

Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/zimbabwe-two-standard-journalists-arrested-30-06-2011,40564.html>

Africa - Zimbabwe

Free on bail

Standard journalists released on bail, investigation continues

2 July 2011

Reporters Without Borders has learned that **Nevanji Madanhire**, the editor of independent weekly *The Standard*, was released on bail of 100 dollars (69 euros) on the evening of 30th June, 24 hours after the release of his reporter, **Patience Nyangove**.

Their release on bail was confirmed when they appeared in court yesterday. The two journalists and Loud Ramakgopola, a senior employee of the company that owns *The Standard*, were arrested during a raid on the newspaper on 29 June.

They are all still subject to a judicial investigation on charges of criminal defamation and "publication of false statements prejudicial to the state." The police have refused to return the mobile phone they took from Nyangove on the grounds that it could provide them with evidence. Examining her phone violates the principle that journalists' sources are confidential.

Reporters Without Borders will continue to follow this case closely.

30.06.2011

Two Standard journalists arrested on libel charge in new threat to independent media

Reporters Without Borders condemns yesterday's arrest of **Nevanji Madanhire**, the editor of independent weekly *The Standard*, and **Patience Nyangove**, one of his reporters, and the charges of criminal defamation and "publication of false statements prejudicial to the state" that have been brought against them.

"This latest case of judicial harassment of *The Standard's* journalists shows that government officials want to censor independent media," Reporters Without Borders said. "By criminalizing newspaper articles, officials are trying to cover up the recent tension between the two parties in the ruling coalition, President Robert Mugabe's Zanu-PF and Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai's Movement for Democratic Change (MDC). Designed to get outspoken media to censor themselves, these arrests and charges are unacceptable. We fear they are a prelude to more arrests of independent journalists."

Madanhire, Nyangove and Loud Ramakgopola, the human resources director of Alpha Media, the company that owns *The Standard*, were arrested during a raid yesterday on the newspaper by members of the Law and Order section of the Central Intelligence Department. Nyangove and Ramakgopola were released yesterday evening, but Madanhire was held overnight at Harare police headquarters and was due to be brought before a judge late today.

The arrests were prompted by an article in *The Standard's* 26 June issue headlined "MDC-T fears for missing Timba's life." It was about the arrest of Jameson Timba, a senior aide to Tsvangirai and a minister of state in his government, on 24 June on his return to Zimbabwe after attending a special Southern African Development Community (SADC) summit on 11-12 June in South Africa.

During the summit, a South African newspaper quoted Timba as describing Mugabe as a "liar." Leading Zanu-PF member Jonathan Moyo reacted by accusing Timba and Tsvangirai of insulting the president and calling for their arrest. Zimbabwean journalists who reported these

developments are being accused of violating article 31 of the criminal code on defaming the government.

Reporters Without Borders has learned that several other leading journalists are threatened with the possibility of arrest at Zanu-PF's behest. Journalists with the *Daily News* and *Zimbabwe Independent* who wrote similar articles are also reportedly being accused of trying to tarnish the president's image.
