

The African Media Barometer (AMB)

The Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung's Southern African Media Project took the initiative together with the Media Institute for Southern Africa (MISA) to start the African Media Barometer in April 2005, a self assessment exercise done by Africans themselves according to homegrown criteria. The project is the first in-depth and comprehensive description and measurement system for national media environments on the African continent.

The benchmarks are to a large extent taken from the African Commission for Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) "Declaration of Principles on Freedom of Expression in Africa", adopted in 2002. This declaration was largely inspired by the groundbreaking "Windhoek Declaration on Promoting an Independent and Pluralistic African Press" (1991) and the "African Charter on Broadcasting" (2001).

By the end of 2007, 26 sub-Saharan countries have been covered by the AMB. In 2007 those countries which started the exercise in 2005 were revisited providing for the first time comparable data to measure developments in a country over a two-year period.

Methodology: A panel of experts is formed in each country, including representatives of media and civil society at large in equal numbers. They are serving as panel members in their personal capacities, not as representatives of their respective organisations. The panel should consist of not more than ten members. They will meet bi-annually for two days retreats to go in a self-assessment process through the indicators in a qualitative discussion and determine (quantitative) scores for each indicator. The meetings will be chaired by an FES consultant to ensure comparable results. The resulting reports are made public.

¹ The ACHPR is the authoritative organ of the African Union (AU) mandated to interpret the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights

Scoring system: Panel members are asked to allocate their individual scores to the respective indicators after the qualitative discussion in an anonymous vote according to the following scale:

- 1 Country does not meet indicator.
- 2 Country minimally meets aspects of the indicator.
- 3 Country meets many aspects of indicator but progress may be too recent to judge.
- 4 Country meets most aspects of indicator.
- 5 Country meets all aspects of the indicator and has been doing so over time.

Scores for each sector are determined as follows: Members of the panel will, after a qualitative group discussion, attach their individual point-score (1 - 5) to each sub-indicator of a sector. The sum of all individual scores will be divided by the number of panel members. The result will then be considered the final score for the sub-indicator.

This qualitative report, including the scores, serves the purpose of measuring over time (based on bi-annual repetitions of the panel meetings) the progress or otherwise of developments in the media landscape.

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AFRICAN MEDIA BAROMETER ZIMBABWE 2008

Sector 1: Freedom of expression, including freedom of the media, are effectively protected and promoted.

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

ANALYSIS:

Section 20 (1) of the Constitution of Zimbabwe says: “No person shall be prevented from exercising his or her freedom of expression, which includes the freedom to hold opinions and to receive and/or communicate ideas and information without interference.” Clause 2 of the same section, however, provides that freedom of expression can be limited if it is necessary

- in the interest of defence, public safety and economic interest of the state, public morality/ public health;
- to protect the independence of courts and parliament;
- to protect the freedoms and reputation of others.

These statutory limitations are not permissible “as far as that provision ... is shown not to be reasonably justifiable in a democratic society”. This means that the individual seeking to assert the right to freedom of expression must prove that a particular restriction is not justifiable.

Freedom of the press and/or the media is not expressly guaranteed.

Pieces of legislation restricting the right to freedom of expression include but are not limited to the Public Order and Security Act Chapter 11:7 (POSA), the Access to Information and Protection of

Privacy Act Chapter 10:27 (AIPPA), the Broadcasting Services Act Chapter 12:06 (BSA) and Criminal Law Amendment Act. These Acts make it difficult to assert the constitutional right to freedom of expression as they override it.

Although POSA, AIPPA and BSA were amended on 21 December 2007 the overall frameworks of the Acts remain the same. Media lobby groups and activists noted with concern that the three pieces of legislation were passed in one day in one sitting of Parliament. Cynics regard these changes as cosmetic and a smokescreen put up by Government to give the impression of conceding to requests made by the opposition during mediation talks between the ruling ZANU (PF) and opposition Movement for Democratic Change brokered by South Africa's President Thabo Mbeki.

Under the amended AIPPA, the Media and Information Commission has been replaced by the Zimbabwe Media Commission which will comprise a chairperson and eight other members. The ZMC will be appointed by the President from a list of 12 nominees to be submitted by Parliament's Committee on Standing Rules and Orders. The functions of the ZMC will be similar to those of the MIC.

The amendments include a new section which authorises the ZMC to establish a Media Council headed by a chairperson and consisting of representatives from different sectors that will be nominated by:

- an association of accredited journalists
- an association of publishers
- an association of advertisers
- an association of mass media trainers
- an association of churches
- an association of trade unions
- an association of womens' groups
- an association of youth.

According to AIPPA, the various associations must "in the opinion of

the Commission be fairly representative” of their respective sector. If any association fails or refuses to submit nominations the Commission will then appoint a person of their own choice. In the final analysis, therefore, government appointees will determine the composition of this Media Council.

This creation of a Media Council is a parallel process that directly conflicts with and undermines the formation of the (voluntary) Media Council of Zimbabwe in June 2007 by the Media Alliance of Zimbabwe, comprising the Media Monitoring Project Zimbabwe, the Zimbabwe Union of Journalists and the Media Institute of Southern Africa. The Council was set up after wide consultation with media practitioners, media organisations and key stakeholders which included relevant government ministries and personnel.

Another amendment to AIPPA concerns the accreditation of journalists. Section 83, which stated that “no person other than an accredited journalist shall practise as a journalist nor be employed as such or in any manner holding himself out as or pretend to be a journalist”, was scrapped. It is therefore no longer a criminal offence to practice journalism without an official accreditation, even though other restrictions remain in place.

Amendments to the Broadcasting Services Act maintain the monopoly of the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Holdings over the airwaves in the provision of broadcast media services. In regard to commercial broadcasting, another amendment now allows for minimal foreign ownership and funding.

Certain sections of POSA have also been amended. Appeals against the banning of a march, for example, are no longer decided by the executive but by a magistrate’s court. On the other hand, there is now a general ban on demonstrations outside Parliament, the courts and other public institutions. An addition to the Act includes submission of more detailed information before a meeting or march

can be held. Names of the convenor and deputy convenor now have to be provided to the police. This allows them to arrest and charge individuals whereas before they charged organisations as a whole.

In the 17th Amendment of the Constitution, lawmakers added a unique standard for measuring the legitimacy of freedoms and arguably that of expression, i.e. through the determination of whether the action/activity is of “national interest”. Outcomes of court cases now depend entirely on how the individual judge will interpret “the national interest”.

