



April- June, 2021

# STATE OF THE MEDIA IN ZAMBIA



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# STATE OF THE MEDIA IN ZAMBIA

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

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|              |   |
|--------------|---|
| <b>ATI</b>   | Access to Information                                     |
| <b>ECZ</b>   | Electoral Commission of Zambia                            |
| <b>EEP</b>   | Economic Equity Party                                     |
| <b>GDP</b>   | Gross Domestic Product                                    |
| <b>IBA</b>   | Independent Broadcasting Authority                        |
| <b>ICT</b>   | Information and Communication Technology                  |
| <b>NDP</b>   | National Democratic Congress Party                        |
| <b>UPND</b>  | United Party for National Development                     |
| <b>ZICTA</b> | Zambia Information and Communication Technology Authority |
| <b>ZNBC</b>  | Zambia National Broadcasting Corporation                  |



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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The State of the Media Report is a quarterly assessment of the media environment in Zambia. This edition covers the second quarter of 2021 i.e. April-June. This assessment and record describes the media trends in Zambia during the period and was prepared under the auspices of the MISA Zambia Chapter.

This report includes a number of interesting occurrences that added new developments, twists and opportunities alike for the overall media environment in Zambia.

The socio-political environment did not record any major violations or inhibitions to freedom of the press through violent attacks by political party cadres, save the burning of part of Kalungwishi Radio in Chiengi District by unknown persons. The quarter also witnessed positive developments in pronouncements made by President Edgar Lungu on protection of the media as well as the implementation of practical security training for journalists. On a negative note, though, the quarter witnessed the resurgence of a third wave of the COVID-19 pandemic with renewed restrictions that constrained the work of journalists and media outlets.

The legal environment did not record any major development. As predicted in the previous quarter, the Access to Information Bill was not presented to Parliament while the fifth session of the twelfth National Assembly ended on 12<sup>th</sup> May. This marks nearly twenty years of a campaign for the enactment of the law. The legal environment also witnessed the launch of a report by Amnesty International, alleging various human rights concerns over a ten-year period.

In the economic environment, a slightly more positive picture was observed as compared to the first quarter. The quarter witnessed a marginal improvement in economic activity, whose benefits trickled down to the media sector while the absence of such exacerbating factors as load shedding helped to cushion the impact on media enterprises which were reeling from the economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic witnessed in the first quarter. The general upward trend in most economic variables, particularly inflation among others, continued to affect media outlets negatively by increasing the cost of doing business and reducing the capacity of media houses to make capital investments, especially in the wake of the virtual society under the COVID-19 pandemic which required improved technology.

Finally, in the technological environment, a major development was noted in the launch of the National Cyber Security Policy that is expected to guide and promulgate various strategies aimed at securing the online space.

The review in this report shows that there has been a notable improvement in some of the key thematic areas in the fourth quarter as compared to the first quarter. Overall, the second quarter posted a more positive outlook than the first quarter given certain improvements itemised in the various sections below.



## I.0 Introduction

The State of the Media is a quarterly report of trends and developments in the media sector as compiled by the MISA Zambia Chapter. The report serves as an advocacy tool for media policy reform as well as an archive of information which can be used for reference on media developments in Zambia.

The report has previously helped to shape policy formulation with regard to media freedom, freedom of expression and access to information in Zambia. The report, which has been published quarterly for over fifteen (15) years, serves as a tool for dialogue and action in the media fraternity, government and non-governmental sectors alike.

The rationale of the report is based on the corollary between media performance of certain cardinal functions and democratic governance. However, the media are affected by various trends and developments that could undermine their performance.

In this regard, the report is divided into various sections covering the socio-political, economic, legal and technological environment in which the media operated in the period under review.

The objectives of the report are, therefore, to:

- Report political, economic, legal and technological trends in the media sector in Zambia, and
- Assess the level of freedom of expression and media freedom in Zambia.

## 2.0 Methodology

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The report is exploratory and descriptive in nature as it mainly aims to present the general state of the media sector in the identified quarters.

In compiling this report, a desk review was conducted in which an analysis of various materials pertaining to freedom of expression and the welfare of the media within the quarters under consideration was undertaken. This was augmented by a content analysis of various media publications (electronic, print and online) as well as media violation alerts to establish the common themes with regard to the objectives of the study.

The report also employed the use of interviews with purposively selected participants on the basis of their known or presumed knowledge about issues related to or affecting the state of the media. The participants comprised democratic governance advocates, media experts, statutory institutions and practising journalists to gain a deeper understanding and validation of some of the phenomena observed in the quarter. In the same vein, a semi-structured questionnaire was administered to a convenient sample of media practitioners.

## 3.0 Trends

### 3.1 Socio-political environment

The social-political environment in the quarter under review was generally more conducive than that recorded in the previous quarter, despite a few notable occurrences.

For example, only one attack on a media house was recorded in the quarter under review<sup>1</sup>, a marked improvement from the situation in the previous quarters which had violent attacks recorded, with damage to property in certain instances. This improvement could be attributed to various interventions undertaken by media associations and stakeholders during the quarter aimed at addressing the safety and security of journalists. One such programme conducted during the quarter was a practical training on police-media relations.



The training covered aspects such as avenues for strengthening police and media partnership, safety and security of journalists during planned and unplanned riots or violent demonstrations, online safety and security tips for the journalists, physical endurance in hostile environments and first aid, among others<sup>2</sup>. At the inaugural training held at Lilayi Police College, Police Inspector-General, Kakoma Kanganja stated in part that:

*The Zambia Police Service treasures and holds in high esteem the role that the media plays in informing the public on the effects of negative vices such as political violence and electoral related crime. The media are our all-weather partners and during police operations such as crowd control and management, the presence of the media acts as an oversight and to some extent regulates the conduct of police officers.*

*I know that the suspension of mass gatherings such as political party rallies due to COVID-19*

<sup>1</sup> On 24<sup>th</sup> June, unknown people set Radio Kalungwishi in Chiengi District ablaze causing damage to an air-conditioner and transmission cable with a combined value of K16, 000. According to a statement issued by the Zambia Police Service, members of the public quickly responded to the call of distress and managed to extinguish the fire and prevented it from spreading to other parts of the building.

<sup>2</sup> See <https://zambiareports.com/2021/06/07/dont-use-platforms-disseminate-hate-messages-kanganja-urges-medi/>

*has resulted into many political parties using the media especially radio stations to reach out to the electorate. My appeal is that the media should always ensure that such platforms are not used to disseminate hate messages or speech but convey correct and positive information to the public, devoid of mudslinging and character assassination. It is against media law and ethics to allow content to run on the radio or television station which you know is malicious and scandalous allegations or indeed unsubstantiated information about one opponent with the aim of damaging their reputation.*

Such efforts must be commended and go to add to trainings and consultative meetings held in the previous quarter by the Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA) and MISA aimed at developing standard operating practices for the media in order to ensure safety and security.

Other interventions during the quarter include a call made by President Edgar Lungu to end violence against journalists during commemoration of World Press Freedom Day on 3<sup>rd</sup> May under the theme “information as a public good”.

President Lungu said intimidation and violent attacks against journalists should come to a stop as the media is a key component of the state and that once an individual engages in violent activities towards journalists, it becomes an act of criminality that should be prosecuted regardless of one’s political affiliation<sup>3</sup>. The call by President Lungu is significant in that media products (such as news) aim to serve the public interest and are therefore a public good that should be safeguarded at all costs, including enhancing the ability and latitude of media practitioners to carry out their work. This is also significant in that press freedom is enshrined in Article 20 (2) of the Constitution albeit implicitly<sup>4</sup>.



*Pictures courtesy of Jean Mandela*

<sup>3</sup> See <https://www.lusakatimes.com/2021/05/03/intimidation-and-violent-attacks-towards-journalists-should-come-to-a-stop-president-lungu/>

<sup>4</sup> Article 20 (2) reads: “Subject to the provisions of this Constitution no law shall make any provision that derogates from freedom of the press”.



Based on the numerous violations witnessed between quarter 1, 2020 and quarter 1, 2021 (over fifteen), it is elating that such incidents reduced significantly in the quarter under review and it is hoped that the trend will continue, with major stakeholders such as the Zambia Police safeguarding media practitioners.

Notable in the quarter also was the commencement of various electoral activities leading to the August 12<sup>th</sup> general elections. Notable among these activities was the commencement of campaigns on 12<sup>th</sup> May<sup>5</sup>. The commencement of campaigns was also significant in view of the COVID-19 guidelines, with contestants encouraged to use safer means of communicating to the electorate, such as through media outlets.

