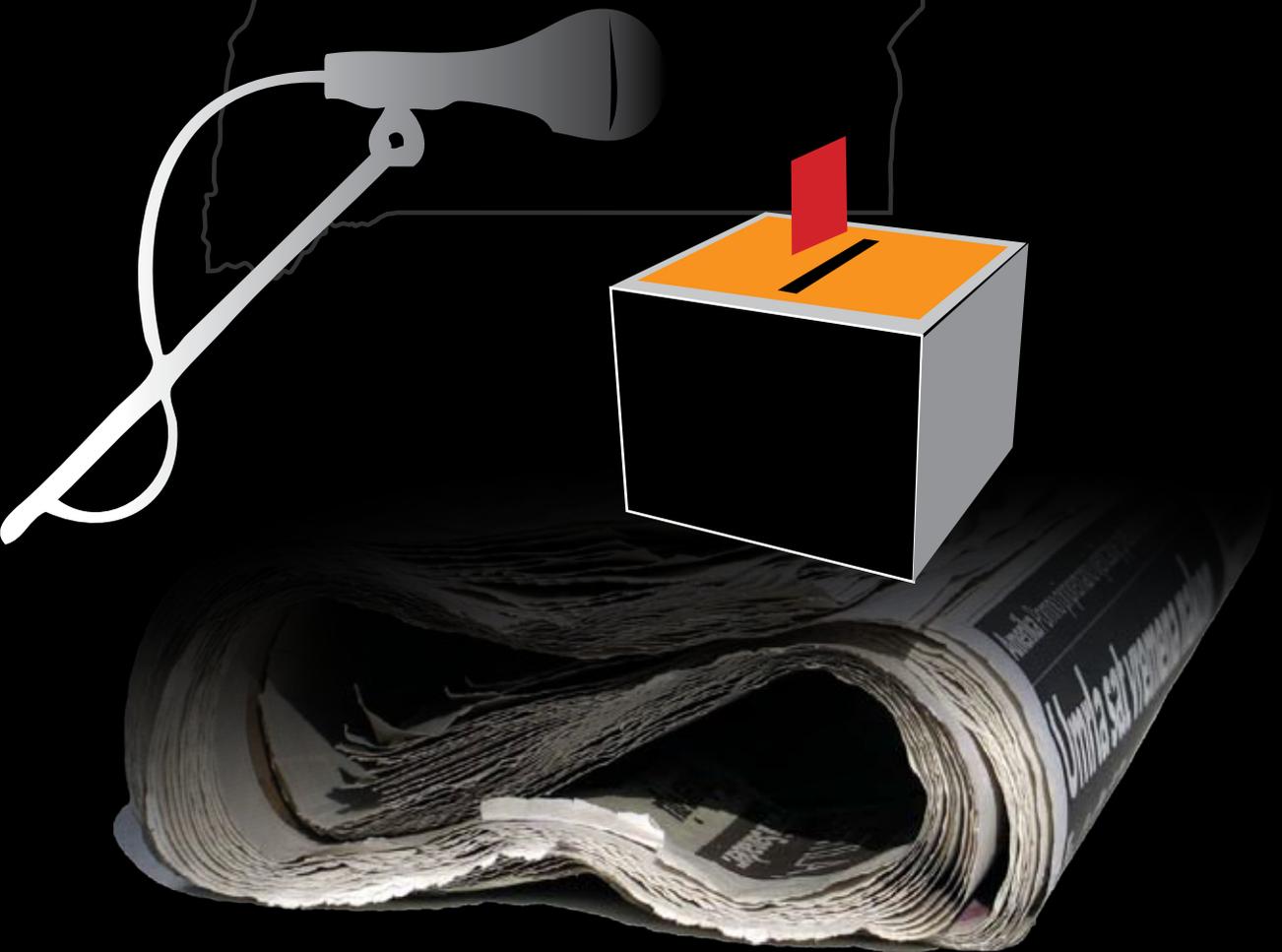


GUIDELINES FOR

MEDIA COVERAGE of Elections

IN UGANDA



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

These guidelines lay out the responsibilities of the media and other important players such as political parties, candidates, and the Electoral Commission in the coverage of the 2011 elections in Uganda. They have been developed through a participatory process facilitated by the African Centre for Media Excellence (ACME), with support from the Deepening Democracy Programme.

