

Monitoring Fairness and Balance in Media Coverage of the March 2022 By-elections Issue 1: 1-7 March 2022

1.0 Introduction

The media have an ethical obligation to be impartial in their coverage of electoral processes; this requires fairness and balance in their representation of the political players. Through this report Media Monitors tracks if the local media is adhering to these requirements. Monitoring will be informed by Sections 160 E - 160J of the Electoral Act which make provisions for fair and balanced access to the media by all political parties and candidates; fair political advertising, as well as the general conduct of the media in an election that ensures that:

- All political parties and candidates are treated equitably in regard to the extent, timing and prominence of the coverage accorded to them
- Election reports are factually accurate, complete and fair
- A clear distinction is made in the news between factual reporting on the election and editorial comment on it
- Inaccuracies are rectified without delay and with due prominence
- Political parties and candidates are afforded the right of reply
- News media do not promote political parties and candidates that encourage violence or hatred.
- News media avoid language that encourages prejudice or hatred, incites violence and may lead to public contempt against any person or political player

1.1 Methodology

What will be monitored?

To assess coverage, Media Monitors measures the space and time allocated to political actors¹ in print media and broadcasts between 5pm and 9pm (prime time).

Unit of measurement

For this report “media coverage” refers to the direct speech attributed to candidates and political party representatives and when they are mentioned or the subject of a news story

Number of media platforms monitored: 19 (see annex 3 for media set)

¹ Political actors monitored include; national assembly candidates, local authority candidates, party spokespersons and political parties when they are the subject in news stories

1.2 Context

This monitoring report coincided with the stepping up of campaigns by the political parties and actors contesting in the by-elections while the electoral commission was ramping up its preparations to host the elections.

1.2.1 Campaign activities

- On 26 February CCC and ZANU PF held star rallies in Gokwe and Kwekwe respectively
- Violence erupted at a CCC rally that took place on 27 February in Kwekwe. The violence resulted in one death and 17 injuries.
- On the 5th of March CCC and ZANU PF held Star rallies in Bulawayo and Tsholotsho respectively

1.2.2 Administrative issues

- Following the violence that occurred at the CCC rally in Kwekwe, ZEC and the Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission reproached political violence in general without apportioning blame.
- ZEC released a statement that it had accredited 352 local and foreign observers for the by elections. Of these 342 are local observers and the remaining 10 are foreign diplomats from local embassies.
- ZEC also expressed confidence that everything was on course for successful polls even though it registered concern over low voter registration turn out in Matabeleland.

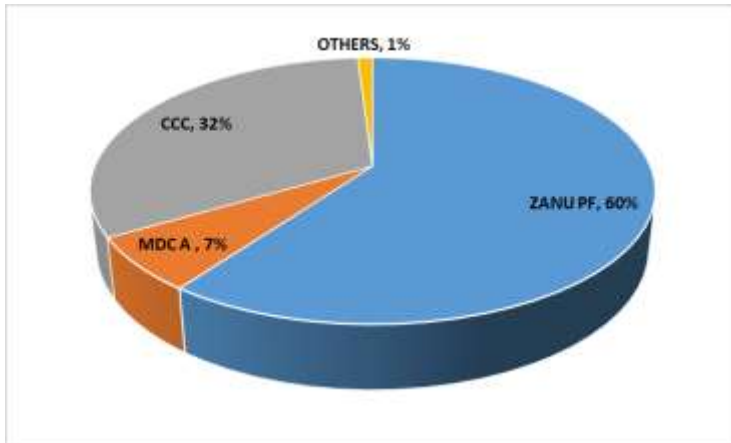
1.3 Summary of Results

- Overall 12 of the 17 parties contesting in the by-elections received coverage, however only 3 (18%) received significant coverage as they accounted for 99% of the coverage.
- Political party agendas received the majority of media coverage (55%) while the prospective national assembly and local authority candidates were featured in 24% and 1% of the coverage respectively.
- Although party leaders are not contesting in this election, they spearheaded campaigns and became the focal persons at rallies, thus, they received 18% of political actors' coverage.
- Gender representation in election reportage favoured men who received 91% visibility in the media. There was a low number of women's voices as women received only 9% of coverage amongst political actors.

