



**Media News**  
Media Southern Africa

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## 1 AIPPA turns independent Zimbabwean media into the enemy

By Ish Mafundikwa

**The signing of the AIPPA into law by President Mugabe days after his controversial re-election in March 2002 was like a declaration of war on non-government media. After a difficult relationship with the non-government media over the years, the infamous AIPPA (Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act) makes an enemy of whoever tries to present the Zimbabwe story as it is.**

After repeating the lie that the British are behind Zimbabwe's problem because they want to re-colonise Zimbabwe, it became easy for the government to cast those who dare question its policies as enemies. Journalists in the 'independent' media are the targets, while those who work for government media can demonise, insult and lie with impunity.



Ish Mafundikwa  
Foto: Brendan Keogh ©

The architect of the act is none other than Zimbabwe's leading political chameleon, Jonathan Moyo. For years a fierce critic of President Mugabe, he re-invented himself as a loyal member of the ruling party and is now Minister of State for Information and Publicity.

Since it's becoming law, numerous journalists have been arrested and charged for violating sections of the act but the government is still to win a conviction. Whatever the outcome of the cases, the fact remains that if a journalist writes something the government does not agree with, he or she can be arrested and detained for a night or two or even longer in police cells.

### *'Admission of guilt'*

From personal experience, that in itself is punishment enough. Last February I was a 'guest' of the police for more than twenty-four hours. Not for breaching any section of AIPPA but for trying to alert other journalists that a colleague from 'The Daily News' was being arrested.

I was charged with 'Undermining of police authority' under the equally oppressive Public Order and Security Act (POSA), which is applied selectively against those who dare question the policies of Mr. Mugabe.

My 'crime' attracts a fine of not more than Z\$20 000 or imprisonment not exceeding two years or both. The police were however willing to let me go if I paid a Z\$3 000 'admission of guilt' fine. I refused, choosing to go to court the next day. For spurning the police offer, I was detained overnight. I was released without charge the next day.

*Obnoxious piece of legislation*

AIPPA lists a number of 'rights' that a journalist enjoys. Rights, which can only be enjoyed if one is accredited by a commission, appointed by minister Moyo. To be accredited one must be a Zimbabwean citizen or have permanent residence status.

Some (including Moyo) have argued that this creates space for Zimbabwean journalists to work for foreign media organisation. The truth however is that it is easier for the authorities to deal with local errant journalists than with foreigners. Foreigners can only be accredited for a limited period.

To be accredited one has to fill in a form that gives such personal information as marital status, passport number, residential address and qualifications.

Before, media organisations vowed they would defy the act. But by the deadline most journalists had applied for accreditation. While most journalists have received their accreditation cards, a few have had their applications turned down.

Some, including this writer and the majority of reporters at 'The Daily News', have refused to legitimise this obnoxious piece of legislation. 'The Daily News' and the Independent Journalists Association of Zimbabwe among others are challenging the constitutionality of the act in the Supreme Court.

*Lack of support*

In the meantime we cannot get accreditation to cover parliament or attend government press conferences. I think it is a very small price to pay for not compromising. Of course we are breaking a law and face heavy penalties when the government decides to act but some of us feel very strongly about this assault on freedom of expression.

The police however are as always quick to use laws such as AIPPA to harass innocent citizens. The weekend after my night in jail, I was in a group of reporters when police who demanded our 'licences to be journalists' approached us. I protested that they had no right to ask for the cards and produced my national identification card. I was only released after being taken to the police station 'for clarification.'

The most difficult part of the sad state of affairs for journalists in Zimbabwe is the lack of support from media organisations. More than a month after my arrest, I am still to hear from any one of the organisations that rushed to issue statements about my arrest. I am lucky in that one of the organisations I free-lance for provided me with a lawyer when I got arrested. I feel sorry for those not so lucky to have the connections I have.