The guidelines focus on the following areas, among others:

- Provision of information
- Accuracy
- Distinguishing between news and opinion
- Sourcing and the use of unnamed sources
- Live interviews
- Balance and fairness
- Corrections and replies
- Opinion polls and election projections
- Vox pops
- Responsibility and good journalism
- Coverage of incumbent and government activities
- Equity and consistency
- Full coverage of electoral process
- Electoral violence
- Discrimination
- Bribery and corruption (on the part of journalists)

It is hoped that the guidelines will help journalists covering the elections do the following:

- I. Provide fair, accurate and comprehensive elections-related news and information to enable citizens make informed political decisions.
- II. Provide balanced and adequate opportunity for citizens, candidates and political parties to express divergent political views during campaigns.
- III. Act as a watchdog that monitors the fairness and credibility of the electoral process.
- IV. Report accurately the election results.
- V. Report accurately and fairly the immediate aftermath of the elections.

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We would like to thank the Deepening Democracy Programme for supporting the development and publication of these election coverage guidelines.

We would also like to acknowledge the contribution of the following media houses and organisations in the development of the guidelines: The New Vision Group, Monitor Publications Ltd, NTV Uganda, WBS TV, Uganda Radio Network, The Observer, The Independent, Radio One and Akaboozi ku Bbiri, Luo FM, Mega FM, Radio Paidha, the Electoral Commission, the Independent Media Council of Uganda, the Uganda Journalists Union, the Human Rights Network for Journalists-Uganda, the Uganda Media Development Foundation, and the Department of Mass Communication at Makerere University.

Finally, we would like to thank the following international organisations, from whose guidelines we have borrowed heavily: Article 19, the Commonwealth Broadcasting Association, Kenya Correspondents Association, and the International Centre for Journalists.

The media must get across to the public an understanding that their votes matter, that politics matter, that politics are about their lives, their health, their education, their culture, their security, their future.

– Commonwealth Election Broadcasting Guidelines as published by the Commonwealth Broadcasting Association for the Commonwealth Secretariat

Media houses in Uganda have developed the following guidelines through a participatory process led by the African Centre for Media Excellence (ACME) as a voluntary code of ethics to govern their conduct in the coverage of the 2011 elections.

PREAMBLE

We media houses, regulators, political parties, and election managers in Uganda:

CONSCIOUS of the importance of regular, free and fair elections in building and maintaining a democratic society;

REMEMBERING our history of political turmoil and upheaval created in part by lack of regular elections or profound electoral fraud, malpractice, and irregularities;

AWARE that free, independent, responsible and pluralistic media are critical for advancing and sustaining democracy;

RECOGNISING the central role the media play or can play in the election process by, among others, providing people information on which to base their decisions, facilitating public debate on the choices before the voters, acting as a watchdog for fairness during campaigning and polling, and providing a voice to voters;

AWARE that our Constitution guarantees all citizens the right of access to information, and to “freedom of speech and expression, which ...include(s) freedom of the press and other media”; and that international law requires States to “encourage and facilitate the pluralistic expression of opinion via the ... media”;

ACKNOWLEDGING that media freedoms come with responsibilities, and in particular that media serve the public better by covering elections in a fair, balanced, and impartial manner;

RECOGNISING that while our media have made tremendous strides in the last two decades and that our country is today blessed with a vibrant media scene, many newsrooms are still filled with many inexperienced journalists;

REITERATING that professional journalistic responsibilities require the media to maintain the highest standards of professional conduct;

AWARE that our responsibilities during elections include:

a) Providing fair, accurate and comprehensive election-related news

- and information to enable citizens make informed political decisions.
- b) Providing balanced and adequate opportunity for citizens, candidates and political parties to express divergent political views during election campaigns.
 - c) Reporting accurately the election results.
 - d) Reporting accurately and fairly the immediate aftermath of the elections;

RESOLVE to abide by the following guidelines during the coverage of the 2011 elections.

1. SCOPE

These guidelines shall apply to media houses, including both private and state-owned media, regulators, political parties, the Electoral Commission, and government agencies that have voluntarily acceded to them.

