

UCC renews crackdown on illegal broadcasters, couriers

By Chris Kiwawulo

The Uganda Communications Commission (UCC) has reignited the crackdown on all illegal broadcasters and courier operators in the country.

The crackdown meant to enforce compliance in the postal and courier sectors, saw 28 radio stations and 20 bus and courier operators across the country stopped from operating, pending a follow-up meeting between the commission and the affected owners.

According to Pamela Ankunda, the head of international and public relations at UCC, the affected radio stations include; Touch FM, Radio Maria, Suubi FM, and Pearl FM. UCC estimates that there are over 100 illegal radio operators in the country.

In June, UCC asked resident district commissioners (RDCs) and Internal Security Organisation (ISO) officers to crack the whip on mushrooming illegal radios broadcasting in the country.

UCC's onslaught on media came after a Buganda Road Court Chief Magistrate, James Mawanda Ereemye, convicted Gerald Ssemwanga, for operating a radio station

Ssemwanga was arrested for installing broadcast equipment without a licence

without a licence from the regulator.

"Following this precedent, we have asked other government agencies and stakeholders through the Office of the President to support the operation. Anyone found breaking the law will be dealt with," said Godfrey Mutabazi, the executive director of UCC, in a statement.

Mutabazi said Ssemwanga was arrested on May 19 after UCC's compliance and investigation unit received complaints from residents of Mutundwe.

"He was broadcasting using a mixer-amplifier that he had connected to eight cone loud speakers," he said.

The Chief Magistrate sentenced Ssemwanga to two months in jail for installing broadcast equipment without a license contrary to section 26 of

the UCC Act.

UCC explained that they crafted in ISO and RDCs in the monitoring and enforcement of the broadcast regulation in order to track illegal media houses that are clandestinely operating in the country.

Ankunda in a statement yesterday named Global coaches, Comfort, Nile Coach, Zawadi, Divine Coach, Roblyn, Friends Coach, Felister, Gaagaa, Trinity, Gateway, as bus companies found operating courier services illegally.

Other courier companies that were found operating illegally are; Courier Mate Uganda and High Speed Courier and Logistics Limited.

Quoting the communications Act 2013, Ankunda said any person conveying, delivering or distributing postal articles without a licence issued under the Act is prohibited.

"Services, which are regulated by the Commission; include postal and courier services, which services are part and parcel of communications services in Uganda," she observed.

The affected operators are not allowed to operate unless they seek authorisation from UCC after meeting their obligations.