



Defending free expression and your right to know

The mass media have a critical role to play during “election periods” acting as the main sources of information for the public about the prevailing political environment, the preparations for holding the elections, and about the political contestants themselves. As the holding of harmonised elections on July 31st 2013 approaches, the Media Monitoring Project Zimbabwe (MMPZ) will be carrying daily media updates on this momentous event until the day after the election results are announced. The daily media updates monitor the output of the mainstream domestic print and electronic media relating to coverage of election issues. This is aimed primarily at establishing whether the media is communicating the information the public needs to make informed decisions when they go and vote – and whether they can vote freely. For any views and comments, you can email us at monitors@mmpz.org.zw

The Media Monitoring Project Zimbabwe

Daily Election Report No.10-2013

Wednesday 24th July 2013

Electronic Media Report - Tuesday, July 23, 2013

SUMMARY

FOR the first time since MMPZ started its daily monitoring of the media’s coverage of the campaign trail, the national public broadcaster, ZTV, “only” carried one hour and 42 minutes of live coverage of President Mugabe’s rally in Mutare. Up until now, these live, direct access broadcasts have rarely been less than four hours for each of Mugabe’s rallies.

But while this “shortened” live coverage also reflected a shorter time on the podium for Mugabe, it still added an hour and 42 minutes to ZTV’s grossly inequitable coverage of the contesting political parties, giving ZANU PF’s presidential candidate a total of nearly 26 hours of live coverage compared to none for any of his political rivals.

ZBC's radio station, Spot FM, has also given the ZANU PF candidate exactly the same live coverage and has also ignored the other political parties' presidential candidates.

This slavish devotion to one political party by the public broadcaster continues to violate the Electoral laws governing media coverage of political parties during election periods.

MMPZ again calls upon the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission, which is responsible for ensuring the media comply with the electoral regulations, to put an end to this unacceptable violation of our laws – not to mention regional and continental standards and protocols on the media's coverage of elections.

THE STATS

The electronic media carried a total of 39 election-related stories in their main evening bulletins. Of these 20 were on political party activities. Fourteen stories were on administrative issues, and three on election-related political violence.

Of the 20 political party activities, 13 were in the bulletins of the public broadcaster (ZTV 10 and Spot FM three) while the privately owned radio stations carried the other seven (ZiFM three, Star FM two, Studio 7 and SW Radio Africa, one report each).

ZTV's *Newshour* bulletin carried five promotional stories on ZANU PF's activities, taking up 16 minutes and 28 seconds of its 30-minute main news section. Spot FM carried two favourable stories on ZANU PF occupying 6 minutes and 20 secs in its 12-minute 8pm news bulletin.

ZTV allocated 3 minutes and 23 secs to one negative report on the MDC-T's rallies in Mashonaland East, and 2 minutes 17 secs to an MDC-N report in which its deputy president attacked the MDC-T. Spot FM also gloated over the low turn-out for the MDC-T in Mashonaland East in a 45-second report.

Of the 14 stories on administrative issues six appeared on ZBC whilst eight were in the private media.

Studio 7 carried three reports on political violence.

PARTY CAMPAIGN ACTIVITIES

ZiFM delays reports of ZANU PF's rivals

ZBC continued to give extensive coverage to ZANU PF rallies held at Aerodrome grounds in Mutare and Hatfield constituency in Harare. As has become the norm, the "star" rally held in Mutare was again accorded uninterrupted live coverage on both the public broadcaster's radio and television channels.

Five of the seven party campaign stories on ZTV promoted ZANU PF officials, including President Mugabe, First lady Grace Mugabe, Vice-President Joice Mujuru and Local Government Minister Ignatius Chombo.

MDC-T on the other hand was accorded much less time – and less favour. The MDC-N's Binga rally was given just two minutes – just enough time to quote its deputy president, Edwin Mushoriwa saying of his political rival, ***“Tsvangirai believes in corruption and violence, together with his party”***.

Only Spot FM's report on the MDC-T rallies in Mashonaland East reported Tsvangirai taking a swipe at traditional leaders, whom he accused of intimidating his supporters, saying he would ***“deal with them.”***

ZTV's report on the MDC-T highlighted how Tsvangirai had failed to convince two of his party's candidates to withdraw to allow the MDC-T's alliance partners, MKD and ZANU Ndonga candidates a better chance of winning in the two constituencies where they are standing.

ZiFM carried news of one MDC-T rally held in Gweru over the weekend and another on the MDC-N's Lower Gweru rally on Monday. Both these rallies were only reported days after taking place and raises questions about whether ZiFM's owner, Supa Mandiwanzira, who happened to have been the master of ceremonies at Mugabe's rally in Mutare, deliberately delayed these reports. ZiFM joins ZBC in giving other political parties questionable coverage of their election campaigns compared to its coverage of ZANU PF.

