

Watching the Watchdog



Elections Media Monitoring Report





Watching the Watchdog: 2015 Elections Media Monitoring Report

Media Council of Tanzania

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2015
Elections Media Monitoring Report

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CONTENTS

Executive Summary	1
Chapter One: The Project	5
1.1 Rationale of the Project	5
1.2 Scope of the Project	6
1.3 Specific Objectives of the Project	7
1.4 Methodology	7
Chapter Two: Elections Coverage by Print Media	10
2.1 Introduction	10
2.2 Newspaper monitoring and reports	10
2.3 Summary of findings	11
2.4 Analysis of reportage in print media	12
Chapter Three: Electronic Media Coverage	25
3.1 Election agenda-setting	25
3.2 Summary of findings	25
3.3 Professionalism	26
3.4 Challenge in Electronic Media	31
3.5 Crowd-sourcing	32
3.6 Vox pop coverage	32
3.7 Hate speech and spin	33
3.8 Gender	33
3.9 Voters' Education	34
3.10 Polarization	35
3.11 Extreme Polarisation in Zanzibar	35
Chapter Four: Assault on Press Freedom	37
4.1 Introduction	37
4.2 Media houses under attack	37
4.3 Journalists under attack	39
Chapter Five: Achievements, Challenges and Recommendations	41
5.1 Achievements	41
5.2 Challenges	43
5.3 Recommendations	43

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Media Council of Tanzania (MCT) undertook the 2015 Elections Media Monitoring Project from September 2015 to February 2016. It was made possible by a generous grant from UK's Department for International Development (DFID) for which the Council is very grateful. Initially, the Project was to wind up in December 2015, but was extended for two more months after the Zanzibar Electoral Commission (ZEC) chairman annulled the Zanzibar elections held on October 25, 2015. The aim of the extension was to see how the media would cover this annulment and its resultant tensions and political wrangling on the Isles. The Project however did not continue to cover the actual rerun of the Zanzibar elections.

The aim of the Project was to conduct continuous monitoring of a sample of media outlets representative of the national media and bring out a fair picture of how media covered the elections. Ethical conduct and professionalism in terms of multiple sourcing, treatment of hate speech, presentation of diversity of perspectives, balance, truth and fairness as well as impartiality would be monitored. Special emphasis would be put on coverage of women as voters and candidates in the 2015 General Election as well as media treatment of development issues highlighted by parties and their candidates.

Thirteen daily newspapers were sampled, together with 16 weeklies, including weekend editions. These included the only daily published in Zanzibar. Eight local radio stations and seven local TV stations were monitored, including the Zanzibar state broadcaster. The media outlets were selected for their reach, but also consideration for Zanzibar coverage.

With the shift of the focus to Zanzibar beginning New Year, four international broadcasters, were added. This is because it became apparent that with the tight state control of Zanzibar media, Zanzibaris would most likely depend more and more on international broadcasters for independent news coverage of the situation.

The Project was able to determine the following important issues in the print media:

- a) Reportage of election issues was very high taking a big chunk of news stories, opinion pieces, features and photographs and cartoons.
- b) The CCM Presidential candidate and running mate and other candidates for Parliament and councillors received more coverage than those of the opposition parties.
- c) The embedding of journalists in campaign teams of presidential candidates caused serious ethical lapses.



- d) There was a polarization of the media between those supporting the opposition and those supporting the ruling party.
- e) Professional requirements such as objectivity, balancing stories, multiple sourcing of stories and providing various perspectives of an issue, were frequently disregarded, especially at the beginning of the campaign.
- f) In most monitored newspapers there was little attempt to publish voices of marginalised groups in the community such as women and youth even though their participation as voters and as seekers of elective posts in the 2015 elections was unprecedented.
- g) Coverage of gender issues in regard to analysis of political space for men and women such as the challenges facing women candidates was limited and at times the victory of women in some constituencies where they toppled male political heavy weights came as a surprise to the media.
- h) Voters' education in general was inadequate in print media considering the fact that there were a large number of newly registered voters.

Regarding broadcast media, the 2015 Elections Media Monitoring Project made the following major observations:

- a) Electronic media devoted ample air time to voter education, electioneering and after polls events, playing a crucial role in ensuring high voter turnout and peaceful elections.
- b) The CCM Presidential candidate and running mate and other candidates for Parliament and councillors received more coverage than those of the opposition parties.
- c) The state run broadcasters both on Mainland and Zanzibar were heavily biased in favour of the ruling party.
- d) Zanzibar state broadcaster systematically blacked out the main opposition party on the Isles, CUF.
- e) Except for *Star TV* and *RFA* of the Sahara Media Group, private electronic media outlets were generally impartial.
- f) Electronic media steered clear of hate speech and spin during election campaigns, on the polling day and through to post election period.
- g) Generally no station could be said to have exhibited a clear and consistent editorial policy on gender matters.
- h) The embedding of journalists in campaign teams of presidential candidates led to the embedded reporters' dispatches sounding more like PR communiqués rather than independent and objective reporting.

Some notable achievements were attained by the Project. The Project enabled editors and reporters to get prompt, objective feedback on their work. The evidence based feedback was important as it enabled them to critically look at their work and make necessary improvements. Civil society organizations, independent observers and interested foreign missions also had an opportunity of following up media performance during the crucial period.

The following achievements were noted:

- a. Some media outlets improved on their sourcing, moving from predominantly

- single source reporting to multiple sources. Others improved on the aspect of multiplicity of perspectives in their stories.
- b. Media houses used the reports for internal capacity building. Examples are Mwananchi Communications Ltd. and The Guardian Ltd, two of the major media houses in the country.
 - c. Newspapers improved on coverage in terms of impartiality.
 - d. Many media outlets increasingly improved on the aspect of providing equitable space and airtime for the competing political parties, including the smaller parties.
 - e. The usefulness of the Project was also underlined by the fact that some media outlets that were left out of the sample kept asking to be included because they saw this as a unique chance of having their work assessed by an independent agent and getting objective feedback.
 - f. Feedback from stakeholders indicated that they found the reports very useful and that they could be used as a secondary source of information in the academia.
 - g. Independent assessment by media professionals also indicated appreciation for the work of the Project.
 - h. Internally within the Council, the training that went with the project further built the capacity of the media monitors.

The following recommendations are made from the experience of monitoring the 2015 General Election which was the most competitive since the return to multi-party political dispensation in Tanzania.

a. *Preliminary stakeholders' engagement*

Since elections media monitoring is a huge multi-stakeholder activity, the building of rapport is an important Project's preparatory work.

Knowing beforehand the ideas and expectations of key election players about media conduct would shape monitoring activity planning and organisation and the design of tools for content capture and eventual analysis.

b. *Monitoring the nomination process*

2015 experience has shown that the internal party nomination process is very important and can have considerable impact on the conduct and results of the elections. It would be prudent to monitor how media captured and reported this stage of the democratic process.

c. *Comprehensive training*

As every general election comes with its distinctive features and challenges, so does media coverage and its monitoring. All actors involved in the Project implementation should be equipped, in time, with the relevant skills and competencies for delivering the Project's outcomes. This goal can be achieved if the Project's design and funding disbursement are realized, say, a month before commencement of actual monitoring activity.



d. Monitoring feedback encounters

Despite the use of newsletters and online platforms for sharing with stakeholders the periodic monitoring results, scheduled feedback encounters with some key players is important. Future Project's design should consider hosting joint periodic debates and consultations guided by the monitoring results with important stakeholders such as editors, media owners, journalists' professional associations, government regulatory authorities, election management bodies, police force, political parties, and the Registrar of Political Parties.

CHAPTER ONE: THE PROJECT

1.1 Rationale of the Project

The Constitution of the United Republic of Tanzania Article 3 provides, among other things, that the United Republic is a democratic state which adheres to multi-party democracy.

Elections in Tanzania are held after every five years. 2015 was a General Election year and Tanzanians fulfilled their democratic obligation and right by electing the president, members of Parliament as well as councillors.

Media plays a critical role in the proper functioning of a democracy. Its watchdog function during election times is manifested by its scrutiny and discussion of the competence, successes and failures of candidates, governments, party policies and manifestos, the efficiency of electoral management bodies and equally important, by the post election follow-up coverage. The media can inform the public on how effectively they have performed during elections and help them to hold to account those elected to positions of power.

Hence, the media are essential to democracy, and a free, fair and credible electoral process is impossible in modern times without the media. A free and fair election is not only about the freedom to vote and the knowledge of how to cast a vote, but also about a participatory process where voters are engaged in public debate and have adequate information about parties, policies, candidates and the election process itself in order to make informed choices.

Furthermore, media acts as a crucial watchdog to democratic elections, safeguarding the transparency of the process. Indeed, a democratic election with no media freedom, or stifled media freedom, would be a contradiction in terms.

Specifically the media have essential roles in enabling full and free public participation in elections. These include:

- a. Educating voters on how to exercise their democratic rights;
- b. Reporting on the development of an election campaign;
- c. Providing a platform for the political parties and candidates to communicate their message to the electorate;
- d. Articulating the national election agenda;



- e. Providing a platform for the public to communicate their concerns, opinions, and needs, to the parties/candidates, the National Electoral Commission, the government, and to other voters, and to interact on these issues;
- f. Allowing the parties and candidates to debate with each other;
- g. Reporting electoral processes and results and monitoring vote counting;
- h. Scrutinizing the electoral process itself, including electoral management, in order to evaluate the process's fairness, efficiency, and probity;
- i. Providing information that as far as possible avoids inflammatory language, to help prevent election-related violence.

Hence, the aim of this Project by the Media Council of Tanzania (MCT) was to conduct continuous monitoring of a sample of media outlets to gauge their adherence to professionalism and ethical conduct during the electoral process. Special emphasis would be put on coverage of women as voters and candidates in the 2015 General Election as well as media treatment of hate speech, human rights and development issues highlighted by parties and their candidates as well as any other crucial agenda that would shape the 2015 electoral politics in Tanzania.

Feedback to editors would be undertaken through email exchanges as a way of effecting rapid response to detected ethical and professional challenges. Periodic reports would be shared electronically and via Council website. Monthly English and Kiswahili publications highlighting how media was covering the electoral process would also be published.

1.2 Scope of the Project

The 2015 Elections Media Monitoring Project was intended to monitor selected electronic and print media outlets that would be representative of the national media and bring out a fair picture of how media covered the elections. Two industry endorsed instruments would be used: the Code of Conduct for Media Professionals as well as the Media Guidelines for Elections Reporting. Professionalism in terms of multiple sourcing, treatment of hate speech, presentation of diversity of perspectives, balance, truth and fairness as well as impartiality would be monitored.

The Project's scope also inevitably included monitoring how ethical media was and whether there were any improvements as MCT shared its periodic reports and as the process progressed towards poll day and beyond.

All in all, the Project monitored thirteen daily newspapers together with sixteen weeklies which included weekend editions. These included the only daily published in Zanzibar. Eight local radio stations and seven local TV stations were monitored, including the Zanzibar state broadcaster. The media outlets were selected for their reach, but also consideration for Zanzibar based media and coverage generally. No community and district media outlets were monitored.

Beginning January 2016, focus was shifted to Zanzibar following the controversial nullification of the October 25 elections by the Zanzibar Electoral Commission Chairman. Monitoring of post election coverage of Mainland continued as well, mainly documenting how media reported the election petitions filed in courts of law as well as the Dar es Salaam mayoral elections.

With the shift of the focus to Zanzibar beginning New Year, four international broadcasters, were added. These were Deutsche Welle (DW), Voice of America (VoA), Radio France International (RFI) and BBC Radio and TV. This is because it became apparent that with the tight state control of Zanzibar national media, Zanzibaris would most likely

depend more and more on international broadcasters for independent news coverage of the situation.

Two weekly papers, *Mawio* and *MwanaHalisi*, seen to have a wide audience in Zanzibar were also added, as well as the regional The East African newspaper, after its ban was lifted.

However, the Project encountered an unexpected challenge when fake newspapers started appearing online. The fakes were not, of course, within the scope of the Project. Neither had the Project designers foreseen such a turn of events. Yet soon after the monitoring began, hacks and computer savvy political party operatives started designing and producing fake newspapers and disseminating them electronically. The fakes, complete with mastheads, carried very damaging stories on opposition candidates. While the mandate of the project was to monitor the genuine newspapers, this posed a dilemma because these fakes were posted on hacked websites, distributed online and read by a lot of unsuspecting Tanzanians. The question was, how should the Project deal with “newspapers which were not the real newspapers”? At the end, the Project decided to expose the fakes through its newsletters, *Election Monitor* and *Darubini*.

1.3 Specific Objectives of the Project

- 1.3.1 To achieve high level of professionalism and ethical conduct in election reporting as guided by the Code of Ethics for Media Professionals and the Code of Conduct for Election Reporting;
- 1.3.2 To help create an electorate that is fully and accurately informed about the electoral issues and candidates, so that it can make informed choices;
- 1.3.3 To provide constant feedback to the media on their professional and ethical performance so that they are able to continuously improve their reportage until and after announcement of results;
- 1.3.4 To achieve increased participation in the political and electoral process, because of the quality of information being disseminated to the electorate through the media;
- 1.3.5 To achieve increased participation by women in the political process by ensuring that the media monitoring process focuses adequately on election issues of concern to women.

1.4 Methodology

1.4.1 Sampling of media outlets:

A sample of media outlets was chosen for monitoring. The sampling took into consideration national coverage for both print and electronic media as well as frequency for print, ensuring that there were both daily and weeklies. It also ensured inclusion of political party-owned media outlets, government owned outlets as well as privately owned media. The sample also considered the language medium, ensuring representation of both Kiswahili and English media. There was also consideration for Zanzibar-based media.

The following print media outlets were covered for the entire period of the Project: *Zanzibar Leo*, *Daily News*, *Sunday News*, *The Guardian*, *The Guardian on Sunday*, *The Citizen*, *Sunday Citizen*, *Habari Leo*, *Habari Leo Jumapili*, *Nipashe*, *Nipashe Jumapili*, *Mwananchi*, *Mwananchi Jumapili*, *Uhuru*, *Mzalendo*, *Tanzania Daima*, and *Tanzania Daima Jumapili*.

