

MONITORING OF INDECENT CAMPAIGN LANGUAGE ON RADIO

FINDINGS FOR THE PERIOD MAY 16-31, 2016.

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1.0 Introduction

As the most patronised media platform in Ghana, many politicians resort to the use of radio to persuade the electorate to vote for them. While radio programmes provide a great platform for the marketing and exchanging of ideas, some political party representatives who appear on radio abuse the opportunity by resorting to insults and personality attacks instead of focusing on discussing issues. This is particularly prevalent in electioneering periods and if left unchecked could potentially incite people to violence as witnessed in some countries.

To help make electoral campaign communications issues-based, the Media Foundation for West Africa (MFWA) is implementing a project titled, *Promoting Issues-based and Decent Language Campaigning for a Peaceful, Free and Fair Elections in Ghana in 2016*. The project is aimed at encouraging people to use decent language on radio by naming and shaming those who use abusive and indecent expressions on radio. Ultimately, the project seeks to reduce incidence of hate speech and other abusive expressions that could foment elections-related violence.

The project is being carried out with funding support from OSIWA, STAR-Ghana, the EU (through Socioserve-Ghana) and the Embassy of France in Ghana.

The project involves the daily monitoring of selected programmes on 60 radio stations selected across the country to track and report on incidents of hate speech and indecent expressions. It also involves monitoring 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. The monitors send daily reports to the MFWA. The reports are analysed by a team of programme staff and researchers at the MFWA with a consolidated report publicised every two weeks.

2.0 Findings

This report covers findings from monitoring reports collated and analysed for the period, May 16 - 31, 2016. It covers findings from 40 radio stations monitored during the reporting period. The report presents findings on categories of indecent expressions recorded, political affiliation of those who used indecent expressions and the radio stations on which indecent expression were recorded.

2.1 General Findings

Over the two-week monitoring period, **972** radio programmes were monitored. The programmes included news bulletins, political and current affairs discussions aired on the 40 radio stations. Most of these programmes were moderated by males. Over 95 percent of individuals who

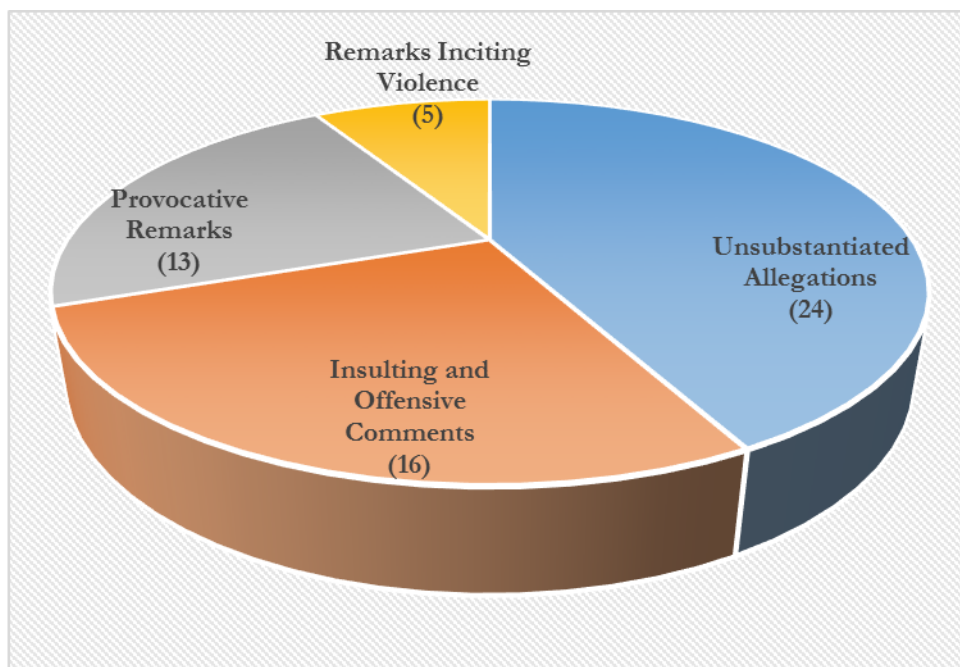
participated in the programmes as discussants, panellists or callers, were also males. In spite of the male dominance, no gender-specific indecent expression was recorded.

