

AFRICAN MEDIA BAROMETER

The first home grown analysis of the
media landscape in Africa

ZIMBABWE 2015





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The African Media Barometer (AMB)






The African Media Barometer (AMB) is an in-depth and comprehensive description and measurement system for national media environments on the African continent. Unlike other press surveys or media indices the AMB is a self-assessment exercise based on home-grown criteria derived from African Protocols and Declarations like the Declaration of Principles on Freedom of Expression in Africa (2002) by the African Commission for Human and Peoples' Rights. The instrument was jointly developed by fesmedia Africa, the Media Project of the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) in Africa, and the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) in 2004.

The African Media Barometer is an analytical exercise to measure the media situation in a given country which at the same time serves as a practical lobbying tool for media reform. Its results are presented to the public of the respective country to push for an improvement of the media situation using the AU-Declaration and other African standards as benchmarks. The recommendations of the AMB-reports are then integrated into the work of the 19 country offices of the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) in sub-Sahara Africa and into the advocacy efforts of other local media organisations like the Media Institute of Southern Africa.

Methodology and Scoring System

Every three to four years a panel of 10-12 experts, consisting of at least five media practitioners and five representatives from civil society, meets to assess the media situation in their own country. For 1½ days they discuss the national media environment according to 39 predetermined indicators. The discussion and scoring is moderated by an independent consultant who also edits the AMB-report.

After the discussion of one indicator, panel members allocate their individual scores to that respective indicator in an anonymous vote according to the following scale:

1	Country does not meet indicator	
2	Country meets only a few aspects of indicator	
3	Country meets some aspects of indicator	
4	Country meets most aspects of indicator	
5	Country meets all aspects of the indicator	

The sum of all individual indicator scores will be divided by the number of panel members to determine the average score for each indicator. These average indicator scores are added up to form average sector scores which then make up the overall country score.

Outcome

The final, qualitative report summarizes the general content of the discussion and provides the average score for each indicator plus sector scores and overall country score. In the report panellists are not quoted by name to protect them from possible repercussions. Over time the reports are measuring the media development in that particular country and should form the basis for a political discussion on media reform.

In countries where English is not the official language the report is published in a bilingual edition.

Implementing the African Media Barometer the offices of the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) and – in SADC countries the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) – only serve as a convener of the panel and as guarantor of the methodology. The content of the discussion and the report is owned by the panel of local experts and does not represent or reflect the view of FES or MISA.

In 2009 and again in 2013 the indicators were reviewed, amended, some new indicators were added and some were replaced.¹

By the end of 2013 the African Media Barometer had been held in 30 African countries, in some of them already for the fifth time.

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¹ Consequently, the comparison of some indicators of previous reports is not applicable (n/a) in some instances in which the indicator is new or has been amended considerably. Furthermore sector scores are not applicable (n/a) as indicators have been moved.



See above 30 AMB Countries (2005-2015)

African Media Barometer Zimbabwe 2015

Summary

Zimbabwe adopted a new constitution in 2013 after an outreach programme, effectively putting an end to the Lancaster House constitution that acted as the country's supreme law since 1980. The "inclusive government" formed by the Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) and two formations of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) negotiated the Constitution, which guarantees several 'first generation' political and civil rights, including the freedom of expression and of the media.

Despite adoption of a Constitution seen as progressive, the media operating environment has not transformed. Repressive laws such as the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA), Public Order and Security Act (POSA), Official Secrets Act (OSA) remain on the statute books. There is no effort by the government to align these pieces of legislation with the Constitution. The environment for freedom of expression remains restrictive and marked by existing harsh laws the state can invoke anytime. Although journalists and citizens do practice their right to freedom of expression to a certain extent, they do this with a high-level of fear. The mysterious disappearance of human rights activist Itai Dzamara in March 2014 and the random arrest of journalists justify the fear that permeates society.

Zimbabwe remains polarised along political lines. This polarisation manifests itself more strongly in the media and characterised by sharp divisions about how the media cover political and economic issues. This has compromised the media's democratic role and created a credibility crisis for the media. The continued media polarisation is without doubt the result of Zanu-PF's stranglehold over the state media, which propels propaganda for the ruling party. For instance, the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC), often gives the First Lady Grace Mugabe, who is also the Chairperson of Zanu-PF Women's League, huge amounts of airplay on its news platforms. This control of the ZBC is enabled by a partisan ZBC Board which the Minister of Information appoints, without any public involvement in the nomination process. Similarly, the Minister of Information, with the approval of the President, appoints the board of the country's broadcasting regulatory body, the Broadcasting Authority of Zimbabwe (BAZ). The private media has also exacerbated the polarisation by adopting journalistic practices that promote opposition politics.

Media integrity is also under siege because of decreasing professionalism among journalists. Causes contributing to the decline in the quality of news reporting include corruption in the media, poor calibre of journalists and the dearth of skills in the newsroom. There has also been an increase in “lapdog journalism” – whereby journalists have become puppets of certain politicians, musicians and increasingly religious organisations. Cases of unethical or shoddy journalism are not effectively investigated as the code for media regulatory body, the Voluntary Media Council (VMCZ), is not subscribed by all media houses due to polarisation between the private and state media. In addition, the VMCZ is seen as toothless as it has no deterrent mechanism for media houses carrying out irresponsible reporting, breaking the code, or refusing to submit to its authority.

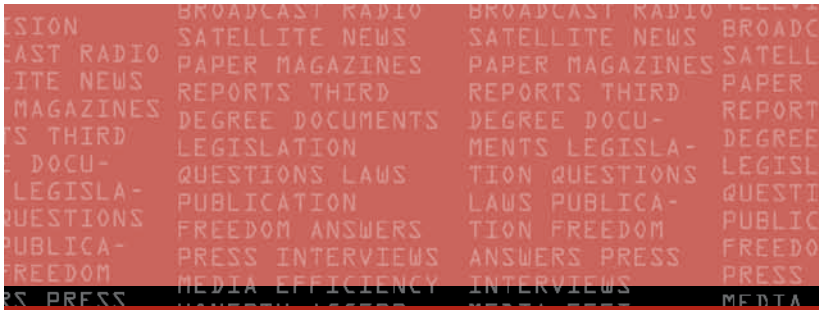
Media pluralism has moderately improved with the awarding of licenses to several radio stations. In 2012, two commercial licenses ZiFM and Star FM received operating licenses, thus breaking the decades old ZBC monopoly over the airwaves. In 2015, the BAZ awarded 8 more licenses, although only one station, Ya FM, has gone on air. There is concern that all these commercial radio stations have links to government or state-owned companies. But the government has refused to issue licenses to community broadcasters, despite a law, the Broadcasting Services’ Act, passed almost 15 years ago, that provides for a three-tier broadcasting system comprising public, commercial and community broadcasting stations. Although there are over 20 community radio initiatives clamouring for licenses, none has been granted a licence and many of them have found themselves under sustained attack from the authorities. For instance, in 2013, the police raided the offices of Radio Dialogue in Bulawayo and confiscated radio sets and interrogated the production manager. In 2015, state security agents raided Radio Kwelaz offices in the town of Kwekwe and seized laptops and hundreds of compact discs. Equally worrying, the BAZ has not awarded any television licenses and the state terrestrial television station remains the only one in the country.

Plurality of media outlets has not translated into a diversity of content. An inordinate amount of news is focused on politics at the expense of other social and economic news. There is narrow coverage of women and minorities groups. For instance, despite years of gender training offered to journalists and media houses, a recent baseline study commissioned by the Federation of African Media Women Zimbabwe (FAMWZ) shows that only 17% of voices in the media are those of women, with males making up the most of news sources. While there has been some improvement in gender representation, women continue to be stereotyped and caricatured in some media. Urban areas are also favoured with little focus given to rural areas. The lack of financial resources to some extent limits the ability of media houses to effectively represent the voices of all people in society. Lack of material resources also affect investigative journalism which is seriously lacking in the country.

Like other countries in the region, new media technologies (ICTs) have opened new avenues for exercising freedom of expression in Zimbabwe. Despite lack

of effective implementation of an ICT policy adopted in 2005, Zimbabwe has witnessed a remarkable growth in mobile phone and Internet penetration rates. As of end of 2014, Zimbabwe had a mobile phone penetration of 106% and internet reach of 47%. Although new media technology usage is nominally free from government interference, the spectre of surveillance hangs over citizens' heads. In 2007, the country set up a Monitoring of Interception of Communications Centre and passed the Interception of Communications Act (ICA) which allows state security authorities and the Zimbabwe Revenue Authority to spy on citizens' mobile phones and emails. The government is also planning to introduce a cyber-security law intended, among other issues, to deal with abuse of cyber platforms and social media "infractions". The Bill, if passed, would also allow government to remotely install forensic spying tools onto citizens' communication devices.

An imperative for Zimbabwe going forward is to harmonise existing legislation with the constitution. The new constitution presents an opportunity for Zimbabweans to reclaim civil rights like freedom of expression, the right to privacy and freedom of assembly that are currently under threat from the state.



SECTOR 1:

Freedom of expression, including freedom of the media, is effectively protected and promoted.



Freedom of expression, including freedom of the media, is effectively protected and promoted.

1.1 Freedom of expression, including freedom of the media, is guaranteed in the Constitution and supported by other pieces of legislation.

Zimbabwe's new constitution (Act 20 of 2013) guarantees freedom of expression and of the media in Chapter 4 under 'Fundamental Human Rights and Freedoms'. Article 61(1) of this chapter states that:

- (1) Every person has the right to freedom of expression, which includes—
- (a) freedom to seek, receive and communicate ideas and other information;
 - (b) freedom of artistic expression and scientific research and creativity; and
 - (c) academic freedom.

With respect to freedom of the media, Article 61(2) states:

- (2) Every person is entitled to freedom of the media, which freedom includes protection of the confidentiality of journalists' sources of information.

Although these freedoms are guaranteed in the constitution, they are not fully supported by other pieces of legislation, which are yet to be aligned with the new constitution. On the contrary, several existing laws "take away from the real exercise of freedom of expression."

"Section 61 conflicts with other legislation such as the AIPPA (Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act) and POSA (Public Order and Security Act), and there have been no deliberate efforts to align." "There's merely been talk of harmonising supporting legislation with the Constitution. But it's all talk, and no real action." No timeframe has been set for the harmonisation of these laws to take place.

A panellist remarked that it was important that a distinction be made between 'constitution' and 'constitutionalism'. "We have a brilliant constitution with a beautiful bill of rights, but the extent to which these freedoms are enjoyed by citizens is a different thing altogether. We might cry foul that the laws need to be aligned and so on, but the biggest worry is that the powers that be should guarantee citizens adherence to the constitution."