Others were *Mtanzania*, *Mtanzania Jumapili*, *Raia Mwema*, *Raia Tanzania*, *Majira*, *Majira Jumapili*, *Jambo Leo* and *Jambo Leo Jumapili*.

Four newspapers were added when the Project was extended for two months after the nullification of the Zanzibar elections. These were: the weeklies *MwanaHalisi* and *Mawio* which have a wide readership in Zanzibar, as well as *Jamhuri* and *The East African* whose ban had been lifted by the government. *Mawio* was deregistered during the period due to its aggressive coverage of Zanzibar election crisis which the government was not happy with.

Electronic media outlets covered during the entire Project period were: Star TV, TBC Taifa, ITV, TBC 1, Radio One, Radio Free Africa, Clouds FM and Clouds TV.

Others were: *ZBC TV*, *ZBC Radio*, *Zenj FM*, *Hits FM*, and *Channel 10*. *Azam TV* was added later while foreign broadcasters were included in January 2016 following the extension of the Project for two months to further monitor how media was covering the aftermath of the Zanzibar election nullification.

The foreign broadcasters were the Kiswahili channels of Voice of America (VoA), Deutsche Welle (DW), BBC Radio, BBC TV and Radio France International (RFI).

1.4.2 Engaging media intelligence company

A media intelligence company, Push Observer, was engaged to assist capture reported election content for both print and electronic media. Limited copies of monitored newspapers were also availed to monitors, as well as TV and radio sets for follow up, quality assurance as well as ensuring value for money for the procured services.

Push Observer would capture print media content and cuttings on election news would be scanned and delivered through a dedicated online platform.

Electronic content (TV and radio) was captured from broadcast newscasts and delivered online to MCT's monitor-cum-analysts who would in turn play back the content and analyse it accordingly. A dedicated database was also provided to help analyse statistical information for proper interpretation.

Print media capture by Push Observer was restricted to September - December 2015 monitoring activities. During the extended period to February 2016 to monitor reportage of the Zanzibar election crisis, the capture of print media content was done manually by the monitors. Push Observer delivered electronic media content only.

1.4.3 Monitor-cum-analysts:

The role of the monitors was to critically analyse and report on the quality of election reportage; whether it was impartial, professionally presented and to what extent electoral issues were exposed to the public to help it make national poll decisions.

During the extended monitoring period focusing on Zanzibar, the issue of reportage on resolving the election crisis was also monitored.

1.4.4 Project coordination and periodic reports:

The Project manager was responsible for overall coordination and management of the Project, assisted by project coordinators. The coordinators were tasked to oversee monitoring processes consistent with the agreed procedures and standards and to reshape monitoring reports through comprehensive editing. A total of fifteen periodic reports were written and disseminated during the period of the Project.

1.4.5 Election Monitor and Darubini:

The coordinators were also in charge of production and distribution of the two Project newsletters, *Election Monitor* and *Darubini*. The newsletters captured the highlights of the reports and presented them in a reader friendly journalistic fashion. Six editions each were published and distributed from September 2015 to February 2016.

Why were the newsletters *Election Monitor* and *Darubini ya Uchaguzi* important?



They were important because they were intended to reach the lay audience in a more accessible journalistic language, rather than the language of reports. They would provide the highlights and salient features of the monitoring reports. The Council started to publish the newsletters and distributed them to diplomatic corps, newsrooms, press clubs, electoral management bodies, and political parties.

Other targeted recipients were human right organisations and other civil society organisations.

1.4.6 Final Report:

This final report of the Project concludes the Project and will be shared with stakeholders throughout the country.

The 2015 Elections Media Monitoring Project was made possible by a generous grant from UK's Department for International Development (DFID) for which the Council is very grateful.

CHAPTER TWO: ELECTIONS COVERAGE BY PRINT MEDIA

2.1 Introduction

The print media in Tanzania is quite vibrant and diverse ranging from mainstream newspapers covering news and events to specialised publications on sports, religion and entertainment. Currently, Push Observer, a media intelligence company contracted by MCT during the Project monitors some 77 daily, weekly, bi weekly and monthly publications.

Under the project, a total of 13 daily newspapers and 16 weeklies including Sunday editions of dailies were monitored. These included state owned newspapers as well as privately owned ones.

Newspapers thus formed the bulk of monitored media outlets in the 2015 Elections Media Monitoring Project. During the election period particularly during the campaign period and even after the polls, reportage of election issues was very high, taking a big chunk of news stories, opinion pieces, features, as well as photographs and cartoons.

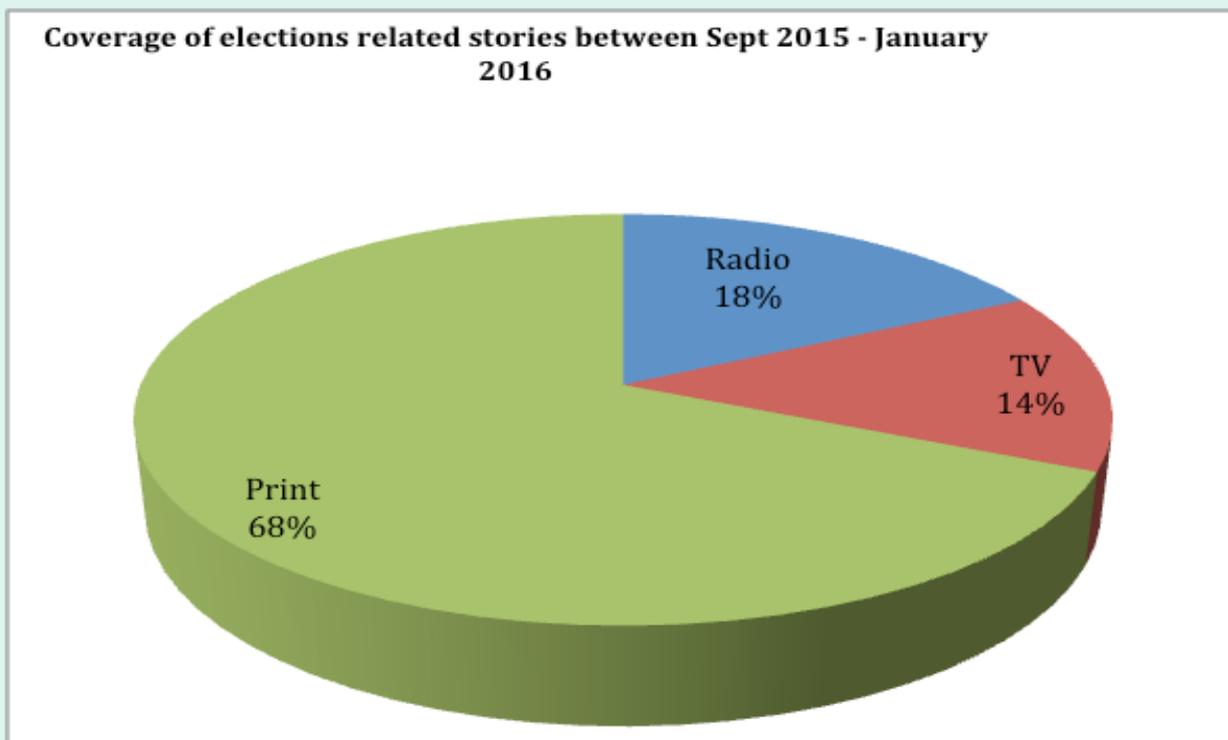
It is thus not surprising that newspapers also featured highly in the amount of stories generated. Between September 2015 and end of January 2016, a total of 36,818 election stories were covered in the monitored media out of which 25, 161 were stories printed in newspapers making up 68% of the total media coverage.

2.2 Newspaper monitoring and reports

MCT commissioned Push Observer, a media intelligence firm that monitors local TV channels, radio stations, print and online sources to monitor and provide clippings on a daily basis based on agreed key words. This was up to the end of December 2015, after which print monitoring was done internally. The clippings were then analyzed by MCT monitor-cum-analysts based on agreed criteria and a report written on a daily basis. The analyzed data was then used to write weekly reports which were shared with editors, journalists and other interested stakeholders such as the National Electoral Commission and the Zanzibar Electoral Commission. The reports were also shared with local and international observer teams to give them a better understanding of media reportage. The Council was invited by the SADC Observer mission to give them a briefing on media reportage of the elections but also the state of the media in general.

To the editors, the reports provided feedback on their performance and during the project period, the print media reported on the reports especially when they were favourable to them. However, there were times when editors sought clarity on issues especially when criticized in the reports.

Fig No. 1: Coverage of Election Related stories in monitored media



2.3 Summary of findings

The Project was able to determine the following important issues in the print media:

- a) Reportage of election issues was very high taking a big chunk of news stories, opinion pieces, features and photographs and cartoons.
- b) The CCM Presidential candidate and running mate and other candidates for Parliament and councillors received more coverage than those of the opposition parties.
- c) The embedding of journalists in campaign teams of presidential candidates caused serious ethical lapses.
- d) There was a polarization of the media between those supporting the opposition and those supporting the ruling party.
- e) Professional requirements such as objectivity, balancing stories, multiple sourcing of stories and providing various perspectives of an issue, were frequently disregarded, especially at the beginning of the campaign.
- f) In most monitored newspapers there was little attempt to publish voices of marginalised groups in the community such as women and youth even though their participation as voters and as seekers of elective posts in the 2015 elections was unprecedented.
- g) Coverage of gender issues in regard to analysis of political space for men and women such as the challenges facing women candidates was limited and at times the victory of women in some constituencies where they toppled male political heavy weights came as a surprise to the media.

- h) Voters' education in general was inadequate in print media considering the fact that there were a large number of newly registered voters.

2.4 Analysis of reportage in print media

2.4.1 Professionalism and ethical conduct

One of the trends seen from the monitoring exercise was the large number of single sourced, unbalanced stories, lacking different perspectives. From the first to the last monitoring report, the single source syndrome was noted but even when attempts were made at multiple sourcing, many a time there was no diversity of voices or opinions. It was the same voices, of the same political party or its sympathizers emphasizing on a campaign issue.

This was especially so at the beginning of the monitoring but there was noticeable change and improvement as the media monitoring reports continued to point out this anomaly. By polling day and post election coverage, most newspapers had reversed the trend to differing degrees.

In its very first report, noting that anomaly, the monitoring report recommended to the media:

"The media should go to its roots of being a watch dog, responsible and accountable to the audience and the larger public because what was exhibited by some media sections during the period under review need to be reversed. Those media outlets with exemplary professional performance are encouraged to maintain the grip".

A typical observation was such as:"of the 89 election stories that were published by Tanzania Daima newspaper, 65 were based on single sources (73%)" in the Monitoring Report for September 11 - 17 2015. Or, as in the Report for September 25 - October 1, 2015: 35 stories published by Mtanzania newspaper, equivalent to 81%, were supported by single sources, only six 6 stories (14%) had multiple sources and only 2 stories (5%) had diverse perspectives expressed by multiple voices.

MCT insists that that stories have to be balanced and get as much as possible "all the sides of the story" to ensure fairness and objectivity. Unbalanced stories can become dangerous as seen in stories published by Raia Tanzania and Uhuru newspapers in mid-September 2015. Tanzania Daima on September 11, 2015 had a story headlined *Kikosi cha vurugu Oktoba 25 mafunzoni* (Squad for unleashing chaos under training ahead of October 25) while Uhuru newspaper on its part published similar content on September 14, 2015 under the headline *Chadema waingiza msituni vijana 3,000* (Chadema recruits 3,000 for training in the bush).

The two articles alleged that the opposition party Chadema had sent 3,000 youths for training for the purpose of causing chaos during the elections. The stories failed to provide solid facts to substantiate such sensitive allegations touching on national security. While Raia Tanzania newspaper quoted an anonymous source, Uhuru alleged to have quoted unnamed sources which had recently defected to Chadema from CCM.

Such sensitive allegations require to be subjected to rigorous scrutiny with high level sources in Chadema and the state security and sources around places where training allegedly took place. The story should not have been published without passing the investigative score cards. The story had all the elements of a fabricated piece of alarmist propaganda.

Bias was also noted in newspaper coverage of election stories and this was because most of them had taken undeclared stands to support particular candidates or parties.

The monitoring team saw that there were newspapers that openly supported the opposition and those that supported the ruling party. This was done in a very clear way leaving little doubt that a certain newspaper was in support of a certain party through the slant of stories, the amount of space given and also in the tonality of the news items. The bias was not confined to the opinion pages but permeated into the news pages at times passing opinion as fact.

This of course was in violation of both the Code of Conduct for Media Professionals and the Media Guidelines for Elections Reporting, both endorsed by the industry in Tanzania, which insist on adhering to professional and ethical conduct and avoidance of bias.

The Media Guidelines for Elections Reporting in Item 2 on **Accuracy and Fairness** states that:

“Journalists must ensure that their election reports are accurate, and must at all times strive for fair, impartial and balanced coverage, achieved by allocating reasonable space and airtime to all sides of an issue.”

Item 4 on Separation of fact and opinion:

In all media, there must be a clear separation between fact and comment.

No matter what editorial position a publication or broadcasting station takes, accurate reporting of the facts is the journalist’s priority.

Absalom Kibanda - Group Managing Editor of New Habari (2006) Ltd. which publishes *Mtanzania, Rai, Dimba,* and *The African*:



“The monitoring reports have challenged us to perform better. They have been reminder calls for change and improvement. The reports were inspirational for producing good and balanced coverage with multiple sources.”

On claims that the newspapers *Mtanzania, Rai* and the *African* under his leadership were pro opposition, Kibanda says the papers were pro- change and supported even candidates within the ruling party CCM who were advocating for change. “We were not biased”, he insists, “but pro-change”.

