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<http://www.rsf.org/zimbabwe-former-minister-sues-daily-news-16-09-2011,41009.html>

Africa - Zimbabwe

Judicial harassment

Former minister sues Daily News over stories quoting WikiLeaks cables

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Reporters Without Borders condemns former information minister Jonathan Moyo's continuing judicial harassment of the Harare-based independent newspaper, the *Daily News*, and the company that publishes it, Associated Newspapers of Zimbabwe.

In a lawsuit filed this week naming editor **Stanley Gama** and reporter **Thelma Chikwanha**, Moyo is demanding 100,000 US dollars in damages for stories by Chikwanha on 6 and 7 September quoting comments which – according to US diplomatic cables released a few days before by WikiLeaks – Moyo made to US diplomats in Harare.

"The *Daily News* just reported, and commented on, reliable information that is now accessible to everyone through WikiLeaks," Reporters Without Borders said. "Its reporters did a serious piece of investigative journalism based on information that is clearly embarrassing but is now out in the open.

"Annoyed by the publication of his confidential comments, Moyo is singling out a local newspaper he has never liked. His accusations are grave and without foundation, and the amount of damages he is demanding is exorbitant. He is trying to deter journalists from doing their job and to throttle the newspaper financially."

In its 6 September story, headlined "Moyo's plans to oust Mugabe," the *Daily News* reported that, in conversations with US diplomats, Moyo had voiced support for travel and economic sanctions by the United States and other western countries against President Robert Mugabe, who he said now had throat cancer, and members of his inner circle.

In its article the next day, headlined "Moyo advised US on Zanu-PF sanctions list," the newspaper reported that Moyo had even suggested which senior members of the ruling Zanu-PF party should be targeted by the sanctions.

Moyo has confirmed that he met with US diplomats and has not denied the comments attributed to him in the cables released by WikiLeaks. Instead, his lawsuit takes issue with the way the newspaper used this information. Certain sections of the articles were "wrongful, unlawful, false, scandalous and defamatory," Moyo said.

Moyo claims that the newspaper misrepresented his position by suggesting he played a leading role in enlarging the list of sanction targets, as well as making him appear dishonest and hypocritical in the government's eyes. The court has given the newspaper 10 days to say whether it intends to defend the suit. A *Daily News* representative told Reporters Without Borders the newspaper stood by its articles.

Last May, shortly after the *Daily News* resumed publishing after a seven-year ban, Moyo sued the newspaper for 60,000 dollars for reprinting old articles [about his expulsion from Zanu-PF in 2005](#).

The latest suit was filed the same week that the minister of media, information and publicity,

Webster Shamu, warned foreign and privately-owned news media that the government would withdraw their licences if they continued their "vitriolic attacks and the use of hate language" against President Mugabe.

Picture : Jonathan Moyo (AFP / Alexander Joe)
