



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.5-2013

Friday 19th July 2013

Electronic Media Report - Thursday, July 18, 2013

SUMMARY

HIGHLIGHTS of the news in the electronic media today were the political parties' activities going on around the country ahead of the July 31 harmonized elections.

Other notable news was Chinamasa's arrival in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, for the African Union Peace and Security Council meeting to discuss Zimbabwe's election preparations. Chinamasa is expected to travel to the SADC Troika meeting in Pretoria, South Africa, on Saturday.

THE STATS

The electronic media recorded a total of 28 election related stories. Of these 11 were on political party activities. Ten stories were on administrative issues, three on election-related political violence, and two on media issues.

Of the 11 political party activities, five were in the public broadcaster (ZTV four and Spot FM one) and the remaining six appeared in the privately owned radio stations (ZiFM, Star FM and Studio 7 had two reports each).

ZTV allocated 18 minutes 58 seconds to ZANU PF activities in its main evening news bulletin and 2 minutes 34 seconds to the ZDP, once again showing that the public broadcaster is not adhering to its mandate of equitable coverage.

Of the 10 stories on administrative issues four appeared on ZBC whilst six were in the private media.

SW Radio Africa reported two stories on political violence.

ZTV carried two stories on media issues; one on ZEC criticizing the media for writing negatively about the electoral body; the other on the emergence of a new television station, 1st TV, broadcasting into Zimbabwe using the free-to-air Wiztech platform, which the broadcaster described as “*illegal*”.

PARTY CAMPAIGN ACTIVITIES

Zanu PF rallies flood ZBC’s airwaves again

ZBC continued to give extensive coverage to ZANU PF rallies held at Chinhoyi University and Mt Darwin East today, while ignoring activities of the other main political parties, such as the MDC-T and MDC-N.

ZBC’s Spot FM and ZTV both gave excessive prominence to President Mugabe’s address at his “star” rally in Chinhoyi, interrupting their programming to cover it live for four hours between noon and 4pm, as well as leading their main evening news bulletins with the event.

In fact, all Mugabe’s rallies – at Marange in Manicaland last Saturday, Rudhaka Stadium in Marondera (Monday), Chitungwiza (Tuesday), and Chinhoyi today – have been afforded almost four hours of live coverage on each occasion on both the public broadcaster’s radio and television channels.

This amounts to nearly 20 hours of live coverage for ZANU PF’s presidential candidate compared to absolutely no live coverage for either of ZANU PF’s coalition government partners, the MDC-T and MDC-N.

This represents a gross violation of Zimbabwe’s electoral laws governing the media’s coverage of election issues. The Zimbabwe Electoral Commission, responsible for enforcing these laws – and for monitoring the media to ensure they comply with them – should bring a stop to this disgraceful favouritism from the national public broadcaster.

At the Chinhoyi rally Mugabe attacked America and the European Union for allegedly wanting to interfere in Zimbabwe's political affairs by asking to send election observer teams to assess the conduct of Zimbabwe's election preparations and the vote. In his emotional, racist and intemperate outburst he said, ***"America must be mad, absolutely insane...Keep your pink nose out of our affairs please."***

ZTV did carry one report on a minor party, the Zimbabwe Development Party aspiring presidential candidate Kisinoti Mukwazhe, who dismissed calls for media reforms and accused the private media of propagating hate speech.

ZTV quoted him saying ***"We are very much content, we appreciate what the state media has done in appreciating the laws governing the elections, but the private media, to be very much honest, have not reformed. They still have some hate speech in their reporting."***

ZBC's other party activity reports contained the now typical rhetoric from ZANU PF officials, including Vice-President Joyce Mujuru, Dickson Mafios, and First Lady Grace Mugabe urging people to vote for ZANU PF to defend the country's sovereignty and heritage.

The private radio stations' coverage on political party activities was diverse. There were two reports on ZANU PF and MDC-T respectively, and another on ZAPU.

Star FM and Studio 7 both quoted Mugabe mocking Tsvangirai at his Chitungwiza rally for endorsing the July 31st election date while he was still ***"obstructing the process by having all kinds of applications to the High Court and Supreme Court..."***

Studio 7 carried news of one MDC-T rally held in Lower Gweru today reporting its president, Morgan Tsvangirai, accusing ZANU PF of tampering with the voters' roll to rig the election outcome. The station reported him saying that the military was now in charge of the voting process to make sure the president retains power. The other report was on Star FM where National Organising Secretary Nelson Chamisa was reported saying that Dangamvura-Chikanga candidate, Arnold Tsunga, was risking disciplinary action if he chose to defy the directive of leadership.