2. PURPOSE OF THE GUIDELINES

The objective of these guidelines is to prescribe the 'Rules of the Game' or "Code of Practice" for elections reporting for Uganda's general elections in 2011. The guidelines propose basic requirements to achieve balance, fairness, and impartiality in election coverage. Furthermore, the guidelines attempt to contextualise international standards and good practice from elsewhere to the Ugandan legal framework. While the guidelines cover both the print and broadcast media, it should be noted that these types of media have different characteristics and could not possibly implement specific components to the same degree. Different sections of the guidelines will have more relevance to each type of media to varying degrees.

3. GENERAL GUIDELINES

Provision of information

- Media, as autonomous sources of information, inform members of the public on top of educating and entertaining them. During an election, therefore, the media have a duty to inform the public about political parties, candidates, manifestos, and voting processes. Media houses thus need to deploy early enough as many reporters as possible to cover all the different aspects of the campaigns.

- The media houses also need to assemble databases with as much information about the current and previous election cycles.

Balance and fairness

- Journalists have a duty to remain balanced and impartial in their election reporting and not to discriminate against any political party or candidate in granting access to the media. The obligation of balance and impartiality derives directly from the fundamental rights of voters and candidates to freedom of expression and information, and non-discrimination. Fair and balanced election coverage means individual stories, and the pattern of stories over a period of time, contain points of view from different parties or candidates.
- Editors will assess each bulletin/newspaper edition and where normal journalistic judgement creates an unavoidable temporary imbalance, they must rectify it as soon as possible over succeeding coverage. Some meticulous system must be set up in the newsroom. A large wall-chart with basic details of every election story broadcast/printed entered after each bulletin/newspaper edition would be a good start.

Independence

- The media will maintain independence from political, economic and other interests. In particular, they will not allow themselves to be controlled by political parties, candidates, the government, business or any other groups.

Accuracy

- The media must report accurately across the board but especially on issues such as the spelling of the candidates' names, the actual words they use (quotes), names of places, and context. Elections are a time of heightened excitement for both candidates and voters, and so care must be taken in reporting so as not to make people react in a manner that may breach the public peace.
- Reporting the size of crowds attending political rallies and presentation of pictures of the rallies in the media is a very critical matter. If rally sizes must be mentioned at all, journalist must rely on estimates provided by credible agencies such as the police or independent monitors. Otherwise, say something like: Candidate Y attracted a crowd that seemed to fill Kololo Independence Grounds for her final rally. The grounds are the size of three football pitches. Or, the fundraising cocktail party for

Candidate X attracted a capacity crowd to the Sheraton Rwenzori Ballroom. The ballroom seats about 300. But when people are standing with little room between them, as was the case last evening, the room takes in 450. Find a more neutral and believable way of conveying audience size.

News coverage

- Editorial opinion must be clearly distinguished from news to avoid the danger of misleading audiences.
- The duty of balance requires that parties or candidates receive news coverage commensurate with their importance in the election and the extent of their electoral support. It tends to become pretty obvious as the campaigning goes on and as opinion polls come out which parties are in the lead and which ones are peripheral. Because any of the parties in the lead could form the next government, it becomes inevitable for media to pay more attention to those parties and their agendas.
- The ruling party, due to its governing role, will normally attract more news coverage than other competing parties during electoral campaigns. Careful measures need to be taken to prevent this from happening. For example, news coverage of press conferences and public statements concerning matters of political controversy (as opposed to functions of State) by the governing authorities should be subject to a right of reply or other equitable response from other competing parties. This obligation acquires even greater force when the person making the statement is also standing for office. *(Refer also to Equity and Consistence entry below)*

Release form from guests

- Broadcast media houses should develop guidelines, which guests to their programmes, especially interview and talk show programmes, should sign on to before they go on air (radio/TV). This will help protect the station and media practitioners from liability.

Sourcing

- Unnamed sources should not be used unless the pursuit of the truth will best be served by not naming the sources that must, in any case, be known by the reporter and communicated to the editor. When unnamed sources are used, the reasons for withholding their identity must be clearly stated.

- Reporters should not use the shield of unnamed sources to disguise their personal opinions. In a multiparty political environment, candidates or their agents and supporters may easily hide behind requests for confidentiality to malign their opponents.
- Reporters must observe professional secrecy regarding sources of information obtained in confidence.

Corrections and replies

- Any candidate or party that has been defamed or otherwise suffered illegal injury by a broadcast/article should be entitled to a correction or where this would be an insufficient remedy, be granted an opportunity to reply as soon as possible. The media will not report specific allegations or insults without providing an opportunity for a response or reaction from the accused side.