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## 2 Journalism in Zimbabwe: A Most Dangerous Vocation

Background

By Tawanda Hondora

**The practice of journalism in Zimbabwe is not for the faint-hearted. The existence of legislation, such as Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA); the Broadcasting Services Act (BSA); and the Public Order and Security Act (POSA), renders freedom of expression and of the press, unlawful. Coupled with a breakdown of the rule of law, and partisan law enforcement, journalism independent of the government is an impossible vocation.**

Zimbabwe's Constitution guarantees basic rights and freedoms enjoyed in most democracies in the world, and in particular section 20 entrenches freedom of expression. This notwithstanding, journalists are routinely detained, assaulted, tortured and denied basic rights by government agents, for merely carrying out their activities. It is impossible for journalists to obtain prosecution because the perpetrators of these heinous acts are usually the police or government sponsored agents.<sup>1</sup>

One may then ask: If the Constitution entrenches most of the basic political rights, such as the right to protection of the law<sup>2</sup>, why are journalists unable to enforce their rights by legally compelling the police to investigate and prosecute complaints?

Tortured by the army in 1999, journalists Mark Chavunduka and Ray Choto when faced with police prosecution inaction made a court application compelling the Attorney General to investigate and prosecute those responsible.<sup>3</sup>

Despite a Court order, no prosecution has been initiated by the State. The government simply refuses to uphold the law, or recognise court judgements, most of which it ignores with contempt. This case illustrates that

- (1) victims do not automatically obtain protection of the law,
- (2) that they must be willing to challenge the system,
- (3) they must have sufficient financial resources to initiate litigation.

With the Zimbabwean economy imploding, very few journalists will have sufficient resources to challenge the system.

Moreover, there is empirical proof that with the judiciary substantially compromised by the government, politically contentious cases are given to a select few and mostly recently appointed judges, who in the majority of cases cause inexplicable delays in passing judgements. Judgement in Capital Radio's<sup>4</sup> application challenging the constitutionality of the Broadcasting Services Act, filed in 2000 is yet to be passed.

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<sup>1</sup> Agents such as the Central Intelligence Officers, Youth Trained Militia, War Veterans, or ZANU PF Supporters, usually perpetrate these offences.

<sup>2</sup> Refer to Article 18(1) of the Constitution.

<sup>3</sup> Chavunduka and Another v. Minister of Home Affairs and Another, SC/36/2000

<sup>4</sup> Capital Radio is a private company that has sought to set up a private radio station in competition to that of the government, to no avail.

With ZANU PF commanding a majority in parliament, all three pillars of State militate against journalists enforcing their rights under the Constitution.

#### *Government Control of the Media*

Through AIPPA and the BSA the government created a system through which it controls content of publications, the practice and employment of journalists. On pain of criminal sanction, journalists are required to register with, are disciplined by, and deregistered at the instance of a Media Commission; which Commission is set up and enjoys tenure of office at the instance of the Minister of Information in the President's Office. Publishing inaccurate information, referred to in the Act as peddling falsehoods, constitutes a criminal offence. The government is the only entity permitted to create and operate broadcasting stations.

It is illegal for journalists to comment on political issues, particularly in a manner that questions, satirises, or ridicules the President, or public figures; or in a manner, which, according to the government is deemed to cause alarm and despondency.

#### *Supporting organisations*

In such an environment, even associations of journalists are rendered inane. Under POSA it is illegal to petition the government or parliament for amendments to media repressive laws. This is considered unlawful and many journalists have been detained while protesting. But it must be noted that the several journalists' organisations that exist in Zimbabwe lack a collective sense of purpose, and as a result have buckled easily under pressure, with some associations aligning themselves with the government.

The Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) attempts to rally all journalists and associations to common themes and issues, often assisting in recording data on media repression, a crucial role for information dissemination and for history's sake. The Media Defence Fund, created under the auspices of MISA assists journalists with financial and legal resources to challenge arrests of journalists and legislation, prosecuting cases in both civil and criminal courts. This has been by far the most practical assistance that Non-Governmental Organisations have given to Zimbabwe's strife-stricken journalism community.

#### *Conclusion*

Unless and until media repressive laws are challenged and struck out by the Supreme Court on the basis of their unconstitutionality, or the government has a change of heart and causes the amendment if not complete repeal of the legislation, journalism in Zimbabwe will remain the forbidden vocation.

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#### **Endnotes**

I Agents such as the Central Intelligence Officers, Youth Trained Militia, War Veterans, or ZANU PF Supporters, usually perpetrate these offences.

II Refer to Article 18(1) of the Constitution.

III Chavunduka and Another v. Minister of Home Affairs and Another, SC/36/2000

IV Capital Radio is a private company that has sought to set up a private radio station in competition to that of the government, to no avail.

