



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.8-2013

Monday, July 22nd, 2013

Daily Electronic Media Report – Sunday, July 21, 2013

SUMMARY

The outcome of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Troika summit held on Saturday in South Africa, and the political party rallies held countrywide ahead of the July 31st elections were the highlights of the election stories reported in the electronic media.

THE STATS

The electronic media aired 13 election stories in their main evening news bulletins today. These comprised eight stories on the activities of the political parties, three on the administration of the elections, and two on general election issues.

Due to a technical fault, Media Monitoring Project Zimbabwe could not monitor the main evening news bulletins of ZiFM or ZBC's Spot FM.

Of the eight stories carried by the public broadcaster, ZTV, and the other private radio stations monitored on political party activities, ZTV broadcast six, and the private media aired two. These media broadcast three stories on the administration of the election (ZTV two and Star FM one).

ZANU PF's party campaign activities received a total of 20 mins and 09 secs on ZTV's main evening news bulletin.

None of the stations carried any reports of political violence.

PARTY CAMPAIGN ACTIVITIES

ZANU PF continues to enjoy biased coverage on ZTV

The national public broadcaster, ZBC, continued to disregard its obligation to cover the activities of all political parties and candidates fairly and equitably during elections as stipulated in the Electoral Act, section 160J(a-e)

All six of ZTV's reports focused on the ZANU PF campaign where party officials, such as President Mugabe, Vice-President Joice Mujuru, Local Government Minister Ignatius Chombo, and ZANU PF politburo member Tendai Savanhu, were all allowed 20 minutes of free airtime on the main evening news bulletin to campaign for their party.

The station carried no reports of other political party activities.

The domestic private radio station Star FM aired one report where the Bulawayo Progressive Residents Association was reported to be holding meetings for aspiring candidates for the harmonised elections to meet residents.

Studio 7 carried one report on the MDC-T rallies in the Midlands province, where its leader, Morgan Tsvangirai, promised to resuscitate Zimbabwe's collapsed industries.

The report also announced the MDC-T and ZANU PF schedule of rallies due to be held around the country.

Notably, ZTV restricted coverage of the MDC-T rally in Bulawayo and the MDC-N rally in Binga on Saturday to its website, where news of these events were posted yesterday (Sunday).

But even then, the report of the MDC-T event was highly selective and distorted in order to discredit the party's leader. The ZTV website report used a comment from Tsvangirai's White City Stadium speech; that he recognised the critical role of Zimbabwe's liberation war heroes, to accuse him of hypocrisy since it claimed that he had "boycotted" the funerals of some national heroes, such as the late Major-General Jevan Maseko.

This report reinforced ZTV's blatant bias against ZANU PF's most serious political rival, the MDC-T, and compounded its policy of depriving the party of any significant airtime on the only television broadcasting station in the country.

ZTV's website also carried another negative story claiming that MDC-T supporters in Marondera had defected to ZANU PF because "***it has people oriented programmes***". Although the story accessed comment from some of the alleged defectors, it made no attempt to seek comment from the MDC-T.

The only MDC-N report on the ZBC website was on the launch of the party's manifesto, where its leader Welshman Ncube promised to improve the health sector.

ELECTION ADMINISTRATION

ZTV censors SADC troika communiqué

The electronic media carried three stories on the administration of elections. These included a report on the SADC communiqué released following the meeting of its Troika Organ on Defence, Politics and Security Co-operation, news of justice minister Patrick Chinamasa "***setting the record straight on Zimbabwe's media environment***" after his visit to Addis Ababa to brief the African Union's Peace and Security Council meeting to discuss Zimbabwe's election preparations; and a meeting between ZEC and polling agents.

ZTV censored the SADC communiqué that "***noted***" problems affecting the July 14 and 15 special early voting process, which resulted in only 29 000 civil servants and uniformed forces personnel voting out of the 69 000 people authorized to do so.

Only Studio 7 reported the SADC Troika "commending" the Zimbabwean authorities and political parties for committing themselves to ensure that the country's month-end elections would be held in a peaceful environment.

But the station also reported Troika chairman, Tanzanian President Jakaya Kikwete, saying that SADC wished Zimbabwe had "***heeded***" its advice to delay the polls, adding that the elections would be difficult to organise due to time limitations.

ZTV followed up its initial story the previous day on the African Union meeting to discuss Zimbabwe's election preparations.

