

MISA-Zimbabwe

MISA-Zimbabwe Statement on the opening of Parliament

MISA Zimbabwe congratulates all Honourable Members of the House of Assembly as well as the Senate on the occasion of the convening of the 7th Parliament of the Republic of Zimbabwe on 26 August 2008. We especially would like to congratulate the new Speaker of the House of Assembly, Honourable Lovemore Moyo, and his Deputy, Honourable Nomalanga Khumalo on their election to office. MISA Zimbabwe also especially congratulates Honourable Edna Madzongwe and Honourable Naison Ndhlovu for their election to the posts of President and Deputy President of the Senate respectively.

It is MISA Zimbabwe's belief and hope that Honourable Members of the 7th Parliament of Zimbabwe will, among several other issues affecting the country, take into greater consideration issues pertaining to media freedom, freedom of expression and access to information for the building of a democratic Zimbabwe.

MISA Zimbabwe holds that for the work of Parliament to be within the public discourse there is need for a free, fair and balanced media environment in the country. In order to achieve that balance, MISA Zimbabwe humbly requests that the 7th Parliament of Zimbabwe takes into account the need for:

1. An immediate cessation of the arrest, harassment and torture of all journalists and media houses reporting on Zimbabwe.
2. The granting of permission to all media houses, (both foreign and local) to cover the political situation as it unfolds.
3. The suspension and subsequent repealing of all repressive legislation that targets the media, and in particular, the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act, the Public Order and Security Act, the Broadcasting Services Act and the Interception of Communications Act. In their place, all media policy should be guided by the principles outlined in the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights, the Windhoek Declaration and the African Charter on Broadcasting.
4. An immediate conversion of the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation from a state broadcaster into a public broadcaster under the guidelines outlined in the African Charter on Broadcasting.

It is MISA Zimbabwe's hope and prayer that the 7th Parliament remains true to the needs and aspirations of the people of Zimbabwe and that in responding to these aspirations, Honourable Members recognise freedom of expression as the cornerstone of a true democracy.

Inserted by MISA-Zimbabwe, 84 McChlery Drive, Eastlea, Harare. Telefax 263 4 776165/7468838, Email: misa@misazim.co.zw, Website: www.misazim.co.zw.

For further questions, queries, enquiries please contact