

# VOICE OF THE NATION SILENCED BY VIRUS

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Percy Simelane

SBIS Director

**A computer virus crashed through the Swaziland Broadcasting and Information Corporation (SBIS)'s entire computer system, destroying almost all files belonging to the country's only public broadcaster.**

The virus, whose source is not known, caused a complete blackout, resulting in a major disturbance in the broadcasting operations. Though SBIS is now migrating from analogue broadcasting to digital, engineers were left with no option but to switch to analogue. SBIS Director Percy Simelane said advertisements were the worst affected as they were ready to be broadcast.

Most of the adverts are stored within the computer systems and cannot be retrieved

manually. Recorded programmes were also wiped out by the virus, hence announcers kept apologising to listeners.

The station's authorities also had to improvise on contingency measures to avert the crisis. In some scenarios, affected programmes were either replaced or live recordings made hastily.

"For over a week, we could not air adverts and we had a torrid time explaining the situation to our advertisers. They were not impressed by the blackout because they also had their targets. Some advertisers understood the situation, but others shared different sentiments because they are also in business."

Simelane said SBIS stood to lose an unspecified amount of money on lost advertising revenue and on curing the problem.

The director said the virus attack caught them off guard.

Virus attack to be avoided in future

Simelane said the station was currently putting in place protective systems to cushion the station from similar virus' attacks in future.

"We are looking for a highly protective anti virus system, which will protect our computers from similar damage in future."

Simelane said from now on, the station would be engaging technicians time and again to conduct

<http://www.TakeABackup.com>

upgrades on all systems to ensure that a situation like the recent computer blackout does not prevail again.

“But we should all be aware and careful that technology is technology,” adding that constant glitches brought about by technological advances were rather inevitable.

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