SCORES:

Individual scores: 2, 2, 2, 1, 2, 1, 2, 2, 2, 2

Average score: 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.*

ANALYSIS:

Panelists were split in their opinion on this indicator and felt that there are two systems at play in Zimbabwe.

One group of participants felt that ordinary Zimbabweans are willing and able to express themselves and that they are doing so without fear.

They pointed out that ordinary people are giving their forthright opinions about a range of issues - economy, inflation, shortages and the president. They do this mainly in their neighbourhoods. This debate is not instantly evident because there is only one national broadcaster and ordinary people do not have access to that broad-

caster. However they are freely expressing themselves on alternative media such as Studio 7 of Voice of America, SW Radio Africa and Voice of the People.

The majority of panelists disagreed and stated that the atmosphere in Zimbabwe is not conducive to free expression. People voice their opinions freely only within their own group and often consider carefully where they are, who they are with and what they say under the circumstances. In rural Zimbabwe there is fear of victimisation and fear of disappearance, torture and violence when one expresses oneself.

Security is everywhere and repression has become a norm which people have accepted. They fear being branded “infidels” if they disagree with the views of officialdom and so become subservient to the political status quo: “You can’t even talk about the President’s age”.

Fear is further instilled by bloody images of activists, lawyers, opposition party members and ordinary citizens being assaulted by the police and the militia published in newspapers and broadcast by TV.

Apart from the few alternative media which are difficult to access, there are no channels to express opinions publicly. As a result politicians are removed from what people think. Government communicates its policies through the various media under its control (Zimpapers, Zimbabwe Broadcasting Holdings) but citizens do not have the same access to these media when they want and need to express themselves.

This constraint on free expression is not confined to political issues. Every issue in Zimbabwe is seen as being a political issue with a political meaning. People are generally afraid to talk and this culture of fear permeates everything. In the courts, there are certain issues

that lawyers cannot talk about because they are off limits. Politicians and policy makers are even more restricted than the average citizens, as they cannot openly express their views: they make totally different statements on one and the same issue depending on whether they are in private or in public.

At universities, traditionally the hotbed of free debate, lecturers are often afraid to include certain contentious topics in their course outlines or comment on them. This “culture of self-censorship” is described as widespread and universal amongst Zimbabweans. Equally, students no longer freely debate issues without fear.

One cannot speak freely on the bus or in public or go to the national broadcaster or the media with one’s views, if these are not in line with the views of government.

Zimbabweans have realised that normal channels of communication are not open to them and they find alternative ways of expressing their disgruntlement through theatre and music. A number of musicians are composing songs in a way that allows their consumers to interpret the lyrics they way they want. Drama is another medium that is being chosen as a way for people to convey their sentiments.

In the Afro Barometer, which researches opinions and attitudes of people in 18 countries, Zimbabwe always comes out worst. Up to 35 % of respondents say “don’t know” in reply to what they perceive to be politically sensitive questions, preferring to give non-committal responses since they do not dare to give clear answers.

SCORES:

Individual scores: 1, 3, 1, 2, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1

Average score: 1.3 (2006 = 1.1)

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- 1.3 *There are no laws restricting freedom of expression such as excessive official secrets or libel acts, or laws that unreasonably interfere with the responsibilities of media.*
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ANALYSIS:

Zimbabwe has laws in place that take away the little freedom of expression that the constitution allows. These are, among many others, the Official Secrets Act, POSA, BSA and AIPPA.

POSA, for example, makes it a criminal offence to publish or communicate “false statements prejudicial to the state”. A person may be fined or imprisoned for up to five years for publishing a “false” statement likely to incite public disorder, affect the defence and economic interests of the country, or undermine public confidence in the police, armed forces or prison officers. Section 16 makes it an offence to make a public statement with the intention of, or knowing that there is a risk of “undermining the authority of or insulting the President”. This includes statements likely to engender feelings of hostility towards the President, cause “hatred, contempt or ridicule” of the President, or any “abusive, indecent, obscene or false statement” about his person or his office. The offence attracts imprisonment for up to one year.

The Criminal Codification Act 2005 is the most threatening piece of legislation regarding freedom of expression - the “mother of all repressive acts”. It forbids the publication or communication of “false statements prejudicial to the state” (section 31). Although the provision directly targets journalists and the mass media, its ambit is wide enough to include citizens generally. According to section 33 of the Act, a person is guilty of undermining the authority of or insulting the President if they publicly make a statement by words, by an act or by a gesture that will “(i) engender feelings of hostility towards; or (ii) cause hatred, contempt or ridicule of the President or an acting President, whether in person or in respect of his office ...”.

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The Criminal Codification Act together with POSA severely restrict citizens' right to freedom of association, assembly and movement, thus suppressing any form of dissent.

The State has fine-tuned the apparatus that impedes citizens from expressing themselves and a large number of people feel they may be arrested anywhere at any time for anything.

Editors can be forced to reveal their sources under the Parliamentary Privileges Act, and under the Defence Act the state can punish a journalist who has access to "sensitive" information considered seditious or treasonous. The same act restricts journalists from uncovering or revealing how the Ministry of Defence utilises funds allocated to it.

SCORES:

Individual scores: 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 2

Average score: 1.1 (2006 = 1.3)

1.4 *Entry into and practice of the journalistic profession is legally unrestricted.*

ANALYSIS:

As from December 2007 the accreditation of journalists with the Zimbabwe Media Commission is no longer compulsory.

Nevertheless, the practice of the journalistic profession remains partly restricted. Journalists who are not accredited may be barred from access to public places (such as Parliament, polling stations), state facilities and state functions (Independence Day celebrations etc). This is seen as a severe restriction on the exercise of their profession.

SCORES:

Individual scores: 2, 3, 2, 3, 2, 2, 4, 2, 2, 3

Average score: 2.5 (2006 = 1.4)

1.5 *Protection of confidential sources of information is guaranteed by law.*

ANALYSIS:

Confidential sources of information are not protected by any law and journalists can be forced to reveal their sources. The above mentioned Parliamentary Privileges Act makes provision for enforcing such disclosure.

SCORES:

Individual scores: 1, 2, 2, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1,

Average score: 1.2 (2006 = 1.0)

1.6 *Public information is easily accessible, guaranteed by law, to all citizens including journalists.*

ANALYSIS:

AIPPA - the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act - professes to make access to public information possible. But this is not the case. The criteria to gain access to information in the hands of government are very restrictive, as is the process. Only the heads of public bodies are allowed to respond to requests for information and in the case of the police, only two people are allowed to comment - the police commissioner or the police spokesperson. They often refuse to provide information or are simply unavailable par-

ticularly to journalists from the privately owned media.

