

# Mugabe signs comms bill into law

President Robert Mugabe has signed the Interception of Communications Bill into law. The Chief Secretary to the President and Cabinet Misheck Sibanda announced this in a general notice issued in the Government Gazette of 3 August 2007.

Harare - The Act will make lawful the interception and monitoring of communications in the course of their transmission through a telecommunication, postal or any other related service or system in Zimbabwe. The Act also provides for the establishment of a monitoring centre.

An interception warrant, to be issued by the Minister of Transport and Communications, may be applied for by the Chief of Defence Intelligence, the Director-General of the Central Intelligence Organisation, the Commissioner of Police, and the Commissioner General of the Zimbabwe Revenue Authority or any of their nominees.

Service providers, among them Internet Service Providers (ISPs), are required to install systems that are "technically capable of supporting lawful interception at all times." ISPs will not have long to comply with this law as the Act clearly states that regulations to this effect will be issued within two months of the commencement of this Act.

MISA-Zimbabwe Chairperson Loughy Dube expressed dismay at the promulgation of this Act calling it yet another sad day for Zimbabweans.

"It is indeed a very sad day for Zimbabweans who for a long time now have had their right to freedom of expression being taken for granted. The government has refused to open the airwaves, closed newspapers and, as if that is not enough, it now wants to pry into people's conversations. This is simply an indication of a government that is afraid of its own citizens.

In addition, when a government becomes afraid of its own citizens, it becomes a danger upon those citizens. As Zimbabweans, we do not deserve such laws. We will certainly ask our legal department to look into the possibilities of mounting a constitutional challenge against this law in the Supreme Court," Dube said.

What remains now is the publication of a statutory instrument that will advise when the law will become operational.

Source: [MISA](#)