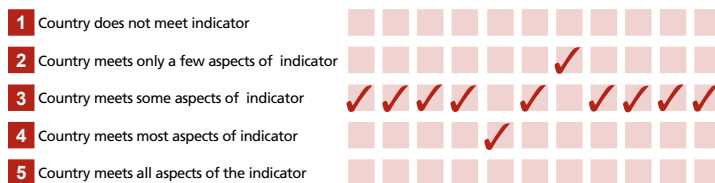
Despite the fact that Section 2 of the constitution guarantees the supremacy of the constitution, "the mere presence of statutes that conflict with the constitution

is concern enough because until such time that they are repealed, they remain in force.”

In early November 2015 at an Editors’ meeting in Harare, it was resolved that those present would petition government to align media-related laws with media freedom provisions in the constitution.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score:

3.0 (2012 = 2.3; 2010 = 1.6; 2008 = 1.8;
2006 = 1.3)

1.2 The right to freedom of expression is practised and citizens, including journalists, are asserting their rights without fear.

Citizens and journalists practice their right to freedom of expression to a certain extent, and with a high level of fear because of the legislative environment, and due to recent events. A few examples include the recent disappearance of political activist, Itai Dzamara, the arrest of journalists (including the 2014 arrests of News Day Editor Nevanji Madanhire reporter Moses Matenga and Zimbabwe Mail photojournalist Angela Jimu) and the 2011 arrest and detention of two Media Monitoring Project of Zimbabwe (MMPZ) advocacy officers Fadzai December and Molly Chimhanda, which struck fear amongst journalists for themselves and their families.¹ “So journalists aren’t free to assert their rights.”

Additionally, threats issued against the media “by the President’s wife Grace Mugabe and some government ministers are real because the people making them are the policy makers”. In addition, there are pieces of legislation that criminalise criticising the government, thereby curbing citizens and journalists’ ability to freely express themselves.

¹ The charges against the MMPZ staff were dropped in 2015.

One panellist argued: “Zimbabwe has a good environment for freedom of expression. But the big issue is freedom **after** expression. Freedom of Expression is circumstantial, and we have people that do a great deal of self-censoring.”

A journalist contextualised the conflict that exists with regards to journalists’ freedom of expression in the eyes of citizens. “I used to write for the *Daily News*, and when I wrote a critical piece, people would call me and warn me not to be critical, but when I wrote a piece that was seen as pro-government, those same people would call and question my pro stance.”

To some extent, however, journalists continue to be critical. One panellist argued, “There is freedom of expression to some extent. You see pieces that are critical of the First Lady, and journalists are not arrested for this. This is indicative that freedom of expression is there.”

Reference was also made to how playwrights and other artists are able to express themselves, even when critical of government. “There is free expression, although there are obstacles. For example, some laws can be used when going ‘below the belt’ with criticism.”

For Zimbabwean citizens, “the issue of fear is especially real”. “People are scared. There is intense fear and people are afraid. Even preaching in church or speaking at conferences, there is definitely fear.”

Panellists noted that this is especially the case during election periods. “Freedom of expression is seasonal! Towards elections, there are certain things you can’t freely express, but in between, it’s slightly different.”

One panellist posited that this high level of fear is more potent for citizens because they have less protection from abuse than journalists might have. “Being journalists provides some cushioning because if they touch you, the whole world will know. But citizens don’t have the same benefit.”

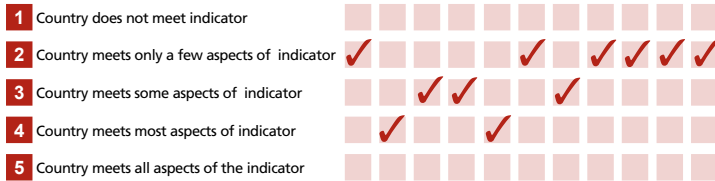
Where criticism is directed from also plays a role, as seen in social media circles where “locals don’t say much on social media, but those abroad do. Self-censorship is rife even on social media and in social circles. You always want to know whose around you.”

For instance, after the Baba Jukwa incident, many people closed their social media accounts and distanced themselves from his profile.²

2 Baba Jukwa” (Shona for “Jukwa’s father”) was a Facebook page which became very popular in the lead-up to the 2013 harmonised elections as it dished out a steady stream of secretive operations by the ruling party, including murder, assassination and corruption plots, voter intimidation and vote-rigging.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score:

**2.6 (2012 = 2.2; 2010 = 1.2; 2008 = 1.3;
2006 = 1.1)**

1.3 There are no laws or parts of laws restricting freedom of expression such as excessive official secrets, libel acts, legal requirements that restrict the entry into the journalistic profession or laws that unreasonably interfere with the functions of media.

Several laws exist that restrict freedom of expression.

The POSA Act states that police clearance is required in order to carry a march of a demonstration "and this is not an easy process, especially if you want to go past parliament."

The Official Secrets Act hampers access to information that is deemed to be secret. The Act covers any matter which the state may allege to be "prejudicial to the safety and interests of Zimbabwe". It does not define what is meant by the term "interests". Its provisions are exceedingly wide in scope.

Per the stipulations that exist in the AIPPA Act, even though journalists are able to practice their trade without accreditation, in order to access public information, they have to be accredited by the government. Attaining this accreditation is a cumbersome and restrictive process, and annual renewals are required.

"Your qualification doesn't grant that you'll be able to practice. The accreditation section of AIPPA requires that you have references. So unless you were able to publish articles while you were studying, it is difficult to be accredited as an entry journalist."

More recently, AIPPA has relaxed the reference requirement, and now accepts stamped letters from universities as references for journalists who have recently graduated into the profession.

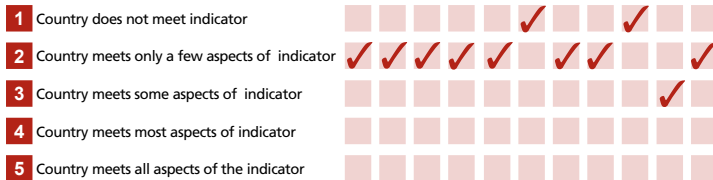
There have been other relaxations of the accreditation process, but despite these relaxations, there have been no changes to the letter of the law.

There are also provisions under the Criminal Law (Codification and Reform) Act of 2004 (with amendments in 2005, 2006 and 2007) that hamper practice by journalists. Section 31 of the Act, for example, criminalises the publication or communication of “a false statement prejudicial to the state”. Further, Section 33 of this Act states that any person who publicly makes a statement that could “engender feelings of hostility towards or cause hatred, contempt, or ridicule of the President or an acting President” or that makes an “abusive, indecent or obscene statement about or concerning the President” “shall be guilty of undermining the authority of or insulting the President.”

Additionally, in the Broadcasting Services Act (BSA), “the broadcasting authority doesn’t just regulate the airwaves, but also imposes restrictions on who comes in and who doesn’t.”

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score:

1.8 (2012 = n/a; 2010 = n/a; 2008 = n/a; 2006 = n/a)

1.4 The government makes every effort to honour regional and international instruments on freedom of expression and freedom of the media.

Zimbabwe has signed, amongst others, the African Charter, the SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the Windhoek Declaration on Promoting an Independent and Pluralistic Press.

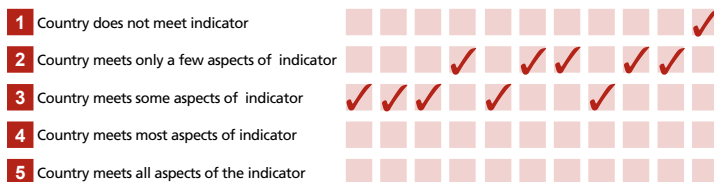
However, “we sign and ratify these instruments, but they are not domesticated so that people can benefit from the provision of these instruments.” “Even when we domesticate, we only pick what we may, and leave out things that should be promoting freedom of expression.”

Section 34 of Zimbabwe’s Constitution provides that “The State must ensure that all international conventions, treaties and agreements to which Zimbabwe is a party are incorporated into domestic law.”

Generally, citizens are unaware of the international instruments that government has signed or ratified, although it was pointed out by one panellist that a list of these instruments is available at the parliament library.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score:

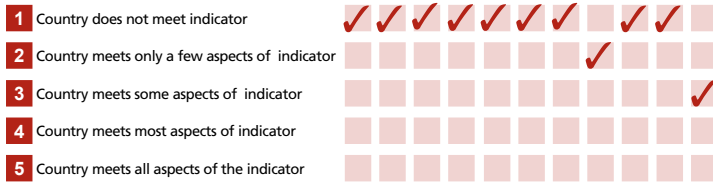
2.4 (2012 = 1.6; 2010 = 1.0; 2008 = n/a;
2006 = n/a)

1.5 Print publications are not required to obtain permission to publish from state authorities.

Print publications are required to obtain a licence through the Zimbabwe Media Commission (ZMC) in order to publish. A fee of USD 2,000 is required in order to obtain this licence.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score:

1.3 (2012 = 2.1; 2010 = 1.0; 2008 = n/a; 2006 = n/a)

1.6 Confidential sources of information are protected by law and/or the courts.

The confidentiality of sources of information is guaranteed in Section 61(2) of the Constitution, which states that “Every person is entitled to freedom of the media, which freedom includes protection of the confidentiality of journalists’ sources of information.”

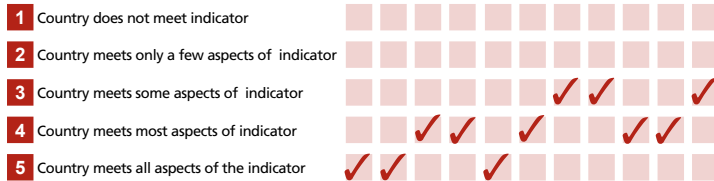
However, panellists were divided on the extent to which this provision is put into practice.

One panellist noted that “I am not aware of any cases in which journalists were forced to reveal their sources.” However, others cited incidences where the confidentiality of sources could have been compromised.

In March 2015, for example, there was a raid on The Source news agency following the granting of search and seizure order to Econet (and its banking unit, Steward Bank) by the High Court, filed ex parte, to retrieve information from the agency that may potentially have had information on the source. The constitutionality of the raid – particularly with respect to the freedom of expression by the media – was questioned by The Source and its lawyers.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score:

**4.0 (2012 = 3.0; 2010 = 1.4; 2008 = 1.2;
2006 = 1.0)**

1.7 Public information is easily accessible, guaranteed by law, to all citizens.

Section 62 of the constitution guarantees access to public information by stating that “Every Zimbabwean citizen or permanent resident, including juristic persons and the Zimbabwean media, has the right of access to any information held by the State or by any institution or agency of government at every level, in so far as the information is required in the interests of public accountability.”