Newspapers like *Nipashe, Mtanzania* and *Tanzania Daima* openly took a pro opposition stance and proceeded to provide positive coverage to Chadema and the Ukawa coalition while a number of newspapers like *Uhuru* which is CCM owned, *Raia Tanzania, Jambo Leo* and the government owned newspapers i.e. the *Daily News, Habari Leo* and *Zanzibar Leo* proceeded to be anti opposition and pro CCM.

However, there were occasions that even those newspapers exhibited excellent professionalism and ethical conduct. For example, there was noticeable change in the

coverage of election issues in *Nipashe* and *Mtanzania* as the campaigns progressed towards Election Day. Post elections coverage by these papers was quite sober especially in reporting poll results.

Another example is *Habari Leo* which in the week of November 6 - 12, 2015 published a total of 80 stories including 48 hard post election news stories and 11 feature articles. Of these, 42 items were based on multiple sources (53%) while 26 (32%) carried single sources and the remaining 12 (15%) represented sources with diverse perspectives.

For instance, *Habari Leo* of November 11, 2015 published a front page story with the following headline: '*Kasi ya Magufuli yavutia wengi*' (Magufuli's pace impresses many). This story had ten sources, including voices of ordinary people, NGOs, legal expert, government workers and a media expert.

Mwananchi and *The Citizen* distinguished themselves by constantly adhering to professionalism and ethical conduct throughout the monitoring period with rare incidences of transgressions. The two newspapers also go on record as having consistently the widest coverage of election issues as well the largest number of stories.

Spin, sensationalism and hate speech were also noted in the coverage of election stories in the print media. A typical example was the stories quoted above that were published by *Uhuru* and *Raia Tanzania*.

Another example is a story published by *Tanzania Daima* in its September 12, 2015 edition with the headline: "*Ilemela wamlilia Kiwia*" with the lead paragraph stating the following: "*Mgombea ubunge wa Ilemela, jijini Mwanza, juzi alisababisha baadhi ya wananchi kuangua kilio mkutanoni, aliposimulia namna alivyonusurika kifo baada ya kutekwa na kukatwa mapanga na watu wanaodhaniwa kuwa wafuasi wa Chama cha Mapinduzi (CCM)*".

This story says that followers attending a campaign rally staged by Ukawa candidate for Ilemela constituency (Mwanza) were made to shed tears in distress after hearing how their favourite had cheated death after escaping attack by violent machete wielding CCM zealots.

Such sensitive content getting published with neither corroboration nor balancing, even by consulting the police and hospital sources to prove those claims, is certainly unprofessional.

This typical case demonstrates how media outlets became part of the election campaign propaganda. While contesting candidates increasingly resorted to propaganda to promote their campaigns' point of view, it was the responsibility of reporters to sift news from propaganda, while also removing any trace of hate speech.

2.4.2 Coverage of Political Parties and Candidates

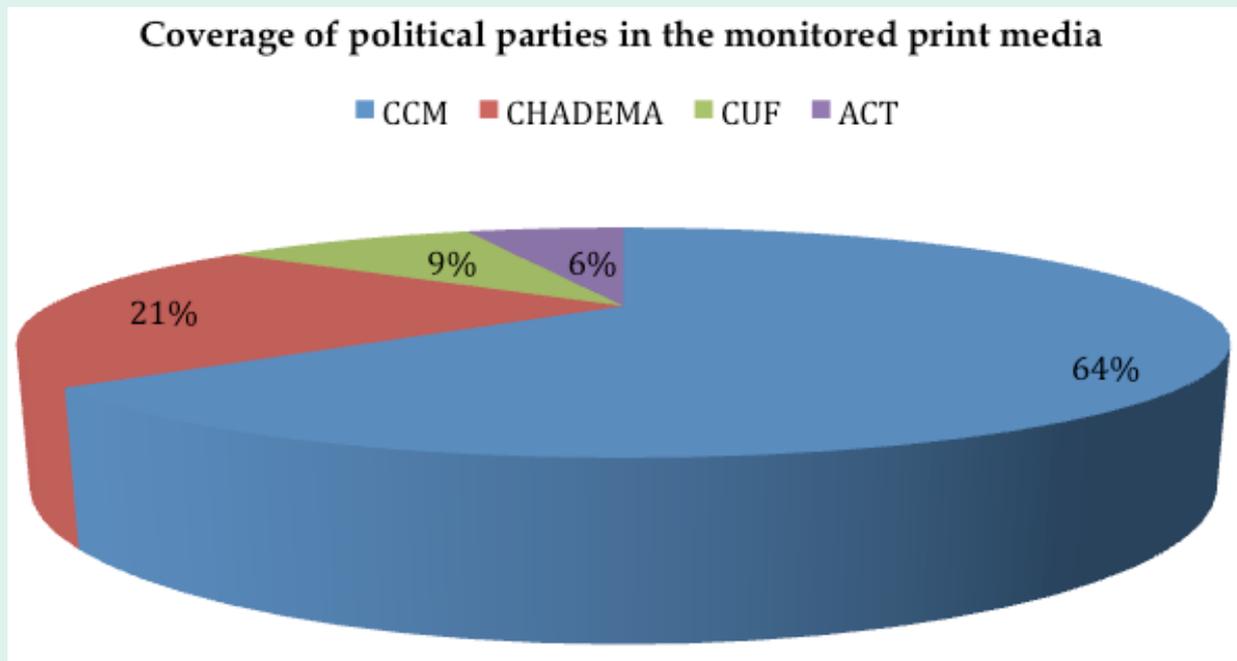
In general, the ruling party CCM garnered the biggest chunk of coverage in the monitored print media throughout the monitoring period. Statistics show that CCM was given 64 per cent of the total coverage followed by Chadema, CUF and ACT Wazalendo, while the smaller parties hardly got any coverage.

The government owned newspapers *Daily News* and *Habari Leo* had the tendency to give more prominence to the ruling party CCM and its candidates in terms of space and placement. Some political parties were completely blacked out, as were stories which were deemed to be controversial or unfavourable to the ruling party or the government. For the two newspapers, content for ruling CCM campaigns would mostly be given front page coverage, if not second page, however trivial the issue was.

If anything, news coverage for the campaigns of the opposition parties would be elevated

to front page status if it contained negative content. A typical negative story was published on September 2, 2015 headlined: “Slaa slams Lowassa on Chadema”.

Fig. 2: Coverage of political parties in the monitored print media in the 2015 General Election



The *Jambo Leo* newspaper also depicted reportage leaning towards ruling party CCM candidates. For instance in week of September 1-10, 2015, CCM sources or candidates were quoted 43 times, Ukawa sources quoted 14 times, CUF only two times and NCCR just once. *Uhuru*, a CCM owned newspaper, *Tanzania Daima* and *Mtanzania* to different degrees exhibited clear bias. They focused much on spin coverage against opponents of their preferred candidates. Even if it is not openly said, *Tanzania Daima* and *Mtanzania* seem to be in the fold of Ukawa and thus anything regarding this grouping was positive whereas *Uhuru* bashed everything from the opposition camp.

For example *Tanzania Daima* of September 6, 2015 had a story with a headline; “NEC yaionya CCM...” meaning NEC warns CCM, while in fact NEC warned all contesting political parties against exceeding campaign time limit approved by NEC. The choice to pinpoint CCM in the headline and in content is surely an act of spin.

On September 8, 2015 the same newspaper carried a story on page six (6) with a headline that screamed: *Dk. Mwakyembe anukurika kichapo* (Dr. Mwakyembe escapes beating). The story text, however, says that some scuffle occurred while Mwakyembe’s campaign was about to be launched in Kyela district. It is silent on whether Mwakyembe, a CCM candidate had mobilized a rally which turned against him. The main culprit, Mwakyembe, is not consulted for comment. Chadema legislative aspirants are however given opportunity on the same space to disparage Mwakyembe, while he is denied the right of reply.

Again, *Uhuru*, for example, on September 1, 2015 had articles headlined *Sumaye na Lowassa walaghai* (Sumaye and Lowassa are conmen) because allegedly the two were touting campaign pledges already under implementation by the CCM government of the day.

Another article by the same newspaper headlined *Nchi haiwezi kukabidhiwa wapiga dili*. (It is unacceptable to hand over the country to wheeler dealers) purports that Chadema contestants were bent on selling out the country and so should not be elected.

On September 30, 2015, *Tanzania Daima’s* page 16 carried a column with a screaming headline: “Magufuli atakuwa kama Hitler, hafai”, translated as “Magufuli is set to become

another Hitler, he should not be elected". Content criticizes the manner CCM presidential hopeful Dr. Magufuli had been conducting his campaigns in an allegedly dictatorial manner suggesting that once he ascends to the presidency, he will resort to giving dictatorial orders, akin to Germany's Nazi leader Adolf Hitler.

While it is true that in journalism, columns and op-ed pieces allow writers to include their own voice and express an opinion, to be acceptable the columns must be grounded in journalistic research. Such research involves acquiring facts, quotations, citations or data from sources as well as personal observation.

Unless there is concrete proof to equate a presidential candidate with Adolf Hitler, one of history's most notorious dictators and mass murderers on account of the candidate's campaign speech is not only character assassination but tantamount to hate speech which is forbidden by the Elections Reporting Guidelines.

Dennis Msacky - Managing Editor, *Mtanzania*

Says the monitoring conducted by the Media Council of Tanzania had immense impact on the way the newspapers reported elections - from campaigns to the elections and post-election.

Among the main things that his paper had to improve on was the balancing of stories. He says it moved from single sourcing to multiple sourcing.

On hate speech, Msacky notes that this election had no problem of hate speech as the main presidential contenders, Magufuli and Lowassa, avoided the politics of character assassination.

On equitable coverage for all contesting parties in the election, he is of the opinion that this was supposed to be strictly observed by the public funded media. He however observed that government newspapers covered mainly CCM candidates and those of smaller parties but avoided to cover giants like Lowassa of Chadema and the Ukawa coalition.

"We are in the business of selling news and those in the public media can have that luxury of giving equal coverage even for the smaller parties as they get government subsidy drawn from tax payers".



It was noted that as polling day came closer, some media became even more embroiled in the vitriolic utterances of politicians. More spin and character attacks were being carried in partisan newspapers as they also became part of the bashing.

For instance, *Uhuru* of October 8, 2015 published a front page story headlined "Mchezo mchafu" (Foul play) with subheads "Lowassa atenga fedha kununua kura million 10", (Lowassa sets aside cash to buy 10m votes) "Boda boda, mama na baba lische ndio walengwa" (Motor cyclists, street food vendors targetted) and "Mratibu atajwa, mgawo kuanza Oktoba 23 na 24" (coordinator named, dividends out from October 23 and 24).

This story contained serious allegations directed at Chadema presidential candidate Edward Lowassa and his wife Regina. Also, in the same story were allegations that some officials of the PCCB were part of the massive vote buying mission. The story was not

balanced; the right of reply not given and it lacked authentic sources. Again this one smacked of unsubstantiated fabrication.

Newspapers provided limited coverage to smaller parties some of which had also fielded presidential candidates. Reportage of those parties was scant as if the general election involved only CCM and the parties under the Ukawa coalition.

It was also found out that prominence was given more to presidential candidate's election campaign trails while those of members of parliament and councilors were scarcely reported.

Embedding journalists with presidential campaign teams proved to be a challenge for ethical and professional reportage. Most of the embedded reporters were facilitated by the campaign teams and at most had to act more or less like public relations officers of the candidate.

A journalist with *Mwananchi* newspaper, Peter Elias who was embedded in the CCM presidential candidate's campaign team was kicked out for what was allegedly unfavourable coverage. The disputed story was published with the headline: "*Dk. Magufuli akabilia na Ukawa Mbeya*," meaning "Magufuli has a face-off with Ukawa in Mbeya".

The story was based on an incident in Mbeya which is an Ukawa's stronghold where Dr. Magufuli's entourage encountered Chadema supporters who greeted him with party slogans and songs and the two figure opposition salute. Magufuli was reported to have halted his entourage and addressed the group requesting them to give him "people's power" so that he can ensure "Mbeya for Change" referring to the opposition party's slogans. However, soon after the story was published, Elias was told to leave the campaign team.

Although, the monitoring project did not expressly include online media, however, it was noted early in the monitoring exercise, that fake issues of major publications, *Mwananchi*, *Mtanzania*, *Nipashe* and *Rai* appeared online with fabricated stories painting the opposition in very bad light. This was quite a new phenomenon which took the media by surprise and shocked media managers who wrote scathing editorials to condemn the "hooliganism". They called upon the police and the Tanzania Communications Authority (TCRA) to take action. No action was taken by either of the two authorities until monitoring ended in February, 2016.

The best illustration of media responsibility was shown by newspapers on October 23, 2015, when nearly all major newspapers carried editorials appealing for peaceful conduct of the elections.

The decision to write common editorials urging for peaceful elections was reached at a meeting of editors who adopted the clarion call "there is life after the elections" which was also taken up by radio and television stations.

Some of the newspapers beseeched voters to cast their votes and accept the results amicably in order to maintain peace and order. Although there were those who criticized the media for the move saying that it was a ploy aimed at preparing the masses to accept the results without questioning, the media was generally credited for the move which may have helped to avert palpable fear that the elections results could have led to violence.