### 3 Aluta Continua Carlos!

Comment

By Jeanette Minnie

**Carlos Cardoso was always destined to go out in a blaze of glory. He was a smouldering revolutionary consumed with the passion of building a just society in Mozambique. Investigative journalism was his choice of weapon. Since the murder of Cardoso, Mozambican journalists have told various fact-finding missions, that they are too afraid to report on the subject of high-level corruption.**

In the last years before his murder on 22 November 2000 he deliberately set out to develop an understanding of the inner workings of financial institutions. Deductive logic told him that the modest size of the legal economy could not account for the country's dramatic banking and property development boom. High-level corruption was taking place. Two brothers from a prominent banking family, one of their business partners, and three gunmen hired by them were found guilty of his murder on January 31 this year.

From the third day onwards during November last year, until the end of January, the trial of the six men was broadcast live on state television and radio every day, right up to the final verdict, despite serious objections by the public prosecutor. Presiding Judge Augusto Paulino refused to impose a ban saying that attempts to do so were unrealistic. His only ruling was to request the media for safety reasons not to show the faces of witnesses (rather than the accused).

#### *Sex workers' clinic*

By all accounts, the trial dominated public life in Mozambique with citizens on every street corner, in every office and in every house, glued to their television or radio sets. The CPU News reported in its February edition that "one aid agency official recalls walking into a sex workers' clinic to find the TV in the waiting room, normally pumping out MTV or another music channel, showing the trial minute by minute instead". Saturation coverage in both the public and private press also took place.

This turn of events is dramatic. Two years ago no one seriously believed that Cardoso's assassins would even be found, particularly when the police investigation was seriously bungled during the early stages.

Serious irregularities also obstructed the case, such as attempts to intimidate the judge and the prosecuting attorney, difficulties in obtaining the autopsy report and the fraudulent introduction of mobile phones into the prison for the use of the accused who were seeking to obstruct the work of the investigators. And finally the disappearance from prison of the main assassin shortly before the trial (he was eventually re-arrested in South Africa days after being found guilty in absentia by the court).

The Attorney-General of Mozambique, Joaquim Madeira, has said in a recent report to Parliament that when all six men were detained "we understood that this was not a



simple murder motivated by personal revenge or the like, but a real case of organised crime involving professional hitmen, a great deal of money and corruption”.

*So-called leaked copy*

However, the President of the Supreme Court of Mozambique, Mario Mangaze, criticised some sections of the media for its coverage of the case in a speech on March 3, at the opening of the judicial year. He said while there were journalists who wrote with "rigour, objectivity and a constructive spirit, even when they make harsh criticisms", there were also cases that eroded the confidence of the public and other institutions in the media.

For instance, the weekly paper “Zambeze” published a so-called leaked copy of the verdict the day before it was delivered. But what it published bore little similarity to what was read out in court the following day, when the six murderers were sentenced to long prison terms.

Mangaze warned that "when abuses of the press reach a certain level, even when committed by a minority, they may lead in the mid or long term, to the loss or limitation of the rights and freedoms of journalists”.

He continued: “In certain quarters corporatist movements have arisen against press abuses. When movements like this are set up and persist, they may endanger fundamental freedoms that cost a great deal to attain - the freedom of the press and individual rights”. Some in Mozambique, notably opposition political parties, have misconstrued his statements as an attack on press freedom.

*Chissano junior*

The impact of the murder of Carlos Cardoso on Mozambican society is destined to continue for some time. Allegations made in the trial by some of the accused and other witnesses implicating Nyimpine Chissano, the oldest son of Mozambican President Joaquim Chissano, are under investigation.

They claim that Chissano junior paid for the murder. Since the murder of Cardoso, Mozambican journalists have told various fact-finding missions, including this author, that they are too afraid to report on the subject of high-level corruption.

Only time and a continued determination on the part of the Mozambican government and its law enforcement agencies to effectively combat organised crime will restore their confidence.

In the meantime, it has taken the death of Carlos Cardoso to break new ground in the area of public access to information in Mozambique in view of the unprecedented live public media coverage of his trial.

The government has been forced to acknowledge and focus on high-level corruption in the country. Internationally, this is also one of the very few cases in the world where the murderers of journalists have not escaped with “impunity” – a major grievance of all media freedom organisations in the world.

