

Media commission interview results annulled?

Parliament has reportedly set aside results of interviews conducted with potential candidates for eventual appointment to the statutory Zimbabwe Media Commission (ZMC) in a shock development that could seriously undermine the principle of separation of powers between the executive, legislature and judiciary.

According to the state-controlled national daily The Herald of 4 August 2009 the process hit a snag after Zanu PF officials led by Munyaradzi Paul Mangwana allegedly "realised" that the interviews were allegedly fraudulent and biased against candidates perceived as sympathisers of Zanu PF.

It is reported that "parties" to the agreement then resolved that all the names of the 27 candidates interviewed be forwarded to the President without ranking them. In terms of Constitutional Amendment No 19 the envisaged Commission shall consist of a chairperson and eight other members appointed by the President from a list of not fewer than twelve nominees submitted by the Committee on Standing Rules and Orders.

It is on the basis of that constitutional provision that the interviews were conducted on 3 August 20079 by the Standing Rules and Orders Committee (SROC). To act otherwise by submitting the list of candidates wholesale to the President would be a serious breach and abdication of responsibility on the part of parliament pertaining to a process that is protected by a constitutional provision.

Also in contention, and of which the public is also owed an explanation, relates to how SROC also bundled the ZMC interviews with those for BAZ when the advertisements placed for applications to be submitted for interviews by the Committee were specifically for the ZMC and made no mention of the possibilities of those so short listed being also considered and short listed for BAZ appointments.

Background

A five-member interviewing panel comprising members of SROC on 3 August 2009 interviewed a total of 27 potential candidates who will be short listed for appointment to the ZMC and the Broadcasting Authority of Zimbabwe (BAZ). A four-member panel of experts was also in place to determine the final list of candidates that will be short listed for onward appointment by the President.