2.4.3 Zanzibar 2015 Elections Coverage

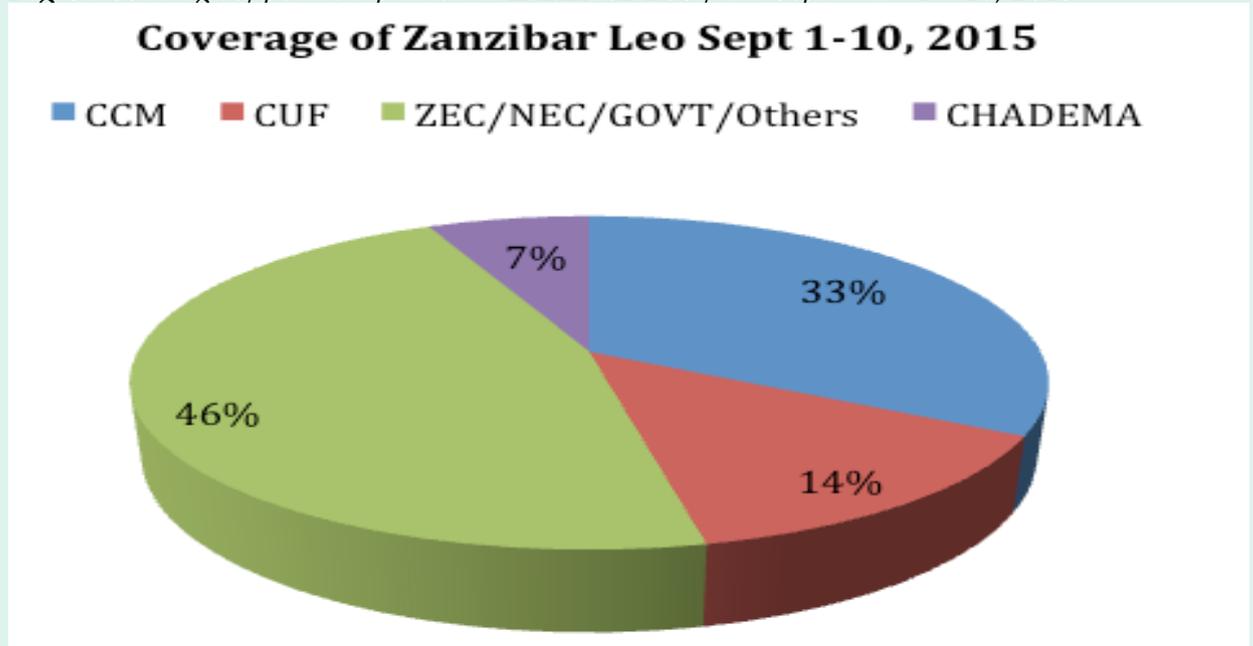
In an effort to make sure Zanzibar was visible in 2015 General Election, MCT monitored media on election reporting focusing on all articles regarding the Isles.

The Zanzibar political scene is dominated by two political parties, the ruling CCM and

the opposition Civic United Front (CUF). Consistently, throughout the election period, *Zanzibar Leo* gave more prominence in its coverage to the ruling party CCM and less coverage to other political parties especially so the main rival, CUF.

According to the first report for example, in the period monitored government owned newspaper *Zanzibar Leo* carried 88 stories on election. Twenty nine of the news accounting for 33% positively focused on the ruling party - CCM, whereas the major opposition party, CUF, had a paltry 12 articles or 14 percent. Chadema carted home 6 stories (7%) while the rest was shared by opposition parties, religious leaders, ZEC and NEC.

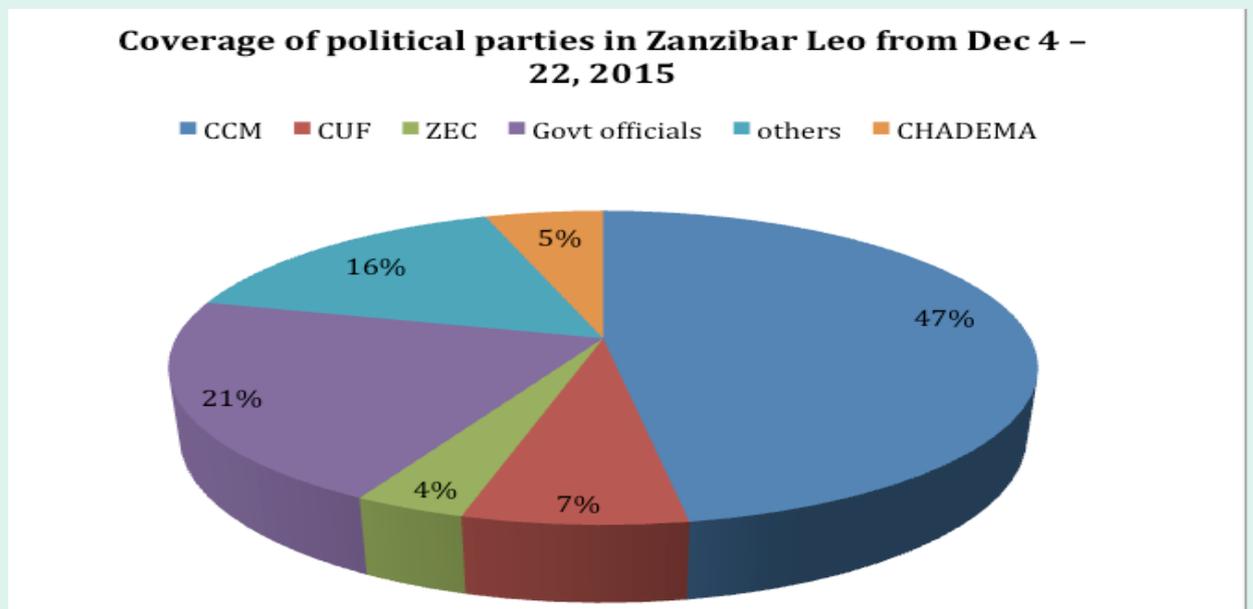
Fig 3: Coverage of political parties in Zanzibar Leo from September 1 - 10, 2015



The bias in the coverage is also illustrated in the report of December 4 to 22, 2015, whereby *Zanzibar Leo* published 57 stories on post-election issues.

The distribution of these stories as per sources showed CCM still had the highest coverage with 27 stories (47%), CUF - 4 stories (7%), Chadema - 3 stories (5%), ZEC - 2 stories (4%) and government officials - 12 stories (21%). Other 9 stories (16%) covered ordinary people, religious leaders, journalists, international organisations, police, Tadea and civil society organisations.

Fig 4: Coverage of political parties in Zanzibar Leo from Dec 4 - 22, 2015



The pattern of content distribution above shows that more articles were given to the ruling CCM party than Zanzibar's leading opposition party, CUF.

Another conspicuous trend of Zanzibar government owned *Zanzibar Leo* reportage was spin favouring CCM, providing it with positive reportage while disparaging the opposition.

For example on October 17, 2015 the newspaper carried a news article with the following headline: '*Balozi Seif avunja ngome ya CUF Pemba*' literally meaning "Ambassador Seif crushes CUF stronghold in Pemba." One of the paragraphs read as follows: '*Alisema inasikitisha hata viongozi hao wanapopatiwa fedha za mfuko wa jimbo huwa hawazifikishi katika majimbo na badala yake huzitumia kwa mambo yao binafsi*', meaning: "..... it is heartbreaking that these leaders misappropriate funds for constituency development by diverting them to private use".

This spin content reflects campaign propaganda captured from a rally though this could be turned into a meaningful election news story if CUF or those CUF's leaders to whom those allegations were aimed at were consulted for their opinion. Even ordinary citizens from constituencies where alleged funds were misappropriated could have provided useful balance of the story.

The report of October 23 -29, 2015 was characterized by two election phases. One phase was marked by the last two days of election campaigns, that is, 23rd and 24th October 2015.

Zanzibar Leo awarded ruling CCM massive coverage of its last two days of campaign, reported from simultaneous campaigns held both in Pemba and Unguja Islands. Although the main opposition party CUF mounted the same caliber of last ditch campaigns, this effort would not be given even the slightest mention in *Zanzibar Leo*.

Overall, ruling party CCM got 17 news stories (21%) while the CUF was given seven (9%) news stories. Chadema earned four stories (5%) only.

Beginning from the voting day through to the first four post election dates, ZEC attracted more media currency.

Zanzibar Leo newspaper granted ZEC 15 stories (19%) while NEC got 10 news stories (13%), the police got six stories (8%). The rest 11 stories (14%) were given to the other five opposition parties, religious leaders and election observers.

As indicated above, Zanzibar has one newspaper and thus she depends to a great extent on the newspapers based on the Mainland. At the kick off of the election campaigns, the coverage of Zanzibar election issues by mainland based papers was very sparse. Much attention was given to the Union presidential candidates especially after the crossing over of CCM's Edward Lowassa to Chadema where he was appointed candidate for the Ukawa coalition.

However, coverage did pick up quite strongly, as the campaigns continued and also in the post election reporting when the Zanzibar elections were annulled by the Zanzibar Electoral Commission (ZEC) Chairman.

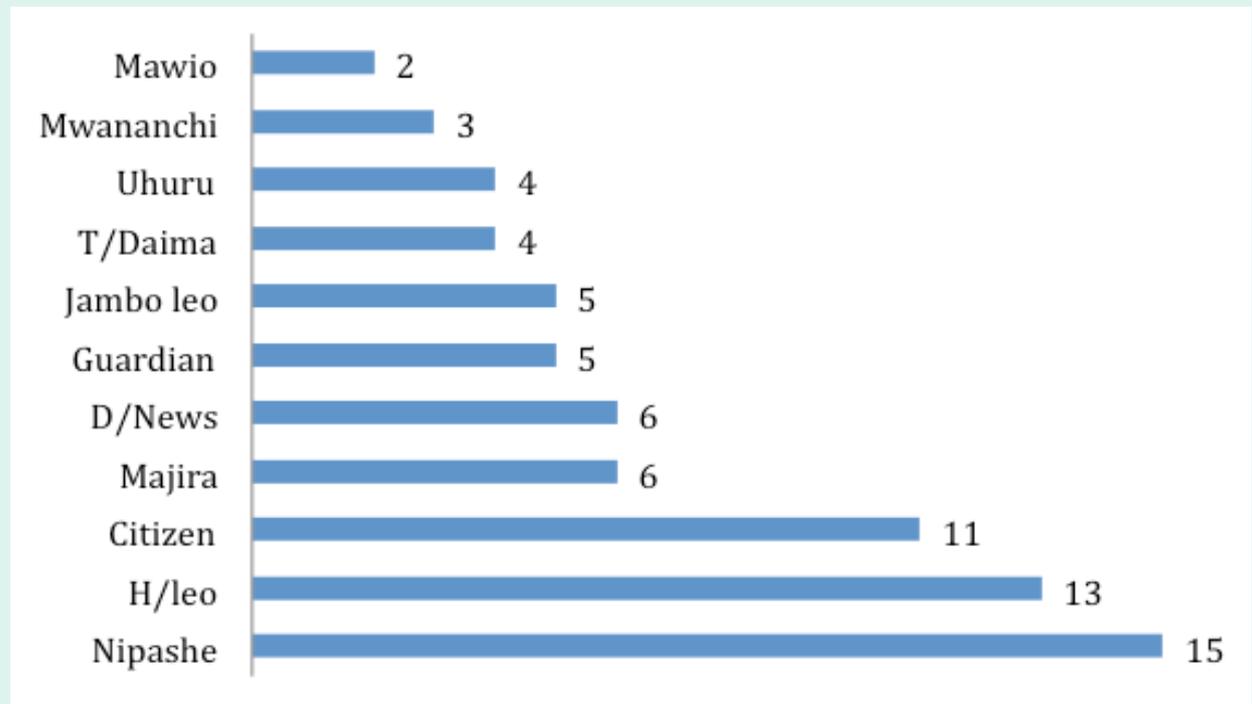
The biggest story on October 26, 2015 was the self declaration of the CUF presidential candidate Seif Sherrif Hamad as the winner of the elections by 52%. The government owned *Daily News* and *Habari Leo* did not carry this story. Perhaps it was prudence on their part because Sherrif's declaration was not blessed by ZEC, but interestingly enough, other newspapers found ways to report this turn of events without attracting the wrath of the law.

Several newspapers went with news straight as it was. *The Guardian* newspaper ran a front page story '*Police teargas CUF supporters as Hamad "declares victory"*'. *Mtanzania* newspaper

ran the story on page three with the headline ‘*Maalim ajitangazia ushindi Zanzibar*’ meaning Maalim Seif declares himself winner in Zanzibar. *Majira* newspaper ran a page six story with the headline “Mzee ‘Sawasawa’ ajitangaza mshindi Zanzibar”.

Jambo Leo approached the story from CCM’s point of view with a page one story headlined “*CCM yasikitika CUF kujitangazia ushindi*” meaning that CCM is saddened by CUF’s declaration of victory. *Mwananchi* newspaper also ran a front page story headlined “*Ulinzi waimarishwa Zanzibar*” meaning that security has been strengthened in Zanzibar.

Fig 5: Coverage of political parties in Zanzibar Leo from September 1 – 10, 2015



The ingenious treatment of the story especially by privately owned newspapers was illustrative of how media could report controversial stories without running foul of the authorities that be.

The saga of the cancellation of the Zanzibar elections was given wide coverage by most of the newspapers. There was however a conspicuous attempt to downplay the annulment by government owned media like *Zanzibar Leo*, *Habari Leo* and *Daily News*.

On the annulment of the elections by ZEC Chair, it would be rightly expected that *Zanzibar Leo* as the sole newspaper on the isles would have provided in-depth coverage of the elections saga. Yet it took a very controversial stand, siding with ZEC’s decision to cancel the elections and ignoring all counter views.

The paper’s editorial blackout of dissenting views implied censorship and for a media funded by the public, such a stand was undesirable. Interestingly, on November 5, 2015 the newspaper did publish a joint statement of four opposition parties: AFP, ACT- Wazalendo, ADC and TLP because they supported ZEC’s decision to annul the elections.

However, privately owned newspapers gave exemplary coverage to the unfolding crisis by providing in-depth coverage and analysis. *The Citizen* of November 1, 2015 carried a story headlined. “We are ready to lead a unity government” quoting sources from both CCM and CUF. The story had a comprehensive background and a wide range of sources and perspectives including international observers, legal experts and individual citizens. It was a good example of the role the media should play when there is a crisis.

2.4.4 Gender, people's voices and agenda setting

Gender visibility was also another challenge for most newspapers. It should be recalled that in the 2015 elections women and young people registered in high numbers. According to the National Electoral Commission (NEC), as many women as men registered in the voter's registration roll and that in some regions, there were more registered women voters than men. Also in the 2015 elections a lot more women vied for elective office as members of Parliament and as councilors. ACT- Wazalendo also fielded a woman presidential candidate while CCM's presidential running mate was a woman. Young people below the age of 35 years made up to 57 per cent of registered voters.