In practice, however, information is not accessible. “If you try to get information from a public office, for example, they’ll quote AIPPA and tell you to send a letter of request. It will then take 90 days to get this information, and by that time it is out-dated for the purpose it was being sought.”

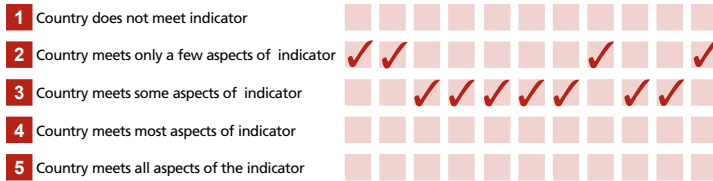
One panellist noted, “Citizens are guaranteed access to information, but those in possession of that information are not compelled to give out that info”.

In addition to the difficulty of gaining information as a journalist or a citizen in general, Zimbabwe also has an Official Secrets Act which limits the ease of obtaining information.

“We have these hierarchies of freedoms, where, for example, freedom of the press can’t override state security. You can only enjoy media freedom after state security is guaranteed. The two freedoms are not on par.”

Scores:

Individual scores:



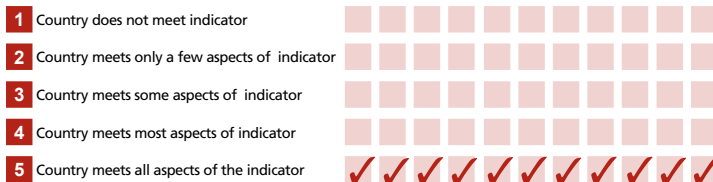
Average score: 2.6 (2012 = 2.5; 2010 = 1.9; 2008 = 1.2; 2006 = 1.1)

1.8 Websites, blogs and other digital platforms are not required to register with, or obtain permission, from state authorities.

Digital platforms do not require permission from state authorities to operate.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score: 5.0 (2012 = 4.9; 2010 = 5.0; 2008 = n/a; 2006 = n/a)

1.9 The state does not seek to block or filter Internet content unless in accordance with laws that provide for restrictions that serve a legitimate interest and are necessary in a democratic society, and which are applied by independent courts.

The Interception of Communications Act empowers government entities, with permission granted by the Minister of Information Communication Technology, Postal and Courier Services, to “lawfully” intercept communications, including internet communications, for up to three months without the knowledge of the owner(s) of those communications.

According to the Act, every Internet Service Provider (ISP) – under the advice of an established ‘monitoring centre’ – has to install equipment “to enable interception of communications at all times or when so required.” Telecommunications and postal service providers also have to keep up to date records of the contract users of their services and also central database with all registrations. Service providers who do not comply with these and other stipulations in the Act that call for their assistance may be found guilty of an offence and subject to fines and/or imprisonment.

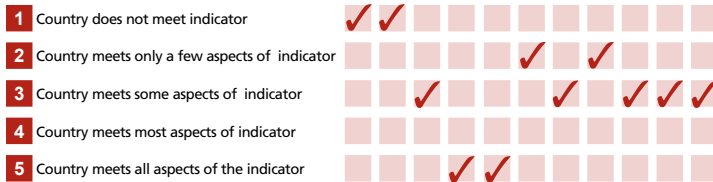
The example of Elizabeth Macheke Morgan Tsvangirai’s former wife, was cited, wherein in 2013, her phone and email communications were intercepted, and communication between her and a married man, Kennedy Ngirazi, extracted, regarding a meeting in Cape Town.

On social media, panellists noted that aside from the Baba Jukwa case, they didn’t know of any other sites that had “attracted government attention with such intensity.”

The Cyber Security Bill is currently in draft form, and has not yet been passed into law. It, however, outlines offences such as pornography, the handling of racist or xenophobic material, the illegal access or use of a computer and illegal interception, illegal data interference, data espionage, and so forth. Panellists noted that parts of this Bill could be unconstitutional, as they contradict Section 57 of the Constitution, as there is no proviso in this regard. Section 57 in the constitution protects the right to privacy. Section 57(d) in particular protects the privacy of citizens’ communications. “The thrust is freedom of privacy, but there is no proviso in terms of security, etc.” Additionally, both the Interception Act and the possible Cyber Secrecy Bill still need to be aligned to the new Constitution.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score:

**2.8 (2012 = 3.9; 2010 = 2.9; 2008 = n/a;
2006 = n/a)**

1.10 Civil society in general and media lobby groups actively advance the cause of media freedom.

A number of civil society organisations actively advance the cause of media freedom in Zimbabwe. Most notable among them are the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) - Zimbabwe, the Voluntary Media Council of Zimbabwe (VMCZ), Media Monitoring Project of Zimbabwe (MMPZ) and the Zimbabwe Union of Journalists (ZUJ).

However, although there is broad satisfaction with the work of these organisations, several gaps require redress.

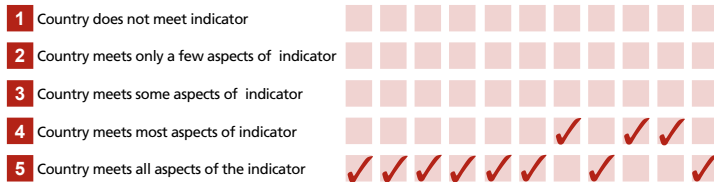
“There hasn’t been much in terms of advocacy for media laws, especially in terms of their alignment to the new Constitution. This shows there are some gaps to be addressed in terms of civil society in pushing the state to align these laws.”

Importantly, MISA Zimbabwe has been more engaging and has started packaging its messages in a way that is more accessible to everyone. The organisation has also been “very visible” on the issue of broadcasting digital migration, and was actively engaged in activities surrounding the recent efforts to have the criminal defamation act scrapped from the statute books.

The Media Alliance of Zimbabwe has also been active, and has come up with a number of programs. “Their documents are being used regionally and internationally to support the work that these different organisations are doing.”

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score:

**4.7 (2012 = 3.5; 2010 = 4.2; 2008 = 3.1;
2006 = 2.5)**

1.11 Media legislation evolves from meaningful consultations among state institutions, citizens and interest groups.

There has not been new media legislation since the last AMB (2012) although there have been a few amendments to existing legislation.

Generally, when laws are made, “it all happens in a black box. There are no inputs or anything, and the policymakers make the decisions. There is no meaningful consultation.”

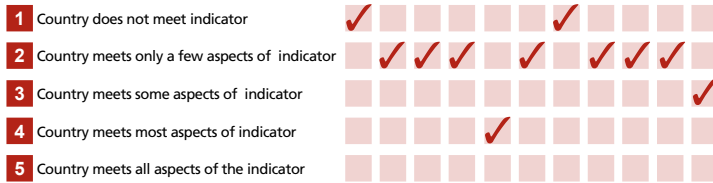
Where consultation does take place (oftentimes at short notice and without an active invitation for participation), it is not entirely meaningful because “little that was shared at those consultations is actually incorporated into the final legislation.”

The Information and Media Panel of Inquiry (IMPI) process provides an interesting case in point, in that on the positive side, broad consultation took place to bring about important recommendations to government on restrictive media laws that need to be reviewed or repealed. However, while the process was consultative, some felt that it was simply window-dressing, to appease people. The important indicator of whether the process was successful will be the implementation of the findings, which have not been acted upon to date.

“I’m not too optimistic that government will take everything (from the IMPI report). They had their consultations, with many people and lots of good input, but when they came out, no changes were made.”

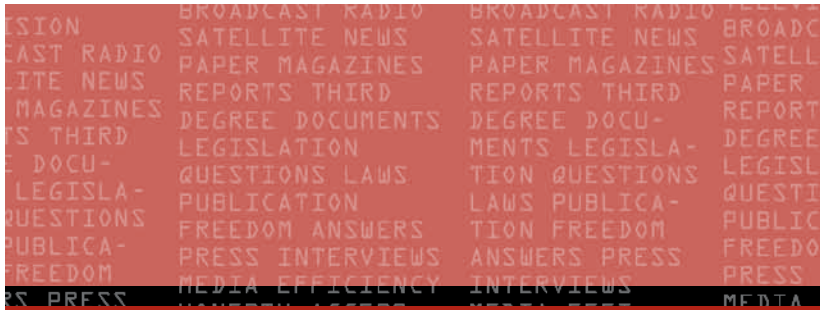
Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score: 2.1 (2012 = 2.1; 2010 = 1.6; 2008 = n/a; 2006 = n/a)

Average score for sector 1: 2.9



SECTOR 2:

The media landscape, including new media, is characterised by diversity, independence and sustainability.



The media landscape, including new media, is characterised by diversity, independence and sustainability.

2.1 A wide range of sources of information (print, broadcasting, internet, mobile phones) is accessible and affordable to citizens.

While a range of information sources exist (with a few new ones coming into print or being licenced to broadcast in the last few years), some media houses have had to shut down, primarily because of the poor economic situation.

New sources that have come to the media industry since the last AMB in 2012 include ZiFM and Star FM, which started operating in 2012, along with the licensing of 8 more commercial radio stations countrywide. These include Zimpaper's Diamond FM, AB Communications' Gogogoi FM and FAYA FM, Fairtalk Communications' Breeze FM and Skyz FM, YA FM and Kingstons' KE100.4FM and Nyaminyami FM. To date, only one of these YA FM, has become operational, and another – Diamond FM (of Zimpapers) – is doing test runs for broadcast in Mutare. No new TV licenses have been awarded.

On the downside, there was the closure of three newspapers: *Zimbabwe Mail*, the *Zimbabwean*, and the *Southern Eye*. The *Flame News* also closed during the period under review.

Print Media

Print media is accessed mainly in urban centers, and due to a partnership with Econet, papers published by Zimpapers can also be accessed online on MobiNews.

The economic crisis has greatly affected print media, with several newspapers – such as the *Zimbabwe Mail*, the *Zimbabwean*, and the *Southern Eye*, closing shop during the past three years.

The public dailies include *The Herald*, *Chronicle* and *H-Metro*. Private dailies include the *Daily News* and *Newsday*. Each of these papers – public and private – sells for USD1. This is considered a rather high amount to pay. To put this in context, a loaf of bread costs approximately the same amount.

Several weeklies also exist. These include, amongst others, the privately owned *Zimbabwe Independent* and the *Financial Gazette* which sell for USD2. The state-owned *Sunday Mail* and *Sunday News*, *Kwayedza* (a paper published in the Shona language) as well as the privately-owned *Standard go* for USD1, and

the state-owned Manica Post sells for USD0.80. Other weeklies include the *Daily News on Sunday*, *Weekend Post* and *Newsday Weekender*.

No new newspapers have come into print since the 2012 AMB exercise.

