

MONITORING OF INDECENT LANGUAGE ON RADIO

FINDINGS FOR THE PERIOD JULY 1-31, 2020



with funding support from:  **OSIWA** &



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1.0 Introduction

The media continue to play crucial roles in public access to information and serve as channels for sensitisation, awareness creation, public debates and discussions, and campaigns. As a principle and a norm, the media are expected to be professional in the discharge of their duties. During electioneering periods, the media, especially radio, are the biggest platforms used by political parties who seek the mandate of the electorate.

Unfortunately, as a result of unprofessionalism, some media houses allow offensive, provocative, unsubstantiated allegations and other forms of indecent expressions and hate speech that do not bode well for democratic discourse and the peace of the country on their platforms. The situation often gets worse during electioneering periods. Political party officials, supporters, affiliates and assigns take advantage of such media platforms to make expressions without regard for the basic ethos of public communication. The situation is no different in the 2020 electioneering period even amidst the COVID-19 outbreak. Public discourse around the disease and other current affairs and political debates on radio continue to be characterised by indecent expressions.

To help focus radio discussions in the 2020 electioneering period on issues and not personality attacks and other forms of abusive expressions, the Media Foundation for West Africa (MFWA), is implementing a project titled, *Promoting Decent Language and Issues-based Campaigning for Peaceful Elections in Ghana in 2020*. The project is aimed at contributing to peaceful elections through issues-based campaigning devoid of hate speech and indecent expressions that could feed into elections-related violence. The project involves the daily monitoring of selected programmes on radio stations to track and report on the use of hate speech and other indecent expressions by politicians and others who feature on the programmes. It also monitors how presenters on target radio stations handle their respective programmes to ensure that indecent expressions are not tolerated on their programmes. The project 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 political activists and other political 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 35 radio stations in Ghana from July 1-31, 2020. Below are the 35 radio stations that are being monitored under the current phase of the project.

Table 1: List of Radio Stations being Monitored under the Current Phase

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
	Asempa FM
	Adom FM
	Hot FM
	Atinka FM
Ashanti Region	Hello FM
	Ash FM
	Kessben FM
	Obuoba FM
	Angel FM
	Fox FM
Northern Region	Diamond FM
	Radio Justice
	North Star FM
Upper West Region	Radio Progress
Upper East Region	A1 Radio
Savannah Region	PAD FM
Oti Region	Beyond FM
Volta Region	Jubilee FM
Central Region	Pink FM
Western Region	Skyy Power
Bono Region	Tain FM
	Royal FM
	Space FM
North East Region	Eagle FM
Bono East	Classic FM

The monitoring is done based on a validated [monitoring instrument](#). Thirty-five 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 35 radio stations. 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. It also names radio stations on which indecent expressions were made, as well as the conduct of the programme hosts/presenters. The report ends with some recommendations for relevant stakeholders.

2.0 Findings

Over the monitoring period (July 1 - 31), 2,749 radio programmes were monitored on the 35 radio stations. The programmes monitored were news bulletins, political and current affairs discussions aired on the 35 radio stations. Most of the programmes were moderated by males. Over 96 percent of the individuals who participated in the programmes as discussants, guests and texters were also males.