Journalists requiring information from a public body are expected to put their request in writing and the institution has 30 days in which to reply. During this period the application can be delayed or denied and the applicant can then complain to the minister - the same minister heading the ministry that refused access in the first place. There have been a number of cases where journalists submitted a request for information on a certain issue. That request was neither denied nor complied with, but often an article containing the information requested would subsequently find its way into the state controlled media.

Whether access is granted or not very much depends on the person applying: whether one is seen as a supporter of government or “being against the establishment”. Journalists applying for access to official records and documents are viewed with suspicion. For example, a reporter looking for a copy of a newspaper published in 1979 could not get it from the National Archives simply because he was a journalist from the independent media and therefore perceived to have sinister motives for wanting to get hold of it.

Government keeps tight control over its own publications such as the Government Gazette. Even the Hansard, the transcript of parliamentary debates, has not been published for a while. Citizens who wanted information relating to investments by a government-run social security organisation were denied the right to such information. A workers’ organisation was equally denied access. Such withholding of information also extends to normal comment from official government spokespersons who routinely refuse to speak to journalists in the private media on the basis that “you know I do not speak to your paper”.

SCORES:

Individual scores: 2, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 2, 1, 1

Average score: 1.2 (2006 = 1.1)

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

ANALYSIS:

Some civil society groups are supportive of media causes but as some of the issues being fought are also pursued by opposition politics, media activism is often perceived as “regime change” campaigning. The situation is worsened by the polarisation of media lobby groups into those regarded as “pro-regime” and “anti-regime” factions.

Civil society groups frequently fail to speak with one voice because they compete for space and influence and most importantly for donor funding. This results in the various groups looking after their own specific causes without adopting a broader approach.

Human rights and media freedom activists are “trying to fight a repressive system within the framework of the repressive system”. Despite the daunting odds, core groups of media practitioners and activists have generally been making efforts to advance the cause of media freedom, among them the Media Institute of Southern Africa - Zimbabwe Chapter (MISA), the Zimbabwe Union of Journalists, the Zimbabwe Independent Editors Forum (ZINEF) and the Media Monitoring Project of Zimbabwe (MMPZ). MISA, ZUJ and the MMPZ have formed the Media Alliance of Zimbabwe (MAZ) which is now working as a united front in the struggle for media freedom and freedom of expression.

More needs to be done to ensure media lobby groups spread their

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work throughout Zimbabwe. Often they are preaching to the converted and grassroot communities are overlooked. The Media Monitoring Project of Zimbabwe has outreach programmes in growth points in rural areas.

SCORES:

Individual scores: 4, 3, 3, 3, 3, 3, 4, 3, 3, 2

Average Score: 3.1 (2006 = 2.5)

Overall score for sector 1: 1.7 (2006 = 1.4)

Sector 2: The media landscape is characterised by diversity, independence and sustainability.

2.1 *A wide range of sources of information (print, broadcast-ing, internet) is available and affordable to citizens.*

ANALYSIS:

Print media

Over the last few years the print media market has been shrinking due to the struggling economy as well as the restrictive media laws that hinder development.

The print media currently available include the state-owned The Herald, The Sunday Mail, The Sunday News (Bulawayo-based), The Chronicle (Bulawayo-based), The Manica Post (Mutare-based) and Gweru Times.

The Financial Gazette is said to be owned by the governor of the Reserve Bank. The weeklies The Standard and The Zimbabwe Independent are privately owned. The People's Voice, a publication of the Information Department of the ruling ZANU (PF), was at one time out of circulation but is now back in print; The Worker is published by the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions and The Agenda by the National Constitutional Assembly. All these publications are becoming more and more expensive to publish. Other periodicals are lifestyle papers Trends, En Vogue and other specialised publications.

Circulation figures are very low. The Herald, for example, puts out 30.000 copies. On average 10 people read one copy of the dailies, with the figure rising to 20 per copy of weekly newspapers.

Newspapers are expensive to purchase on a daily basis and it is the

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weeklies that are being bought more consistently by middle and higher income earning groups. A copy of The Herald presently (19 January 2008) costs Z\$900 000, the price of two standard loaves of bread - and most people prioritise bread over newspapers.

South African newspapers like Sunday Times and Mail & Guardian are available and have a sizeable market in Zimbabwe.

Broadcasting

Broadcasting in Zimbabwe has been described as “narrowcasting” because the state-controlled Zimbabwe Broadcasting Holdings has a monopoly over the airwaves. There is no other broadcasting operator in the country.

Internet

Very few Zimbabweans have private access to Internet. Wider public access is via Internet Cafes, but they charge outrageous prices beyond the reach of many. Those who have access mainly use the facilities at their workplaces. Access is further hampered by regular electricity outages.

The Interception of Communications Act, passed in August 2007, legalises the surveillance of all communication including internet traffic. Officials who can make applications for the interception of communications include the Chief of Defence Intelligence, the Director-General of the President’s department of national security, the Commissioner of the Zimbabwe Republic Police and the Commissioner-General of the Zimbabwe Revenue Authority. E-mails for example could be monitored, automatically identifying sensitive phrases and thus stopping the message from being forwarded to the recipient. There is no legal obligation to inform the person under surveillance.

Although all Internet Service Providers (ISPs), freight forwarders, courier companies, postal and telephone service providers and any providers of any medium that facilitates communication are obliged to put in place at their own expense mechanisms to monitor and record all information that passes through their system, this part of the act has not been implemented yet. Already, though, the act has had the psychological effect that many people are now fearful of sending e-mails which could be seen as sensitive.

On-line newspapers

There are around 30 on-line newspapers (!) run by Zimbabweans in the diaspora, with ZimOnline (news) ZimbabweTimes (news analysis) and NewZimbabwe.com being the most important ones.

Satellite stations

DSTV is available for subscription but only against payment in foreign currency. South African and other international TV channels are accessible through free to air satellite receivers.

Informal communication channels

Word of mouth is increasingly becoming both more important and restricted. People from urban areas carry news to the rural areas and vice versa. However, due to the ever rising costs of transport and a severe cash crisis many people cannot afford to visit their rural areas as often as they would wish. Thus, even this flow of information is diminishing.

