



AFRICAN MEDIA BAROMETER

The first home grown analysis of the
media landscape in Africa



ZIMBABWE 2012

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STIFTUNG



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The African Media Barometer (AMB)






The African Media Barometer (AMB) is an in-depth and comprehensive description and measurement system for national media environments on the African continent. Unlike other press surveys or media indices the AMB is a self-assessment exercise based on homegrown criteria derived from African Protocols and Declarations like the “*Declaration of Principles on Freedom of Expression in Africa*” (2002) by the “African Commission for Human and Peoples’ Rights” (ACHPR)¹. The instrument was jointly developed by *fesmedia Africa*, the Media Project of the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) in Africa, and the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) in 2004.

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

Methodology and Scoring System

Every two to three years a panel of 10-12 experts, consisting of at least five media practitioners and five representatives from civil society, meets to assess the media situation in their own country. For 1 1/2 days they discuss the national media environment according to 45 predetermined indicators. The discussion and scoring is moderated by an independent consultant who also edits the AMB-report.

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

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

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

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

Outcome

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

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

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

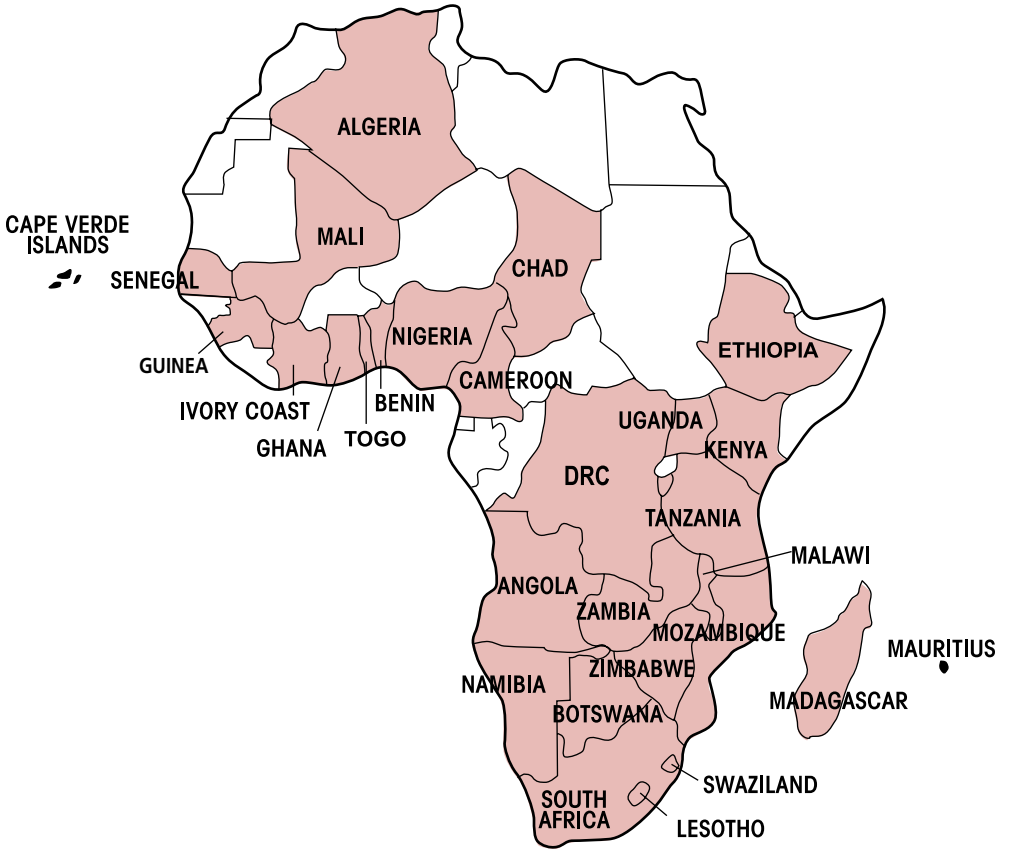
At the end of 2008 the indicators were reviewed, amended and some new ones were added to address the rapid developments in Information Communication Technology².

By the end of 2012 the African Media Barometer had been held in 29 African countries, in some of them already for the fourth time.

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² Consequently, the comparison of some indicators of previous reports is not applicable (n/a) in some instances in which the indicator is new or has been amended considerably. Furthermore sector scores are not applicable (n/a) as indicators have been moved.



See above 29 AMB Countries (2005-2012)

African Media Barometer

ZIMBABWE 2012

Summary

Since February 2009 Zimbabwe has been ruled by an “inclusive government” formed by the Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) and two formations of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC). This new government was based on a “Global Political Agreement” (GPA) which formally recognised the “importance of freedom of expression and the role of the media in a multi-party democracy”.

Three years on the country remains deeply polarised between the two major political forces and the struggle for political power between them is continuing as Zimbabwe heads for elections which are supposed to take place at the end of 2012 or in 2013. This struggle has been hampering necessary reforms in many political and social sectors while some progress has been made in regard to the economy. Despite this continuing stagnation the political climate has relaxed a little over the last two years since the AMB in 2010 and there are signs of progress in the media sector which seem to have led to a slightly more optimistic mood.

Two years ago the market was dominated by government-controlled newspapers. Since then formerly banned newspapers have re-appeared and new publications have hit the streets. Two private radio stations have been licensed - but still have to go on air. The self-regulatory mechanisms of the (private) media have been strengthened.

These apparently positive developments, however, have their downsides, showing the deep contradictions in present day Zimbabwe.

All old, new and revived publications had to be registered with a statutory Zimbabwe Media Commission (ZMC). When the Commission was formed in 2009, media organisations were opposed to it because, as a statutory body, it contradicts the principle of self-regulation of the media. For the time being, however, media organisations are tolerating its existence “grudgingly” as the only available legal means to get new print media on the streets. They also had to put up with the expectation that journalists apply for accreditation with the ZMC if they want to work effectively and gain access to Parliament, public bodies, national and state events.

At the time of the panel meeting, the Zimbabwe Media Commission was planning to set up a statutory media council. This media council is to run parallel to the Voluntary Media Council of Zimbabwe which provides members of the

public with an opportunity to lodge their complaints against the media without resorting to legal redress. Media organisations have stated categorically that they will not participate in such a statutory media council. The ZMC is planning to go ahead regardless, whether they are supported by the media or not.

Another body whose legitimacy is contested not only by media organisations but also by parts of the government Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) is the Broadcasting Authority of Zimbabwe (BAZ). The current board was appointed unilaterally by the Minister of Media, Information and Publicity and is dominated by the minister's political party ZANU PF. There are frequent calls by the MDC to revisit this process and to constitute a legitimate Authority. All deadlines set for these demands have long since passed and the minister has publicly declared that he will not reconstitute the contested media bodies. The BAZ has granted licences to two radio stations, one being part of the Zimbabwe Newspapers Group (Zimpapers) stable which runs pro-government newspapers and the other has been linked with ZANU PF.

No community radio has been licensed although there are quite a number of initiatives across the country ready to go on air. They have to wait for the BAZ to invite applications for licences – but these invitations have not been coming forward. This could be taken as an indication of the mistrust within government circles, perhaps due to a suspicion that community radio stations have a political agenda not sympathetic to one of the political parties in government (ZANU PF).

As a result the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC) maintains its monopoly over the airwaves. Attempts to transform the state broadcaster (if any) have stalled. Its current board was announced by the Minister of Information in September 2009. It is not truly representative of society at large and members will toe the line of those who appointed them.

The same goes for Zimpapers, the company which publishes newspapers such as The Herald, and which is majority-owned by government. The current board was appointed in September 2009 by the same minister, again very much to the dismay of the MDC who complained that they had not been consulted.

Efforts to reform legislation related to the media have also largely failed. The Criminal Law (Codification and Reform) Act 2004 makes it an offence to “insult” the President - dozens of people have been charged under this provision. The Access to Information and Privacy Bill (AIPPA) which requires journalists to register remains in place. The same law regulates access to information held by public bodies and allows heads of government departments to handle requests for information at their own discretion and refuse access to documents if a release would not be in the “public interest”.

These contradictions, existing legislation and uncertainty about the future are the causes why freedom of expression is certainly not being practised without fear in Zimbabwe. Old draconian pieces of legislation have been used to arrest citizens and journalists for the flimsiest of reasons. To a certain extent these actions have subdued Zimbabweans and they tend to act with caution.

Some journalists take the risk of writing stories that they realise might upset the powers that be. They know that they are treading on dangerous ground if they write about the president, the police, the army, cabinet meetings and certain individuals in positions of power.

The threats to freedom of expression increase in severity prior to elections when the polarisation of Zimbabwean society becomes very visible. People aligned to a certain party or civic society organisation will refuse to show any public display of their preferred choice in an area regarded as the stronghold of the opposing party. Intimidation, threats and assaults increase in volume and the majority of people live in fear.

On the other hand, there are a plethora of political parties and civil society organisations working in the country, private newspapers carrying articles critical of the government are sold on the streets - all indications that there are windows of opportunity for freedom of expression.

The media are not always using these windows professionally. While some media houses are stable and try hard to ensure information is confirmed, facts are checked and figures are accurate, there are other sections of the media where there is no such thoroughness and no accuracy at all.

Activism over the years has blurred the lines for journalists, many of whom are reporting from a biased perspective because they feel "they are still in the struggle". Journalists attending political events will write from a ZANU PF or MDC perspective depending on who they write for and the accurate story will be somewhere in between the two versions.

This unprofessional and unethical behaviour can be attributed to a number of things: laziness, inadequate training, poor salaries, corruption, shortage of skilled staff in the newsrooms – all of these are putting the experienced staff under constant pressure.

All in all, Zimbabwe is on a path of uncertainty. There is frustration in view of the snail's pace at which changes are being effected and the constant set-backs. But there is also a sense of hope that things are improving - slowly but, so people hope, steadily.