The majority of stories and articles published by monitored newspapers were mostly reflecting what was being said by politicians and especially the presidential candidates from the two heavy weights, CCM and Chadema representing the Ukawa coalition.

There are a few newspapers which made deliberate efforts to give the common person a voice. *Mwananchi* and its sister newspaper *The Citizen* had distinguished themselves throughout the monitoring period for providing space to others apart from politicians.

For example, *Mwananchi* newspaper regularly carried vox pop content which reflected various voices other than politicians. On September 30, 2015, on page 25, for instance, it carried a story headlined "*Je, serikali ijayo ije na vipaumbele gani?*" translated as "What should be the priorities of the next government?" It covered various views of the ordinary people regarding their take on priorities for the forthcoming new government, including views from women.

Bakari Machumu – Executive Editor, Mwananchi Communications Ltd., publishers of *Mwananchi*, *The Citizen* and *Mwanaspoti*.



According to Machumu, "Though the company had prepared itself for the coverage to ensure it observed professional ethics and regulations, the monitoring reports by MCT provided positive impact. The reports served as views of independent assessors providing the newspapers the opportunity to evaluate their performance".

He says salient elements that came out from the monitoring reports included balancing and multiple sourcing. "There was a mix-up on the issue of multiple sources. One would interview many people with the same view and imagine that was multiple sourcing while diversity was clearly lacking".

He adds that the *Mwananchi* Communications newspapers also avoided hate speech and bias. They took initiative to engage the youth by publishing their views on the elections as much as possible. As for

The newspaper also made clear efforts to analyse campaign pledges through editorials, opinion pieces and feature articles to clarify on electioneering propaganda. For example on September 30, 2015, an article was published with the headline "*Wagombea urais na*

hatima ya wazee wa Tanzania", which translates as "Presidential hopefuls and the destiny of the elderly in Tanzania". The content analysed promises made by presidential candidates on welfare spending and old age pension schemes as pledges for luring voters come October 25, 2015.

An example of deep analysis of election issues is *The Citizen's* article published on October 7, 2015 on page 20, which covered a manifesto-watch of all political parties headlined "Parties' stand on major issues", outlining major issues parties promised would get done, including constitutional reforms, once elected to power.

When it came to stories on women and gender issues, the challenge was not only in providing space to ordinary women and men concerning their aspirations and outlook, but it was also difficult for women aspiring to elective posts. Throughout the monitoring, women's voices seldom reached more than 10 per cent of the total coverage. There were as a matter of course, a few good examples of attempts to give space to women. For example, *The Daily News* through its pull out, *Women Magazine* of September 24, 2015, profiled ACT-Wazalendo presidential candidate Anna Mghwira with the headline: "Anna Mghwira: Tanzania's sole female presidential candidate".

During the period September 18 - 24, 2015, 87 per cent of the stories covered different campaign issues like land, water, electricity, economy, industries, leadership and infrastructure. Only 1 story (3%) was reported on corruption, 2 stories (4%) on constitutional reforms, while 3 (6%) were on gender issues.

Tanzania Daima published a gender feature on September 12, 2015 with a headline "Nafasi ya mwanamke katika uchaguzi" (Role of a woman in elections).

On gender, *Mwananchi* covered obstacles facing women in pastoralist societies impeding their effective participation in the 2015 elections. On September 23, 2015 an article was published headlined "Rushwa, mfumo dume kikwazo cha ushiriki jamii za wafugaji" (Corruption, patriarchy impede women participation). Women voices were also included in vox pops that were carried by *Mwananchi* as shown in the Monitoring Report for the period September 18 - 24, 2015.

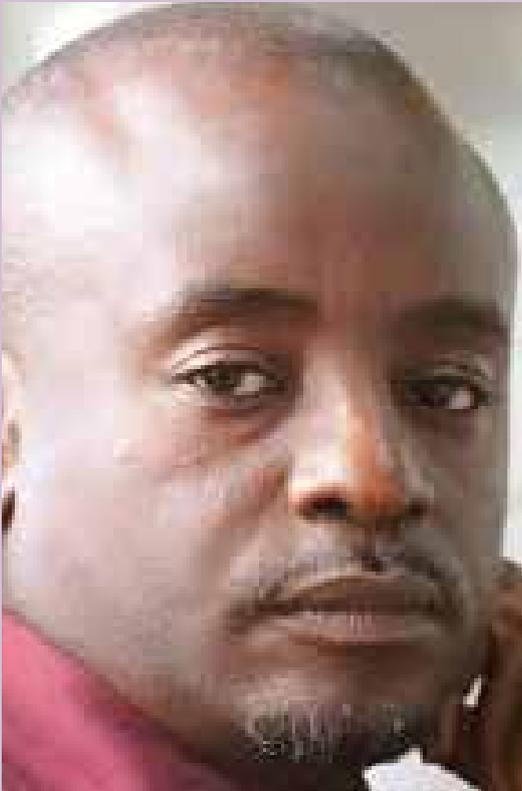
Women candidates' voices were also captured. On September 25, 2015 a feature article was published reflecting ACT-Wazalendo presidential hopeful Anna Mghwira's strategies for economic empowerment of women in Tanzania.

Habari Leo pull out of September 27, 2015 page 27 carried a column headlined "Wanawake, wanasiasa wasiwadanganye kwa zawadi za msimu" which translates as: "Women beware: politicians should not lure you with short-lived presents". This column warns women to be careful with politicians who use women during election seasons by providing them with petty gifts so as to earn their votes. Only 2 stories were on gender while constitution and corruption shared 1 story each.

Among 87 stories covered by *Zanzibar Leo* from September 18 to 24, 2015, only 19 (21.8%) articles touched on gender issues in the context of 2015 elections. Also among the 19 gender stories, only 4 stories (4.6%) granted ordinary women a voice, while the rest focused on women leaders mainly from CCM, and election candidates.

Jambo Leo also picked on women voices in the context of 2015 elections, but more prominently on October 4, 2015 when it profiled the quandary of woman candidate on ACT-Wazalendo ticket headlined: 'Eva Mpagama, Mgombea ACT anayetishiwa maisha kwa sababu ni mwanamke', translated as "ACT candidate Eva Mpagama life threatened due to her gender". Eva was vying for Chilonwa constituency seat in Dodoma but male chauvinists within her own party were allegedly unhappy about her candidacy. The threats on her life had been reported to police and ACT-Wazalendo hierarchy.

Jesse Kwayu - Executive Editor of The Guardian Ltd, publishers of *The Guardian* and *Nipashe* newspapers among others.



“The monitoring reports impacted immensely on how the newspapers *Nipashe* and *The Guardian* covered the elections. Actually the reports were the working tools for the group’s newspapers”.

As for hate speech Kwayu is quick to point out that this was something they were “scared of” from the very beginning and were “very careful not to fall into the trap of becoming purveyors of hate speech”.

On whether his papers were biased, he says they were not as they strived to balance between the two giants - Ukawa and the ruling CCM. He admits however that they did not give so much space to smaller parties, but pointed out that some of them did not even organise any activity during the election.

On CCM, he says though stories on CCM “did not sell”, they continued to give the party space on front page.

A particular notable feature story was published in *Habari Leo* of September 15, 2015 with the headline: *Wanawake watoa vipaumbele vyao katika Uchaguzi Mkuu* which means: “Women outline their priorities in the forthcoming election”. The feature was not only the most visible since the start of the campaigns on August 22, 2015, but also the most informative on what women wanted as far as the 2015 General Election was concerned.

Perhaps the most bizarre story of the election period was that covered in *Zanzibar Leo* concerning the alleged divorce of 47 women because they had voted for a candidate against the wishes of their husbands. This story, apparently based on a study done by TAMWA, was not properly authenticated and although it had the makings of a very interesting gender story, it died prematurely.

However, reportage of women candidates came to life after the polls when in a number of constituencies’ women candidates outwrestled seasoned politicians. Since the media had not given enough attention to the women candidates, their winning streak came as a surprise to the media.

Take for example the election of Bunda constituency where the incumbent, a long time politician and cabinet minister from CCM, Steven Wassira was defeated by a young woman politician Esther Bulaya from the opposition Chadema party who was a former Special Seats CCM MP before she crossed over to the opposition.

The MP for Ilemela constituency, the high profile Highness Kiwia from Chadema was ousted by a woman CCM candidate Angelina Mabula. Another seasoned politician and cabinet minister, Prof. Juma Kapuya was also sent packing by a woman candidate, Magdalena Sakaya from CUF.



On November 11, 2015, *Mwananchi* covered a gender story headlined:

'*Siku 67 za bahati kwa Dk. Tulia Ackson*' (The 67 lucky days of Dr. Tulia Ackson). The story outlined the meteoric rise of Dr. Ackson where within two months she moved from university don to Deputy Attorney General before she was elected the Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly.

CHAPTER THREE: ELECTRONIC MEDIA COVERAGE

3.1 Election agenda-setting

All electronic media outlets monitored had a clear agenda-setting editorial strategy during electoral campaigns, on the polling day and for post election events. Agenda-setting was also obvious on the coverage of the Zanzibar election crisis, brought about by the surprise unilateral nullification of 2015 Zanzibar elections by Zanzibar Election Commission chairman, Jecha Salim Jecha on December 28, 2015.

Content on 2015 elections was generated repeatedly, with increased frequency towards the last three weeks to the polling day, October 25 and thereafter reportage of election results and resultant petitions filed in courts of law by poll losers.

The thrust and vigour of editorial agenda-setting on 2015 elections was a notable media feat as all monitored outlets dedicated priority time and resources to gather and broadcast election news. With this show of professional prowess, broadcasters credibly contributed to the smooth conduct of 2015 elections.

Agenda-setting on 2015 Tanzania elections demonstrated strategic editorial choice to oil and fuel the critical democratic transition, by informing and engaging all stakeholders across the spectrum: the electorate, political parties and their contesting candidates, electoral management bodies and observers.

The aggressive elections coverage proved that media are essential to democracy, and a democratic election in a modern state is impossible without media. Electronic media especially ensured participatory process in 2015 elections where voters were enabled to engage in public debate and have adequate information about parties, policies, candidates and the election process itself in order to make informed choices. By setting the agenda straight, electronic media acted as the crucial watchdog to 2015 elections, safeguarding the transparency of the process.

3.2 Summary of findings

Regarding broadcast media, the 2015 Elections Media Monitoring Project made the following major observations:

- a) Electronic media devoted ample air time to voter education, electioneering

- and after polls events, playing a crucial role in ensuring high voter turnout and peaceful elections.
- b) The ruling party CCM received higher coverage in the electronic media compared to the opposition parties.
 - c) The CCM Presidential candidate and running mate and other candidates for Parliament and councillors received more coverage than those of the opposition parties.
 - d) The state run broadcasters both on Mainland and Zanzibar were heavily biased in favour of the ruling party.
 - e) Zanzibar state broadcaster systematically blacked out the main opposition party on the Isles, CUF.
 - f) Except for Star TV and RFA of the Sahara Media Group, private electronic media outlets were generally impartial.
 - g) Electronic media steered clear of hate speech and spin during election campaigns, on the polling day and through to post election period.
 - h) Generally no station could be said to have exhibited a clear and consistent editorial policy on gender matters.
 - i) The embedding of journalists in campaign teams of presidential candidates led to the embedded reporters' dispatches sounding more like PR communiqués rather than independent and objective reporting.

The October 23 – 29, 2015 period is picked to showcase how electronic media had set 2015 elections as their agenda of focus:

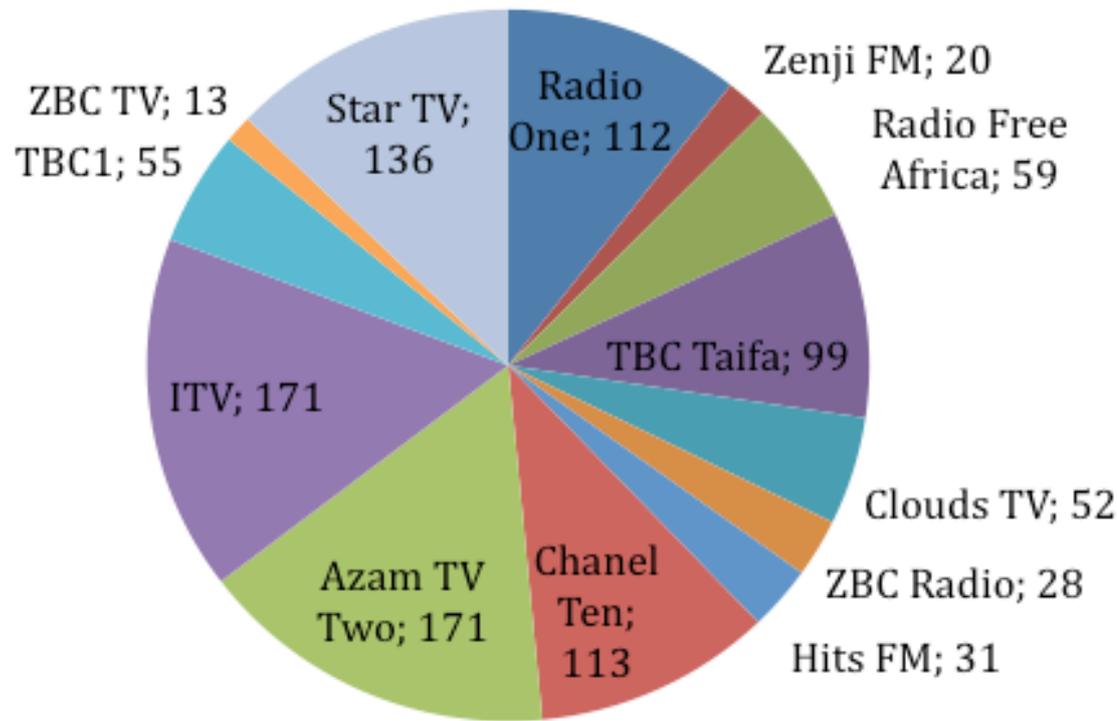
S/N	Media Outlet	Amount of Stories Aired
1	Radio One	112
2	Zenji FM	20
3	Radio Free Africa	59
4	TBC Taifa	99
5	Clouds TV	52
6	ZBC Radio	28
7	Hits FM	31
8	Chanel Ten	113
9	Azam TV Two	171
10	ITV	171
11	TBC1	55
12	ZBC TV	13
13	Star TV	136
	Total	1,060

3.3 Professionalism

3.3.1 Truth and Balance

Truth and only the truth was what were expected of 2015 election reportage. Where serious allegations were involved, it was important that right of reply was sought to balance content for fair reportage. For instance, on October 10 2015, *Radio Free Africa (RFA)* carried a news item that the Tanzania Teachers' Union leaders strongly dismissed allegations circulating on social media platforms that the Teachers' Union had offered CCM TZS 35bn/- to boost its election campaigns.

