

The Campaign and the Media

The Campaign

Overview

The Zanzibar Electoral Commission designated an official campaign period which began on 22 August 2000 and ended on 28 October 2000. Members of the Group were able to observe the last four weeks of the campaign.

Campaigns for elections are required to be conducted in accordance with the Zanzibar Election Act 1984, as amended, and any regulations made thereunder. The Group was informed that the relevant authorities in Zanzibar decided to introduce additional measures in Zanzibar that had a bearing on the campaign. Examples of these measures are a ban on house to house canvassing of votes and a regulation requiring political rallies to end by 6 p.m. In addition, no public address systems were allowed in Zanzibar town. The Group was informed that whereas a draft text of a Code of Conduct had been agreed upon by the political parties, there had been no signing of this draft Code.

In order to avoid conflicts of schedule, party agents are required to submit programmes of their proposed rallies to ZEC and the police for approval. The Group heard complaints from several opposition parties that regardless of the approval obtained from the competent authorities, some local officials and supporters of the ruling party sometimes prevented them from holding rallies at particular grounds. This situation inevitably led to conflicts, sometimes violent.

We were told that ZEC held meetings with stakeholders to try to resolve this issue. We were also told by ZEC that some parties were reluctant to reveal the precise venue of their rallies until the very last minute. There were occasions when, according to TEMCO and monitor reports, the decisions by ZEC and the central police authorities were ignored or overruled by the shehas, reinforced by the local DCO (District Commanding Officer), who encouraged people to deny CUF access to open spaces, although there are no regulations conferring such powers on shehas to overrule the central police.

Football clubs, maskanis (CCM neighbourhood branches), private individuals or businesses control many of the fields that are best suited for campaign meetings in Unguja. Much of the tension that arose in the course of the campaign stemmed from what some saw as a systematic campaign on Unguja to deny CUF access to these grounds. TEMCO has reported that four days before the 11 October shootings at Kilamahewa, there had been a serious clash between CCM and CUF supporters at Kwahani, Zanzibar, when CCM youths tried to stop CUF from conducting a campaign rally in the area. We recommend that the exact venues for rallies and meetings be authorised by ZEC and the central police authority only after agreement on the exact venue with those who have control of the grounds.

Generally speaking, rallies of political parties followed a similar format, with great enthusiasm being displayed by respective supporters. There was singing of party songs and robust chanting of slogans, followed by introductory speeches

by party dignitaries. Party candidates were then introduced to the electorate. Finally the most important candidate was called upon to address his or her supporters. All rallies featured a ceremony of conversion where supporters of one party would publicly renounce their party membership and be embraced into the fold of the other to the gleeful acclamation of the party supporters.

While both major parties engaged in a certain amount of discussion of concrete issues, such as economic development, health and education, the main purpose of the presidential rallies seemed to have less to do with programmes and issues and more to demonstrate capacity and mass support. One important issue was the debate on the nature of the Union, with the CCM adhering to the established policy of two governments and CUF advocating three governments – independent governments in Zanzibar and Tanganyika and a Federal Government including representation of both. In the debate concerning the nature of the Union, CCM alleges that the position of CUF would lead to the break-up of the Union. The CUF denies this, arguing that the CCM wants to end Zanzibari autonomy.

The Group noted that whereas a significant number of women activists attended political rallies there were few female candidates for the Union Parliament, House of Representatives and local elections.

We also noted that the parties spent considerable amounts of money on the printing and production of kangas, T-shirts, caps, posters and flags, which were generously distributed at rallies. High quality posters were pasted on walls and trees, even in the remotest villages. There was a clear difference in the capability of the two main parties to provide campaign materials: everywhere we went the CCM seemed to be better resourced. There was also evidence that the ruling party abused the advantages of its incumbency, for instance in the use of state vehicles. We understand that there is no formal mechanism for the declaration of income and expenditure by the political parties during the campaign.

The Group noted that all political parties made great efforts to get as many of their supporters as possible to their respective rallies. The Group attended rallies where it was reported that in excess of 1,000 vehicles had been mobilised to transport supporters.



POSTER WARS . . . there were party campaign posters all over Zanzibar. In some places (*left, in Stone Town*) both CCM and CUF were represented. But elsewhere all the posters were from one party (*below, village outside the capital*)



A Level Playing Field?

There were consistent complaints from opposition parties of the lack of a level playing field for the campaign. Opposition parties complained, among other things, of the ruling party's privileged access to and abuse of the state owned media, public funds and vehicles. Publicly owned resources should not be used for campaign purposes by the ruling party of the day; we believe that ZEC should urge the parties to adopt a code of conduct and itself issue regulations on the matter, with effective mechanisms for enforcement.