2.0 Space and time allocated to political actors

Media Monitors observed that 12 of the 17 political parties contesting in the election received coverage in the monitored media. It should however be noted that nine of these parties received marginal coverage as they only made up 1% of the total coverage whilst CCC, MDC A and ZANU PF combined for 99%.

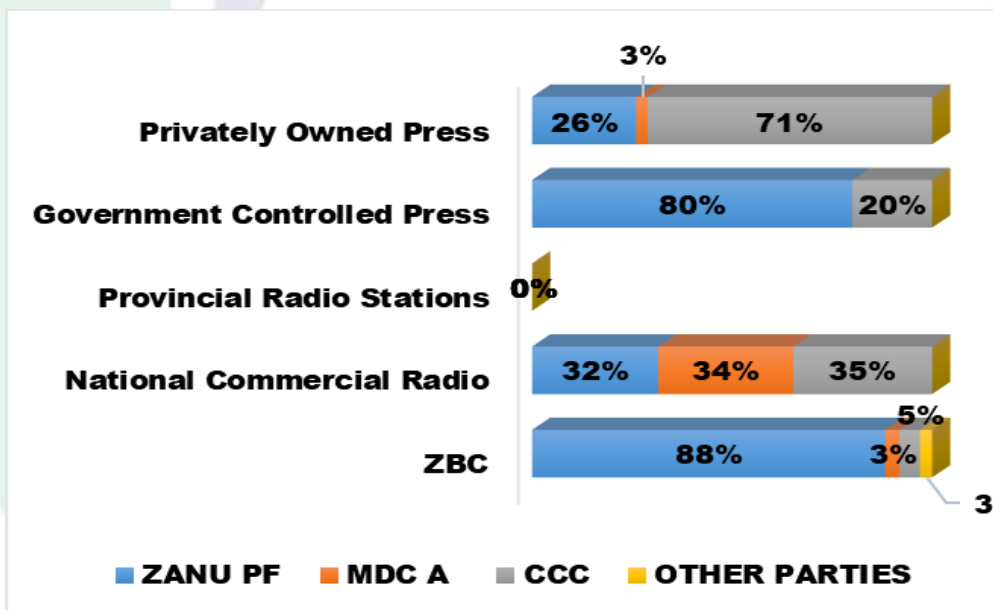
Fig 1. Overall distribution of space and time among political actors (this includes political parties, leaders and candidates) in all media



NB**Space and time allocated PZ, RPZ, UZA, ZAPU, FREE ZIM, LEAD, MA'AT ZIM, UDA and Independent candidates was negligible.

Zanu PF and CCC dominated coverage on all platforms, however, Zanu PF had the lion's share of coverage in government controlled newspapers and ZBC channels. Provincial radio stations had no coverage linked to elections during the monitored times.

Fig 2. Distribution of space and time among political parties by platform



Zanu PF, CCC and MDC A held rallies that drew the media's attention. The media focused on attendance figures as a means to compare the popularity of the political parties especially when rallies were held in the same constituencies. Another factor that increased the space and time of Zanu PF and CCC was their counter accusations and blame game for the Kwekwe rally violence.

Which political actors were allocated space and time?

With 55%, election coverage focusing on political parties, their agendas dominated coverage amongst political actors. This was followed by coverage of aspiring legislators. Local Authority candidates received the least amount of media attention at 1% while party leaders and spokespersons got 18% and 2% respectively.

Three party leaders received prominence in the media, these were Nelson Chamisa, Emmerson Mnangagwa and Douglas Mwonzora, and these leaders were mostly featured in reports on rallies they addressed. In their campaign messages they were canvassing for votes for 2023 while at the same time endorsing their candidates for the by-elections.

Two party spokespersons, Fadzai Mahere (CCC) and Christopher Mutsvangwa (Zanu PF) received coverage in the first week of monitoring. The two communicated their respective party positions on the violence at a Kwekwe CCC rally.

