

THE MONTH'S TOP STORIES

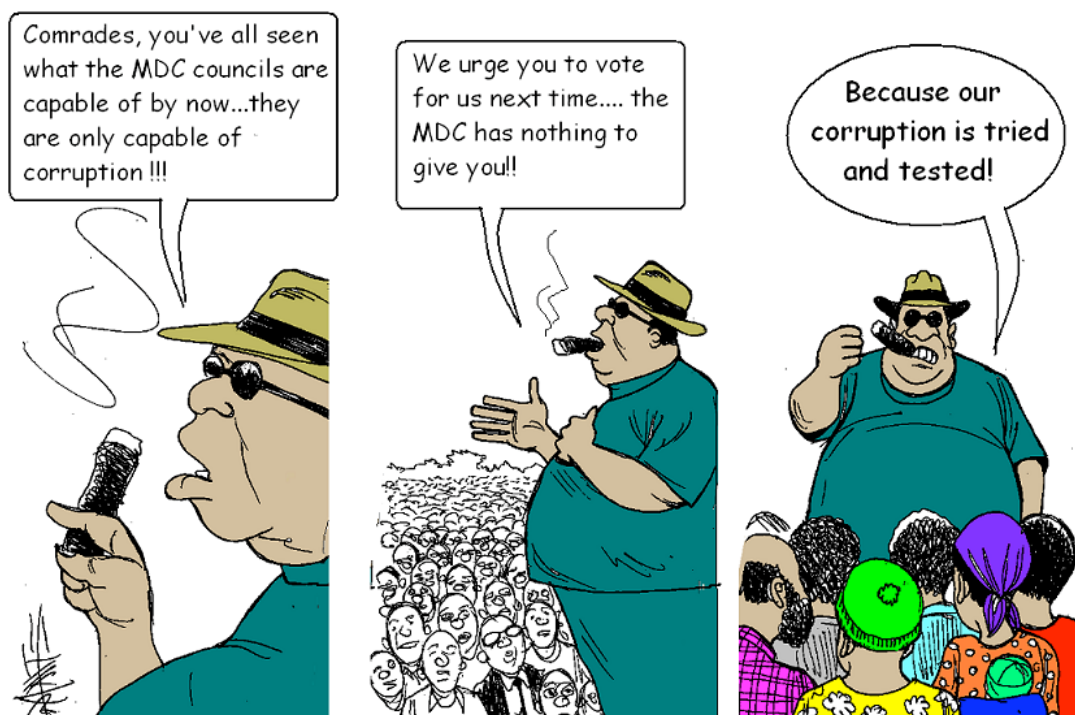
ZIMBABWE's Independence celebrations received most attention in the media this month.

The highlight of this year's celebrations was President Mugabe's expression of regret over past violence, his appeal for Zimbabweans to campaign peacefully and for the urgent conclusion to the constitutional reform exercise.

These celebrations received coverage in 261 stories. Of these, 201 (77%) appeared in the state-controlled media, while the remaining 60 featured in the private media.

Activities of the country's main parties competed for attention, coming a close second with 254 reports. One hundred and seventy-two (68%) were in the state media, while the private media carried the remaining 82.

ZANU PF's controversial indigenization programme attracted coverage in 168 stories, while reports on the administration of the country's constitution-making process and planned elections concluded the list of the media's most popular stories with 155 reports.



Mangwana hits back at Moyo

AS this report was being compiled, the privately owned *Daily News* (25/4) carried a robust response from Constitutional Parliamentary Select Committee co-chairman Paul Mangwana to senior ZANU PF officials led by Politburo member Jonathan Moyo, who has been spearheading a propaganda campaign in the state media to discredit Copac's work.

This propaganda crusade appeared to intensify after *The Herald* leaked a provisional draft constitution last February containing a clause that appeared to disqualify President Mugabe from contesting the post of president.

The Daily News (25/4) reported Mangwana describing Moyo and his colleagues as **"workers of the devil"**, bent on derailing Copac's work for selfish reasons.

This followed what appeared to be Moyo's strongest expression of contempt for Copac to date, which appeared in one of his regular articles in the state-controlled weekly, *The Sunday Mail* of April 8th.

In this article, headlined: *Copac mafia uses devolution for regime change*, the Tsholotsho MP accused Copac leaders of **"abusing"** the constitutional reform exercise to **"block or delay elections"**; having **"polluted"** it **"to the level of utter corruption"**; being **"treacherous"**; and attempting to **"smuggle their dirty"** draft constitution for adoption.

In response, Mangwana said: **"We are not going to be commenting on him (Moyo) because it is the work of the devil. They are messengers of evil as they wanted to distract our work as Copac"** (*Daily News*, 25/4).

