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**The Media Monitoring Project Zimbabwe
Monday July 19th - Sunday July 25th 2010
Weekly Media Review 2010-28**

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MATTER OF FACT

IN OUR last Weekly Media Review (No.27/2010), MMPZ incorrectly stated that the Mahendere Brothers produced the *Nyatsoterera* album and that they participated in former information minister Jonathan Moyo's 2002 *Pax Afro* project. It has since been brought to our attention that Amos Mahendere, and not the Mahendere Brothers, produced *Nyatsoterera* in his individual capacity. We also incorrectly stated that *Pax Afro* was part of Moyo's 2002 pre-election publicity campaign that did so much to damage Zimbabwean society by its promotion of political intolerance, division and hatred. The correct position is that *Pax Afro* was a 2004 musical project, which released a compendium mostly of love songs. MMPZ unreservedly and unequivocally apologizes to the parties concerned for any harm that may have been caused.

THE TOP STORIES

RENEWED tensions in the inclusive government, fuelled by the continued broadcast of ZANU PF publicity songs on the national broadcaster and President Mugabe's unilateral appointment of ambassadors, received the most attention in all the media this week.

The Constitutional Parliamentary Committee's outreach consultative programme, which resumed this week after a one-week break, came a close second. Problems affecting state enterprises and local government authorities' ability to deliver and reports exposing human rights violations, which mostly appeared in the private media, competed for attention too.

Fig 1: Top stories in the media

Media	Tensions in government	Constitutional reforms	Poor service delivery	Human rights
Public media	27	34	28	3
Private media	49	37	10	27
Total	76	71	38	30

ZANU PF songs poison coalition relations

TENSION in the inclusive government over the national broadcaster's promotion of ZANU PF propaganda songs on ZBC, made headlines in the private media this week.

While the private media quoted the two MDC formations, civic groups and political commentators arguing that the songs severely undermined the spirit of power sharing, the government media quoted ZANU PF, ZBC management and pro-ZANU PF commentators defending them on the grounds that they were a reflection of the country's history and nationhood.

The official media downplayed evident friction between the coalition parties over the songs, exemplified by their discussion in Cabinet on July 20. According to private media reports, Cabinet agreed that the national broadcaster should stop airing the songs (*NewsDay*, *The Financial Gazette* & Studio 7, 22 & 23/7).

Although *The Herald* (22/7) reported the issue as having dominated the Cabinet meeting, it did not report any resolution to the debate. The paper simply quoted unnamed sources saying Cabinet had **"reached a decision that will soon be communicated"** to the Media and Information Ministry without disclosing its nature. Instead of dispassionately assessing the reasons why the songs had become a major cause for concern, especially complaints by the MDC formations that the songs were part of ZANU PF's campaign strategy, *The Herald* quoted ZANU PF spokesman Rugare Gumbo dismissing the concerns as baseless, as the songs allegedly had **"nothing to do with elections"**. Gumbo added: **"The songs just ensure that our people don't forget where we are coming from as a nation. ZANU PF, unlike other parties, is a party with a history, of the present and of the future"**.

ZTV (22 & 23/7, 6 & 8pm) quoted ZBC chief executive officer Happison Muchechetere, ZANU PF officials, pro-ZANU PF commentators such as Goodson Nguni, ZANU PF MP Jonathan Moyo, members of the Mbare Chimurenga Choir, war veterans and unnamed **"observers"** defending the songs. Muchechetere, Nguni and Moyo argued that Cabinet had no right to stop the broadcasting of the songs, as doing so would amount to political interference. While Muchechetere maintained that there was nothing wrong with the content of the songs, as they were **"in line with"** forthcoming Heroes and Defence Forces Day commemorations, ZANU PF MP Makhosini Hlongwane implicitly admitted the songs promoted ZANU PF by describing criticism of their airplay as **"outrageous"** because ZANU PF had the **"right to advertise"** and **"announce its presence to the public"**. However, ZBC did not ask Muchechetere to explain if the national broadcaster would give similar publicity to songs by the other coalition parties if they submitted them for airplay, as the Global Political Agreement (GPA) compels ZBC to provide **"balanced and fair coverage to all political parties for their legitimate political activities"**.