Fig 3: Distribution of coverage amongst political actors

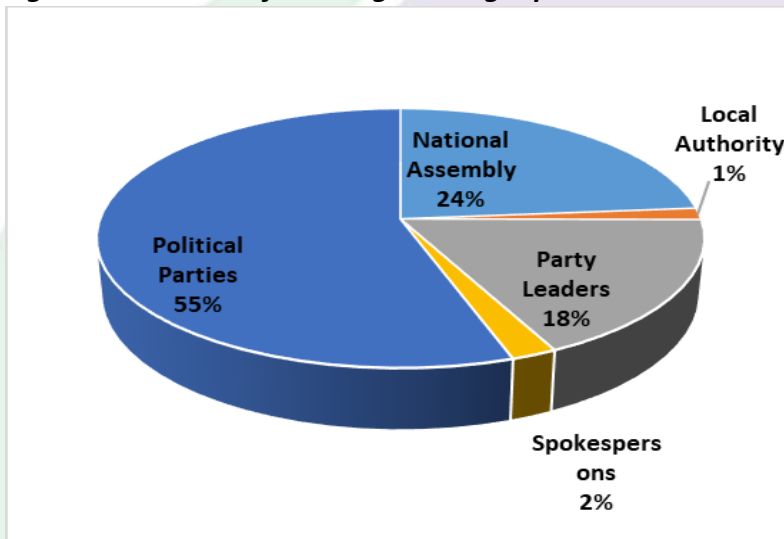
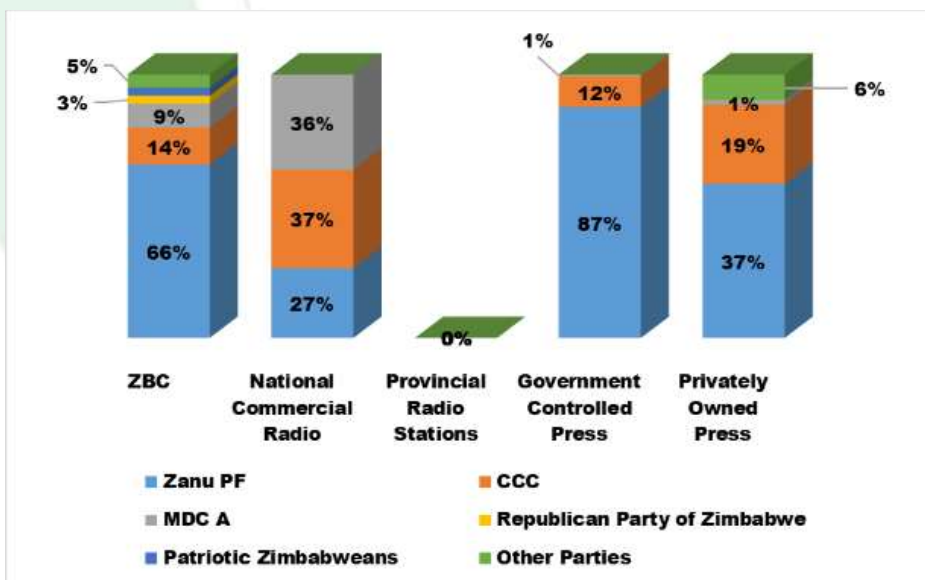


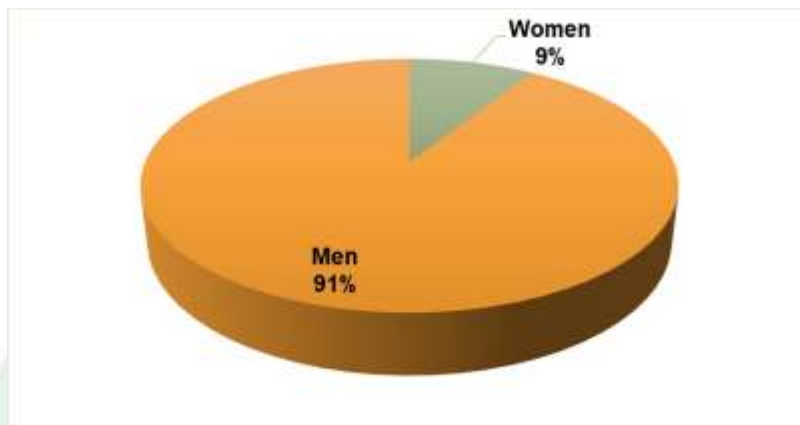
Fig 4: Space and time allocated to National Assembly candidates by platform



3.0 Gender representation of political actors featured in the media

Lack of gender balance in election reporting remains an issue of concern in Zimbabwe. Only 9% of the election coverage was either dedicated to women candidates or sought comment from women spokespersons and party leaders. Women candidates constitute 18% of candidates in the upcoming by-elections.

