

Practical Guide to Media Monitoring, ARTICLE XIX

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1. Rights and the electoral process

1.1 The right to be informed

When citizens enter a polling booth to vote for the candidate of their choice they are exercising one of their most fundamental rights. This right is guaranteed by a number of international human rights instruments, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Appendix 1).

In order to exercise this right fully, citizens must be able to meet, speak with and listen to representatives, candidates and colleagues about community issues. The rights to assemble and associate freely are also protected by these same international human rights instruments.

Individuals, as potential voters, must be particularly well-informed during an election. Not only do they require information about the various candidates their qualifications, opinions, voting records, and characters - but voters should also be familiar with the contending parties' platforms and policies.

Especially in countries which do not have a long history of democratic elections, voters will need information about what the election is for and *how* to vote.

Gaining access to information during a campaign is an extension of the right of citizens to be well-informed and hold and express opinions about their governments' activities generally. These rights to information and free expression are also guaranteed by international instruments. For instance, Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that:

Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

Even in democracies there may be limitations on these rights, but these should be carefully conceived to protect democracy, not undermine it. Specifically, any restriction must be provided by law, relate to one of a small number of exceptions set out in the instrument guaranteeing the right and be necessary in a democratic society. In certain instances limitations on these rights have been approved to maintain public order, protect privacy or ban communications that would promote religious, racial or national hatred.

To strengthen the rights to freedom of expression and information at the local level the rights have been laid out in various regional human rights agreements. For instance, the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights sets forth in Article 9 that "every individual shall have the right to receive information, ... [and] to express and disseminate his opinions within the law." The Inter-American Convention on Human Rights guarantees the rights of individuals to freedom of thought and expression.

Similarly, Article 10 of the European Convention guarantees that "everyone has the right to freedom of expression ... [including] freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart information and ideas without interference by public authority and regardless of frontiers."

It is upon this sturdy foundation that the right to be informed and to hold and impart opinions during an election campaign is built.

1.2 Freedom of expression and the electoral process

In order for a democracy to function, citizens must be able to make informed choices at the ballot box. To do this they must have access to accurate and full information about the candidates, parties and issues. It is the role of a democratic government to ensure that an environment exists where facts, opinions and ideas can flow freely, where all sides of an argument can be heard and where debate is robust.

During an election campaign, the government has the additional task of ensuring that the electoral "playing field" is levelled and that the electoral process is transparent, fair and understood. For example, constituency boundaries should not favour one party or another, the process of registering voters should not benefit certain candidates over others, and voting procedures and ballot counting should be honest. People should be told why they should vote, as well as how, where and when to cast their ballots.

Government should also create an environment where the privately owned media can express a wide variety of opinions about the issues, parties and candidates. At the same time the state-owned or publicly funded media must remain unbiased when collecting and disseminating information about the election.

During an election campaign there are three sectors of society whose rights to information and free expression must be specially protected - potential voters, the news media and the various political forces. More specifically,



- Voters depend on receiving full and accurate information in order to cast their ballots. They will receive this information in various forms and from various sources, including election rallies, debates, door-to-door canvassing, campaign literature, news reports and informal conversations.



- If the media are to play their part in informing the citizens, they must be able to gather and disseminate information about candidates and parties freely, and to question and criticize all political forces, including incumbents and contenders, without censorship, intimidation or political pressure.



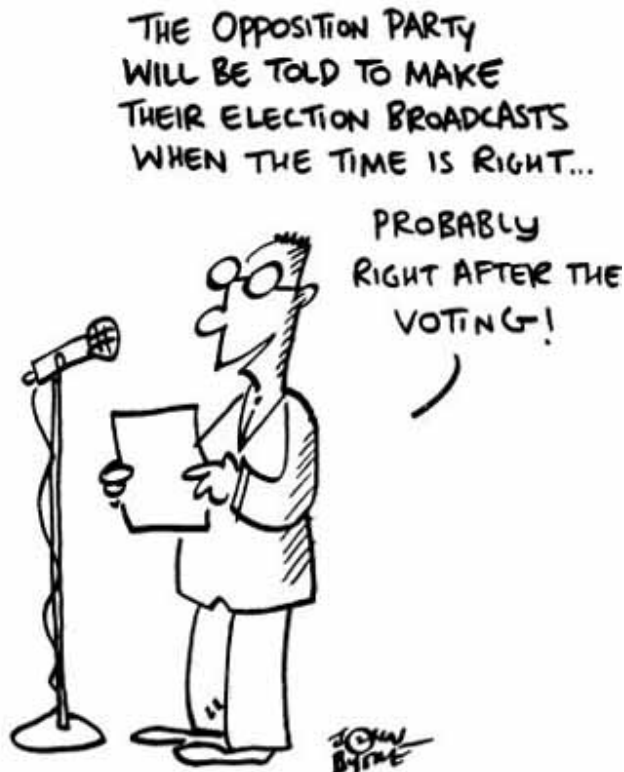
- The candidates, political parties and other electoral challengers and pressure groups depend on the ability to present their messages without distortion or manipulation, and in sufficient time before the election for the electorate to have understood and evaluated them.

The media - television, radio, newspapers, magazines, posters and pamphlets, and other forms of verbal and written communication - are central to the electoral process. Without these, candidates and voters would be hard-pressed to gather and share information and views.

Indirect access

In Mozambique in 1994 many parties were unaware of their right to direct access broadcasting. The leaders of some parties criticized the Electoral Commission for not providing them with information on how to use radio and television airtime. Party officials told ARTICLE 19 that they did not know that they were supposed to pre-record their messages and take them to the television station already in cassette form. They were not informed of the technical specifications, such as the type of cassette to use.

(ARTICLE 19)



2. Media and communications

2.1 The publicly owned media

In many parts of the world governments own or control significant sections of the media. This is often the case because in poorer nations only the governments have had access to sufficient capital and expertise to start and operate radio and television stations. Also in autocratic countries governments frequently retain control of the media to limit the influence of the opposition. As a result, in many transitional states governments have inherited control of important segments of the media, including radio and television stations, news agencies, information departments and newspapers.

In such cases government will manage the media through a separate department, such as a Ministry of Information, or through a semi-autonomous body, such as a posts and telecommunications parastatal. The head of the media organization may well be a political figure, such as a minister, or a senior civil servant who is ultimately answerable to the head of state and other politicians. This relationship tends to mean that the state-owned media can be influenced by the political party in power.

These media will be largely dependent on public funds raised from taxpayers, although government may collect television or radio licence fees or newspaper charges from the public

to help offset costs. The media will be staffed by individuals employed and paid by government, although some of their work may be subcontracted to companies and people outside government, such as printers, studios and actors.