External broadcasting

Externally based radio stations are enjoying significant growth in popularity, in particular Voice of the People (VOP), Studio 7 (a Voice of America programme produced by Zimbabweans) and SW Radio

(broadcast from London, produced by Zimbabweans in exile). All three are broadcasting on short wave. Their impact is limited by the shortage of SW radio receivers and attempts by government to jam their signals.

Radio stations from neighbouring countries are also popular in areas near to the borders to Mozambique and South Africa.

SCORES:

Individual scores: 2, 3, 2, 3, 2, 2, 2, 2, 2, 3

Average score: 2.3 (2006 = 1.3)

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

ANALYSIS:

With the economy in free fall both access to and availability of local publications are decreasing. It is no longer standard practice to buy a newspaper together with a loaf of bread and a pint of milk. All three products are often unavailable or far too expensive for the majority of Zimbabweans.

There have been incidents of the authorities banning privately-owned newspapers from being distributed in certain, especially rural areas. In some cases, the state secret service Central Intelligence Organisation (CIO) buys them up in bulk.

Foreign papers available in Zimbabwe include The Zimbabwean (a London-based weekly produced by exiled Zimbabweans) and the South African Mail & Guardian, The Sowetan, Sunday Times and The Sunday Independent. There have been threats by the Media Commission to “deal” with those foreign newspapers which are “hostile”

to government. A number of bookshops regularly sell a wide variety of leisure and specialist magazines including Home and Garden, Shape, FHM, National Geographic, Cars and Living and Loving.

Weak signals in the outlying areas of the country and frequent power cuts have made it increasingly difficult for people to watch television. Radio is the most popular medium in Zimbabwe but people are limited to the four radio stations run by the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation. There have allegedly been several attempts by Government to jam the externally based shortwave radio stations broadcasting into Zimbabwe.

People who have access to the Internet enjoy a wide choice of on-line publications being produced by Zimbabweans in the diaspora. If and when the authorities begin seriously implementing the Interception of Communications Act, such on-line publications may be in danger of being filtered out by the internet service providers.

SCORES:

Individual scores: 2, 3, 2, 3, 4, 3, 2, 4, 2, 3

Average score: 2.8 (2006 = 1.2)

2.3 *Efforts are undertaken to increase the scope of circulation of the print media particularly to rural communities.*

ANALYSIS:

Due to a severe shortage of newsprint and fuel for transport there are presently no such efforts. The NGO Africa Community Publishing and Development is being hampered in its attempts to distribute books in rural areas by restrictions imposed by local authorities.

SCORES:

Individual scores: 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1

Average score: 1.0 (2006 = 1.3)

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

ANALYSIS:

On paper the Broadcasting Services Act 2001 (BSA) provides for commercial and community radio but in practice Zimbabwe Broadcasting Holdings maintains its monopoly over the airwaves. The Broadcasting Authority of Zimbabwe created through the Act and appointed by and under the control of the Minister of Information, with the responsibility to issue licences for broadcasting, has not granted any licence since it was launched.

Applications were submitted in 2006 to set up community radio stations but none have been approved.

Of all pieces of media legislation in Zimbabwe, BSA is the most restrictive. Through the BSA the state is able to place restrictions on ownership, structure and even content.

All broadcasters ever to be granted a license will be required to set aside one hour per week for government programmes. For community broadcasters, there is a prohibition against broadcasting material of a political matter and this is loosely defined as “including the policy launch of a political party.”

SCORES:

Individual scores: 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 2, 1, 1

Average score: 1.1 (2006 = 1.0)

2.5 *Community broadcasting enjoys special promotion given its potential to broaden access by poor and rural communities.*

Community broadcasting is non-existent in Zimbabwe.

SCORES:

Individual scores: 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1

Average score: 1.0 (2006 = 1.0)

2.6 *The editorial independence of print media published by a public authority is protected adequately against undue political influence.*

ANALYSIS:

Print media published under the Zimbabwe Mass Media Trust, whose major shareholder is the state, are controlled essentially by the Ministry of Information. It determines their editorial policy and appoints the boards which in turn formally appoint editors and other leading staff based on their support for the ruling party and government. All media have to follow the state's proclaimed mission "to protect the interests of the government of the day". If someone does not toe the party line, he or she gets fired. Therefore, staff at these papers are exercising self-censorship.

SCORES:

Individual scores: 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 2

Average score: 1.1 (2006 = 1.0)

2.7 *Local or regional independent news agencies gather and distribute information for all media.*

ANALYSIS:

The only news agency, New ZIANA, is a commercial enterprise owned by government and is thus not independent.

SCORES:

Individual scores: 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 2, 1, 1, 1, 1

Average score: 1.1 (2006 = 1.1)

2.8 *Media diversity is promoted through adequate competition regulation/ legislation.*

ANALYSIS:

Although at face value pieces of legislation such as AIPPA and the BSA may appear to promote media diversity in Zimbabwe, the application of these laws so far has demonstrated that the government uses them to actually stifle such diversity. While the Broadcasting Authority of Zimbabwe is tasked with the licensing of new broadcasting stations, to date BAZ has thrown a lot of spanners in the works of potential operators and has not approved a single broadcasting licence.

There is very little competition in the print media and even pri-

vately owned newspapers act as a cartel. Advertising rates usually go up at the same time and by the same rates, giving the impression that there is collusion among owners. The same people who head state media institutions also control them in their capacity as board members. There is a constant recycling of the same people who sit on a range of boards in a variety of sectors.

The current economic situation and restrictive legislative requirements act as a deterrent to potential investors.

SCORES:

Individual scores: 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 2, 1, 1, 1, 1

Average score: 1.1 (2006 = 1.0)

2.9 *Government promotes a political and economic environment which allows a diverse media landscape.*

ANALYSIS:

The economy of Zimbabwe is imploding, with the result of - among many other things - hyper-inflation.

The prices of newsprint, ink, labour and fuel are rising steeply on a daily basis. Experienced personnel from the printing industry are migrating to other countries leaving a critical void in the technical pool of skills. This results in shoddy printing work which affects the media industry. The electronic media is also losing skilled staff as they shift to the corporate sector or migrate. The consequence of all this is a cutback in advertising as companies protest high prices, mediocre adverts and inferior media products.

As a result diversity in the media landscape is shrinking even further as media organisations downsize or close down.

SCORES:

Individual score: 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1

Average score: 1.0 (2006 = 1.0)

2.10 *Private media outlets operate as efficient and professional businesses.*

ANALYSIS:

Privately owned media houses try to operate as efficient and professional businesses but are unable to do so as a result of the economic situation outlined above.