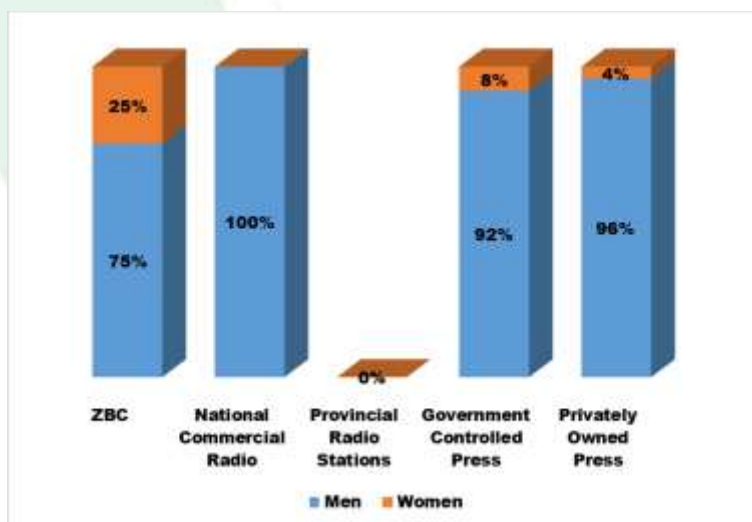
Fig 5: Overall distribution of space and time by gender



The imbalance in gender representation in the first week of monitoring was a result of women political actors not being covered as individuals but included as part of party and election programmes. CCC spokesperson Fadzai Mahere was vocal in condemning election violence against CCC supporters and gave a statement on behalf of the whole party.

National Assembly candidates, Gladys Mutunami (UZA), Faith Chuma (PZ), Mavis Gumbo, Loice Magweba and Zalera Makari, all from Zanu PF were visible in the media. Visibility of Zanu PF actors was increased by the party’s women empowerment programmes that were held to drum up support for the ruling party’s candidates in the upcoming polls.

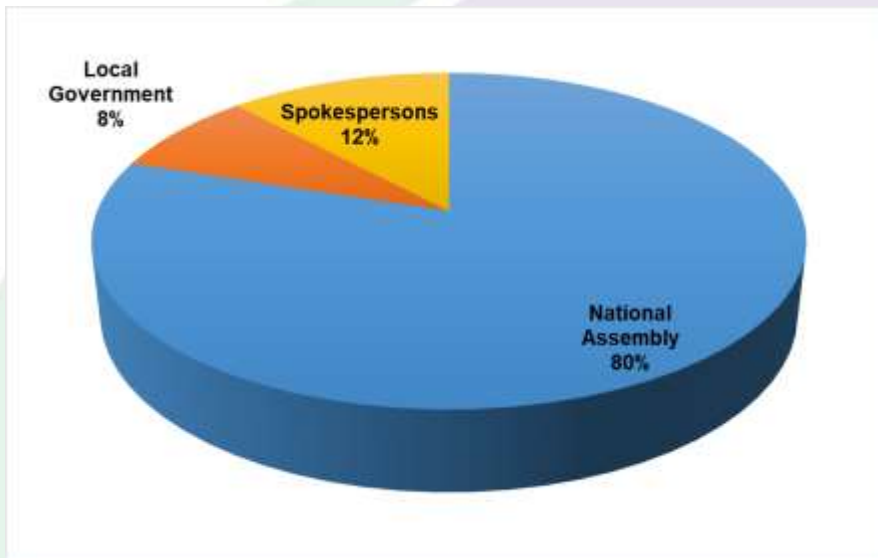
Fig 6: Gender representation in the monitored media



Media outlets that included elections related coverage did not offer men and women actors the same space and time. National commercial radio stations fared dismally in this respect as they had 100% male representation. Both government and privately owned newspapers had minimal inclusion of women actors at 8% and 4% respectively. The ZBC had the most women inclusion ratio at 25%, although this was far below parity. The monitored provincial radio