But the report was only in the form of justice minister Chinamasa "***setting the record straight over Zimbabwe's media environment.***"

Interviewed by ZTV's Reuben Barwe on his return from the Ethiopian capital, Chinamasa was reported saying the AU's **"long-term observer team should understand that Zimbabwe's media environment is polarized."**

Barwe brought viewers the news that the observers believed **"the media environment is skewed in favour of Zanu-PF"**. But he went on to complain that they were, **"mum on the role of the so-called independent media and three pirate radio stations...aimed at bolstering the MDC formations"**.

Chinamasa was then quoted complaining about the **"pirate radio stations"** and **"a new pirate TV station...headed by...operatives of...the British MI6,"** that was beaming its broadcasts into the country from South Africa. He complained that these, together with Western-funded NGOs, were all working to **"effect regime change"** in the country.

Both ZTV and Studio 7 provided fair reports on the statement from South Africa President Jacob Zuma that the South African presidency had **"noted with great concern the unfortunate statements made on the situation in Zimbabwe"** after President Mugabe had called on the SADC facilitator to "rein in" his international advisor, Lindiwe Zulu, who is a member of the technical staff in Zuma's facilitation team.

Political Violence

The electronic media did not report any incidents of political violence.

ZTV carried a *vox-pop* report where people commended the peaceful environment.

Current Affairs Programmes

ZTV carried two 30-minute current affairs programme, ***Zvavanhu*** and ***The Candidate***.

Zvavanhu, featured pro-ZANU PF commentator Tafataona Mahoso and "political analyst" Danny Musukuma discussing the topic of good leadership. The panel took turns to assassinate the personality of MDC-T leader Morgan Tsvangirai and discussed his love life, blaming him for sanctions and promoting homosexuality. This was an entirely biased programme, adding to the broadcaster's negative publicity for ZANU PF's political rivals.

The Candidate discusses political party policies and the programme featured ZAPU Vice-President Emelia Mukaratiwa.

Political Advertising

ZTV and Star FM continued airing the MDC-T advert entitled, **"Its time for more"**. Other MDC-T advertisements on these stations included one that

educates the public that “**Your vote is your secret**” and dismisses reports that there are cameras in the polling stations.

ZANU PF advertisements broadcast by ZTV and Star FM included. “**Vote Robert Mugabe for President**” and, “**Indigenisation Explained**”.

ZTV continued to flight advertisements that discredit MDC-T leader Morgan Tsvangirai as someone who supports homosexuality, who is a womaniser and who uses vulgar language.

Print Media report for Monday, July 22nd, 2013

SUMMARY

The SADC Troika summit statement commending Zimbabwe on its preparations for holding national elections at the end of the month following its meeting in Pretoria on Saturday, attracted coverage in all the print media today.

But the headlines were grabbed by stories in the two private papers, *NewsDay* and the *Daily News*, reporting on plots to rig the upcoming election in favour of ZANU PF. In contrast, *The Herald* led with an apology by the SADC facilitator to the Global Political Agreement, South African President Zuma, over comments made by a member of his technical team casting doubt on Zimbabwe’s election preparations. *NewsDay* also reported this story.

The dailies continued to report on election administration issues, particularly relating to a disputed voters’ roll and the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission’s ability to conduct a national election in nine days’ time

THE STATS

The print media carried 42 stories on the harmonised elections set for the end of this month.

Of these, 25 (60%) appeared in private newspapers, *NewsDay* and the *Daily News*. The remaining 17 (40%) were captured in the state-controlled daily, *The Herald*.

Twenty-six (62%) of the 42 stories were on party political activities and 14 (33%) were on the administration of the elections. The remaining two reports were on political violence and election-related court reports.

The private dailies each carried one ZANU PF advertisement.

CAMPAIGN ACTIVITIES

Herald steps up campaign to discredit MDC-T

The state-owned *Herald* carried six stories portraying the MDC-T in a negative light, while four others gave ZANU PF activities wide and favourable publicity.

Collectively, the public and private Press carried 24 reports on party activities; *NewsDay* (seven), the *Daily News* (six) and *The Herald* (11).

The Herald's stories on the MDC-T exclusively attempted to discredit the party and its leadership. For example, in a front-page story entitled, '*Biti renders over 100,000 jobless*', the paper uses unsubstantiated allegations from Industry Minister, Welshman Ncube, leader of the smaller MDC formation, to discredit his MDC-T rival, Finance Minister Tendai Biti.

