

1.0 Introduction

Electioneering periods in Ghana are often characterised by the use of abusive and other indecent expressions against political opponents, institutions and other groups. The situation is no different in 2020. Even in the midst of the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, public discourse around the disease and other current affairs and political debates particularly on radio continues to be characterised by indecent expressions. Unfortunately, a number of the radio stations allow political parties and their representatives to abuse the airwaves with little or no restraint from programme hosts and presenters. This often results in heightened political tension in the country every four years. In a preemptive effort to bring the phenomenon under control, the Media Foundation for West Africa (MFWA) has since 2012 been implementing the language monitoring project to monitor, report and name perpetrators of hate speech and indecent expressions on radio.

Based on lessons learnt from the 2012 and 2016 language monitoring projects, the MFWA is monitoring indecent language on radio during the 2020 electioneering period to contribute to issues-based, decent language campaigning and peaceful elections. The project involves the daily monitoring of selected programmes on 20 radio stations to track and report the use of hate speech and other indecent expressions by politicians and others who feature on the radio programmes monitored. It also assesses the performance of presenters or hosts in their handling of programmes and whether or not they tolerate the use of indecent expressions on their programmes.

The project, *Promoting Decent Language and Issues-based Campaigning for Peaceful Elections in Ghana in 2020*, is being implemented with funding support from the STAR-Ghana Foundation and the Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA).

1.1 Methodology

The project involves the daily monitoring of expressions used by politicians and other actors who feature on radio programmes such as news bulletins, political discussions and current affairs discussions. It also involves assessing and reporting how presenters or hosts of selected programmes on radio stations handle their programmes and whether or not they tolerate the use of hate speech and other indecent language on their programmes.

This report covers monitoring of 20 radio stations in Ghana from June 15-30, 2020. Below are the 20 radio stations that are currently being monitored under the current phase of the project.

Table 1: List of Radio Stations Monitored

Region	Radio Stations
Greater Accra Region	Top FM
	Rainbow Radio
	Oman FM
	Power FM
	Class FM
	Peace FM
	Happy FM
	Okay FM
	Accra FM
	Ahutor FM
Ashanti Region	Hello FM
	Ash FM
	Kessben FM
	Obuoba FM
Northern Region	Diamond FM
	Radio Justice
Bono Region	Tain FM
	Royal FM
North East Region	Eagle FM
Bono East	Classic FM

The monitoring is done based on a validated [monitoring instrument](#). Twenty language monitors have been recruited (one monitor per station) and trained on the use of the monitoring instrument. Each monitor is assigned a digital recorder for purposes of recording the programmes they monitor. Monitors send daily reports to the MFWA which are analysed by a team of programme staff and researchers for a consolidated report to be produced.

This report presents findings from the daily monitoring of selected programmes on the 20 radio stations above. It specifically cites the number of indecent expressions recorded, the categories of indecent expressions used, names of individuals who made indecent remarks and their political party affiliation, the radio stations on which the expressions were made as well as the hosts who made indecent remarks. The report ends with some recommendations for relevant stakeholders.

2.0 Findings

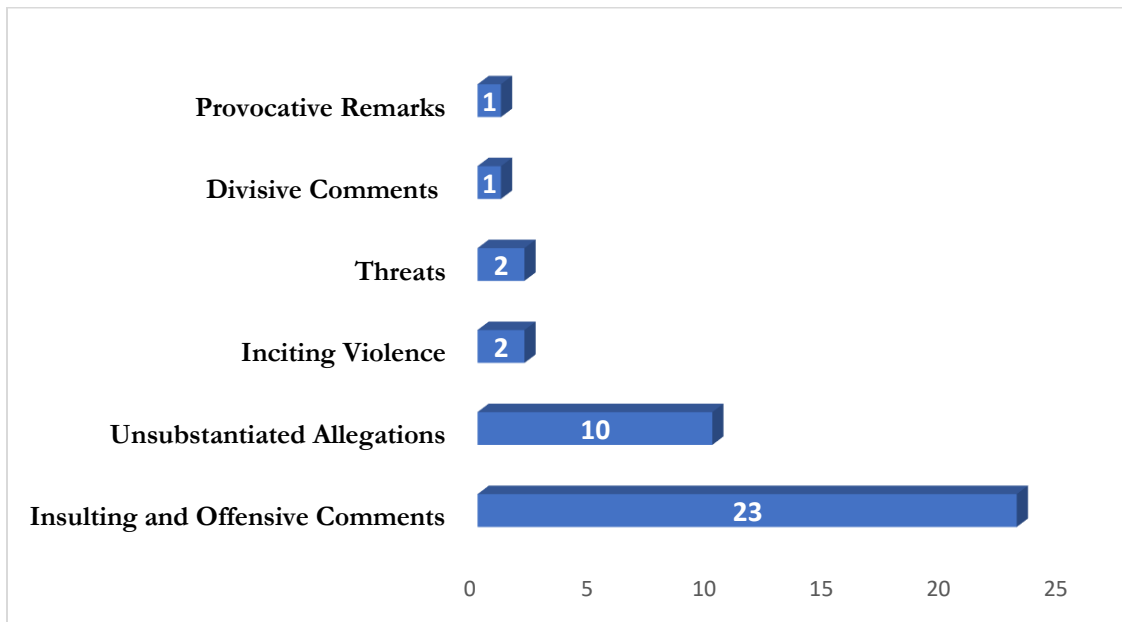
This report covers findings from monitoring undertaken over the period, June 15 - 30, 2020. In all, 793 radio programmes were monitored. The programmes monitored were news bulletins, political and current affairs discussion programmes aired on the 20 radio stations. Most of the programmes were moderated by males. Over 97 percent of the individuals who participated in the programmes as discussants, guests, callers and texters were also males.

