

1.0 Introduction

The media, especially radio, during elections, gain momentous dominance as the electorate look up to them for information on the various political parties, their vision, policies, ideologies and what they seek to do for the masses. Similarly, political parties, their activists, affiliates and assigns in reaching out to the masses with their messages, often resort to the use of radio as it remains the most effective citizens' engagement platform in Ghana.

Quite regrettably though, such engagements are often characterised by the high preference for intemperate, indecent and unethical language often manifested in character assassinations, insults, unsubstantiated allegations, unwarranted provocation and outbursts or fury, among others. As evidenced in some countries, such abusive expressions and hate speech have the potential of inciting people or instigating electoral violence during electioneering periods.

To help focus public discourse on radio in the 2020 electioneering period on issues and not personality attacks and other forms of vitriolic expressions, the Media Foundation for West Africa (MFWA), in June 2020 commenced its project titled, *Promoting Decent Language and Issues-based Campaigning for Peaceful Elections in Ghana in 2020*. The project aimed at contributing to peaceful elections through issues-based campaigning devoid of hate speech and indecent expressions before, during and after the 2020 elections.

1.1 Methodology

The project involved daily monitoring of hate speech and abusive language on 60 selected radio stations across the country from the period June 2020 and January 2021. Specifically, the project involved the daily monitoring of expressions used by political activists and other political actors who featured on radio programmes such as news bulletins, political discussions and current affairs discussions. It also monitored how presenters on the target radio stations handled their respective programmes to ensure that indecent expressions were not tolerated on their programmes.

The project was implemented with funding support from the Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA), STAR Ghana Foundation with funding from UKAID and EU, and USAID through CDD-Ghana.

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

This report covers monitoring of **60 radio stations** in Ghana from January 1-31, 2021 (the month after the elections). 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.

Below are the 60 radio stations that are being monitored under the current phase of the project.

Table 1: List of Radio Stations being 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
	Ahotor FM
	Asempa FM
	Adom FM
	Hot FM
	Angel FM
Ashanti Region	Hello FM
	Ash FM
	Kessben FM
	Angel FM
	Fox FM
	Otec FM
	Wontumi Radio
	Zuria FM
Northern Region	Diamond FM
	Dasuma Radio
	Radio Justice
	North Star FM
	Zaa Radio
	Radio Tamale
Eastern Region	Obuoba FM
	Ofie FM
	Goodlife FM

Upper West Region	Radio Progress
	Home Radio
Upper East Region	A1 Radio
	Grune Star
Savannah Region	Pad FM
	Kan FM
	Nkilgi FM
Oti Region	Beyond FM
	Oti Radio
Volta Region	Jubilee FM
	West FM
Central Region	Pink FM
	Darling FM
Western Region	Skyy Power
	Rok FM
	De Beat FM
Western North	Akwaaba FM
Bono Region	Tain FM
	Royal FM
	Space FM
	Nimdeɛ FM
	Akina Radio
	Radio Link
North East Region	Eagle FM
	Loom FM
	Scarp FM
Bono East	Classic FM
Ahafo Region	Success FM
	Genesis Radio

2.0 Findings

Over the monitoring period (January 1 - 31) **2,715**, radio programmes were monitored on the 60 radio stations. The programmes monitored were news bulletins, and political/current affairs discussions aired on the 60 radio stations. Most of the programmes were moderated by males. Over 96% (percent) of the individuals who participated in the programmes as discussants, guests, callers and texters were also males.

Nineteen (19) indecent expressions were recorded over the 31-day monitoring period. The topics/issues which led to the use of the **19** indecent expressions were the Election Petition at