Fig 6: Election Coverage by different Media outlets for October 23 - 29, 2015



It was the RFA which first broke this controversial news but solely supported by a single source of the press release. Obviously, the Tanzania Communications Regulatory (TCRA), the police force and alleged CCM beneficiary would have been contacted to provide their version over the issue. (Not clear: if the Teachers' union is refuting claims attributed to it, why do you need police and TCRA for balance?) Unfortunately, this professional procedure was not observed.

The use of single sources was predominant in radio newscasts although this trend diminished towards the polling day, October 25, 2015 and during post election reportage.

On the voting day, October 25, 2015, *TBC Taifa* was able to report preliminary results released by returning officers from constituencies scattered in six regions of Lindi, Katavi, Dodoma, Kigoma, Tabora and Zanzibar. This broadcasting feat was possible because *TBC Taifa* had strategically stationed roving reporters across the country.

TBC Taifa gave ample actuality to returning officers in upcountry polling stations and this surely convinced audience beyond reasonable doubt that events aired were true and objective.

Similarly, RFA gave newsmakers and in particular NEC, huge actuality exposure. In fact, content for special NEC programmes was wholly dominated by NEC characters announcing official results as they trickled in from polling stations from across the country. This news gathering strategy ensured reportage of early voting results accurately.

Roving RFA journalists across regions reported 'on the spot' voting results, suggesting winners, losers and leading presidential candidates at the regional level.

Clearly, roving election news collection strategy at RFA proved quite efficient: On October 27, 2015 alone, RFA was able to report election results of over 60 constituencies as announced by respective returning officers.

The need of sticking to the right of reply principle was endlessly repeated in the Project's periodic reports, but this was not always paid heed to by the editors.

This was especially emphasized where serious allegations were involved. On October 21, 2015, serious allegations in the context of 2015 elections were reported by RFA after

content was collected from a civil society seminar in Tanga City and broadcast without balancing it first.

Dinnah Chahali – Editor of *Channel Ten*

“The monitoring reports had big impact on the station’s coverage of the election. The channel managed to check on balancing of stories following the observations of the monitoring reports”, she said. However, she explains that owing to financial limitations, the TV station could not be so independent in its coverage as its journalists were embedded in the two major camps – CCM and Ukawa, to the disadvantage of the other smaller parties.

It is pertinent, she notes, that in future her television station prepare and create a fund for election coverage to do away with over dependency on parties with financial clout.



A seminar participant had claimed that some notorious agents were roaming around Tanga City’s streets, alluring voters to sell their voters’ identity cards for between 5,000 and 10,000 shillings.

Even though this newscast was given the tribute of actuality, still this step alone in journalism was not enough to deal with such alarming allegations because even the person who made the allegation at the seminar could not provide proof, even circumstantial.

So, by the time RFA was airing that newscast, the quality of the content was still at the level of gossip, badly in need of more authoritative sources to bring it anywhere close to being objective.

Similarly, on October 19, 2015, RFA aired a newscast that quoted immigration officials as having nabbed over 700 suspected illegal immigrants in Kagera region with voters’ identity cards. No one can underestimate the sensitivity of this election newscast, and the fact that arresting 700 people is no mean feat.

Sadly, neither was actuality provided for this particular newscast, nor one of those alleged to have been arrested for illegal stay in the country interviewed in compliance with the right of reply principle of journalism.

By contrast, *ITV* showcased that balancing election news content was possible, especially when controversy was involved. For instance, on October 25, 2015, it reported that hundreds of eligible voters in Kimara ward in Dar es Salaam had complained to have failed to cast their ballots allegedly because voting materials had not been supplied to the various polling stations. NEC was in turn contacted and clarified that voting materials destined for Kimara ward had been vandalised by disgruntled election clerks, citing paltry pay for the job. NEC confirmed election for Kimara ward would be held on October 26, 2015.

3.3.2 Impartial Election Reportage

One measure of quality election reporting is impartiality. Impartial reporting is closely

related to accuracy. Accurate reporting is a precondition to impartiality; however, alone it is not sufficient. One-sided reporting that conveys the position of a favoured party or candidate without reporting alternative positions is biased election coverage. A news story that includes different points of view is always going to be a stronger and more balanced one.

3.3.3 Impartiality in State owned media outlets

State owned electronic media outlets failed miserably in this area. For example, during the whole October 2-8 monitoring week *TBC1* aired 43 election newscasts, giving 18 slots (42%) to CCM campaign activities, granting Chadema six news slots (14%), two (5%) went to ACT-Wazalendo and the remaining 17 stories (39%) went to the whole lot of other 2015 elections stakeholders.

On October 8, 2015 alone, CCM presidential candidate campaigns were given seven slots while CCM's main presidential challenger, Edward Lowassa was blacked out.

On October 6, 2015 CCM party received seven news slots while the Ukawa coalition was given two campaign newscasts and ACT-Wazalendo a single news slot.

There was no any opposition party story that was given lead newscast status. CCM campaign activities were always given precedence on news bulletins.

During October 2-8 week, *TBC1* gave CCM a total of 1:09 hours election news exposure for the whole week, Ukawa coalition 42 minutes, ACT- Wazalendo 03:56 and NEC was given 11:36 minutes respectively.

These details bring the understanding that *TBC1* failed to provide equitable coverage for candidates and parties, generally to the inconvenience of the opposition. While *TBC Taifa* arguably did better, as is shown elsewhere in this report, the Tanzania Broadcasting Corporation (TBC), in general, failed to fulfill its presumed public broadcasting obligation as a state funded media outlet of providing equitable treatment to all parties and candidates contesting the 2015 elections.

Again, during this period, election campaigns for hopeful legislators were covered but those of aspirant councilors were ignored by *TBC1*.

Like *TBC1*, *ZBC TV* was also excessively biased towards ruling party CCM. During October 9 - 15, 2015 period, *ZBC TV* aired 35 election newscasts, giving CCM election campaign activities 20 newscasts, equivalent to 57%. The major Zanzibar opposition party CUF campaigns were given five news slots only, equivalent to 14%, two stories went to ADC (6%), SAU got a single story (3%) The remaining seven stories (20%) went to other election stake holders.

On October 15, 2015, *ZBC TV* awarded Dr. John Pombe Magufuli and Dr Ali Mohamed Shein presidential campaigns at Chake Chake Pemba almost four hours, 4:26 minutes of actuality.

Even during campaign apex, *ZBC TV* (October 16 to 22, 2015) aired 37 news slots whereby CCM was given eleven (11) stories equivalent to 30%, CUF 5 newscasts (14%), ADC was given a single news story, equivalent to 3% while Chadema also had a single story. The rest went to the other stakeholders including government, ZEC, NEC, religious leaders and other players.

TBC Taifa did better than her sister state owned outlets both on Mainland and Zanzibar. During the October 2-8, 2015 week, it aired eight (8) election news items, giving opposition (Chadema) a slightly more exposure compared to its close rival CCM.

While Chadema was given three (3) news slots (37%), CCM got two (2) slots (25%).

On October 5, 2015, *TBC Taifa* showcased its commitment to equitable coverage of 2015 elections. It did so by airing a special post-news thirty (30) minutes campaign program for the Tanzania Labour Party (TLP) presidential candidate Maximillian Lymo.

During the October 9 - 15, 2015 week, it broadcasted seven (7) election newscasts. For the first time since the beginning of the marathon 2015 election campaigns, *TBC Taifa* practically ignored covering election activities of the two main contending political parties - CCM and Chadema - in favour of other parties previously underserved in their election newscasts.

In this regard, both Jahazi Asilia and Chama cha Ukombozi wa Umma (CHAUMMA parties received single newscast (14%) on the news bulletin monitored, while NEC received 2 newscasts (28%).

In particular, on October 12, 2015, *TBC Taifa* radio station granted CHAUMMA presidential aspirant Hashim Rungwe a whole 30 minutes of airtime broadcasting his campaign rally at Manzese suburb, Dar es Salaam.

3.3.4 Impartiality in Private media outlets

Except for *Star TV* and *RFA* of the Sahara Media Group, private electronic media outlets were generally impartial.

Star TV and *RFA*, even without having publicly endorsed CCM presidential candidate, went overboard in their bias towards CCM campaigns, and by extension, discriminating against the opposition parties. This was exhibited not only in the amount of airtime given to the ruling party, but also the angling and tonality of their broadcasts.

This was typically embodied in its September 25 - October 1, 2015 coverage of seventeen (17) election news slots by *Star TV*.

Newscasts promoting CCM campaigns were 11 (65%) while its main rival, Chadema was given two (2) news items only (12%). ACT-Wazalendo, both CUF and the National Electoral Commission (NEC) were each granted a single story.

There was a barrage of partisan advertisement spots for CCM on *Star TV* which gave CCM an edge against other political parties in terms of exposure to the electorate.

On September 26, 2015 during its 20:00 hours news bulletin, there was no single news item on 2015 elections aired. Yet, the same bulletin was garlanded with spots touting CCM presidential candidate and his election pledges (*Star tv* or *RFA*??).

On its part, *RFA* on its October 9 - 15, 2015 period election coverage for example, aired seven (7) election newscasts, allocating three (3) news items (27%) to CCM presidential candidate and allied parliamentary contesters. Chadema campaign activities received a single newscast (9%).

In the run-up to October 25 polling day *RFA* discriminated against campaign activities of the six other political parties participating in the 2015 elections.

Azam TV Two was an exemplary purveyor of impartial and equitable election reporting. This is partly testified by its October 9 - 15, 2015 broadcast of 46 newscasts whereby Chadema was awarded 10 (22%) election newscasts, followed by CCM with 8 (17%) slots. The other parties whose campaign activities were also aired include ACT *Wazalendo* with 5 (11%) slots, CUF with 1 (2%) slot, NLD got 2 (4%) slot, TLP obtained 2 (4%) and DP and NRA had single (2%) slots each. The rest went to other non political party stakeholders.

These facts prove that *Azan TV 2* was impartial, by treating most parties equitably. This does not rule out the fact that Chadema and CCM were granted more campaign coverage than other parties involved due to the superior intensity of their campaign activities, as

well as the fact that they fielded most candidates.

ITV was generally impartial on reporting 2015 elections. During the October 9 - 15 period for example, it aired 86 newscasts of which Chadema obtained 24 (28%) news slots, followed by CCM with 20 (23%) slots. The other contesting political parties were also given airtime such as CUF with 4 (5%) slots, ACT-Wazalendo obtained 6 (7%) news slots, CHAUMMA got 3 (3%) slots and TLP was awarded a single election newscast (1%). The rest went to other stakeholders.

The pattern reflects equitable reporting trend by awarding airtime to most political actors in 2015 elections.

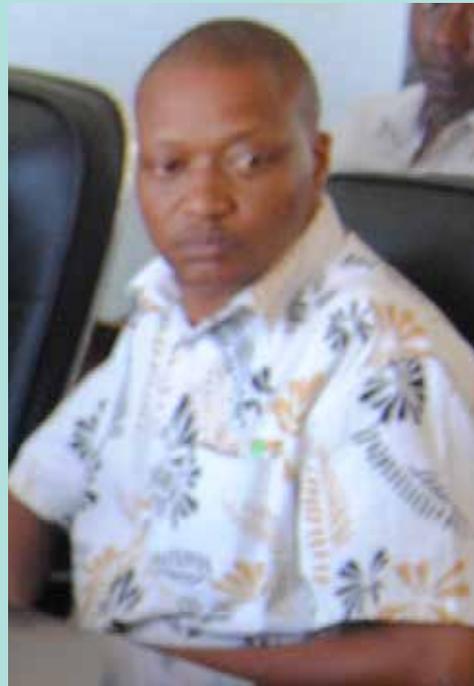
Even during peak campaign season (October 16 - 22, 2015), *ITV* aired 84 election newscasts, for which CCM election activities received 25 (30%) newscasts, Chadema was given 23 (27%) slots, ACT Wazalendo 5 (6%) slots, CHAUMMA got 3 (4%) slots and CUF with 2 (2%) newscasts.

Stephen Chuwa – Head of News and Current Affairs, *ITV*

Chuwa says the monitoring reports were useful as they helped them conform to professionalism in terms of balancing stories. They also reminded *ITV* to provide coverage to women as well.

“The reports”, says Chuwa, “Had initially indicated that *ITV* was not adequately covering women and that made us change. The reports also pointed out our inadequate coverage of the smaller parties and so we found ways of providing more space to these parties”.

As to why there were attempts by CCM zealots to harass *ITV* reporters on the suspicion that the TV station favoured Ukawa, Chuwa maintains that the station was not biased. “CCM did not like other parties, especially those in the Ukawa coalition, to be covered as well. They just wanted the station to cover CCM only”.



3.4 Challenge in Electronic Media

It was sometimes a challenge, according to feedback from editors, for electronic media to establish balance within a particular story. For example, a journalist may be assigned to a particular party campaign and will not have opportunity to seek comment from other parties. While appreciating such a situation, editors were reminded to do their best to make sure that different party positions on the same issue were reported not far apart. Those back in the newsroom could help by way of making phone calls. The Project’s periodic reports also insisted that compiling composite stories or running parallel stories that portray the different party positions would also go a long way towards ensuring that the public was informed comprehensively.