Altogether, 39 indecent expressions were recorded, with majority of them being captured during discussions around issues such as the Supreme Court’s ruling on New Voter Register exercise by the Electoral Commission of Ghana (EC), parliamentary primaries of the New Patriotic Party (NPP) and issues of vote buying, COVID-19 and students returning to school, and security presence in some border towns in the country.

2.1 Categories of Indecent Expressions Recorded

The 39 indecent expressions that were recorded were made up of insulting and offensive comments; unsubstantiated allegations; remarks inciting violence; threats; expressions or comments promoting divisiveness; and provocative remarks. Figure 1 below indicates the frequency of use of each type of indecent expression recorded.

Figure 1: Frequency of Indecent Expressions Recorded

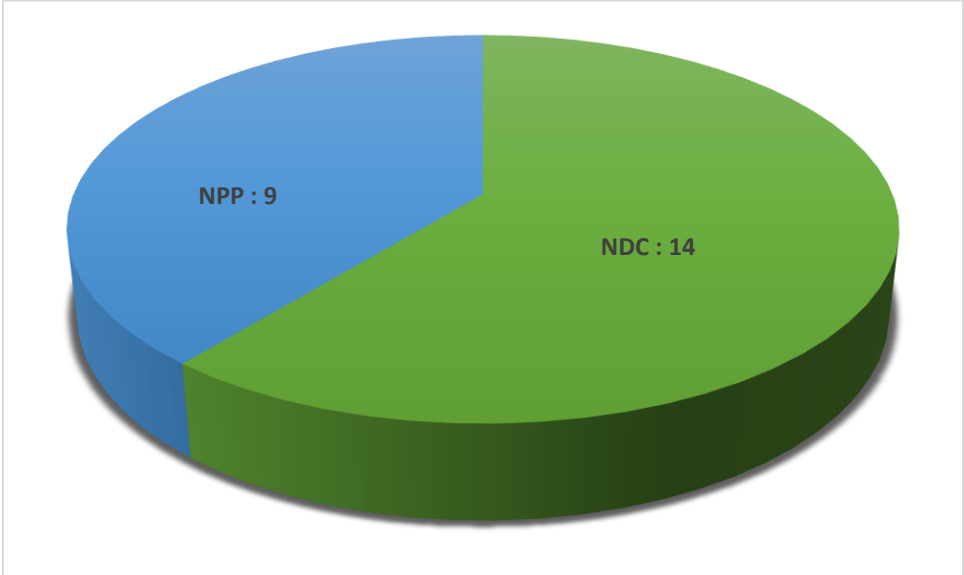


2.2 Political Party/ Group Affiliation of Individuals Who Used Indecent Expressions

A total of 23 individuals made the 39 indecent expressions recorded. These individuals featured on the programmes monitored as hosts, discussants, interviewees and callers. More than half (23) of the 39 indecent expressions recorded were made by political party officials, supporters and affiliates. The remaining 16 were made by six individuals whose political party affiliation was not established on the programmes monitored. Their political party affiliation could not be established because they were not introduced as representatives or members of any political party.

During the period under review, only officials and affiliates of the National Democratic Congress (NDC) and the New Patriotic Party (NPP) were cited for indecent expressions (23). Figure 2 below provides a graphical representation of the frequency of indecent expressions recorded by affiliates of the two political parties.

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 2 above

In Table 2 below, the categories of indecent expressions made by affiliates of the NDC and NPP are presented. Included in Table 2 are the expressions made by persons whose political affiliation could not be established.