Television

Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC), which is state-owned, is the only local television service. Its reach is estimated at no more than 60%. It is also available on the South African based digital satellite television platform (DSTV), where Zimbabweans can access a slew of other channels from the region and beyond. With on-going efforts towards broadcasting digital migration, it is envisaged that more TV stations will open up, and/or that ZBC will be able to provide additional offerings/channels, although it would need to overcome content generation challenges.

Radio

With the highest number of transmitters across the country, the state-owned ZBC has approximately 80% coverage, and was the only local broadcaster with four stations until recently. Since the 2012 AMB, 8 more commercial radio stations have been licenced. Of these, YA FM recently became operational, and Diamond FM is currently conducting test runs.

Due to the restrictive nature of Broadcasting Services' Act, over the year's alternative broadcasting channels operating on shortwave have emerged. These stations – Radio Dialogue, CORAH FM, SW Radio Africa, Studio 7 and Radio Voice of the People – utilise a single platform offered by ChannelZim, a satellite television based radio platform operated from South Africa.

Some South African stations also have coverage in Zimbabwe.

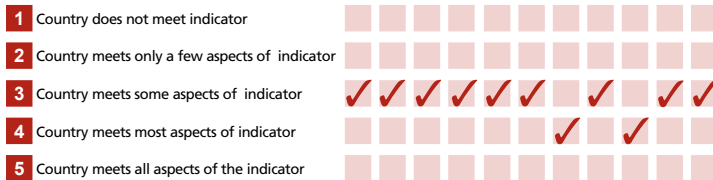
New Media

There has been increased access to mobile and online news sources. Mobile penetration is very high, and estimated at over 100%. Data, however, is expensive, with a home data package running a cost of about USD25-30 per month. Mobile data is considered more expensive than a general internet connection.

Popular online news sources include platforms such as *New Zimbabwe*, Nehanda Radio and Bulawayo24.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score:

3.2 (2012 = 2.9; 2010 = 2.1; 2008 = 2.3;
2006 = 1.3)

2.2 Citizens' access to domestic and international media sources is not restricted by state authorities.

There are no legal restrictions to citizens' accessing domestic or international news sources.

However, in February 2012, there was an attempt by government to bar unregistered foreign newspapers – specifically the critical *The Zimbabwean* and the *Sunday Times* – from circulating their papers in Zimbabwe, using the argument that foreign papers had to be registered in the country. The *Sunday Times* was out of circulation for about one week, and after its lawyers brought up a case, the paper went back into circulation.

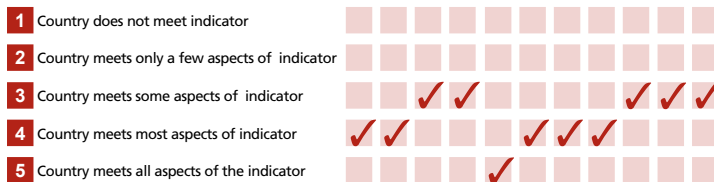
“These types of things are seasonal issues. The barring of the *Sunday Times* happened around election time.”

The Government does not bar international broadcasters from transmitting in the country, but people without satellite television do not have access to international news sources, as transmission is not made on terrestrial channels.

If foreign media houses want to set up offices in the country, the accompanying fees as prescribed by AIPPA are very high. Panellists viewed this as a form of restriction in itself.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score:

**3.6 (2012 = 2.8; 2010 = 2.3; 2008 = 2.8;
2006 = 1.2)**

2.3 The editorial independence of print media published by a public authority is protected adequately against undue political interference.

Section 61(4) of constitution states that:

All State-owned media of communication must

- be free to determine independently the editorial content of their broadcasts or other communications;
- be impartial; and
- afford fair opportunity for the presentation of divergent views and dissenting opinions.

However, what is set out in theory, is not necessarily done in practice.

As one panellist noted, “there is massive evidence in the public domain of state interference. Read *‘The Politics of Mass Media: A Personal Experience by Elias Rusike’*, which chronicles how in the 1980s and early 1990s stories were influenced, things planted, etc. They had situations where the Minister of Information would provide all the copy for the front page.”

The perception of state interference is so rife at all levels, that when there was once a change of Ministers of Information, because of the idea that the Minister sees the publication before he goes to bed, the incumbent minister “demanded that he see the paper before it goes to print. The editor refused to allow that, but that minister had the perception that that is what the predecessor was doing.”

A panellist from a state media house, however, contested the idea of state interference, noting that: “...I’ve been called to meetings by government officials to discuss issues; but in general, we don’t have interference from the state.”

From my experience, I have not seen anything other than a relationship with the shareholder." "I haven't had a phone call to tell me to drop a story. I have conversations with politicians, yes. But at the end of the day, it is up to the editor to make the decisions."

One panellist posited that a distinction would have to be drawn in terminology. "It's an issue of defining interference as opposed to general bias or even self-censorship."

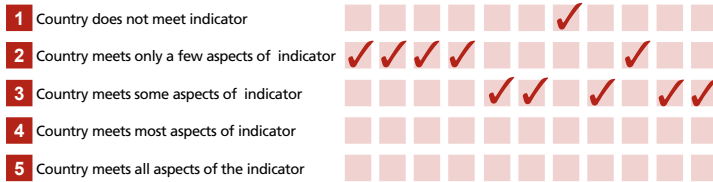
An example provided was that "when the President fell at the airport, *NewZimbabwean.com* and all other media houses reported on the fall. But The Herald said he broke the fall. Pictures were published online, (*The Herald's* reported that he had fallen), and the chief photographer's pictures were deleted."

Another example noted was that "when an editorial appeared in *The Herald* referring to the then presidential affairs minister (Didymus) Mutasa as a dwarf in giant's robes. The editor of the paper, Caesar Zvayi was suspended for a month for this."

Some panellists noted the interference is not only from government. However, it also stems from companies who use their advertising spend to influence editorial content.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score:

2.4 (2012 = 1.5; 2010 = 1.1; 2008 = 1.1; 2006 = 1.0)

2.4 Transparency of ownership of media houses in print/broadcasting is guaranteed by law and enforced.

Transparency of ownership is only guaranteed in so far as what is available on the records at the Deeds of Companies Office. There, the public is able to access information on the ownership of registered companies.

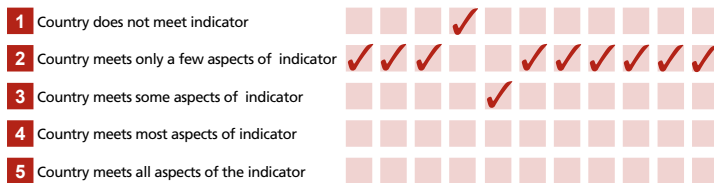
AIPPA also requires disclosure of ownership.

ZMC has full records of on media ownership in the broadcast sector, but it does not disclose this information on ownership structures to the public.

Panellists also expressed concern that there may be instances where those registered as owners on the company documents are simply proxies for the real shareholders. “There’s no transparency on ownership. You see a company and the directors of that company, but they may simply be there as fronts for the company.”

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score:

2.0 (2012 = n/a; 2010 = n/a; 2008 = n/a;
2006 = n/a)

2.5 Adequate competition legislation/regulation seeks to prevent media concentration and monopolies.

Zimbabwe’s competition and media laws do not adequately prevent media concentration.

While the Competition Act addresses monopolies in the business sector, it does not mention media.

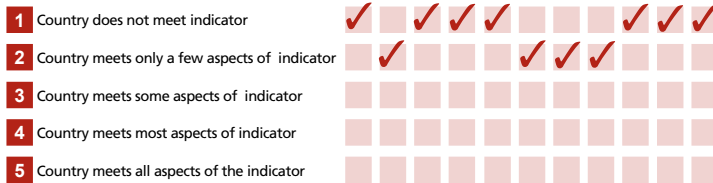
Furthermore, the Act does not look at the licensing regime, which itself imposes no restrictions or prohibitions in terms of media concentration or monopolies. AIPPA makes no mention of competition in the media industry.

Cross ownership is allowed, and is taking place. ZIFM, for example, plans to launch a TV station and a newspaper, Zimpapers has interests in both print and broadcast (radio) media.

“Competition outweighs diversity, so there is concentration.”

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score: 1.4 (2012 = 3.0; 2010 = 1.5; 2008 = 1.1; 2006 = 1.0)

2.6 Government promotes a diverse media landscape with economically sustainable and independent media outlets.

“The government is not showing any signs of promoting the media landscape.”

Economically, even in the midst of an economic crisis, media houses still have to contend with high taxes.

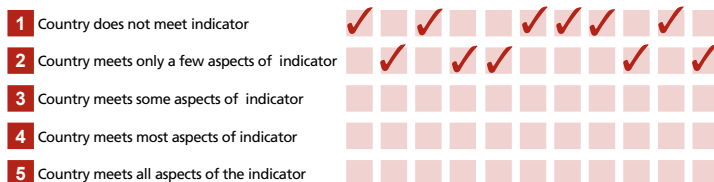
For newspapers, “we have to import newsprint, and we are taxed on that newsprint. This makes it very difficult to survive.”

In the broadcasting sector, several other taxes have to be paid, including to the Broadcasting Authority of Zimbabwe (BAZ), Transmedia the signal carrier, the Zimbabwe Music Rights Association (ZIMURA), ZMC, the National Arts Council and other mandatory taxes. “There are too many taxes, which compromise the profitability of ventures in this sector.”

The country’s taxation system is punitive and prohibitive for the media sector to grow and remain sustainable and compromises the diversity of the media.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score:

**1.5 (2012 = 2.2; 2010 = 1.3; 2008 = n/a;
2006 = n/a)**

2.7 All media fairly represent the voices of both women and men.

Women are not fairly represented in Zimbabwean media, and a recent baseline study commissioned by the Federation of African Media Women Zimbabwe (FAMWZ) shows that only 17% of voices in the media are those of women, with males making up the bulk of news sources.

While some panellists posited that “the problem is that women don’t want to deal with many of the issues covered by the media, and don’t want to speak or have their photos taken even for voxpops”; others argued that “women are ready to talk and provide insights, but the media haven’t used this. They all think it’s a men’s game.”

“Mainstreaming is what is lacking, and this should be everyone’s business, not just that of women.”

FAMWZ has worked hard to change the perception that there are no women sources, and has published a directory of female news sources called ‘According to Her: A Database of Women as Sources of News’. In addition, the organisation conducts extensive research on gender issues in the media.

Some panellists complained that “Female journalists themselves are not championing the cause,” but agreed that being a female journalist shouldn’t be solely about writing about women. “Journalists should be able to reflect society.”