Star FM and ZiFM both carried reports of the ZANU PF Mutare rally, while SW Radio Africa and Studio 7 did not. Instead, they followed up reports on Local Government Minister Ignatius Chombo's directive to all councils to write off all debts incurred by residents between February 2009 and June 2013.

The private media dismissed this as a vote-buying gimmick, whilst the same report received uncritical cheers from the state media.

ELECTION ADMINISTRATION

ZEC says it's 'ready to roll'

The electronic media carried 14 stories on election administration issues (ZBC six, private media eight). These stories included a meeting held by ZEC yesterday (Tuesday) briefing local and foreign observers on the commission's preparations for the month-end elections.

ZTV and Spot FM reported that the meeting also sought to give clarity on ZEC's application to the Constitutional Court seeking to allow those who failed to vote in its special early voting exercise a chance to do so on July 31.

In the private media only SW Radio Africa reported on this.

ZBC's reports quoted ZEC saying that it was ready for the elections and that the final batch of ballot papers would be distributed tomorrow (Thursday).

Star FM and ZBC's radio and television channels also reported the arrival of African observer teams, among them the African Union's Dr. Aisha Abdullahi, Commissioner of Political Affairs, as well as Charles Nqakula of the SADC facilitation team.

The private media also carried news of these developments in their eight stories on election administration issues.

POLITICAL VIOLENCE

Only Studio 7 carried three reports on political violence:

- The eviction of more than 20 farm workers at Winrey Farm in Mutorashanga allegedly on the instruction of Ignatius Chombo.
- MDC-T's aspiring council candidate in Lion's Den, Christopher Makoni, claimed to have been manhandled by the ZANU PF candidate at Murereka Police Station after reporting to the police that his posters were being pulled down.
- Some Shackleton residents accused ZANU PF members of ordering landlords to evict MDC-T tenants.

Current Affairs Programmes

ZTV carried two current affairs programmes; ***The Candidate***, whose guest was MDC-T spokesperson Douglas Mwonzora. The programme was aired for 22 minutes but contained a 12-minute advertising break, which reduced Mwonzora's airtime to barely 10 minutes. And,

The Manifesto, a current affairs slot whose guests have been mainly leaders from lesser-known political parties such as ZDP, PIMZ and Voice of the People explaining their party manifestos.

ZiFM - ***The Agenda***; this show hosted three young women from the main political parties; Varaidzo Mupunga of ZANU PF, Maureen Kademaunga of MDC-T and Cecilia Chimhiri of MDC-N discussing their political backgrounds and the role of women in politics.

ZiFM - ***X1G*** programme hosted Tawanda Chimhini from the Election Resource Centre, discussing what young people look for in a candidate.

Star FM - ***The Hub*** featured ZANU PF Mabvuku/Tafara candidate Goodwills Masimirembwa speaking about his party's policies and attacking the MDC-T for poor service delivery in the constituency.

Political Advertising

Star FM aired the MDC-T advert entitled, "***Its time for more***" (30 seconds) and the party's educational ad, "***Your vote is your secret***" which reassures voters that there are no cameras in polling stations. (34 seconds)

The station also carried two ZANU PF advertisements (one 29 seconds, the other 53 seconds)

ZANU PF advertisements on ZTV included **“Vote Robert Mugabe for President”** and, **“Indigenization Explained”**. (each 3 minutes), and ZANU PF’s indigenization advertisement (55 seconds).

Both ZTV and Spot FM continued to flight advertisements whose origins are unidentified, attacking the personality of MDC-T leader Morgan Tsvangirai describing him as a womanizer, a defender of homosexuality, and a man who uses vulgar language. (45 seconds each)

Spot FM aired two ZANU PF continuity jingles, one 5 minutes and 40 seconds long, and the other lasting 6 minutes 10 seconds.

Spot FM and ZiFM repeatedly aired a ZANU PF indigenization advert of 1 minute 30 seconds, and a 28-second MDC-T advert.

Print media report for Wednesday, July 23, 2013

SUMMARY

Reports on ZANU PF coercing civilians to attend their rallies and allegedly intimidating MDC-T supporters attracted attention in the private papers, *NewsDay* and *Daily News* but were ignored in the state controlled *Herald*. *NewsDay* reported that ZANU PF youths **“invaded”** the venue of the MDC-T rally in Mutoko chasing away people, pulling down the party’s campaign posters and transmitting offensive statements insulting party leader Morgan Tsvangirai.

The papers carried Tsvangirai’s comments urging party supporters to wear ZANU PF regalia to avoid violence and to vote for him, **“Just wear their T-shirts, but you know what is deep down in your heart”**.

