# 54 Nigerian stations shut down

The licences of 54 broadcast stations in Nigeria have been revoked over failure to pay mandatory fees, according to the Media Foundation for West Africa.



The Director General of the National Broadcasting Commission, Is-had Modibbo, who announced this at a press conference in Abuja on March 13, 2017, said the decision followed the expiry of a 60-day grace period given to the owners of the affected stations.

The decision means the frequencies of the affected television and radio channels are no longer available for their listeners and viewers.

The situation could become worse with the head of the NBC warning of similar sanctions against 120 other stations who have failed to start operating after receiving their licenses two years.

"There is another list of over 120 licences that were paid within the mandatory period but were unable to come on air within the mandatory two years; they are also being processed for revocation," Modibbo said.

Given the heavy loss of revenue that a station will incur when it is shut down, the MFWA believes it is unlikely that any media owner would deliberately risk such sanctions.

Incidentally, the NBC boss disclosed that some of the stations do write to complain that the fee is too high and to indicate "how much they are willing to pay and even adding the time they are going to pay such sums." The MFWA encourages the NBC to respond to positively to these overtures and to try to find a common ground with the affected stations.

"The closure of the 54 stations is a major blow to citizens' right to receive information about local, national and international issues concerning their lives. A prolonged period off air will compound the already precarious finances of these stations and keep hundreds of media professionals out of work. We therefore appeal for dialogue leading to the eventual reopening of the stations concerned."

This statement was originally published on **mfwa.org** on 14 March 2017.