The ZANU PF Copac co-chair, described Moyo as **"crazy"** and driven by a **"sinister agenda"** in his efforts to destabilize Copac. He added: **"We are glad that we have finished it (the draft). We did not respond to Jonathan Moyo because he did not deserve the dignity of our response on what he was talking about on the draft. It did not make sense at all"**.

Reports on the conflict between Moyo and Copac constituted 41 of the 155 reports the media carried on the administration of the constitutional reform process and elections. Thirty-eight were on other developments in the constitution-making process, such as the latest order by the coalition principals for Copac and its management committee to conclude drafting the new constitution and deliver the document to them the following week (ZTV, 24/4, 8pm and *The Herald*, 25/4).

The remaining 76 (49%) were on other electoral issues, such as concern over the state of Zimbabwe's voters' roll and warnings by the region and international community that the country was not yet ready for democratic polls (*News Day*, *Daily News* and *Zimbabwe Independent*, SW Radio Africa and Radio VoP, 9, 10, 11, 13 & 15/4).

Of the 155 stories, 85 (55%) appeared in the government media, while the remaining 70 featured in the private media.

INDIGENIZATION POLICY

Indigenization divides government

A PUBLIC fallout between Zimbabwe's coalition parties over the implementation of the ZANU PF-sponsored indigenization programme was a key feature in the media's coverage of this controversial exercise.

Threats by Indigenization Minister Saviour Kasukuwere to indigenize foreign-owned banks and nationalize all mines appeared to add fuel to an already smouldering situation.

Government's plans to take over mining firms that have failed to comply with the country's indigenization regulations were published in a government notice on March 25th (*The Financial Gazette*, 5/4).

This notice was published two days after Kasukuwere reiterated that foreign-owned banks ***“will not be exempted from relinquishing majority shareholding to black locals under the Indigenization Act despite numerous attempts to give the sector immunity”*** (*Daily News*, 23/3).

While the state-controlled media widely expressed their support for this programme, presenting it as a panacea for Zimbabwe's economic prosperity and signifying genuine independence, the private media criticized ZANU PF for using the policy to gain political mileage ahead of national elections.

The private media reported economic commentators and the MDC arm of government expressing concern over the manner in which the indigenization law was being interpreted and applied (*Daily News*, Radio VoP, *NewsDay* and *The Standard*, 23/3 and 8, 14 and 22/4).

All media reported this conflict as having exposed sharp policy and ideological differences between the parties, prompting Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai to call for a special Council of Ministers meeting to find ways of addressing it.

But the decision by ZANU PF Cabinet ministers to boycott the meeting reportedly exposed ZANU PF's contempt for the PM and that differences between these parties could be irreconcilable.

The state media chose to report ZANU PF ministers justifying their decision to boycott the meeting and vilifying Tsvangirai and his party for opposing the indigenization programme without giving the MDC-T an opportunity to adequately explain its position (*The Herald*, 4 & 5/4).

These media reported ZANU PF ministers and ***“observers”*** accusing Tsvangirai of trying to take advantage of President Mugabe's absence to chair a ***“mini-Cabinet”*** and ***“being used by his Western handlers”*** (*The Herald*, 4 & 5/4).

The private media expressed concern that the indigenization programme had ***“divided”*** and ***“paralyzed”*** government and urged the parties to ***“shelve”*** it until after elections (*Daily News*, 22/4).

PARTY ACTIVITIES

Media report factionalism in parties

REPORTS of intra-party clashes in ZANU PF's provincial structures, fuelled by alleged vote rigging and the imposition of candidates in party elections, dominated the media's coverage of the activities of Zimbabwe's main political parties.

Although this news made headlines in all media, the state media highlighted reports of power struggles in Prime Minister Tsvangirai's MDC, while the private media largely ignored them.

On the few occasions the private media paid attention to alleged MDC-T divisions, their coverage was mostly in the context of dismissing the existence of the problem in the party.

While all media reported the suspension of ZANU PF's Bulawayo provincial chairman, Isaac Dakamela, and demonstrations against party provincial leadership in Masvingo and Manicaland as evidence of factionalism in ZANU PF (ZBC, 15, 16 & 19/4, 6am, 1pm & 8pm and *The Herald*, 16 & 17/4), the official state media appeared to downplay its gravity.

The Sunday Mail censored news of this factionalism in ZANU PF, but prominently reported similar problems in the MDC-T.

For example, the weekly (22/4) splashed a front-page lead: *MDC-T youths detain Biti*, in which it reported Bulawayo East MP Tabitha Khumalo, whom it erroneously addressed as a member of the party's national executive, as having accused Tsvangirai of **"killing the party"** with his **"unorthodox management style that has seen the emergence of two factions"** – one allegedly led by secretary-general Tendai Biti and the other by national organizing secretary Nelson Chamisa.