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

Categories of Indecent Expressions Recorded	Political Party Affiliation of Perpetrators			Total
	NDC	NPP	Not Mentioned	
Insulting and Offensive Remarks	7	5	11	23
Unsubstantiated Allegations	6	3	1	10
Remarks Inciting Violence	0	0	2	2
Threats	1	0	1	2
Divisiveness Comments	0	1	0	1

Provocative Remarks	0	0	1	1
Total	14	9	16	39

2.3 Specific Expressions Used

Below are the names of the individuals who made the 39 indecent expressions, the radio stations and the dates on which the expressions were made. They have been placed under the types of indecent expressions they made.

Insulting and Offensive Comments

1. Kwabena Kwakye (political affiliation not mentioned), the host of Oman FM's *Boiling Point* programme – during the June 18, 2020 edition of the programme. The programme was also broadcasted live on Ashh FM.
2. Nana Okatakyie Afrifa Mensah (political affiliation not mentioned), the host of Happy FM's *Epa Hoa Daben* programme – during the June 19, 2020 edition of the programme.
3. Nana Okatakyie Afrifa Mensah (political affiliation not mentioned), the host of Happy FM's *Epa Hoa Daben* – during the June 22, 2020 edition of the programme.
4. Mutala Surazu, NPP communication team member for Walewale Constituency – during Eagle FM's *Eagle Breakfast* show aired on June 23, 2020.
5. Joshua Hamidu Akamba, NDC National Organizer – in an interview on Top FM's *Enne Ghana* programme aired on June 22, 2020.
6. A caller identified as Abu Fresh (political affiliation not mentioned) – during Eagle FM's *Eagle Breakfast* show aired on June 24, 2020.
7. Nana Okatakyie Afrifa Mensah (political affiliation not mentioned), the host of Happy FM's *Epa Hoa Daben* – during the June 24, 2020 edition of the programme.
8. Nab Ali Gbarima, NDC Youth Organiser for Tamale-North – during Justice Radio's *Super Morning Show* aired on June 16, 2020.
9. Kwame Baffoe, popularly known as Abronye DC, NPP Bono Regional Chairman – **two (2)** during Oman FM's *Boiling Point* also broadcasted live on Ashh FM on June 25, 2020.
10. Benjamin Essuman (political affiliation not mentioned) – during Power FM's *Dwaboase programme* aired on June 26, 2020.
11. A. A. Gafaru, Deputy Communication Officer for the NDC in the North East Region – during Eagle FM's *Eagle Breakfast* show aired on June 29, 2020.
12. Anthony Nukpenu, NDC Greater Accra Regional Organiser – during Power FM's *Inside Politics* aired on June 29, 2020.
13. Gordon Asare Bediako (political affiliation not mentioned), a member of Oman FM's morning show (*National Agenda*) team – during the June 29, 2020 edition of the programme.
14. Hajia Dzifa Mariam Ibrahim, NDC member in the Amasaman Constituency – **two (2)** during Ahotor FM's *Adekye Mu Nsem* programme aired on June 17, 2020.
15. Listowel Nana Kusi Poku, Executive Secretary of Good Governance Advocacy Ghana (political affiliation not mentioned) – during Ahotor FM's *Adekye Mu Nsem* programme aired on June 17, 2020.
16. Gloria Yaa Amponsah, NDC communication team member for Tain district - during Tain FM's *Morning Political Show* aired on June 16, 2020.

17. Listowel Nana Kusi Poku, Executive Secretary of Good Governance Advocacy Ghana (political affiliation not mentioned) – **two (2)** during Accra FM's *Citizen Show* aired on June 25, 2020.
18. Yaw Adomako Baafi, Former Communication Director (NPP) – **two (2)** during Oman FM's *Boiling Point* programme aired on June 30, 2020. The programme was also broadcasted live on Ashh FM.
19. Gordon Asare Bediako (political affiliation not mentioned), a member of Oman FM's *Boiling Point* team – during the June 30, 2020 edition of the programme. The programme was also broadcasted live on Ashh FM.

Unsubstantiated Allegations

1. Dada Appiah, NPP communication Officer for Tain Constituency – during Tain FM's Morning Political Show aired on June 23, 2020.
2. Mohammed Zacious, NDC Communication team member – during Justice Radio's *Super Morning Show* s aired on June 18, 2020.
3. Kobby Mensah, NDC Youth Leader/Activist from Ningo Prampram – in an interview on Okay FM's Morning Show, *Ade3 Akye Abia* programme aired on June 24, 2020.
4. Azzey Baba, NDC communication team member for Tain Constituency – during Tain FM's Morning Political Show aired on June 24, 2020.
5. Mohammed Issahaku Awal, NDC Communication team member for Tamale – during Justice Radio's *Super Morning Show* aired on June 15, 2020.
6. Kwame Baffoe, Abronye DC, NPP Bono Regional Chairman – **two (2)** during Oman FM's *Boiling Point* also broadcasted live on Ashh FM aired on June 25, 2020.
7. James Tannor, NDC Tain Constituency Secretary – during Tain FM's Morning Political Show aired on June 29, 2020.
8. Listowel Nana Kusi Poku, Executive Secretary of Good Governance Advocacy Ghana (political affiliation not mentioned) – during Accra FM's Citizen Show aired on June 25, 2020.
9. Nyame Emmanuel Gregory, NDC Constituency Youth Organizer (Tain District) – during Tain FM's Morning Political Show aired on June 23, 2020.