The Zimbabwe Independent, for example, gets its paper out on time, and management is seriously committed to making a profit. Regular board meetings are held and the board does its best to leave editorial policy to the staff.

The management of human resources by private media outlets, on the other hand, has always been scandalous. There are strikes in media organisations by staff who are working in poor conditions. The remuneration received by qualified personnel working in the privately owned media is shocking. These media practitioners often work with scarce resources and outdated equipment yet they are being pushed to increase their output all the time. The papers do not often help staff to cover their communication or transport costs. There are no support systems to assist staff on a story where their life may be in danger. If they face litigation as a result of AIPPA there is often no moral support by their organisation.

SCORES:

Individual scores: 2, 1, 2, 2, 2, 2, 4, 2, 2, 2

Average score: 2.3 (2006 = 3.6)

2.11 *State print media are not subsidised with tax payers' money.*

ANALYSIS:

There are no clear indicators of direct budget subsidies but as state media, like any other, are suffering from the shrinking of advertising revenue due to economic and political reasons, it is highly likely that newsprint and fuel are being subsidised. However, there is no hard evidence to prove this.

SCORES

Individual scores: 3, 5, 4, 3, 3, 3, 4, 3, 2, 4

Average score: 3.4 (2006 = 1.4)

2.12 *Government does not use its power over the placement of advertisements as a means of interference with media content.*

ANALYSIS:

Advertisements are screened by personnel at the state media organisations. Parastatal companies advertise overwhelmingly in the state run papers. Directives oblige all state run universities not to advertise in the private media. The state run media are also directed not to take advertisements from certain companies associated with the opposition.

SCORES:

Individual scores: 3, 2, 2, 3, 1, 3, 2, 1, 1, 3

Average score: 2.3 (2006 = 1.0)

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

ANALYSIS:

Although there is a perception that the papers are full of ads, in reality only very few companies can still afford to advertise. Most if not all advertising budgets have been drastically slashed due to stringent cost cutting measures within the corporate sector. The only relief comes from three key areas: NGOs, banks and seasonal advertisements that are mandatory such as audited financial statements of companies listed on the Zimbabwe Stock Exchange at the end of March. Rates on radio are very low, so while there may be considerable volumes of advertising there is often no real income.

Advertising agencies are either downsizing or closing down.

All this has a direct and negative impact on the growth of the media industry and certainly does not assist in increasing the diversity of the media landscape.

SCORES:

Individual scores: 1, 2, 2, 3, 2, 2, 2, 2, 1, 2

Average score: 1.9 (2006 = 2.3)

Overall score for section 2: 1.7 (2006 = 1.4)

3.2 *The appointments procedure for members of the regulatory body is open and transparent and involves civil society.*

ANALYSIS:

Civil society is not involved in the process of appointing nominees. The whole procedure is neither open nor transparent.

SCORES:

Individual scores: 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1

Average score: 1.0 (2006 = 1.0)

3.3 *The body regulates broadcasting in the public interest and ensures fairness and a diversity of views broadly representing society at large.*

ANALYSIS:

It is difficult to judge the new broadcasting authority as it has not been appointed yet, but the lack of transparency in the appointments procedure and the lack of independence of board members are likely to compromise the work of the body. If the previous record of BAZ is anything to go by, in particular the fact that it did not issue a single licence, there is clearly no regard for the public interest in general and no attempt to ensure either fairness or a diversity of views.

SCORES:

Individual scores: 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1

Average score: 1.0 (2006 = 1.0)

3.4 *The body's decisions on licensing in particular are informed by a broadcasting policy developed in a transparent and inclusive manner.*

ANALYSIS:

There is no formal broadcasting policy in place. BAZ works behind closed doors and is shielded from any public scrutiny.

SCORES:

Individual scores: 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1

Average score: 1.0 (2006 = 1.0)

3.5 *The public broadcaster is accountable to the public through a board representative of society at large and selected in an independent, open and transparent manner.*

ANALYSIS:

The board of the holding company Zimbabwe Broadcasting Holdings (ZBH) is appointed solely by the Minister of Information, without any public input.

SCORES:

Individual scores: 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1

Average score: 1.0 (2006 = 1.0)

3.6 *Persons who have vested interests of a political or commercial nature are excluded from possible membership in the board, i.e. office bearers with the state and political parties as well as those with a financial interest in the broadcasting industry.*

ANALYSIS:

Members of the board of Zimbabwe Broadcasting Holdings are all politically interconnected and there is a great deal of patronage, thus ensuring that the political status quo is maintained. Most if not all members of the board have strong affiliations to the ruling party and government. Five out of the total of nine occupy senior positions in the state-run newspapers and thus have a vested interest in making all the state media in the country conform to one common editorial (party-) line.

SCORES:

Individual scores: 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1

Average score: 1.0 (2006 = 1.1)

3.7 *The editorial independence of the public broadcaster from commercial pressure and political influence is guaranteed by law and practised.*

ANALYSIS:

No such legal guarantees are in place.

There is a great deal of interference that hinders the professional and efficient operations of the public broadcaster. The divisions and factionalism within political circles are often played out in the newsrooms. Ministers will phone and give a directive regarding a story

and soon after a Permanent Secretary will call and give instructions that counteract the initial directive. Politicians will stipulate who to report on and who not to report on. The reality is that the system allows politicians and government personnel to interfere, manipulate and place political pressure on the national broadcaster.

There is a great deal of commercial influence by large advertisers who can then make their own demands. The business section in the news bulletins seems to be influenced by the interests of advertisers. A chimurenga (liberation war) song is played after every Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe advert and this subtle and strategic placement is powerful. It is clear that big advertisers are spared from stories that may prejudice their reputation. Sponsorship of highly popular programmes is often driven by political rather than commercial interests.

Although there is legislation specifying what is permissible and what is not during an election period, the unwritten policy is that as a “public” broadcaster, ZBC will put aside the need to operate commercially and in the interests of the public at such times. As Zimbabwe enters the pre-election period ZBC will be expected to campaign for the ruling party although they are legally obliged to provide equal coverage to all parties. There is no directive in this regard but editors at ZBC know what is expected from them.

ZANU PF politicians have the advantage of holding public office and so they will be covered extensively in their capacity as ministers, governors, etc. The timing of stories can also be used to disadvantage opposition parties, i.e. by covering them at times when the public is not watching or listening to the national broadcaster. In this way the ruling party gets preferential treatment from ZBC while, on the face of it, the broadcaster will maintain it is operating within the requirements of the law.