Altogether, **58** indecent expressions were recorded. The abusive expressions were mostly recorded during the discussion of issues such as corruption, political party activities, high electricity tariffs and elections-related issues.

2.2 Categories of Indecent Expressions Recorded

Four categories of indecent expressions were recorded over the monitoring period. Unsubstantiated allegations was the dominant category of indecent expression used, often intended to malign and impugn the reputation of others. The other categories of indecent expressions are depicted in Figure 1 below:

Figure 1: Categories of Indecent Expressions Recorded

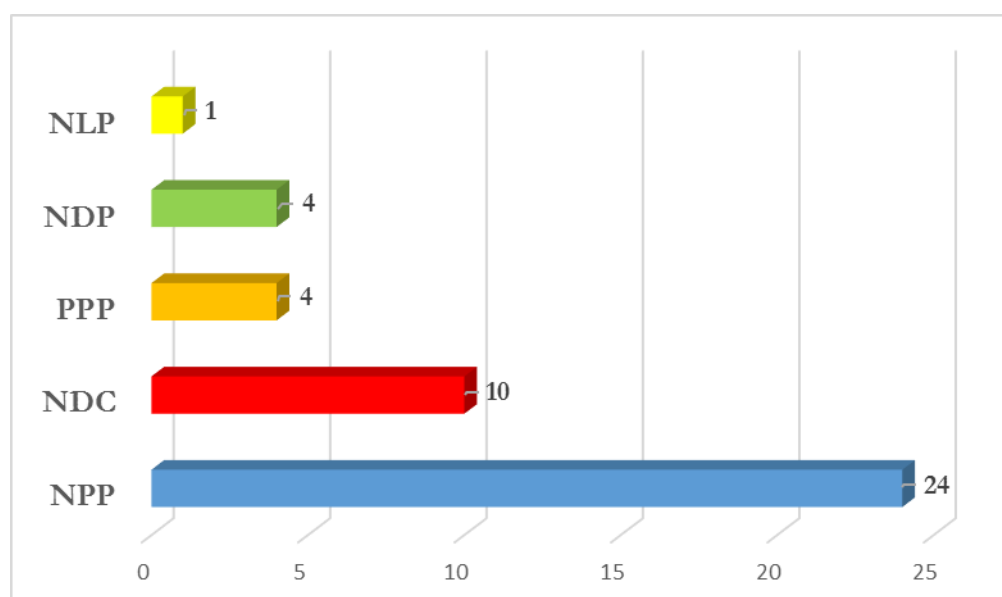


2.3 Political Party/ Group Affiliation of Individuals Who Used Indecent Expressions

The 58 indecent expressions were made by political party affiliates; radio programme hosts and presenters; and other individuals whose affiliation could not be established on the programmes monitored. Forty-three (43) out of the 58 indecent expressions recorded were made by political party affiliates. The remaining 15 were made by individuals whose political affiliation was unknown.

Affiliates of five political parties were cited for using abusive expressions. They were: the New Patriotic Party (NPP), the ruling National Democratic Congress (NDC), Progressive People's Party, National Democratic Party (NDP) and the unregistered New Labour Party (NLP). Figure 2 below is a graphical representation of the frequency of indecent expressions recorded by each of the five political parties.

Figure 2: Frequency of Indecent Expressions Used by Political Party Affiliates



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

Categories of Indecent Expressions Used by Political Party Affiliates

As shown in Figure 2 above, affiliates of the NPP recorded the highest number of indecent expressions followed by the NDC. Whereas affiliates of the NPP dominated in the use of unsubstantiated allegations, insulting and offensive comments, and provocative remarks; affiliates of the NDC dominated in the use of remarks inciting violence. Table 1 below shows the specific categories of indecent expressions used by affiliates of each of the five political parties. Also included is the breakdown of the indecent expressions used by individuals whose political party affiliation could not be established.