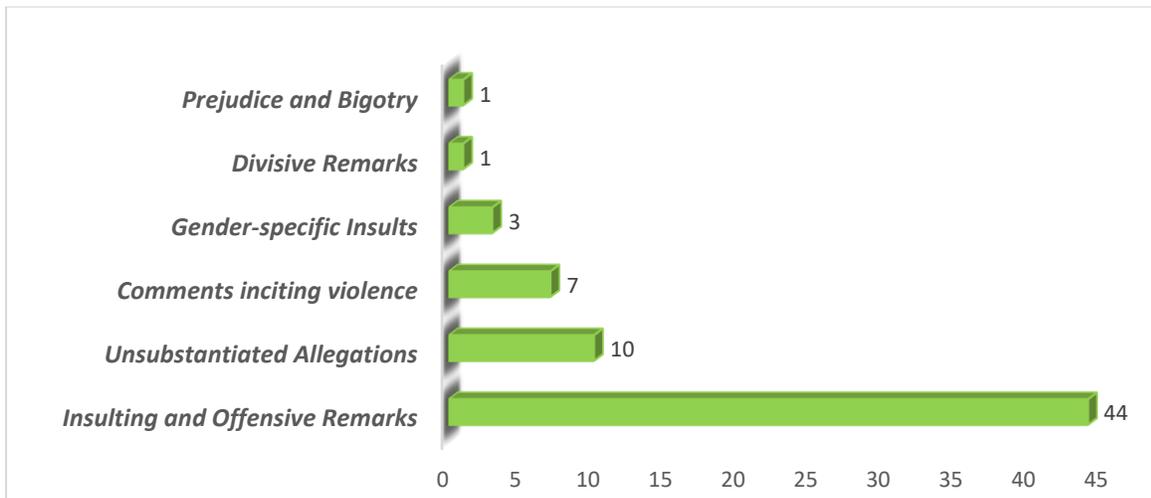
Altogether, 66 abusive and indecent expressions were recorded. The abusive expressions were mostly recorded during the discussion of issues such as pockets of violence at registration centres; mid-year budget review; order to Ghana's Auditor General to proceed on leave; COVID-19 infections at Senior High Schools; President Akufo-Addo's self-isolation; announcement of running mate of the National Democratic Congress (NDC); GPRTU's meeting with government over fares and the arrest of Apostle Kwabena Owusu Agyei.

2.1 Categories of Indecent Expressions Recorded

The 66 indecent expressions that were recorded were made up of six types of indecent expressions – insulting and offensive comments; unsubstantiated allegations; comments inciting violence; gender-specific insults; expressions or comments promoting divisiveness; and expressions promoting prejudice and bigotry.

Figure 1 below indicates the frequency of use of each of the six categories of indecent expressions recorded.

Figure 1: Frequency of Indecent Expressions Recorded



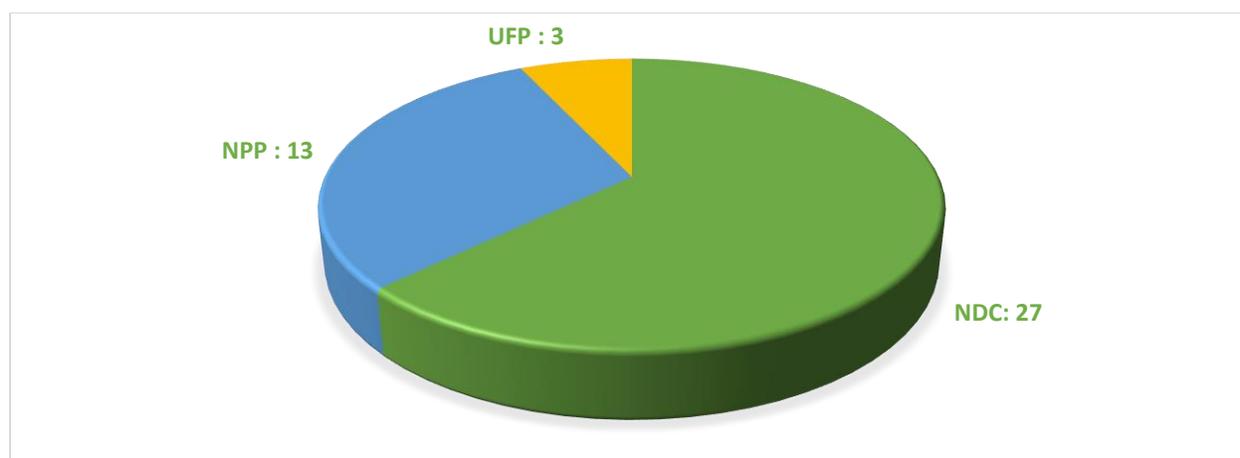
2.2 Political Party/ Group Affiliation of Individuals Who Used Indecent Expressions

In all, 36 individuals made the 66 indecent expressions. These individuals featured on the programmes monitored as hosts, discussants, interviewees and texters. The political party affiliation of seven of the individuals who made abusive remarks could not be established. This is mainly because only persons who represent or are introduced as members of a political party are coded against their respective political parties. Forty-three (65%) out of the 66 indecent expressions recorded were made by political party officials, supporters and affiliates. The remaining 23 (35%) were made by the seven individuals whose political affiliation could not be established.

Officials and affiliates of the three political parties namely the New Patriotic Party (NPP), the National Democratic Congress (NDC) and the United Front Party were cited for the 43 indecent expressions attributed to political parties.