BROADCAST RADIO
 SATELLITE NEWS
 PAPER MAGAZINES
 REPORTS THIRD
 DEGREE DOCUMENTS
 LEGISLATION
 QUESTIONS LAWS
 PUBLICATION
 FREEDOM ANSWERS
 PRESS INTERVIEWS
 MEDIA EFFICIENCY
 HONESTY ACCESS

SECTOR 1:

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

PUBLICATION
 DEGREE DOCU-
 QUESTI-
 THIRD
 FREEDOM ANSWERS
 PRESS INTERVIEWS
 MEDIA EFFICIENCY
 HONESTY ACCESS
 BOOKS TRANSLA-
 TION TRUTH POINT
 OF VIEWS INFOR-
 MATION COMMUNI-
 CATION CONSTITU-
 TION TELEVISION
 BROADCAST RADIO
 SATELLITE NEWS
 PAPER MAGAZINES
 REPORTS THIRD
 DEGREE DOCUMENTS
 LEGISLATION
 QUESTIONS LAWS
 PUBLICATION
 FREEDOM ANSWERS
 PRESS INTERVIEWS
 MEDIA EFFICIENCY

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 supported by other pieces of legislation.

The current Constitution of Zimbabwe provides for a general guarantee of freedom of expression in section 20 (1):

... 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.

Subsection (2) provides that freedom of expression can be limited if it is necessary

- in the interests of defence, public safety, public order, the economic interests of the state, public morality or public health;
- to protect the reputations, rights and freedoms of other persons;
- to maintain the authority and independence of the courts or parliament.

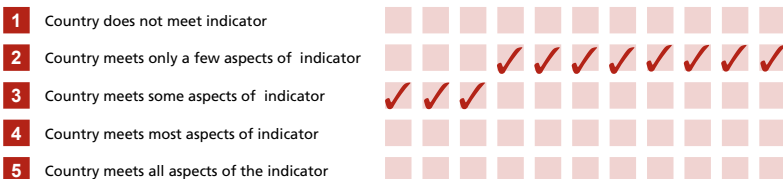
Some of these exclusions are rather vague, using undefined phrases such as 'public order', 'economic interests' and 'public morality'.

Freedom of the media, artistic creativity or academic freedom are not mentioned in the original text of 1980. Constitutional Amendment 19 passed in February 2009, however, mentions "freedom of the press" in the context of the Zimbabwe Media Commission (ZMC), constituted by the controversial Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA). The amendment tasks the ZMC summarily "to uphold and develop freedom of the press". More specifically it gives the commission the responsibility "to promote *and enforce* good practice and ethics" in the media and to "take disciplinary action against journalists". These provisions, which accord a statutory body the power to control the media, run counter to the principles of freedom of expression (see next indicator).

In addition to these limitations there is an array of laws which contain clauses that curtail the right to freedom of expression. These include the above-mentioned AIPPA, the Public Order and Security Act (POSA), the Broadcasting Services Act (BSA), the Interception of Communications Act and the Criminal Law (Codification and Reform) Act.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score:

2.3 (2010:1.6; 2008:1.8; 2006:1.3)

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

Freedom of expression is certainly not practised without fear.

There are a raft of laws such as AIPPA, the Public Order and Security Act (POSA), the Official Secrets Act and the Criminal Law (Codification and Reform) Act that have been used to arrest citizens and journalists for the flimsiest of reasons. The threat of arrest and conviction hanging over peoples' heads is intimidating and causes fear. To a certain extent Zimbabweans have thus been subdued and now tend to act with caution when it comes to exercising their right to freedom of expression.

Journalists will take the risk of writing stories that they realise might upset the powers that be and then wait for that threatening phone call or dreaded knock on the door. "At the end of the day after the paper is out, I expect a knock on the door or a white truck without number plates coming to pick me up so I really live in fear. I have got to overcome that fear of course because of my convictions, but to write in Zimbabwe is a fearful experience," explained one of the panellists.

Journalists know that they are treading on dangerous ground if they write about the president, the police, the army, cabinet meetings and certain individuals in positions of power.

"I did a story on the military forming power structures in government. I actually got a call from certain members of the military who told me that I had gone too far ... they even gave a date, saying they were going to arrest me on the 3rd of January, so I just sat at home waiting", recalled another panellist. However in the end they never came.

Another journalist asked the subject of his article for comment on the information he had collected. Even before the story had been written he was 'visited' by police officers who wanted to question him.

Ordinary citizens are also arrested or intimidated for incongruous reasons.

In February 2011, a man from Bulawayo was arrested for a Facebook comment on the uprising in Egypt: "What happened in Egypt is sending shockwaves to all dictators around the world. No weapon but unity of purpose. Worth emulating, hey." He was arrested and charged but the case was thrown out of court for lack of evidence.

In December 2011, two employees and a member of the Media Monitoring Project of Zimbabwe (MMPZ) were arrested and charged with contravening Public Order and Security Act (POSA) for 'participating in a gathering without seeking authority from the regulating authority' and also for allegedly contravening the Criminal Law (Codification and Reform) Act by 'distributing material that is likely to provoke a breach of peace.' Their case was eventually dismissed. During this tumultuous period, the MMPZ lost several followers of its statements on the internet. People called in or emailed and asked to be taken off the mailing lists.

During a conference on community broadcasting held by Radio Dialogue in March 2012, participants decided to take to the streets to demand the allocation of broadcasting licences, even though an earlier request to the police for permission to hold such a demonstration had been denied. Within minutes of the participants expressing the need to march there was a heavy police presence outside the workshop venue and participants abandoned the protest. The quick police reaction pointed to the presence of a mole in the workshop.

In August 2010 a special government order was issued to formally prohibit the exhibition of artist Owen Maseko at the National Gallery of Bulawayo. His work - paintings, graffiti and 3D installations - focused on Gukurahundi, the uprising in the early 1980s in Matabeleland where thousands of lives were lost.

Fear and intimidation are not confined to the discussion of political issues but extend to any issue considered sensitive in Zimbabwe. "You don't necessarily have to challenge a person in a certain powerful position. As long as the subject is contentious then along comes the intimidation and fear."

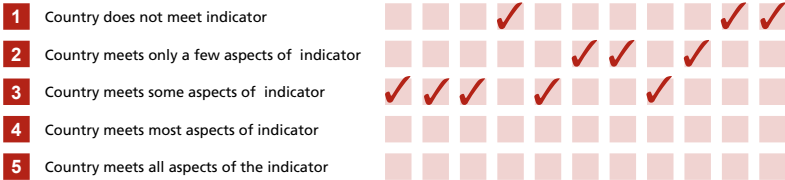
On the other hand, there are a plethora of political parties and civil society organisations working in the country and private newspapers with articles critical of the government are sold on the streets - all of these indications that there are windows of opportunity for freedom of expression.

The threat to freedom of expression is however, severe especially prior to elections when the polarisation of Zimbabwean society becomes very visible. People aligned to a certain party or civic society organisation will refuse to show any

public support for their preferred choice in an area regarded as the stronghold of the opposing party. Intimidation, threats and assaults increase in volume and the majority of people live in fear.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score:

2.2 (2010:1.2; 2008:1.3; 2006:1.1)

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

There are several pieces of legislation that impact and curtail freedom of expression, such as AIPPA, POSA or the Criminal Law (Codification and Reform) Act.

When the “Inclusive Government” of the then ruling Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front (ZANU PF) and two formations of the then opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), was formed in February 2009, many citizens and activists strongly believed that this would result in amendments or even the abolishment of these pieces of legislation. However, there have only been a few changes since then.

Certain sections of POSA have 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.

The Criminal Law (Codification and Reform) Act 2004 is the most threatening piece of legislation regarding freedom of expression because it introduced even harsher penalties than those provided for under POSA and AIPPA. Section 31 makes it an offence to make a statement about the President of Zimbabwe with the intention of, or knowing that there is a risk of, “undermining the authority of

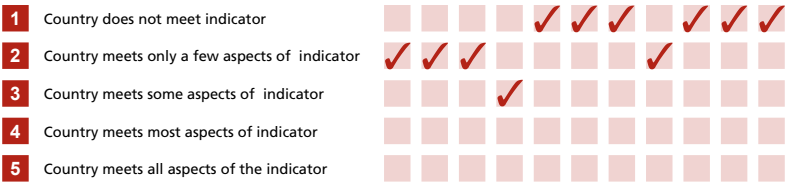
or insulting the President". This includes statements likely to engender "feelings of hostility towards" the President, cause "hatred, contempt or ridicule" of the President, or any "abusive, indecent, obscene or false statement" about his person or office. Dozens of people have been charged under this provision.

The Criminal Law also 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. A convicted offender can be jailed for a term of up to 20 years.

According to section 33 it is an offence to make a statement about the President of Zimbabwe 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 office. The offence attracts imprisonment for up to one year.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score:

1.5 (2010:1.6; 2008:1.1; 2006:1.3)

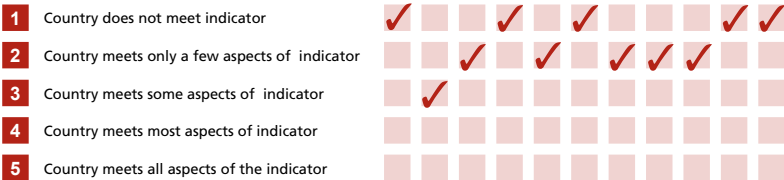
1.4 Government makes every effort to honour regional and international instruments on freedom of expression and the media.

The international and regional instruments that Zimbabwe has acceded to, among them the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, signed provide the foundation for ideal media freedoms and freedom of expression. Government has been slow, however, in taking them up and reforming its national legislation accordingly. No effort has been made to amend offensive clauses or repeal repressive laws.

Since the formation of the Inclusive Government in 2009 there have been reports of new laws in the making to replace AIPPA, such as the Freedom of Information Act and the Media Practitioners Act. No actual steps have been taken in this direction though.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score:

1.6 (2010:1.0; 2008: n/a; 2006: n/a)

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

Print publications are required to obtain permission from the Zimbabwe Media Commission (ZMC) under section 66 and 90 of AIPPA. Failure to comply with the registration requirement is a criminal offence attracting a fine or imprisonment of up to eighteen months. Only in-house newsletters as well as parliamentary and religious publications are exempt from this requirement.

Media houses have to pay significant fees on applying for registration and rather steep statutory levies on an annual basis.