The small opposition parties reported that they had received no government subsidies, as in 1995, and that this had hampered their ability to campaign effectively. We were informed that one reason that the Government was unable to advance grants to the parties in these elections was the absence of donor funding for this purpose, unlike the situation in 1995.

The complaints went further. We were told, for instance, that the rules of the campaign were not evenly enforced. It was alleged that while the police were quick to insist on the ending of opposition rallies at exactly 6 p.m., they did not display a similar zeal with regard to rallies of the ruling party.

Reports of Intimidation and Violence

Our Group heard numerous reports of violence and brutality by the police before, during and after the campaign period. Our attention was drawn in particular to the violence by the police during the registration period. There were frequent reports of heavy intimidation by police acting in a partisan manner. It was reported in the media that the police mounted roadblocks on roads leading to campaign rallies, particularly of opposition parties where opposition supporters were subjected to thorough car and body searches.

Whatever the aim, this had the effect of delaying and discouraging opposition supporters. In anticipation of such operations, opposition supporters resorted to departing for venues of campaign rallies many hours in advance. It was not unusual to see bus-loads of CUF supporters and activists on the move from 10 a.m. for a 3 p.m. rally. There were no reports of similar searches of CCM supporters. It should be noted that these searches were generally suspended later in the campaign, and TEMCO reported increased professionalism in the way the police were dealing with the media, opposition parties and the public after consultations with political parties on 2 October 2000.

Rallies of opposition parties were sometimes interrupted by unidentified youths, suspected to be ruling party zealots ('maskanis'), who would demand the departure of opposition politicians from "their" area. An example of this is the incident in Zanzibar town on Sunday, 8 October 2000 when a tour by the CUF presidential candidate was interrupted by youths who unleashed a barrage of stones and shouted slogans denouncing his presence in the area, forcing him to seek refuge in a nearby building, which was also stoned. He was subsequently "rescued" by the arrival of FFU forces who cleared the area with their renowned efficiency. The CUF subsequently alleged that the police themselves encouraged the mob, and drew attention to the fact that nobody was reported to have been arrested for this attack, even though it took place in broad daylight and there was the usual deployment of police forces at the

scene itself. The presidential candidate himself was quoted in the press as saying that he was only rescued by the Field Force Unit (FFU).

There were media reports that on 22 September 2000, the police attacked people at Darajani, Mbuyuni and Vikokotoni near Stone Town and Mlandege. The Inspector General of Police was visiting Darajani. Monitor reports recorded by TEMCO indicated that CUF supporters and the police swapped insults, after which the police tear-gassed the area and beat people with clubs, resulting in injuries requiring hospitalisation.

Perhaps one of the most serious cases of violence occurred on Wednesday, 11 October 2000 when six CUF supporters were shot by the police in clashes with police during a CUF rally. The police later claimed they opened fire after coming under attack by stone-throwing CUF militants. The CUF and international journalists recounted a different version of events, and insist that this particular incident was part of a pattern of intimidation and harassment. On more than one occasion, our Observers witnessed citizens' fear of the FFU, whose mere appearance in full battle gear would result in a scattering of men, women and children.



RALLYING SUPPORT . . . CCM and CUF both held major rallies as the campaign drew to a close

For their part, officials of the ruling CCM party also told the Observers that their supporters were victims of intimidation and violence, principally from CUF militants.

We noted that towards the polling day, on 15 October 2000, meetings were held between the leaders of the main political parties, Mr Seif Sharif Hamad and Mr Amani Karume, and the Inspector General of Police,



Omar Mahita, in a bid to calm the situation. These meetings were positively received by the press and the general public. Leaders of all political parties called for calm and restraint from their respective supporters.

Future election campaigns would obviously benefit from a more disciplined and professional approach by the security forces, with a duty to uphold the law without fear or favour. Sadly, this has not been the case in Zanzibar.

Finally, we must comment on the conduct of the political parties. The text of a Code of Conduct was agreed by the political parties, but never signed. The campaign unfolded in an atmosphere of tension and intermittent episodes of violence.

In the last week of September the CUF presidential candidate traded what media monitors deemed “hate speech” with the Inspector General of Police. The presidential candidate vowed that CUF would stand firmly as men (‘ngangari’) and that blood would flow in Tanzania if CUF was denied victory. The Inspector General’s retort that the police would counter CUF’s ‘ngangari’ with their own firmness (‘ngunguri’) was eagerly taken up and widely covered by the media. Thereafter, the CUF battle cry ‘ngangari’ rang out from their campaign vehicles. The CCM responded with taunts of ‘ngunguri’.