Arbitration

- In the event of strong disagreement between a media house and a political party or candidate for office, the two sides will seek adjudication from either the statutory Media Council or the Independent Media Council of Uganda before resorting to the Courts.

Opinion polls and election projections

- Opinion polls can have a significant impact on voting patterns, especially where their significance is not adequately understood. Opinion poll results are best appreciated when additional information on who conducted the survey, who commissioned and paid for the poll, the methodology used, the sample size, the margin of error, and the field-work dates is provided.
- Opinion poll results shall be reported in context. Previous election trends and background information about candidates and constituencies covered will be included in the reporting.
- The media shall minimise horse-reporting (who is leading, who is falling behind according to the polls) and pay more attention to issues of concern to the voters and how the different candidates are addressing them, shifting or buttressing positions.
- Media shall refrain from publishing opinion poll results days before an election. This may cause undue excitement.

Vox pop

- This is not a scientific poll and should be used with care. The electorate must not be led to believe that one of these street samples has any statistical validity. It merely reflects a range of views amongst the group of people at that time but it is not a real measure of overall voting intentions.

Responsibility and good journalism

- Journalists will ensure that their reports are not overly oriented towards personality, party or ethnic positions as opposed to being issue-oriented.
- Responsible journalism does not defame or promote malice or corruption. Good journalism does not repeat inaccurate allegations and insults or twist the truth about a person. Journalists can report allegations and offensive speech, but the story must be balanced so the allegation or offense is answered. News reports can ruin politicians' reputations, put party members in danger, or cause public protest. Good journalism does no special favours for any politician or party.
- Journalists will endeavour to be aware of the election rules, the operations of the Electoral Commission, and the voting process.

Equity and consistency

- The media should treat all parties, candidates and all viewpoints equitably. This does not mean that news values and processes will be distorted to give the same weight to small parties or poor performing contenders. It should be noted that the voting public is entitled to more comprehensive coverage of serious contenders. However, equitable treatment is unlikely to be achieved in a single programme or article. This also means that all parties may not appear in a single or every programme/article.

Electoral violence

- Media will not give space to hate speech or utterances that might incite violence or cause social turmoil.
- Journalists will avoid presenting acts of political violence in a manner that glorifies such conduct. Stories, views, and comments relating to election violence should be reported after proper verification of facts and presented with due caution and restraint in a manner that is con-

ducive to the creation of an atmosphere congenial to national harmony, amity, and peace. Elections need not lead to breaking of bones and destruction of life and property.

Direct access programmes

- The media should grant all political parties or candidates airtime for direct access programmes on a fair and non-discriminatory basis. Time slots for direct access programmes shall be assigned in an equitable manner. All parties/candidates should be allowed to purchase airtime for political advertisements on equal terms.

Political advertising

- Media houses, especially broadcast, should not allow the bigger parties to buy up all advertising space leaving nothing for the smaller parties.
- The media house's advertising department will consult with the editorial department before running political advertisements to avoid hate speech, for example.
- All political advertising will be labelled accordingly.

Right to edit

- Media houses reserve the right to edit any programme in consultation with the political party or candidate concerned if some or all the content is objectionable for any of the following reasons: against public order or morality; offends national unity; infringes any law of the land; insensitive to the reputation, rights and freedoms of others.
- In the event that sealed envelopes of 'news copy' are delivered to newsrooms with the spoken or unspoken instruction not to drop or change a single word, it is up to the news editor to judge its news value and accuracy and decide accordingly.

Discrimination

- Journalists will avoid using language or expressing sentiments that may further discrimination or violence on any grounds including race, sex, language, religion, political or other opinions, and national or social origins.
- Female and male contestants will be treated equally as news subjects and as news sources.

- Media will not discriminate against disadvantaged or marginalised people and groups seeking to participate in political leadership.

Bribery and corruption

- Media houses must make it clear to the journalists that to accept any sort of bribe – say accepting cash or other favours in return for favourable coverage of a politician or political party – is a serious breach of duty likely to result in dismissal.

Conflict of interest

- To ensure the integrity of election coverage, individual journalists will disclose a conflict of interest or potential conflict of interest, including political affiliations.

Full coverage of electoral process

- Election coverage is not limited to the campaign period. The coverage should be extended to encompass all phases up to and including the declaration of the results and the day after. As far as possible, the media shall cover the election results from the polling station to the national level.
- It is also important to comprehensively cover the first weeks after the declaration of results to capture the reactions of the winners and the losers and their supporters, plus the views of monitors and independent experts.