Carlos has remained a revolutionary – even from the other side of the grave. It will remain the duty of journalists in Mozambique to maintain his legacy by being brave enough to continue exposing corruption in high places with professional integrity.

*Jeanette Minnie is an advisor to NiZA on the issue of freedom of expression. She has been a director of the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) and the Freedom of Expression Institute (FXI), South Africa.*

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## 4 Lack of press freedom in the electronic spotlight

Action Alerts

By Yvonne Heselmans

**Action Alert! Human rights and media organisations and related lobby organisations receive daily briefings via the Internet regarding the latest press freedom violations worldwide. Those responsible are spotlighted 'electronically' by the Action Alerts that are disseminated to all nations. However, the large amounts of worrying reports are not matched by the same amount of really vigilant co-ordinated follow-up actions.**

Action Alerts are factual reports on torture and detention of journalists; besides, repressive government measures to muzzle journalists and restrict independent media are also closely monitored. The aim of all of this is to stand up for the freedom of expression and the right to information for everybody (section 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights).

A major organisation involved in the dissemination of this information is Canada-based IFEX, the International Freedom of Expression Exchange. The Action Alert Network is one of the central components of IFEX. IFEX member organisations submit almost daily reports about violations in their own region to the head offices; the head offices subsequently circulate the information electronically to various parts of the world.

New members that have never drawn up Action Alerts are offered training by IFEX. It is thanks to this support that one of NiZA's new partners, Journalist En Dangers (JED), is now also involved in reporting press freedom violations from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). MISA's head office in Namibia, responsible for Actions Alerts regarding the media situation in southern Africa, has been a member of IFEX since a few years.

### *Remarks*

The globally disseminated Action Alerts draw the attention to violations of the freedom of the press. A few remarks can be made though. Actual co-ordinated follow-up action is rare in comparison with the stream of worrying information, and so are concrete legal assistance to journalists and punitive sanctions against the culprits.

There are exceptions, of course. The Committee to Protect Journalists, an internationally respected organisation that is based in Canada, sends complaints signed by officials to those violating the freedom of the press. 'Article 19' institutes legal proceedings whenever possible and strengthens the capacity of local media to monitor and protest against institutional and informal censorship. In the Netherlands the Dutch Journalists' Association maintains a fund that enables it to come to the rescue of threatened journalists.

Local organisations are also active in southern Africa. In March JED took up arms against the DRC government's taking the 'Amazone' radio and TV station off the air.

MISA Zimbabwe, among other things, established a 'Legal Defence Fund', while FXI supports legal aid counsel to journalists.

#### *Lacking sanctions*

These are important initiatives which merit to be internationally supported, legally, financially and politically, to a much greater extent than they are at present, not only by journalists, donors, lawyers and human rights organisations, but also by the United Nations and the governments that have signed international conventions on the Freedom of Expression. Resolutions could be adopted and sanctions applied against governments that violate these conventions.

This is why MISA wants to call a greater deal of attention within southern Africa to the increasing numbers of journalists in the region that are being muzzled. On May 3<sup>rd</sup>, International Freedom of Expression Day, it will launch a grand campaign entitled 'Journalist under Fire'.

#### *Journalist under Fire*

MISA also wants to appeal to Western organisations to support 'Journalist under Fire'. Presently the international support comes solely from Dutch journalists. This approach carries the major advantage, when compared with initiatives like those mentioned above, that it is centred on one region only; hopefully this will lead to the development of sustained exchanges of information and contacts, and consequently a mutual involvement with one another between journalists in southern Africa and the Netherlands. NiZA acts as an intermediary in the Netherlands.

Kees Schaepman, a Dutch journalist, and NiZA's media expert Jeanette Minnie are involved in the initiative. Last year they, together with MISA, gave a workshop in South Africa aimed at getting to know from media organisations at the spot what type of support they expect of Dutch journalists.

#### *Exchanges*

'What our colleagues in southern Africa wanted most was for us to provide funding for journalists who are in jail and need proper legal counsel. A so-called "Legal Defence Fund" like the one put up by MISA Zimbabwe,' Kees Schaepman explains.

Schaepman emphasises that such funds only make sense if a system is in place in southern Africa for effectively channelling money to where it is most needed. Therefore MISA has reserved more staff time to developing the 'Journalist under Fire' campaign and setting up exchanges with colleagues in the Netherlands.