3.5 Crowd-sourcing

Azam TV 2 showcased how crowds could be tapped to produce quality, crowd-sourced journalism on 2015 elections.

For instance, on October 10, 2015 *Azam TV 2* harnessed the collective intelligence of Monduli district citizens regarding problems afflicting their different communities and how they expected the forthcoming president to solve them.

This marked the shift towards broadcasting of the public’s problems and expectations in election time, and an open call for proposals of ways of solving immediate community problems. Members of the public submitted both problems and expected solutions which were ultimately broadcast by *Azam TV 2* as election messages. Crowd-sourcing helped Monduli citizens to communicate directly with different political contestants, regardless of their political affiliation.

3.6 Vox pop coverage

Vox pop reportage was a less favoured broadcasting strategy during campaigns. This Project’s periodic reports also noted that when attempted, it was not always properly done, failing to engage the public meaningfully. A common weakness was to have respondents of similar views on the programme.

However, vox pop somewhat turned out to be a popular post election feature. For instance, during the October 30 - November 5 2015 period, *Azam TV 2* aired a special post election programme in the form of vox pop in which citizens from all walks of life were given a platform to express their expectations of the CCM’s presidential winner Dr. John Magufuli.

Similarly, vox pop and independent opinions aired by *ITV* during the same period reflected on the perceived integrity of Dr. Magufuli as a virtue that would move the country forward. They wanted him to live up to his election-time promises.

Hassan Mhelela – Chief Editor, *Azam TV*



To him the monitoring reports were quite useful because the TV station was new and wanted to be careful in covering the elections.

He says the monitoring reports helped them to provide equitable coverage, as well as providing balance and multiple sourcing.

“Though we were akin to the new kid on the block, our performance was good as reflected in the monitoring reports. We gave substantial space to candidates of other parties, such as Chaumba party’s presidential candidate Hashim Rungwe Spunda and UPDP’s Fahmi Dovuta. *Azam TV* also provided ample time to the youths and to gender issues”.

However, he points out that those political parties that did not have candidates for parliamentary seats could not get as much coverage as those that did.

3.7 Hate speech and spin

It is evident throughout this Project's fifteen periodic monitoring reports that the electronic media steered clear of hate speech and spin during election campaigns, on the polling day and through to post election period.

This trend was consistently praised by Project's periodic reports as credible professional conduct and editors realized it was a virtue worth carrying on.

Indeed, some electronic media outlets took the responsibility condemning the utterance of inflammatory statements during campaign rallies, as did *RFA* during October 16-22, 2015 period.

3.8 Gender

It was apparent from the periodic reports that most electronic media outlets had no clear editorial strategy on covering gender issues in the context of the 2015 elections. This is clear in the periodic reports in which gender aspects in 2015 Tanzania elections were scarcely spotted.

For instance, for the period October 30 – November 5, 2015, *ZBC TV* aired 15 election newscasts of true and accurate content due to their actuality. However, only one news item was supported by multiple sources collected during a vox pop involving both men and women speaking their minds about their post election feelings.

Even so, some sporadic attempts were monitored, a few quite outstanding, as on November 2 2015, when *Radio One* reported a typical case of gender discrimination in 2015 election processes.

It quoted a number of women from the Coast Region accusing their husbands of taking away their voter identity cards from them days before the polling date (October 25, 2015) hence denying them their democratic right to participate in 2015 elections. Unfortunately, there was no follow-up coverage on the matter and the story was not enriched with alternative sources, even rights groups.

TBC1 as well, in the period December 4 to 22, 2015 quoted two ordinary women from Dodoma while high profile women such as Deputy Cabinet ministers Dr. Susan Kolimba (Foreign), Anastazia Wambura (Information) and Misungwi District Commissioner Mwajuma Nyiruka were given chance to comment on the house demolition exercise in Dodoma and cholera outbreak in Misungwi District in Mwanza region. The ministers got opportunity to clarify how they would lead their portfolios in order to deliver according to government plans.

On its part, *Azam TV 2* often gave women voices a platform in seeking and sharing citizens' opinions regarding the procedures and processes of the election conduct.

In particular, gender based violence (GBV) in relation to the conduct of this election was reported on October 28, 2015 whereby a woman was reportedly assaulted by her husband allegedly for allowing his intuition to guide him that his wife will vote for CCM instead of the opposition camp.

On November 6, 2015, *TBC1* conducted a vox pop coverage reflecting voices of ordinary women in Arusha City. Four ordinary women were interviewed for 2 minutes. Despite congratulating President Magufuli for his presidential victory, they also expressed their expectations that the new President will live up to his election time pledges.

On the polling day and thereafter, *TBC1* reporting was evidently gender conscious as results for winning women candidates were presented in context with some women breaking into male dominated spheres.

Women as sources of election news was reflected at *Azam TV 2* station. For instance, Anna Mghwira, the presidential candidate for ACT *Wazalendo*, Samia Suluhu, presidential running mate for CCM were regularly given airtime as sources of news.

Another aspect of the gender in 2015 elections relates to the lead role given to women in some exciting aspects of the 2015 elections.

For instance, on October 18, 2015, a woman moderated the live broadcast of the presidential debate that was aired live by *Azam TV 2*.

Again, a woman lawyer was given sufficient actuality on October 22, 2015 at the *Azam TV 2* to clarify electoral legal matters.

However, on December 4, 2015, *Azam TV 2* channel was off the mark when its vox pop carried the voices of six males as they made their independent opinion about the content of the speech made by Dr. Magufuli on December 3, 2015 to address business community at the State House. No single woman voice was heard, symbolising lack of consistency on editorial policy on gender matters.

On December 10, 2015 *RFA* quoted gender rights groups reminding President John Magufuli to walk his talk on gender equity by appointing more women to key decision making positions, including cabinet line-up. *RFA* devoted 4.39 minutes for the two gender-lensed newscasts.

On September 28, 2015, *ITV* aired a special programme regarding the position of women in 2015 elections.

There were extremes of gender insensitivity, as shown by *Clouds FM* failure to give voice to any woman during October 23 – 29, 2015 period, to the extent that content was wholly dominated by men newsmakers.

Zanzibar privately owned *Hits FM Radio*, during the October 16 - 22, 2015 period provided sufficient airtime to Zanzibar Female Lawyers Association on issues pertaining to peaceful elections. This was like a platform of women discussing various aspects of 2015 elections in the context of peace building.

While, as shown above, there were incidences of gender reporting with some quite well handled, generally no station could be said to have exhibited that it had a clear and consistent editorial policy on gender matters.

3.9 Voters' Education

Electronic media outlets monitored played a commendable role in mass voter education dissemination which helped voters get ready, willing, and able to participate in 2015 elections. Reporting on voters' education was more vibrant during the last two weeks preceding the polling day, October 25, 2015.

In summary, the thrust of voter education reporting focused on facts such as the polling date, accreditation of polling booths, eligibility, how voter can verify registration, where to vote, how to vote, procedures, preparing for voting, commencement of voting, issuance of ballot paper, voting and election offences and penalties. Concerns of marginalised persons, especially people with disability were well reported.

Clouds FM for instance, on October 20, 2015, aired an election newscast on people with disability voters' education. It was reported from a voter's education workshop for which facilitators; participants and sponsors of the training were all given actuality. This news story had all sides and a vox pop content which ultimately ended getting an exposure of 5:45 minutes

On its part, for the period October 16 – 22, 2015 *Radio One* reported how The Society for

the Blind took issue with NEC for not doing much on voter education for its group and thus suspected they might not effectively be able take part in the polls on October 25.

In the same period, voters' education was given more emphasis by *ITV*, as it aired 17 (20%) voter education news slots.

For the period October 16 – 22, 2015, *Azam TV 2* aired 46 newscasts on 2015 general election whereby 15 (33%) news slots focused on voters' education.

Again, a woman lawyer was given sufficient actuality on October 22, 2015 at the *Azam TV 2* to clarify on electoral legal matters.

In the October 19 – 24 week, *ITV* gave prominence to NEC's electoral management activities through 5 news slots. The Commission had mostly been clarifying about issues raised by political parties and the public in the run-up to October 25 polling date.

A part of *Azam TV 2* professional feat was the repeated broadcast of a piece of light singsong verse whose content reminded the electorate to exercise their basic voting right on October 25, 2015 polling day.

Its coverage on NEC mostly clarified on the supposed distance of the position of the people from the polling stations after they cast their votes.

On October 12, 2015 during the post news bulletin segment on RFA NEC Chairperson Judge Damian Lubuva was given more than four (4) minutes of airtime to speak to voters.

3.10 Polarization

Sections of electronic media were caught up in the polarized election campaigns and propaganda blitz of political parties. Cases emerged of coverage getting slanted either towards the views of the opposition parties under the umbrella of Ukawa or the ruling party, CCM.

For example, during the campaign trails up to mid October 2015, the entire electronic media gravitated towards covering only two presidential candidates, Dr. John Magufuli (CCM) and Edward Lowassa (Ukawa coalition). The six other candidates, including the sole woman presidential contender, Anna Mghwira (ACT-Wazalendo) were generally ignored. After sustained criticism by the Project's monitoring reports, the trend changed noticeably two weeks to the run-up to October 2015 polling day, and thereafter.

3.11 Extreme Polarisation in Zanzibar

Coverage of Zanzibar suffered most from polarization. It was especially alarming for state owned electronic media outlets (*TBC1, TBC Taifa, ZBC-TV, ZBC-Radio*) which tended to become the mouth piece of the ruling party while discriminating against the electoral activities of the opposition camp.

Extreme trends were monitored during the period of the Zanzibar election crisis following the controversial cancelation of 2015 Zanzibar elections by ZEC chairman, Jecha Salim Jecha.

While it had emerged, and was widely reported that the main opposition party CUF had rejected participation in the repeat elections as announced by ZEC, those media outlets would never report this position. ZEC, and by proxy CCM position for poll re-run as antidote to the Zanzibar election crisis was given undue, one side prominence, leading to further political polarization.

Strangely, those media outlets chose not to report on the background of the political instability that faced Zanzibar. This made it difficult for a first time listeners to understand



the chain of electoral events which had plunged Zanzibar into the political abyss.

By contrast, the private TV and radio (*ITV, Star TV, AZAM TV 2 and Zenji FM*) performed impartially, reporting on the positions of both CCM-ZEC and CUF on the impasse, yet all sadly failed to provide background of the election crisis.

When media is entangled in such polarization in a political system where two-parties are dominant, like in Zanzibar, moderate voices lose power and influence over the crisis, as was seen in Zanzibar where civil society, religious bodies, women and the youth were marginalised by local electronic media.

Even the Project's reports warning on the dangers of *ZBC Radio* and *ZBC TV* taking extreme ideological positions in their reportage of the crisis did not help change their editorial attitudes.

Thanks to media pluralism, *Zenji FM* was an exception to polarised reportage of the Zanzibar crisis, as it fairly reported the positions of both CCM-ZEC and CUF. It went further to seek the independent views of civil society and religious leaders over the Zanzibar electoral deadlock. Interestingly, the station is owned by a Zanzibari CCM stalwart.

Commendably, the international broadcasters *BBC Swahili, Radio France International, Deutsche Welle* and *Voice of America* channels would always report comprehensively on the background of the political impasse in Zanzibar. This also included reporting opposing views of the main political protagonists on the Isles, CCM and CUF regarding participation in the ordered repeat elections on March 20, 2016. Independent analysts were often given space and time to enrich perspectives over the crisis.

CHAPTER FOUR: ASSAULT ON PRESS FREEDOM

4.1 Introduction

The 2015 General Election was the most fiercely contested since the re-introduction of multiparty political dispensation in the country. For the first time, the “grand old party” CCM looked in real trouble. Its presidential candidate was being given the run for his money. Heavyweight ministers were struggling to regain their seats. Election funding for the opposition was unprecedented even if it still could not match CCM’s, and the biggest city and commercial-industrial capital of the country, Dar es Salaam, was clearly pro-opposition.

The heat and excitement was contagious, and media was caught in the middle of the hustle and bustle. All the protagonists wanted to win over the media, and all of them did not like it when a media outlet appeared to undermine them in its reportage. Consequently, media houses were threatened and even attacked, and individual reporters assaulted or threatened. Data from MCT’s Press Freedom Violation Register indicate that more than half of the violations committed in 2015 were election related.

4.2 Media houses under attack

The situation explained above therefore led to several press freedom violations in the run up to and immediately after the elections as seen below.

4.2.1 Mawio newspaper banned

When the government deregistered *Mawio* newspaper in mid-January 2016, shock waves reverberated in the media industry. The Project publications *Election Monitor* and *Darubini ya Uchaguzi* published the Government notice number 55 issued on January 15, 2016 prohibiting the publication of the newspaper in the January 2016, editions. *Mawio*, a weekly tabloid was deregistered for what the government claimed was its “seditious style of presentation which threatened the peace, stability and security of the country”.

According the Minister for Information, Nape Nnauye, the newspaper which was widely read in Zanzibar had published news items with sensitive headlines. These were such as the one declaring Seif Sharrif Hamad – the Zanzibar presidential candidate for the opposition – as the winner of the Isles’ presidency, and another claiming that Zanzibar

was on the verge of bloodshed.

The tabloid ban was slapped on both the printed version using the Newspaper Act of 1976 and the online version using the Electronic and Postal Communications Act of 2010.

With the Zanzibar election poised for rerun, the government move scared media outlets, as the decision to deregister a newspaper threatened editorial independence.

The decision was not well received by media practitioners and stakeholders who viewed it as a continuation of official machinations to muzzle the press. The position of media stakeholders is that the government move to close or deregister publications is unacceptable as it denies people the right to access information which is fundamental and a basic constitutional and human right.