When the ZMC was formed in 2009, media organisations were opposed to the Commission because it is administered under the contested AIPPA and because, as a statutory body, it contravenes the principle of self-regulation of the media. For the time being, however, they are tolerating its existence “grudgingly” because it provides the only available legal way to get new print media on the streets.

Virtually all print media organisations that applied to the Zimbabwe Media Commission have been granted licences, with the exception of a few applicants who did not comply with the requirements contained in the law. Over 30 media houses have been registered since the establishment of the Zimbabwe Media Commission.

For instance, media organisations whose majority shareholding was comprised of non-Zimbabweans when AIPPA specifically stipulates that the controlling stake in a registered Media House should be with a Zimbabwean or Zimbabweans.

As from February 2012 the ZMC demanded that foreign newspapers that specifically target the Zimbabwean market such as the South Africa-based *Sunday Times* or *The Zimbabwean* should also register with the commission, because the law provides for the establishment of a representative office in Zimbabwe for foreign media houses that publish and distribute such products in Zimbabwe. The conflict was unresolved at the time of the panel meeting.

As from February 2012 the ZMC demanded that foreign newspapers that also target the Zimbabwean market such as the South Africa-based *Sunday Times* or *Mail & Guardian* also register with the commission, because the law prescribes that they have to have an office in Zimbabwe. The conflict was unresolved at the time of the panel meeting.

Scores:

Individual scores:

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

Average score:

2.1 (2010:1.0; 2008:n/a; 2006: n/a)

1.6 Entry into and practice of the journalistic profession is not restricted by law.

Journalists are expected to apply for accreditation with the Zimbabwe Media Commission but this is no longer compulsory since AIPPA was amended in 2007.

Section 79 of AIPPA states:

- (1) A mass media service or news agency shall make a block application or individual applications for accreditation in terms of this section on behalf of all or any journalists employed by it on a full-time basis.
- (2) A part-time or freelance journalist may, if he or she so wishes, make [an] application on his or her own behalf for accreditation in terms of this section.

This section is reinforced by Section 42D (a) which gives the ZMC the power, on the recommendation of the (still to be established, statutory) Media Council, to suspend the accreditation of a journalist, impose conditions under which a journalist may be allowed to practice, or withdraw his accreditation.

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

In theory the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA) legislates for the easy retrieval of information by the general public and even more specifically for ‘accredited’ journalists.

According to AIPPA’s section 78 (1) (b) an accredited journalist will:

be given prior access or privileged access to records to which access is permitted in terms of this Act or to such other records or documents as may be prescribed ...

This, of course, contradicts section 39 (1) (c) of AIPPA which tasks the Zimbabwe Media Commission “to ensure that *the people* of Zimbabwe have *equitable* and wide access to information” (emphasis by author). The same section under (m) also empowers the Commission

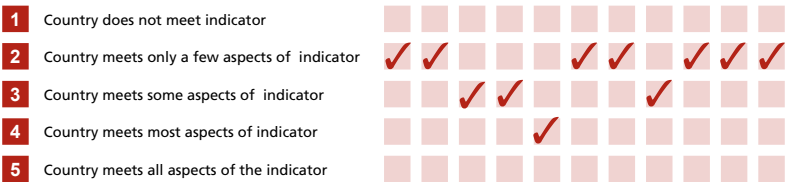
to authorise a public body, at the request of its head, to disregard requests that would unreasonably interfere with the operations of the public body ...

In reality it is difficult to obtain information from government departments and other public bodies. Heads of public bodies are allowed to refuse the release of information “if granting access to a ... record is not in the public interest”. Such a catch-all provision gives departments a free hand to deal with requests for information at their own discretion.

The process of obtaining information is bureaucratic and involves a written request to the relevant public body which then has 30 days to reply. If the request is not responded to within 30 days the person requesting information can complain to the minister heading the department. For journalists working on a deadline, this is a laborious process that impacts negatively on the quality of their output.

Scores:

Individual scores:

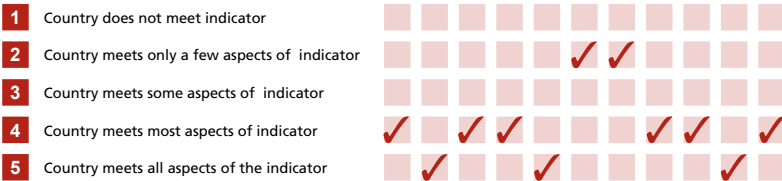


Average score:

2.5 (2010:1.9; 2008:1.2; 2006:1.1)

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score:

3.9 (2010:2.9; 2008:n/a; 2006:n/a)

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

There are numerous media organisations in Zimbabwe that strongly advocate for media freedom issues. These include the Media Institute of Southern Africa - Zimbabwe Chapter (MISA), the Zimbabwe Union of Journalists (ZUJ), the Zimbabwe Independent Editors Forum (ZINEF), the Media Monitoring Project of Zimbabwe (MMPZ), the Zimbabwe National Editors Forum (ZiNEF), the Zimbabwe Association of Community Radio Stations (ZACRAS), the Community Newspapers Association of Zimbabwe (CANAZ) and the Voluntary Media Council of Zimbabwe (VMCZ)

Their advocacy efforts have been strengthened by the formation of the Media Alliance of Zimbabwe which brings together MISA, ZUJ and the MMPZ. The three organisations maintain their independence and operate as separate entities in their daily work but unite on media freedom and freedom of expression issues.

Model laws have been drafted by MISA with positive contributions from civil society and media lobbying groups and these have been presented to the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Transport and Communication, Parliament itself and the Senate. In addition, workshops have been held for lawmakers to give them a better understanding of numerous media freedom issues including self regulation.

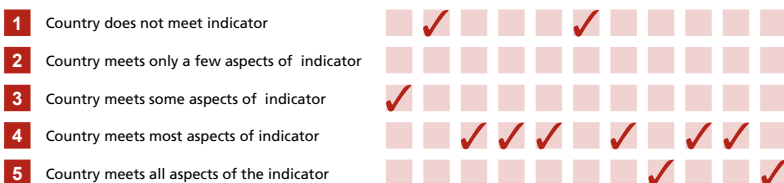
Civil society has actively and strongly pushed the media freedom agenda and participated in media related events. The extent to which they can support media freedom depends on their financial resources. Often they may provide support in principle and join the lobbying and advocacy activities but their priorities will be focused on their core work.

Advocacy around media freedom issues has focused primarily on the promotion of privately owned media. As a result media practitioners working for state

controlled organisations feel isolated, especially when they make the effort to support causes. They often risk losing their jobs when they do so and they are not supported by media lobby groups to the extent that journalists working for the private media are.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score:

3.5 (2010:4.2; 2008:3.1; 2006:2.5)

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

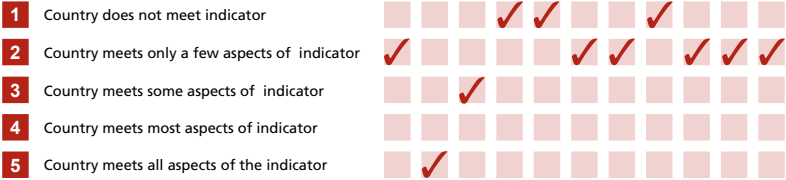
There has been no new media legislation over the last two years but going on past experience the promulgation of media legislation has never been a consultative process. The Broadcasting Services Act, AIPPA and the Interception of Communication Act were all enacted with minimal consultation.

There is a process whereby the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee for Transport and Communication invites members of the media and other stakeholders to attend public hearings but this tends to be a window dressing exercise. People participate but there is no guarantee that their viewpoints will be considered let alone incorporated.

Two years ago the government invited stakeholders in the media industry to a meeting in Kariba to discuss AIPPA and other pieces of legislation. Sections of the media decided to boycott the gathering because it was obvious from the programme that the government wanted the media to participate in a process whose outcome was predetermined. If certain media organisations had attended it would have allowed the state to push through its position while claiming that there had been consultation. Further justification for the boycott was provided when two journalists were arrested on the eve of the meeting – this made it quite clear to members of the media that the government was not sincere in working towards reform.

Scores:

Individual scores:



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

Average score for sector 1: 2.8 (2010:2.2)*

* The indicators were reviewed, changed and shifted in 2008/2009. Therefore the scores of some indicators and sector scores are not comparable to scores of previous AMBs.

SECTOR 2:

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

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

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

Print media

There are at least six dailies but this figure fluctuates as publications are launched and then disappear off the market. The established dailies are the pro-government *The Herald* and *Chronicle* as well as the private *NewsDay*, and two new players, the private *Daily News* and the tabloid *H-Metro*, published by the pro-government Zimbabwe Newspapers Group (Zimpapers). Other dailies have appeared on the street but only for a short time such as *The Mail*. There were plans to re-establish *The Daily Gazette* but they did not come to fruition because of a lack of financial resources.

Among the weeklies available nationally are the pro-government *Sunday Mail* and the privately owned *The Zimbabwe Independent*, *The Financial Gazette*, *The Zimbabwe Standard*. There are also *Umtunywa*, *The Manica Post*, *Chaminuka News*, *Business Weekly*, *Mashonaland Telegraph* for Chinhoyi and *Nehanda Guardian* in Bindura. The newer weekly publications are *B-Metro*, a tabloid that is part of the Zimpapers stable, and *The Patriot*. In addition, the London-based weekly *The Zimbabwean* is sold in major centres.

The dailies are available in all major cities but harder to find in the remote rural areas. The price of most newspapers is US\$1 - quite high, given that most workers are civil servants who earn approximately US\$300 a month. The *Zimbabwe Independent* is more costly at US\$2 a copy and is mostly found in city centres. The provincial dailies are more accessible and probably more popular in their own communities.

South African magazines and newspapers like the *Sunday Times*, *Business Day*, *The Sowetan* and *Mail & Guardian* are available and have a sizeable market in Zimbabwe. The *Sunday Times* (which costs only US\$1) and *Mail & Guardian* have special Zimbabwe editions.