Together with NiZA Kees Schaepman will organise a workshop for Dutch journalists, to discuss the question of how they can actually implement the 'Journalist under Fire' project at the Dutch side, in co-operation with existing and active organisations such as the Committee to Protect Journalists, the Dutch Journalists' Association and Article 19.

A follow-up workshop with Kees Schaepman and Jeanette Minnie is scheduled for May and will again be organised by MISA, aiming at once again discussing the issue of how to implement the Dutch-Southern African project in more concrete ways.

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**More information:**

International Freedom of Expression Exchange [www.ifex.org](http://www.ifex.org)

Reporters sans Frontières [www.rsf.fr](http://www.rsf.fr)

Journaliste en danger [www.jed-congo.org](http://www.jed-congo.org)

Article 19 [www.article19.org](http://www.article19.org)

Committee to Protect Journalists [www.cpj.org](http://www.cpj.org)

Dutch Association for Journalists [www.villamedia.nl](http://www.villamedia.nl)

## 5 "The necessity for FXI has never been greater"

Interview with head of Anti-Censorship Program

By Henk Rossouw

**Now that South Africa has a Constitution enshrining the right to freedom of expression, donors may think that the country no longer needs The Freedom of Expression Institute (FXI), which has its origins in the fight against censorship under apartheid. "We are arguing against that tide," says Kimani Simon Ndung'u, the head of FXI's Anti-Censorship Program, established in July 2002. "The necessity has never been greater."**

Certainly over the last few years, says Mr. Ndung'u, the FXI has noticed a new trend in South Africa towards censorship, subtle but worrying. For example, the government used the apartheid-era Arms Procurement Act to keep trade negotiations over the controversial purchase of R60-billion worth of arms behind closed doors, out of reach of journalists.



Simon Ndung'u  
foto H. Rossouw©

When the Campaign for Open Media and the Anti-Censorship Action Group, both organizations which built up their reputation under apartheid, merged in 1994 to form FXI, one of the organization's first aims was to ensure the repeal or amendment of laws inhibiting freedom of expression, like the outdated Protection of Information Act.

### *Broadcast Amendment Bill*

Since then FXI has also kept on eye on new legislation which constricts the media and freedom of expression in general. FXI played a key role in the negotiations that turned the draft version of the Broadcast Amendment Bill -- which stated South Africa's public broadcaster must check editorial policy directly with the Minister of Communication, and deleted clauses guaranteeing freedom of expression -- into a more reasonable document.

Historically, FXI's image has been centred on safeguarding a free press. However, Mr. Ndung'u says, FXI is trying to open up the definition of freedom of expression to include protecting ordinary peoples' right to communicate, especially to the media.

Last year, for example, the steel giant Iscor obtained a high court order stopping Vanderbijlpark residents from speaking to the media about the pollution of the area. FXI were prepared to challenge the court order in the Constitutional Court, until Iscor finally backed down. That the court was prepared to grant the court order in the first place, contrary to the Constitution, says Mr. Ndung'u, is why South Africa still needs the FXI.

### *Shift in focus*

Since 1997, FXI's longstanding defence fund -- for paying for the legal costs in cases involving press freedom -- has been widened to include any legal case where freedom

of expression is on trial. At the same time, South Africa's media relies on FXI's reputation. Mr. Ndung'u gets three or more requests for intervention every week, ranging from the manhandling of journalists by Mpumalanga officials to the arrest of SA journalists reporting in Kenya on the Mombassa terror attack for their "Middle Eastern appearance".

Mr. Ndung'u's daily work reflects a shift in FXI's focus towards educating the South African public about freedom of expression, rather than concentrating solely on intervention. Over the next six weeks, until the Anti-Terrorism Bill comes up for debate in Parliament, Mr. Ndung'u will be conducting an intensive awareness campaign, involving workshops, press conferences, lectures, and culminating in a protest march.

FXI is concerned over how the upcoming Anti-Terrorism Bill, by granting SA's law enforcement agencies too much power, will impact on freedom of expression. For journalists, the consequences of the bill, as it stands, means they will have no choice but to testify in court if called as witnesses, endangering their independence, because they are seen collaborating with the government, and their ethical obligations to their sources.