ZBC staff - even if they want to act professionally - have no choice

but to succumb to these pressures. People who love radio or television work just have no other option but to join the state broadcaster.

SCORES:

Individual scores: 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1

Average score: 1.0 (2006 = 1.2)

3.8 *The public broadcaster is adequately funded in a manner that protects it from arbitrary interference with its budget.*

ANALYSIS:

The last time ZBH got money from government was in 1994 when Jonathan Moyo, the then Minister of Information and Publicity, was in charge. ZBH is surviving on advertising and does not collect licence fees. It is not adequately funded as evidenced by the fact that salaries are sometimes paid late and there is a high staff turnover. The funding shortage is exacerbated by the fact that Government demands free advertising. ZBH has had some of its vehicles attached in a labour dispute brought by retrenched workers and has been reported to be unable to honour its debts.

SCORES:

Individual scores: 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 3, 1

Average score: 1.2 (2006 = 1.0)

3.9 *The public broadcaster is technically accessible in the entire country.*

ANALYSIS:

Frequent power outages have resulted in the malfunction of ZBC's technical equipment which directly affects accessibility especially in remote parts of Zimbabwe. People who have access to DSTV can pick up ZBC more clearly via satellite.

Radio

The reception of the radio channels depends on the station and the bandwidth. Shortwave is heard in most parts of the country. National FM and Radio Zimbabwe have the best signals nationwide. But reception is poor in areas such as Nyanga, Hwange and Beitbridge and people there listen to broadcasts from neighbouring countries.

Television

According to the chairperson of the parliamentary communications committee TV signals presently cover 40 % of the country. As transmitters are in a very sorry state, it is difficult to receive television signals in a number of areas. The situation is not likely to improve in the near to mid term because the government-owned transmitter company Transmedia cannot afford new expensive transmission equipment.

SCORES:

Individual scores: 3, 2, 1, 2, 2, 2, 2, 2, 1, 2

Average score: 1.9 (2006 = 1.5)

3.10 *The public broadcaster offers diverse programming for all interests.*

ANALYSIS:

ZBC offers diverse programming but most of it is boring.

TV caters for all tastes: sports, soap operas (such as Studio 263), children's, drama and current affairs programmes, but provides no special offerings for the youth. Movies and international soaps are extremely old reruns. In current affairs in particular there is no diversity as most programmes are biased in favour of the ruling party and government.

Radio offers various channels with different formats, such as Sport FM or Power FM (youth radio).

The quality of most programmes on both radio and TV is poor as experienced people have left and are being replaced with young and inexperienced staff. Technical quality is also deteriorating as engineers are leaving the country.

ZBC is certainly not the first choice of the people - but they have no alternative.

SCORES:

Individual scores: 3, 3, 3, 3, 2, 3, 2, 3, 2, 3

Average score: 3.3 (2006 = 2.2)

3.11 *The public broadcaster offers balanced and fair information reflecting the full spectrum of diverse views and opinions.*

ANALYSIS

The broadcaster is biased towards advancing the cause of the ruling party and government. There is a lot of reporting on the President, government and the ruling party. Typically, news stories start off by saying: “The government warns the public”, “The Minister urges civil servants”, “ZANU(PF) cautions against ...” etc., regurgitating statements made at state functions and ruling party meetings. The public get to hear the opinions of politicians in power but there is no feedback from the people or the opposition. Programmes on radio and television are one-sided and not interactive.

SCORES:

Individual scores: 2, 2, 2, 2, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 2

Average score: 1.5 (2006 = 1.0)

3.12 *The public broadcaster offers as much diverse and creative local content as economically achievable.*

ANALYSIS:

Jonathan Moyo in his time as Minister of Information introduced a local content quota for both radio and television. With the exodus of creative and technical staff it has become increasingly difficult to produce local programmes. The rising costs of production are another inhibitive factor. As a result ZBC hardly manages to fill even a 40% quota and “local” has been expanded to mean “African”. This quota is still in place but western music and programming are slowly being re-introduced.

Zimbabwe

75% of the music played on radio is locally produced material - which is not very popular.

SCORES:

Individual scores: 1, 2, 2, 2, 1, 1, 1, 2, 1, 4

Average score: 1.7 (2006 = 1.4)

Overall score for section 3: 1.4 (2006 = 1.1)

Section 4: The media practise high levels of professional standards.

4.1 *The media follow voluntary codes of professional standards, which are enforced by self-regulatory bodies.*

ANALYSIS:

A self-regulatory Media Council of Zimbabwe was officially launched on June 8, 2007 by the Media Alliance of Zimbabwe which comprises the Media Monitoring Project Zimbabwe, the Zimbabwe Union of Journalists and the Media Institute of Southern Africa. The Council also has the backing of the Zimbabwe Independent Editors Forum (ZINEF) and the Federation of African Media Women. Initially journalists and editors working for the state media had endorsed the concept of the voluntary media council and the code of ethics, but they later had to withdraw, obviously following pressure ‘from above’, because MISA and MMPZ are perceived as organisations of “regime change activists”.

After the amendment of AIPPA in December 2007 and the establishment of a statutory “Media Council of Zimbabwe”, it was decided to change the name of the self-regulatory body to Voluntary Media Council of Zimbabwe (VMCZ) to avoid confusion.

A code of ethics has been developed and the administrative structure of the VMCZ is in place. Its board comprises 14 members, seven public representatives and seven media representatives. At present only 13 of the 14 seats have been filled so as to leave space for the state editors to come on board.

A Media Complaints Committee will be established to adjudicate complaints from the public, using the code of ethics as a basis. Where applicable, the Committee has the right to demand that corrections be published. Because the state media are not (yet) part

of the structure, the Committee can not officially adjudicate cases involving these media houses, but it may be possible to talk with state editors behind closed doors.

The work of the VMCZ will eventually extend beyond adjudication to monitoring, research and training of media practitioners on ethics and professionalism based on the issues and problem areas highlighted in the course of the body’s adjudication and monitoring processes. One of the hurdles is the fact that there are no professional media trainers left in the country - the Media Council will try to train editors as trainers.

At present, VMCZ has still not started operations - six months after its launch.