In some countries, broadcasting stations are owned by political parties, or even individual politicians, in or out of government. These are not the same as government media. Although often it is difficult to differentiate between these privately owned, but highly politicized media, and government-owned media, it is important to do so. State-owned media should not be partisan in their editorial line.

Taxpayers' money and civil servants should not be used to run any privately owned media, and the use of public funds to assist highly placed individuals or parties in this way is a form of corruption.

At all times, not just during campaign periods, the government-owned media should be impartial, non-partisan and accessible to parties and people with varied opinions. For instance, politicians who oppose the ruling party's policies should be given airtime to express their reservations and propose alternative policies. Democracy thrives in such an environment.

2.2 Campaign communications

In the run-up to an election it is especially important for the publicly owned media to present campaign news fully and impartially. In many countries an independent Electoral Commission will manage the election. For instance, it will oversee the demarcation of constituency boundaries, the registration of voters and the activities of the civic education programme. Part of its task will be to develop guidelines for the media during the campaign and election (Appendix 2). Generally these guidelines will deal with three different aspects of campaign communications:

- **Political party and candidate access to the people through direct communications, such as political advertising.**
- **Print and broadcast media coverage of candidates, parties, and issues such as news and special programming, and**
- **Civic education information regarding the mechanics of voting and voter participation.**

These communications may take different forms. For instance, direct communications by candidates and parties may include radio, television or newspaper advertising, as well as debates and interviews where candidates are able to explain their views to the audience.

Media coverage will take the form of news about the contestants as well as special items, such as opinion polls. Civic education will present information about the importance of voting and will explain to people where, how and when to vote.

Some media covering the campaign will be privately owned, while others will be public. For instance, news about the election can appear in both government-run newspapers and those owned by private publishers. Similarly, both government- and privately owned television and

radio stations will carry campaign speeches and debates. Civic education will appear in both private and public media as well.

The privately owned media may have more latitude to be politically partisan, although they should always adhere to ethical standards of journalism and clearly separate fact and comment.

Depending on the law or regulations, a private publisher or broadcaster may be entitled to editorialize in favour of a certain candidate. Indeed, the goal in a democracy is to have as wide a variety of views expressed through the various media as possible. On the other hand, the government-owned media - which uses money from all citizens and must represent all different views fairly - should be even-handed in their presentation of the candidates, parties and issues. It is the openness and impartiality of the public media which will be monitored. However, in some cases private media may broadcast direct access political broadcasts by the various parties. In such cases, they must adhere to the standards of fairness laid down by the electoral commission or other regulatory body and could be monitored by the project.

The agency rules

In Malawi's first multi-party elections in 1994, between 2 April and 20 May the Malawi News Agency reported approximately 170 political events. Of these, 130 dealt with speakers, rallies or pronouncements of the ruling Malawi Congress Party. The remaining 40 covered the speeches and meetings of 6 opposition parties and 4 presidential candidates.



(ARTICLE 19)

Quality and quantity

Figures from the South African Broadcasting Corporation's own research department showed that the ANC received more coverage than other parties in the run-up to the country's first multi-party elections. But what sort of coverage? The independent Media Monitoring Project noted that the ANC was generally portrayed positively when it was involved in negotiations but negatively when it organized protests and mass action. SABC officials admitted that damaging reports, such as the criminal proceedings against Winnie Mandela, would count in their overall tally of "ANC coverage".

(Media Monitoring Project and ARTICLE 19 interview with SABC officials, February 1994)



2.3 What media to monitor

The publicly owned media may comprise radio and television stations, news agencies and various print media, including magazines and newspapers. Each country will differ. For instance, in some countries there is a state-owned radio service with several regional stations broadcasting in local languages. There may be more than one television station with regional variations. At best, all these would be monitored for fairness and accessibility.

Print media can take several forms. For instance government may publish a "development" magazine that covers new health, educational and infrastructural projects. Another paper may present information about economic opportunities and developments, while a third may cover topics of interest to the tourism industry. As publicly owned media they ought at all times to

be impartial and non-partisan. During an election campaign this is especially important, and their political neutrality should be monitored.

A government may own and operate a news agency whose journalists (who are in effect civil servants) are based in rural areas and provincial cities to collect and report the news. Such local news will be sold to private publishers and broadcasters, and will be used by the government-owned media, such as the radio station. The news agency may also have access to wire service reports from the international news agencies, which it will disseminate inside the country. Since the privately owned media are often without the resources to keep or send reporters to the field or to buy international news, they will often depend on the news agency for stories. This gives the government extraordinary power to mould public opinion, which is especially decisive during an election. For that reason, the output of the news agency should be monitored during a campaign.

A department of government may also provide other services to promote communication. For instance, this department may have a mobile video unit or drama group that delivers development messages to the public. It may also furnish groups with microphones, loudspeakers and other equipment for public meetings. These services should be monitored to ensure that they are provided without favour and that any messages government delivers are non-partisan and unbiased.

In some countries public money may be used illegitimately to help privately owned media. For instance, government funds might be channelled into a party to publish a newspaper, or reporters working for government (in the Ministry of Information, for instance) may be seconded to work on a privately owned television station. In such cases public resources, which should be used to support all members of the public equally, are being used to assist special interests. During an election campaign this is particularly important and such issues should be monitored and reported.

2.4 What to look for

What exactly should be monitored depends on which medium is being scrutinized. While this will be discussed in more detail below, there are some general guidelines to be followed for all media.

Firstly, monitors should be concerned with all forms of censorship. Governments should do nothing to inhibit the free flow of information and opinions necessary for voters to decide how to cast their ballots. For instance, advertisements by various political parties should not be banned or censored, while media workers should be allowed to collect and report news, and threats against media workers should not result in self-censorship or distortion of the news. Campaign materials, such as posters or videos, should be circulated without interference.

Secondly, government should ensure that the media remain free of interference from other forces. For instance, if journalists are threatened or attacked by party members, government should take positive steps to protect them. If security forces or party activists seize film or tape recorders or threaten to destroy printing presses or broadcasting equipment, the

government must take every step necessary to protect these media to guarantee freedom of expression.

Thirdly, monitors should look closely at the campaign and news messages in the public media. These messages should be analysed in terms of their content, but also their language and style (or "discourse"). In the first instance, monitors should ask what the messages contain. They will have to determine, for example, what news is in the messages, how long the messages are, who is quoted, what is said and what information is left out.

For instance, if a news item mentions the name of the incumbent but not the challenger in an election, monitors will report this. If the ruling party is allowed a two-minute slot for campaign advertising, while the opposition parties are given one minute each, monitors will note that. If on television a still photograph of the presidential challenger and a moving picture of the presidential incumbent are shown during a news report, the monitor will record the difference. If the ruling party's local officials are interviewed but no one other than the presidential candidate of an opposition party is interviewed, monitors should take note of that. Differences such as these may seem unimportant in an individual newspaper or broadcast, but will take on meaning as a trend in favour of one or another party is established over time.

