



REPORT ON INDECENT CAMPAIGN LANGUAGE ON RADIO, OCTOBER - DECEMBER, 2016.

Introduction

The Media Foundation for West Africa (MFWA) has been monitoring the use of hate speech and other indecent expressions on selected radio stations across the country since April 2016. The project: **Promoting Issues-based and Decent Language Campaigning for Peaceful Elections in Ghana in 2016**, is aimed at contributing to issues-based and decent language campaigning on radio before, during and after the December 7 polls.

The project involves daily monitoring of expressions used by politicians, activists and presenters on selected radio stations across the country. The monitoring and reporting is done based on an instrument designed by experts and validated by stakeholders. The project also monitors how presenters on the target radio stations handle their programmes to ensure that indecent expressions are not tolerated on their programmes.

A team of monitors trained and assigned to target radio stations send daily reports to the MFWA. The reports are then analysed by a team of programme staff and researchers at the MFWA. A consolidated report is produced and publicised periodically. The reports are meant to provide evidence for appropriate institutions and groups to take informed remedial actions. This report covers findings from the monitoring undertaken over a 12-week period.

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

Findings

During the 12-week monitoring period (October to December, 2016), a total of **6,644** radio programmes were monitored on 70 radio stations for the period October to November, 2016 and 60 radio stations from December 1-31, 2016. Altogether, **24** indecent expressions were recorded.

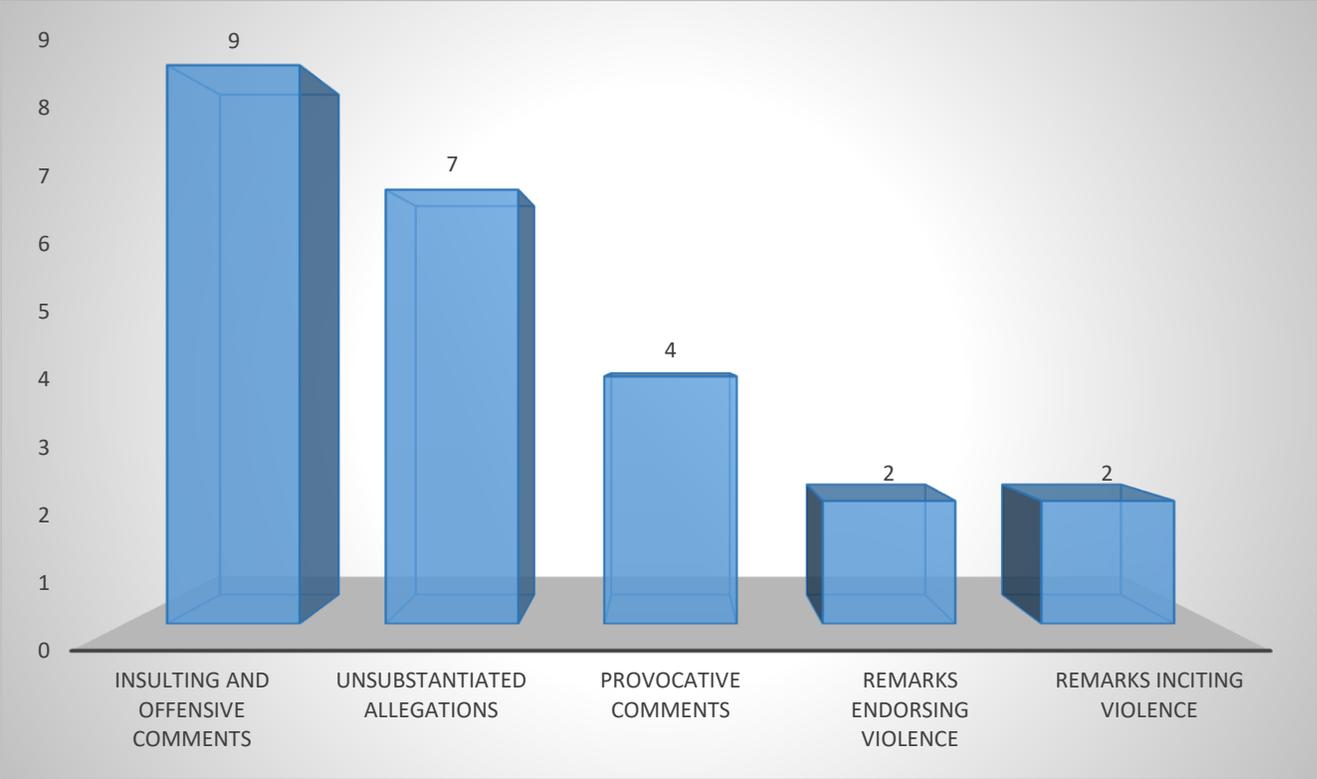
Findings from the 12-week period show a 75 percent reduction in the use of indecent expressions compared to the monitoring period, July – September, 2016. While **97** incidents of indecent expressions were recorded from July to September, 2016, **24** incidents, were on the hand, recorded from October - December, 2016.