Figure 2 below gives a graphical representation of the frequency of indecent expressions recorded by affiliates of the two main 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 two political parties, as well as the individuals whose political affiliation could not be established are presented.

Table 2: Specific Categories of Indecent Expressions Recorded by Perpetrators

Categories of Indecent Expressions Recorded	Political Affiliation of Perpetrators				
	NDC	NPP	UFP	Not Mentioned	Total
Insulting and Offensive Remarks	16	8	2	18	44
Unsubstantiated Allegations	8	1	0	1	10
Comments Inciting Violence	2	2	1	2	7
Gender-specific Insults	0	1	0	2	3
Expressions or Comments Promoting Divisiveness	1	0	0	0	1
Expressions promoting Prejudice/Bigotry	0	1	0	0	1
Total	27	13	3	23	66

2.4 Specific Expressions Used

Below, the names of the individuals who made the 66 indecent expressions, as well as the radio stations and the dates on which the expressions were made, are placed under the specific type of indecent expression used.

Insulting and Offensive Comments

1. Oheneba Boamah Bennie (political affiliation not mentioned), host of Power FM's *The Battle Ground* – during the July 1, 2020 edition of the programme.
2. Ananpasia Abraham (political affiliation not mentioned) read a text message from Kiyoyo Zambachi a communication officer of the NDC – during Pad FM's mid-day political show *Aboya Milso* aired on July 1, 2020.
3. Danny, NDC communication team member – in an interview on Pink FM's morning show, *Omanbapa Kasa*, aired on July 1, 2020.
4. Listowel Nana Kusi Poku, Executive Secretary of Good Governance Advocacy Ghana and General Secretary of United Front Party (UFP) – **two (2)** during Ahotor FM's *Adekye Mu Nsem* programme aired on July 1, 2020.
5. Joyce Opare, NPP communication team member – during Oman FM's *Boiling Point* programme which was also broadcast live on Ashh FM on July 2, 2020.
6. Afrifa Yamoah Ponko, Former MCE for Ejisu (NDC) – in an interview on OKAY FM's *Ade Akye Abia* aired on July 2, 2020.
7. Ntim Twumasi Kwaku, NPP second vice-chairman for Ejisu Constituency – during Fox FM's *eboborba* programme aired on July 2, 2020.
8. Samuel Adom Botchway, Former DCE of Asikuma Odoben Brakwa (NDC) – during Ahotor FM's *Adekye Mu Nsem programme* on July 3, 2020.
9. Alhaji A. Adams Gafaru, NPP communication team member - during North Star Radio's *Super Morning Show* aired on July 6, 2020.
10. Mutala Surazu, NPP communication team member for Walewale Constituency – during Eagle FM's *Eagle Breakfast* show aired on July 6, 2020.
11. Mugabe Maase (political affiliation not mentioned), host of Power FM's *Inside Politics* programme – during the July 7, 2020 edition of the programme.
12. Oheneba Boamah Bennie (political affiliation not mentioned), host of Power FM's *The Battle Ground* – **three (3)** during the July 8, 2020 edition of the programme.
13. Ibrahim Abdulai, also known as Oli, NDC Wa Central Constituency Youth Organizer – during Radio Progress's *Super Morning Drive* aired on July 9, 2020.
14. Mugabe Maase (political affiliation not mentioned), host of Power FM's *Inside Politics* programme – **two (2)** during the July 9, 2020 edition of the programme.
15. Anita De-Sosoo, former First National Vice-chairperson of the NDC – **four (4)** during Power FM's *Inside Politics* programme aired on July 9, 2020.
16. Oheneba Boamah Bennie (political affiliation not mentioned) – **three (3)** during Power FM's *Inside Politics programme* (the what is trending segment), aired on July 13, 2020.