SCORES:

Individual scores: 1, 1, 1, 1, 2, 1, 2, 2, 3, 3

Average score: 1.7 (2006 = 1.1)

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

ANALYSIS

The standard of reporting in Zimbabwe has deteriorated over the years and the basic principles of accuracy and fairness are being disregarded by journalists. Reporters and sub editors are failing to cross-check even the most basic details of a story - the correct profession of a person or the spelling of their name. There are a lot of inaccuracies and there is certainly no fairness. Quite a number of media practitioners have left the country and many articles are not written by trained journalists.

Journalists and editors from the privately owned media face constraints when public institutions refuse to provide information. The police will often refuse to comment and so certain information is difficult to verify.

There is a lack of well-researched articles and proper reporting, with many journalists expressing their own opinions rather than trying to write a balanced story and get the people's views. Sometimes a story will present only one view or be based entirely on one document. The regular lack of by-lines and the use of unnamed sources or unofficial sources further reduce the credibility of articles.

Problems of accuracy and fairness are exacerbated by the economic environment. Wages are demoralising and there is systematic corruption, with individuals giving journalists money to write puff pieces or prevent scandals from being published in the paper.

Newspapers are carrying more and more opinion pieces written by columnists who are not journalists. Some columnists write more accurately and knowledgeably than journalists especially on specialist subjects such as health, education and the law.

Editors of state media tend to give political stories written by their reporters a slant that suits their political masters. Sometimes the reporter would have done his/her best to balance an article only to find a different story printed. Polarisation of the media has resulted in hate speech and hate language being used particularly by columnists writing in the state media. Stories on health or social issues, on the other hand, are generally more balanced.

Politics also taint the way privately owned publications approach a story. Up until quite recently, political activists and thus private newspapers were generally in favour of the opposition MDC. Now, many journalists and editors feel disappointed by the party of their choice and are seeking to keep a greater distance - which may serve

to professionalise their work.

Online publications are among the worst offenders against the principles of accuracy and fairness - with the exception of services such as ZimOnline or ZimbabweTimes. Stories tend to have a sensational slant and many stories are based on rumour and not fact.

SCORES:

Individual scores: 2, 2, 3, 2, 2, 3, 2, 1, 2, 2

Average score: 2.1 (2006 = 2.3)

4.3 *The media cover the full spectrum of events, issues and cultures, including business / economics, cultural, local and investigative stories.*

ANALYSIS:

Business and political news are the two topics that are being taken seriously in newsrooms while other issues receive superficial treatment. There are hardly any investigative stories and there is little or no interest in social and cultural issues. Coverage of rural stories and social issues is extremely poor. Recently artists have reported that they are paying for coverage of their products in the print and the electronic media.

The Herald is predominantly political in nature while some independent papers try to give a total package by covering business and politics, as well as special interests among a broad range of issues.

The reasons for the lack of investigative stories are many:

- There is a shortage of personnel in the newsrooms and often journalists have to cover several beats. The Zimbabwe Independent has six journalists and the Standard eight. Among

them they are expected to cover the broad range of topics to be carried in a weekly paper, including business and political news.

- There is a shortage of journalists who specialise in certain genres.
- Media organisations lack the resources to support their journalists in pursuing in-depth and well researched investigative pieces. Investigative stories currently being carried in the media rely exclusively on documents which are often minutes of meetings, memos or court records. Many have only one source.
- The majority of journalists are not mobile. Often so called investigative pieces get written when someone walks into the newsroom and provides information which is used without questioning the motives of the informer.

SCORES:

Individual scores: 2, 2, 2, 2, 3, 4, 2, 3, 2, 3

Average score: 2.5 (2006 = 1.8)

4.4. *Gender mainstreaming is promoted in terms of equal participation of both sexes in the production process.*

ANALYSIS:

The number of women working in the print media is insignificant. At the Zimbabwe Independent, for example, there is only one woman in the production team of about 12. In the entire history of the state print media only two women have ever reached the top as editor-in-chief.

ZBC has a significant number of women in decision making positions, among them six executive producers.

The operating environment is not conducive for gender mainstreaming, with men regularly stereotyping and being hostile to women.

Media houses are described as being notorious for sexual harassment of women. It has been reported that “carpet interviews” happen with disturbing frequency, meaning that some women get a job and survive in the media houses only in exchange for sexual favours. Sexual harassment is also taking place at media tertiary institutions. Women are said to be systematically excluded from prestigious areas such as business and financial reporting and there is a lack of assistance in newsrooms for new female journalists eager to work in this field.

All this forces women to seek a better working environment outside the newsrooms. A large number of experienced female journalists leave the print media at mid career level and move on to work in the corporate or NGO sector.

SCORES:

Individual scores:	2, 3, 2, 2, 2, 2, 3, 2, 2, 2									
Average score:	2.2		(2006 = 1.4)							

4.5. *Gender mainstreaming is reflected in the editorial content.*

ANALYSIS:

The newspapers are very male dominated. Stories on women are not fair and often not accurate. Women’s voices are scarce or non-existent in sports, economic and business stories. They are often only quoted on social issues - water, sanitation, or health. Male journalists claim that the dearth of women’s voices on the perceived ‘real issues’ is due to the fact that female professionals or experts are not willing to comment when they are approached.

A large number of male politicians and professionals are media savvy and their female counterparts have not been empowered with certain skills so they are often castigated for not having the ability to deal effectively with the media.

Zimbabwean society is patriarchal and the media content reflects the power relations in society.

SCORES:

Individual scores: 2, 1, 1, 2, 2, 2, 2, 1, 2, 2,

Average score: 1.7 (2006 = 1.2)

4.6. *Journalists and editors do not practise self-censorship.*

ANALYSIS:

Self-censorship is practiced extensively in both the state and independent media - both consciously and unconsciously. Many reporters, whether working for the state or the private media, are “conditioned” in the sense that they know what is expected of them without anyone having to give them directions. They suffer from the ‘Publish and Perish Syndrome’, afraid to publish certain stories for fear of victimisation.

SCORES:

Individual scores: 2, 2, 1, 2, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 2

Average score: 1.4 (2006 = 1.7)

4.7. *Owners of private media do not interfere with editorial independence.*

ANALYSIS:

Journalists working in the weekly privately owned newspapers maintain there is no interference from the owners of their publications. Often the owner will check on the paper - the layout and the choice of stories - but will not interfere in the content. But journalists are aware of what is expected from them and what editorial line they are expected to follow - stories that do not conform with these expectations will be spiked anyway.

