



# MISA NAMIBIA E-Newsletter

## "We exist to tell the story without fear or favour," Haikali

MISA Namibia Condemned recent persistent attacks on the media at a press conference held on October 5, 2006.

Addressing the conference was MISA Namibia National Director Mathew Haikali and NANGOF Chairperson and Director of the Legal Assistance Centre Norman Tjombe.

Haikali condemned in the strongest terms the attempts to silence the media through expensive lawsuits that will only end up taking away from what democracy had achieved.

"We are also worried about the lack of understanding of the role of the media by the general public and even some leaders.

The media exists to tell the story as it is, without fear or favour."

"The media however has to adhere strictly to the



Mathew Haikali and Norman Tjombe

ethics of journalism and ensure these are kept to the highest standards," says Haikali.

NANGOF's Tjombe called for an end to the government advertising ban on The Namibian, describing the ban as unconstitutional.

Speaking on access to information he said, "For the most part, experts believe that it is better to have a law protecting the right in place, however weak or flawed, than having no law at all.

Once legislation has been adopted, it can be

### Background

On Tuesday September 19, a caller on the NBC radio call in programme, the National Chat Show, said that media who expose and embarrass leaders should be taken to task.

The Namibian newspaper and senior reporter Werner Menges was sued by former president Sam Nujoma because it reported on an affidavit submitted to the court by former Social Security Commission Finance Manager Avril Green. And all this came after New Era's News Editor Da'oud Vries got suspended after an inflammatory letter was published on July 7.

improved and strengthened through testing, monitoring and timely political review."

## MISA Namibia Supports Swakopmund Community

Ocean Wave Community Radio initiative (OWCR) held a two day training workshop on October 11 and 12 initiated by MISA Namibia .

The station is part of the National Community Radio Network and is expected to go on air early next year.

The network was established to address the lack of information amongst

rural communities.

"I learned that it is not an easy job and that you must be sharp. I also learned how to operate a voice recorder," said one of the participants, Melanie Noabes.

"I got new experience," said Jaime Kangungu. Kangungu said he realised what is needed to excel in journalism, and made him realise the importance of



Participants at work during the workshop

community work. Students received hands on training on the importance of Script-writing, selecting news angles and community broadcasting.

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## Swedish students researching Namibian Media



Sara Landqvist

Sara Landqvist (23) and Helenah Svedberg(22) are both third year media students at the University of Kalmar in Sweden.

They are currently doing their thesis, comparing two Namibian

daily's

namely, The Namibian newspaper which is a private newspaper and New Era a state run newspaper in Namibia.

They arrived in Namibia the last week of October and will be in the country for 10 weeks.

"I love the weather, it's nice and hot, Sweden is pretty cold," says Svedberg. Landqvist says that newspapers in Namibia are quite similar to that of Sweden although she says, you won't find any English newspapers in their country because they are all written in Swedish.

Svedberg says that they will be incredibly surprised if their thesis turns out to be the opposite of what they thought.

"Since New Era is state funded and The Namibian is a private newspaper I would be surprised if my find-



Helenah Svedberg

ings are that New Era is more critical of the state while The Namibian are less critical because my thesis is that it will be the opposite."

[ Enjoy your stay! Ed.]

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## MISA Namibia's revamped website

If you haven't seen the new revamped MISA Namibia website it's about time. It's a breath of fresh air, updated and gives you the latest news.

We have also added a MISA Namibia Opinion and Commentary Service. The service aims to serve as a platform for journalists, media academics, students and activists to express their opinions on issues regarding the media in Namibia.

If you have any opinion piece about the media in Namibia that you always wanted published please forward it to us. We will load it to our website and make it available to the print media. .

However, when publishing articles, the MISA Namibia Opinion and Commentary Service must be cited as the source and include the information provided at the end of each article. If the article is published by any publication MISA Namibia will make a payment to the author.

Authors will be paid N\$ 1 per word. Paid up MISA Namibia members will receive N\$ 1.50 per word. Articles should not exceed 1000 words.

No payment will be made if the author is in the employ of, or has a contractual obligation to provide editorial services, to the publication where his / her opinion piece is published.

a contractual obligation to provide editorial services, to the publication where his / her opinion piece is published. If you are interested in contributing to the service or publishing articles please contact us.



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## MISA Namibia Defense Fund Underway

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"The official preliminary documents on how to apply for support have been launched" said MISA Namibia's National Director, Mathew Haikali.

Haikali said that attacks from different quotas prompted the establishment of the MISA Namibia defence fund.

"The board realised how important it is to have one and mechanisms have already been put in place." However, "Documentation is still being finalised."

He National Director says that MISA Namibia is working closely with the Legal Assistance Centre (LAC),

for fair civil representation, though inasmuch as they do so, Haikali said that the body will be governed through by the MISA Namibia board.

Haikali said that a person with a legal background, preferably a retired judge who understands the media environment will be appointed to chair the committee.

And although MISA Namibia does not have a legal defense fund yet, it has assisted Media practitioners and institutions in the region with legal fees to engage lawyers for their defense in courts of law.