Most of the respondents interviewed and surveyed described the campaign and electoral atmosphere during the quarter under review as fair, with media houses able to carry out their functions. Some respondents, however, noted implicit self-censorship in a bid to avoid being classified under a particular political grouping. For example, one of the respondents, a media practitioner stated that:

*This year's campaigns have not been very active. This might be the reason we have not seen so much interference or disturbance. So far so good. I just sense some element of fear in our management as they keep reminding us on the need to avoid trouble.*

Another respondent stated that:

*The election campaigns have been hectic because in one way or the other they will try and affiliate you to a particular party based on your report or works when you are just doing your job*

Another respondent, also a journalist, revealed:

*Our media outlet was able to cover almost all participating political parties. We managed to engage different political players to explain their manifestos to the would-be voters although we didn't receive a fair share of political adverts.*

News media are expected to fulfil certain quintessential functions during election campaigns, particularly in a representative democracy<sup>6</sup>. Firstly, the media are expected to contribute to pluralistic competition by acting as a civic forum for debate. This entails the media providing extensive coverage of news about politics and government as well as providing a platform (equal and proportional) for a wide plurality of political parties, groups and actors.

Secondly, the media are expected to promote conditions for public participation acting as mobilising agents and in so doing encouraging political learning, interest and participation. The media, in this regard, should stimulate general interest in public affairs as well as encourage citizens to learn about public affairs and political life. The media should also facilitate and encourage civic engagement with the political (or electoral) process. It is, therefore, critical for the media to perform their duties professionally while a conducive environment must be created by the electoral management body, ECZ as empowered by the Electoral Process Act.

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<sup>5</sup> According to a roadmap released by the Electoral Commission of Zambia on 30<sup>th</sup> April. Other processes expected during the quarter under review were compilation of the final register of voters, accreditation of monitors and nominations for all electable positions.

<sup>6</sup> According to Norris, P. (2000). *A virtuous circle: political communications in post-industrial societies*. New York Cambridge University Press.

As such, during the quarter under review, issues of media coverage remained topical, with MISA launching the Electoral Content Report (May-June, 2021) which assessed the balance of coverage and editorial quality of content, share of election related content by political party as well as impartiality and accuracy of the election content covered. The analysis also undertook to establish the nature, key themes and gender representation of coverage of election related content. The study monitored a total of 930 stories from over sixteen (16) media outlets representing major print, electronic and online media outlets in Zambia.



Among the notable findings of the study is that the voices of ordinary persons, including women, youths and persons living with disabilities were minimal across all media platforms monitored. Further, the majority of electoral stories were single sourced (with only one point of view) while of all the content monitored, only one in three stories was balanced for radio, television and print, with only one in ten stories balanced for online media outlets.

The findings of the study echo the need for improved coverage by the media even in the private sector, even though the report shows the extent of the problem is not as severe as that observed in some of the public media. It is important for media to adhere to ethics of truth, balance, objectivity and fairness as basic standards of professionalism in the media, particularly in the build up to the August elections. It is no wonder then, that in the quarter under review, the Independent Broadcasting Authority censured Muvi Television, a private broadcaster for failure to preserve human dignity following a controversial interview broadcast by the Station<sup>7</sup>.

In the same vein, one issue worth noting in the quarter under review is the call for fair, equal coverage by public media, particularly the public broadcaster, ZNBC. This was an issue raised by various stakeholders, among them MISA and some interview respondents. Similarly, on 11<sup>th</sup> June,

<sup>7</sup> IBA Director-General, Josephine Mapoma issued a statement on 30<sup>th</sup> April, cautioning Muvi TV and all broadcasting stations against airing material which may cause humiliation, distress and violate human dignity. She further warned all broadcasters to exercise professionalism in order to avoid contravening the law ahead of this year's general elections. This was after Muvi TV broadcast an interview programme featuring a controversial, unconventional and seemingly disoriented leader of the 'Poor People's Party', raising public concern.



the United Party for National Development (UPND) was granted leave to apply for judicial review by the Ndola High Court in respect of the Electoral Commission of Zambia not allocating time on the mentioned media to political parties and independent candidates to canvass support of the voters. The Court stated that the prescription of airtime on public media to all political parties and independent candidates was highly necessary to enable all players' equal campaign opportunities<sup>8</sup>.

Again, during a visit to Zambia during the quarter, Special Representative of the Secretary-General to the Africa Union and Head of the United Nations Office to the Africa Union, Hanna Tetteh called for state-owned media to be accessible to all political parties in view of the suspension of public rallies. The envoy said during a meeting she held with various stakeholders, it was observed that state-owned media were not equitably accessible to all political parties<sup>9</sup>.

The issue of public media (specifically ZNBC) and equal allotment of coverage to all political players beyond the ruling party and government has been topical for a long time<sup>10</sup>, once culminating into promulgation of and amendments to the ZNBC Act to include a clear editorial mandate and board appointment process that would reflect the general diversity of the Zambian society<sup>11</sup>. For example, Section 7 (1) of the ZNBC Act No. 20 of 2002 (later amended by Act No. 16 of 2010) establishes the following selected functions of the Corporation:

*provide varied and balanced programming for all sections of the populations;*

*serve the public interest;*

*(e) contribute to the development of free and informed opinions and as such, constitute an important element of the democratic process*

*(f) reflect, as comprehensively as possible, the range of opinions and political, philosophical, religious, scientific, and artistic trends;*

*(m) broadcast news and current affairs programmes which shall be comprehensive, unbiased and independent and commentary which shall be clearly distinguished from news;*

It is no wonder that there were calls from various stakeholders in the quarter under review for fair coverage, especially in the wake of the 2021 general elections slated for August 12<sup>th</sup>. The argument behind public media serving a wide section of society is based on their very establishment as a public good. This mainly emanates from the fact that public media are funded from public funds collected through general governmental revenues or special income through television levies and grants for example. Secondly, public broadcasting by its nomenclature demands that there should be a wide reach and variety in programming with inclusivity.

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<sup>8</sup> As reported in the Daily Nation Newspaper of 11<sup>th</sup> June, 2021. The Party sought a declaration that ECZ abrogated its responsibility under section 8 of the Electoral Code of Conduct to prescribe airtime to all public television, radio and print media for the benefit of all participating political parties and independent candidates for the forthcoming national polls scheduled for the August 12, 2021 elections.

<sup>9</sup> See the report carried in the News Diggers Newspaper of 7<sup>th</sup> June, 2021: <https://diggers.news/local/2021/06/07/state-owned-media-must-accomodate-all-political-parties-un-envoy/>

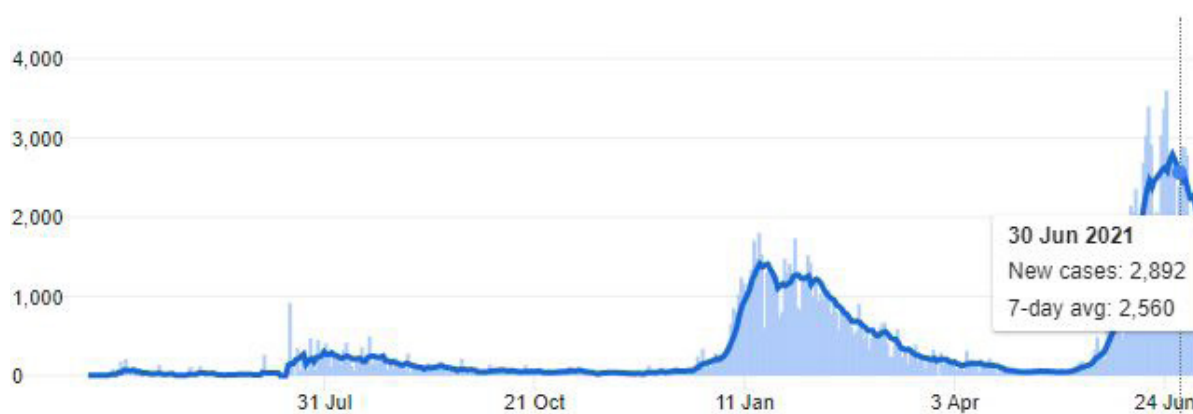
<sup>10</sup> For example, Some of the media monitoring findings in the MISA Election Content Status Report (May-June, 2021) under the Voter's Voice Project show that The coverage by the public broadcaster towards the ruling PF was more than half of the combined coverage of all the opposition parties inclusive of the UPND.