The private media highlighted the damage caused by ZBC's airtime blitz promoting the songs.

They quoted the two MDC formations, civic groups and analysts arguing that by giving the songs so much airtime ZBC was undermining the spirit of power sharing by building a personality cult around Mugabe and giving ZANU PF an unfair advantage over its coalition partners. Although *The Standard* (25/7)

quoted the MDC-T arguing that the airplay given to the songs appeared to be an attempt to win back voters ahead of impending elections, analysts such as Eldred Masunungure told the weekly that the strategy was likely to backfire, as the songs would ***“neither lure more people to ZANU PF nor change the perceptions Zimbabweans already have about the party”***.

New ambassadors unilaterally appointed

PRESIDENT Mugabe’s unilateral reassignment of six ambassadors at Zimbabwe’s missions abroad raised no questions in the government media despite an evident lack of consultation.

The private media however, viewed the move as yet another example of ZANU PF’s disrespect for the GPA, which calls for consultation on key government appointments.

The Herald (24/7) passively reported the appointments, which saw Zimbabwe’s ambassador to Russia, Phelekeza Mpoko, replacing Simon Khaya Moyo in South Africa, while Chitsaka Chipaziwa, who was Zimbabwe’s permanent representative to the UN in Geneva took over from Boniface Chidyausiku, the country’s other UN representative in New York.

The private media reported the unilateral appointments as having worsened relations in the coalition.

The Standard (25/7) quoted MDC-T spokesman Nelson Chamisa arguing that the move had undermined the ***“credibility and confidence”*** of the inclusive government. ***“It’s a grab and take-all reminiscent of yester-year politics when ZANU PF was the only song in town”***, said Chamisa.

MISSING STORIES

THERE were a number of important stories that were censored by the public media that reflected their bias against ZANU PF's coalition partners. Others were the subject of distortion. The most glaring omissions were:

- The Zimbabwe Electoral Commission's meeting with Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai during which ZEC told Tsvangirai that it was not prepared to hold elections soon (*NewsDay* & *The Zimbabwean On Sunday*, 23 & 25/7).
- The visit to London by a high-powered Zimbabwe government and business delegation, including at least two MDC ministers, headed by Deputy Prime Minister Arthur Mutambara, to seek investment and support (the *Financial Gazette*, *The Zimbabwean On Sunday* & *New Zimbabwe.com* (22, 24 & 25/7)).

Distortion

ZBC (20/7, 8pm) reported a senior MDC-M official David Coltart as having "**blasted**" the West for maintaining sanctions against Zimbabwe during the BBC's *Hardtalk* programme on Tuesday July 20.

ZBC claimed Coltart had told the West to give the coalition parties "**an opportunity to address**" the country's problems "**without interference**". ZBC's interpretation appeared to have emanated from Coltart's criticism of the West for refusing to cooperate with Zimbabwe due to its distrust of Mugabe (*New Zimbabwe.com*, 21/7). MMPZ listened to the interview and nowhere in it did he castigate the West for refusing to lift sanctions. Coltart only criticized the sanctions for being ineffective and having been used by President Mugabe and his party as an excuse for refusing to fully implement the GPA (*New Zimbabwe.com*, 21/7).

MOST POPULAR SOURCES

ZANU PF voices dominated the government media's news reports, an indication of how these media promoted the party's views on topical issues at the expense of the other coalition parties.

Fifty-two (76%) of the 68 voices belonging to the coalition parties were ZANU PF while the remaining 16 voices were shared equally by the two MDC formations. Most alternative voices, including the Affirmative Action Group (AAG), in these media defended ZANU PF's actions, especially the controversial broadcasting of its propaganda songs on ZBC. The private media exposed its sympathy for the MDC-T by giving more publicity to its views compared to its coalition partners. Of the 92 voices these media devoted to the parties, 63 percent belonged to the MDC-T, while 27 percent were ZANU PF. The remaining 10 percent belonged to the smaller MDC formation (See Fig. 2).