Table 1: Specific Categories of Indecent Expressions Recorded by Political Party Affiliates

Category of Indecent Expression	Political Party Affiliation of Culprits						Total
	NPP	NDC	NDP	PPP	NLP	Unknown	
Unsubstantiated Allegations	11	3	0	1	1	8	24
Insulting and Offensive Comments	5	0	4	3	0	4	16
Provocative Remarks	7	3	0	0	0	3	13
Remarks Inciting Violence	1	4	0	0	0	0	5
Total	24	10	4	4	1	15	58

2.4 Political Parties, Groups and Individuals Attacked

Generally, the indecent expressions recorded were targeted at some political parties, their officials and supporters, government institutions and other individuals with no clear affiliation or association to a political party.

The NDC as a party, along with some named individuals in the party, were the target of 18 incidents of abusive expressions. The NPP along with some named party officials and affiliates were verbally assaulted four times. Apart from these, President John Mahama, who is also the presidential candidate for the ruling NDC, was the target of 14 abusive comments while the presidential candidate of the NPP, Nana Addo Dankwah Akuffo-Addo, was the target of five abusive expressions.

The Electoral Commission (EC) was the most abused institution. There were four abusive expressions against the Commission and its leadership. Other victims of abusive comments were heads of institutions and radio programme hosts.

2.5 Specific Expressions Used

Below are the names of the individuals who made the 58 indecent expressions. The names are placed under the specific categories of indecent expressions they made. The radio stations on which they used those expressions and the dates on which the expressions were made have also been indicated.

Unsubstantiated allegations

1. Kwaku Boahene, a Deputy Communications Director of the NDC – on Adom FM's Edwaso Nsɛm aired on May 16, 2016
2. Teacher Moro of the NDC – during Adekyeε Mu Nsɛm on Royals FM broadcast on May 16, 2016
3. Isaac Asiamah, NPP MP for Atwima Mponua, in a phone interview – on Ashh FM's Key Note programme aired on May 16, 2016
4. Quartey, a caller (affiliation unknown) – during AdeεAkyeAbia on Okay FM aired on May 16, 2016
5. George Boateng (affiliation unknown) – on Oman FM's Boiling Point programme aired on May 19, 2016
6. Peter Boamah Otokunor, a Deputy Director of research for the NDC – on The Platform on Peace FM aired on May 23, 2016
7. Hopeson Adoye of the NPP– on The Platform programme on Peace FM aired on May 23, 2016
8. Kwadwo Owusu Afriyie (popularly known as Sir John), former General Secretary of the NPP– in a phone interview on the May 23, 2016 edition of Okay FM's Adeε Akye Abia
9. Daasebre Dwamena (affiliation unknown), co-host supporting the main host with newspaper review– on the May 23, 2016 edition of National Agenda on Ashh FM
10. Daasebre Dwamena (affiliation unknown) co-host of the Key Note programme on Ashh FM – on the May 23, 2016 edition of the programme
11. Boakye Agyarko Former Campaign Manager of the NPP – during the May 24, 2016 broadcast of Boiling Point on Oman FM (also aired on Ashh FM)

12. An NPP activist only introduced as Adiza – **two (2)** on Boiling Point on Oman FM (also broadcast on Ashh FM) on May 24, 2016
13. Yaw Adomako Baafi, a Deputy Communications Director of the NPP – **two (2)** on Oman FM's Boiling Point programme (also aired on Ashh FM) broadcast on May 24, 2016
14. Listowel Nana Kusi Poku of the NLP– on Montie FM's Pampaso programme aired on May 24, 2016
15. An NPP representative introduced as PAGNAA – on May 25, 2016 during Radio Justice's Super Morning Show
16. A caller by name Suala (affiliation unknown) – on May 26, 2016 during Royal FM's Adekye Mu Nsem programme
17. A caller by name Alhaji Red (affiliation unknown)– on Adekye Mu Nsem on Royals FM aired on May 26, 2016
18. Charles Owusu, a member of the communication team of the PPP – on the May 26, 2016 broadcast of Boiling Point on Oman FM (also aired on Ashh FM)
19. Bernard Antwi Boasiako (also known as Chairman Wontumi), Ashanti Regional Chairman of the NPP – in an interview on Okay FM's Adeε Akye Abia programme aired on May 30, 2016
20. Daniel Agyenim Boateng, Deputy Ashanti Regional NPP Organiser – on Angel FM's programme, The Platform, aired on May 30, 2016
21. Alhaji Binyuribuusheli Polo, a caller (affiliation unknown)– on May 31, 2016 during the broadcast of Dagbani Paper Review on Diamond FM
22. A caller by name Nana Ama (affiliation unknown) – on Dwen Ho Biom programme on Hot FM aired on May 31, 2016