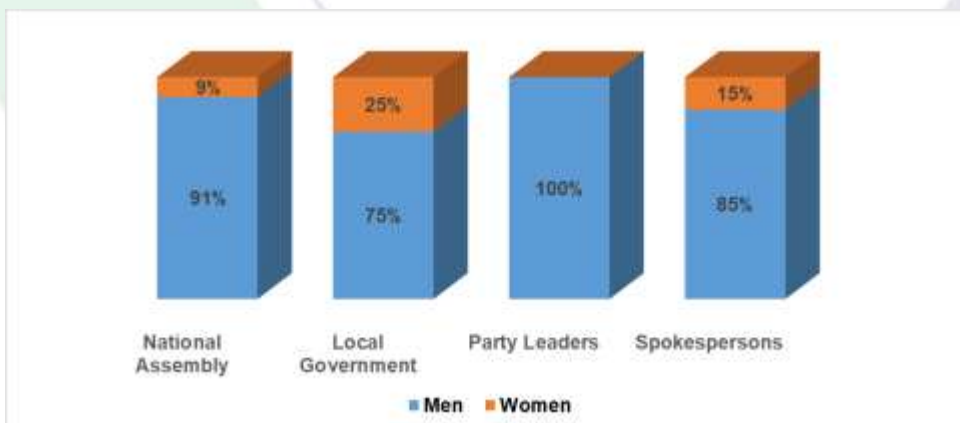
stations had no elections related content during monitored times. This omission by channels that are closer to both the constituencies and poll candidates also prejudiced women of possible inclusion in the media.

Fig 7: Visibility of women as political actors



Women national assembly candidates received the most coverage (80%) amongst women political actors, followed by spokespersons and local government candidates. No women party leaders were covered by the media during this monitoring period. Amongst the four categories, women were most visible as local government candidates.

Fig 8: Distribution of coverage amongst political actors by gender



Conclusion and Recommendations

Overall, elections media coverage focused on three parties in the first week of monitoring. Zanu PF, CCC and MDC-A enjoyed the most coverage. Contesting candidates were subordinated to coverage of political parties in general and coverage of political actors focused on men. During the monitored times, provincial radio stations did not publish any election related material.

- ZEC should ensure the local media gives equitable, fair and balanced coverage to all political parties and actors contesting in the elections through constant monitoring of the media's performance and regularly engaging the media to take corrective action.
- The media is encouraged to give prominence to the campaigns of the political actors contesting in the by-elections while being mindful of the need to be fair and balanced in their coverage.
- The media is advised to include more women in their coverage as more efforts are needed to reduce the dominance of men in the media.
- Provincial radio stations are advised to participate actively in elections coverage as they can be more inclusive and schedule more time for local authority candidates.

Annex 1: Political Parties Contesting the Election

APP -All People's Party

CCC -Citizens Coalition for Change

DOP -Democratic Opposition Party

FAS - Federation of African States

FREEZIM - Free Zimbabwe Congress

LEAD -Labour, Economists and African Democrats

MA'AT ZIM - MA'AT Zimbabwe

MDC-A - Movement for Democratic Change Alliance -

NPF - New Patriotic Front

PZ -Patriotic Zimbabweans

RPZ -Republican Party of Zimbabwe

UDA- United Democratic Alliance

UZA- United Zimbabwe Alliance

ZANU PF - Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front

ZAPU - Zimbabwe African People's Union

ZLP - Zimbabwe Labour Party

Annex 2: Space and Time allocated to the monitored political actors from 1-7 March, 2022

Actor	Party Affiliation	Role in Election	ZBC	National Commercial Radio	Government Controlled Newspapers	Privately Owned Newspapers
			In seconds	In seconds	In cm ²	In cm ²
Chamisa Nelson	CCC	Party Leader	142		640	884
Mnangagwa Emmerson	ZANU PF	Party Leader	1544		1070	234
Mwonzora Douglas	MDC A	Party Leader	99			143
Mahere Fadzai	CCC	Spokesperson			10	70
Mutsvangwa Christopher	ZANU PF	Spokesperson	212		336	40
Chadoka Albert	MDC A	Local Authority	1			
Gondo William	ZANU PF	Local Authority	1			
Hapa Malvern	ZANU PF	Local Authority	1			
Madzingira Hamy	CCC	Local Authority				89
Mateke Ignatius	ZANU PF	Local Authority	25			
Mathuthu Thembani	ZANU PF	Local Authority	1			
Mazhale Justin	CCC	Local Authority	1			
Mhlanga Vusani	MDC A	Local Authority	1			
Ncube David	ZANU PF	Local Authority	15			
Ncube Gregory	RPZ	Local Authority	15			
Nyathi Lizwe	ZAPU	Local Authority	1			
Biti Tendai	CCC	National Assembly	43	-	1	215
Chagadama Ernest Kudzaishe	ZANU PF	National Assembly	31			
Chibaya Amos	CCC	National Assembly	4			
Chibukwe Lovemore	P12	National Assembly			1	
Chidziva Happymore	CCC	National Assembly			6	
Chikwinya Settlement	CCC	National Assembly			16	36