<sup>11</sup> The campaign for media reforms, specifically the enactment of the IBA and ZNBC Acts among others is detailed by renowned scholar and legal practitioner Dr Patrick Matibini (currently speaker of the National Assembly): Matibini, P. (2006). *The struggle for media law reforms in Zambia*. Lusaka: MISA.

It is, therefore, critical that all public media outlets endeavour to carry fair content that is representative of the various interests in society as opposed to a particular section as opposed by certain stakeholders. It is for this reason that media associations have been advocating for the true transformation from a “state broadcaster” into “public broadcaster”<sup>12</sup> through harmonisation of the ZNBC and IBA Acts to allow for regulation by the IBA, enhancement of the board appointment processes (such as reinstatement of an independent appointments committee) to devolve or reduce the real or perceived influence of the Information Minister who has power to appoint or dissolve boards as well as review of management and funding models to enhance editorial independence.

This would also be in line with the 2001 African Charter on Broadcasting<sup>13</sup>, which creates an obligation for public broadcasters with editorial independence and freedom from interference. Interestingly, it is from the Charter that the initial three-tier broadcasting model (public, commercial and community) is adopted.

Another issue worth noting in the quarter under review was the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, with a surge in cases towards the end of the quarter in what was widely considered to be a third wave of the pandemic. The country witnessed a spike in the number of COVID cases and deaths, leading to reintroduction of certain restrictive measures by the government. The measures included closure of schools, colleges and universities, restriction of church meetings, restriction of bars, night clubs and other recreation facilities and, other meetings to be suspended until further notice, among several other measures<sup>14</sup>.



A graphical representation of the COVID-19 trajectory<sup>15</sup>

The restrictions and resurgence of the COVID-19 pandemic in the quarter constrained the work of the media, similar to the occurrence in the previous quarters. This is because media practitioners rely on observation and first hand gathering of information and opinions, usually face to face through news and television interviews, for example, despite other innovative means such as virtual hosting.

The restrictions of the pandemic meant that media practitioners could not easily interact with their sources through press briefings, for instance, thereby limiting their ability to bring office bearers to account. Further, the media were at high risk as they are front liners in their effort to ensure the public is kept informed even on the COVID19 pandemic itself. This is particularly difficult as

12 See a survey titled “Public broadcasting in Africa: Zambia” conducted by the Africa Monitoring and Advocacy Project and Open Society Institute Media Program.

13 Available at [https://en.unesco.org/sites/default/files/african\\_charter.pdf](https://en.unesco.org/sites/default/files/african_charter.pdf)

14 This was announced in a national address by Secretary to the Cabinet, Dr Simon Miti on 16<sup>th</sup> June, 2021.

15 Sourced from the COVID-19 Data Repository by the Center for Systems Science and Engineering (CSSE) at Johns Hopkins University. See the data repository at <https://github.com/CSSEGISandData/COVID-19>

most media houses have not been able to procure adequate personal protective equipment for their staff due to the high cost of conducting business for media houses, discussed further in the economic environment in 3.3 below. In this vein, government through the Disaster Management and Mitigation Unit donated personal protective equipment to forty-five public and private media houses<sup>16</sup>. The donation was mainly comprised of 250, 000 face masks and 650 litres of liquid hand sanitiser.

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the media cannot be overemphasised and it is commendable that DMMU stepped in to ease the burden. It is hoped that a long-term programme (socioeconomic) will be developed to safeguard the safety and sustainability of media enterprises. One of the respondents surveyed, a media practitioner, recounted the impact of the COVID pandemic in the quarter under review, stating that:

*It wasn't easy to gather news because sources would prefer phone interviews to physical meetings for fear of the pandemic, however due to limited resources, it was challenging to get all the required information on phone, also coverage of online events such as zoom meetings proved to be a huge challenge due to inadequate bundles and internet connectivity issues. Despite being front line workers, our outlet could not provide adequate protective clothing due to lack of resources, making it difficult for us to go out in the field freely.*

Another respondent stated that

*The COVID-19 pandemic created an extremely hostile situation; sometimes you may not even know the risk you are subjecting yourself to during the course of duty. This affected news gathering as there were a lot of restrictions. Even covering State House has been left to a few media houses, especially television.*

Most of the respondents bemoaned the high cost of working remotely as well as the increased workload due to preventive measures such as rotational work schedules as well as staff under mandatory quarantine.

Overall, the socio-political environment in the second quarter was generally calm with no major incidents of violence/harassment against media houses/practitioners, a significant positive change when compared to the first quarter. The media were affected by the resurgence of the COVID-19 pandemic in what was believed to be the third wave, thereby restricting their ability and latitude to effectively gather and disseminate information.

## 3.2 Legal Environment

The legal environment in the fourth quarter was not as eventful as that recorded in the previous quarter which saw enactment of the Cyber Security and Cyber Crimes Act with several provisions that pose a threat to freedom of the press.

Most respondents viewed the quarter as less severe and more stable with no instances of repression of the media using arbitrary legal instruments or provisions, even in the wake of what was a landmark legal case on the eligibility of President Edgar Lungu. Some respondents, remarking on the legal environment in the quarter noted that they had “not received any warnings or arrests compared to last year around the same period under review”, the legal environment was “somewhat compromised or gagged” and that “justice could not be served properly” because of “political interference” and that it was “not protective for those who are not connected to political power”.

<sup>16</sup> As reported by the Zambia Daily Mail on 27<sup>th</sup> June, 2021. See <http://www.daily-mail.co.zm/dmmu-aids-journalists-with-masks-ppes/>

The quarter witnessed arrest of individuals under the law on defamation of the President contained in Section 69 of the Penal Code Act. For example, in May alone, two arrests were noted involving the law on defamation of the President when police detained EEP leader Chilufya Tayali and UPND Presidential aide Mubita Nawa in two separate incidents<sup>17</sup>.



FILE: Chilufya Tayali after appearing in the Lusaka Magistrates' Court-picture by Tenson Mkhala

Similarly, in June, the Lusaka Magistrates' Court found New Labour Party leader Fresher Siwale with a case to answer in a matter he is accused of defaming President Edgar Lungu by questioning his citizenship and identity<sup>18</sup>. Prior to this, the Lusaka Magistrate's Court acquitted former NDC leader Chishimba Kambwili of a case in which he was facing a charge of defamation of the President for questioning President Lungu's association with a prominent businessman<sup>19</sup>.

The law on defamation of the President is one of many that freedom of expression activists have been advocating against for a long time, given its potential to stifle freedom of expression because of the vague, arbitrary provisions it contains. The law contains elements of both criminal defamation and insult laws.

The law offers special protection to a President who already has immunity against legal suits and can, thus, actually defame opponents at will while making it criminal for them to defame him, a status that can stifle genuine debate and criticism of the office of President.

Additionally, the law is somewhat nebulous as based on the latitude and wide discretion it gives

<sup>17</sup> Statements issued by the police spokesperson stated that the arrest of UPND's Mubita Nawa on 10<sup>th</sup> May was in line with a video which went viral after being posted on various social media platforms while the arrest of Tayali on 7<sup>th</sup> May was in relation to another video which went viral on social media after the suspect allegedly made derogatory remarks against President Edgar Lungu.

<sup>18</sup> As reported in The Mast Newspaper of 11<sup>th</sup> June, 2021. See <https://www.themastonline.com/2021/06/11/magistrate-finds-siwale-with-case-to-answer-in-lungu-defamation-case/>

<sup>19</sup> According to media reports, the Lusaka Magistrate Court's decision to acquit Mr Kambwili came after a request by affected parties to settle the matter outside court. In this case, Mr Kambwili was facing trial for defaming President Lungu after he questioned his association with a prominent businessman. This followed a complaint filed by New Congress party president Peter Chanda.



police officers to decide what constitutes insulting matter-allowing for abuse. This is even more important considering the public status of a president or any other person occupying public office as they are expected to be accountable and transparent to the public in their actions. This, then requires a higher standard and thick skin against criticism, especially that the President is not above politics i.e. he is an executive and not titular president seen as a symbol of national unity.

There are several arguments against maintaining such a law<sup>20</sup>. Chief, however, is the chilling effect on genuine criticism arising from the fear created by such arrests and detentions. It is imperative that those who genuinely defame the President are sued in the president's private capacity<sup>21</sup> or charged with appropriate insult or other laws related to seditious libel. It is, therefore, saddening that instances of application of the said law were noted during the quarter, even though no media practitioner was affected.