17. Oheneba Boamah Bennie (political affiliation not mentioned), host of *The Battle Ground* programme on Power FM – during the July 13, 2020 edition of the programme.
18. Samuel Adom Botchway, Former DCE of Asikuma Odoben Brakwa (NDC) – during Ahotor FM's *Adekye Mu Nsem* on July 15, 2020.
19. Ellen Daaku, NPP communication team member – during Oman FM's Evening Political Show, *Boiling Point*, aired on July 14, 2020, and also broadcasted live on Ashh FM.
20. Oheneba Boamah Bennie (political affiliation not mentioned) – during Power FM's *Inside Politics programme* (the what is trending segment), aired on July 14, 2020.
21. Mugabe Maase (political affiliation not mentioned) host of Power FM's *Inside Politics programme* – during the July 15, 2020 edition of the programme.
22. Piesie Okrah (political affiliation not mentioned), news anchor of *Dwaboase* on Power FM – during the July 15, 2020 edition of *Dwaboase*.
23. Mugabe Maase, (political affiliation not mentioned) host of Power FM's *Inside Politics programme* – **three (3)** during the July 16, 2020 edition of the programme.
24. Nana Kay, NPP communication team member – during Happy FM's *Epa Hoa Daben* programme aired on July 28, 2020.
25. Benjamin Kofi Ayeh, Former NPP MP for Upper Denkyira West – during Asempa FM's *Ekosii Sen* programme aired on July 28, 2020.
26. Wuni Ali Abdul-Majeed, NDC communication team member for Walewale Constituency – during Eagle FM's *Eagle Breakfast* show aired on July 29, 2020.
27. Kwaku Boahene, NDC Deputy National Communications Officer – **two (2)** during Peace FM's *The Platform* programme aired on July 29, 2020.
28. Samuel Adom Botchway, Former DCE of Asikuma Odoben Brakwa (NDC) – during Ahotor FM's *Adekye Mu Nsem* programme aired on July 29, 2020.
29. Hajia Dzifa Mariam Ibrahim, a member of the NDC communication team - during Ahotor FM's *Adekye Mu Nsem* programme aired on July 29, 2020.
30. Koku Mawuli Nenegbe, a member of the NDC communication team – during Rainbow Radio's *Morning Show* aired on July 30, 2020.
31. Seth Agyei Yeboah, also known as Nana Kay, a member of the NPP communication team – during Rainbow Radio's *Morning Show* aired on July 30, 2020.
32. Fuseini Donkor, Former DCE for Sekyere Afram Plains (NDC) – during Fox FM's *eboborba* programme aired on July 30, 2020.

Unsubstantiated Allegations

1. Bawa Mubarik, also known as Baari, NDC Former Youth Organiser for Damango Constituency and Communication Team Member for Damango Constituency – during Pad FM's mid-day political show, *Aboya Milso*, aired on July 1, 2020.
2. Kofi Amoabeng, a member of NDC communication team – during Fox FM's afternoon political discussion show *eboborba* aired on July 2, 2020.
3. Kofi Amoabeng, a member of NDC communication team – during Angel FM's morning show *Angel in the morning* programme aired on July 2, 2020.

4. Nurudeen Abass, Ashanti Regional Communications Officer of the NDC – in an interview on Okay FM’s Morning Show, *Adeε Akye Abia*, aired on July 15, 2020.
5. Richard Mano Reuben, a member of the NDC communication team - during Rainbow Radio’s *Morning Show* aired on July 15 or 14, 2020.
6. John Boadu, NPP General Secretary – in an interview on Oman FM’s *National Agenda* aired on July 23, 2020.
7. Christian Donkor, a chartered accountant and auditor (political affiliation not mentioned) – during Oman FM’s *6pm News broadcast* on July 25, 2020.
8. Nurudeen Abass, Ashanti regional communications officer of the NDC – during Fox FM’s *εboborba* programme aired on July 27, 2020.
9. Johnson Asiedu Nketiah, General Secretary of the NDC – in an interview on OKAY FM’s *Adeε Akye Abia* programme aired on July 29, 2020.
10. Fuseini Donkor, Former DCE for Sekyere Afram Plains (NDC) – during Fox FM’s *εboborba* programme aired on July 30, 2020.

Comments Inciting Violence

1. Oheneba Boamah Bennie (political affiliation not mentioned), host of Power FM’s *The Battle Ground* – during the July 1, 2020 edition of the programme.
2. Listowel Nana Kusi Poku, Executive Secretary of Good Governance Advocacy Ghana and General Secretary of United Front Party (UFP) – during Ahotor FM’s *Adekye Mu Nsem* programme aired on July 1, 2020.
3. Stephen Ofosu Agyare, NDC Chairman for Awutu-Senya East – in an interview on Pink FM’s Morning Show, *Omanbapa Kasa*, aired on July 3, 2020.
4. Yakubu Tony Aidoo, NDC Asawase Communication Officer – during Asempa FM’s *Kukurantumi* aired on July 4, 2020.
5. Kwame Baffoe, popularly known as Abronye DC, NPP Bono Regional Chairman – **two (2)** in an interview on Okay FM’s Morning Show, *Adeε Akye Abia* programme aired on July 15, 2020.
6. Nana Okatakyie Afrifa Mensah, host of Happy FM’s *Epa Hoa Daben* programme read a text message from one Don Leo located at Abeka Lapaz (political affiliation not mentioned) – during Happy FM’s *Epa Hoa Daben* show aired on July 27, 2020.