With regard to editorial independence, the blurring of the separation of powers between owners and editors is of great concern. Owners sometimes call to say they want to see certain stories in the paper, or the chief executive will walk into the newsroom, look at the lead story and make comments on which direction the story should take. Problems occur when an editor-in-chief is also the publisher/owner of a media outlet. In these cases, there will always be active intervention as he/she will be part of the editorial team.

There are cases where the owner may phone journalists in the newsroom to alert them to events that might interest them but does not complain when the suggestion is not taken up.

SCORES:

Individual scores: 2, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1,

Average score: 1.1 (2006 = 2.2)

4.8. *Salary levels and general working conditions for journalists and other media practitioners are adequate to discourage corruption.*

ANALYSIS:

Salary levels at all media organisations are shockingly low. At the time of the panel meeting (19/20 January 2008) journalists working for a private weekly were being paid Z\$30 -Z\$70 million a month (the equivalent of US\$6-US\$14 on the parallel market, or 10 to 20 loaves of bread). Salaries in the state media organisations are slightly better (little more than Z\$100 million). Journalists throughout the industry do not enjoy benefits such as housing loans, company cars or entertainment allowances.

Corruption is rampant - but this is not confined to journalists alone. It is a problem of society and the system as a whole.

Journalists from the privately owned media could be the most corrupt but they are not. Instead they have chosen to moonlight for foreign based organisations to earn foreign currency (typically US\$ 15 per story). This may become problematic and compromise the reputation and professionalism of the organisation that employs them: their stories often break in the foreign media outlets before they appear in the local media.

Brown bag journalism (a phrase coined because of hyperinflation and the necessity to carry vast amounts of money) is becoming rife as politicians, sports persons and business people bribe journalists to gain prominence. Journalists are also extorting money from personalities with the promise to keep their images untainted in return.

SCORES:

Individual scores: 2, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1

Average score: 1.1 (2006 = 1.4)

4.9. *Training facilities offer formal qualification programmes for journalists as well as opportunities to upgrade their skills.*

ANALYSIS:

Training varies within organisations with most of it being specialised. Most journalists pursue their own training opportunities.

Formal training is offered at the University of Zimbabwe Department of Media Studies, Harare Polytechnic, Christian College Of Southern Africa (CCOSA), ILSA, Midlands State University, National University of Science and Technology (NUST), Zimbabwe Open University (ZOU) and the UMAA institute. Editors regularly complain about the qualification of graduates from these institutions because they “do not know the basics of news writing and have to be re-trained in MISA workshops”.

Institutions such as NUST are facing numerous challenges with lack of resources being the main obstacle to quality teaching. Lecturers are trying to form an organisation of trainers to ensure professional standards are maintained at a high level.

The gradual lowering of entry qualifications for tertiary institutions and falling educational standards generally impact heavily on the calibre of students entering universities.

Trainers are leaving the country in droves for greener pastures. There are a number of lecturers who are not trained/qualified to

teach some of the specialist subjects they are teaching. Training is more theoretical than practical. Infrastructure is dilapidated and equipment outdated.

Formal training is offered up to Masters level, while there are also opportunities for upgrading skills through in-house training, regional attachments through institutions such as MISA, and regular workshops. The problem is that editors often send their most junior instead of their seasoned staff members, which results in the same ground being covered over and over again, but people not having the opportunity or capacity to utilise the information learnt.

SCORES:

Individual scores: 2, 3, 4, 3, 3, 4, 4, 3, 1, 3

Average score: 3.0 (2006 = 4.0)

4.10 *Journalists and other media practitioners are organised in trade unions and/or professional associations.*

ANALYSIS:

Journalists in Zimbabwe are well organised. They are members of the Zimbabwe Union of Journalists, the Media Institute of Southern Africa - Zimbabwe Chapter, the Zimbabwe Independent Editors Forum (ZINEF), the National Association for Freelance Journalists (which is not fully functional), or the Federation of African Media Women. MISA and ZUJ are members of the Media Alliance of Zimbabwe.

Zimbabwe

SCORES:

Individual score:	4.	5.	4.	4.	3.	3.	4.	4.	4.	4.
Average score:	3.9 (2006 = 4.5)									
Overall score for section 4:	2.1 (2006 = 2.1)									
OVERALL COUNTRY SCORE:	1.7 (2006 = 1.5)									

Developments since 2006 and the Way Forward

Positive developments in the media environment in the last two years:

- o Non-accreditation of journalists no longer a criminal offence
- o Formation of the Media Alliance of Zimbabwe
- o Launch of the self-regulatory Media Council of Zimbabwe
- o Lawmakers interested in taking part in discussions with the media
- o Increase of online publications

Negative developments in the media environment in the last two years:

- o Catastrophic deterioration of the economy with impact on the media industry, circulation of papers and access to broadcasting
- o Continuation of political violence
- o Exodus of skilled media staff
- o Interception of Communications Act, passed in August 2007

Main drivers/actors for positive change:

- o The Media Alliance of Zimbabwe, designed to focus efforts and project a united front on media issues
- o Lobbying shifted from international to African organisations (SADC, African Union)

Zimbabwe

- o Opposition parties are more aware of dangers to freedom of expression

Possible obstacles for further development:

- o The overall political environment
- o Fear and intimidation
- o Economic deterioration
- o Weak opposition
- o Government's reluctance to involve citizens in political processes
- o Uninformed and counterproductive statements by the international community likely to jeopardize internal reform efforts
- o Lack of interest of SADC and AU in media freedom issues
- o Inadequate funding of civic society groups

Activities needed over the next few years:

- o Better coordination of pro-democracy groups
- o Journalists to form a united front across the political divide
- o Mobilisation of communities for freedom of expression issues
- o Strengthening of support for the Voluntary Media Council
- o Intensifying of advocacy efforts in the SADC region

The panel meeting took place at the Holiday Inn, Mutare, 18 to 20 January 2008.

The Panel:

Loughty Dube - Media Institute of Southern Africa- Zimbabwe Chapter Chairperson

Emilar E Vushe - Media Monitoring Project of Zimbabwe

Vongai Tinarwo,

Patricia Magorokosho - Federation of African Media Women Zimbabwe

Earnest Mudzengi - National Constitutional Assembly

Stanford Matenda - Department of Journalism and Media Studies, NUST

Guthrie Munyuki - Journalist and media activist

Abigail Gamanya - Media Alliance of Zimbabwe

Lifaqane Nare - Journalist

The panel also had a practising journalist

The Rapporteur:

Reyhana Masters

The Facilitator:

Hendrik Bussiek