Another notable issue in the quarter under review is the launch of a report titled "Ruling by fear and repression" by an international movement, Amnesty International. The report tracked the status of four key rights in Zambia, particularly the freedom of expression, association, peaceful assembly and right to life over a period of ten years<sup>22</sup>.

The report cites various incidents which had an impact on freedom of expression and media freedom alike. Some of the incidents cited include the closure of the Post Newspaper and Prime Television. The report also alleges use of the law to criminalise peaceful dissent and a wide range of offences, including criminal defamation, incitement of public disorder and sedition, usually against government critics. Below is an excerpt from the report:

*While States can set up regulatory bodies for the media, such as Zambia's IBA, such bodies must be independent and protected from undue interference.<sup>78</sup> The determination of any complaints against a media company brought before such a body must be transparent and free of political, commercial and other undue interference. ....*

*Furthermore, as fair trial principles extend to "any process where rights and obligations are determined in a suit at law," media outlets must be afforded the right to a fair trial in respect of any complaints brought against them. This includes the right "to a fair and public hearing by a competent, independent and impartial tribunal", to be informed promptly of the nature and cause of the case against them, to have adequate time and facilities for the preparation of their defense, to be present during the determination of their case, and to examine witnesses and evidence against them. The initial closure of Prime TV did not meet these requirements and therefore constituted, not only a violation of the right to freedom of expression and media freedom, but also fair trial rights.*

*The Zambian authorities are further required to ensure an enabling environment for the work of journalists, including putting in place and raising awareness of laws and standards*

<sup>20</sup> See the following: Manchishi, K. (2017). Defamation of the President and the law's effect on media performance: a study of the Zambia Daily Mail and The Post Newspaper. Unpublished master's thesis. Lusaka: University of Zambia; Kasoma, F. (2004). Community radio: its management and organisation in Africa. Lusaka: ZIMA; Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Services, 2000. Report of the taskforce on media law reform; Chanda, A. W. and L. Mufalo (1999). Handbook of media laws in Zambia. Lusaka: ZIMA.

<sup>21</sup> Precedence for this was set in 2012 when then President Michael Sata sued (in his personal capacity) the proprietor of a tabloid, the Daily Nation along with a lecturer from the University of Zambia, claiming general and exemplary damages for defamation of character.

<sup>22</sup> The report is based on interviews with a cross section of individuals representing victims of human rights violations, government officials and representatives of political parties, civil society organisations, and media outlets. The organisation also undertook desk research and examined newspaper accounts and official documents, as well as secondary publications such as journal articles and books. The full report is available at <https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/AFR6340572021ENGLISH.PDF>

*for ensuring their safety, adopting measures to prevent attacks against them for the exercise of their functions, and ensuring investigations, prosecutions and accountability for attacks against them. This extends to preventing and ensuring accountability for attacks perpetrated by “law enforcement, security, intelligence, military and other personnel”, such as the police. The UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of expression has warned that “Failure to undertake effective investigations and to prosecute those responsible for attacks against journalists perpetrates further violence and undermines the ability of journalists to report on similar matters in the future.” The authorities are therefore required to ensure accountability for attacks against journalists as a means of fully protecting the right to freedom of expression, access to information, and media freedom<sup>23</sup>*

The report sparked debate, with the government dismissing the findings<sup>24</sup>. It is however, important that the findings are weighed against various benchmarks, especially that the country heads to the polls in August with several political parties offering policy alternatives on protection of human rights, key among them freedom of expression (and by extension, freedom of the media).

### 3.2.1 Access to Information Bill

In the quarter under review, there was no significant progress on enactment of a law on Access to Information as forecasted in the previous *State of the Media* Report based on the trajectory of events recorded.

History has repeated itself as another session of Parliament<sup>25</sup> came to an end and election campaigns began, with political parties promising enactment of the ATI Bill as a hall mark feature of their manifestos. This marks nearly twenty (20) years of advocacy (since January 2002<sup>26</sup>) for enactment of a law on access to information, with successive governments failing to enact it despite several promises and steps taken to do so.

Prior to its dissolution, on 13<sup>th</sup> April, Parliament unanimously adopted a report of the Committee on Media, Information and Communication Technologies, which recommended for the fast tracking of the process to enact a law on Access to Information in view of its benefits for the citizenry and potential to enhance investigative reporting in Zambia<sup>27</sup>.

The law on Access to Information is critical for the enhancement of transparency, accountability and the role of the media, all of which are essential in a liberal democracy. Further, such a law could help to alleviate vices such as corruption which thrive in an environment of secrecy.

While it is commendable that the Government Communication Policy was adopted in erstwhile quarters, there was no clear roadmap towards the review of the Bill as well as a process of enactment. Further, as highlighted in the *State of the Media* Report for the fourth quarter, 2020, some of the measures in the policy actually impede the essence and logic of public access to information.

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<sup>23</sup> Page 21, Amnesty International, 2021. *Ruling by fear and repression*. London: Amnesty.

<sup>24</sup> In a statement issued by Ministry of Information Permanent Secretary, Amos Malupenga, government disputed the findings of the report, stating that it is “not unusual for organisations to cause panic when they anticipate that an election outcome is not likely to suit their preferences”.

<sup>25</sup> The fifth session of the twelfth National Assembly came to an end on 12<sup>th</sup> May while Parliament dissolved on 14<sup>th</sup> May in line with the Constitutional Provision in Article 81 (3).

<sup>26</sup> A narration of all meetings and steps taken at the beginning of advocacy activities for the Access to Information (then Freedom of Information), ZNBC amendment and Independent Broadcasting Authority Acts I detailed by Matibini, P. (2006). *The struggle for media law reforms in Zambia*. Lusaka: MISA.

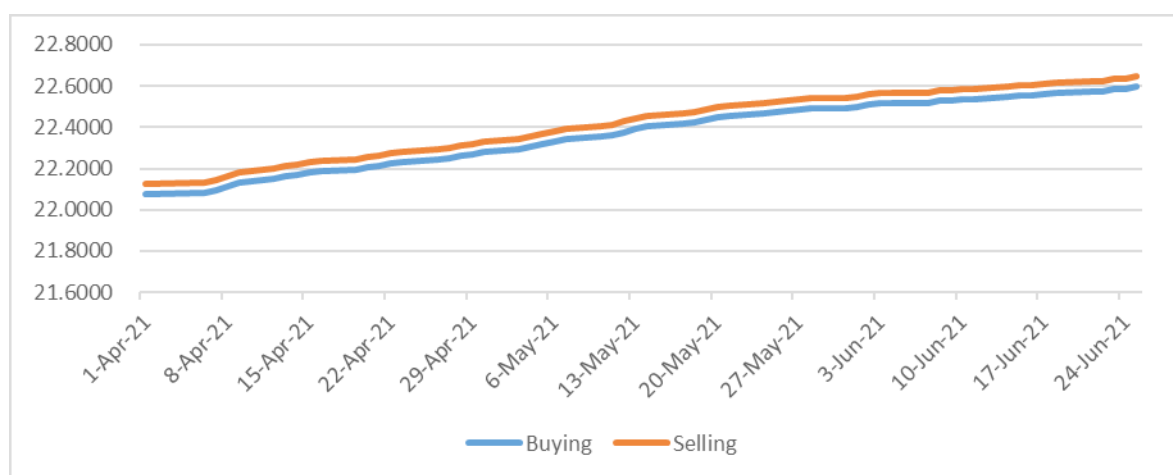
<sup>27</sup> See <https://www.parliament.gov.zm/node/8894>

Overall, the quarter under review was, like other thematic areas, not as severe as that witnessed in the previous quarter. The failure to enact a law on access to information dealt a major blow to most advocates who were expectant of significant progress from 2016 when the last elections were held and assurance of enactment in the twelfth National Assembly given. Other occurrences in the quarter, such as the potential chilling effect arising from instances of application of the law on defamation of the President also had an impact.

### 3.3 Economic Environment

There was very little improvement observed in the economic environment which recorded similar developments in most economic variables noted in the first quarter, thereby constraining the operations of media houses in the quarter under review. This trend (of negativity) has obtained for the past three quarters and remained a source of concern.

In the quarter under review, there was continued currency depreciation, with the Kwacha performing poorly against major convertible currencies, trading at an average of K22.4 for one United States Dollar<sup>28</sup>.