ELECTION ADMINISTRATION

MDC blamed for electoral problems

The electronic media carried 10 stories on the administration of elections. [ZBC four, private media six] These stories included Justice and Legal Affairs Minister Patrick Chinamasa's visit to Addis Ababa for the AU Peace and Security Council meeting, the blaming of MDC formations for the chaotic nature of the special voting process, and various court cases on the election process.

In two of their stories, ZBC blamed the MDC formations for the various problems that plagued the electoral process.

While ZTV and Spot FM both quoted Chinamasa taking some responsibility for the chaos that marred the special voting process that the broadcaster said resulted in only 29 000 security personnel out of 69 000 voting, ZTV's Reuben Barwe also blamed the MDC formations because they had **"clogged the judiciary system with numerous court applications."**

In another report ZTV quoted Chinamasa on his departure to Addis Ababa Ethiopia to brief the Peace and Security Council accusing the MDC formations of **"trying all the tricks in the book to frustrate the holding of the elections."**

However, the report lacked context, as it did not state the circumstances surrounding his visit. No other media reported this.

The private media also reported the MDC-T's Constitutional Court application over the special voting exercise and on the Attorney-General's office submitting police figures to the Constitutional Court as directed.

Other reports included women's activists' concerns over the failure by political parties to adhere to the quota system, and civil society's concern over the timing of the elections and the ability of ZEC to hold a free and credible poll.

POLITICAL VIOLENCE

SW Radio Africa carried two incidents of political violence; the disruption of a sports tournament organized by the Youth Agenda Trust of Zimbabwe in Mvurwi, by ZANU PF Youth militia, and an attack in Chitungwiza on MDC-T activists putting up posters, by ZANU PF youths. ZBC had no stories on political violence.

Current Affairs Programmes

ZTV carried one current affairs programme called ***African Pride***, hosted by Vimbai Chivaura broadcast soon after *Nhau/Indaba*, featured political analyst and commentator Danny Musukuma and Dr. Tafataona Mahoso. The programme focused on the issue of leadership.

Asked what role **"outsiders"** like America have in helping Zimbabwe elect a leader, political analyst Danny Masukuma took a swipe at President Obama saying, **"Obama construes himself as obtaining political might, military might, which in any case, is to superintend over Africa – a continent they deem to be still uncivilized. When he landed in South Africa, the mission was to sow seeds of regime change and resentment among African people."**

Masukuma also added that, **"Obama's backyard is suffering from some kind of kwashiorkor out of immorality"**

Star FM (18/7) aired a programme called *The Hub* which discussed the participation of women in Zimbabwean politics.

Spot FM (18/7) broadcast a programme called *X1G*. The show is funded by Election Resource Centre. It is meant to encourage young people and first time voters to go out and cast their votes on the 31st of July.

Political Advertising

There were continued *X1G* advertisements in both the public and private media encouraging youths to vote.

ZTV, Spot FM and Star FM continued to air unidentified political advertisements discrediting the MDC-T party and its leadership. The adverts are in violation of the Electoral Law (for details see MMPZ's earlier reports).

Star FM, ZTV and Spot FM also continued to flight MDC-T advertisements.

Print Media report for Friday, July 19th , 2013

SUMMARY

The main focus in today's papers, particularly the privately-owned Press, was on the irregularities in the administrative modalities of the forthcoming harmonised elections. The government daily, *The Herald*, continued to paint a glossy picture of the process through Justice Minister Patrick Chinamasa. The print media continued to give follow-up reports on the special early voting exercise.

The Herald continued to give wide and positive publicity to ZANU PF activities and their party candidates.

The African Union Peace and Security Council meeting also captured the attention of both the public and private Press. Only the private media highlighted cases of intimidation, allegedly committed by ZANU PF youths.

Stories on party political campaigns also dominated today's newspapers.

THE STATS

The print media carried 59 stories relating to the harmonised elections set for July the 31st.

Of these, 47 (80%) appeared in private newspapers, *NewsDay*, *Daily News* and *Zimbabwe Independent*. The remaining 12 (20%) were captured in the state-controlled daily, *The Herald*.

Twenty-three of the 59 stories (40%) were on party political campaigns and 29 (49%) were on the administration of the elections.

The *Daily News*, *News Day*, and *The Herald* carried a ZEC advertisement dismissing allegations that it was partisan and emphasizing the electoral body's impartiality.

The private papers also carried various advertisements from civic organisations, which included NANGO, Women's Trust, Zimbabwe National Council for Welfare of Children, ZESN and The Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission (ZHRC) on the deteriorating political environment for civic organisations during the election period; while the Women's Trust urged women to vote for female candidates.