Television

The Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC) still has the monopoly on broadcasting in the country. The reach of its TV signals is quite restricted and has only recently been extended to regions near the borders in Plumtree, Beitbridge, Victoria Falls and Hwange.

A second (commercial) television station was launched in April 2012 and is to carry mainly programming (not news!) provided by the South African private TV company e.tv.

Free-to-air channels available on satellite at a once off cost of US\$60 for the decoder are a popular alternative to ZBC. Zimbabweans able to afford this preferably watch Botswana TV, religious channels and South African stations.

Radio

There is only one broadcasting operator on air: ZBC. It runs four stations on FM. Radio stations which work outside the country and beam their signals into Zimbabwe via short or medium wave are SW Radio Africa, Studio 7, Voice of the People (VOP) and Community Radio Zimbabwe.

Internet

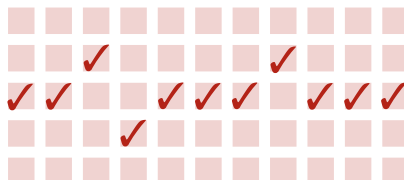
The availability of internet has increased dramatically and the competition between 12 Internet Access Providers at present has pushed prices down. Dongles that allow access to the internet are available at a once off cost of US\$50 to US\$100 and a monthly subscription of US\$18 to US\$30. There are numerous internet cafes around the country which are extremely popular especially with the younger generation.

The increase in internet access can also be linked to mobile phone usage. Cellphone coverage is still not adequate but the cost has gone down dramatically. Sim cards are now available at US\$1 each, down from US\$100 a few years ago. The cheapest phone made in China sells at US\$15. There are 6 million registered users and mobile phone penetration stands at 60 per cent. People tend to access internet over their phones if these are internet capable.

Scores:

Individual scores:

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



Average score:

2.9 (2010: 2.1; 2008: 2.3; 2006:1.3)

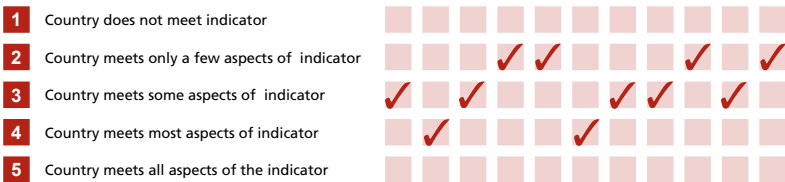
2.2 Citizens' access to domestic and international media sources is not restricted by state authorities.

At one time the radio broadcasts of externally based radio stations such as Studio 7 and Voice of the People were being jammed but this is said to be no longer the case. These stations are regarded as "pirate" stations by the State and there have been several incidents of harassment against interviewees and listeners. Solar powered shortwave radios that were being distributed have been confiscated by state authorities.

At the time of the panel meeting it was not clear whether foreign print media which refuse to be registered by the Zimbabwe Media Commission under AIPPA (see indicator 1.5) are to be banned as a consequence.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score:

2.8 (2010:2.3; 2008:2.8; 2006:1.2)

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

Efforts to increase the circulation of print media in general face several challenges.

Printing costs are very high and newsprint is expensive. Supplies have to be imported from China, Russia and South Africa and are heavily taxed. As a consequence, papers are forced to save on newsprint by reducing the size of the paper and the print run. There is the additional problem of transporting the newsprint to Zimbabwe as there is often major traffic congestion at border posts.

Private weeklies such as the *Zimbabwe Independent* are distributed mainly in urban centres and in some remote areas but sales are inhibited by its prohibitive cost of US\$2 – often a hundred copies may be taken to a rural area and only three copies are sold.

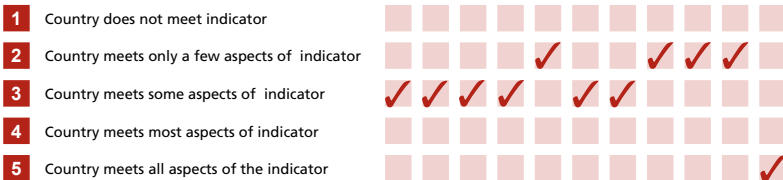
This is where Zimpapers with government as the majority shareholder has an advantage over other media houses. They are able to source and carry stories from rural areas and then ensure that their publications get to these areas. There are 22 cars sent out of Harare every night to distribute *The Herald* all over the country. In addition, Zimpapers has made arrangements with bus drivers to distribute the paper in areas that are not reached by their company cars.

The privately owned daily *NewsDay* has also been working on increasing its circulation and made similar arrangements with bus operators to distribute the newspapers along their service route.

Two civil society initiatives distribute older copies of newspapers for free to communities in remote areas so that citizens outside cities and towns get access to a diversity of news.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score:

2.8 (2010:1.7; 2008:1.0; 2006:1.3)

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

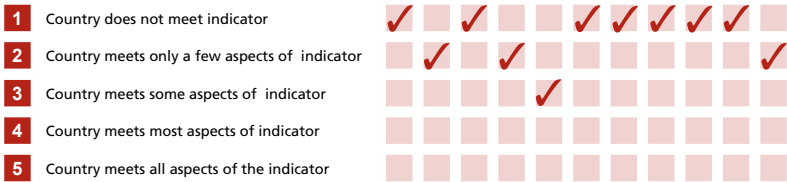
Zimpapers, the company which publishes newspapers such as *The Herald*, is majority-owned by government. The current board was appointed in October 2009 by the ZANU PF Minister of Media, Information and Publicity very much to the dismay of the MDC – the party complained that they had not been consulted.

The editorial policy of Zimpapers' publications is to defend government policy. If government supports indigenisation of the economy, for example, then *The Herald* as the stable's flagship will endorse that position "one hundred per cent". This is apparently achieved without too much overt coercion. A panel member observed that "... there is no daily interference. There is self-censorship. They may let you get away with things, but you don't really know, so half the time people are self-censoring themselves."

Before the establishment of the inclusive government it was taboo for these papers to cover the views of ZANU PF and MDC in the same manner: “the MDC was regarded as the opposition and the major shareholder was ZANU PF, so the paper would not have given mileage to its opponent”. This is said to have changed even if there is still “resistance here and there”.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score:

1.5 (2010:1.1; 2008:1.1; 2006:1.0)

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

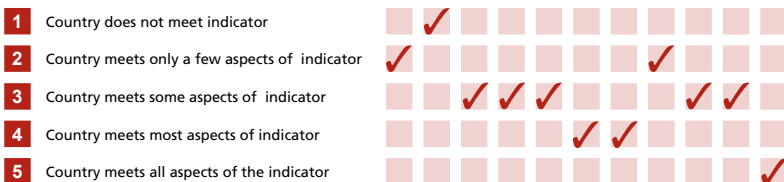
There is a Competition Act in place with the objective to curtail the development of monopolies in the business sector generally but not specifically in the media. If the spirit of the Competition Act were applied it could prevent media concentration and monopolies.

Until 2000, when this provision was declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court, the Broadcasting Act of Zimbabwe guaranteed the monopoly of the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation. In its decision the court ordered that the government formally end its monopoly by amending the Act. In response the government established the Broadcasting Authority of Zimbabwe (BAZ) as a statutory regulator under a new Broadcasting Services Act, tasked to license more operators. It took no less than 12 years for the authority to allow two private radio stations on air – a decision which was still being disputed at the time of the panel meeting.

Cross-ownership of broadcasting and print media was prohibited under the Broadcasting Act but it is possible under the Broadcasting Services Act. As a result, Zimpapers now has the licence to set up a radio station alongside its print publications.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score:

3.0 (2010:1.5; 2008:1.1; 2006:1.0)

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

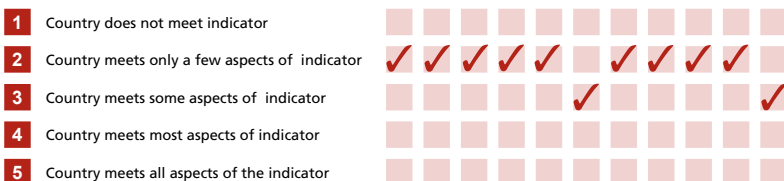
The Zimbabwe Media Commission claims to have contributed to a diversity of print media products by registering 30 media houses since its formation.

After a long lobbying process spearheaded by the London-based *The Zimbabwean*, government exempted foreign print media from a high import tax.

In regard to broadcasting, the government is hesitant to allow more players on air. Two radio licences were granted only in early 2012, one to the pro-government Zimpapers stable, another to a former ZBC employee who is said to be near to ZANU PF.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score:

2.2 (2010:1.3; 2008:n/a; 2006:n/a)

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

The coverage of issues cannot be considered fair, especially in a tabloid such as *H-Metro* which demeans women in the way it portrays them and carries degrading pictures of women on the front page.

This is one illustration of the fact that the media is a reflection of the patriarchal structure and attitudes of Zimbabwean society. Gender roles are specified and there are unwritten and unofficial rules that spell out the role of men and women. "It is the way we are socialised and the way we grew up - men always had this dominant space. You only have to look at the newsrooms - the men are in the decision making posts and there are very few women at the top."

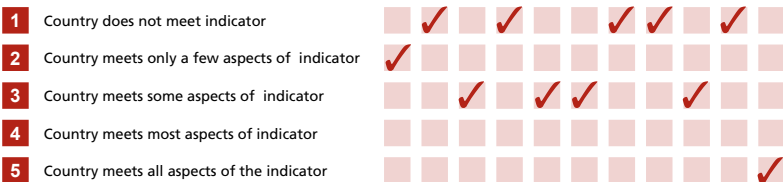
An informal survey of the print media found that most articles in every section focused on men as subjects and as sources. The stories talked about the achievements of men in their different fields and when the spotlight was turned on women it was either as a victim or the perpetrator of a crime – such as the woman who beat up her husband. The role of women in social situations is dramatised and sensationalised.

A study on gender and the media, commissioned by the Media Monitoring Project Zimbabwe (MMPZ) in 2011, found "that women remain at the periphery of the news, either appearing in limited roles or simply invisible". Even quality papers mainly talk about women and not with them: The front pages remain a male bastion with only 22 per cent of articles reviewed in a three-month period featuring women as news sources.