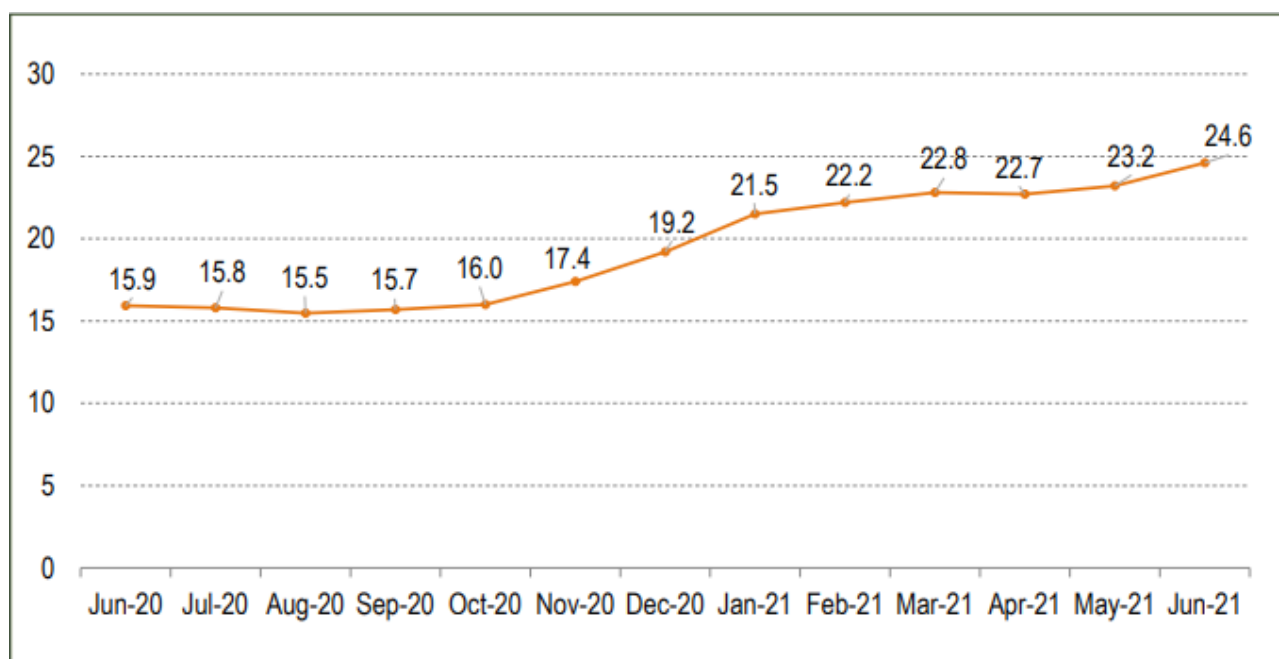


Above: Performance of the Kwacha against the Dollar in the Quarter

Further, the rate of inflation (year on year) also continued on an upward trajectory. For example, at the close of the quarter, the annual inflation stood at 24.6%, from 22.7% recorded in April. This was attributed to increases in the price of some food items<sup>29</sup>.

<sup>28</sup> As recorded on 1<sup>st</sup> April, 2021 according to data contained in the Bank of Zambia Historical Series of Exchange Rates for April-June, 2021.

<sup>29</sup> See Zambia Statistics Agency (ZAMSA) Monthly Bulletins for April, May and June, 2021. Available at <https://www.zamstats.gov.zm/index.php/publications/category/51-2021>



Above: Annual Inflation Rate, June 2020-June 2021 (%)

The economic environment remained uncertain (in the short term) mainly due to the financial shocks caused by the COVID-19 pandemic previously experienced as well as limited fiscal policy measures. However, despite weaker growth recorded at the beginning of the year, there was a basic recovery expected for real GDP in view of improved performance in certain key sectors of the economy. This was expected to ease the situation and possibly trickle down to the media sector as well<sup>30</sup>.

According to the Stanbic Purchasing Manager's Index (PMI) for April<sup>31</sup>, there was growth recorded in input buying as well as expansion in new business for the first time in a long period, leading to the slowest fall in activity in more than two years. Further, new orders slightly returned to growth. However, reduced staffing levels affected firms as they could not keep up with workloads especially in the wake of improved customer demand. Against this backdrop was an increase in purchase costs and increased staff costs, leading to companies increasing their selling prices. Generally, there was improved business confidence.

The performance of various economic fundamentals in each quarter has a somewhat direct or ripple effect on the media sector and its operations and this was the case in the second quarter.

Firstly, media houses heavily rely on advertising and sponsorship as a source of revenue to support their operations. The majority of media houses in Zambia are heavily dependent on advertising revenue to sustain their operations, an issue that has been a cause for concern for a long time<sup>32</sup>. As such, a bleak or turbulent economic environment (like that observed in the quarter) with reduced economic and commercial activity entails low advertising revenue as most firms tend to reduce on production and promotion as indicated in the findings cited above.

<sup>30</sup> The Bank of Zambia Quarterly Survey of Business Opinions and Expectations for the first quarter of 2021 reveals that business entities expected improved economic performance in the second quarter of 2021 based on most economic indicators rising above the expected average, increase in agricultural output as well as general optimism boosted by the COVID-19 vaccination programme.

<sup>31</sup> See [https://www.stanbicbank.co.zm/static\\_file/Zambia/ZM\\_PMI\\_APR\\_2021.pdf](https://www.stanbicbank.co.zm/static_file/Zambia/ZM_PMI_APR_2021.pdf)

<sup>32</sup> See Banda, F. (2004). *Newspapers and magazines in Zambia-a question of sustainability*. Lusaka: MISA. See also: Kasoma, F. (2004). *Community radio: its management and organisation in Zambia*. Lusaka: MISA.



Secondly, media houses encounter a high cost of doing business based on poor performance of economic variables indicated above. For example, the high rate of inflation in the quarter as well as currency depreciation increased the cost of running a media outlet as most of the inputs (such as newsprint, television programmes and rights, international hosting and so on) are procured in foreign currency and poor performance of the local currency entails higher costs. Locally, the high inflation rate meant media houses had to spend more money to procure certain goods and services, while still having to meet statutory obligations and salaries of their staff.

Thirdly, a combination of the economic variables presented above also limited the capacity of media houses to make capital investments as well as purchase new equipment, especially in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic which has led to an introduction of a virtual society underpinned by advanced technology (e.g. virtual interviews and mobile broadcasting). One of the respondents noted that:

*As a media house, we lost out on business as a result of the pandemic because most of our clients were still struggling to get back on their feet after the first, second and now third wave, therefore they could not give us business like before. This made our operations very difficult, hence we had to come up with innovative ways of raising money so as to meet salaries for journalists and other members of staff*

Overall, financial independence is a cardinal element of press freedom. In fact, some studies have found a converse relation between a country's economic freedom and the level of press freedom<sup>33</sup>. As such, the factors discussed above tend to generally compromise the media's ability to enjoy press freedom as they become over-dependent on advertising, which exposes them to commercial influence.

During the quarter under review, there was no load shedding observed, different from the case in the previous quarter and seriously affected the operations of media houses. In the quarter under review, there was no load management implemented, save maintenance operations with minimal periods of power outage. This contrasts with the past two quarters in which most media houses had to rely on alternative sources of electricity to keep their equipment running, often at high cost.

Overall, the economic environment in the quarter under review posted a slightly more positive outlook as compared to the first quarter. The quarter witnessed a marginal improvement in economic activity, whose benefits trickled down to the media sector while the absence of such exacerbating factors as load shedding helped to cushion the impact on media enterprises which were reeling from the economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic witnessed in the first quarter. The general upward trend in most economic variables, particularly inflation among others, continued to affect media outlets negatively by increasing the cost of doing business and reducing the capacity of media houses to make capital investments, especially in the wake of the virtual society under the COVID-19 pandemic which required improved technology.

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<sup>33</sup> See a 2018 economic note titled "Economic freedom promotes freedom of the press" by the Montreal Economic Institute (MEI). Available at [https://www.iedm.org/sites/default/files/web/pub\\_files/note0118\\_en.pdf](https://www.iedm.org/sites/default/files/web/pub_files/note0118_en.pdf)

### 3.4 Technological environment

The technological environment continued to grapple with what can be termed as a topical issue in both the first and second quarter: The Cyber Security and Cyber Crimes Act.

In April, five NGOs petitioned the Lusaka High Court for a declaration that various provisions of the Cyber Security and Cyber Crimes Act are unconstitutional and should be struck off the statute books<sup>34</sup>.

The five NGOs argued that sections 11, 12, 29, 38, 40, 54, 59, 65, 69, 72 and 74 of the Act severely threaten the right to privacy, the freedom of expression, the right to freely impart and receive information, the freedom of conscience, the freedom of the media and the right to a fair trial.