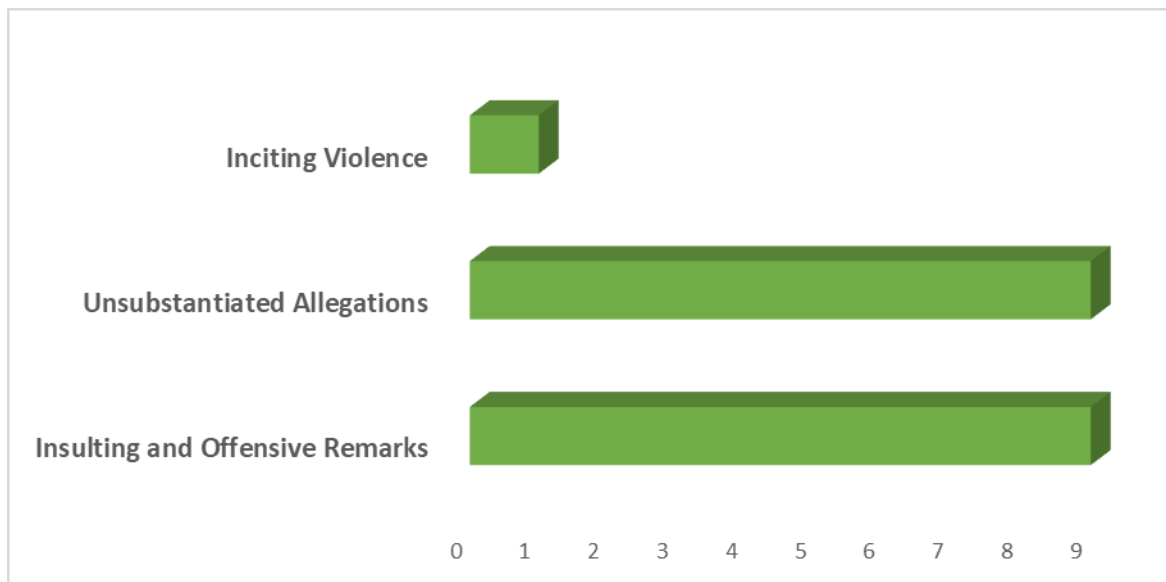
the Supreme Court; the swearing in of MP's elect to the 8th Parliament; Rise in Covid-19 cases; and the burial of Former President Jerry John Rawlings.

2.1 Categories of Indecent Expressions Recorded

The **19 indecent expressions** that were recorded comprised three types of indecent expressions – Insulting and Offensive comments; Unsubstantiated allegations and Comments Inciting Violence.

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

Figure 1: Frequency of Indecent Expressions Recorded



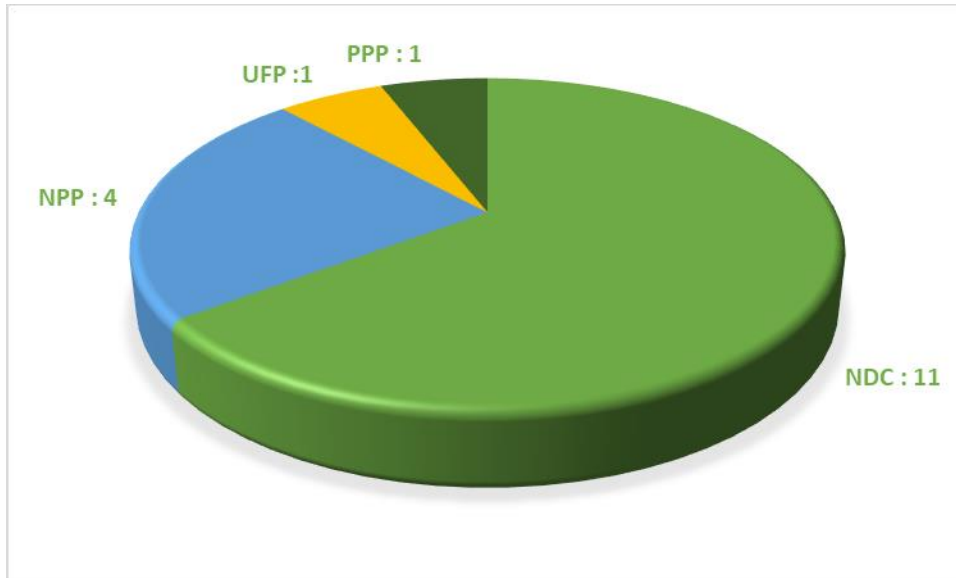
2.2 Political Party/ Group Affiliation of Individuals Who Used Indecent Expressions

Altogether **16 individuals made the 19 indecent expressions**. These individuals featured on the programmes monitored as hosts, discussants and interviewees. Fourteen (14) out of the 16 individuals who made these indecent expressions are affiliated to a political party. The affiliation of the remaining 2 individuals could not be established. This is because only persons who represent or are introduced as members of a political party are coded against their respective political parties.