Gender Specific Insults

1. Gordon Asare Bediako (political affiliation not mentioned) who hosted Oman FM’s *Boiling Point* programme aired on July 7, 2020 – **two (2)**. The programme was also broadcast live on Ashh FM.
2. Johnson Ayine, NPP Deputy Communications Director for Upper East Region – during A1 Radio’s *Critical Issues* programme aired on July 10, 2020.

Divisive Remarks

1. Bawa Mubarik, also known as Baari, NDC Former Youth Organiser for Damango Constituency and Communication Team Member for Damango Constituency – during Pad FM’s mid-day political show programme, *Aboya Milso*, aired on July 1, 2020.

Expressions Promoting prejudice and bigotry

1. Nana Kay, NPP Communication team member – during Happy FM’s *Epa Hoa Daben* programme aired on July 28, 2020

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 35 radio stations monitored, 16 recorded indecent expressions. Accra-based Power FM recorded the highest (22) indecent expressions on three of its major programmes – *Inside Politics* (15), *The Battle Grounds* (6) and *Dwaboase* (1). Ahotor FM also based in Accra, recorded 7 indecent expressions – all on the morning show titled, *Adekye Mu Nsem*. Accra-based Oman FM followed with 6 indecent expressions while Kumasi-based Fox FM and Accra-based Okay FM recorded 5 indecent expressions respectively. The frequency of indecent expressions recorded on all the 16 radio stations are presented in Table 3 below:

Table 3: Radio Stations that Recorded Indecent Expressions

Radio Station	Frequency of Indecent Expressions
Power	22
Ahotor FM	7
Oman FM**	6
Fox FM	5
Okay	5
Happy FM	3
Pad FM	3

Rainbow Radio	3
Asempa FM	2
Eagle FM	2
Peace FM	2
Pink FM	2
A1 Radio	1
North Star	1
Radio Progress	1
Angel FM	1
Total	66

*Note: ** Four of the indecent expressions recorded on Accra-based Oman FM were also recorded on Kumasi-based Ashb 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 respective platforms. Findings from the period under review (July 1-30, 2020) show that some moderators directly engaged in the use of indecent expressions. Specifically, Oheneba Boamah Bennie, host of Accra-based Power FM's *The Battle Ground* programme, singlehandedly made 10 indecent expressions, closely followed by Mugabe Maase, host of Power FM's Inside Politics programme, who also recorded seven indecent expressions. Progressively, a number of moderators continue to make efforts to prevent the use of indecent expressions on their platforms. The MFWA commends such moderators and encourages all others to be professional in the discharge of their duties.

3.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

The use of indecent expressions in current affairs and political discourse on radio is quite prevalent. For the period, July 1-31, 2020, a total of 66 indecent expressions were recorded on 16 out of the 35 radio stations monitored. The main culprits of the practice are political party officials, supporters and affiliates of the three political parties in the country, the NDC, the NPP and the UFP. Together, affiliates of the three parties made 65 percent of the indecent expressions recorded. Disturbingly, some radio show hosts/presenters were also captured using abusive expressions. Two moderators on Accra-based Power FM, for instance, together made 26 percent of the indecent expressions recorded. This is a very worrying situation given the fact that show hosts who are expected to encourage civility on air and ensure that those who feature on their respective programmes focus on issues and avoid indecent expressions are themselves culprits in the use of indecent expressions.

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

- Leaders of the various political parties, especially the NDC and the NPP should encourage their representatives, affiliates and communicators to focus on issues in their discourse on radio 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 continue to place ground rules for their respective programmes and ensure guests abide by the rules.
- Radio stations and programme managers must know the reputation and propensity of the use of abusive language on their shows and rescind invitations to such individuals.
- 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 engage in issues-based campaign instead of attacking personalities so as to help inform and guide their voting decisions.



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