The NGOs further argued that the Cyber Security and Cyber Crimes Act No 2 of 2021 contains several provisions which threaten the right to protection from deprivation of property guaranteed by Article 16, the right to privacy guaranteed by Article 17, the right to protection of the law guaranteed by Article 18, the freedom of conscience guaranteed by Article 19, the freedom of expression guaranteed by Article 20 (1) and the freedom of the press guaranteed by Article 20 (2).

The NGOs added that the Act seeks to facilitate wide scale surveillance and interception of private communications with insufficient safeguards for constitutionally guaranteed rights and freedoms.

Meanwhile, the Zambia Information Communications Technology Authority (ZICTA) urged politicians to be aware of the consequences of perpetrating hate speech. ZICTA Board Chairperson, Frightone Sichone, stated that:

*As Zambia commences the political campaign period in preparation for the upcoming elections in August this year, it is important that all citizens, particularly, politicians from both the ruling party and the opposition parties as well as their supporters are aware that there will now be consequences for perpetrating hate speech, character assassination, fake news and other related vices that have been happening online in the past few years. This law therefore, is expected to introduce a conducive online environment for users of digital platform in the country.*

*The Act provides for the protection of persons against cybercrime and provides for child online protection. It also prohibits the use of hate speech and safeguard the peace of the country. We all know that hate speech led to genocide in Rwanda<sup>35</sup>.*

Arguably, the Act has certain progressive provisions which could strengthen the regime against cybercrimes which are on the rise. Prior to enactment of the Act, the legal regime against cybercrime was anchored on the Electronic Communications and Transactions (ECT) Act No. 21 of 2009 and the ICT Act No. 15 of 2009. The two Acts were not as effective given certain limitations posed by rapid advancements in technology as well as the challenges regarding admissibility of electronic evidence for effective prosecution of certain cyber or digital crimes. The Cyber security and cyber crimes Act was, thus, an attempt to cure this challenge identified in the implementation of the two precursor laws.

However, the law has an expanded scope with various provisions which provide remedies beyond

<sup>34</sup> The NGOs include Chapter One Foundation Limited, Bloggers of Zambia Limited, Governance, Elections, Advocacy, Research Services (GEARS) Initiative, People's Action for Accountability and Good Governance in Zambia and Alliance for Community Action. The petitioners prayed to the Court to make a declaration that sections 1, 12, 29, 38, 40, 54, 59, 65, 69, 72 and 74 of the Cyber Security and Cyber Crimes Act are unconstitutional and should be struck off from the statute books. A detailed analysis of various suppressive sections of the Act is contained in the first quarter State of the Media Report.

<sup>35</sup> Mr Sichone said this during a courtesy call on the Copper Belt Permanent Secretary, Bright Nundwe in May. See <https://www.themastonline.com/2021/05/14/zicta-warns-politicians-against-propagating-hate-speech/>

the legal ailments in the precursor laws, some of which were raised by the five NGOs that petitioned the Court. This is against the backdrop of the current legal regime which has several laws that are inimical to freedom of expression online. The law thus threatens freedom of expression and access to information given the excessive provisions which could allow for arbitrary application or targeting of critical individuals as well as undermining investigative journalism. There is need for fair implementation of the Act and it is noteworthy that in the quarter under review no excessive application of the provision of the law against media practitioners was noted.

During the quarter, government launched the National Cyber Security Policy whose rationale is to protect critical information infrastructure in both public and private sectors, develop a coordinated cybersecurity governance structure, provide mechanisms to ensure a safe and secure cyber environment and address inadequate cyber security provisions in the national ICT policy. The overall objective of the policy is to transform the cyberspace in Zambia into a safer environment in order to fully realise the social, economic and strategic benefits of using ICTs<sup>36</sup>.

Specifically, one of the objectives of the policy is to provide cybersecurity education and develop requisite skills in order to attain a culture of cybersecurity. This is to be attained through development of mechanisms to integrate cybersecurity in all education and training programmes, enhancing the development of cyber security awareness programmes and development of mechanisms to improve cyber security.

This is a commendable move as it will help to enhance strategies towards the enhancement of cyber security which establishes a safe environment for the enjoyment of other digital rights such as freedom of expression online. This is even more critical in the present day where a big number of people utilise online spaces and other digital platforms as an extension of the public sphere to express their views and opinions. Similarly, several institutions, including media outlets, utilise various digital tools in their daily activities of gathering information and disseminating publications and productions.

It is commendable, then, that the Ministry of Transport and Communications has prioritised education and integration of cybersecurity issues. This will eventually trickle down to media training institutions and also benefit the public at large, teaching them to responsibly exercise their rights and freedoms online in a safe environment.

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36 Available at [https://www.mtc.gov.zm/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/National-Cybersecurity-Policy2\\_compressed.pdf](https://www.mtc.gov.zm/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/National-Cybersecurity-Policy2_compressed.pdf)

With regard to media development and performance during the quarter, the following was the breakdown of media outlets:

#### **BROADCAST INSTITUTIONS<sup>37</sup>**

|                                     |            |
|-------------------------------------|------------|
| COMMUNITY RADIO                     | 72         |
| COMMERCIAL RADIO                    | 62         |
| COMMERCIAL TELEVISION               | 24         |
| COMMUNITY TELEVISION                | 13         |
| PUBLIC RADIO                        | 6          |
| PUBLIC TELEVISION                   | 5          |
| SUBSCRIPTION MANAGEMENT SERVICE     | 7          |
| LANDING RIGHTS BROADCASTING SERVICE | 7          |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                        | <b>196</b> |

#### **MAJOR DAILY NEWSPAPERS<sup>38</sup>**

| OUTLET             | REACH          | OTHER EDITIONS | E-PAPER | PRICE |
|--------------------|----------------|----------------|---------|-------|
| Zambia Daily Mail  | Nationwide     | Sunday Mail    | YES     | K10   |
| Times of Zambia    | Nationwide     | Sunday Times   | YES     | K10   |
| Daily Nation       | Nationwide     | -              | NO      | K10   |
| News Diggers       | Selected towns | -              | YES     | K10   |
| The Mast Newspaper | Selected towns | -              | NO      | K10   |

#### **TOP SOCIAL MEDIA NEWS OUTLETS-FACEBOOK<sup>39</sup>**

| OUTLET           | FANS      |
|------------------|-----------|
| Mwebantu Zambia  | 1,425,420 |
| Zambia Reports   | 1,281,074 |
| Zambian Watchdog | 894,911   |
| Smart Eagles     | 850,259   |

<sup>37</sup> According to a list of broadcast media houses supplied by the Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA)

<sup>38</sup> According to an observation of newsstands in selected towns in the quarter under review

<sup>39</sup> As observed on 30<sup>th</sup> June, 2021

## 4.0 Conclusion

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The review in this report has shown that there has been notable improvement in some of the key thematic areas in the fourth quarter as compared to the first quarter. However, the effect of the occurrences under key thematic areas cannot be overemphasised regardless.

The socio-political environment did not record any major violations or inhibitions of freedom of the press through violent attacks by political party cadres, save the burning of parts of Kalungwishi Radio in Chiengi District by unknown persons. The quarter witnessed positive developments in pronouncements made by President Edgar Lungu on protection of the media as well as the implementation of practical security training for journalists. On a negative note, though, the quarter witnessed the resurgence of a third wave of the COVID-19 pandemic with renewed restrictions that constrained the work of journalists and media outlets.

The legal environment did not record any major development. As predicted in the previous quarter, the Access to Information Bill was not presented to Parliament, marking nearly twenty years of a campaign for the enactment of the law.

In the economic environment, a similar trajectory was recorded with regard to most of the economic variables which posed a negative scenario that inhibited the growth of media outlets given the high cost of doing business.

Finally, in the technological environment, a major development was noted in the launch of the National Cyber Security Policy that is expected to guide and promulgate various strategies aimed at securing the online space.

Overall, the second quarter posted a more positive outlook than the first quarter given certain improvements itemised above.