Political party officials, supporters and affiliates made 17 out of the 19 (89%) of the indecent expressions recorded. The remaining 2 (11%) indecent expressions were made by the 2 individuals whose political affiliation could not be established.

Officials and affiliates of three political parties namely the New Patriotic Party (NPP), the National Democratic Congress (NDC), the Progressive People’s Party (PPP) and the United Front Party (UFP) were cited for the indecent expressions.

Figure 2 below gives a graphical representation of the frequency of indecent expressions recorded by affiliates of the three political parties.



Note: Individuals who used indecent expressions but their political party or group affiliation was not mentioned on the programmes monitored are not included in Figure 2 above

In **Table 2** below, the categories of indecent expressions made by affiliates of the three 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					Total
	NDC	NPP	PPP	UFP	Not Mentioned	
Insulting and Offensive Remarks	4	2	1	1	1	9
Unsubstantiated Allegations	7	1	0	0	1	9
Inciting Violence	0	1	0	0	0	1
Total	11	4	1	1	2	19

2.3 Specific Expressions Used

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

Unsubstantiated Allegation

1. Kwame Baffoe, also known as Abronye DC, NPP Bono Regional Chairman - **one (1)** during January 5, 2021 edition of Oman FM's *Boiling Point* programme. The programme was also broadcast live on Kumasi based Ashh FM.
2. A.B.A Fuseini, NDC MP for Sagnarigu – **one (1)** during Asempa FM's *εkosii Sen* aired on January 5, 2021.
3. An Executive Member of the NDC in the Asunafo North Constituency popularly known as Sir Joe – **one (1)** during Genesis Radio's *Genesis in the Morning* aired on January 12, 2021.
4. NDC Bono East Organizer introduced as Kofi - **one (1)** in an interview on Genesis Radio's *Genesis in the Morning* aired on January 13, 2021.
5. George Gad, NDC's Constituency Secretary for Tarkwa -Nsuaem - **one (1)** in an interview on Genesis Radio's *Genesis in the Morning* aired on January 13, 2021.
6. Emmanuel Quarshie also known as Hitman, host of *Akina in the Morning* - **one (1)** during the January 14, 2021 edition of the *Akina in the Morning* programme on Akina FM.
7. Don Dallas Williams, NDC Eastern Regional Communication Officer – **one (1)** during Obuoba FM's *Obuoba Kasa* programme, aired on January 19, 2021.
8. Nurudeen Abass, NDC Deputy Ashanti Regional Communication Officer – **one (1)** during Fox FM's *Morning Drive* aired on January 20, 2021.
9. Don Dallas Williams, NDC Eastern Regional Communication Officer – **one (1)** during Obuoba FM's *Obuoba Kasa* programme, aired on January 25, 2021.

Insulting and Offensive Remarks

1. Richard E.A Sarpong, also known as Father Casford, part of the leadership of NDC Galant Cadres Association (Central Region branch)– **one (1)** in a phone interview on Accra FM's Mid-Day News aired on January 4, 2021.
2. Joshua Hamidu Akamba, NDC National Organizer – **one (2)** during Power FM's *Dwaboase* programme aired on January 6, 2021.
3. Richard Boadu, PPP Ashanti Regional Chairman - **one (1)** during Wontumi Radio's *Morning Show* which picked the feed from Wontumi TV on January 8, 2021.
4. Dennis 'Miracles' Aboagye, NPP Former MCE for Akuapem North – **one (1)** during Peace FM's *The Platform* aired on January 11, 2021.
5. Kwabena Kwakye, host of *Boiling Point* – **one (1)** during Oman FM's *National Agenda* programme aired on January 13, 2021.

6. Listowel Nana Kusi Poku, Executive Secretary of Good Governance Advocacy Ghana and General Secretary of United Front Party (UFP) – **one (1)** during Ahotor FM’s *Adekeye Mu Nsem* programme aired on January 14, 2021.