The Sunday Mail reported **"sources"** alleging that the infighting had **"reached a crescendo"** when Biti was **"a fortnight ago detained by suspected pro-Tsvangirai youths just before a critical party meeting"** at the party's headquarters.

The official media ignored a Press statement from the MDC-T on April 23rd dismissing this *Sunday Mail* story.

The private media did not do themselves any favours by sensationalizing reports of factionalism in ZANU PF.

They gave the impression that the problem was so severe that it was threatening to tear the party apart and was on the verge of collapse (*NewsDay*, 25/4).

NewsDay's front-page lead: *ZANU PF explodes...Demos rock provinces* (25/4), and a *Daily News* report of the same day, summed up the private media's coverage.

These reports were among 254 stories the media carried on the activities of Zimbabwe's main political parties.

Of these, 169 appeared in the state media, while the remaining 85 featured in the private media.

A total of 128 of the state media's reports were on ZANU PF, while 32 were on the two MDC formations: [MDC-T (26) and MDC-N (six)]. The remaining nine belonged to other parties: [Rebuilding Party of Zimbabwe (five) and ZANU Ndonga (four)].

The private media allocated 50 stories to ZANU PF and 26 to the MDC groups: [MDC-T (22) and MDC-N (four)]. Nine others were on other parties: [ZAPU (five) and Mavambo (four)].

Figs.1 & 2: Media coverage of the activities of Zimbabwe's parties

Fig.1: Government media

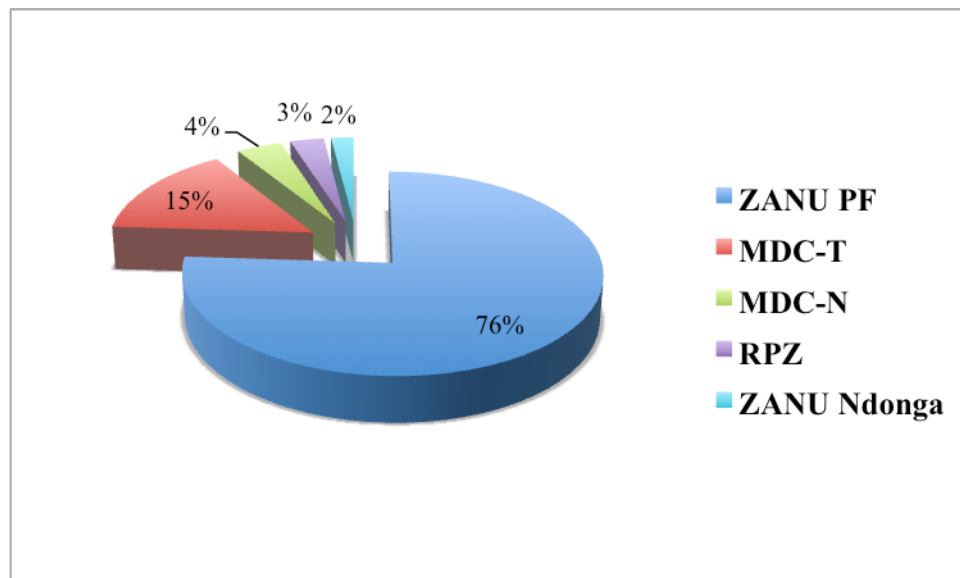
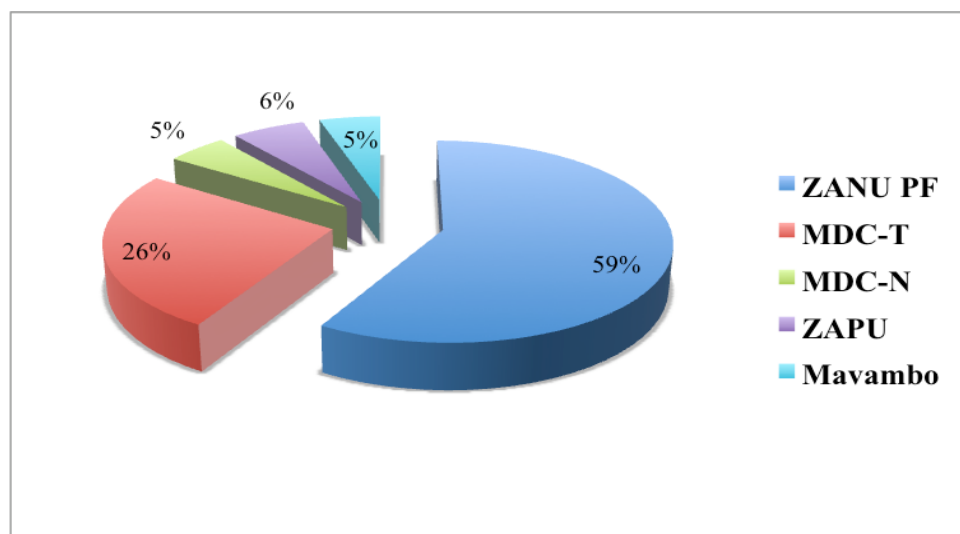


Fig.2: Private media



HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES

Media under renewed attack

NEWS of the arrest of a New Zealand journalist and a Zimbabwean woman at Beitbridge Border Post while allegedly working on a story about irregular migration between Zimbabwe and South Africa were among 48 incidents of rights violations the media reported this month.