## 5.0 Recommendations

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i. *Safeguarding the sustainability of media enterprises*

*Given the negative economic trends observed in the quarter, it is critical that financial support packages are extended to media enterprises. Deliberate moves must be taken through the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting to develop a package of incentives (tax, non-tax, empowerment) to bail out media houses.*

ii. *Need for professionalism and adherence to media ethics*

*There is need for the media (both public and private) to adhere to professional codes of journalism and basic tenets such as objectivity, balance, fairness and the public interest. These tenets are critical if the media are to serve the public and contribute to the attainment of functional democracy. Specifically, the public media must undertake to transform their programming to reflect the diversity of public voices, including those deemed to be critical of the State.*

iii. *Enactment of Media regulation and Access to Information Bills*

*There is need for a renewed drive and strategy towards a campaign for the enactment of the Access to Information Bill given the lapse of a second decade without the Bill being enacted.*

iv. *Review of laws inimical to freedom of expression*

*There is need for review of laws that continue to hinder the enjoyment of freedom of expression and other civil liberties as guaranteed by the Constitution.*

## 6.0 Appendices

### 6.1 Interview guides

**MISA ZAMBIA**  
**STATE OF THE MEDIA REPORT**  
**QUARTER 2 (Apr-June) 2021**

Dear respondent, MISA Zambia conducts a quarterly review of the state of the media in Zambia, detailing trends in the political, legal, economic and technological operating environment. In this regard, your assistance and input by response to the questions below will be of utmost help in compilation of reports for the Second quarter of 2021. Ensure to give as much information as clearly as possible. The information collected is solely for the purpose of the State of the Media reports.

**Name** ..... (To be withheld on demand)

**Date**...../...../2021

1. How would you describe the level of freedom of expression and of media in the second quarter of 2021?

2. How would you describe the following aspects with regard to the media.

a. Political environment

b. Economic environment

c. Legal environment

3. What are some of the challenges and opportunities you have observed with regard to media freedom in the quarter under review?

4. What are your general comments on the state of the media in the quarter under review?

5. Based on your observations, what are your recommendations for media development?

**STATE OF THE MEDIA REPORT  
QUARTER 2 (Apr-June) 2021**

Dear respondent, MISA Zambia conducts a quarterly review of the state of the media in Zambia, detailing trends in the political, legal, economic and technological operating environment. In this regard, your assistance and input by response to the questions below will be of utmost help in compilation of reports for the Second quarter of 2021. Ensure to give as much information as clearly as possible. The information collected is solely for the purpose of the State of the Media reports.

1. In which province are you/your station located?

- ➡ Lusaka
- ➡ Copper Belt
- ➡ Central
- ➡ Southern
- ➡ Eastern
- ➡ Northern
- ➡ Muchinga
- ➡ Luapula
- ➡ North-Western
- ➡ Western

2. How would you describe freedom of expression and of the media in the second quarter of 2021?

.....

3. What has been your/your media house's experience during the election campaigns?

.....

4. How would you describe the political environment in the quarter under review?

.....

5. How would you describe the economic environment in the quarter under review?

.....

6. How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected your work as a journalist/media house in the quarter?

.....

7. Generally, how would you rate the media's operating environment in the second quarter?

Free 😊😊      Relatively Free 😊      Neutral /)      Mostly unfree ☹      Repressed ☹☹



## 6.2 Alerts and Communiqués

### **Communiqué-7<sup>th</sup> April (ZNBC)**

United Party for National Development (UPND) Deputy Secretary General Patrick Mucheleka accused the ruling Patriotic Front (PF) of abusing state-owned; Zambia National Broadcasting Corporation (ZNBC) on a daily basis to parade huge numbers of fake defections from UPND. In a statement released to the media, Mr. Mucheleka further accused the ruling party of blocking the opposition from holding meetings while allowing PF members to continue campaigning.

### **Communiqué-8<sup>th</sup> April (News Diggers)**

LUSAKA Chief Resident Magistrate Lameck Mwale found Chishimba Kambwili with a case to answer in a matter he was being charged with defamation of the President in relation to his remarks.

### **Communiqué-14<sup>th</sup> April (KBN TV)**

MISA Zambia received a report from KBN in which the office of the Inspector General of police was requesting for video footage which was aired on Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> April, 2021 in which alleged PF cadres harassed a civil servant, threatening violence on suspicion that the victim was a UPND supporter. The matter was followed up with KBN TV station manager Joe Simata who confirmed the incident to be true and that they had given police the said footage. However, he said the alleged cadres invited KBN to cover the harassment of the civil servant whom they accused of working against the government of the day.

### **Alert-14<sup>th</sup> April (News Diggers)**

MAZABUKA Central UPND Member of Parliament Garry Nkombo said News Diggers Media Limited had demonstrated the importance of investigative journalism in the country and has set benchmarks for the industry. Debating on the report of the Committee on media, information and communication technologies, Nkombo said the government should provide a platform for investigative journalism to flourish so that the country can benefit from this type of journalism.

### **Communiqué-15<sup>th</sup> April (Daily Mail)**

The executive should speed up the process of enacting the Access to Information bill to enable journalists to easily write stories that can benefit the public, Parliament heard on Tuesday.

Chifubu member of Parliament (MP) Frank Ng'ambi Said the piece of legislation will allow journalists to freely undertake investigative reporting

Dr. Ng'ambi said this when he moved a motion to enable the house adopt the report of the committee on Media, Information and Communication Technologies. "The bill will make it easy for journalists to get information from Public officers. It will also enable the public to have easy access to information." Dr. Ng'ambi said.

### **Communiqué-15<sup>th</sup> April (Daily Mail)**

Elections should not be synonymous with violence, so journalists should be given space to tell the story as they see it professionally at any given time.

The Minister of Information and Broadcasting Services Dora Siliya said reporters should be allowed to operate in a free environment as the country prepares for the August 12 elections.

Ms. Siliya, who is also government spokesperson has since reaffirmed government commitment

to the protection of journalists and Media Freedom. She was speaking yesterday when Charge d'affairs at the Embassy of the United States in Zambia, David Young, paid a courtesy call on her....

#### **Communiqué-17<sup>th</sup> April, 2021 (News Diggers)**

LUSAKA Chief Resident Magistrate Lameck Mwale found Lusaka photographer Cornelius Chellah Tukuta with a case to answer in a matter in which he is accused of defaming Information and Broadcasting Minister Dora Siliya. In this matter, it is alleged that Tukuta on May 26, 2020 in Lusaka, published defamatory matter affecting Chief Government Spokesperson Dora Siliya in the form of a video on Facebook.

#### **Communiqué-17<sup>th</sup> April (Lusaka Times)**

The Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA) in collaboration with cooperating partners will soon start conducting capacity building programmes for all its licensees. IBA Board Chairperson, Mabel Mung'omba, says the programmes will be tailored to equip journalists with knowledge and skills in election reporting to enhance professional and ethical coverage of the August 12, 2021 general elections. Ms Mung'omba said as Zambia heads to the polls on August 12, 2021, the media will play a critical role in providing platforms for various political players and civil society organisations to reach out to the electorates...

#### **Communiqué-22<sup>nd</sup> April (The Mast)**

Mulungushi University lecturer and media rights campaigner Kamufisa Manchishi observed that the media fraternity is currently operating under oppressive laws.

In his presentation during the Central Province Police media dialogue forum organized by Bloggers of Zambia at Kabwe's Urban Bliss Hotel, Manchishi pointed out that Zambian Media houses had been operating in a very oppressing legal environment that derogates from the fundamental freedom of expression...

#### **Communiqué-29<sup>th</sup> April (News Diggers)**

Government has launched the National Cyber Security Policy and the National Postal Policy. Speaking during the launch, Wednesday, Transport and Communications Minister Mutotwe Kafwaya said the National Cyber Security Policy would possess sufficient capacity to identify and manage cyber security risks. "I am very pleased to launch two policies which are not only important to government but the Zambian people generally. The policies that we are launching today, the National Cyber Security Policy and the National Postal Policy are the first for the country in both sectors.

#### **Communiqué-29<sup>th</sup> April (Times of Zambia)**

Journalists should be well –remunerated to prevent them from falling prey to lavish politicians who attempt to brainwash them with *blalizo* (favours, especially monetary), thus compromising their work. Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Services Permanent Secretary Amos Malupenga says Government will engage media house to discuss the issue of incentivizing and motivating reporters through a minimum wage.

"I'm urging employers at various media institutions to look after the journalists well. Incentives them, shield them, and insulate them from unnecessary temptations which will make them to compromise on their professional expectation. We can motivate them in various ways, but money is key. This is why I'm always talking against *blalizo*," he said...

### **Communique-3<sup>rd</sup> May (Lusaka Times)**

President Edgar Lungu has called for the protection of Journalists in the country against all forms of attacks. President Lungu said intimidation and violent attacks towards journalists should come to a stop as the media is a key component of the state.