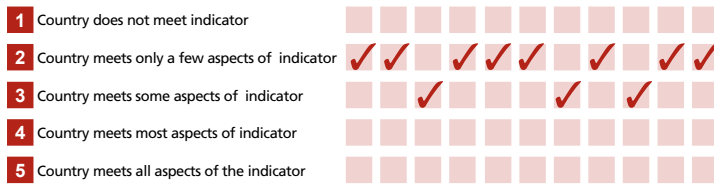
Panellists also complained that journalists lack the skills and training to effectively ensure that their reporting is balanced when it comes to ensuring the fair voices of men and women.

When women’s voices are carried, this is usually in their personal capacity, rather than in their professional capacity as sources for hard news, political coverage, and so forth. Additionally, coverage on women often portrays them “with a bit of mockery”, it showcases them as overly emotional, they are often sexualised in terms of their bodies, and the media usually places them in stories as victims, rather than as news sources and/or heroes.

No media house in the country has a gender policy except for Zimpapers news group which has a draft.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score: 2.3 (2012 = 2.2; 2010 = 1.3; 2008 = n/a; 2006 = n/a)

2.8 All media fairly represent the voices of society and its minorities in its ethnic, linguistic, religious diversity.

Not all voices in society are fairly represented, and the elite often enjoy greater representation. “The rich and the powerful get more prominent coverage.” “Ordinary people are also covered, but often in terms of crimes, etc.”

Panellists noted a problematic “news value system”, which is “not celebrating ordinary people in terms of their achievement.”

Even in cases where media outlets claim to have representation nationally, several areas are not covered or accessed for news content. “Almost always, media houses are limited to coverage in/of Harare, Bulawayo and Mutare.”

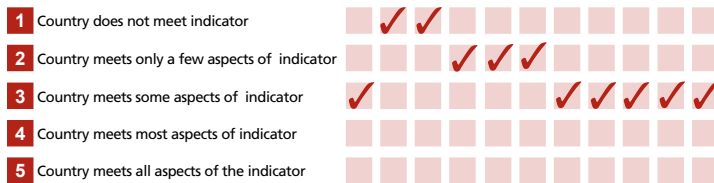
Where greater diversity is represented linguistically – such as in the *Kwayedza* paper written in Shona, issues covered are not always nationally relevant. “*Kwayedza* would be touching on different issues such as witches, as opposed to national issues.

The absence of community radio stations perpetuates this problem. “For as long as we don’t have community radios and other entities that might not be commercial, media won’t carry that diversity.”

The lack of financial resources also limits the ability of media houses to effectively represent the voices of all people in society. “The private media are operating on bare bones due to resources. As such, voices from far out won’t be found in the media. The private press doesn’t reflect all the issues that it should.”

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score:

**2.4 (2012 = 2.7; 2010 = 1.7; 2008 = n/a;
2006 = n/a)**

2.9 Media cover the full spectrum of economic, cultural, political, social, national and local perspectives and conduct investigative stories.

In general, there is an “over-obsession with covering politics at the expense of any other meaningful news.” “If you were a foreigner, you’d think only politicians exist in Zimbabwe” (based on media coverage).

Additionally, the different media report very differently on a single topic. “You get one story with different angles. But you have to read all the papers to get an idea of the real story, due to varied bias.”

On the positive side, however, although the focus is primarily on politics, collectively, the media also cover sports, business, lifestyle and so forth. “We are covering all these issues, and have different sections in the papers” for these topics. Headline news is usually reserved for political stories though. “The front page is based on what sells. And in Zimbabwe, politics sells! It’s a commercial decision.”

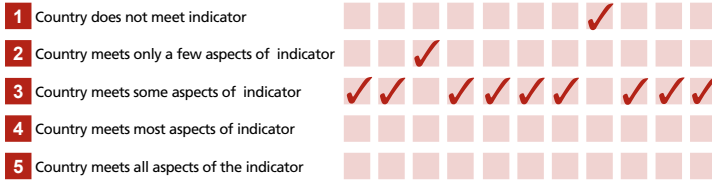
“We had a story once on the front page about Harare’s water being contaminated. Many people didn’t want to read the paper, and we had 28% returns.”

One panellist noted that politics usually take up pages 1 to 3 of the newspapers, development issues take up pages 4 to 7, and then other stories make up the rest of the paper. “Regardless of the commercial aspect, social stories have the higher number, but prominence is given to politics and business...the economy.”

Investigative journalism is seriously lacking. “There is no investigative journalism in Zimbabwe. What Zimbabwe claims is investigative, are documents issued by public bodies.” Where investigative journalism is attempted. “it’s a once-off case”. Panellists noted that greater focus should be placed on investigative journalism by media houses, journalists, and media training institutions.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score: 2.7 (2012 = 3.1; 2010 = 2.6; 2008 = 2.5; 2006 = 1.8)

2.10 Private broadcasters deliver a minimum of quality public interest programmes.

Because there are no local private television broadcasters, the discussion on this indicator centered on private radio stations.

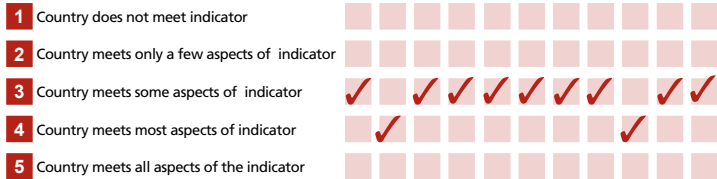
According to the Broadcasting Services Act, all broadcasters have a mandate to provide sufficient coverage on issues of national interest. The regulator also has a template on how these issues can be covered, with quotas on local languages and types of programmes.

Meeting these quotas is “still a work in progress” for most radio stations as they are “trying to find a balance”. Many broadcasters, for example, face difficulties in finding people who can do programmes in other languages.

For the most part, the various private radio stations also cover topical social issues, although much content is driven by government activity and advertising.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score:

**3.2 (2012 = n/a; 2010 = n/a; 2008 = n/a;
2006 = n/a)**

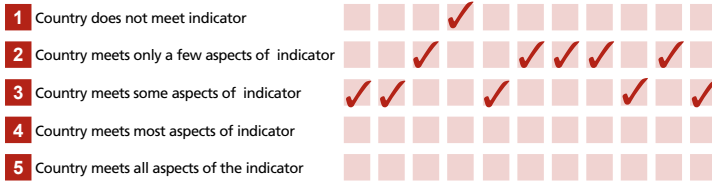
2.11 The country has a coherent ICT policy and/or the government implements promotional measures, which aim to meet the information needs of all citizens, including marginalised communities.

Zimbabwe has been using an ICT policy from 2005, but this is largely seen as outdated, and panellists were unaware of its existence. They were aware, however, of the Draft National ICT Policy presented to cabinet in early 2015, which started off with a consultative forum. Despite the absence of a working policy, however, there have been efforts to meet the country's information needs, and a digital migration policy currently exists, although Zimbabwe has not made the switch to digital as yet.

Many schools in rural areas also have the infrastructure required for the promotion of ICTs in school, "but the question is whether it's working."

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score: 2.4 (2012 = 2.9; 2010 = 1.2; 2008 = n/a; 2006 = n/a)

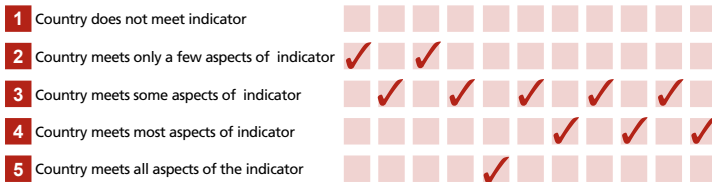
2.12 Government does not use its power over the placement of advertisements as a means to interfere with editorial content.

Government does not have the economic power to use the placement of advertisements as a means of interfering with editorial content. If it were to pull its advertising from private media outlets, this would not affect the sustainability of these media houses.

Rather than use advertising, “they use under-handed tactics” such as issuing threats.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score: 3.3 (2012 = 4.0; 2010 = 1.0; 2008 = 2.3; 2006 = 1.0)

2.13 The advertising market is large enough to support a diversity of media outlets.

Given the ongoing economic crisis in Zimbabwe, the advertising market is certainly not big enough to sustain a large number of media outlets. “The cake has become very small.”

“If you want to look at advertisers, they are very few, and much less than in the past. You can count them on one hand. So if you lose one of them, income can really take a hard knock.” There is no data, however, on the actual size or value of the advertising market.

This is problematic because it affects the objectivity of reporting in cases where large advertisers are concerned, as media outlets try to maintain positive relationships with these companies in order not to lose their advertising income.

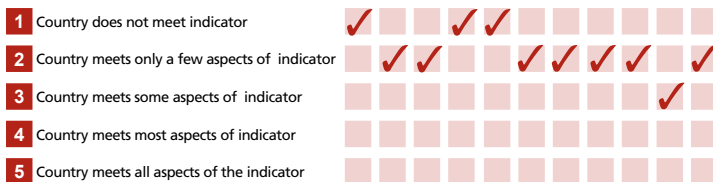
“The real concern threatening private newspapers is the companies. Companies use their advertising dollars as a weapon against them.”

Panellists highlighted examples where media houses had to either apologise for a negative story, or where they could not publicise a story, because of the risk of losing ad spend from certain companies. Examples were also noted where said companies threatened to pull advertising because of reportage deemed negative.

“These challenges are not only particular to companies with advertising, but also to political parties” that might advertise during election campaign periods.

Scores:

Individual scores:

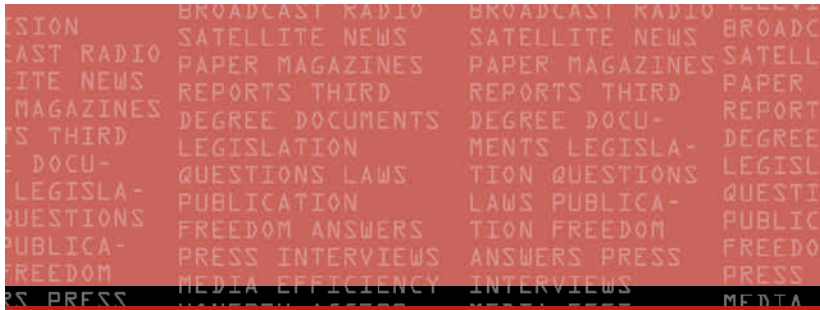


Average score:

**1.8 (2012 = 1.8; 2010 = 1.1; 2008 = 1.9;
2006 = 2.3)**

Average score for sector 2:

2.5



SECTOR 3:

Broadcasting regulation is transparent and independent; the state broadcaster is transformed into a truly public broadcaster.



Broadcasting regulation is transparent and independent; the State broadcaster is transformed into a truly public broadcaster.

3.1 Broadcasting legislation has been passed and is implemented that provides for a conducive environment for public, commercial and community broadcasting.