Release of results

- If a media house decides to release results as they come in, it will rely on reports by its own journalists or independent monitors at the various polling stations or district tally centres. The reporters will clarify at all times that the results they are announcing are from, say, one quarter of polling stations; from the stronghold of Candidate X; the results are not yet confirmed by the Electoral Commission. In other words, the release of partial results should be done with sufficient context not to excite or mislead voters. Media houses must know, however, that it is the constitutional mandate of the Electoral Commission to announce the definitive results.

Additional Guidelines

- i) The media will remain alert, at all times, to exploitation and avoid unwitting promotion for self-seekers.

- ii) All quotations – especially when they are politically controversial or are defamatory in language and terms, for example, jargon, technical abbreviations and political euphemisms not clearly or easily understandable – should be verified and fully explained.
- iii) The deliberate presentation of scenes, episodes, and facts that are meant to excite passion, hatred, contempt, and prejudice must not be entertained.
- iv) The media must, as far as possible, respect legitimate police orders to clear away from a particular scene. The police should, however, be reminded to respect the constitutional responsibility of media practitioners to the general public at all times.

Key Areas of Focus

Below are just a few of the areas that the media need to be aware of, and report on, to help advance the cause of free, fair, and violence-free elections.

Voters' rights

- a) Are all eligible voters on the voters' list?
- b) Are all voters free to hear and discuss the parties and issues without fear?
- c) Do parties threaten voters or election officials?
- d) Do parties or candidates try to bribe voters with money, large gifts or promises of jobs?
- e) Do voters understand their role and the importance of voting, and do they know their choices?
- f) Do women and minorities feel safe in voting?
- g) Are aggrieved voters aware of where to seek redress?

Candidates and party rights

- a) Are all qualified parties and candidates allowed to run in the election?
- b) Are candidates representing minorities, regions and different political opinions allowed to seek election?
- c) Are all parties allowed to hold public meetings without fear?
- d) Are the election rules and limits applied equally to all parties?
- e) Are the police protecting all parties as they campaign, distribute information, and hold public meetings?
- f) Do the parties disclose to the Electoral Commission, as required by the law, the sources of their money?

- g) Are government officials neutral and not using government money and resources such as vehicles to favour one party?
- h) Is the ruling party making many announcements of new projects just when the election campaign is beginning?
- i) Are all polling stations known to all stakeholders?

The election process

- a) Are voters' lists complete?
- b) Are voters left out able to get on the list by showing proper identification?
- c) Are the ballots easily understood by voters who cannot read?
- d) Do voters easily understand the voting instructions?
- e) Are there enough ballots, ballot boxes and officials to observe the voting and count the ballots?
- f) Are there security arrangements to protect the people going to vote?
- g) Are there security arrangements to protect the ballot boxes so nobody can stuff them with false ballots?
- h) Is the Electoral Commission seen as impartial, independent and honest?
- i) Are there international and independent observers monitoring the election?
- j) Are all competing parties allowed to deploy their election officials/agents at polling stations?
- k) Does the Electoral Commission respond quickly to complaints from the media, the voters, and the political parties about all alleged violations of the electoral laws?
- l) Does the Electoral Commission investigate and stop violations of the electoral laws? Are violators penalised in any way?
- m) Are the media, non-governmental organisations, and international observers able to monitor and report to the public on the election process without interference or fear?
- n) Are the state media providing reliable coverage of all the candidates and parties? Is the coverage accurate, impartial, responsible, and fair?
- o) Do the private media – newspapers, radio and television – provide reliable and fair reporting?
- p) Do the private media treat all parties' advertising equally?

4. GUIDELINES FOR THE STATE BROADCASTER

To comply with international law, government media must fulfil the duties of impartiality and non-discrimination – ARTICLE 19

The law as regards state/government-owned media¹ and electoral campaigns is quite clear.

Article 23 of the Presidential Elections Act, 2005, deals with equal treatment, freedom of expression and access to information of candidates.

- Article 23 (1) During the campaign period, every public officer and public authority and public institution shall give equal treatment to all candidates and their agents.
- Article 23 (2) Subject to the Constitution and any other law, every candidate shall enjoy complete and unhindered freedom of expression and access to information in the exercise of the right to campaign under this Act.
- Article 24 on Rights of Candidates
 - Article 24 (1) All presidential candidates shall be given equal treatment on the State owned media to present their programme to the people.