Inciting Violence

1. Nana Okatakyie Afrifa Mensah (political affiliation not mentioned), the host of Happy FM's *Epa Hoa Daben* programme – during the June 23, 2020 edition of the programme.
2. Nana Okatakyie Afrifa Mensah (political affiliation not mentioned), the host of Happy FM's *Epa Hoa Daben* programme – during the June 24, 2020 edition of the programme.

Threat

1. Kobby Mensah, an NDC Youth Leader/Activist from Ningo Prampram – in an interview on Okay FM's Morning Show, *Ade3 Akye Abia* programme aired on June 24, 2020.
2. Listowel Nana Kusi Poku, Executive Secretary of Good Governance Advocacy Ghana (political affiliation not mentioned) – during Accra FM's Citizen Show aired on June 25, 2020.

Expression or Comment Promoting Divisiveness

1. Seidu Abdulai Naporo, NPP Communication team member for Tamale – during Justice Radio's *Super Morning Show* aired on June 15, 2020.

Provocative Remarks

1. Nana Okatakyie Afrifa Mensah (political affiliation not mentioned), host of the Happy FM's *Epa Hoa Daben* programme – during the June 26, 2020 edition of the programme.

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 Incidents of Indecent Expressions

Out of the 20 radio stations monitored, 10 recorded indecent expressions. Accra-based Oman FM recorded the highest number (9) of indecent expressions on two of its major programmes – Boiling Point (8) and National Agenda (1). All the eight indecent remarks captured on Oman FM's Boiling Point programme were also recorded on Kumasi-based Ashh FM which picks live feed of the programme. Happy FM, also based in Accra, followed with six indecent expressions recorded solely on its afternoon political programme, *Epa Hoa Daben*. Nsawkaw-based Tain FM recorded five indecent expressions over the period. The frequency of indecent expressions recorded on all the 10 radio stations are presented in Table 3 below:

Table 3: Radio Stations that Recorded Indecent Expressions

Radio Station	Frequency of Indecent Expressions
Oman FM**	9
Happy FM	6
Tain FM	5
Radio Justice	4
Accra FM	4
Ahotor FM	3
Eagle FM	3
Okay FM	2
Power FM	2
Top FM	1
Total	39

*Note: ** Eight of the indecent expression recorded on Accra-based Oman FM were also recorded on Kumasi-based Ashh FM.*

Assessment of Moderation of Programmes by Hosts

As part of the language monitoring project, moderators or hosts are assessed to find out how they conduct themselves on their respective programmes and also, how they handle their programmes to ensure that hate speech and other indecent expressions are not used on their platforms. Findings

from the period under review (June 15-30, 2020) show that some moderators directly engaged in the use of indecent expressions. Specifically, Nana Okatakyie Afrifa Mensah, host of Accra-based Happy FM's afternoon current affairs programme, *Epa Hoa Daben*, singlehandedly made six indecent expressions. On the other hand, a number of moderators ensured that indecent expressions were not made on their platforms.

3.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

The findings of the two-week monitoring recorded a total of 39 indecent expressions from the 20 radio stations monitored. Some affiliates of the NDC and the NPP were the main culprits in the use of indecent expressions on radio. Also, Nana Okatakyie Afrifa Mensah, host of *Epa Hoa Daben* on Accra-based Happy FM, was found to be the most abusive, having made six indecent expressions out of the 39 recorded. This is a very worrying situation given the fact that he is a host and expected to rather be the one ensuring that those who feature on his programme are civil and decorous.

In consideration of the above findings, the MFWA makes the following recommendations:

- Leaders of the various political parties should encourage their representatives, affiliates and communicators to focus on issues and desist from using indecent expressions.
- Radio stations, especially presenters/ moderators should handle their programmes with professionalism by desisting from using indecent expressions and insisting on the use of decent expressions by persons who appear on their programmes. Moderators of the various programmes should do well to put in place ground rules for their respective programmes and enforce them.
- 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.
- The electorates are encouraged to follow and consider the findings from the monitoring reports to know which political parties are discussing the issues that are of concern to them and those attacking personalities so as to help inform and guide their voting decisions.