

# MACRA cautions radio stations for provocative programmes

 By [Gregory Gondwe](#)

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The Malawi Communication Regulatory Authority (MACRA) has cautioned two local radio stations for broadcasting programmes, one where President Bingu wa Mutharika was insulted and the other one for airing programmes that could spark the country into religious strife.

The media institutions, Capital FM Radio station was cautioned for broadcasting a phone-in programme in April this year in which somebody called to insult President Bingu wa Mutharika while Radio Islam was warned for denigrating other religious beliefs.

The warnings, that have been sent to the two radio stations, have since been published in daily and weekly newspapers last week.

"In the said programme an anonymous caller castigated the state president of the Republic of Malawi calling him obscene and indecent names for the expulsion of the former British Ambassador to Malawi, Fergus Cochrane Dyet," said MACRA director general Charles Nsaliwa.

## Breach of law

Nsaliwa said the warning follows a meeting that was held at the MACRA offices on 4 May 2011, where Capital FM Radio Limited acknowledged the breach of Section 52 Subsection 2 of the Third Schedule to the Communications Act and their licence terms and conditions.

Radio Islam was also found guilty of breaching the same law and it also acknowledged breach of this particular law.

The radio station, through its programme 'Tipange Dawa', had been denigrating other religious belief, until in December 2010, a listener complained to the board against the radio.

According to Section 52 Subsection 2 of the said law, which the two radios were not supposed to breach, licensees shall not broadcast any material which is indecent or obscene or offensive to public morals including abusive or insulting language or offensive to the religious convictions of any section of the population, or likely to prejudice the safety of the republic or public order and tranquillity.

Apart from this particular piece of legislation, Capital FM Radio also breached two other parts of this same section where

they failed, as the law says, to "exercise due care and sensitivity in the presentation of material which depicts or relates to acts of brutality, violence, atrocities, drug abuse and obscenity."

Furthermore, for allowing a listener to insult the president, the radio also breached the section that says licensees shall exercise due care and responsibility in the presentation of programmes where a large proportion of the audience is likely to be children.

## ABOUT GREGORY GONDWE

Gregory Gondwe is a Malawian journalist who started writing in 1993. He is also a media consultant assisting several international journalists pursuing assignments in Malawi. He holds a Diploma and an Intermediate Certificate in Journalism among other media-related certificates. He can be contacted on [gregorygondwe@gmail.com](mailto:gregorygondwe@gmail.com). Follow him on Twitter at @Kalipochi.

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