More difficult is an analysis of the hidden meaning of the messages. For monitors to be able to undertake a "discourse analysis" of campaign messages they must first be fully conversant with the language of the broadcast or newspaper report, the issues of the campaign and the history and culture of the nation. In order to find hidden meaning, monitors will need to look at how various items are placed in relation to one another, what events are reported and which are left out of the news, whether a news item treats the activities and candidates sympathetically or not, what type of words are used to convey meanings, and whether the messages are vague or full of irrelevant detail rather than substance.

For example, in a contest where the ruling party states that violence will result if the opposition party wins, monitors should determine whether newspaper items or broadcasts about the opposition are repeatedly placed next to items about unrest and genocide in other countries. If monitors know (from other sources or first-hand experience) that an opposition party's rally was broken up by thugs from the ruling party, they should look at articles about the meeting to determine if the reports are accurate and, if they are not, which party is likely to benefit. Monitors should be aware of how the use of emotive words - such as "exposed" or "revealed" rather than "said" or "stated" - almost subliminally influences the views of an audience. Reporters can generate bias by using such words - for instance, "the human rights organization *alleges* ..." while "the government *states* ..." gives much more credence to the government than the human rights group.

Another means of creating negative feelings about a party or candidate is to add irrelevant detail. For instance, the audience is given an unfavourable view of a party's rally if the journalist reports that "the marchers left a lot of litter". Vague language may also conceal responsibility for actions that would be of interest to voters. For example, a report might state that "three men died in a shoot-out with police" without ever explaining who incited, what caused the violence and, indeed, who did the killing.

The reporting of a news event might be deemed accurate, but still be singularly unhelpful to voters. For instance, a journalist might stenographically report what a politician has said, without ever analysing the material or making explicit the links between it and other statements, events or larger trends. In some countries so-called news is little more than a collection of the speeches and activities of the president and ruling party politicians. "The President opened a school today at ... , the Minister of Works cut the ribbon for a new road ... , and the MP rose in parliament to praise the President for" During an election campaign such reporting gives undue attention to the ruling party candidates. Monitors should therefore judge the newsworthiness of such reports. Moreover, this type of journalism is not helpful to the electorate which should be presented with reports that outline the issues and explain how the words and actions of candidates and the policies of the parties relate to them.

Where messages are printed or broadcast in one language and translated into another it is important that a monitor who understands both languages determines whether the translations are exact. There will be times in Africa, for instance, where a message produced in a European language is meant for the diplomatic and donor community while the translated message for the local audience will have a different meaning. Alternatively, the meaning of a speech given by a politician at a village meeting can be changed when translated and widely broadcast in a national or European language.

Monitors will find it useful to read and listen to the privately owned media as well. In order to determine whether the messages in the public media are complete and accurate, monitors need to be fully informed. They can obtain additional information by reading privately owned newspapers, listening to privately owned radio stations and watching television, and perhaps even attending a few rallies, debates and interviews themselves. Monitors must read or listen to speeches, and follow other events of the election in order to understand the hidden meanings, allusions, oblique references and the implications of a politician's words or a party's statements. Also, at times elections are held against a backdrop of weighty events in other parts of the world - genocide, coups and revolutions - which will be reported in the local media and can be used to influence voters. Monitors must be aware of these events and the possibility of their misuse by politicians.

Monitors should be familiar with any media guidelines laid down by their own country's Electoral Commission or other bodies. These should first be evaluated for fairness, and then the various media should be monitored for compliance with these guidelines.

If the Electoral Commission has drawn up civic education guidelines, monitors should be familiar with these and should try to determine whether they are being followed by the various organizations and media involved. Civic education messages may be disseminated in all media, including privately owned newspapers and radio or television stations. No matter where published or broadcast, all voter education messages should be non-partisan. Messages explaining why or how to cast a ballot should not encourage the electorate to vote for one party or candidate instead of another.



The incumbent factor

The 1997 presidential and parliamentary elections in Kenya showed how reporting of government activities can create a constant bias in favour of incumbent candidates. Five months before the elections, news coverage divided as follows: the ruling Kenya African National Union (KANU) 53 per cent;

President Daniel arap Moi 39 per cent; opposition parties 4 per cent. By three months before the election, the Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC) was bound by an inter-party agreement to provide fair coverage. Its coverage of the opposition rose to 14 per cent, with KANU receiving 31 per cent and the President 49 per cent. Opposition coverage reached its high point three weeks before the election when it attained 29 per cent, but the combined KANU/presidential total was still 68 per cent. Coverage was fairest once the polling booths had closed and the KBC could no longer affect the outcome of the election.

When ruling party coverage declined, reporting of presidential activities increased in compensation, and vice versa.

(Kenya Human Rights Commission/ARTICLE 19)



Subtle threats

One television advertisement by the ruling ZANU-PF in the 1990 Zimbabwe elections showed a car crash. The voice-over said: "That is one way to die. Another way to die is to vote for ZUM [the main opposition party]. Don't commit suicide. Vote ZANU-PF and live."

Another advertisement in the same series compared ZUM to Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS).

(Human Rights Watch/Africa)



Spot the difference

"Their placards left little doubt about how strongly they felt. Many left their comfortable homes and normal Saturday shopping to join the march in pouring rain down Blouberg road to the police stations" - white Cape residents' protest about a nearby squatter camp, as reported by the South African Broadcasting Corporation, 11 June 1993.

"Traffic on the N2 highway was disrupted for about two hours when members of the ANCYL blocked the dual carriageway to protest among other things police patrols along the highway" - African National Congress protest reported in the same SABC bulletin.

(Media Monitoring Project)



Prompt action

President (formerly "Life-President") Kamuzu Banda made an unscheduled broadcast to the nation four days before Malawi's first multi-party elections in 1994. Much to the consternation of the ruling party, the Electoral Commission offered the other presidential candidates equal airtime. A genuinely independent electoral supervisory body can make a real practical difference.

(ARTICLE 19)



3. Public radio monitoring

Radio is especially important in countries where illiteracy is high, where newspapers do not circulate outside the towns and where television is not widely available because of poor electricity supplies and the high cost of television sets. Even in the poorest countries most rural families will have access to portable radios and have sufficient funds to buy batteries. For these reasons radio is an important medium for political advertising, campaign news and civic education.

3.1 Direct access

Parties and candidates will want to present themselves and their policies to the electorate. They will do this directly through campaign advertising, and at rallies and meetings and in debates and interviews, many of which will be wholly aired on radio. Monitors will want to make sure that all parties and candidates have equitable access to the radio and that their messages are not distorted.

