

South African Press Council hearings to start amid poisoned air

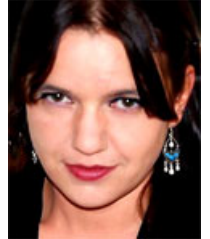
 By [Julie Reid](#)

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Next week in Johannesburg, the [Press Council of South Africa](#) will begin the first of a series of nationwide public hearings to discuss reforming media self-regulation. But will the media's concerns be heeded, or will the hearings just create the illusion of participation, with the media appeals tribunal ultimately going ahead anyway?

These hearings are largely due to ANC threats instituting a media appeals tribunal which would presumably be a statutory body to monitor the press and punish "offending" journalists and editors who, [according to ANC spokesman](#) Jackson Mthembu: "Don't contribute to the South Africa we want".

The Press Council's agreement to relook its self-regulation is widely credited for the ANC taking a supposedly "softened" position. But this could be a dangerous assumption for three reasons.



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