Duty to inform

- During the period preceding an election, government-owned media have a duty to inform the public about the political parties, candidates, campaign issues, voting processes, and other matters relevant to the election. The government's obligation to ensure that "Every citizen shall have the right and opportunity, without ... distinction [of any kind] ... to vote ... at genuine ... elections" compels it to ensure that voters have the necessary information to register and vote, and to make informed choices regarding matters that are the subject of elections.

Voter education

- Government media have an obvious duty throughout the election campaign and up to the close of voting, to provide education and information on the electoral process designed to ensure a maximum poll by a well-informed electorate. Indeed, one of UBC's aims is to pro-

¹ The term "government media", according to ARTICLE 19, is used in these guidelines to refer to broadcasting channels that are owned, operated or controlled by the government, as well as to channels that are managed by government appointees or that are governed by boards, a majority of whose members are selected by the government or ruling party. The guidelines also apply to public service broadcasting channels, namely, media which are supported entirely or in part by government funds but are governed by boards that are independent of government and all political interests.

vide “electronic media and consultancy services that educate and guide the public”. The programmes must be accurate and impartial and must effectively inform voters about the voting process, including how, when and where to vote, to register to vote and to verify proper registration; the secrecy of the ballot (and thus safety from retaliation); the importance of voting; the functions of the offices that are under contention; and similar matters.

- The government media are obliged to broadcast programmes that will reach the greatest number of voters feasible. Broadcasts should include programmes in minority languages and programmes targeted for groups that traditionally may have been excluded from the political process, such as ethnic or religious minorities, women and indigenous groups.
- It goes without saying that voter education programmes must not in any way further the interests of any party or candidate.

Duty of balance and impartiality

- Government media have a duty to be balanced and impartial in their election reporting and not to discriminate against any political party or candidate in granting access to airtime. This duty requires that news, interview, and information programmes must not be biased in favour of, or against, any party or candidate. Consistent with international standards, guidelines of UN election missions provide that “[i]n the case of government-owned media, it is customary that equal access, both in terms of timing and length of broadcast, should be given to the competing sides” and that “the information provided by the government-owned media should not be biased in favour of one or the other side”.

Direct access for party broadcasts and/or advertising

- In most countries, if not all, the parties will want direct access to the airwaves of the government broadcaster to put across their manifestos, unhindered by awkward questions from journalists. Can the richest party (usually the ruling party) have as many slots as it wants? This would seem seriously undemocratic.
- Does the station retain any editorial control over these programmes? It would be better to pre-record them. What if a programme is too long or contains unacceptable abuse of political opponents? Who edits it?

Like Ghana's GBC, the state broadcaster, should claim the right to edit any programme (in consultation with the political party concerned) "if it is objectionable for any of the following reasons: against public order or morality, offends national unity, infringes any law of the land, insensitive to the reputation, rights and freedoms of others".

News coverage

- Government media must be particularly scrupulous in complying with their obligation to provide accurate, balanced and impartial information in their reporting of news and current affairs. Of the various forms of election broadcasts, news coverage is generally accepted as the most influential. Accordingly, the duties to inform the electorate and to report with balance and impartiality are particularly strong concerning news programmes.

Presidential Press Unit

- In many countries PPU journalists deliver sealed envelopes of "news copy" to newsrooms with the spoken or unspoken instruction not to drop or change a single word. It is, however, up to the news editor to judge its news value and accuracy. It must be made clear that reproducing such material unedited can only happen in the ruling party's Party Election Broadcasts slot and not in the station's normal news output.

Running orders

- Where a story is placed in a news bulletin will determine its perceived importance. Proper journalistic judgement must be used to prevent giving one party the lead position regardless of balance and the news value of the story.

Refusal to broadcast

- The standards used by the ... government media in determining whether or not to broadcast an election programme must not be vague or broadly defined. A number of courts have held that refusal to broadcast an election programme pursuant to vague standards is illegal. For instance, Germany's Federal Constitutional Court ruled that, while a station manager may refuse to broadcast an election programme that is a "clear" violation of the criminal law, he or she may not refuse to broadcast a programme on the ground that its tone is hostile to the spirit of the Constitution; such a vague and speculative concern does not constitute a "clear" violation.

