



*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 31<sup>st</sup> 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](mailto:monitors@mmpz.org.zw)*

**The Media Monitoring Project Zimbabwe**

**Daily Election Report – No.7-2013**

**Sunday, July 21<sup>st</sup> 2013**

## **Electronic media report for Saturday, July 20<sup>th</sup> 2013**

### **SUMMARY**

THE political parties’ election campaigns seized all the headlines in the electronic media today, signifying an intensely contested election countdown to Zimbabwe national poll on July 31.

Only ZTV broke news of the African Union’s Peace and Security Council meeting in Addis Ababa yesterday (Friday) endorsing the Zimbabwean authorities’ election preparations.

But apart from this, the station’s main evening news bulletin was almost entirely devoted to the promotion of ZANU PF and its activities. On the other hand, Studio 7’s coverage of the party’s “star rally” in Gwanda only focused on negative aspects of the rally, while reporting favourably on the MDC-T’s rally in Bulawayo.

## THE STATS

THE electronic media carried a total of 21 election-related stories. These included 15 party campaign stories, one report on election administration issues and another on political violence. There was one report on the AU Peace and Security Council communiqué and another on the arrest of a parliamentary candidate and his supporters in Mutare.

The other two reports (both on ZTV) included a ZNA drill competition in Masvingo where soldiers were urged to exercise their right to vote, and the president of the apostolic churches, Tsungayi Bushe's denunciation of leaders who recognized homosexuality.

ZBC, aired 13 election-related stories, (ZTV 10 and Spot FM three)

The private radio stations carried eight stories. [ZiFM and Star FM two stories apiece and Studio 7 four stories].

ZTV allocated 23 minutes 14 seconds to ZANU-PF campaign activities in its main evening news bulletin, while ignoring other political parties whose rallies were also held on the same day. Spot FM allocated 4 minutes 57 seconds to ZANU-PF campaigns in a nine-minute news bulletin.

## The 'balance' so far...

Since MMPZ started its daily reports on the media's coverage of election issues on Monday, July 15, ZTV, the national public broadcaster's flagship television station, has exposed the extent of its bias in favour of ZANU PF, granting a total of more than 90 minutes in its main evening news bulletins in the week to favourable reports of the party's activities, compared to little more than 10 minutes of mostly negative coverage for its main rival the MDC-T. The MDC-N and other smaller parties, such as ZAPU and the ZDP have received barely five minutes in coverage in the seven bulletins monitored.

This is in addition to at least 24 hours of live coverage ZTV has given to ZANU PF's "star rallies" and its presidential candidate, Robert Mugabe, during the week, compared to absolutely no live coverage for any other political party.

However this is computed, this grossly biased coverage represents a clear violation of the Electoral (Amendment) Act's regulations governing the media's conduct during election periods, especially section 160J (a) which states that all political parties and candidates be **"treated equitably"** by the media **"in regard to the extent, timing and prominence of the coverage accorded to them"**.

MMPZ calls upon the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission, responsible for ensuring that the media adhere to these laws, to curb this unprofessional conduct from the public broadcaster.

## CAMPAIGN ACTIVITIES

### Party rallies grab the headlines

ZTV continued to give ZANU-PF's election campaign activities massively favourable publicity during the day, covering the party's 'star rally' in Gwanda in a live broadcast spanning more than four hours.

But the rallies of other political parties remained all but unknown on the public broadcaster's audiences today.

ZTV's footage of the Gwanda event, which led its main evening news bulletin lingered on full wide-angle shots to capture the size of the vast crowd who attended the meeting, as well as their enthusiastic welcome for ZANU PF's presidential candidate. Such camera-work has never been granted to President Mugabe's main political rival in the MDC-T.

Party campaign stories around the country dominated the news in all the radio and television news bulletins. ZTV led the way by devoting 23 minutes of its main evening news bulletin to various ZANU PF rallies and campaign activities in seven stories that included Gwanda and the previous day's rally in Lupane. It completely censored news of the MDC-T's rally in Bulawayo and the MDC-N rally in Binga.

In its report on the Gwanda meeting, ZTV quoted President Mugabe attacking Lindiwe Zulu, a member of South African President Jacob Zuma's facilitation team, set up by SADC to ensure Zimbabwe holds a credible election:

***"That persistent, negative voice from South Africa, could it please be stopped. I appeal to President Zuma to stop this woman of theirs on speaking on Zimbabwe. We were given one facilitator with one mouth and that's President Zuma himself. That's the only voice we want to hear..."***

While Spot FM just focused on the Gwanda rally, ZTV reported on four other ZANU PF rallies in Murehwa where it quoted Vice-President Joice Mujuru denouncing the West's alleged sanctions and saying, ***"It's is time we bring back a ZANU PF-only government"***.