Insulting and Offensive Comment

1. Karim Moro of the NPP said – during Royals FM's Adekye Mu Nsem programme aired on May 16, 2016
2. Kwasi Kyei, Ashanti Regional Communication's Director of the NPP – on the May 16, 2016 broadcast of Key Note on Ashh FM
3. Yaw Adomako Baafi, a Deputy Communications Director of the NPP – on the May 17, 2016 broadcast of Boiling Point on Oman FM (also aired on Ashh FM)
4. Nana Owusu of the NDP– on the Maakye Dwumadie on Kessben FM aired on May 17, 2016
5. Kwame Nkrumah Tikese (affiliation unknown), host of Okay FM's Adeε Akye Abia programme, read an offensive text message from one Ericus (affiliation unknown) – during the May 17, 2016 broadcast of the programme
6. Ernest Owusu Bempah, Communications Director of the NDP – in a phone interview on Peace FM's 6pm News (also aired on Okay FM, Neat FM and Hello FM) broadcast on May 18, 2016
7. Ernest Owusu Bempah, Communications Director of the NDP and host of Happy FM's Democracy programme aired – on the May 23, 2016 edition of the programme
8. A caller by name Otafere Gya (affiliation unknown) – on Happy FM's Democracy programme aired on May 26, 2016
9. Charles Owusu, a member of the communication team of the PPP – **three (3)** on Oman FM's Boiling Point programme (also aired on Ashh FM) on May 26, 2016
10. Ernest Owusu Bempah, Communications Director of the NDP – on Atinka FM's AM Drive programme aired on May 26, 2016
11. A caller by name Nana Ama (affiliation unknown) – on Hot FM's Dwen Ho Biom programme aired on May 26, 2016

12. Hopeson Adoye of the NPP – on Happy FM’s Democracy programme aired on May 30, 2016
13. Hajia Habiba a caller (affiliation unknown) – during the Al Fijiri programme on Marhaba FM aired on May 31, 2016
14. Dr. Percy, former Communications Director of the NPP – on the Alhaji and Alhaji programme on Radio Gold broadcast on May 28, 2016

Provocative Remarks

1. Nana Obiri Boahene of the NPP – in a phone interview on Atinka FM’s AM Drive programme broadcast on May 16, 2016
2. Hopeson Adoye of the NPP – on Happy FM’s Democracy programme aired on May 16, 2016
3. Daasebre Dwamena (affiliation unknown), co-host of the Key Note programme on Ashh FM– on May 16, 2016 edition of the programme
4. Kwadwo Owusu Afriyie (popularly known as Sir John), former General Secretary of the NPP – **two (2)** in a phone interview on Okay FM’s Adeε Akye Abia programme broadcast on May 23, 2016
5. Nana Kwadwo Acquaaah of Critical Thinkers International – in a phone interview during ObuobaKasa programme on Obuoba FM broadcast on May 23, 2016
6. Hopeson Adoye of the NPP – in a phone interview on Okay FM’s Adeε Akye Abia programme broadcast on May 24, 2016
7. Hopeson Adoye of the NPP– **two (2)** on Happy FM’s Democracy programme aired on May 26, 2016
8. Kwame Alfred, a presenter of Oxy FM (affiliation unknown)– on Happy FM’s Democracy programme aired on May 26, 2016
9. Timothy Awinterem of the NDC – during Montie FM’s Pampaso programme aired on May 27, 2016
10. Abdul Mumin Sofu of the NDC – on Radio Justice’s Super Morning Show aired on May 30, 2016
11. Wofa Atta of the NDC– on Angel FM’s programme, The Platform aired on May 30, 2016