4.2.2 Hits FM torched

In Zanzibar, masked arsonists torched the studios of *Hits FM* on December 3, 2015 after overpowering security guards and staff on duty. Although the incident was reported to the police, no arrests had been made by the time the Project wound up.

There have been reported incidents of violent attacks on citizens by masked people, notoriously known as “zombies” in Zanzibar. The opposition has pointed out that those attacked are known opposition members or sympathizers. It does not help matters that the police have not been able to make any arrests and have at times refused to acknowledge the incidents.

While there was no clear proof that the criminal act against *Hits FM* was election related, the incident was enough to force the station to reassess their coverage of election news. The station manager, Hafidh Kassim was quoted in the press admitting that they are now more “cautious” with the news they air, and that they have discontinued live broadcasts with political element. “We now record first so that we have ample time to edit”, he said. The Council sees all this as adding up to self-censorship.

4.2.3 Swahiba FM suspended

On October 26, 2015 the Executive Secretary of the Zanzibar Broadcasting Commission, Chande Omar Omar issued a letter of a three month suspension to the management of *Swahiba FM*. The ostensible reason was that the station had announced Zanzibar presidential results contrary to the law which empowered only the ZEC to announce such results.

The truth of the matter is that the station had had the audacity to cover live CUF presidential candidate Seif Sharrif Hamad’s press conference. During the conference, Hamaad, who was also First Vice President, proclaimed himself winner in the presidential race.

Although Swahiba FM was punished for covering the event, no step was taken against the Vice President himself, and Mainland based media as well as international media proceeded to print and broadcast Hamad’s proclamation of victory. Two days later, without countering Hamad’s claims, the ZEC chairman annulled the elections.

4.2.4 Media magnate Reginald Mengi harassed

After CCM’s Magufuli was declared winner in the Union presidential race, what followed was for the NEC chairman to present him with the winner’s certificate. The event took place at Diamond Jubilee hall in Dar es Salaam on October 30, 2015. Mr. Reginald Mengi, a prominent businessman who owns a host of TV channels and newspapers, and is also the chairman of the Media Owners Association of Tanzania (MOAT), was also invited, and he attended.



Media owner Reginald Mengi (inset) being whisked away in the official car of the Minister for Foreign Affairs after he was harassed by some CCM zealots.

However, after the event Mr. Mengi was confronted by CCM zealots who heckled and booed him alongside reporters from ITV, a station he owned. The CCM supporters were apparently unhappy with the way the station had covered the election, accusing him and the station of hypocrisy and favouring the opposition.

As the situation got worse, Mengi was whisked away in one of CCM leaders' car.

4.3 Journalists under attack

The fact that more than half of press freedom violations in 2015 were election related was also noted in the Project publications. Journalists were harassed and assaulted in various places – during registration of voters up to the voting day October 25, 2015. The violations were committed by officers of law enforcement organs as well as mobs of supporters of political parties – mainly CCM and Ukawa zealots.

4.3.1 Mayhem in Zanzibar

Several journalists were roughed-up or beaten during the period leading to the elections. Those on record include Zanzibari freelance journalist, Omar Ali who was beaten by unknown assailants in June during the registration of voters in Zanzibar.

Coconut radio station was raided by a group of people who had their faces hidden in masks who were looking for journalist Ali Ahmed Abdurahman. The reporter had prepared a special programme on voters' registration. The raiders however could not identify Ali who was present and he managed to escape.

Correspondent Salma Said of *Deutsche Welle* and *Mwananchi* newspaper received a number of phone threats, intimidating her and warning her to stop "writing about the government" or else. The threats were reported in the Project newsletters and local media. She reported being tailed on several occasions as she drove to work or home, and even receiving death threats through text messages.

Her reports on *Deutsche Welle* about the "zombies" were dismissed by police commander

Salum Msangi, who said he had no knowledge of such people. The police commander went further and threatened to take action against doctors who attended to people claiming to have been assaulted by “zombies”. He said some of these people could be criminals who were injured as they attempted to carry out criminal acts. He said doctors should not attend to such patients unless they came with a police report.

4.3.2 Violations against Mainland reporters

A journalist with *Uhuru* newspaper, Christopher Lissa was beaten up by people alleged to be Chadema sympathisers while covering a demonstration of purported Chadema members opposed to the nomination of Edward Lowassa as the party’s presidential aspirant.

Reporter Masoud Maulid working for *Kyela FM* was arrested by police. He was one of the people demanding the announcement of election results. Maulid claimed that though he had left the place, the police caught up with him at his friend’s house and beat him up. He was arrested and charged.

The press reported that three journalists were mobbed by a group of up to 40 people when covering election related disputes in Ruanda village in Ruvuma. The mob was opposing CCM preferential voting procedures.

The journalists involved in scuffle were Cassian Nyandindi of *Business Times* newspaper, Aden Mbele and Pastory Mfaume of *Jogoo FM* of Songea.

Other reporters who reported violations against them were Felix Mwakyembe of *Raia Mwema*, Brandy Nelson and Ipyana Samson of *Mwananchi* who were denied access to information when *Kyela* Commanding Officer of Police, Jingi Lissu confiscated their phones and cameras during a fracas at a polling station.

In Moshi town two reporters, Luinda Kidemi and Oska Uroki of *Moshi FM* were assaulted by guards of a Parliamentary aspirant of Moshi urban constituency.

CHAPTER FIVE: ACHIEVEMENTS, CHALLENGES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Achievements

The Project enabled editors and reporters to get prompt feedback on their work. The evidence based feedback was important as it enabled them to critically look at their work and make necessary improvements. The reports were also read by some media owners and feedback we got was that the reports helped media owners to engage with editors, or vice versa, at a more objective and professional level. Civil society organizations, independent observers and interested foreign missions also had an opportunity of following up media performance during the critical period.

The following achievements were noted:

- a) Some media outlets improved on their sourcing, moving from predominantly single source reporting to multiple sources. There are others who improved on the aspect of multiplicity of perspectives, as some senior editors quoted elsewhere in this report testified.
- b) Media houses used the reports for internal capacity building. Mwananchi Communication Ltd, a major media house in the country, made the reports a crucial reference document for election reportage strategy in their newsroom. Its papers also used the reports as a source of news and published stories from the findings of the reports. The same applied to Nipashe newspaper published by another major media house, The Guardian Ltd.
- c) Newspapers improved in terms of objective reporting. A good example is Nipashe newspaper which improved on its coverage in terms of impartiality where the initial trend of being overly pro-opposition was mitigated as time went by and they started producing more balanced and objective election news reports. While there could have been other factors that contributed to this positive change, the fact that the monitoring reports were used as news sources would suggest that they were taken seriously by reporters' and editors' and had an impact on their performance. The Executive Editor is quoted elsewhere in this report saying the monitoring reports were used as "working tools" by the group's newspapers.

- d) Many media outlets increasingly improved on the aspect of providing equitable space and airtime for the competing political parties, including the smaller parties. There were clear efforts in this direction by media outlets like ITV, Radio One, The Citizen, Mwananchi, Mtanzania, and Zenji FM.
- e) The usefulness of the Project was also underlined by the fact that some media outlets that were left out of the sample kept asking to be included because they saw this as a unique chance of having their work assessed by an independent agent and getting objective feedback. Notable examples are the investigative weekly Jamhuri newspaper, as well as Azam TV which were eventually included in the sample.
- f) Feedback from stakeholders indicated that they found the reports very useful and that they could be used as a secondary source of information in the academia. For instance, the then Associate Dean of the School of Journalism and Mass Communication at the University of Dar es Salaam, Dr Ayub Rioba used the monitoring reports in his presentation during the 7th Convocation Symposium of the University of Dar es Salaam held on January 22, 2016. In his presentation, Dr Rioba praised the Council for the periodic monitoring reports.
- g) Independent assessment by media professionals also indicated appreciation for the work of the Project. For example, panellists in the morning Star TV Tuongee Asubuhi programme aired on February 27, 2016 and hosted at both their Mwanza and Dar es Salaam studios were unanimous in their praise of the work of the Project, particularly the periodic reports.
- h) Internally within the Council, the training that went with the project further built the capacity of the media monitors. They acquired new skills and the intensive monitoring exercise and daily report writing gave them the necessary experience and confidence to handle such big assignments in future.

Neville Meena - Editor, *Tanzania Daima*

He holds similar views to those of other editors on the monitoring reports produced by MCT, crediting them as very useful contributions during the elections and for the future as well.

However, he distinctly points out his concern that monitors could not separate views expressed in opinion articles and the position of the newspaper. "Due to this sometimes the paper was reflected in the monitoring reports as biased. It was not a proper observation as opinion remains as views of the author of the article and not necessarily reflecting the position of the paper", says Meena.



5.2 Challenges

While the Project registered notable achievements, there were several challenges during its implementation.

- a. The Project had been planned to start in August 2015 but could not take off on time because of logistical challenges following late disbursement of funds. The Project started in September 2015 and this also led to late training of monitors. There was no time, for example, for designing electronic monitoring prototypes and joint implementation of dry runs to attain compatibility with the Push Observer portal. The dry runs would have ensured that by the time the Project took off, both Push Observer experts and MCT monitor-cum-analysts were on the same page regarding the variables. This would have made the entire work a whole lot easier and more efficient.
- b. Sporadically, opening the portal from the Push Observer platform took a long time due to slow internet connectivity. Video and audio data requires fast connectivity and this was a challenge leading to monitors struggling to meet deadlines.
- c. Soon after the monitoring began, hacks and computer savvy political party operatives started designing and producing fake newspapers and disseminating them electronically. The fakes, complete with mastheads, carried very damaging stories on opposition candidates. While the mandate of the project was to monitor the genuine newspapers, this posed a dilemma because these fakes were posted on hacked websites, distributed online and read by a lot of unsuspecting Tanzanians. The question was, how should the Project deal with “newspapers” which were not the genuine newspapers? At the end, the Project decided to expose the fakes through its newsletters, *Election Monitor* and *Darubini ya Uchaguzi*.

5.3 Recommendations

The following recommendations are made from the experience of monitoring the 2015 General Election which, as earlier stated, was the most competitive since the return to multi-party political arrangement in Tanzania.

a) *Preliminary stakeholders' engagement*

Since elections media monitoring is a huge multi-stakeholder activity, the building of rapport is an important Project's preparatory work.

Knowing beforehand the ideas and expectations of key election players about media conduct would shape monitoring activity planning and organisation and the design of tools for content capture and eventual analysis. It is recommended that in future, sufficient time-lag between Project's preparations and the launching of election campaigns is provided for, so that the thinking of other stakeholders is also taken into account in the Project's operational framework. To achieve this, Project's documentation and funding disbursement will have to be realized way ahead of election campaigns.

b) *Monitoring the nomination process*

2015 experience has shown that the internal party nomination process is very important and can have considerable impact on the conduct and results of the elections. It would be prudent to see how media captured and reported this

stage of the democratic process. In 2015, for example, there is no doubt that the CCM presidential candidate nomination process had an impact on the elections, particularly with the axing of front runner Edward Lowassa who then crossed to the opposition.

c) *Comprehensive training*

As every general election comes with its distinctive features and challenges, so does media coverage and monitoring of those elections. Since media monitoring activity is time-sensitive, it has to be managed in an efficient and effective manner.

This will only happen when all actors involved in Project implementation are equipped, in time, with the relevant skills and competencies for delivering the Project's outcomes.

In this regard, comprehensive training component is necessary, even as it brings the Project's external service providers into the learning theatre so as to deliver as one. For instance, this Project hired the services of Push Observer, a media intelligence company to capture content and deliver it online.

Although Push Observer has the necessary technical capacity, it lacked the basic insights regarding elections media coverage, content labelling like campaign advertising and crowd sourcing.

In addition, Project staff and external service providers have to jointly master the practical understanding of the Project's implementation through dry runs as testing processes where the effects of a possible failure are deliberately mitigated. Again, this goal can be achieved if the Project's design and funding disbursement are realized, say, a month before commencement of actual monitoring activity.

d) *Monitoring feedback encounters*

Despite the use of newsletters and online platforms for sharing with stakeholders the periodic monitoring results, scheduled feedback encounters with some key players seems important as well. Future Project's design should consider hosting joint periodic debates and consultations guided by the monitoring results with important stakeholders such as editors, media owners, journalists' professional associations, government regulatory authorities, election management bodies, police force, political parties, and the Registrar of Political Parties.

The outcome of such encounters would oil and fuel the monitoring process for immediate impact and better final results.

Watching the Watchdog

Media plays a critical role in the proper functioning of a democracy. Its watchdog function during election times is manifested by its scrutiny and discussion of the competence, successes and failures of candidates, governments, party policies and manifestos, the efficiency of electoral management bodies and equally important, by the post election follow-up coverage. The media can inform the public on how effectively they have performed during elections and help them to hold to account those elected to positions of power.

Hence, the media are essential to democracy, and a free, fair and credible electoral process is impossible in modern times without the media. Indeed a free, fair and credible election without a free media would be a contradiction in terms.

The Media Council of Tanzania (MCT) undertook the 2015 Elections Media Monitoring Project from September 2015 to February 2016.

The aim of the Project was to conduct continuous monitoring of a sample of media outlets representative of the national media and bring out a fair picture of how media covered the elections.

Ethical conduct and professionalism in terms of multiple sourcing, treatment of hate speech, presentation of diversity of perspectives, balance, truth and fairness as well as impartiality were monitored. Special emphasis was placed on coverage of women as voters and candidates in the 2015 General Election as well as media treatment of development issues highlighted by parties and their candidates.

Thirteen daily newspapers were sampled, together with 16 weeklies, including weekend editions. These included the only daily published in Zanzibar. Eight local radio stations and seven local TV stations were monitored, including the Zanzibar state broadcaster. The media outlets were selected for their reach, but also consideration for Zanzibar coverage.

Fifteen periodical reports were published during the monitoring period, together with six issues of the English newsletter Election Monitor and its Kiswahili sister Darubini ya Uchaguzi. This report, written in a reader friendly style, sums up what was observed by MCT monitors and analysts.

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