Of these, 43 (90%) appeared in the private media, while the remaining five featured in the state media.

The Herald (20/4) reported Beitbridge police confirming the arrest of “Hammond Robin Nicholas”, who stays in Cape Town, and Bertha Chiguvare, who is employed by Save the Children in Musina, South Africa.

The police said Nicholas was facing charges of contravening Sections of the Protected Areas and Places and Immigration Acts, while Chiguvare was charged with breaching a section of the Criminal Law Codification and Reform Act and the Protected Areas Act.

This incident coincided with reports that the Broadcasting Authority of Zimbabwe (BAZ) had ordered *Freedom Fone* to stop its services. Freedom Fone is a platform where the public can dial in to listen to pre-recorded messages in various languages (including news headlines), or send in their own voice messages (*The Standard*, 22/4).

Although the basis for BAZ’s action was unclear in this report, it appeared as if the authority believed *Freedom Fone*’s call-in programmes were tantamount to broadcasting illegally.

Of the 48 incidents the media reported, five were media-related, while four were on infringements on the rights of civil society activists. The remaining 40 (83%) were attacks on ZANU PF’s opponents, particularly MDC-T supporters.

WHAT THEY SAID...

“All mining companies that have not complied with this notice should note that 51% of their shareholding is now deemed to be owned by the State and that any business transacted in respect of this 51% shall have been transacted on behalf of the Government of Zimbabwe with effect from the deadline stipulated in the said General Notice 114 of 2011, which deadline for the avoidance of doubt was 25th September 2011” – Indigenization Minister Saviour Kasukuwere expressing government’s intention to nationalize foreign owned mines in a public notice, which appeared in *The Financial Gazette* (5/4).

“Kasukuwere has put the country and the government into disrepute by continuously saying statements that contradict government policy. He continues on his deluded path of believing his wishes should supercede government policy. We cannot embrace policies that are motivated by greed and primitive accumulation of wealth. The youth of Zimbabwe have not seen a cent from the so-called indigenization programme” – MDC-T youth assembly secretary-general Promise Mkwanzani (*NewsDay*, 9/4).

“I am still the Hitler of the time. This Hitler has one objective, justice for his people, recognition of independence of his people and their right to resources. If that is Hitler, let me be a Hitler tenfold” - Kasukuwere responding to criticism by Prime Minister Tsvangirai and his party over the manner in which he was applying the controversial black economic empowerment programme (*NewsDay*, 9/4).

“In the past few days ...Tsvangirai has sought to abuse his role in government to undermine the laws of our country. He has brought us a tired legal opinion written by white supremacists in Whitehall and those still in Salisbury, seeking to overturn the empowerment programme. We have had enough time to play and we are determined and will not...waste our precious time sitting down and listening to their masters speak through them. We refuse to attend meetings where (British Prime Minister) David Cameron was about to address us through a courier” – Kasukuwere justifying the refusal by the ZANU PF component in the government to attend a special meeting chaired by Tsvangirai (*NewsDay*, 9/4).

“Our people require to be looked after. They require to be protected, not as second-class citizens, not people without freedom of being safe from violence...Each and every one of them wants to live in peace. We should respect the peace of the people” – President Mugabe’s speech marking Zimbabwe’s 32nd Independence anniversary at the National Sport Stadium, Harare (*The Herald*, 19/4).

“All forms of violence, all forms of fighting and all forms of struggle that are of violent nature should be bygone. They should not be allowed to interfere with our happiness. We have done wrong to our people as political leaders because we were violent, we were fighting among each other” – Mugabe (*The Herald*, 19/4).

“We must take care and caution that the past is buried and care for free belonging. Membership should not be forced, people should vote freely for the party of their choice...When it’s between parties during campaigns, we want peaceful elections” - Mugabe (*The Herald*, 19/4).

“He is a misguided missile, a person who belongs to no culture. He is a cabbage in the society” – ZANU PF Shurungwi South MP Anastacia Ndlovu condemning Finance Minister Tendai Biti for suggesting that Mugabe was too old to rule while addressing a meeting in Washington, US (ZTV, 22/4, 8pm).

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Zimbabwe, 9 Knight Bruce Road, Milton Park, Harare, Tel: 263 4 741816 / 778115, E-mail:
monitors@mmpz.org.zw