

Digitalisation a violation of media freedom

The chairman of the Royal Media Services (RMS), Dr Samuel Makau Macharia, called plans to migrate from analogue to digital broadcasting an affront to media freedom.



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He subsequently called on government to review the programme bemoaning the high expenses that Kenyans would be subjected to in the acquisition of the Set Top Boxes (STBs) and the monthly subscription charges they would have to pay to continue enjoying television services.

"They (government) are saying the current broadcasters be taking their signals to pay television careers, those who charge wananchi even if I deliver my content to that pay television if they want to change they can change and that was not the idea," said Macharia during while on a church fundraiser in Turbo, Uasin Gishu. Deputy President William Ruto attended the event where Sh 21 million was raised.

Deadline postponed

The digital migration deadline was postponed to 6 February after a successful petition by three leading media houses in Kenya, including RMS. The migration process was scheduled to take place in phases with Nairobi being the first target of the migration.

The government targets to have transferred from the analogue broadcasting to digital broadcasting by June this year.

The migration has faced a lot of challenges among them unending court battles by media houses over what they term as unfair tendering of the digital signal distribution.

Kenyans on the other side complain over the high prices of STB and pay TV channels that they have been forced to acquire.

The migration is in line with the International Telecommunications Union's (ITU's) targets to complete the exercise by 2015.