There are a number of direct access programme formats. For instance, in Malaysia in 1990 the manifestos of the 40 parties contesting the elections were aired in brief radio broadcasts in the week before the election. In Malawi in 1994 a series of "Meet Your Candidate" interviews was broadcast, as was a series of 12 short broadcasts by each party over an eight-week period. It is possible that the timing and format of each direct access broadcast will be laid down beforehand by the Electoral Commission or other body to ensure that each party has an equal chance to have its views heard.

How to ensure the equitable provision of airtime to all parties is a complicated problem (see Chapter 3 of ARTICLE 19's *Guidelines for Election Broadcasting in Transitional Democracies*, August 1994).

Equitable does not necessarily mean equal. It will be the responsibility of an independent Electoral Commission, or similar body, to devise a formula which ensures that airtime fairly reflects the popular support for each party. Clear and impartial criteria should be used to decide, for instance, whether to allocate free airtime to parties or whether new small parties should receive the same amount of airtime as the more established parties. Monitors should review these guidelines and their implementation for fairness and impartiality.

Specifically, monitors will want to determine:

- What guidelines for direct access programming have been laid down by the Electoral Commission?
- What type of direct access programming is being aired?
- Are the programmes live or taped?
- Do the programmes include "actuality" - recordings of the candidates in their own words and voices?
- Do the programmes allow candidates and parties to explain their platforms and views?
- Do the programmes give the voters the opportunity to form opinions about the character of each candidate, their platforms and parties?
- Do all the parties and candidates have equal time and similar programme formats?
- Are the parties' programmes aired at similar times during the day?
- Are the broadcasting slots given free of charge?
- If airtime is paid for, can it be said that no discounts were given to specific parties?
- Is the ruling party given access to broadcast additional special programmes?
- Are there arbitrary restrictions on the format of the material?

3.2 News coverage of election campaigns and elections

During an election campaign, radio broadcasters should strive to uphold high standards of professional journalism. This will be difficult to do if the minister or civil servant in charge of the radio station uses his/her influence to dictate programming or if threats are made against radio journalists to present news in a manner favourable to government. Sometimes threats are not needed, for the staff at the radio station will already know that their jobs are dependent on their pro-government performance. Alternatively a built-in pro-government bias may well be evident among radio journalists who have worked for the government for many years and support the party in power.

The monitors will want to ensure that news reports about the campaign, contestants and issues are reported objectively, accurately and in a balanced manner.

To determine if these professional standards are being met there are a number of problems to watch for, including:

- Is there an overall quantitative balance in coverage for each party and candidate?
- Is there a qualitative balance in coverage for each party and candidate?
- Are candidates presented in a favourable or an unfavourable way?
- Are certain political parties or candidates always covered first in the news?
- Are incumbents given more coverage because of their government activities (opening a new clinic, speaking in parliament, inspecting crops), and are these events really newsworthy?
- Do candidates appear on entertainment programmes, giving them free airtime?
- Are campaign meetings for different parties and candidates covered in the same manner - e.g., with "actuality" - or not?
- On special information programmes, are candidates presented equally in terms of airtime, respect, types of questions asked, etc.?
- Do the programmes display interviewer bias towards one candidate or another?
- Do debates give the listeners sufficient information about the candidates' characters and ideas, and their parties' platforms, to help them vote?
- Are opinion polls and projections being broadcast?
- Are opinion polls carried out by an independent agency?
- Is the audience told about the statistical margin of error, the number of people surveyed and their region or district, and other contextual information when the findings of opinion polls or surveys are presented?
- Is it clear to the listeners that the results of a single survey do not give a definitive picture?
- Is there a news blackout in the period (e.g., 24-48 hours) immediately before the election?
- Are "exit polls" (informal surveys of voters done as they leave the polling booths) broadcast?
- Is the public provided with up-to-date and accurate information during the process of counting votes?
- Are the final results accurately and quickly reported on radio?
- Are the reasons underlying disputed results accurately reported in a timely fashion?

It is possible to measure the time given to each political party or candidate, or to count the number of news items. This will often be useful and, in the monitoring reports, can be presented in a graphic or tabulated form. But it is important to remember that coverage can be

either positive or negative, so counting time or number of items does not by itself prove whether coverage is biased. If monitoring reports include statistics about the time devoted to different candidates, they will also need to include some measure of whether coverage was positive or negative.

3.3 Civic education

In countries making the transition to democracy, civic education will be especially important. In these nations people may never have voted before, or where they have voted, they may never have seen a ballot with a selection of candidates. Some people, especially the elderly, may not even understand why they should vote. Voter education is meant to address these and many other issues.

A civic education programme will probably be designed by the body overseeing the election, such as an Electoral Commission. To implement the programme, the Commission will probably involve a number of other bodies, such as church groups, non-governmental organizations and the media. The programme will address a wide range of issues and target different sections of the population, especially women and youth. It will present voter information in a variety of languages and in various forms, including live theatre, puppet shows, radio and television plays, songs, chat shows, soap operas (*novelas*), pamphlets, comic books, T-shirts, announcements, badges and posters.



Monitors should determine:

- What guidelines have been written by the Electoral Commission regarding civic education?
- Has the public radio station responded by appointing a special production team to make civic education programmes?
- What form do civic education programmes take on radio?

- Are the basic questions about the election being answered by the various civic education programmes - why, where, when and how to vote?
- Do all language, regional and social groups receive the same and/or appropriate civic education messages?
- Are civic education programmes broadcast at times of the day when target groups are likely to be listening?
- Are partisan messages included in any civic education programmes?
- Are specific problems addressed by the civic education programmes as they arise, such as the need to keep registration certificates safe?

4. Public television monitoring

Television has become an important means of communicating information in virtually all nations of the world. In poorer nations television viewing is limited only by poor electricity supplies and the high cost of TVs. In such countries governments may try to establish battery-powered community TV and video viewing centres in outlying regions. As a result, TV is fast becoming an important outlet for campaign advertisements, election news and civic education.

Television news broadcasters like to say that they bring viewers the news as it happens. In fact, surveys of television news have shown that this is seldom the case. Most television news consists of "talking heads" - either the newscaster, a correspondent or someone being interviewed. In many respects the things to look for in television coverage are not much different from radio. However, there are a few important considerations which relate to the visual language of television.

For example:

Actuality footage: As with radio sound actuality, the use of video actuality footage to accompany a television news item can make a large difference to the attractiveness and credibility of the subject. Thus, it is necessary not only to measure the length of time allocated to reports of each party's activities, but also to monitor what visual material is contained in each report.

Sound and actuality: Actuality footage seems much more immediate when it is broadcast with its original sound. Note whether the soundtrack was recorded with the visual material, or if there is a voice-over. If the latter, what relation does the voice-over commentary have to the pictures being shown?

