

Kenya government lifts ban

The government of Kenya has lifted the ban on live broadcasting, but has cautioned foreign correspondents against "inflammatory" reporting.

A brief letter revoking the ban faxed to newsrooms by the ministry's administrative head read in part "In view of the improved situation, the Minister for Internal Security George Saitoti has revoked the directive and consequently the suspension is lifted with immediate effect."

The government's action came on the eve of the hearing of a lawsuit filed by the Media Institute and the Kenya Editors Guild (KEG) challenging the legal basis for the order issued on 30 December 2007. Lawyers for both parties appeared in Court on 5 February and marked the suit as settled.

The ban was imposed to curb live reporting of political events in the wake of the declaration and hurried swearing-in of President Mwai Kibaki after a hotly contested election that was described by various international and local observers as "seriously flawed". The result triggered unprecedented demonstration and rioting that has claimed over 1000 lives and drew international mediation by former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan.

Addressing a press conference a day after the lifting of the ban, Information Minister Samuel Poghiso urged the media to be vigilant against inflammatory content. He said that the government would form a task force to consider, among others, rigorous vetting of foreign correspondents. The government has recently been at loggerheads with foreign media over its reporting of the political crisis.

Source: <http://www.ifex.org/>