

Media Commission and foreign newspapers

The Zimbabwe Media Commission (ZMC) chairperson has threatened action to stop the circulation in Zimbabwe of foreign newspapers that are not registered under the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA).

Part XI of AIPPA, which deals with registration, while requiring Zimbabwean mass media owners to register, makes no clear provision for registration of foreign newspapers, although there is a section allowing for a "representative office of a foreign mass media service" to be registered.

But it does not say that a foreign newspaper that is circulated in Zimbabwe must have a registered representative office here. So action by the ZMC to stop the importation or circulation in Zimbabwe of foreign newspapers would require an amendment to AIPPA.

Spokespersons for South African newspapers that are popular in Zimbabwe have denied that AIPPA requires them to register; no doubt they have legal advice to that effect.

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