



MONITORING OF INDECENT CAMPAIGN LANGUAGE ON RADIO

QUARTERLY REPORT (APRIL-JUNE, 2016)

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INTRODUCTION

As Ghana's 2016 elections draw closer, politicians continue to resort to the use of radio to persuade the electorate to vote for them. While radio programmes provide a great platform for reaching out to the electorates, some politicians and activists resort to radio to verbally abuse and provoke opponents. Such abusive language on radio, which sometimes include insults, hate speech and ethnocentric slurs have a huge potential for inciting people to violence, especially during election periods.

To help promote issues-based and decent language campaigning on radio, the Media Foundation for West Africa's (MFWA), under its **Promoting Issues-based and Decent Language Campaigning for a Peaceful, Free and Fair Elections in Ghana in 2016** project, is monitoring and reporting the use of hate speech and other indecent expressions on 60 selected radio stations across the country.

The project is being implemented with funding support from OSIWA, STAR-Ghana, the EU (through Socioserve-Ghana) and the Embassy of France in Ghana. It is aimed at discouraging abusive campaign language on radio by spotlighting incidents of indecent language, naming and shaming perpetrators of such language, and naming the radio stations on which such expressions occur. The project involves daily monitoring of expressions used by mainly politicians and activists on selected radio programmes using a publicly validated monitoring instrument. It also monitors how presenters on the target radio stations handle their programmes to ensure that indecent expressions are not tolerated on their programmes. Each target station is assigned to a trained monitor who is also equipped with a digital recorder to record the programmes monitored.

Using the monitoring instrument, the monitors send daily reports to the MFWA. The reports are analysed by a team of programme staff and researchers at the MFWA and a consolidated report is publicised periodically - mostly every two

weeks. It is hoped that the periodic reports will help the electorate make informed voting decisions. The reports are also meant to provide credible evidence for appropriate institutions and groups to take informed remedial actions.

This report covers findings from monitoring reports collated and analysed for the first quarter of the project (April-June, 2016). It covers findings from 50 radio stations monitored during that first quarter of the project period. The report presents findings on categories of indecent expressions recorded, political party affiliation of those who used indecent expressions and the radio stations on which such indecent expressions were recorded.

Findings

Over the three-month monitoring period, a total of **4,759** radio programmes were monitored on the 50 radio stations that were monitored during the period. The programmes included news bulletins, political and current affairs discussions. About 95 percent of individuals who participated in the programmes as discussants, panellists or callers, were males. A total of **343** indecent expressions were recorded over the three-month period.

Categories of Indecent Expressions Recorded

Overall, seven (7) categories of indecent expressions were recorded during the first quarter of the monitoring. A breakdown of the categories of indecent expressions recorded and their frequencies are presented in **Table 1 below**:

Table 1: Categories and Frequency of Indecent Expressions Recorded In the First Quarter

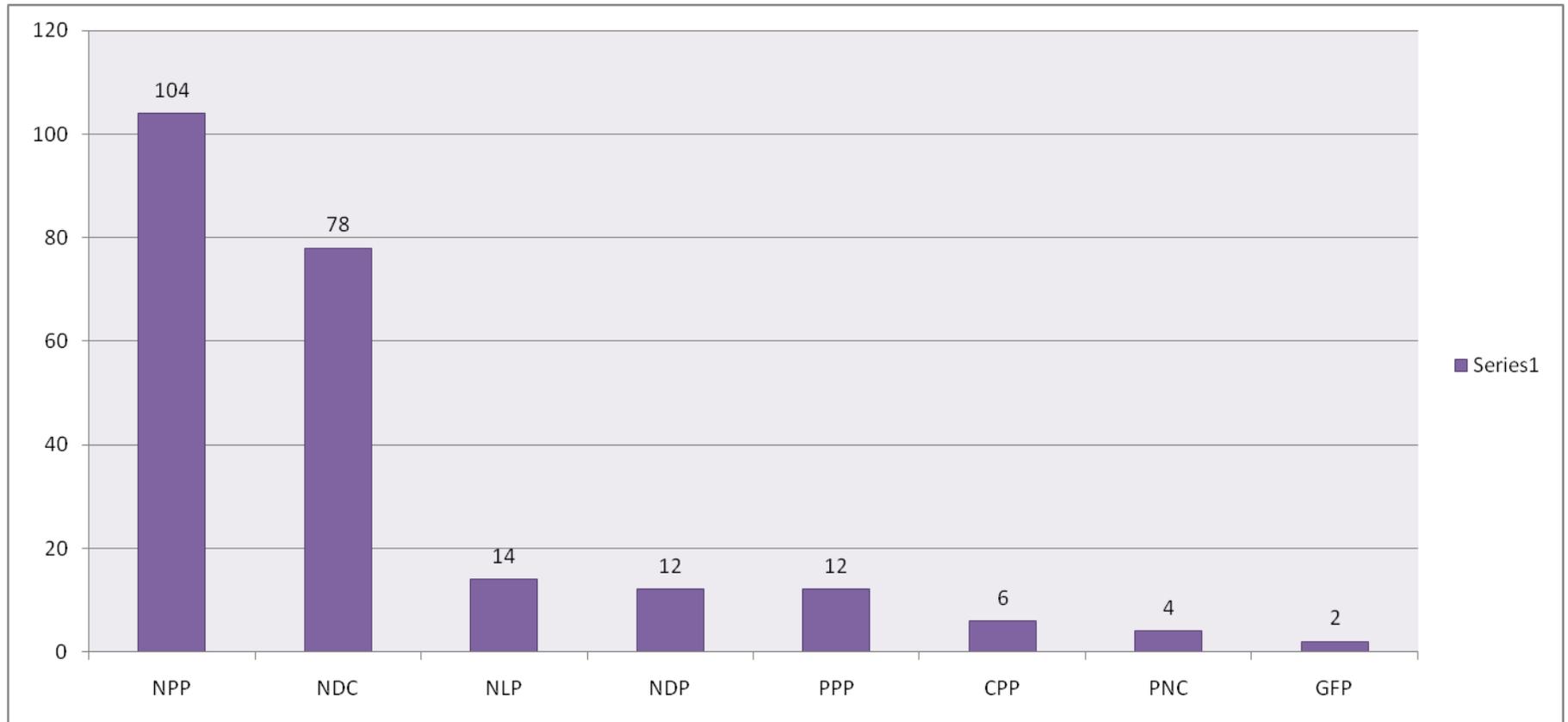
Category of Indecent Expression	Frequency
Unsubstantiated Allegations	127
Insulting and Offensive Comments	127