The Herald instituted a gender policy early in 2012 to promote the voices of women and the newsroom agreed that their female colleagues would take the lead in this initiative.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score:

2.2 (2010:1.3; 2008:n/a; 2006:n/a)

2.8 All media fairly reflect the voices of society in its ethnic, linguistic, religious, political and social diversity.

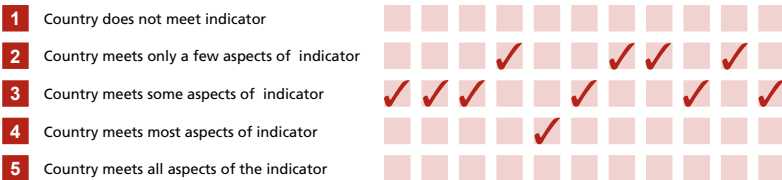
Most media houses in Zimbabwe are known for their partisan position: “We know that this media house supports this political party and that media house supports the other party”. This certainly does not give a full or rounded picture of political diversity in the country.

Religious groupings that are aligned to political power enjoy broad coverage, for example leaders of the Apostolic faith. Other religious sectors are ignored completely while traditional systems are looked down upon.

There are only few newspapers or magazines that publish in vernacular languages. The majority of publications are in English and do not cater for the Shona and Ndebele speaking public. It is alleged that people are not used to reading in their local languages.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score:

2.7 (2010:1.7; 2008:n/a; 2006:n/a)

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

An ICT policy was launched in 2010 by the Minister of Information Communication Technology, Nelson Chamisa, but it does not seem to have been widely publicised as most of the panellists did not know anything about it. According to the policy

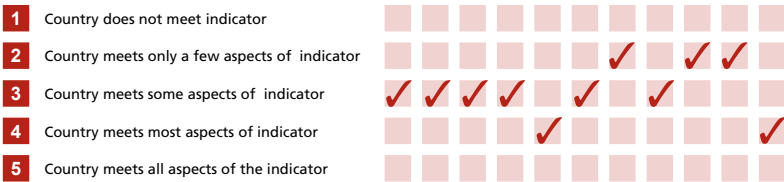
there are plans to transform post offices into ICT centres but this has not yet happened.

In early 2012 government increased the distribution of computers to schools. The success of this programme will depend on supply of electrical power and training for teachers.

The licensing of more internet service providers has had a ripple effect with connectivity prices becoming more affordable for the general public. The expansion of the mobile phone network in terms of subscriber base and reach has vastly increased the communication network and provides better access to other ICT facilities via cellphones.

Scores:

Individual scores:



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

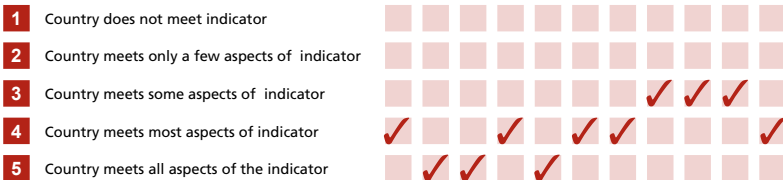
2.10 Government does not use its power over the placement of advertisements as a means to interfere with editorial content.

Government departments and government ministries always advertise in the state media and very rarely in privately owned publications. Government obviously does not want to be associated with the independent media.

Government ad spend is not very high and so it is not a tool that could be used to put pressure on media organisations. A publication would not collapse if government decided to pull out all its advertising.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score:

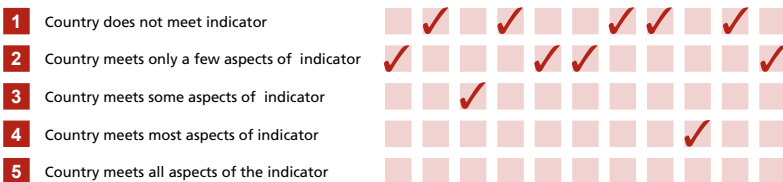
4.0 (2010:1.0; 2008:2.3; 2006:1.0)

2.11 The advertisement market is large enough to support a diversity of media outlets.

Due to the declining economy, the advertising base in Zimbabwe has shrunk dramatically over the last decade but there are no statistics available to confirm this. Many media outlets have failed to make it in the market and the papers that are still around are struggling. The *Daily Gazette* did not take off because the publishers found it difficult to attract enough advertising while *The Mail* shut down after a short time for the same reason.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score:

1.8 (2010:1.1; 2008:1.9; 2006: 2.3)

Average score for sector 2:

2.6 (2010:1.5)*

* The indicators were reviewed, changed and shifted in 2008/2009. Therefore the scores of some indicators and sector scores are not comparable to scores of previous AMBs.

SECTOR 3:

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

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

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

The Broadcasting Services Act (BSA) 2001 governs the industry and provides for a three-tier system - public, commercial and community broadcasting. It also establishes the Broadcasting Authority of Zimbabwe (BAZ)

Radio is a popular and the most accessible medium, hence government would prefer to control its influence. It is aware of the reach of radios and probably remembers that during the liberation struggle ZANU and ZAPU broadcast programmes that went out on shortwave on radio stations. Radio was the most effective means of reaching people in the then-Rhodesia and providing them with the latest news and propaganda.

This seems to be the reason why there is no conducive environment for the development of broadcasting in Zimbabwe. There is a lack of political will to award licences to new players that might be difficult or impossible to control.

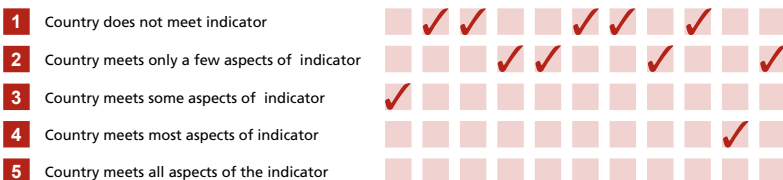
The first two commercial radio licences were awarded in 2012 amongst much controversy. One was granted to former ZBC journalist Supa Mandiwanzira's AB Communications, which owns ZI FM, and the other to government-controlled Zimpapers, which is planning to operate Zimpapers Talk Radio.

No community radio has been licensed although there are quite number of initiatives across the country ready to go on air. They have to wait for the BAZ to invite applications for licences – but these invitations have not been forthcoming.

This may be taken as an indication of the mistrust within government circles. They suspect that community radio stations have a political agenda not sympathetic to one of the political parties in government (ZANU PF) and that this could lead to 'regime change'.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score:

1.8 (2010:1.3; 2008:1.1; 2006:1.0)

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

The Broadcasting Authority of Zimbabwe (BAZ) cannot be considered independent and there is no deliberate protection against political interference. The argument has been made that BAZ is dominated by one particular political party, namely ZANU PF, and it is difficult to challenge that allegation.

The Broadcasting Services Act 2001 in its section 3 establishes the Broadcasting Authority of Zimbabwe (BAZ) as the regulatory and licensing authority for the sector. An Amendment Act of 2003 gives the BAZ the power to grant licences.

The authority's board consists of twelve members, nine of whom are appointed by the President after consultation with the minister in charge of broadcasting and (to some extent) on the basis of a list submitted by Parliament's Committee on Standing Rules and Orders. The remaining three members are appointed by the President from a list of six nominees suggested by the Committee on Standing Rules and Orders.

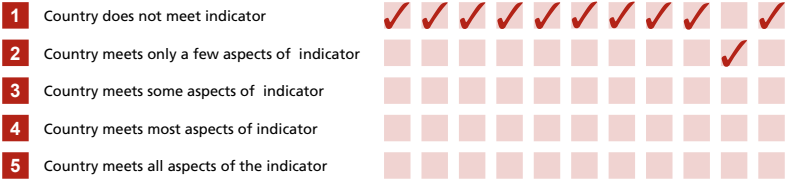
The current board was unilaterally appointed by the Minister of Media, Information and Publicity Webster Shamu (ZANU PF) in September 2009, with the former chair of the highly controversial Media and Information Commission, Dr Tafataona Mahoso, as chairperson.

These appointments were immediately contested and the legality and legitimacy of the board is considered doubtful. The lack of transparency in the manner in which the board was constituted has been questioned along with the lack of consultation with the MDC component of government.

At regular intervals there are calls by the MDC to revisit the appointment process and to constitute a legitimate Authority. All deadlines for these demands have long since passed and the Minister has declared that he will not reconstitute the body.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score:

1.1 (2010:1.0; 2008:n/a; 2006:n/a)

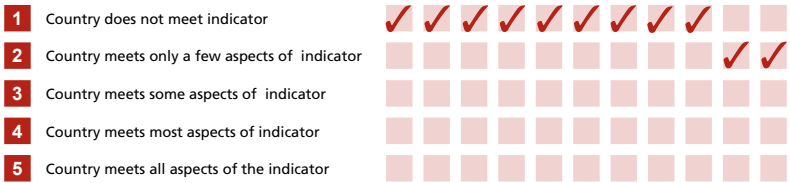
3.3 The body, which regulates broadcasting services and licences, does so in the public interest and ensures fairness and a diversity of views broadly representing society at large.

BAZ has been in place since October 2009 and has granted just two radio licences so far. Community radio stations have not been invited to apply for licences.

The lack of any other broadcaster on the media landscape speaks volumes about the fairness in the allocation of radio licences and so do the two licences that were recently awarded. One of the stations will be part of the Zimpapers stables and it is clear where their loyalties lie. The owner of the other radio station is the chairman of the Affirmative Action Group which has leanings towards Zanu PF and he has openly admitted that he supports ZANU PF.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score: 1.2 (2010:1.0; 2008:1.0; 2006:1.0)

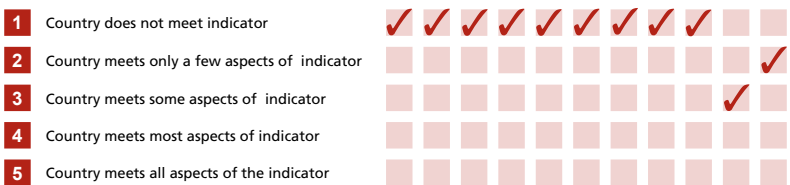
3.4 The state/public broadcaster is accountable to the public through a board representative of society at large and selected in an independent, open and transparent manner.

The Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation Act of 2001 places the responsibility of appointing board members for the ZBC board in the hands of the Minister of Information “after consultation with the President and in accordance with any directions that the President may give him”. Furthermore, the Global Political Agreement which has set up the inclusive government compels the appointing authority to consult with the principals of the ruling parties on key appointments. The process is thus neither independent, open nor transparent.

In September 2010, Minister Shamu announced the current ZBC board which includes military personnel, religious leaders and musicians. While they represent different sections of society they do not necessarily reflect diverse political viewpoints and alliances. The board cannot be truly representative of society at large and will toe the line of those who appointed it.

Scores:

Individual scores:



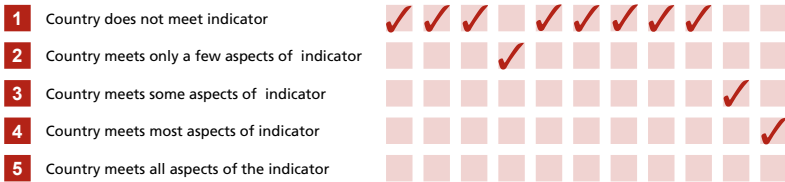
Average score: 1.3 (2010:1.1; 2008:1.0; 2006:1.0)

3.5 Office bearers with the state and political parties as well as those with a financial interest in the broadcasting industry are excluded from possible membership on the board of the state/public broadcaster.

There is no provision in the Act for the exclusion of office bearers with the state or political parties or those with a financial interest in the broadcasting industry.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score:

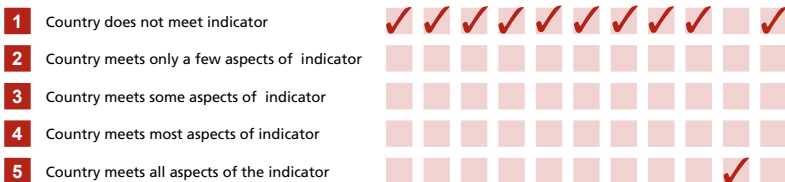
1.5 (2010:2.6; 2008:1.0; 2006:1.0)

3.6 The editorial independence of the state/public broadcaster from political influence is guaranteed by law and practiced.

According to the ZBC (Commercialisation) Act 2001, the state is the only shareholder in ZBC, holding its shares through persons appointed by the Minister of Information and who serve “as an agent of the State” (section 5). Section 3 gives the ZBC a clear mandate to “give priority to serving the needs of the state”. This rules out any possibility of the ZBC being independent.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score:

1.4 (2010:1.0; 2008:n/a; 2006:n/a)

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

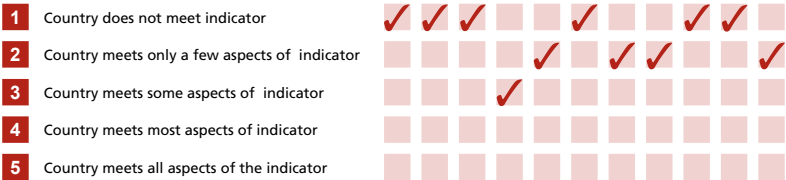
The ZBC is supposed to receive a grant from government and additional funding is derived from licence fees and advertising.

The government grant is not forthcoming. All vehicle owners in Zimbabwe who own car radios are expected to pay an annual ZBC licence fee of US\$30 for private cars and US\$80 for commercial vehicles. All television owners in Zimbabwe are required to pay an annual licence fee whether they are tuned in to ZBC or the satellite service DSTV. It is not clear whether these fees are then handed over to ZBC. In any case, the amount collected through fees is described as “insignificant”.

The largest portion of ZBC’s budget comes from advertising. As the ZBC still has the television monopoly in the country, clients are keen to buy airtime – they have no power to exercise commercial pressure. It is unlikely, however, that the ZBC would carry stories that are detrimental to their big advertisers, especially when this is where the bulk of its revenue is sourced.

Scores:

Individual scores:



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

3.8 The state/public broadcaster is technically accessible in the entire country.

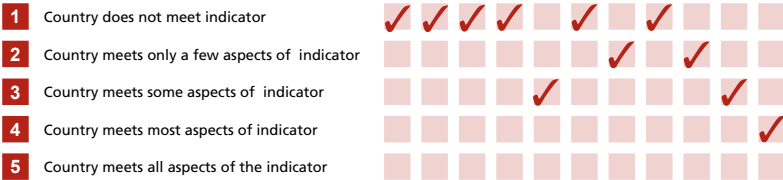
It is difficult to access ZBC television throughout the country, and in remote regions the reception is extremely poor. The channel is now also available through the satellite subscription service DSTV - for people who can afford to pay the subscription fee.

The reach of radio signals is said to cover 30 to 35 per cent of the country.

It is very unlikely that the situation will improve soon, as most of the transmission equipment is old or broken down and difficult to replace because of the lack of adequate funding.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score: 1.8 (2010:1.3; 2008:1.9; 2006:1.5)

3.9 The state/public broadcaster offers diverse programming formats for all interests.

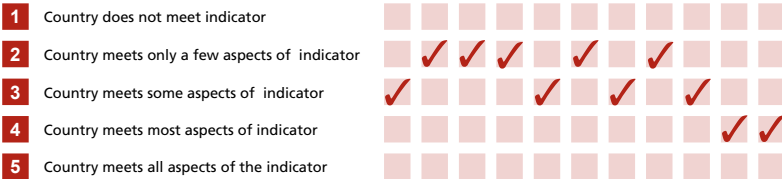
There are satellite receivers dotted around every suburb in the country which indicates that people are tuning in to other television service providers besides ZBC. Even the newly launched second channel of ZBC flights programmes that are available on DSTV to capture audiences that are being lost to ZBC.

ZBC television may not offer popular programmes but there is diverse content and viewers are able to watch news, talk shows, music, religious programmes, sports as well as Chinese and Korean movies. A better choice of more attractive programmes is being hampered by the lack of financial and technical resources. Even if ZBC was interested in offering diversity and quality they do not have the technical and financial resources to produce the kind of programmes they would like to.

Radio on the other hand is far more diverse and interesting and the most popular medium in the country. The four different stations cater for a diversity of audiences and offer a range of different programmes.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score:

2.7 (2010:2.7; 2008:3.3; 2006:2.2)

3.10 The state/public broadcaster offers balanced and fair information in news and current affairs, reflecting the full spectrum of diverse views and opinions.

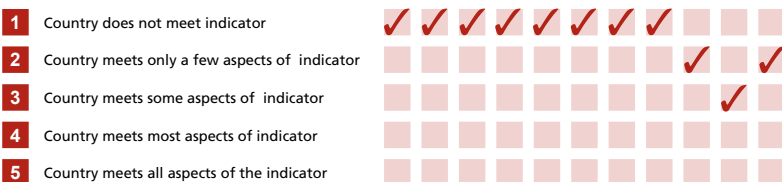
People tune in to watch the evening news bulletins but it is obvious that there is no balance - the news are all about ZANU PF and if the MDC-Prime Minister is featured on the bulletin he is either being ridiculed or shown in a negative light. If people on the street are being interviewed, the only opinion you hear is the one that endorses ZANU PF's view. No alternative viewpoints are ever covered. The so-called political analysts used as expert sources are often politburo members of ZANU PF.

Even though there is no written policy that the President should always make headline news, it seems that news producers feel that he should be at the top of the news agenda even when there are stories of more critical importance.

It is understood that there is pressure on journalists to edit or abandon certain stories but it is not clear which quarters such pressure is coming from. What is obvious, though, is that journalists seek to play safe and avoid any risk.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score:

1.4 (2010:1.2; 2008:1.5; 2006:1.0)

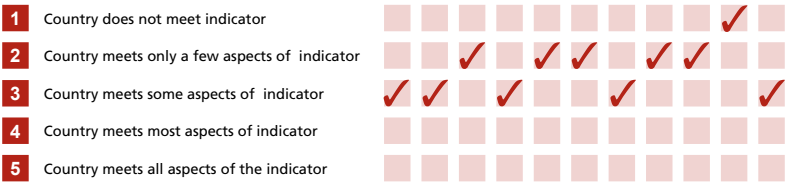
3.11 The state/public broadcaster offers as much diverse and creative local content as economically achievable.

Television programme schedules are characterised by repeats. Some attempts to produce new local material have been fairly successful – programmes like Studio 263, The Gentleman or Dzavanhu – but they are not enough to make a real difference.

On radio it is easier to offer local content - across the four stations there is news, music, educational programming, celebrity news and other programmes.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score:

2.4 (2010:2.0; 2008:1.7; 2006:1.4)

3.12 Community broadcasting enjoys special promotion by the government given its potential to broaden access by communities to the airwaves.

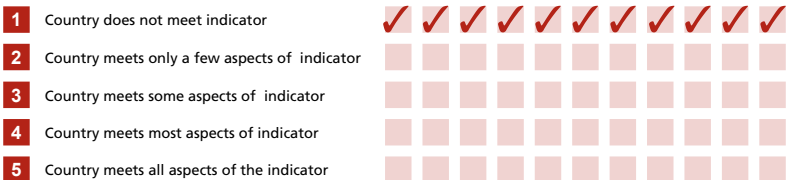
There is no special consideration or concession made for community broadcasting.

The Broadcasting Services Act defines community broadcasting as “a free to air radio or television broadcasting service, not operated for profit or as part of a profit making enterprise, which provides programmes for community purposes and is capable of being received by commonly available equipment, does not broadcast programmes or advertisements on behalf of any political party ...”.

So far, the Broadcasting Authority of Zimbabwe has not invited applications for community radio stations, although there are several community radio initiatives in the country ready to start going on air as soon as licences are granted.