Origin of video footage: All footage shown should have been shot by the television station on which it is being shown. If it comes from elsewhere - bought from another station or supplied from another source, such as a political party or government - this must be clearly indicated.

Date of video footage: Any footage shown which is not up-to-date news footage should be clearly indicated as such (using "Library pictures" or a similar caption). This is to avoid the tendency for film of senior figures to be broadcast in their absence, just to ensure that they are constantly in the public eye.

What is left out: Try to judge from what is shown whether there have been crucial sections of footage left out. This may be apparent from the way in which the film has been edited, or it might be possible to deduce from independent information about what happened at a news event.

Camera angles: The authority and credibility of television performances can be affected by the angle of the camera.

"Authoritative" figures such as incumbent government ministers are often portrayed at an upward angle (with the camera positioned low down), whereas opposition figures are more likely to be filmed with a level camera angle. Similarly, ministers are more likely to be invited to address the camera directly (and thus to speak directly to the viewer) while opposition figures will address an unseen interviewer to one side of the camera and will therefore not address the viewer directly. Background is also important. "Ordinary" interviewees are more likely to be seen in the open air. An office background or a book-lined study conveys that the speaker is an "expert" or a figure of some authority - an impression which is underlined if he or she is behind a desk. These devices may not be consciously used to convey bias - they have become part of the conventional visual language of television news - but it is important to be alert to the messages that the viewers may read into these conventions.

Graphics: Television news items are often accompanied by a projected graphic which is intended to sum up the item. The same graphic is likely to be repeated if the story is one which runs over a number of bulletins. Such graphics should be neutral representations of the subject matter of the story. But sometimes they can be used to present a particular angle. A TV graphic for political negotiations in South Africa in 1993 showed two white men and one black man. This was later changed to one white man, one off-white woman and one black man. Neither was representative of the actual composition of the negotiations. Bias can also be exhibited when stories featuring government ministers are illustrated by their photographs, while stories on the opposition use only their name or logo.

Direct access: Monitors should be familiar with the rules governing the making of direct access party broadcasting slots. Are these made by the parties themselves or by the state television system? Is preferential access given to some parties in use of library footage or other facilities? It should be noted which parties use their direct access slots to broadcast filmed advertisements and which use still text or graphics. Why is this? In Mozambique, for example, some opposition parties only broadcast still slogans because they had not been properly informed of the specifications for submitting their video films.

Finally, the role of the television news "anchor" (announcer or commentator) is particularly crucial. This person can make a gesture or remark which can have an enormous impact on the way a candidate is perceived. The role of the anchor person is to provide the where, how, why, what, when and who of the news and, when appropriate, to make the linkage between

the news events being reported and other events and trends. The anchor's neutrality regarding candidates, parties and platforms is essential.

Invisible victims

The run-up to the 1994 South African elections was marred by political violence, but this was not allowed to upset the sensibilities of SABC TV viewers. On a day when 24 people died in a single violent incident, this was only reported as the sixth item below the following: the British Prime Minister winning a vote of confidence; the effect of the drought on white farmers; the meat price; ostrich smuggling; and a Johannesburg car accident.

(Media Monitoring Project)



5. Monitoring government news-gathering and publications

Many of the guidelines for radio and television can be adapted to monitoring the government's own print media. In this case the monitors should determine whether the government news service and print media are being used to help incumbent candidates and the party in power, or less likely, other politicians. Such help can be subtle or overt, and can take various forms.

5.1 Monitoring the government news agency

Governments may have reporters based in provincial cities to gather news about local events, such as district council meetings, development projects or emergencies. During a campaign these journalists will cover local rallies and party meetings, and their stories will be used on government radio and television and sold to private publishing and broadcasting companies. It is therefore important that their coverage is complete, non-partisan and fair. To determine if this is the case, monitors will want to read the daily news agency reports. They should ask, for instance,

- Are all political parties' rallies covered or is there a major discrepancy in coverage in favour of one or another party or set of candidates?
- Is the coverage of each party and candidate similar to that of others in tone, depth and length?
- Are party members for all parties given equal coverage, or are one party's organizers or activists given additional coverage?
- Are incumbents given undue coverage because of their positions in and activities for government?
- Are stories about the campaign covered, including stories about abuses of electoral law and other problems?
- Does the news agency offer any analysis of candidates' claims and speeches, or does it only report their words verbatim?
- Does the news agency publish announcements of future meetings for each party equally?
- Is the coverage of disruptions at rallies accurately and fully reported for each party?
- Is news reported that is relevant to the central issues of the campaign - such as economic performance figures, human rights abuses or corruption?
- Does the news agency report on the impact that civic education is having on the population?

5.2 Monitoring the government print media

As noted earlier, there may well be a number of government publications for various audiences. At any time these may be used illegitimately to promote or justify the policies of the party in power, but during an election this is particularly troublesome. Monitors should read these publications in order to determine whether their coverage is biased, partisan or incomplete. Questions similar to those laid out previously for radio and TV should be asked. For instance,

- Do the party in power and its candidates receive additional or more favourable coverage?
- Are stories of violence at rallies, and its perpetrators, accurate and fair?
- Do civic education articles promote one party or another?
- Do photographs of one party's candidates appear more often or more prominently than another's?

Although the ordering of stories on television and radio is an issue, it may be easier for monitors to determine whether stories in the print media are placed in such a way as to advance or impede a person's candidacy or the fortunes of a particular party. For instance, a story about the distribution of relief in a certain district placed next to a story about the incumbent for that district may well influence a reader. Or a voter may be swayed by the placing of a report about a candidate's speech in favour of structural adjustment next to an item about rural poverty caused by structural adjustment. Monitors should understand the subtlety of such methods and be aware of the topics likely to be used in this manner.



The missing story

The Malawi Broadcasting Corporation in 1994 often got round the problem of how to report the election fairly by not reporting it at all. It was not unusual for there to be no mention of domestic news in bulletins. Thus:

28 March 1994, throughout the morning: reporting limited to Burundi, Uganda, Italy, Afghanistan, the Middle East and Russia; 29 March, 6.00 a.m.: Mozambican refugees, Preferential Trade Area, India, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Central African Republic, third world trade, Zimbabwe and Senegal; 1 April, 9.00 a.m. in English: South Africa, Liberia, Israel, Iraq and 10.00 a.m. in Chichewa: South Africa, Portugal and South Africa, Cameroon and Nigeria, and Israel; 1.00 p.m. in English: South Africa, Liberia, Northern Ireland, Philippines, Israel, South Korea, ex-Yugoslavia, Sahara desert, and at 1.10 p.m. in Chichewa: South Africa, Northern Ireland, Israel, USA and Middle East, South Korea, ex-Yugoslavia, Sahara desert.