The period, October – December, 2016 also shows a reduction in the number of radio stations cited for allowing the use of indecent expressions on their platforms from 24 in July - September, 2016 to 10.

Categories of Indecent Expressions Recorded

The **24** indecent expressions recorded over the monitoring period were made up of five categories of expressions. As shown in figure 1 below, Insulting and Offensive Comments were the most commonly used indecent expressions followed by Unsubstantiated Allegations.

Figure 1: Categories and Frequency of Indecent Expressions Recorded



Categories of Indecent Expressions Used by Political Party Affiliates

Of the **24** indecent expressions recorded, 18 were made by officials, supporters and affiliates of six political parties and a group identified as New Labour Party (NLP). The remaining 6 were made by individuals whose political party affiliation could not be established on the programmes monitored. Table 1 below shows the categories of indecent expressions recorded and the affiliation of the individuals who made the indecent expressions.

Table 1: Categories of Indecent Expressions Recorded and Political Party Affiliation of Culprits

Category Of Indecent Expression	Political Party Affiliation Of Culprits				
	NPP	NDC	NLP	Unknown	Total
Insulting And Offensive Comments	5	1	0	3	9
Unsubstantiated Allegations	2	3	2	0	7
Provocative Comments	1	2	0	1	4
Remarks Endorsing Violence	0	1	0	1	2
Remarks Inciting Violence	1	0	0	1	2
Total	9	7	2	6	24

Radio Stations and Incidents of Indecent Expressions

During the monitoring period (October-December, 2016), Accra-based Ahotor FM and Oman FM each recorded five incidents of indecent expressions followed by Montie FM (4). Table 2 below provides details of the 10 radio stations cited and the frequency of indecent expressions recorded on each.

Table 2: Frequency of Indecent Expressions Recorded on Radio Stations

Radio Station	Frequency
Ahotor FM	5
Oman FM	5
Montie FM	4
Ashh FM	3
Happy FM	2

Atinka FM	1
Boss FM	1
Obuoba FM	1
Pink FM	1
3FM	1
Total	24

Conclusion and Recommendations

The monitoring of the indecent campaign language on radio shows a significant reduction in the number of recorded incidents since April, 2016. In the first quarter of the monitoring period (April – June, 2016) a total of 343 indecent expressions were recorded. In the second (July - September) and third (October – December, 2016) quarters however, a total of 97 and 24 indecent expressions were recorded respectively.

The 24 incidents of indecent expressions recorded in the last quarter of the monitoring period (October - December) is the lowest recorded in any quarter and represents a 93% reduction compared to the first quarter (343).

The number of radio stations also cited for allowing the use of indecent expressions on their platforms significantly reduced in the last quarter of the monitoring. While a total of 33 radio stations were cited in the first quarter of the monitoring period (April - December), 10 radio stations were cited in the third and last quarter. This represents a 70% decline in the number of radio stations cited.

In view of the above, the MFWA commends all stakeholders for demonstrating commitment to the promotion of issues-based campaigning during the electioneering period devoid of the use of indecent expressions. We hope the lessons learnt in the monitoring as well as coverage of the electoral process will guide us all in the next electioneering period (2020)

The MFWA, however makes the following recommendations as part of measures to improve elections campaign communications for peaceful elections in the future:

- Leaders of the various political parties should continually encourage their representatives and affiliates to focus on issues-based discussions devoid of the use of abusive expressions on radio.
- Radio stations, especially programme presenters/hosts should continually handle their programmes professionally by insisting on issues-based discussions on their platforms.
- 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.