

REPORT ON INDECENT CAMPAIGN LANGUAGE ON RADIO

FINDINGS FOR THE PERIOD OCTOBER 1- 31, 2016



REPORT ON INDECENT CAMPAIGN LANGUAGE ON RADIO – FINDINGS FOR OCTOBER 1-31, 2016

1.0 Introduction

Hate speech and other abusive comments have contributed to elections-related violence in a number of countries. Unfortunately, the use of hate speech and other indecent expressions continue to characterise electoral campaign discourse in Ghana. As a preemptive measure ahead of the 2016 elections, the Media Foundation for West Africa (MFWA) has been monitoring and reporting on incidents of hate speech and other abusive expressions on radio. Findings so far have shown a steady decline in the use of such indecent expressions and the findings from the month of October is no exception.

October 2016 recorded a total of 11 indecent expressions, a 21 percent reduction from the September findings (14). This report presents details of the 11 indecent expressions recorded in the month of October, including the categories of expressions used, the political actors and their respective parties that were abusive, the radio stations on which such acts were perpetrated and a recommendation to streamline political communication before, during and after the 2016 elections.

The monitoring and reporting of hate speech and other indecent expressions form part of the MFWA's election project titled, **Promoting Issues-based and Decent Language Campaigning for Peaceful Elections in Ghana in 2016**. The project involves the monitoring of selected programmes on 70 radio stations across the country to track and report on the use of abusive expressions by politicians and activists. It also assesses the performance of presenters or hosts in their handling of programmes and whether or not they tolerate such language on their programmes.