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## 'Drug lords and crime syndicates will continue,' says Haikali

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A week-long Workshop was held at the Windhoek Safari Hotel from the 24<sup>th</sup> of September to the 5<sup>th</sup> of October 2006.

The aim of the Workshop was to network with various stakeholders who work in human rights organisations, to meet and exchange ideas on issues ranging from, moral ethics, criminal courts, existing systems, national institutions and commissions and Non-governmental organisation with regards to human rights.

MISA Namibia's National Director Mathew Haikali presented a paper on Freedom of Expression: *Challenges Facing Media in Africa*.

In his paper Haikali said that 'The media in Namibia is regarded to be enjoying unprecedented freedom and reasonable access to information from the government and private sector as compared to other countries.' "In the so called modern democratic systems of governance, it is difficult

for the system to operate without the full realisation of the Freedom of Expression"

Haikali said that it is important to note that while the Constitution gives the right to freedom of expression and freedom of the press there is no right to Access to information in order to fully entrench these rights.

"How then does the press get hold of documents relating to financial scandals or otherwise? This is where the 'leaks' come in. So called 'official' documents are leaked to the media and then when the story comes out in the paper, there is at first heated denials followed by denouncements of the 'unpatriotic' stance of the media."

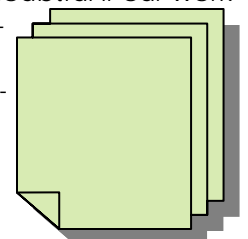
Such statements Haikali said, are the preserve of the privileged few who are privy to what should be public information if handled correctly.

"Drug lords and crime syndicates will continue unabated safe in the knowledge that no one dare open their mouths without protection from the authorities of state."

In conclusion the National Director said that it is important to make sure that the political governing organs at the highest level, namely the African Union, is in acceptance of the need for this legislation in the hope that the sentiment can trickle down to member states.

Haikali said that the workshop was a challenge on its own, however it provided an opportunity for discussion and the sharing of different experiences from other African countries.

"Without access to information legislation, it is doubtful if our work will get any easier in Namibia and on the continent as a whole."



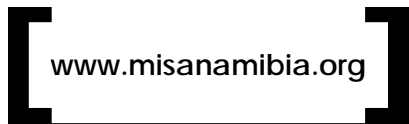


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*Committed to promoting and  
advancing media freedom*



## Your new E-Newsletter

This is our third electronic newsletter and if you have just signed up, I would like to welcome you on board. And please keep those comments coming, we always want to know what you think of your newsletter and improve where you think, need be, to make this newsletter better equipped for both you and us.

I have some bad news though, Johnathan Beukes our Information Officer recently took up another post with Nampower and by the time you read this, he is busy settling in his new job. MISA Namibia would like to wish him a prosperous career and thank him for the work and time spent with us. Good luck Johnathan.

Well, as we promised in the last issue we brought you the report on the media conference that was held last month, regarding the recent attacks that circulated in the media industry. Addressing the conference was MISA Namibia's National Director and NANGOF's Chairperson, Norman Tjombe.

A two day workshop was held in Swakopmund recently with the aim being to transfer practical skills to prospective volunteers of a new community radio initiative, take a look and see what the participants had to say.

We also welcomed two students at our offices from Sweden who are doing their thesis on state and private run newspapers in Namibia, its all on the second page.

The suspended news editor of New Era Da'oud Vries, was suspended for a second time and dismissed from his position. More of this in our newsletter.

And before you sign off, do take the time to take a look at MISA Namibia's revamped website, a whole new wardrobe with new loaded information just for you.

Until next month, enjoy.

Vikitoria Hango (*Interim Editor*)

## Vries, *New Era* in Labour Court

Da'oud Vries has been dismissed as *New Era's* news editor, after he was suspended for the second time.

Vries who was first suspended after an inflammatory letter was published in the *New Era* newspaper on the 7<sup>th</sup> of July which criticised the Ovakwanyama tribe, and received widespread criticism from the audience on national radio phone in programmes.

Vries was suspended the second time early last month after he allegedly failed to return from work without leave after the first hearing found him innocent.

However, Vries says that he was not informed about the outcome of the first hearing and that is was unfair for *New Era* to suspend him again.

On October the 30<sup>th</sup> Vries took

the Newspaper to the Windhoek District Labour Court after he was suspended for the second time.

*New Era* argued that the District Labour Court had no power to hear an urgent application, while Vries's representative, Hewatt Beukes disagreed.

Vries said that *New Era* in a plot to dismiss him engaged the services of two outsiders, respondent one Robin Raines and respondent two Sam January – as "political hitmen" in an employment contract.

Judgement by Magistrate Clement Daniels has yet to be specified although by law he has up to 21 days to make a ruling.

Vries has given instructions for a

separate civil claim against Raines and January, whom he accused of failing to follow correct procedures during the second disciplinary hearing.

Raines represented the company while January was the chairperson of the second hearing.

Meanwhile, MISA Namibia have approved Vries application for funding assistance and was represented by Hewatt Beukes.

Vries applied for assistance with MISA's defense fund.

However we are all awaiting for Magistrate Daniels ruling. which is still not set to date.

*Vries is  
Fired*