



Alert 3: Flighting of political adverts

ZTV has flighted an edited version of an MDC Alliance advert that had initially been rejected by the national broadcaster on the grounds that it contained hate speech. The advert was aired on Saturday 28 July at 1913. The same advert was also aired on Star FM at 1825.

The *Daily News on Sunday*¹ had reported that, “State controlled broadcaster Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC) has refused to flight MDC Alliance’s presidential candidate Nelson Chamisa’s political advertisement ahead of the crunch elections tomorrow ostensibly because it borders on hate speech”.

Daily News noted that, the advert, which was scheduled to be flighted during the past week in the form of a prayer recited by Nelson Chamisa, was classified by the ZBC review board as a “sly attack ad, raising objections to prayer lines where Chamisa says “torwa nevanoshandisa moto” (we fight with those who use fire) and “torwa nemakarwe” (we fight with crocodiles), a jibe at ZANU PF candidate Emmerson Mnangagwa who is known as “garwe” or “the crocodile”

The party, through Nelson Chamisa’s legal advisor, advocate Thabani Mpofu, was worried whether the advert would be aired at all, “given that the Electoral Act decrees that political parties should wrap their campaigns by midnight or 48 hours before polling day”.

In the unedited version of the advert, Chamisa says; “*Tinorwa nevanepfuti, Tinorwa nevanemakarwe, tinorwa nevanoenda kun’anga vanosvetuka moto*” Loosely translated, this means, (We fight against those with guns, and those with crocodiles, we also fight against those who consult traditional leaders and exercise in rituals to gain supernatural power).

ZEC published a notice announcing the end of the campaign period at midnight 28 July in line with the Fourth Schedule of the Electoral Act which states in paragraph seven that:

7. (1) No political party or candidate may, from midnight twenty-four hours before polling day in any election or referendum until polling stations are closed on that day—

- (a) convene or hold a public gathering of any kind;
- (b) publish, or cause or permit the publication, of any advertisement or statement promoting or opposing a particular party or candidate;
- (c) disrupt the work of election officials at a polling station or counting centre;
- (d) campaign or display campaign material within 300 metres of a polling station or counting centre;
- (e) coerce a voter, who does not require assistance, to be assisted to vote.

¹ Daily News (29/7) ZBC refuses to flight Chamisa’s prayer; Page 3