One ARTICLE 19 monitor remarked that if the MBC was your only source of information, you would hardly know that the country was preparing for its first multi-party elections in more than three decades.

(ARTICLE 19)



6. How to get started

There are no hard and fast rules for monitoring the media during a campaign and an election. But there are certain things that are needed, and each group designing such a project should think about the issues listed below. Projects will differ from one place to another according to national conditions, the media being monitored, the human and financial resources available and the time that can be put into monitoring.

6.1 Equipment and publications

What equipment is needed will depend on which media are being monitored. In turn, the cost and availability of equipment may influence the design of the programme. The amount of money available to buy equipment may determine how much of the media the project can monitor.

Equipment and publications

- A good quality radio-cassette recorder is needed for each radio station being monitored. Check to make sure the radios have the appropriate wavebands - AM, FM, and/or shortwave.
- Audiotapes will be needed to record the radio programmes monitored. These will be stored and not erased, so plenty of tapes are needed.
- Each radio cassette needs a set of earphones.
- In addition the project should buy a couple of cassette players with earphones. Personal stereos are sufficient because these will be used only to listen to tapes already recorded on the radio cassettes.
- If television is being monitored, a TV and video recorder with earphones will be needed for each station being monitored.

- Plenty of videotapes will be needed because these will be stored and not erased.
- An extra TV and video may be needed to replay tapes, though this will depend on whether there is sufficient time available when the first TV and video are not being used to record programmes, to enable a monitor to replay already recorded tapes.
- A subscription to the government news agency will be necessary.
- Make arrangements to pick up the news agency reports daily if they are otherwise going to be posted, as the project will want to have these without delay.
- Government newspapers and magazines should be purchased or delivered daily.
- Privately owned newspapers and relevant magazines should be purchased or delivered daily.
- Documents from the Electoral Commission and other political actors (parties, donors, United Nations, church groups, civic education committees, etc.) regarding the campaign and election should be collected on a regular basis.

6.2 Location

- The project will need a *secure* room with electricity outlets to plug in the radios, TVs and video recorders.
- The room/location should have good TV/radio reception.
- The room should have a bulletin board where schedules and other information can be posted, and bookshelves or boxes for storage of tapes and papers.
- It should be accessible to monitors with a key.
- It should be located in a neighbourhood that is safe so that monitors can arrive and leave work early in the morning and late at night.
- Public transport may be needed by monitors, so the office should be near such routes.

If radio and/or TV stations are being monitored that can only be received in provincial towns or rural areas, then separate locations (each with the requirements noted above) will be needed in each of these places. For instance, in some countries radio programmes are broadcast in several local languages. Not all these local stations can be heard in the capital city. If these local programmes are going to be monitored, the project will need to open a monitoring office in each area where these are heard.

6.3 Monitors and supervisor(s)

Monitors should be fully literate and articulate in the languages they monitor and in the language in which they write their monitoring reports. They should be interested in, and closely follow national politics and, preferably, regional and international affairs. For instance, college students or university graduates might make good monitors. While they can have their own political views, they should not be actively involved in party politics.

They must be, and appear to be, neutral.

Monitors will work shifts that are several hours long - say three or four hours – several days per week. They must be punctual, for missed shifts or even missed minutes of a shift will affect the credibility of the project and its findings. Unreliable monitors should be dropped from the project.

Whether one person or several persons supervise the team is not important, but there are certain leadership tasks that need to be done:

- A schedule for monitoring must be designed and posted regularly.
- Monitors' daily reports must be collected, checked and collated. These will form the basis of the weekly monitoring reports, so it is essential that these tasks be done well and in a timely fashion.
- If monitors are to be paid, it is necessary for someone to organize payments and keep receipts.
- Wage levels must be established and negotiated.
- Accounts must be kept and banking must be done.
- Equipment must be purchased and sold/distributed upon completion of the project.

Reports will be written to disseminate the project's findings. Writing can be done by a separate person, a supervisor(s) or monitor(s). The reporter(s) should be literate, analytical and reliable, and have a good understanding of the political situation and an ability to write quickly.

The reports will need to be reproduced (printed, photocopied or duplicated) and distributed by hand or post. Again these tasks should be put into 6. How to get started

6.4 Starting the project

There are many ways to start a monitoring project. The method outlined below is only one possibility:

- Decisions should be made regarding what to monitor and why, the duration of the project, and what time of day monitoring should be done.
- Media guidelines for the campaign and election should be obtained from the Electoral Commission or equivalent body.
- A monitoring office(s) should be rented and monitors chosen and trained.
- Equipment should be purchased, subscriptions ordered and back- ground documentation obtained.
- Relations should be established with the various actors, including the Electoral Commission, donors, political parties, the radio station and other monitoring project officials.
- A list should be compiled of those who will receive the project's monitoring reports.

- A schedule for monitoring should be created and disseminated to monitors and posted on a noticeboard.
- Monitoring should begin.
- Reporting should begin.

6.5 Methodology

Again, broadcast monitoring can be done in a number of ways. One method is suggested here:

- Each monitor will work 3-4 hours per shift, perhaps as many as four or five shifts per week.
- Each monitor will record on tape and listen to one television or radio station for the length of the shift.
- If the programme is rebroadcast in another language, it is preferable that the same monitor listen to the programme to compare it with the first broadcast.
- Each recording will be fully labelled (station, date, time, monitor's name) on a tape and properly stored.
- Several persons will monitor and record different stations at the same time if necessary.
- Each monitor will fill in a reporting form (see Appendix 3) during each shift and for each programme as necessary.
- If the form cannot be completed at the time of recording, then the monitor should listen to the tape (on a personal stereo in the office) soon afterwards and complete the reporting form.
- The reporting forms will be gathered together daily and checked by a supervisor(s), and given to the person(s) who will write the report.
- A weekly report of findings will be written and disseminated in a timely fashion.

Monitors may also be asked to read the government newspapers and magazines, the daily government news agency releases, as well as to listen to private radio and television, read private newspapers and/or attend rallies. Those with specific language skills should read articles in translation as well as the originals to ensure that the translations do not differ from the original.

With adequate resources, other jobs might be taken on to complete the task of monitoring freedom of expression and information. For instance, a researcher might interview journalists who are being harassed, editors and owners of papers that are censored, villagers who are not allowed to express their political views or attend certain rallies, women who are told by their husbands how to vote, and any others whose rights to information and free expression are abused during the campaign and election period. These findings might also be reported on a weekly basis.

Monitors should also be given the completed weekly monitoring reports so that they can see how their findings are being used and can understand the full process. They may also have some suggestions regarding changes in the weekly report, or the reporting format.

Calling the tune

During the Cameroonian presidential election of October 1997, a leading radio current affairs programme had as its theme tune the music of a song of praise of the incumbent President, Paul Biya. Although the words themselves were not broadcast, they are known to all Cameroonians.