The broadcasting sector is regulated by the Broadcasting Services Act of 2001, which – amongst others – provides for “the functions, powers and duties of the Broadcasting Authority of Zimbabwe (BAZ); the constitution of the Authority; the planning, management, allocation, regulation and protection of the broadcasting frequency spectrum and the regulation and licensing of broadcasting services and systems; and programme standards”.

The Act also provides for public, commercial and community broadcasting, but to date, no community broadcasters have been licensed or are on air.

“We don’t have community radio stations because BAZ has not made any calls for licenses, although there have been some initiatives where people went to BAZ to seek community licenses,” but excuses such as how to define ‘community’ have been brought up by BAZ.

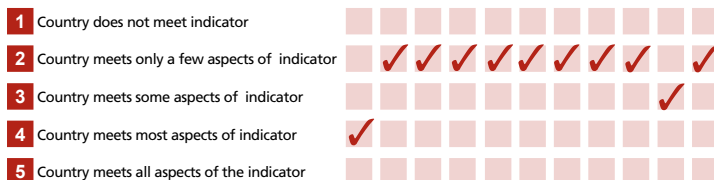
One panellist suggested that the non-licensing of community stations has to do with power. “For a government whose hegemony is threatened, they won’t grant community licensing.”

Although the BSA seeks to promote a diverse broadcast landscape, implementation is lacking. “When it comes to effectiveness vis-a-vis promoting diversity, it goes back to the issue of licensing and calling for application. The process of selection is not exactly transparent, and the regulator can use any criteria and get away with it.” “The law is being manipulated to favour specific people.”

Other legislation such as AIPPA and the Competition Act do not address licensing concerns in general, and the need for community radio in particular.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score:

2.3 (2012 = 1.8; 2010 = 1.3; 2008 = 1.1;
2006 = 1.0)

3.2 Broadcasting is regulated by an independent body that is adequately protected by law against interference and whose board is not dominated by any particular political party and is appointed – in an open way – involving civil society and not dominated by any particular political party.

The regulating authority for the broadcasting sector is BAZ, whose board is appointed by the Minister of Information, with the approval of the President.

Part II (4) of the Broadcasting Services Act states that:

1. The operations of the Authority shall, subject to this Act, be controlled and managed by a board to be known as the Broadcasting Authority of Zimbabwe Board.
2. Subject to subsection (3), the Board shall consist of not fewer than five members and not more than nine members appointed by the, minister after consultation with the president and in accordance with any directions that the president may give him.
3. In appointing the members of the board the minister shall endeavour to ensure that members are representative of groups or sectors of the community.

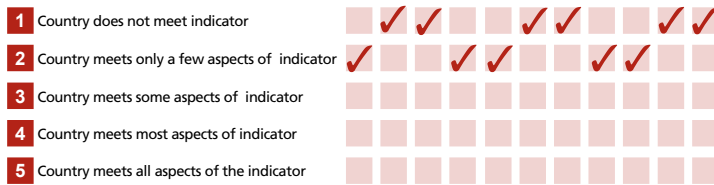
Section 249 of the constitution points out that the board of the Zimbabwe Media Commission, which also has direct bearing on broadcasting landscape, is appointed by the president "after consultation with the Committee on Standing Rules and Orders." According to the Constitution, this board (made up of a chairperson and 8 other board members) "must be chosen for their integrity and their competence in administration and their knowledge and understanding of human rights issues and the best practices in media matters."

The process of selection is, however, not transparent, with overlapping functions often being assigned. “The CEO of ZMC is also the chairperson of BAZ. And at one point, the ZMC was instructed to write to the Chair of BAZ. He had to write to himself!”

ZANU-PF also dominates the process. “During the time of the inclusive government, with Amendment 19,³ we had people from the different parties engaged. Since then, what has been happening?”

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score:

1.5 (2012 = 1.1; 2010 = 1.0; 2008 = n/a; 2006 = n/a)

3.3 The body, which regulates broadcasting services and licenses, does so in the public interest and ensures fairness and a diversity of views broadly representing society at large.

Past licensing processes have demonstrated that procedures were not carried out fairly, or in the public interest, and that the process is politicised. Additionally, calls for licence applications for community radio remain lacking, and whether licensing procedures reflect a diversity of views broadly representing society is therefore questionable.

Nothing has come of the public hearings for licensing that have been held, and “when people were licenced, they were the same as those granted licenses in the previous round, and they have been linked to the ruling party.”

“The issue is that BAZ is not answerable after the hearings.”

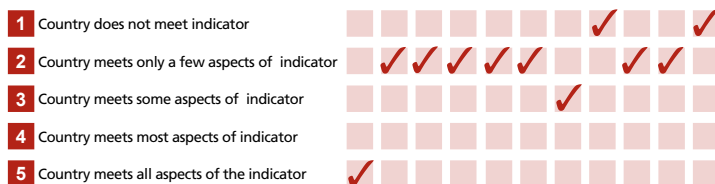
3 Amendment 19 of the Constitution brought into law a power-sharing deal signed between President Robert Mugabe, leader of the ZANU-PF party, Morgan Tsvangirai, leader of the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), and Arthur Mutambara, an MDC breakaway party, on 15 September 2008.

Those awarded licenses – i.e. transport minister Obert Mpofu and AB Communications – are viewed as having been favoured in the process because of their closeness to the minister. “In a public court of opinion, it is clear that the whole thing of saying we are going to have hearings doesn’t work when decisions are already predetermined.”

The first two commercial radio stations granted licenses in 2011 – ZiFM and Star FM – are owned by the current minister of information, communication and technology, Supa Mandiwanzira and Zimpapers respectively. The 8 radio stations granted licenses by BAZ in February 2015 are also believed to be politically aligned.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score:

2.2 (2012 = 1.2; 2010 = 1.0; 2008 = 1.0;
2006 = 1.0)

3.4 The state/public broadcaster is accountable to the public through an independent board which is representative of society at large and selected in an independent, open and transparent manner.

In line with the provisions of the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation Act of 2001, the ZBC board is appointed by the minister of information, and the public is not at all involved in the nomination process.

The current board was constituted in 2014, and is made up of Father Gibson Munyoro, Dr Ndabezinhle Dlodlo, Ms Joyce Jenje-Makwenda, Mr Gelfand Kausiyo, Mr Donald Khumalo, Professor Charity Manyeruke, Ms Rudo Mudavanhu, Dr Cleopatra Matanhire-Mutisi and Mr Blessing Rugara. While board members come from diverse professional backgrounds, the objectivity of some of them has been questioned, as they are viewed to be linked to the ruling party.

The independence of the board is debatable, and although the ZBC Commercialisation Act is in place, it is not being implemented, and its status is ambiguous as it is governed by the ZBC Act of 2001. In addition to the minister appointing the board, he is also involved in the promotion and demotion of executives at ZBC.

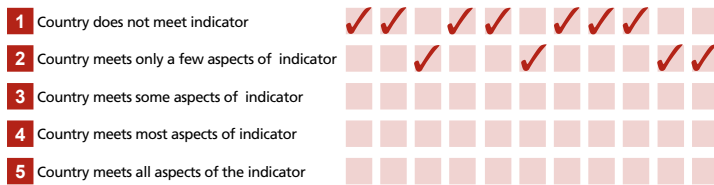
“The board is not independent because when it fired/suspended executives at ZBC who had been implicated in looting, the then minister lashed out at the board, and those who had just been let go were reappointed.”

“The long and short of it is that it’s just a ZANU-PF thing. ZBC is not a public broadcaster! It’s a state broadcaster.”

In some cases, bulletins have been sent to the permanent secretary at the ministry of information for vetting before being aired.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score: 1.5 (2012 = 1.3; 2010 = 1.1; 2008 = 1.0; 2006 = 1.0)

3.5 The editorial independence of the state/public broadcaster from political influence is guaranteed by law and practised to ensure balanced and fair news and current affairs programmes.

Section 61 of the constitution states that:

All State-owned media of communication must--

- a. be free to determine independently the editorial content of their broadcasts or other communications;
- b. be impartial; and
- c. afford fair opportunity for the presentation of divergent views and dissenting opinions.

However, the Broadcasting Services' Act is silent on the independence of the state broadcaster.

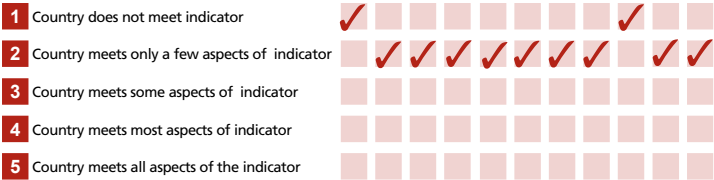
"There is a possibility of allowance of state interference from the government in general in the state media (not just state broadcaster)."

Examples cited include delays in the news bulletins caused by the ministry of information; the affording of more airtime to ZANU-PF compared to other political parties during the 2013 election; the strong bias of ZBC journalists towards ZANU-PF; and the suspension of a ZBC media worker for mentioning President Mugabe's Malawian origins.⁴

"The coverage of ZANU-PF definitely takes prominence over other parties. For example, there was a time when the ZBC covered a ZANU-PF rally live, then covered it again in the news, and then after the news presented a special edition on the First Lady."

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score: 1.8 (2012 = n/a; 2010 = n/a; 2008 = n/a; 2006 = n/a)

3.6 The state/public broadcaster is adequately funded in a manner that protects it from political interference through its budget and from commercial pressure.

ZBC draws its funding from licence fees and advertising, and claims that it does not receive money from parliament, although there is a statutory provision for this. With regards to advertising, it does not face much commercial pressure because it is the only television station, although advertising has been affected by its coverage. For example, when ZBC once linked Joice Mujuru, former vice president to Telecel, the company appeared to withdraw advertising from the station for a while.

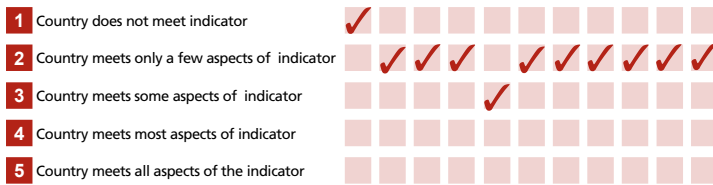
⁴ It is widely believed that President Mugabe's father is Gabriel Matibili who comes from Malawi.

Despite the above-mentioned funding sources, however, the ZBC is still not adequately funded, and there have been times when it has been unable to pay its workers. The broadcaster embarked on a multi-pronged approach to recover money from its debtors, including engaging the police to force these debtors to pay.