Parliamentary Constitutional Committee (Copac) co-chairman Paul Mangwana was the most quoted individual in the government media.

He was quoted eight times, followed by ZBC CEO Happison Muchechetere and President Mugabe (six times each), Media and Information permanent secretary George Charamba and Jonathan Moyo (five times apiece). Mangwana was heard commenting on Copac's constitutional outreach programme while Mugabe insisted that the coalition parties were working well together while addressing new foreign diplomats. Charamba was quoted saying that Cabinet had not yet informed his ministry about its alleged decision to scrap ZANU PF songs from ZBC, while Moyo defended the songs as a reflection of the country's history.

MDC-T spokesperson Nelson Chamisa (nine) was the most frequently quoted individual in the private media.

He was followed by MDC-T Copac co-chairman, Douglas Mwonzora, who was quoted seven times, MDC-T Secretary-General Tendai Biti (six) and Charamba (five). Chamisa was quoted expressing his party's concern over ZANU PF's songs on ZBC, while Charamba expressed his ignorance over Cabinet's decision to stop the ZBC broadcasts of the ZANU PF songs. Biti was quoted repeating his party's commitment to the national reconciliation exercise.

Fig 2: Voice distribution in the media

Media	ZANU PF	MDC-T	MDC-M	Alternative	Ordinary people
Public Media	52	8	8	6	8
Private Media	25	58	9	43	12

Human rights abuses

THE private media continued to be a reliable source of information about ongoing human rights violations.

They recorded 18 new incidents, 11 (61%) of which were connected to Copac's outreach programme. The government media reported three, none of which were related to the outreach programme.

Incidents included:

- The alleged bombing of a house and minibus belonging to MDC-99 leader Job Sikhala by suspected ZANU PF supporters in Chitungwiza (*The Standard, The Herald & ZimDaily*, 25, 26 & 27/7).
- The stabbing of MDC-T activist Tongai Ground by two ZANU PF youths, Siyaseni Chatemera and Tawanda Kukama, in Gokwe (SW Radio Africa, *The Financial Gazette & The Zimbabwean On Sunday* 21, 22 & 25/7).
- Eviction of Bond Godzi and his family from Shemara Farm by war veterans on the grounds that he had been **"too vocal"** during a Copac outreach meeting held at Odzi Country Club (the *Gazette & The Zimbabwean On Sunday*, 22 & 25/7).
- Disruption of a constitutional outreach meeting and assault of a senior MDC-T official Martha Muronzi in Shamwa North by suspected ZANU PF youths and disruption of other outreach meetings in Mberengwa (the *Gazette, Studio 7 & Daily News*, 19, 20 & 22/7), and
- Intimidation by soldiers of villagers in Murewa North against freely expressing their views on a new constitution (*The Zimbabwean*, 22/7).

What they said...

“At the moment dead people are still appearing on the voters roll. We will need about 12 months to clear out the old voters’ roll” – ZEC commissioner Bessie Nhandara (*The Zimbabwean On Sunday*, 25/7).

“When we celebrate our history, which includes heroic participation and involvement by these leaders (President Mugabe and his two deputies) you (MDC-T) have no right to ban our history just because you don’t have a history...When you (ZANU PF) come up with a song, which reminds every one (about Zimbabwe’s history) they cry foul and pretend that there is something hurtful or inappropriate about this. The truth is that (these songs are) speak to a history that they don’t have and therefore expose them as completely empty vessels when it comes to fundamental issues which define the make-up of this country...” – Jonathan Moyo (ZTV, 22/7, 6pm).

“What they are doing is like playing soft music to a corpse in the hope that it will rise and dance to the nice lyrics” –Unidentified political commentator questioning the effectiveness of ZANU PF’s songs (*The Standard*, 25/7).

“If we speak with forked tongues, one during the day and another at night, we will be deceiving each other and we will continue to form organs on national healing” – MDC-M secretary-general Welshman Ncube urging the coalition parties to be sincere in campaigning against violence (*ZimOnline*, 22/7).

Ends/

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