This is a good example of why monitors need local knowledge. A foreign monitor would not have understood the significance of the tune.

(Conscience Africaine/ARTICLE 19)

7. Reporting

The aim of the monitoring project is to ensure that during a particular election the public is fully and accurately informed by the public media about the electoral process and about the candidates, issues, parties and platforms. It is not just a theoretical exercise.

In some parts of the world, media monitoring projects have chosen not to report their findings until after the elections, then declaring that the media was biased and partisan and that its partiality influenced the outcome of the election.

ARTICLE 19 believes that adverse findings that are widely distributed can make a difference and that it is therefore more effective to disseminate the findings during the campaign period. For instance, an Electoral Commission can use the project's findings to pressure the government to relinquish close control of the media during the campaign period. The Commission can also reformulate its civic education programme if monitors demonstrate that it is biased or partisan. Donors will be able to use the reports to encourage government to make changes. Perhaps most importantly of all, news staff and broadcasters may respond positively to an independent critique of their work and attempt to improve their reporting.

Therefore, the findings ought to be collected, analysed and reported in an accessible format on a regular basis, perhaps bi-monthly at the beginning of the campaign, shifting to weekly reports as the election approaches. It is beneficial if the reports can be reprinted in the popular media because the findings can then reach the widest possible audience.

The weekly report should cover the various aspects of the project - the output of the government news agency, radio, television and print media. Specific instances of bias that are mentioned should be noted by date and time of broadcast. (See sample as Appendix 4). In the event of a dispute it is important that the monitors' daily reports are accurate and supported by tapes, and that the weekly analysis reflects those findings.

The tone and language of the report is extremely important if it is to have any influence. It should be low-key, measured and neutral. State media should be given credit for their

positive achievements, as well as being criticized for any bias. Criticism will not be taken seriously if it seems to be influenced by partisan political considerations.

Be realistic about the length and format of the report. If it is to be produced on time every week it will have to be short and simple. Coloured, computer-generated graphics are attractive but they cannot be photocopied - only printed at much greater time and expense. Keep graphics in simple monochrome shading.

An interim and/or a final report might also be written that summarizes the findings and makes suggestions for improvements in the national media coverage generally and during the next election. This could include some of the more sophisticated and lengthy material that was not included in the weekly reports.

The list of recipients of the weekly and interim/final reports will vary from country to country, but it should at least include:

- Electoral Commission
- Ministry of Information and/or Broadcasting
- Government broadcasting company/parastatal
- Ministry of Justice/Judiciary
- Ministry of Home Affairs/Police
- Parliamentarians
- All political parties

- All national media (newspapers, broadcasters)
- All candidates
- All donors and UN agencies
- Local and international NGOs
- Religious organizations
- Civic education groups
- Other election monitoring groups

8. Conclusion

Monitoring the media during an election campaign is particularly important in parts of the world where people are not aware of their rights and therefore will not speak out to protect them. A media monitoring project can act on their behalf, documenting abuses of the right to freedom of expression and information and pressing for change. In so doing the project is not only making an effort to protect rights but is teaching the public that they have the right to receive unbiased news reports and full information generally, but especially during an election. Moreover, the standards set by the monitoring project for the public media may well be adopted by the government and the Electoral Commission in future elections.

APPENDICES

1. Relevant Human Rights Instruments

Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Article 19

Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

Article 20

1. Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association.
2. No one may be compelled to belong to an association.

Article 21

1. Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives.
2. Everyone has the right to equal access to public service in his country.
3. The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures.

International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

Article 19

1. Everyone shall have the right to hold opinions without interference.
2. Everyone shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of his choice.
3. The exercise of the rights provided for in paragraph 2 of this articles carries with it special duties and responsibilities. It may therefore be subject to certain restrictions, but these shall only be such as are provided by law and are necessary:
 - (a) For respect of the rights or reputations of others;
 - (b) For the protection of national security or of public order (ordre public), or of public health or morals.

Article 21

The right of peaceful assembly shall be recognized. No restrictions may be placed on the exercise of this right other than those imposed in conformity with the law and which are necessary in a democratic society in the interests of national security or public safety, public order (*ordre public*), the protection of public health or morals or the protection of the rights and freedoms of others.

Article 22

1. Everyone shall have the right to freedom of association with others, including the right to form and join trade unions for the protection of his interests.

2. No restrictions may be placed on the exercise of this right other than those which are prescribed by law and which are necessary in a democratic society in the interests of national security or public safety, public order (*ordre public*), the protection of public health or morals or the protection of the rights and freedoms of others. This article shall not prevent the imposition of lawful restrictions on members of the armed forces and of the police in their exercise of this right.

2. Guidelines for Election Broadcasting and Print Media

Much of the following information is derived from ARTICLE 19's *Guidelines for Election Broadcasting in Transitional Democracies* (August 1994) which should be referred to for details.

The government media should:

- inform the public about matters relevant to the elections, including voter education;
- be balanced and impartial in their election reporting;
- not refuse to transmit an election broadcast or publish an election advertisement, unless it contains a clear and direct incitement to violence or hatred;
- be accurate, balanced and impartial in their news and current affairs programmes and articles;
- grant parties and candidates airtime and space for direct access programmes and advertisements on a fair and non-discriminatory basis;
- arrange with the political parties to present a range of special election programmes, such as debates, interviews and phone-in programmes;
- ensure that no party uses general programmes (other than direct access programmes, election news coverage or special election programmes) to promote its electoral interests;
- prohibit their own media staff from broadcasting or printing their own political opinions;
- ensure that any commentaries or assessments should be identified as such and carefully balanced to avoid bias;
- grant equal time and space to both sides of a referendum vote; and

- comply with the above guidelines in local and regional as well as national elections.

Government has an obligation:

- to abolish any laws that restrict freedom of expression in breach of international law and standards;
- to ensure that voter education materials do not further the prospects of one political party;
- to make special efforts to investigate threats and physical attacks on media personnel or offices, and bring those responsible to justice;
- not to censor election programmes or articles in any way;
- to establish or designate an independent, impartial body to monitor and regulate election broadcasts; and
- to ensure that decisions of this body are subject to urgent review by a judicial authority.

It is recommended that:

- the media be exempted from legal liability for unlawful statements made during election broadcasts and in election advertisements by candidates or party spokespersons;
- government provides airtime and space in the state-owned media for direct access advertising on a free and impartial basis;
- government helps inexperienced political parties to produce direct access programmes and advertisements to a professional standard;
- parties and candidates be granted the opportunity to reply to or correct injurious statements or criticisms directed against them;
- government media should broadcast and publish candidate forums and interviews; and
- any media outlet that publicizes the results of an opinion poll or election projection should also include any relevant information about the circumstances and significance of the poll or projection.