#### *Section 205*

When photojournalist Benny Gool was called by the state, under Section 205 of the Criminal Procedure Act, as a witness in the 2001 murder trial of gangster Rashied Staggie by the Muslim vigilante group PAGAD, FXI lobbied until the state finally withdrew the subpoena. Mr. Ndung'u, a lawyer by training, argues passionately about the fine points of Section 205: If a journalist can prove there is "just cause", as in Benny Gool's case, the law states he need not testify. But, the Anti-Terrorism Bill may soon close that loophole.

FXI's Anti-Censorship Program has faced criticism from the head of the South African National Editor's Forum, Matatha Tsedu, for being "too radical" -- there should be room for negotiation on the question of whether the state can call journalists as witnesses or not. So Mr. Ndung'u is looking forward to a media law debate tomorrow at the Pretoria Technikon where both he and Mr. Tsedu are panellists for a debate on Section 205. It's a sign of democracy that they are, at least, debating the exact definition of press freedom.

More information: <http://fxi.org.za>

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## 6 Winds of change blowing through Women's Media Watch



Partner Profile

### Marieke Rodenburg

**The weather is rather stormy in the offices of Women's Media Watch. A large reorganisation is on, intending to restore the ship's course. The need for a body that keeps an eye on South African media as far as their reporting on women is evident. Besides, there is room for some improvement as regards women's access to the media. The organisation in Cape Town doesn't lack the determination to enter into that battle, but for this to succeed a number of organisational changes are needed.**

The role of Women's Media Watch (WMW) has to be viewed against the background of the South African situation. South Africa is a country in transition; its new constitution clearly stresses its anti-racist and anti-sexist ambitions. Although the media could play a major role in this development, they are lagging behind.

It is precisely the contribution that can be made to society by women, which is paid hardly any attention to and stereotypes are rife. Consequently, the media don't take the matter seriously. Violence aimed at women, for instance in combination with a problem like HIV/Aids, is an issue that they do not consider newsworthy.

In fact Women's Media Watch was born as an answer to this lack of attention on the part of the media and of the failing access of women to information and to the media. It tries to talk the media into mending their ways by means of militant action, advocacy, training and research.

#### *Rural areas*

WMW has known ups and downs since its inception in 1995, when a small group of women founded the organisation under the umbrella of the then Community Arts Project - that has been renamed Mediaworks since. Originally WMW could function largely on the basis of the efforts of a great number of volunteers, with funds conspicuously lacking.

Two years later Mediaworks was thoroughly reorganised; WMW gained a greater degree of independence, as had been envisaged from the outset. Members of various organisations and NGOs are occupying key positions within the organisation; they, in fact, determine the course it will take.

WMW focuses on women in the rural areas, which makes WMW, the first organisation of its kind in southern Africa, unique. WMW aims at improving contacts between local media and their established counterparts.



*New course*

WMW gained full independence in the summer of 2002 at last. Today a reorganisation is on, primarily provoked by the departure of a number of prominent staff and lacking funds. There is, moreover, some uncertainty among members about the question of what course WMW should pursue; this tends to jeopardise the status the organisation has gained.

The development of the organisation is facilitated by the support of a number of partners, among which NiZA ranks first. Women's Media Watch will be incorporated shortly; advocacy and activism will be its main tasks. Training and media productions, the two other pillars of the organisation, will serve as a source of funds.

*Advocacy*

The most important and most recent example of advocacy has been the campaign waged against the national broadcaster SABC in September 2002. In a petition handed to SABC by WMW together with the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) attention was drawn to the underrepresentation of women, South Africans, the poor and the rural communities in the TV station's reports, its programming and advertisements.

Women on TV are mainly given the role of entertainers, musicians and actors rather than productive career women. Besides, WMW demanded a reconsideration the SABC's gender policy, the major bone of contention being the small number of women involved at decision-making within SABC. A large meeting accompanied the handing of the petition while many other organisations issued statements on the issue. Although SABC accepted the petition, concrete results haven't emerged so far.

The coming months Women's Media Watch will wage a full-out effort for more gender-sensitive reporting by the media in South Africa. The good will is certainly not lacking. As a cartoon pinned up in the WMW offices says, 'Don't ask how far we are from the top; you'd rather ask how high we have climbed.'