Another story claimed that "**more than 200 MDC-T leaders and members...**" had defected to ZANU PF without a single comment from any of the so-called defectors. And an extraordinary report, ostensibly about the American city of Detroit being declared bankrupt, appears under the headline, '*MDC-T's rich friends sing blues*' without any connection linking the party to Detroit. This story especially, represented the absurd extremes to which the paper is prepared to go in its attempts to discredit ZANU PF's gravest threat.

Other stories, such as its small report on the MDC-T's Gweru rally, were littered with editorial intrusions, describing the party's leader, Morgan Tsvangirai, for example, as "**desperate**" for holding open the possibility of an electoral pact with his MDC-N rival, Welshman Ncube.

All the reports on the MDC-T's activities violated section 160J of the Electoral Act governing the conduct of the media during an election period, which states that "*a clear distinction should be made in their news media between factual reporting on the election and the editorial comment on it*".

The *Daily News* also fell foul of this regulation in a number of its stories, one of which stated that "**Zanu PF has come up with a deadly plot to rig next week's elections, in a desperate bid to keep President Robert Mugabe in power**". Ironically, this story carried the only information on details of discrepancies in the counting of the special early vote conducted by ZEC. Definitive figures from this vote have still not been revealed a week after the event, raising doubts about the commission's capacity to announce the results of the harmonized national elections within five days, in accordance with the electoral laws.

In another story headlined '*Sadc, Zuma maintain (sic) pressure on Zim*', the private daily claims "**it (SADC) also bemoaned the fact that Mugabe had ignored its calls to push the plebiscite to a later date...**" But nowhere does it quote a reference to this in the SADC communiqué.

NewsDay's story on a rigged election emanated from the comments of the MDC-T leader, Morgan Tsvangirai, at his party's rally in Mkoba, Gweru. He was reported claiming that ZANU PF and ZEC were plotting to rig the month-end elections through a number of "**devious**" ways, one of which was by

printing two million more ballots than there are registered voters. The paper's other stories on the parties' activities all appeared to be clearly based on fact.

ADMINISTRATIVE ISSUES

Media divided over SADC Troika statement

The Herald selectively highlighted positive aspects of a statement issued following a meeting of the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation in Pretoria, South Africa at the weekend. The paper downplayed reservations that were raised at the meeting. For example, their story titled, "Sadc commends Zim poll preps" celebrated SADC's complimentary remarks to the Government, political parties and leaders for committing themselves to ensuring peaceful month-end elections. But little was made of the SADC observation that it had noted the "**problems**" arising from the special early voting exercise. However, the paper reported that the summit had "**commended ZEC for taking these up as challenges to be overcome...**" on Election Day.

While *NewsDay* reported the MDC formations condemning the complimentary nature of the statement, the *Daily News* story was completely different, quoting Troika chairman Tanzanian President, Jakaya Kikwete, commenting on Zimbabwe's electoral preparations in his personal capacity: "**You can see the challenges they face, even the incident of early voters where half of them could not vote, partly because of the gravity of time. It will be a tough election to organize.**"

The Herald's lead story also celebrated a statement by South African President Jacob Zuma that appeared to reprimand his international relations advisor, Lindiwe Zulu, for making "**unauthorized**", "**regrettable**" and "**unfortunate**" statements about Zimbabwe's electoral preparations. *NewsDay* reported Zuma's statement as an "apology".

The Herald continued to blame the MDC-T for the chaotic special voting exercise last week, claiming the party had connived with some ZEC commissioners to sabotage the process despite the fact that they quoted ZEC chair, Rita Makarau, saying her commission was still investigating the causes of the chaos.

The private papers' 11 reports continued to question ZEC's capacity to conduct the month-end elections successfully, and discussed the SADC Troika's statement on Zimbabwe's electoral preparations.

NewsDay also reported that ZEC had threatened to crack down on politicians and media organizations accused of fomenting hate speech in the run-up to the July 31 election. It reported that ZEC had issued a statement saying it had received a number of complaints and would follow them up with a view to prosecuting offenders.

Political Violence

The Herald carried one incident of political violence where MDC-T activists allegedly set fire to two huts belonging to Mutaradundu district ZANU PF secretary for the commissariat Howard Gatsi and aspiring Chiweshe councillor John Mudzonga.

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