Scores:

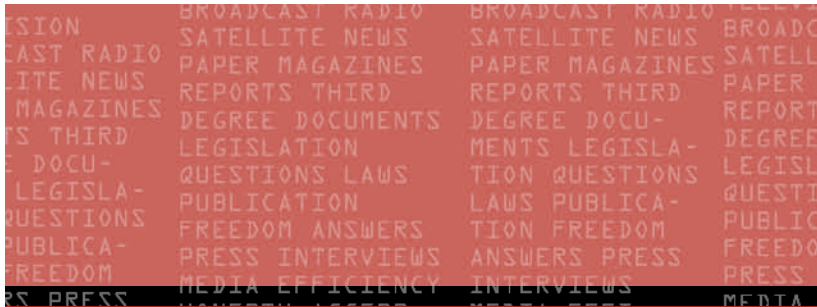
Individual scores:



Average score: 1.0 (2010:1.0; 2008:1.0; 2006:1.0)

Average score for sector 3: 1.6 (2010:1.4)*

* The indicators were reviewed, changed and shifted in 2008/2009. Therefore the sector scores are not comparable to scores of previous AMBs.



SECTOR 4:

The media practice high levels of professional standards.



The media practice high levels of professional standards.

4.1 The media follow voluntary codes of professional standards, which are enforced by self-regulatory bodies that deal with complaints from the public.

Privately owned and community media voluntarily subscribe to the code of ethics set by the self-regulatory Voluntary Media Council of Zimbabwe (VMCZ) which was launched in June 2007. The VMCZ provides members of the public with an opportunity to lodge their complaints without resorting to legal redress through the court system which can be costly and take a long time to sort out.

Media outlets that subscribe to VMCZ place boxes next to their imprint informing readers that they subscribe to the code and that complaint can be lodged with the VMCZ. Newspaper vendors carry neon green waistcoats advertising the VMCZ as a complaints body.

The editor of the publication concerned is notified as soon as a complaint is received by the VMCZ. The VMCZ director will gauge the severity of the complaint and try to solve the case if it is uncomplicated. He will then arrange a meeting between the media house and the complainant in an attempt to reach an amicable solution. When the case is complex it is turned over to a complaints committee for review. The committee, appointed by the VMCZ board, is made up of a legal practitioner (who is also the chair), a public representative and a journalist. In cases where the committee finds that the code has been breached, it can order the publication in question to publish a prompt and prominent retraction and an apology. In 2011, the VMCZ reviewed 24 cases.

Publications in the Zimpapers stable are not part of the VMCZ, probably because it is an initiative that was driven by media lobby groups and civic society organisations whose agenda is regarded with suspicion by government. Instead Zimpapers respond to concerns raised by a body which was established by the inclusive government to oversee the implementation of agreements among them. One clause requires the media to “refrain from using abusive language that may incite hostility, political intolerance and ethnic hatred or that unfairly undermines political parties and other organisations”.

Most publications have their own in-house complaints mechanisms:

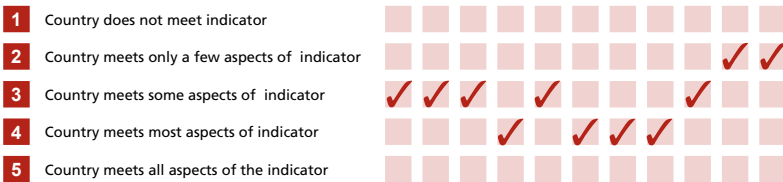
- Alpha Media Holdings, which publishes *The Independent*, among others, has appointed an Ombudsman – a former High Court judge. A few cases have already been handled by him.

- Zimpapers has a code of conduct and when a story has to be retracted, disciplinary measures are taken against the offending journalist.
- ZBC has a code of conduct that journalists are expected to follow. The Voice of Zimbabwe has set up a website and provides an email address for complaints.

There are plans in the pipeline for the Zimbabwe Media Commission to set up a statutory media council under regulations laid out in AIPPA. The statutory media council will run parallel to the VMCZ. Media organisations have categorically stated that they will not participate in the process of setting up such a statutory media council and will not endorse representatives from the media as requested under AIPPA. The Zimbabwe Union of Journalists (ZUJ) is one of the organisations that are expected to nominate candidates for positions in the media council but they have declined to do so. The ZMC is planning to go ahead regardless whether they are supported by the media or not.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score:

3.2 (2010:2.8; 2008:1.7; 2006:1.1)

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

Some media houses try hard to ensure information is confirmed, facts are checked and figures are accurate. There are other sections of the media where this thorough process is ignored and there is no accuracy at all.

Too often, the media use the term “impeccable sources” or “sources close to”, turning the story faceless. “There are certainly instances where sources have to be confidential and their names not published but journalists abuse these terms.” The Herald has attempted to address this problem by ensuring that their journalists provide the names of their sources to the editor and news editor. If the journalist refuses to provide the name of his or her source, the story is spiked.

Of concern is the tendency by journalists in both state and private media to make up quotes. Headlines are often inaccurate or misleading. In a bid to capture the

market the papers will feature sensational headlines to attract audiences, only for the reader to discover that there is a disparity between the headline and the story.

The MMPZ’s weekly reports on the performance of the media in Zimbabwe confirm the lack of accuracy: “Our reports over the years have consistently shown the lack of balance and fairness which is more frequent in the public media but is a growing and worrying trend in the privately owned media.”

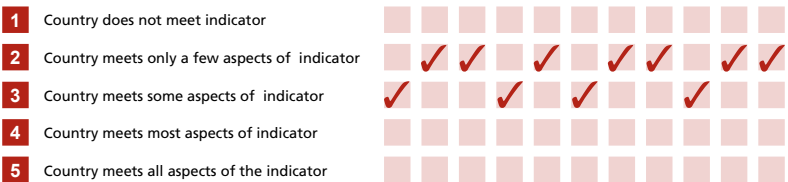
Inaccuracy is often coupled with lack of understanding of a subject. A journalist attended a workshop on the sexual reproductive health rights of workers and the story that was published clearly showed the issues discussed had not been understood.

Activism over the years has blurred the lines for journalists, many of whom are reporting from a biased perspective because they feel “they are still in the struggle”. Journalists attending political events will write from a ZANU PF or MDC perspective depending on who they write for, and the accurate story may be somewhere in between.

The unprofessional and unethical behaviour of journalists can be attributed to a number of things: laziness, inadequate training, poor salaries, corruption and a shortage of skilled staff in the newsroom which puts the experienced staff under constant pressure.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score: 2.4 (2010:2.0; 2008:2.1; 2006:2.3)

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

The media viewed collectively cover the full spectrum of events and publish a lot of business, cultural and local stories.

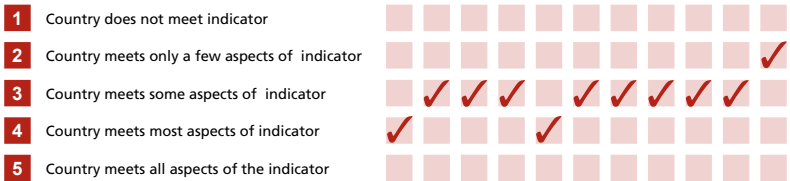
One of the main areas of concern is that the media across the board are not carrying enough investigative stories primarily because resources at media houses are stretched thin and these types of stories require time, skills and money.

Investigative journalism needs specialised skills beyond the mere pursuing of a hard news or feature story. Journalists need persistence, patience and the ability to look for evidence to back up claims made in the story. These qualities are lacking in the new crop of journalists. Journalists who have experience and skill are moved into management positions after five or six years in the profession and do not have the time to do the kind of investigative and analytical stories they received recognition for. Passing on their skills is difficult in an environment that has tight deadlines and suffers from work overload.

Amongst the younger journalists there is a culture of fear and they are unable to deal with intimidation. It takes courage to work on an issue involving influential people. Journalists are aware that they do not enjoy any protection after they have done an investigative story – they could be forced to reveal a source or even get into more serious trouble. Media houses are reluctant to invest in investigative reporting in terms of insurance which is needed to protect journalists.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score: **3.1 (2010:2.6; 2008:2.5; 2006:1.8)**

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

There are very few women in decision making positions in the print media while there are far more women heading various departments in the broadcasting sector.

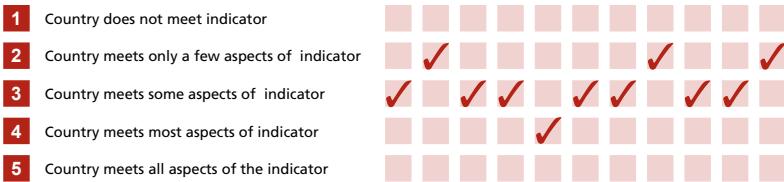
The *Zimbabwe Independent* appointed its first female news editor in March this year, barely four months after she had been promoted to senior political editor. At *NewsDay*, the features editor is female and the *Daily News* has a woman deputy

news editor. In the Zimpapers group there is now a small number of women who occupy top positions but it has taken a long time for them to succeed. "It is very difficult for us women to be recognised even when we have worked hard. They would rather get someone from outside than promote a woman from within. Even when we are promoted, we have to work twice as hard to keep our positions."

The experience in the broadcasting sector is different and there are many women in various decision making positions from Head of Production to Station Head. "Working in a broadcasting environment, it was easy to express myself and get my point heard and understood by my colleagues, because you really need to network even after hours. You need to go to these places that sometimes are not comfortable for women to go. With broadcast, especially radio, you can even talk to male sources on the phone or ask them to come to the studio whereas with print they usually ask you to go to them and may ask you to come to a bar. Sometimes it might not be comfortable."

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score:

2.8 (2010:3.0; 2008:n/a; 2006:n/a)

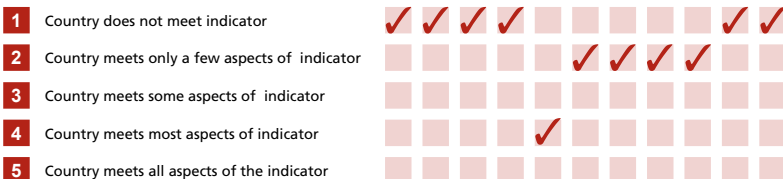
4.5 Journalists and editors do not practice self-censorship.

Self-censorship is common in all media houses and people know exactly what they are expected to do.