5. GUIDELINES FOR GOVERNMENT

Media protection

- ❖ The government has an obligation to punish attacks against media personnel and property. It must make special efforts to investigate all acts, or threatened acts, of violence, intimidation or harassment directed against media personnel, or any act of destruction of the property or premises of a media outlet, particularly where there is any reason to believe that the act was motivated by an intent to interfere with media freedom, and to bring those responsible to justice. Protection of the media is essential if media are to discharge their public function of informing the public about matters of public interest such as the electoral process.

Limits on prior restraint

- ❖ There must be no government censorship of any election programme. The government should issue a clear statement to the public and all media houses that the media are encouraged to broadcast or print election-related programmes, and that the media will not be penalised in any way merely because they have carried material critical of the government, its policies or the ruling party. The experience of transitional democracies is that governments and government media have improperly refused to fairly cover opposition parties.
- ❖ In particular, Resident District Commissioners and District Internal Security Officers will not take the law into their own hands by deciding which guests can appear on different radio stations or what types of content can be aired. RDCs, DISOs, and other government officials or agents who are aggrieved by the conduct of certain journalists or media houses should follow due process by, for instance, lodging complaints before the relevant regulatory bodies.

Limits on media liability

- ❖ It is strongly recommended that the media be exempted from legal liability for unlawful statements made by candidates or party representatives and broadcast during the course of election campaigns, other than those which constitute clear and direct incitement to violence. The parties and speakers should be held solely responsible for any unlawful statements they make. This departure from the normal rules of liability is justified by the short duration of campaign periods and the fundamental importance to free and fair elections of unfettered political debate.

Courts as a last resort

- ❖ Government officials and agents, including ministers, RDCs and DIS-Os, who are aggrieved by the conduct of certain journalists or media houses should allow the relevant regulatory bodies to do their works by lodging complaints before them, instead of resorting to police and courts of law, or worse still to the use of force.

6. GUIDELINES FOR POLITICAL PARTIES/CANDIDATES

Responsibilities of political parties

- ❖ All political party statements, press releases and other forms of information for publication in the media must be signed by an authorised representative duly identified to the media beforehand.
- ❖ Political parties should clean their statements and releases of insulting language that could lead to public unrest or a breach of the peace.
- ❖ Political parties should have a clearly defined public relations or media/press relations department from where the media can obtain necessary information without difficulty.
- ❖ Political parties must give all media houses adequate notice, at least 48 hours, of impending political party activities to allow for proper and adequate logistical arrangements.
- ❖ It is the responsibility of political parties to assure the safety of journalists covering their assignments from their own supporters and, as far as possible, from other would-be molesters.

Bribery and corruption

- ❖ Candidates, and their political parties, will not bribe any journalist for any reason, especially in return for positive coverage.
- ❖ Media houses are under obligation to report immediately to the Electoral Commission any politician who offers a journalist a bribe as an attempt to distort the electoral process.

Politicians who demand specific journalists

- ❖ Political parties, or specific politicians, shall not demand specific journalists to cover (or not to cover) their campaign meetings and rallies. The responsibility to allocate campaign-reporting tasks to whichever journalist lies with the editor. A politician who seeks to get his or her rally covered by a specific journalist risks getting no coverage of that event at all.

7. GUIDELINES FOR MEDIA OWNERS

- ❖ Media owners will demonstrate a commitment to the ideals of free and fair elections. They shall, therefore, develop the capacity of their journalists in election coverage. They shall provide the necessary resources to their journalists for them to report elections effectively.
- ❖ Media owners, particularly owners of broadcast media, shall endeavour to provide in-depth coverage of elections. An election that produces a result acceptable to all is, after all, good for national stability and that stability in turn is good for business.
- ❖ Many radio stations, especially in the countryside, are owned by politicians, most of whom are members of the ruling NRM party. Much as these are private businesses, owners should not mistreat opponents by denying them access to the airwaves. This is especially because the frequency spectrum is a public good – it is not completely private.
- ❖ Media houses need to clearly identify their journalists as a way to protect them from physical attack.

8. GUIDELINES FOR THE ELECTORAL COMMISSION

- ❖ The Electoral Commission will have a clearly defined public relations or media/press relations department from where the media can obtain necessary information without difficulty.
- ❖ The Electoral Commission will encourage all players to observe electoral laws.

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