Remarks Endorsing Violence

1. Bernard Antwi Boasiako (also known as Chairman Wontumi), Ashanti Regional Chairman of the NPP– in a phone interview on Okay FM’s Adeε Akye Abia programme aired on May 30, 2016
2. Joseph Yamin of the NDC – **four (4)** on Okay FM’s Adeε Akye Abia programme aired on May 31, 2016

As a policy, the MFWA does not publish the indecent expressions people make since it amounts to rebroadcasting those remarks. The specific expressions made by people cited in our reports are, however, available at the MFWA for verification by those cited.

2.6 Radio Stations and Incidence of Indecent Expressions

Of the 40 radio stations monitored over the two-week period (May 16-31, 2016), indecent expressions occurred on 17 stations. Accra-based Okay FM recorded the highest number of indecent expressions (12) among the 17 radio stations. All the 12 incidents of indecent expressions were recorded on the station’s morning show programme, Adeε Akye Abia. Oman

FM, also based in Accra, followed with eleven indecent expressions. Majority of the expressions recorded on the station were unsubstantiated allegations. Happy FM followed with seven indecent expressions. It is worth noting that even though Kumasi-based Ashh FM followed with five indecent expressions, nine of the abusive expressions recorded on Oman FM were also aired on Ashh FM. Table 2 below provides details on the 17 radio stations on which indecent expressions were cited, including the categories and frequency of indecent expressions recorded on each.

Table 2: Categories of Indecent Expressions Recorded on the 17 Radio Stations

Radio Station	Category of Indecent Expression				Total
	Unsubstantiated Allegations	Insulting & Offensive Comments	Provocative Remarks	Remarks Inciting Violence	
Okay FM	3	1	3	5	12
Oman FM*	7	4	0	0	11
Happy FM	0	3	4	0	7
Ashh FM	3	1	1	0	5
Royal FM	3	1	0	0	4
Peace FM**	2	1	0	0	3
Radio Justice	1	0	1	0	2
Montie FM	1	0	1	0	2
Hot FM	1	1	0	0	2
Atinka FM	0	1	1	0	2
Angel FM	1	0	1	0	2
Obuoba	0	0	1	0	1
Radio Gold	0	1	0	0	1
Marhaba FM	0	1	0	0	1
Kessben FM	0	1	0	0	1
Diamond FM	1	0	0	0	1
Adom	1	0	0	0	1
Total	24	16	13	5	58

* All the four (4) insulting and offensive comments, and five (5) of the seven (7) unsubstantiated allegations recorded on Oman FM were also aired on Kumasi-based Ashh FM which pick Oman FM's Boiling Point programme.

** The insulting and offensive comment recorded on Peace FM during a news bulletin was also aired on Okay FM, Neat FM and Hello FM which pick live news bulletins from Peace FM

The monitoring shows a relative improvement in terms of the number of radio show hosts cited for the use of abusive expressions. Over the monitoring period, only a few programme hosts and co-hosts were cited for making indecent expressions. However, many of the programme hosts and presenters on the stations cited, faulted in keeping their gate-keeping role by failing to demand from the individuals who made indecent expressions to retract, withdraw or apologise.

3.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

The findings reveal that political party officials, supporters and other affiliates continue to abuse each other with vitriolic allegations, insults and offensive comments and remarks that incite people to violence.

Unfortunately, some radio programme hosts and presenters seem to be unwilling or unable to take charge of their programmes and bring their panellists, interviewees or callers to order to ensure high quality presentations devoid of abusive language on radio programmes.

The MFWA, therefore, urges radio programme managers, producers and hosts/presenters to help ensure that the panellists, interviewees and callers who feature on their radio programmes adhere to editorial guidelines, ethical standards and speak to issues instead of personality attacks. The MFWA also calls on all political parties, especially the NPP, to encourage their communicators to focus on discussing issues rather than resorting to abuse expressions on radio.