More information: [www.womensmediawatch.org.za/](http://www.womensmediawatch.org.za/)

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## 7 Mobilising the critical mass with a cheerfully designed case

Review: Advocacy Training Toolkit

By Yvonne Heselmans

**Posters of a local radio station, Freedom of the Press bumper stickers, and educational material on the freedom of expression. These are training tools that are included in the so-called *Advocacy Toolkit* that has been compiled by the Media Institute for Southern Africa (MISA) to support campaigns for independent, pluralistic and diverse media in southern Africa. The toolkit is intended for MISA's national branches but also for related advocacy organisations.**

How to enhance the freedom of expression in a dictatorially governed country? How to motivate governments and telecom enterprises into opening up rural areas to the Internet? Which steps should be taken to give a voice to critical investigating journalists in Mozambique without putting their lives at risk?

These problems are all connected with the issues of freedom of expression and universal access to information. MISA has developed the Advocacy Toolkit in order to encourage journalists, human rights activists, lawyers and others to stand up for their rights and campaign and lobby together.



Foto: M. Rodenburg ©

“You can’t get all that done on your own,” as MISA director Luckson Chipare stresses in his introduction: “Change does not happen without action and it is we, the citizens of the region, who have the power to break down the barriers that impede freedom of opinion, freedom of expression, freedom of dissemination, freedom of information and the right to access and use of media, information and communication technology.”

### *Transparent*

The Advocacy Toolkit is a cheerfully designed, transparent box - the size of a briefcase. Apparently a playful reference to the official world of attaché-cases holding the Bills that curb the media. The case contains, among other things, an exercise book for participants and a trainers’ manual.

In order to ensure maximum circulation MISA has put the educational material on a CD-ROM, which contains the various declarations that have been adopted internationally in support of the freedom of expression as well as other background documentation.

In addition, the case contains audio-visual campaign material, such as a cassette tape, posters and stickers. With the help of the CD-ROM, examples of this material in English as well as Portuguese and Kiswahili can be downloaded.

*Underlying law*

The students are offered an explanation of the concept of 'advocacy'. The authors make it quite clear that not everything can be called advocacy. When, for instance, MISA uses its Legal Defence Fund to buy the freedom of detained journalists, it renders a service; it is only when it stages a campaign aimed at changing the underlying law that makes it possible for journalists to be detained without fair trial, that one can actually speak of advocacy.

Pictures and stories of successful media campaigns show that citizens can make their influence felt. A picture from Zimbabwe shows how citizens, armed with banners, took to the streets in great numbers in 2002 in order to cry out against the registering of journalists.

Cynics may put forward that there was no point to these actions in Zimbabwe, judged by the increasing numbers of journalists that have been detained and the prevalence of compulsory registration. Yet it remains important to motivate social movements into standing up for their rights, in order to prevent fear and resignation from taking the upper hand.

Sometimes one should opt for other lobby techniques, the compilers say, dependent upon one's objectives, the social context and the opportunities at hand. For example, silent diplomacy, supported by thorough research reports, can be effective as well, as is illustrated by a case from Zambia.

*Gender checklist*

Of course, the gender perspective hasn't escaped notice in the toolkit. By means of special assignments the necessity to review the gender aspect of media is pointed out to the students. A 'gender checklist' helps them to look critically at the media and improve the representation of women in the media in southern Africa.

After this more theoretical part the students set to practical work, developing a campaign model, preparing press releases, or mapping the major adversaries and potential partners. However, the latter aspect is paid rather little attention to. In countries with underdeveloped democratic institutions, the presence of networks in civil society is essential, as is the mobilisation of a vocal critical mass.

Unfortunately relatively little attention is being paid to methods aimed at establishing a lobby network and motivating social movements into collective campaigning. In contrast, a great deal of attention is being paid to the design of large-scale campaigns, illustrated in the material by a lot of practical examples.

Every media organisation in southern Africa, or rather in other regions as well, should have its own copy of the Advocacy Toolkit. Let us hope the box will travel on to other African countries in order to strengthen the much-needed lobby for media and democracy there as well.

***To order:***

The box is produced by MISA Regional Office and can be ordered from: MISA RS, 21 Johann Albrecht Street, Private Bag 13386, Windhoek, Namibia. ([advokit@misa.org](mailto:advokit@misa.org))

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8 Cartoon: TRC final report

By Zapiro



Zapiro 27 March 2003 ©

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