

Justice Department Media Contact:

Christina Dilorio-Sterling, (617) 748-3356
usama.media@usdoj.gov

FCC Media Contact

Will Wiquist, (202) 418-0509
will.wiquist@fcc.gov

For Immediate Release

INJUNCTION SOUGHT TO PROHIBIT ILLEGAL RADIO STATION FROM BROADCASTING IN WORCESTER

BOSTON, March 5, 2019—The United States filed a civil action to prevent an unlicensed radio station from operating in Worcester.

According to the complaint, Vasco Oburoni and Christian Praise International Church have been operating a radio broadcast station in Worcester, on frequency 97.1 MHz, without a license from the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). The complaint alleges that Oburoni and the Church previously operated an unlicensed radio station on frequency 102.3 MHz.

The FCC issued multiple warnings to the illegal operators and issued a forfeiture order in the amount of \$15,000 against Oburoni for repeated violation of the Communications Act of 1934. Oburoni agreed to a payment plan, but later began broadcasting again without a license on a different frequency. The FCC has received complaints, including from a licensed broadcaster, that the unlicensed station is interfering with radio signals.

“It is a potential hazard to public safety for pirate radio stations to broadcast illegally and interfere with critical radio communication,” said United States Attorney Andrew E. Lelling. “Like any member of the community, the operators of these illegal stations could have applied for radio licenses and operated their stations in compliance with the law. When they choose to operate illegally, and continue those operations after being warned multiple times, action must be taken.”

“This groundbreaking step, for an injunction to stop a pirate radio operator’s illegal activities, is part of our continued efforts to combat illegal broadcasting,” said Rosemary Harold, Chief of the FCC’s Enforcement Bureau. “As we work with our law enforcement colleagues to use every tool in our toolbox to combat pirate radio, I welcome the Justice Department’s renewed use of its Section 401(a) injunction authority. Along with fines, equipment seizures, and warnings, this action underlines our continued interest in combatting this serious problem. We sincerely thank the Massachusetts U.S. Attorney’s Office and commend the outstanding work of our hardworking FCC Field agents.”

The Communications Act of 1934 prohibits the operation of radio broadcasting equipment above certain low-intensity thresholds without a license issued by the FCC. The Act authorizes the Department of Justice, at the request of the FCC, to seek an injunction ordering compliance with the Communications Act against operators broadcasting without an FCC license. The

number of available radio frequencies is limited, and unlicensed broadcasting can interfere with the broadcasting of legitimate licensed radio stations, potentially causing chaos in the radio spectrum.

U.S. Attorney Lelling and FCC Enforcement Chief Harold made the announcement today. Assistant U.S. Attorney Carol E. Head of Lelling's Asset Recovery Unit is handling the matter.

###

Media Relations: (202) 418-0500 / ASL: (844) 432-2275 / TTY: (888) 835-5322 / Twitter: @FCC / www.fcc.gov

This is an unofficial announcement of Commission action. Release of the full text of a Commission order constitutes official action. See MCI v. FCC, 515 F.2d 385 (D.C. Cir. 1974).