Studio 7 also covered the Lupane and Gwanda rallies, but balanced these with reports on the MDC-T rally at White City Stadium in Bulawayo and the MDC-N rally in Binga. In its report on the MDC-T rally, the station reported, ***"Tsvangirai says, his party will revive collapsing industries in Bulawayo, if the MDC is elected into power..."***

But it also stated that ***"more than 40,000 people"*** had attended the rally without explaining how it had arrived at this figure.

Notably, ZTV has not tried to put figures to the number of people attending ZANU PF's major rallies, confining themselves to "many thousands" or "multitudes" in most of their bulletins. Instead, they use the power of wide-angle images of the crowds to speak for themselves.

Studio 7's coverage of the ZANU-PF rally only focused on reports claiming Gwanda residents and many others from as far away as Insiza and Bulilima, had been forced to attend, according to one resident quoted.

Spot FM reported Senior Assistant Commissioner Charity Charamba confirming that police in Mashonaland Central were investigating two cases of violence ***"in which two ZANU PF members...lost property worth thousands of dollars in suspected cases of arson"***.

ZiFM was the only station to report ***"the MDC-T parliamentary candidate for Dangamvura-Chikanga, Arnold Tsunga, was arrested yesterday (Friday, 19/7) together with 40 party supporters for allegedly organizing an unauthorized demonstration"***.

ZTV also reported on the installation of Chief Ngezi, which was also turned into a ZANU-PF campaign platform by Information Minister Webster Shamu.

## ADMINISTRATIVE ISSUES

### Electronic media muzzles election admin issues

Issues affecting the administration of the election, widely reported in the print media, were overlooked in the electronic media.

The electronic media carried just one story related to administrative issues.

It appeared on Studio 7 which reported that youth groups had described as ***"authentic"*** the results of a survey conducted by an NGO, the Research and Advocacy Unit, which indicated that as many as two million youths had been left off the voters' roll.

Only ZTV reported news of the African Union's Peace and Security Council meeting in Addis Ababa endorsing the Zimbabwean authorities' preparations for the July 31 election.

## POLITICAL ADVERTISING

ZTV, Spot FM, Star FM & ZiFM continued to broadcast the MDC-T advert titled, ***It's time for more***.

ZTV broadcast a 3-minute ZANU-PF animated advert entitled: *Indigenization Explained*.

Spot FM introduced new pro-ZANU-PF continuity jingles urging the people to vote for the party.

ZiFM broadcast a ZANU-PF advert promoting the party's economic empowerment and employment creation drive. It also aired an MDC-T advert ***"Vote Morgan Tsvangirai for President"***.

MDC-T and ZANU-PF adverts were also aired on Star FM

## Current affairs Programmes

ZTV has launched a new current affairs programme, ***The Candidate***. Hosted by veteran broadcasters, Masimba Musariri and Billiat Magara, the programme aired soon after the *Nhau/Indaba* bulletin. ***“In this programme we discuss political party policies of presidential candidates...”*** Musariri noted in his opening remarks.

The programme’s first guest was Kisinoti Mukwazhe, a former ZANU-PF member and now President of the Zimbabwe Development Party (ZDP).

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## **Print Media report for Sunday , July 21<sup>th</sup> , 2013**

### ***SUMMARY***

The political party campaigns also grabbed the print media’s attention today. The state-controlled weekly, *The Sunday Mail*, like its sister paper, *The Herald*, gave wide and positive publicity to ZANU PF activities, while negatively covering MDC-T and MDC-N activities. *The Standard* and *The Daily News on Sunday* both led their papers with the huge MDC-T rally in Bulawayo.

*The Standard* and *The Sunday Mail* discussed the administrative and logistical modalities surrounding the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission’s capacity to conduct the July 31 harmonised elections. The tone of the state-owned paper was that all was progressing smoothly and the country is ready to for elections. The private media expressed reservations.

## THE STATS

The print media carried 33 stories relating to the harmonised elections set for July 31<sup>st</sup>.

Of these, 19 (57%) appeared in private newspapers, *The Standard* and the *Daily News on Sunday*. The remaining 14 (56%) were captured in the state-controlled weekly, *The Sunday Mail*.

Twenty-one (64%) of the 33 stories were on party political campaigns and 12 (36%) were on the administration of the elections.

*The Sunday Mail* and *The Standard* carried a ZEC advertisement on the conduct of political parties, candidates and the media during the 2013 election period. The notice urged political parties and the media to avoid hate speech and any language that encourages or incites conflict and violence.

*The Standard* also carried two advertisements campaigning for ZANU PF and the MDC-T respectively. Notably, the ZANU PF advert was in the context of MDC-T leaders reading the ZANU PF manifesto with a citation, “*our manifesto has excited everyone*”. The other was a VOTE WATCH 263 advertisement urging the public to report any cases of violence towards journalists during the election period. *The Sunday Mail* and *The Standard* collectively carried five advertisements.