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

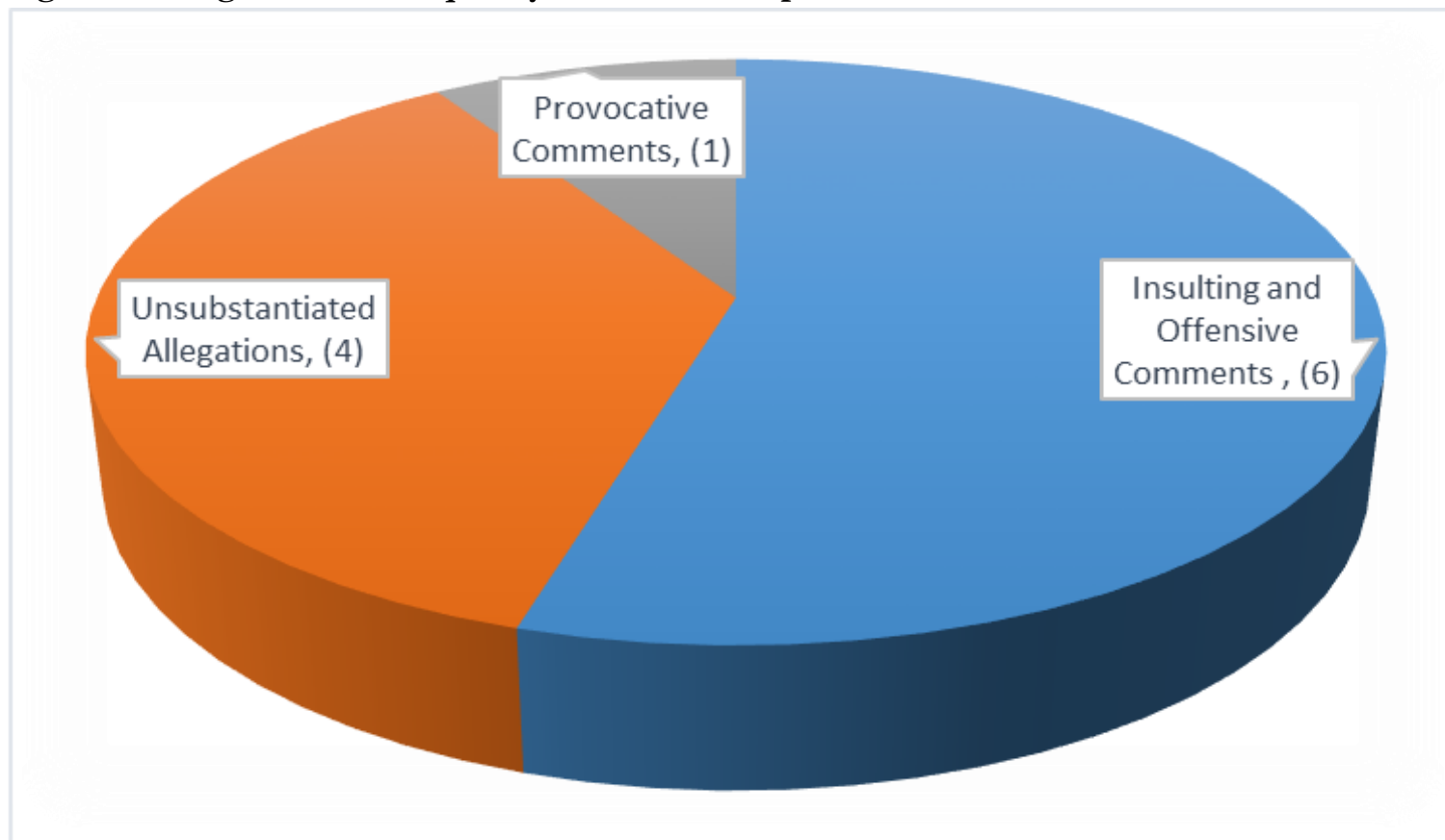
2.0 Findings

During the monitoring period (October 1-31, 2106), a total of **2382** programmes were monitored on 70 target radio stations across the country. The programmes monitored included news bulletins, current affairs and political discussion shows. Eleven indecent expressions were recorded on all the 2382 programmes monitored. During the monitoring period eleven (11) individuals were cited for use of indecent expressions – they were all males with the exception of one female. However, none of the indecent expressions recorded was gender-specific derogatory remark.

2.1 Categories of Indecent Expressions Recorded

The 11 expressions recorded were made up of three (3) categories of indecent expressions: Insulting and Offensive Comments, Provocative Comments and Unsubstantiated Allegations as shown in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Categories and Frequency of Indecent Expressions Recorded

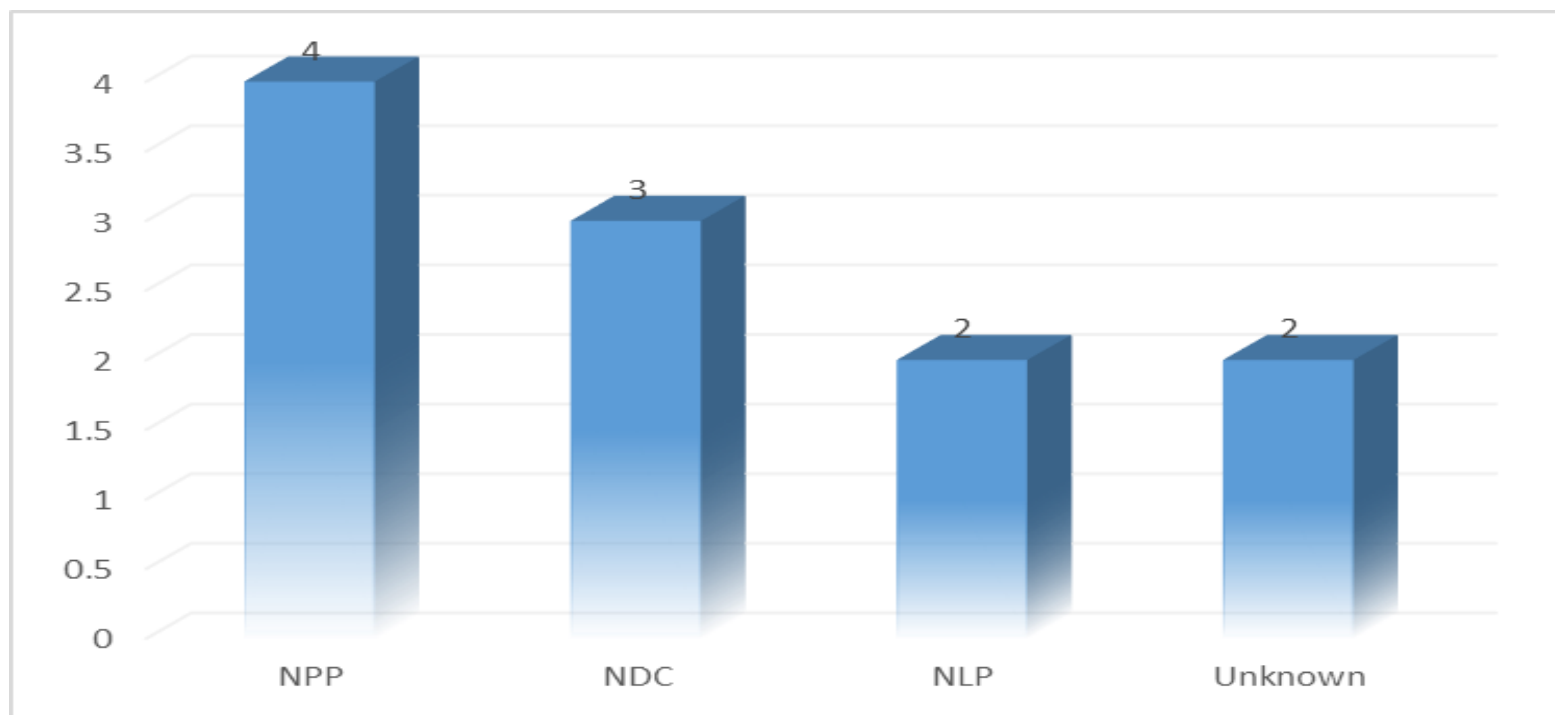


2.2 Political Party/ Group Affiliation of Individuals Who Used Indecent Expressions

Eleven individuals were cited for making indecent remarks on the programmes monitored. These individuals participated in the programmes monitored as discussants, interviewees and callers. Out of the 11, two were individuals whose political affiliation was not established on the programmes they featured on. The remaining nine were officials, supporters and affiliates of the New Patriotic Party (NPP); the ruling National Democratic Congress (NDC) and a

group introduced as National Labour Party (NLP). Together, they made 9 (82%) of the 11 indecent expressions recorded over the monitoring period. Figure 2 below presents more details on this finding:

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



Note: Individuals who used indecent expressions but their political party or group affiliation was not mentioned are not included in Figure 1 above

Categories of Indecent Expressions Used by Political Party Affiliates

As shown in Figure 2 above, officials, supporters and affiliates of the NPP recorded four indecent expressions whereas NDC officials and supporters recorded three. In Table 1 below, the categories of indecent expressions made by

officials, supporters and affiliates of the NPP and NDC, as well as the NLP are presented. Also presented in Table 2 is the breakdown of the categories of indecent expressions used by individuals whose political party affiliation was not established on the programmes monitored.

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

Categories of Indecent Expressions Recorded	Affiliation of Culprits				
	NPP	NDC	NLP	Affiliation Unknown	Total
Insulting & Offensive Comments	4	0	0	2	6
Provocative Comments	0	1	0	0	1
Unsubstantiated Allegations	0	2	2	0	4
Total	4	3	2	2	11

2.3 Specific Expressions Used

Below are the names of the individuals who made the 11 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.

Insulting and Offensive Comments

1. Anthony Abayifa Karbo, Deputy Communications Director of the NPP – on October 17, 2016, in a phone interview, during the broadcast of *National Agenda* on Oman FM.
2. Daasebre Dwamena (affiliation unknown), host of Ashh FM's *Boiling Point* – on October 18, 2016.
3. Baby Ansaba, Editor of the Punch Newspaper in a studio discussion (affiliation unknown) - on October 11, 2016, during the broadcast of *Editors Forum* on Ahotor FM.
4. Kwame Baffoe, Brong Ahafo NPP Regional Youth Organiser – on October 10, 2016, during the broadcast of *Mid-Day News* in a phone interview on Atinka FM.
5. Hajia Fati, a serial caller of the NPP – on October 17, 2016 - during the broadcast of *Democracy* on Happy FM.
6. Joe Donkor of the NPP – on October 17, 2016, during the broadcast of *Democracy* on Happy FM.

Provocative Comments

1. Kofi Adams, National Organiser of the NDC in a phone interview – on October 5, 2016 during the broadcast of *Sunrise* on 3FM.

Unsubstantiated Allegations

1. Listowell Nana Poku of the NLP in a studio discussion – on October 12, 2016 during the broadcast of *Adwene po* on Ahotor FM
2. Listowell Nana Poku of the NLP – on October 8, 2016 during the broadcast of *Nyansa po* on Ahotor FM
3. Stephen Atubiga, a member of the NDC in a studio discussion – on October 21, 2016, during the broadcast of *Pampaso* on Montie FM
4. Koku Anyidoho, Deputy General Secretary of the NDC, in a phone interview – on October 15, 2016 during the broadcast of *Nyansa po* on Ahotor FM

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.

2.5 Radio Stations and Incidence of Indecent Expressions

Out of the 70 radio stations monitored, seven recorded indecent expressions. Accra-based Ahotor FM was cited for four of the 11 indecent expressions followed by Happy FM with two recorded indecent expressions. Details of the specific indecent expressions cited on all the seven radio stations that recorded indecent expressions are presented in Table 2 below:

Table 2: Frequency and Categories of Indecent Expressions Recorded on Radio Stations

Radio Stations	Categories of Indecent Expressions Recorded			
	Insulting and Offensive Comments	Provocative Comments	Unsubstantiated Allegations	Total
Ahotor FM	1	0	3	4
Atinka FM	1	0	0	1
Happy FM	2	0	0	2
Montie FM	0	0	1	1
Oman FM	1	0	0	1
Ashh FM	1	0	0	1
3FM	0	1	0	1
Total	6	1	4	11

3.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

The findings, although show a reduction in the number of indecent expressions on radio as compared to the preceding month, political communication on radio ahead of the December polls is still characterised by the use of abusive expressions. Such abusive remarks have the potential to provoke or incite others to anger and/or violence and must, therefore, be avoided in all forms of political discourse on radio in order to avert any form of elections-related violence before, during and after the 2016 elections.

The MFWA therefore urges radio hosts and presenters in the country to keep playing their gatekeeping role professionally and moderate their programmes to ensure that such expressions are not tolerated on their shows. We also call on all political parties to continuously engage their communicators to focus on issues-based discussions and desist from the use of abusive expressions.