The papers also carried headline stories following up Local Government Minister Ignatius Chombo’s extraordinary directive to local councils to cancel all debts owed by residents. While *The Herald’s* story, *‘MDC-T against slashing of tariffs’* quoted ordinary residents hailing the move, *NewsDay* gave space to stakeholders castigating the directive as a crude attempt at vote-buying and **“a recipe for disaster”**. Describing Chombo’s directive as **“dangerous”** and without legal basis, Harare Mayor Muchadeyi Masunda was also quoted saying, **“This has to be the most outrageous and unreasonable decision that anyone has ever made since this city was founded as far back as 1890.”**

Today’s papers also carried news of other election administration issues, such as reports that ZEC had filed an application to the Constitutional Court to

allow those who failed to vote during the special early voting exercise, to do so in the election next Wednesday.

THE STATS

THE print media carried 36 reports on the harmonized elections, scheduled for July 31.

Of these, 15 (42%) were contained in the state-owned daily, *The Herald*. The remaining 21 (58%) appeared in the private newspapers, *NewsDay* and the *Daily News*.

Eight were on the administration of the elections, while the remaining 25 were on party political activities.

In addition, only the private papers carried 15 adverts on voter awareness. The *Daily News* carried four MDC ad campaigns, one ZANU PF and one by a civic organisation the Women's Trust. *NewsDay* carried three MDC-T ad campaigns, while there was one advert each from civic organisations Misa, and Crisis Coalition (Feya Feya), and ZANU PF and ZEC.

The Herald carried the one report on political violence today, while the private papers each carried reports of political intimidation in Mashonaland East.

CAMPAIGN ACTIVITIES

Herald ZANU PF's megaphone

The Herald continued to give wide and positive coverage to ZANU PF campaign activities. For example, in its six promotional stories on ZANU PF the paper reported President Mugabe dismissing claims that his party was planning to rig elections at another "star rally in Mutare yesterday (Tuesday). ***"We never had rigged elections. Avave MDC vanoti (MDC are saying) you are rigging. Well it's politics, but they know for certain that we don't rig elections, never ever"***.

Mugabe used the rally to promote his anti-West rhetoric, castigating American President Barack Obama for supporting homosexuality, ***"We ask, was he born out of homosexuality? We need continuity in our race, and that comes from the woman, and no to homosexuality."***

Vice-President Joice Mujuru was also reported imploring the electorate at her rally in Goromonzi to vote for Mugabe, ***"Tell those who support other parties what is good about ZANU PF...convince them to join our party without being violent"***.

The paper's two articles on the MDC-T included a news story in which the paper reported that MDC-T leader Morgan Tsvangirai **"came face to face with the reality of poor support"** in Mashonaland East after people allegedly boycotted his rallies in the province. It failed to report the harassment and intimidation of his supporters that appeared in the private papers. The only other article on the MDC-T was an indigestible 150 column-centimetre rambling allegorical opinion piece attempting to discredit the policies of the MDC-T and its leader.

The Herald's biased, selective and distorted coverage of Zimbabwe's two main political parties continued to violate regional principles and protocols on providing fair, equitable and balanced coverage of all the political contestants during an election period, as well as section 160J of the Electoral Act, which guides the media's conduct in covering elections.

In contrast, most of the private press' 17 reports were fair and balanced. For example, both *NewsDay* and the *Daily News* reported that Mugabe had **"begged"** the people of Manicaland to vote for him, and noted that many of those who had attended the Mutare rally had been bussed in using state-owned Zupco buses among other vehicles. The *Daily News* carried front-page photographic evidence of this and quoted residents claiming they had been forced to attend.

In its nine reports on the parties' activities and related events, the paper also reported that 10 MDC-T members had been arrested in Bulawayo on charges of malicious damage to property for tearing down ZANU PF posters.

ELECTION ADMINISTRATION

Updates on election preparations

THE print media carried eight reports on the administration of the July 31st election, seven of which appeared in *The Herald*.

NewsDay and *The Daily News* carried one each.

All the papers reported that the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission had filed a Constitutional Court application seeking an exemption from complying with the Electoral Act, to enable civil servants and members of the uniformed forces that failed to vote during the special vote to do so on July 31. Only *NewsDay* quoted legal expert Tawanda Zhuwara questioning the timing of the application, arguing that such an appeal could have been submitted within seven days of the special vote for it to be treated as an urgent matter.

The Herald and *NewsDay* reported that ZEC had accredited about 20 000 election observers for the harmonised elections. *The Herald* also reported that members of the African Union observer team who included the body's Commissioner of Political Affairs, Dr Aisha Abdullahi, had arrived in the country for the elections next Wednesday.

Political Violence

The Herald carried one incident of political violence in which one unnamed ZANU PF supporter was reported to have been injured over the weekend after clashes between ZANU PF and MDC-T supporters in Tafara, Harare.

In their news stories of Morgan Tsvangirai's rallies in Mutoko, Murehwa and Kotwa, both *NewsDay* and the *Daily News* reported widespread intimidation of MDC-T supporters by ZANU PF activists.

Circulated by the Media Monitoring Project Zimbabwe, 9 Knight Bruce Road, Milton Park, Harare, Tel: 263 4 741816 / 778115, Whatsapp: 0776 739 522, E-mail: monitors@mmpz.org.zw

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