Provocative Remarks	52
Remarks Endorsing Violence	20
Remarks Inciting Violence	8
Divisive Comments	7
Tribal Slurs	2
Total	343

Political Party/ Group Affiliation of Individuals Who Used Indecent Expressions

Officials, supporters and affiliates of seven political parties were cited for using abusive expressions – the New Patriotic Party (NPP), the ruling National Democratic Congress (NDC), Progressive People’s Party (PPP), National Democratic Party (NDP), People’s National Convention (PNC), Conventions People’s Party (CPP), and Ghana Freedom Party (GFP). Affiliates of a group called New Labour Party (NLP), were also cited severally for indecent expressions. Out of the **343** indecent expressions recorded, **232** were made by affiliates of the seven political parties and the NLP. The remaining **111** indecent expressions were made by persons whose political party affiliation could not be established on the programmes monitored. Figure 1 below shows the frequency of indecent expressions recorded by each of the seven political parties and the NLP over the three-month period.

Figure 1: Frequency of Indecent Expressions Used by Political Party Affiliates



Note: Individuals who used indecent expressions but whose political party or group affiliation was not established are not included in this graph

Categories of Indecent Expressions Used by Political Party Affiliates

In Table 2 below, the specific categories of indecent expressions used by affiliates of each of the seven political parties and the NLP are indicated. Also captured are expressions made by individuals whose political party affiliation could not be established.

Table 2: Specific Categories of Indecent Expressions Recorded by Political Party Affiliates

Category Of Indecent Expression	Political Party Affiliation of Culprits									
	NPP	NDC	NLP	NDP	PPP	CPP	PNC	GFP	Unknown	Total
Insulting & Offensive Comments	27	32	11	7	5	1	2	0	42	127
Unsubstantiated Allegations	45	22	3	5	4	1	1	1	45	127
Provocative Remarks	17	10	0	0	1	0	1	1	22	52
Remarks Endorsing Violence	11	5	0	0	2	0	0	0	2	20
Remarks Inciting Violence	2	4	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	8
Divisive Comments	2	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7
Tribal Slur	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	2

Total	104	78	14	12	12	6	4	2	111	343
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Radio Stations and Incidence of Indecent Expressions

Of the 50 radio stations monitored over the three-month period (April-June, 2016), indecent expressions occurred on 33 stations. Accra-based Montie FM recorded the highest number of indecent expressions (83) followed by Oman FM followed (54) and Happy FM (30). Table 3 below provides details on the 33 radio stations cited and the frequency of indecent expressions recorded on each.

Table 3: Frequency of Indecent Expressions Recorded on Radio Stations

Radio station	Total
Montie FM	83
Oman FM	54
Happy FM	30
Ashh FM	24
Radio Gold	21
Adom FM**	16
Okay FM	15
Diamond FM	12
Hello FM	10
Rainbow Radio	8
Asempa FM	6

Top FM	6
Angel FM	5
Eagle FM	5
Radio Justice	5
Royals FM	5
Tain FM	5
Atinka FM	4
Hot FM	4
Classic FM	3
Kessben	3
Obuoba FM	3
Peace FM	3
Kekeli Radio	2
Radio Progress	2
Ultimate FM	2
Accra FM	1
Fox FM	1
Joy FM	1
Marhaba FM	1
North Star FM	1
Winners FM	1
Skyy Power FM	1

Total	343
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****** *Two of the indecent expressions recorded on Adom FM's Edwaso Nsem (the FM's Fa Be Wɔ So segment) were also aired on the Nsawkaw-based Tain FM which picks Adom FM's morning show.*

Conclusion and Recommendations

The findings from the three months shows that incidents of abusive language on radio still require the attention of stakeholders. The MFWA therefore makes the following recommendations as part of measures that need to be adopted to help improve elections campaign communications and for peaceful elections:

- Leaders of the various political parties should encourage their representatives and affiliates to focus on issues-based discussions and desist from using indecent or abusive expressions.
- Radio stations, especially programme presenters should handle their programmes professionally by desisting from using indecent expressions and insisting on the use of decent expressions by persons who appear on their programmes.
- The National Media Commission (NMC), the Ghana Independent Broadcasters Association (GIBA) and the Ghana Journalists Association (GJA) are encouraged to use these findings and subsequent ones to inform remedial actions and processes.