3. Sample Reporting Forms

Various forms can be designed for use by monitors in their daily work. The following forms were used by ARTICLE 19 during the 1994 Malawi election.

FORM 1

Form 1 is used for radio or TV monitoring, and is particularly well suited to provide an overview of the news bulletins. It could also be used, with some modification, for chat shows and other programmes in which a set of items/people/topics are covered.

Broadcast Monitoring Form

Name of Monitor: _____

Date: _____

TV/Radio	Station	Monitored:

Time of Bulletin: _____

List of Short Title of Items in Order

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. etc.

Write clearly and legibly on one side of the paper.

Hand in the completed form to your supervisor.

FORM 2

Form 2 is for a more in-depth report of broadcast news bulletins. It is important that the monitor's additional comments (section D) are not mixed up with his/her report on the content of the news as it is delivered. Monitors' comments (section D) can, for instance, be written on a separate sheet of paper.

News Bulletin In-depth Monitoring Report

Name of Monitor: _____

TV/Radio	Station	Monitored:

Date: _____

Time: _____

A. Transcribe/translate all the headlines of the news word-for-word,

in the order in which they are broadcast:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. etc.

B. Each relevant item:

1. Transcribe/translate the opening line, word-for-word.

2. Provide a detailed summary of each item:

Do not transcribe/translate items that are not relevant, such as football scores, but do indicate that the item was broadcast and what its place was in the bulletin, e.g.,

[1] _____

[2] _____

[3] _____

[4] football scores

[5] _____

3. Indicate the end of the bulletin by writing 'Bulletin ends' and give the time it ends.

C. To determine which news stories were EXCLUDED from the radio

news bulletin, please indicate which other stories were — in your view — important on the day in question but not mentioned.

D. Comments. You should NOT include your comments in the news report

above, but you should put your comments and any analysis here, or on a separate piece of paper.

Write clearly and legibly on one side of the paper.

Hand in the completed form to your supervisor.

FORM 3

Print Media Monitoring Form

Name of Monitor: _____

Date: _____

Name of newspaper/magazine: _____

Date of newspaper/magazine: _____

A. Name and location of relevant articles in newspaper/magazine:

1. _____ page _____

2. _____ page _____

3. _____ page _____

etc.

B. Short summary of each relevant article/advertisement:

1. First line.

2. Name of language in which the article is written.

3. Summary of content.

4. Names of all people/titles/locations that are mentioned.
 5. Is the article in a different language elsewhere in the paper?
 6. Is the translation accurate and has the meaning of the article remained the same?
 7. Monitor's COMMENT or ANALYSIS of the article — clearly label this and separate it from the main part of the report.
- C. Any other comments?

Write clearly and legibly on one side of the paper.

Hand in the completed form to your supervisor.

4. Extract from ARTICLE 19 Media Monitoring in Malawi

Report for Week Ending 7 May 1994

Coverage [by MANA, the government news agency] of political meetings, press statements and speeches by political figures was more balanced during the week. Of the fifty rallies and press conferences reported,

23 concerned MCP [the ruling party] meetings and candidates

14 involved UDF [opposition party] meetings and leaders

5 dealt with the MNDP [opposition party]

4 concerned MDP [opposition party] meetings and speeches

4 concerned AFORD [opposition party] candidates and meetings

MANA reported that Mr Binali (MCP, Mangochi) told supporters that the UDF were telling MCP members at Namwera that they would be killed and their houses burnt if the UDF won. Two regional [MCP] campaigners picked up the theme and told the crowd about how life was being dangerously unbearable in Lilongwe and the Central Region where they said no one dares to walk the streets after dusk for fear of being beaten up and robbed ... "murders, rapes, robberies and thefts have become the order of the day, things unheard of during the Ngwazi's [the President's] peaceful 31 year rule", said the two campaigners. No critical analysis was

offered of these two statements by MANA. Halting regionalism and tribal conflict were themes addressed by MBC [the state radio] during the week. Songs in local languages were used (e.g., 1 May, 6:14 am in *Lemakezani Mulungu*): "... Let us stop regionalism, and let us be like children of one parent. Let us chase the beat of regionalism. Satan is dividing us". Or another song included, "... People are now divided and the nation is shamefully divided. Send your might and grace, have mercy on us, forgive us ..." (2 May, 5:06 am): "... This country belongs to us all. Let us not abuse one another. Let us not hate one another. Let us not intimidate one another." Peace and tolerance were also topics of discussion and song (e.g., 1 May, 2:45 pm; 4 May, 5:32 pm).

People were told how to vote in [the language] Chichewa (4 May, 5:22 pm and 5 May, 7:10 am), in Nkhonde (6 May, 3:55 pm) and in Yao (4 May, 5:39 pm and 6 May, 3:32 pm), while song was used to explain the various party symbols (5 May, 7:10 am and 7 May, 5:57 and 7:38 am). On "Mid-week Magazine" a drama provided information to listeners about how to vote (5 May, 10:05 pm). The Electoral Commission sponsored a football match (7 May, 3 pm) during which information on voting was broadcast. Those who had lost their certificates or had them stolen were asked by MBC to report to the Electoral Commission (4 May, 12:30 pm).

Periodically during the week, news bulletins followed the traditional MBC pattern of reporting ministerial speeches and functions as news (e.g., 2 May, 12:30 pm, in order of presentation: Banda [the President] sends condolences to [President of Kenya] arap

Moi for ferry disaster; Minister of Women and Children's Affairs and Community Services calls for development of monitoring system; Secretary for Economic Planning and Development says Malawi needs better system to analyse national economy; Electoral Commission's press officer says media has crucial role to play in elections; ANC in the lead in SA; PLO rejects Israel's charges, English-speaking separatists in Cameroon; Cuban financial reform measures; and Syria-Israel peace proposals.)

Sir David Steel's critique of Malawi Airways and the MCP was presented on MBC's English midday "Newsreel" (6 May, 12:40 pm), but not on the Chichewa "Newsreel" that followed (12:59 pm). The regular news hour programmes limited their reporting to his statement praising the Electoral Commission (e.g., 5 May, 6:00 pm). Air Malawi's denial of Sir David Steel's accusation was broadcast as news in both English and Chichewa (7 May, e.g., 6:00 and 7:00 am).

MANA read: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 May 1994

MBC monitored:

1 May 4:50 am-12:10 am (2 May)

2 May 4:50 am-1:20 pm and 3:00 pm-12:10 am (3 May)

3 May 4:50 am-12:10 am (4 May)

4 May 6:00 am-12:00 pm and 12:30 pm-12:10 am (5 May)

5 May 4:50 am-12:10 am (6 May)

6 May 4:50 am-12:10 am (7 May)

7 May 4:50 am-12:10 am (8 May)

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