Some argue, however, that the broadcaster is sufficiently funded, but is losing resources to corruption. “ZBC is mobilising a lot of money, but the elephant in the room at ZBC is corruption. Resources are not being properly deployed.” Audit reports have also highlighted the mismanagement of funds at ZBC.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score: 2.0 (2012 = 1.5; 2010 = 1.1; 2008 = n/a; 2006 = n/a)

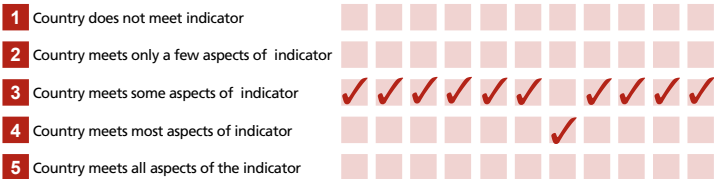
3.7 The state/public broadcaster offers diverse programming formats for all interests including local content and quality public interest programmes.

On television, the quality of programming is deemed very poor, with limited diversity in terms of content. “Yesterday, ZBC themselves admitted they were bad. The issue is on content. They admitted they were poor on content, and lack creativity and skills in this regard.”

However, ZBC is positively recognised for its radio programming. “On radio, ZBC is very good and very competitive.” Radio Zimbabwe (ZBC) has the highest followership, with a wide diversity of programmes conducted in different languages.

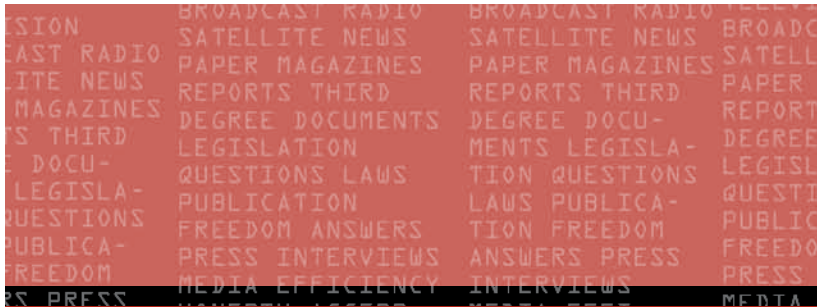
Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score: 3.1 (2012 = n/a; 2010 = n/a; 2008 = n/a; 2006 = n/a)

Average score for sector 3: 2.0



SECTOR 4:

The media practise high levels of professional standards.



The media practise high levels of professional standards.

4.1 The standard of reporting follows the basic principles of accuracy and fairness.

Improvements in the standard of reporting are desperately needed, with problems in accuracy and fairness being primarily due to the high level of political polarisation in the media.

“It is difficult to get a true picture of what is happening. You find that you get three or four different versions of what transpired at one event from the media; and you need to read all the papers and decide what you think is the true picture. It’s like you get extremes, and then you have to balance it all for yourself.”

The level of accuracy and fairness in a report also depends on what is being reported about, and journalists are more consistent across the board when it comes to budget numbers and so forth.

“On politically neutral issues there’s more balance. But on issues with a political flavour, we must appreciate that the media is polarised and it depends on the media house and editorial policy. It all has to do with polarisation.”

Issues regarding accuracy are visible from the high number of corrections and retractions that take place. “The media don’t verify their facts.” “The system of reporting is not as thorough as it should be.”

Panellists noted the large number of stories with spelling mistakes, mistakes in people’s names, titles, or on figures, “unnamed sources” or only one source, “anonymous experts”, and with the by-line “staff reporter”.

“To what extent are reporters held liable to verify their sources?”

“Our journalists don’t research. They don’t read. And it is not unusual to even find the names of ministries stated incorrectly.”

“You find a lot of desktop journalists. If you read twitter, you’ll find what the next day’s headlines will be, and the sources of those stories are sometimes those very tweets.”

The issue of sensationalism is also prevalent, with many media outlets moving “from quality news to tabloid-type reporting” where “everything has to be dramatised. “You find misleading headlines (meant to shock readers), but once you read the story, you see that the headline and the content are totally different.”

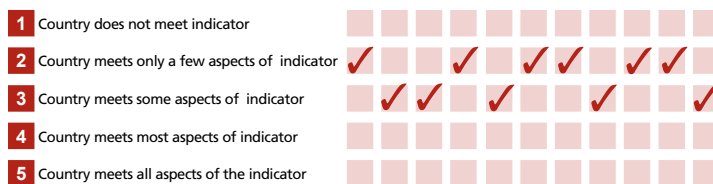
Factors cited that have led to the decline in the quality of news reporting include corruption in the media, “the poor calibre of journalists”, lack of training desks and the dearth of skills in newsrooms.

“The flight of skills in 2002-2008 really affected media industry. All things being equal, quality in the newsroom is not what it should be. You can have a journalist with a Masters in Media Studies, who can’t construct a basic sentence. 95% of those in the newsroom are like this.”

Panellists agreed that the IMPPI process was, in itself, an indicator that something needed to be done with regards to the quality of media reporting.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score:

**2.5 (2012 = 2.4; 2010 = 2.0; 2008 = 2.1;
2006 = 2.3)**

4.2 The media follow voluntary codes of professional standards, which are enforced by independent/non-statutory bodies that deal with complaints from the public.

There is a Voluntary Media Council (VMCZ), but not all media houses subscribe to its code, and the law does not compel public media to be part of a voluntary code, although section 249(1)(d) of the constitution, which speaks to the functions of the Media Information Commission (which replaces Zimbabwe Media Commission) states that one of the functions of the ZMC should be “to encourage the formulation of codes of conduct for persons employed in the media and, where no such code exists, to formulate and enforce one.”

Few panellists supported the fact that that ZMC provides for a statutory code. It was noted that the ZMC had previously attempted to create a code, but did not get enough buy-in from the media and civil society. In the past, BAZ was “enjoined to work on a code of conduct”.

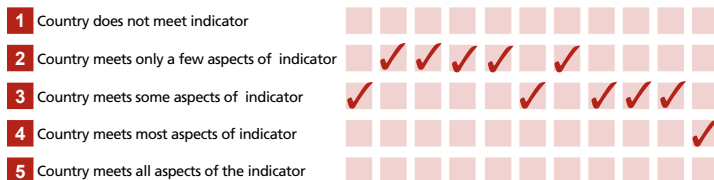
In principle, the ZMC should constitute media ethics council. But because of the divide, civil society is not comfortable with ZMC and prefers to side with VMCZ. Most disagree with the notion of co-regulation.

“VMCZ is a good initiative, but some view it as toothless, and therefore go the court route. But it also works for those that use it. Something needs to be done to give it some teeth and make it more effective.”

Noting that the VMCZ has shifted its focus to training, that it only reacts once complaints have been issued, and that the Council no longer holds regular meetings with its members on ethical codes, “If you look at the role of VMCZ and what it was originally set up for, you can see that they’ve veered off a bit. This has been somewhat disappointing.”

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score:

2.6 (2012 = 3.2; 2010 = 2.8; 2008 = 1.7;
2006 = 1.1)

4.3 Salary levels and general working conditions, including safety, for journalists and other media practitioners are adequate.

There is a large gap between the salaries of editors and those of reporters at both state and private media.

At state media, junior reporters can expect to earn USD 650-700, senior reporters earn about USD 700-750, and desk editors earn USD 1,000; while editors earn approximately USD 6,500 (including allowances).

The private media attempts to compete with the state media in terms of salaries, but has been struggling due to the economic situation, and has therefore removed all perks (e.g. medical aid, pension, etc.) from salary packages. Here, entry-level reporters and subeditors earn about USD 500, senior editors earn USD 800-1,000, desk editors earn USD 1200-1400, and Editors earn USD 4,500.

Most media houses are unable to provide pay increases commensurate with changes in the economy, inflation, etc. “So, it’s a depressing environment.”

Working conditions also leave much to be desired. “Most private media newspapers have a flat newsroom system, where you have the same teams working on the daily, weekly and bi-monthly products. I deal with three titles, and am only off on a Saturday. Of course, this is not in line with labour regulations, but when you want to claim your days, they say you need to be setting the example. So, it’s a difficult situation at the moment.”

Additionally, reporters do not have physical or job security, and often lack the tools of the trade (including transportation) to help them work optimally. There have also been incidents in which journalists from both state and private media have been beaten and harassed, and verbal attacks made on them by politicians, which “gives impetus to the police to disrespect the media. This leaves them vulnerable.”

Some panellists argued that the lack of safety/security and the low pay, has served as grounds for the level of corruption seen in Zimbabwean media. “When the perks have been removed and you have to pay your own pension, that’s a problem. That’s where the issue of corruption then kicks in to make ends meet. And it often happens at the senior level.”

Other panellists, however, noted that salary conditions in the media – compared to other sectors – are reasonable, and that corruption should not be linked to these conditions. “The monies that colleagues are talking about are not bad considering the current state of the economy. A civil servant doctor, teachers, and so forth, are not earning as much as these journalists.”

Female journalists face unique problems with regards to these working conditions. Without contracts, for example, their job security is compromised when it comes to things such as maternity leave, for example. “There is a lot of gender insensitivity in terms of conditions that female journalists face, especially considering their roles and responsibilities and opportunities for promotion because of the roles they have at home.”

The number of active freelance journalists has decreased over the past few years. Zimpapers currently has four sitting correspondents, who receive a fixed retainer of USD 350. They do not receive additional salary benefits though, but can access office resources (e.g. pool cars or other resources needed to carry out their job) as the permanent staff would.

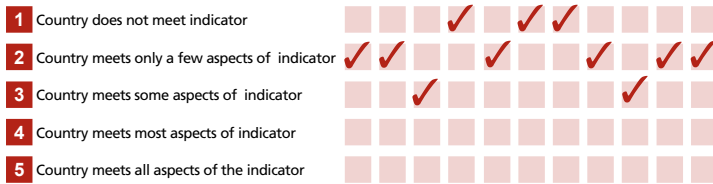
Some panellists were of the view that the extent of corruption in the media is due to their salary rates and conditions. “Salaries are not regular, and journalists are not paid every month. Of course, this is not unique to journalists and working conditions are poor everywhere, but the difference is that journalists have power “to destroy, make, reconstruct, and so forth.”

In the broader context, corruption is high across society, and this is an issue that needs to be looked at across the board. “It’s something that needs to be addressed universally, and it is reflective of a problem that is inherent in the country, and on the continent.” It’s not an issue of culture, but rather, an abuse of a privileged position for selfish means, because there’s no reason why. You know that no one should pay for an article to be in a newspaper.”

Most media houses do not have policies on how to handle freebies, and this blurs the lines of what could be deemed corruption. Radio Dialogue has a policy on this, but still faces challenges with regards to its journalists declaring freebies received from news sources or other organisations.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score: 1.9 (2012 = 2.3; 2010 = 1.7; 2008 = n/a; 2006 = n/a)

4.6 Journalists and editors do not practise self-censorship in in the private broadcasting and print media.

Journalists at both state and private media practise self-censorship.