He stated that once an individual engages in violent activities towards journalists, it becomes an act of criminality that will be prosecuted regardless of one's political affiliation.

President Lungu was speaking during the commemoration of World Press Freedom Day in Lusaka today. The President has assured of government's support for press freedom in the country.....

### **Communique-3<sup>rd</sup> May (Lusaka Times)**

The Human Rights Commission (HRC) has called for the protection and safety of journalists ahead of the forthcoming August 12, 2021 general elections.

HRC Spokesperson, Mweelwa Muleya said members of the public especially political party cadres should accord the media the due respect as the fourth estate of government after the Executive, Legislature and Judiciary. Mr Muleya has since called for enhanced protection of all Journalists ahead of the August general elections.

"In a democracy such as Zambia, the government has a primary responsibility to promote and protect the right to freedom of expression without any form of interference or hindrance. The media also has a noble duty of promoting free expression of divergent and pluralistic ideas and views without any form of discrimination," Mr. Muleya said.....

### **Communique-3<sup>rd</sup> April (Lusaka Times)**

The government has urged the Inspector General of Police Kakoma Kanganja to arrest United Party for National Development (UPND) presidential spokesperson Mubita Nawa and a UPND cadre for defamation of the President.

A video has since gone viral, where Mr. Nawa acting together with another man a "Mulenga" was allegedly insulting and defaming the Republican President contrary to the laws of Zambia. Police are currently investigating the matter.....

### **Communique-4<sup>th</sup> May (Daily Nation)**

PRESIDENT Edgar Lungu has lashed out at media owners who are also presidential aspirants, using their newspaper to attack rivals in an unfair and biased manner.

"It is disconcerting and unprofessional that some individuals privileged to own newspapers have suddenly become politicians and using their publications to attack their rivals which gives undue advantage to such politicians in an election as it creates a very slanted play field, where they quote the same people to create stories" President Lungu said.....

### **Communique-5<sup>th</sup> April (Lusaka Times)**

United Party for National Development (UPND) National Spokesperson, Cornelius Mweetwa has described the PF and its government as an enemy of the media in the country and has since demanded for a conducive working environment for both private and public media houses and practitioners.

Mr Mweetwa says the numerous attacks on media houses and practitioners by especially PF cadres and statutory bodies such as the Independent Broadcasting Authority, IBA is unprecedented in the history of Zambia and a sure sign that the PF has no regard for the media and its noble work.....

#### **Communique-10<sup>th</sup> May (News Diggers)**

Transparency International Global Vice-President Rueben Lifuka has stressed that fair media coverage is important to achieve free and fair elections. And Action Aid Zambia executive director Nalucha Ziba says a democratic election is impossible without a professional and ethical media playing the watchdog role. Meanwhile, Electoral Commission of Zambia (ECZ) Corporate Affairs Manager Patricia Luhanga says despite the code of conduct being in place, the Commission only has jurisdiction on minor electoral disputes.....

#### **Communique-10<sup>th</sup> May (News Diggers)**

VICE-PRESIDENT Inonge Wina says Parliament has performed well in the last five years despite some progressive bills being opposed at every stage. And Vice-President Wina says it is mandatory that ZNBC covers President Edgar Lungu's activities and visits during the campaign period because he still holds the position of President despite the dissolution of Parliament. Responding to a question in Parliament, Friday, from Chimwemwe independent member of parliament Elias Mwila who asked her how she rated the performance of Parliament from 2016 to 2021, Vice-President Wina said Parliament had performed.

#### **Communique-12<sup>th</sup> May (News Diggers)**

INCARCERATED Economic and Equity Party (EPP) leader Chilufya Tayali said he had more information to reveal on some of the wrong things that are being funded by State House. In an interview, Tayali said he was ready to meet President Edgar Lungu in court. Tayali who has been in police custody since Thursday last week has been officially charged with defamation of the President.

#### **Communique-13<sup>th</sup> May (News Diggers)**

UPND president Hakainde Hichilema assured journalists that they will be free to investigate the UPND government once in power. Speaking in an interview, Hichilema stressed that the media was important in ensuring transparency and accountability in the operations of government. He assured the media fraternity that his party was determined to bring about media freedom in the country. "I want to assure the media fraternity and the people of Zambia that we are determined to bring about media freedom in our country. We are very clear in our minds...

#### **Alert-16<sup>th</sup> May (Lusaka Times)**

The Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA) reiterated that it will not hesitate to invoke Section 29 of its amendment Act No. 26 of 2010 if local television broadcasting stations operate in a manner that disregards the law. Section 29 of the IBA Amendment Act No. 26 of 2010 gives the board the power to suspend, revoke or cancel any broadcasting licence issued under the Act.

IBA Director General Josephine Mapoma said in a statement to ZANIS that the authority was appalled by the conduct of Muvi Television (TV) when it hosted Chilufya Tayali, the president of the opposition Economic and Equity party on its assignment programme aired yesterday, May 15, 2021.....

#### **Communique-28<sup>th</sup> May (Daily Mail)**

Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Services Permanent Secretary Amos Malupenga said the

media had no option but to invest in knowledge on a wide range of issues for them to effectively disseminate information. Mr Malupenga said this yesterday during the launch of a pre-election monitoring report (March to May this year) by MISA Zambia. The report states that the media still have challenges in balancing stories.

The report shows that 76 percent of stories surveyed were unbalanced and lacked objectivity. The project is supported by the European Union (EU), in collaboration with BBC Media Action and MISA Zambia. Mr Malupenga said the report also highlights an example of bad journalism in which stories on electoral issues were single-sourced and unbalanced. "I wish to remind the media that elections are not about one particular event such as nominations or the election date. Rather, it is about the entire election process from registration of voters, voting and to announcement of the results," Mr Malupenga said.

### **Communique-29<sup>th</sup> May (Lusaka Times)**

Fr. Benedict Ngandwe was ushered into office to serve as the new MISA Zambia Chairperson following an elective Annual General Meeting (AGM) held on Friday at Golden Peacock Hotel in Lusaka.

Others elected into office included Jean Ndayisenga, Dr. Basil Hamusokwe and Fr. Barnabas Simatende as Committee Members to serve in the National Governing Council (NGC) of MISA Zambia. Fr. Ngandwe who is also Radio Icengelo Director replaces Hellen Mwale who served in that position as the first female candidate and has contributed to the growth and development of the Zambian chapter of MISA.

Fr. Ngandwe thanked the outgoing Board for their work and called for unity for the development and growth of MISA Zambia. The MISA Zambia NGC is responsible for providing policy direction to the institution thus rendering it a true democratic membership driven organisation. The new board will serve for a term of three years....

### **Communique 8<sup>th</sup> June 2021 (News Diggers)**

GERMAN ambassador to Zambia Anne Wagner-Mitchel called on the Zambia Police to provide a safe space in which democracy can be exercised ahead of the August polls. Speaking during the official opening of the practical course in safety and security for journalists, Monday, Ambassador Wagner-Mitchel noted that the political atmosphere in the country was currently rough and that the freedom of the media was under threat. "Zambia has a history of multi-party democracy and peaceful elections. But currently, the political atmosphere is very rough .....

### **Communique 8<sup>th</sup> June 2021 (Lusaka Times)**

Radio Icengelo Chief Executive Officer and MISA Zambia Chairperson Rev. Fr. Benedict Mwelwa Ng'andwe died.

Catholic Diocese of Ndola Bishop Rt. Rev. Dr. Benjamin Phiri announced the death of Fr. N'gandwe.

Bishop Phiri revealed that Fr. Ng'andwe, 52, who at the time of his death served as Our Lady of Africa Parish Priest, died today at Kitwe Teaching Hospital due to high blood pressure and diabetes.....

### **Communique-15<sup>th</sup> June 2021 (Speech Analyst)**

Privately owned Camnet TV decided not to renew the contract for Station's News Editor, Kalani Muchima. Mr. Muchima, had a one-year contract with the church sponsored television which expired today, 15th June, 2021.

### **Communique-16<sup>th</sup> June 2021 (Electoral Commission of Zambia)**

The Electoral Commission of Zambia directed the media not to cover the two suspended political parties, United for National Development Party (UPND) and the Patriotic Front Party (PF) respectively

Following the suspension of the Patriotic Front (PF) and United Party for National Development (UPND) from conducting any manner of political campaigns in Lusaka, Mpulungu, Nakonde and Namwala, All media houses are advised by the ECZ not to cover any **SUSPENDED CAMPAIGN ACTIVITIES** for the two political parties in the said jurisdiction.....



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