Depending on who they are working for, there are certain people and organisations who are off limits - powerful political individuals who will either send the secret police to the office or who may have a journalist arrested, or the powerful corporate sector. Media houses will not do anything to jeopardise their relationships with the bigger companies as their survival depends on them.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score:

1.6 (2010:2.0; 2008:1.4; 2006:1.7)

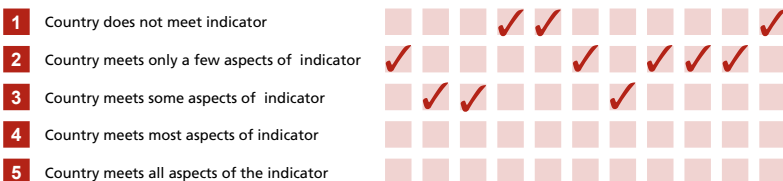
4.6 Owners of established mainstream private media do not interfere with editorial independence.

Commercial interests play a role in the level of interference by owners. The owners of private media houses need to maintain their relationships with businessmen and companies that support them financially. Owners of some newspapers will issue directives or make a phone call to the newsroom to prevent certain stories being written or published.

Companies have pulled their advertisements out of publications in instances where they have been criticised and the media house has had to woo the advertiser back.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score:

2.0 (2010:2.9; 2008:1.1; 2006:2.2)

4.7 Journalists and media have integrity and are not corrupt.

Corruption is endemic in the journalistic profession. In a survey carried out by Transparency International Zimbabwe, media is in the top six most corrupt sectors in Zimbabwe.

Some journalists have a list of people whom they call “paymasters” and whom they know they can get money from. When they are broke they contact the person and claim they are sitting on a hot story which could be killed if a payment is made. The payment is made and the non-existent story ‘does not make it into the paper’.

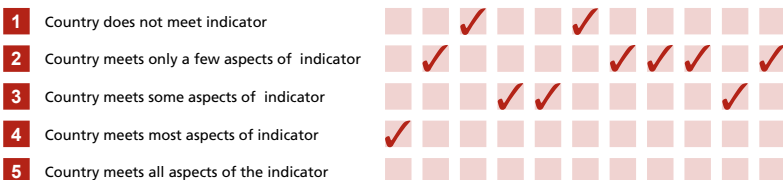
Others are going out of their way to take compromising pictures of people and then blackmail the person to keep the pictures out of the paper. “I went to a music concert show and the next day I was called by a journalist who asked me if I remember what I was doing, because he had pictures of me. I was told that if I did not pay, my pictures would appear in the paper. I told him to go ahead and put the pictures in the paper because I did not care. The pictures did not appear,” said one of the panellists.

A journalist who did an interview with a prominent person on a topical issue was congratulated by several colleagues for “making a killing.” They all assumed she had been paid for the article because it is considered normal practice for people who get prominent space to pay for it. One prominent artist, for example, came to the newsroom for an interview. The journalist who was supposed to interview him was out and so it was done by another colleague. At the end of the interview the artist apologised and told the journalist that he only had US\$200 and would send the rest later. For him this was standard practice – he had always paid every time he was featured in the media.

All these examples, however, should not detract from the fact that most journalists in the country try to remain honest despite the difficult economic circumstances they are living in.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score:

2.3 (2010:1.7; 2008:n/a; 2006:n/a)

4.8 Salary levels and general working conditions for journalists and other media practitioners are adequate.

Journalists are not well paid and there is a tendency at media houses to employ people on a contractual rather than on a full-time basis.

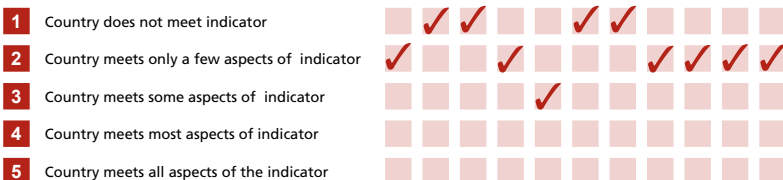
Junior reporters earn on average US\$500 a month and senior reporters US\$700. Renting a small flat in the city centre costs US\$500 or more, so it is difficult for the majority of journalists to survive.

Editors will earn anything between US\$1500 and US\$3000 a month, depending on the journalist's ability to negotiate. There are very few editors who earn US\$3000 which is the maximum at most media houses.

Journalists working for the state media get allowances if they are on assignment during lunch or if they travel out of town. Journalists in the private media sector are given a meagre allowance for out of town travel and do not receive any extra money if they are working through meal times.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score:

1.7 (2010:1.5; 2008:n/a; 2006:n/a)

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

There are a variety of training programmes for journalists starting at diploma level and going up to degree level. Of concern is the fact that many graduates pass each year but only very few are being absorbed into the market. The rate of unemployment is generally high in Zimbabwe and there are a large number of unemployed journalists.

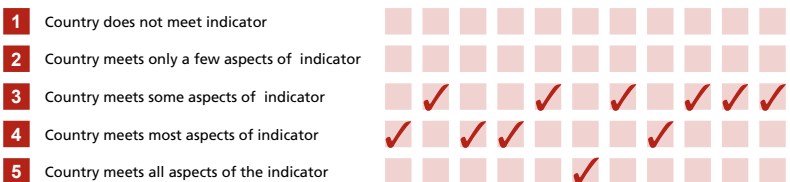
The diploma courses being offered at different colleges such as the Harare Polytechnic cater for the vocational needs of journalists and are more practical than theoretical. The teaching at other institutions does not seem to be adequate: journalists entering the newsroom for the first time have to undergo further on-the-job training because they are unable to master the practical aspects of journalism and have to be taught to write properly.

Universities are offering degree programmes for full-time students and for working journalists able to take short term breaks for their studies. There are also skills upgrade programmes being offered in specialised areas such as sub-editing, newsroom management or economics. Course participants often suggest topics based on their needs.

There are short term training opportunities offered by organisations such as MISA, VMCZ and the Media Centre. The Media Centre is located in the Harare city centre and is a resource centre for journalists providing internet access and other facilities at a nominal fee.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score:

3.5 (2010:3.1; 2008:3.0; 2006:4.0)

4.10 Journalists and other media practitioners are organised in trade unions and/or professional associations, which effectively represent their interests.

There are numerous media organisations with journalists as members, but there is only one trade union, the Zimbabwe Union of Journalists. ZUJ used to be a strong organisation with considerable clout but their effectiveness in the past few years has been weakened by in-fighting and allegations of manipulation of elections.

Mirroring the political polarisation in the media there are two organisations for editors – the Zimbabwe National Editors Forum (ZINEF) for those in the private media and the Zimbabwe Association of Editors for those in the state sector.

Other media associations include MISA and the Federation of Media Women in Zimbabwe.

Scores:

Individual scores:

1	Country does not meet indicator	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	Country meets only a few aspects of indicator	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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5	Country meets all aspects of the indicator	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Average score: 2.5 (2010:4.5; 2008:2.1; 2006:2.1)

Average score for sector 4: 2.5 (2010:2.6)*

OVERALL COUNTRY SCORE: 2.4 (2010:1.9)

* The indicators were reviewed, changed and shifted in 2008/2009. Therefore the scores of some indicators and sector scores are not comparable to scores of previous AMBs.

The way forward

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

Positive developments

- Increasing engagement of civil society in media legislation campaigns and civil society demands for constitutional media freedom and access to information
- Self-regulation has been strengthened by VMCZ
- Reforms at the VMCZ have resulted in a more representative board
- Interaction between parliament and civil society, e.g. training of Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Transport and Communication on media issues
- A marked increase in print media products on the market
- Women have been promoted into decision making posts

Negative developments

- Legal framework for freedom of expression and the media remains unchanged
- Harassment of media activists and journalists persists
- Self-censorship in the media based on fear
- Increase in criminal defamation cases
- The illegitimate appointment of the boards of the Broadcasting Authority of Zimbabwe and Zimpapers
- Controversy over allocation of radio licences
- Government's failure/refusal to transform ZBC into being a truly public broadcaster
- Unwillingness to license community radios
- The planned statutory Media Council could weaken self-regulation
- Threats of the Zimbabwe Media Commission to ban foreign based publications that also target the Zimbabwean market
- Lowering of professional standards in reporting
- Level of corruption in the media has gone up

2. What kinds of activities are needed over the next two years?

- MISA should encourage its members to cover media reform issues in a more focussed and dedicated manner.
- Media organisations should continue to refuse categorically any cooperation with a statutory media council as planned by the Zimbabwe Media Commission.
- MISA and MAZ should engage more with civil society organisations on media reform issues through discussion fora, using their Media Policy Framework and Public Broadcasting Charter as starting points.
- Journalism departments of universities and colleges should invite editors to discuss with politicians the way the media works.
- The Zimbabwe Association of Community Radio Stations (ZACRAS) should be encouraged to put more pressure on the Broadcasting Authority of Zimbabwe to start the licensing process for community radios.
- MISA should intensify its ongoing campaign to transform the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation into a truly public broadcaster.
- Media lobby groups should seek legal advice on possible litigation strategies.
- An Indaba on Ethics and Professionalism in the Media should be hosted by a university or other autonomous and professional institutions, bringing together decision makers in the media across the political divide.
- The two editors' associations should seek partnerships with journalism training institutes at colleges and universities to develop curricula based on the needs of the industry and academia.

The panel meeting took place at Antelope Park, Gweru, 20 to 22 April 2012.

Panellists:

Media:

1. Mr Isdore Guvamombe, editor state-owned newspaper
2. Mr Dzikamai Machingura, media lawyer and activist
3. Ms Faith Zaba, editor private newspaper
4. Ms Sibongile Mpofu, journalism lecturer
5. Ms. Nothando Mpofu, media activist
6. Mr Chris Mhike, media lawyer and Commissioner of Zimbabwe Media Commission
7. Mr Donald Mukota, editor state broadcaster

Civil Society:

1. Ms Patience Mandishona, human rights activist
2. Mr Chris Musodza, IT expert
3. Ms Sibusisiwe Ndlovu, civil society activist
4. Mr Pius Wakatama, church leader

Rapporteur:

Mr Hendrik Bussiek

Moderator:

Ms Reyhana Masters

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