One panellist noted, “There is no independence in independent media”, primarily because media houses feel the need to please their advertisers. “Corporate bullies, politicians and religious charlatans are holding the media hostage with their advertising.”

In December 2013, Caesar Zvayi, editor of The Herald newspaper, was sent on forced leave amid accusations by Information, Media and Broadcasting Services

minister, Jonathan Moyo that the paper had published a story based on false assertions that smacking of a hidden political agenda.

Another panellist highlighted that self-censorship is dependent on stakeholder expectations. “When working for a newspaper, you get to understand what the shareholder expects of you, and that becomes clear in your head – you are told that this is what is expected, and you try to avoid the risks. The shareholder wins.” “You don’t want that phone call.”

Marketing departments at the various media houses also place pressure on journalists “to write “feel-good stories about potential advertising clients”, in order to attract additional advertising.

When one paper ran an editorial criticising Stanbic for the way it had handled employees going on strike, the bank pulled 16 pages of advertising. Since then, the paper no longer writes negative stories about Stanbic.

At another paper, when a journalist had written about the mistreatment of employees at a large company after speaking to people at various levels of leadership, he/she was called to the Editor’s office and told to withdraw the story. In return, the company published its financials in the newspaper.

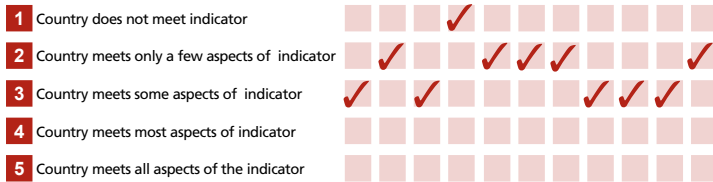
The *Daily News* decided to censor itself on any news – good or bad – related to Strive Masiwa, after rumours that he owns the media house.

Self-censorship also goes hand-in-hand with corrupt practice or the benefits/freebies received from news sources. “What does it mean when a reporter’s air ticket is paid for and they’re given big allowances by a person (discussion in reference to religious leader, Walter Magaya). In the case of one of his crusades, reporters were saying the rally was attended by upwards of 300,000 people, but Magaya himself note that only 80,000 people attended the rally. Censorship comes into play here also.”

Although some panellists noted that their shareholders did not get involved with content, they admitted that depending on who the shareholder(s) is(are), reporters might censor themselves based on what they think the expectation from the shareholder is.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score:

2.4 (2012 = 1.6; 2010 = 2.0; 2008 = 1.4;
2006 = 1.7)

4.7 Media professionals have access to training facilities offering formal qualification programmes as well as opportunities to upgrade skills.

There are a number of institutions that offer media training.

However, the quality of this training is of major concern, as entry-level journalists are still viewed as being ill-prepared to effectively carry out their duties. "When it comes to training, there are certain institutions that are churning out people that find their way into newsroom, but aren't qualified." One panellist noted that it is not just the media training programmes, but the entire education systems that requires review. "It boils down to the entire education system. We have students that can't differentiate between they're, their, and there. That is problematic!"

Among others, Harare Polytechnic School of Journalism and Media Studies (which can take up to 30 media students per year) and Christian College of Southern Africa (CCOSA) (up to 60 students per year) offer qualifications in Journalism, while National University of Science and Technology (NUST) and Midlands State University (MSU) provide training in media studies. CCOSA which is now affiliated with the Zimbabwe Open University, self-certifies its programmes. Panellists raised the absence of a certifying board that ensures checks and balances as a major short coming of CCOSA.

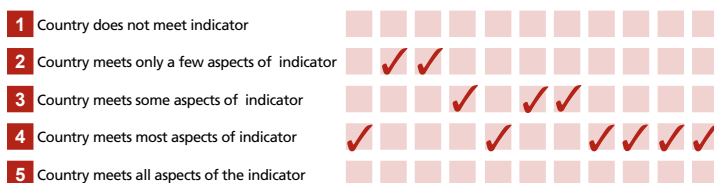
“The biggest asset of the guys doing media studies is that they’re very good at research. But there needs to be a balance between research and journalism.”

Some media CSOs such as MISA and VMCZ also offer some career development training. MISA, for example, provides a back to basics training course. Additionally, media houses also provide on-the-job training. The *Daily News*, for example, is recognised for doing a good job at training young graduates on the job. Zimpapers also had a scheme to assist journalists who wanted to further their skills. However, due to economic problems being experienced in the country, this scheme has been discontinued.

One panellist noted that in addition to the training of journalists, there is a need to train the trainers, and to collaborate more closely with the media sector to ensure that what is being trained is relevant in practice.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score:

3.4 (2012 = 3.5; 2010 = 3.1; 2008 = 3.0;
2006 = 4.0)

4.8 Equal opportunities regardless of race or ethnicity, social group, gender/sex, religion, disabilities and age are promoted in media houses.

Panellists were divided with regards to the extent to which equal opportunities exist for the groups noted in this indicator – particularly women.

“There is not a single female editor in mainstream media.” This is despite the fact that at training level, there are more female than male journalism students. ZiFM has women in top management, but in sales and marketing, not in the newsrooms.

Some panellists noted that although media houses try to promote women media practitioners to management level, the better women do not stay for long, “so there’s no one to choose from. They are busy engineering ways to get out of there and join NGOs, and it’s difficult to get them to the top.”

Women often end up going into Public Relations and communications, while others change their professions completely. This is partly due to the demands that women face both in the workplace and at home. “Most females in the newsroom, for example, have to go home by 5pm to take care of their families, etc.”

Most media houses do not have a gender policy. Zimpapers currently has a draft policy, and FAMWZ is working on having more media houses adopt such policies.

Safety (e.g. issues around having to work late to cover stories), job security (e.g. contracts that conform to labour laws and provide for maternity leave), patriarchy (including mentoring, and the implications thereof), sexual harassment and so forth are among the issues that also need to be addressed. “Because of the differences between males and females, there are many things that one can do or say, without realising issues of male privilege or ‘blind spots’. “It’s not only about how you (males) feel in your newsroom is, but also about how the females feel in the newsroom. Are we creating our media rooms in such a way that they accommodate women?”

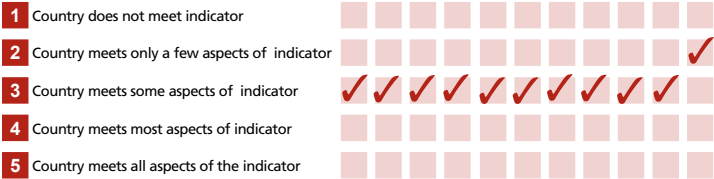
With regards to equal opportunities for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) employees, no problems have been reported.

In terms of equal opportunity for disabled people, again, no issues have been reported, but panellists noted that “the issue of practicality in the context of the media house would have to be considered.” Even where disabled people are unable to physically chase stories, “they can help with editorial research.” The freelance contributor (at *The Daily News*) recognised as “the best cricket writer in Zimbabwe” is blind.

With all the issues of diversity noted above, panellists emphasised the need for mainstreaming and creating a “mind shift” in terms of how these issues are viewed.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score: 2.6 (2012 = 2.8; 2010 = 3.0; 2008 = n/a; 2006 = n/a)

Average score for sector 4: 2.7

The way forward

1. What were the developments in the media environment in the last three/four years?

Positive

1. The media provisions in the new constitution – including the establishment of a constitutional court;
2. The idea and outcomes of IMPI, as an attempt to solve some of the problems in the media landscape;
3. Licensing of new players in the broadcast sector;
4. Growth in ICTs, and increases in the mobile penetration rate;
5. A marked increase in online newspapers;
6. The outcome of the 2014 Criminal Defamation ruling, in which criminal defamation was struck down as unconstitutional; and
7. Coming into the final stages of the broadcasting digital migration process

Negative

1. The closure of some media houses (including Zimbabwe Mail, Southern Eye, The Zimbabwean and Flame News);
2. The worsening economic situation and its repercussions on the media;
3. Threats on private media by politicians, including the first family;
4. The unprecedented arrest of state media officials;
5. The on-going harassment of media workers;
6. The arrest of citizens for expressing their opinions freely (including Itai Dzamara); and
7. Labour issues – for example the lack of contracts for many media workers resulting in limited job security; large income disparities between editors and reporters; the continued absence of internal policies on gender, corruption, etc; and so forth

2. What kinds of activities are needed over the next 3-4 years?

- Media advocacy on the following issues:
 - o Media ethics classes in all training institutions;
 - o The elimination of gender disparities in the media (action could be led by FAMWZ); and
 - o The alignment of media laws to the provisions in the constitution.

- MISA and other media stakeholders should begin raising awareness on some of the new provisions in the constitution, and should not wait for the alignment of the laws to the constitution. Instead, they should raise challenges on laws that are not aligned to the constitution;
- Media trainers from the different institutions that offer courses/qualifications in media subjects should be included in media-related activities;
- The Harare Polytechnic School of Journalism and Media Studies should share its course on Media Literacy (already packaged and ready for use by other media stakeholders) with MISA, for use with media institutions and for advocacy purposes.;
- Awareness should be raised on media issues such as media performance, standards, and corruption, and should be discussed freely and addressed appropriately on media platforms (for example, ZUJ could write an editorial on professionalism, FAMWZ on issues of harassment, etc.);
- Information sharing on critical issues (such as sexual harassment) should be enhanced;
- Sexual harassment in the media fraternity should be addressed. For starters, FAMWZ should recirculate its booklet on sexual harassment in the newsroom;
- Internal policies to deal with various important issues such as gender, corruption, how to deal with freebies and so on, should be developed and implemented; and
- Media houses should develop orientation programmes for entry journalists that address ethics issues, in-house policies, DOs and DON'Ts, etiquette, and so forth.

The panel discussion took place in Troutbeck Inn, Nyanga, Zimbabwe on 13-14 November 2015.

Panellists:

Media:

1. Kelvin Jakachira, broadcaster
2. Mduduzi Mathuthu, editor (print)
3. Guthrie Munyuki, editor (print)
4. Alexander Rusero, journalism and media lecturer
5. Chido Valerie Sibalo, media & gender activist
6. Sharon Sithole, media activist & broadcaster
7. Patience Zirima, media activist

Civil Society:

8. Chris Musodza, IT expert
9. Kossam Ncube, lawyer
10. Thandekile Ngwenya, lawyer
11. Grace Taruvinga, faith group & community activist

Rapporteur:

Ms. Nangula Shejavali

Moderator:

Ms. Sarah Chiumbu

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