## CAMPAIGN ACTIVITIES

### State press pursues its anti-MDC-T campaign

The Sunday weeklies carried 21 stories on party campaign activities. Three appeared in *The Standard*, six appeared in *The Daily News on Sunday*, and *The Sunday Mail* featured 11. Seven of the stories in *The Sunday Mail* were positive ZANU PF campaigns, while three others were negative and editorialized reports on the MDC-T and a fourth one was a negative story on the smaller MDC-N.

The rallies of ZANU PF’s president, Robert Mugabe, again received front-page and lead story status, reinforcing the impression that the state media heavily favour ZANU PF. Mugabe was given 66 column centimetres to attack the SADC facilitation team and NGOs in civil society, as well as the MDC-T at Gwanda’s Pelandaba Stadium. South African President Jacob Zuma’s special International relations advisor Lindiwe Zulu, came in for special attention: **“And may I say that persistent negative voice from South Africa ...could it be stopped. I appeal to President Zuma to stop this woman of theirs from speaking on Zimbabwe”**.

Mugabe also took a swipe at NGOs, describing them as puppets who do not want progress (***zvimbwasungata zvisingade kuti tibudirire***).

Additional reporting on ZANU PF’s activities was in the same spirit, focused mainly on discrediting the MDC-T. ZANU PF officials, including Vice-President Joice Mujuru and Information Minister Webster Shamu, were given free rein to express their anti-West and MDC-T rhetoric.

For example, Shamu, officiating at the installation of a chief in Ngezi, was quoted saying: ***“It is not a secret that Morgan Tsvangirai and his MDC-T want to reverse the gains of the liberation struggle; he wants us to be recolonised again by our erstwhile enemies”.***

To reinforce ZANU PF’s anti-MDC-T rhetoric, *The Sunday Mail*’s report on the MDC-T’s White City Stadium rally in Bulawayo was characterised by editorial intrusions attempting to discredit the MDC-T. Instead of focusing on the deliberations at the rally, *The Sunday Mail* claimed that ***“MDC-T yesterday all but admitted that it was behind the economic strangulation of Zimbabwe”*** without substantiating this claim. The paper’s opinion pieces and editorials further attempted to ridicule the MDC-T, as reflected in an opinion piece entitled, *“Tsvangirai’s miracle money from imaginary friends”*.

Similarly, in its otherwise neutral story on the MDC-N launching its manifesto the paper inserted ***“the manifesto is however silent on the issue of sanctions that have cost the country over \$42 billion in lost income and opportunities”***.

*The Standard* provided balanced and neutral coverage of the party activities. They carried two neutral stories on ZANU PF activities and one on the MDC-T. For example, The MDC-T White City Stadium rally was a detailed account of what transpired. The other report gave space to aspiring parliamentary candidates from ZANU PF, MDC-T and MDC-N. Contrary to the *Sunday Mail*’s sunshine journalism regarding ZANU PF activities, *The Standard* objectively reported on the problems bedevilling the party ranging from the Manicaland youth’s concerns on appropriation of diamonds and haggling over the Save Valley Conservancy.

*The Daily News on Sunday* carried a heavily negative, editorialized opinion piece masquerading as a news story entitled, ‘*Chickens Coming Home for Zanu PF*’, that claimed Mugabe’s party had been ***‘hoist by its own petard’*** by Mugabe’s ***“wild West approach to both domestic and international politics...”***

## **ADMINISTRATIVE ISSUES**

### **ZEC ‘ready for elections’**

*The Sunday Mail* carried three stories on the administration of the national elections due on July 31. The paper sought to reassure its readers that ZEC was well prepared for the polls while censoring reservations reported in the private media.

Its front-page report, ‘*Zec beefs up poll arsenal*’, extensively quoted the commission’s chairperson, Rita Makarau, expressing her confidence that the organisation was ready for the election and had solved all the logistical problems, ***“We are ready as we were before. The printing of ballot papers has started and Fidelity Printers is already printing the ballot papers for the Presidential and National Assembly”***.

Makarau attributed the chaos experienced in the special early vote exercise to “printing problems”, adding that steps had been taken to avoid the same problem in the July 31 elections. The paper also carried an extensive interview with Makarau inside.

The paper also carried a balanced report from Lincoln Towindo blaming ZEC for its lack of readiness in the run-up to the special vote, where he attributed problems during that exercise to “**breakdowns**” at the printers. Notably, Makarau and Towindo’s views contradicted *The Herald*’s position that blamed the MDC-T for the chaos.

However, *The Standard* raised concerns over ZEC’s ability to conduct a smooth election among its nine reports on election administration issues. For example, the paper’s editorial questioned ZEC’s readiness considering their poor performance during the special voting exercise. In other stories, the paper quoted “analysts”, such as Shakespeare Hamauswa and Philip Pasirayi also questioning ZEC’s capacity in the absence of enough funding 10 days before elections, as well as the commissioners’ impartiality. The rest of the reports comprised an announcement on the start of the special votes verification process, and an opinion piece speculating that figures might be manipulated during the elections.

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