Chipanga Hosiah	PZ	National Assembly	1			
Chiposi Fungai	MDC A	National Assembly		1107		1
Chiwetu Jeremiah	ZANU PF	National Assembly	2			
Chiyanike Mitchel	ZANU PF	National Assembly				5
Christopher Mbanga	MDC A	National Assembly	28			
Chuma Faith	PZ	National Assembly	70			
Gumbo Mavis	ZANU PF	National Assembly	193			52
Hlabani Alderman Norman	CCC	National Assembly				4
Hwende Chalton	CCC	National Assembly				35
Jinjika Nobert	ZANU PF	National Assembly	74			
Jinjika Nobert	ZANU PF	National Assembly				40
Juta Emmanuel	ZANU PF	National Assembly	33			
Madzimure Willias	CCC	National Assembly		1186		1
Magweba Loice	ZANU PF	National Assembly	3			
Makari Zalera	ZANU PF	National Assembly	115			
Makope Master	ZANU PF	National Assembly	132			
Mandipurwa Taurai	MDC A	National Assembly	1			
Mandizvidza Tendekai	CCC	National Assembly	26			

Mapfumo Eventhough Brave	MDC A	National Assembly				1
Mapope Shadreck	MDC A	National Assembly	48			
Mapope Shadreck	MDC A	National Assembly	96	54		
Masoka Nyasha	ZANU PF	National Assembly	1			
Masoka Nyasha	ZANU PF	National Assembly	2			
Mateveke Ignatious	ZANU PF	National Assembly	27			
Matewu Caston	CCC	National Assembly				30
Mathuthu Them bani	ZANU PF	National Assembly				1
Mbanga Chrstopher	MDC A	National Assembly	44			
Mhango Turner	FREEZIM	National Assembly	54			
Mhlolo Paul Thompson	CCC	National Assembly	4			
Mlambo Garikai	UZA	National Assembly	26			
Mlambo Garikai	UZA	National Assembly	12			
Moyo Mpumelelo	CCC	National Assembly				6
Mugadza Misheck	ZANU PF	National Assembly	29			
Mupereri Vongaishe	ZANU PF	National Assembly				28
Mupfumi Esau	ZANU PF	National Assembly	75			
Murisi Zwizwai	CCC	National Assembly	1			

Musarurwa Precious Nyaradzo	LEAD	National Assembly	34			
Mutseyami Prosper	CCC	National Assembly	1			
Mutunami Gladys	UZA	National Assembly			1	
Muzavazi Witness	MDC A	National Assembly				6
Ncube Gregory Lovejoy	RPZ	National Assembly	71			
Ncube Musa	ZANU PF	National Assembly	3		1	
Ncube Musa	ZANU PF	National Assembly	3	1		
Ndlovu David	ZANU PF	National Assembly	52			
Nhambu Betty	ZANU PF	National Assembly	49			
Nyamunokora Oscar	ZANU PF	National Assembly		808	121	
Phulu Kucaca Ivumile	CCC	National Assembly	17			
Pindire Carlos	Independen t	National Assembly				18
Sakupwanya Pedzisai Scott	ZANU PF	National Assembly				195
Thompson Paul	CCC	National Assembly	29	10		
Zaranyika Anesu	MA'AT ZIM	National Assembly	1			
Zizhou Munyaradzi	ZANU PF	National Assembly	270	43		
Murisi Zwizwai	CCC	National Assembly	219			

Annex 3: Media Set Monitored

Government Controlled Newspapers	National Commercial Radio
The Herald	Star FM
Chronicle	Zi FM
Sunday News	Provincial Radio Stations
Sunday Mail	Capitalk
The Manica Post	Hevoi FM
Privately Owned Newspapers	Skyz Metro
Daily News	
Newsday	ZBC
The Standard	ZTV
Zimbabwe Independent	Radio Zimbabwe
The Mirror	Classic 263
Tell Zimbabwe	