A total of 15 advertisements appeared in both the public and private media, of which only two were MDC-T campaign advertisements, which appeared in the *Daily News* and *NewsDay* respectively.

CAMPAIGN ACTIVITIES

State media denigrates MDC-T and the West

THE newspapers carried 23 stories on political party election campaign activities. Fifteen (65%) appeared in the private media; The *Daily News* (three), *NewsDay* (seven) and *Zimbabwe Independent* (five). The state-controlled *Herald* ran the remaining eight. Six (35%) of these were positive ZANU PF campaigns, while the other two denigrated MDC-T.

The Herald continued to give ample space to ZANU PF President Mugabe attacking the West and the MDC-T as evidenced in their lead story, in which they quoted him at his Chinhoyi rally lambasting the West saying; **"Your prisons are still full of blacks, where is your democracy? There is lots of racism in your country. Correct that and then come to us when you are cleaner than anyone else. You are still democratically filthy."**

Mugabe also employed racist rhetoric to dismiss concerns expressed by the United States and the European Union that they will not be allowed to observe Zimbabwe's July 31st elections when he said: **"They are advancing mad arguments . . . please keep your pink nose to yourself,"**

The Herald's portrayal of ZANU PF sharply contrasted with the way the MDC-T was presented, continuing to extol ZANU PF and its president Mugabe. This was illustrated in Isdore Guvamombe's opinion piece entitled; *President Mugabe an oasis* in which he glorified Mugabe as the **'founding father of the**

nation, *liberator* and *fountain of experience* among other flattering terms. Their news stories echoed similar sentiments.

The private papers also appeared biased in their coverage of political party activities. Although they carried a number of reports on ZANU PF activities these were dented with negative sentiments, an example being *NewsDay*'s headline, "Supporters walk out on Mugabe". Opinion pieces and commentaries such as the *Zimbabwe Independent* editor's memo "Re-electing Mugabe simply disastrous" and the *Daily News* columnist Mutumwa Mawere "Mugabe's U-turn on values" all denigrated the ZANU-PF leader.

All the papers ignored the smaller parties' activities today.

ADMINISTRATIVE ISSUES

***The Herald* censors administrative irregularities**

The state-owned daily, *The Herald* carried three stories on the administration of the July 31st harmonised elections. The paper continued to give an impression that all was progressing smoothly, censoring news of election irregularities reported in the private Press.

For example, *The Herald* reported that Justice Minister Patrick Chinamasa indicated, "**Zimbabwe was ready for elections**". However, the paper quoted Chinamasa admitting the Special Vote process had not been well planned; "**I feel very embarrassed that when you put it on the ground, when you try to implement it, the practical challenges were clearly not thought through**".

The private Press carried 26 reports on administrative issues, of which 13 (50%) highlighted the irregularities surrounding the process. For example, the *Zimbabwe Independent* lead story attempted to expose the possibility of the vote being rigged in favour of ZANU PF with the help of a shadowy Israeli company, NIKUV International. The company is allegedly working with the Registrar-General's office. The paper chronicled the company's rigging track record in Zambia since the year 2000 elections when the country held its elections.

The *Daily News* also reported SADC facilitator Jacob Zuma citing reservations about Zimbabwe's election preparations through his special adviser on Zimbabwe, Lindiwe Zulu, "**We are concerned because things on the ground are not looking good**".

The *Independent* and the *Daily News* cited a Research and Advocacy Unit (RAU) report, that exposed more irregularities in the voters' roll. The findings included; 63 constituencies having more registered voters than adult inhabitants,; and that 41 constituencies deviate from the average number of voters per constituency by more than the permitted 20% among other highlighted irregularities.

Reportedly, RAU attributed these irregularities to manipulation by the Registrar-General's office and Nikuv International.

On the special vote, the *Daily News* and *The Herald* reported Judge President George Chiweshe reserving judgment on the court case.

POLITICAL VIOLENCE

The private media highlighted two incidents of intimidation and disruption of MDC-T activities. These were reported to have been committed by ZANU PF youths, supporters, traditional leaders and aspiring ZANU PF candidates:

- Lisbon Marufu, aspiring parliamentary candidate for Zengeza West was accused of unleashing ZANU PF youths to disrupt MDC-T candidate Simon Chidakwa's rallies. (*Zimbabwe Independent*)
- Chief Fortune Charumbira, president of the Chiefs' Council, allegedly instructed headmen and village heads to bar villagers from attending MDC Masvingo West candidate Takanayi Mureyi's rallies in the constituencies under his jurisdiction (*Daily News*)

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