7. Mawuli Koku Nenegbe, NDC Communication Team Member – **one (1)** during Rainbow Radio’s *Frontline* programme aired on January 15, 2021.

8. Albert Kwasi Anderson, NPP Communication Team Member – **one (1)** during Obuoba FM’s *Obuoba Kasa* programme, aired on January 27, 2021.

Comments Inciting Violence

1. Kwame Baffoe, also known as Abronye DC, NPP Bono Regional Chairman - **one (1)** during January 5, 2021 edition of the Oman FM’s *Boiling Point* programme. The programme was also broadcast live on Kumasi based Ashh 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.

2.4 Radio Stations and Incidents of Indecent Expressions

13 out of the **60** stations monitored over the 31-day period recorded the **19** indecent expressions. Accra based Oman FM recorded three incidents across two programmes *Boiling Point* (2) and *National Agenda* (1). Goaso-based Genesis Radio and Nkawkaw-based Obuoba FM recorded three indecent expression each across their morning shows *Genesis in the Morning* and *Obuoba Kasa* respectively. Kumasi based Ashh FM and Accra based Power FM followed with two incidents each across *Boiling Point* and *Dwaboase* programmes respectively. The frequency of indecent expressions recorded on all the 13 radio stations are presented in Table 3 below:

Table 3: Radio Stations that Recorded Indecent Expressions

Radio Station	Frequency of Indecent Expressions
Oman FM	3
Genesis Radio	3
Obuoba FM	3
Akina FM	1
Ashh FM**	2
Power FM	2

Asempa FM	1
Wontumi Radio	1
Ahotor FM	1
Peace FM	1
Accra FM	1
Fox FM	1
Rainbow Radio	1
Total	19

*Note: ** Two (2) of the indecent expressions recorded on Accra-based Oman FM were also recorded on Kumasi-based Ashb FM.*

2.4 Analysis and Trends

January 2021 recorded the lowest number of indecent expressions since the monitoring started in June 2020. Below are some of the key factors:

- a) A lot of the political programmes had taken a different format where either a single political communicator was allowed on a show or none appeared at all thereby resulting in a reduced incidence of abusive exchanges.
- b) Some leading perpetrators of abusive language over the previous months were no longer featuring on these shows or allowed to engage in the use of indecent expressions when they featured on shows.
- c) Some of the abusive radio stations stopped their political programmes completely; while others reduced the frequency of these programmes on their network.

2.5 Assessment of Moderation of Programmes by Hosts

Progressively, a number of moderators made efforts to prevent the use of indecent expressions on their platforms albeit a few who were still adamant. Between June and December 2020, there was a monthly average of nineteen (19) indecent expressions by show hosts and moderators. However, particularly in the month of January 2021 the monitoring shows a drop 62%.

Conclusion

Undoubtedly, the naming and shaming strategy served as an effective deterrent for the use of hate speech and pro-violence campaign language on radio and also served as a measure or gauge for decency of communication on radio especially during elections and a measure for media professionalism.

A trend analyses of the 60 radio stations monitored show some significant reductions in the use of abusive language on 12 radio stations that were cited right at the inception of the project in June. It is refreshing to note that overall, there were notable reductions in the use of abusive language on these stations as shown in the table below.

Table 4: Trend Analysis of some 12 radio stations showing significant reductions in use of abusive language over the monitoring period

Radio Station	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January
Oman FM	25	6	28	19	14	12	18	3
Ashh FM	11	4	28	11	14	9	11	2
Power FM	12	22	14	8	15	8	7	2
Happy FM	9	3	1	0	0	0	0	0
Eagle FM	7	2	1	0	0	2	0	0
Tain FM	7	0	7	10	4	0	0	0
Obuoba	6	0	0	3	5	5	3	3
Accra FM	5	0	0	10	6	8	6	1
Ahotor FM	5	7	0	1	1	3	3	1
Okay FM	4	5	0	1	3	2	1	0
Radio Justice	3	0	0	1	1	1	0	0
Wontumi Radio	0	0	34	22	13	22	8	1



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