The issue of violence was openly discussed by the candidates, with the CCM portraying itself as the party of peace and painting the CUF as the party of violence. For its part the CUF portrayed the CCM as intimidatory and repressive and themselves as victims. Both presidential candidates, at different stages of the campaign, made inflammatory statements which did nothing to improve the situation. The CUF candidate promised that if the CUF was cheated this time it would be “an eye for an eye”. This remark was seized on by the CCM, who promised in return “a tooth for a tooth”.

Later in the campaign we were pleased to note that both candidates, while never heard to rebuke their supporters for acts of violence and provocation, openly called on them to remain calm and not to commit acts of lawlessness. We were pleased to note that on election day both parties conducted themselves responsibly.

The Media

Following the arrival of our Advance Group, and subsequently the full Observer Group, we made efforts to assess media coverage of the election campaign. We were not able to monitor the media as systematically as we would have liked, but we were able to undertake some sampling of their coverage. We also consulted widely and were regularly briefed by journalists in the print and electronic media, political parties and stakeholders such as the local observers, TEMCO, the Organisation of Journalists and the Media Monitoring Project to solicit their views on media practice during the election campaign in Zanzibar.

.....
NURU was more credible than JUKWAA, which frequently fell short of minimum professional standards
.....

Print Media

Zanzibar has two weekly newspapers: *NURU*, which is state-owned and *JUKWAA*, owned by CCM. Although these two Kiswahili newspapers have limited circulation within Unguja and Pemba islands, their influence should

not be underestimated. The ongoing analysis by the Media Monitoring Project concluded that *NURU* was more credible than *JUKWAA*, which frequently fell short of minimum professional standards and did not come close to adhering to the guidelines proclaimed in the Media Code of Conduct for Election Reporting 2000.

We noted the legal conditions under which the print media in Zanzibar operate: these include government licensing of individual journalists and steep conditions on ownership and publications of newspapers. The Registration of News Agents, Newspapers and Books Act of 1988 also empowers the government to seize or ban newspapers, search premises, and arrest individual journalists. This situation goes a fair way to explain the stagnation of the print media industry in Zanzibar, as compared to the mainland where there has been a mushrooming of independent newspapers.

These mainland publications arrive daily in Zanzibar and provide an alternative fare. From their inception the independent mainland publications have given substantial coverage to opposition party news and continued well into the campaign to mete out fair treatment to all political parties.

Broadcast Media

The Zanzibar government owns a television station called TVZ, and a radio station, STZ. There is also an independent Dar es Salaam-based television channel, ITV, which covers the whole of Tanzania, including Unguja and Pemba.

Radio and television in Zanzibar are regulated by the Zanzibar Broadcasting Commission Act of 1997. Like its counterpart law for the print media, its restrictiveness can be judged by the fact that, unlike the situation on mainland Tanzania, there are no privately-owned radio and TV stations in Zanzibar. This Act does not provide safeguards for the independence of the governing body, all members of which are appointed by the Government, leaving editorial policy open to dictation by the government and ruling party.

While the television service is restricted to urban centres where electricity is available, radio covers all parts of Zanzibar, and the majority of people, particularly the rural dwellers, rely heavily on it for information. The political parties and the Zanzibar Electoral Commission used radio and television extensively to inform voters about their manifestos and for general voter education, respectively.

We further noted that although Zanzibar laws provide for the allocation to political parties and candidates of free airtime on state-run media, the state television and radio never allowed free political advertising by political parties. This resulted in the ZEC sponsoring airtime for political parties on these state media.

Acting under the relevant provisions of the Zanzibar Constitution and section 19A of the Election Act, ZEC issued its Directives for the State Media to govern their operations from 22 August until 28 October 2000. The directives covered:

- airtime allocation to political parties;
- obligations for political parties and state media on airtime usage during the election campaigns;

- usage of time;
- special time for presidential candidates;
- expiration on using airtime for campaigns.

Inter alia, the directives stated that “all contesting political parties will be given equal airtime in the State Radio and Television”. In addition, each political party would be given 20 minutes weekly to air its programme on radio and television. Among the obligations listed in the Directives were the following: political parties are expected to “avoid slanderous and libellous language in their programmes” and each state broadcasting media “shall not censor or alter in any manner the programme presented by a party or its representative without consultation of party or candidate.”

Compared to the situation which prevailed in the 1995 elections, there was a significant improvement in media attention to both voter education and the campaigns of various political parties. With the issuance of the directives by ZEC and the subsequent adoption of a media code of conduct for election reporting promoted by the Media Council of Tanzania, it was hoped that an environment conducive to a free and fair media reporting would have been created.

However, not all players adhered to the letter and spirit of the ZEC directives or the media Code of Conduct. It is fair to say that the electronic media, especially Zanzibar television, displayed more often than not a blatant bias towards the ruling party, allocating more airtime to CCM candidates in news and political programming.

A recent survey of the mainland media by the *Election Monitor Newsletter* revealed that the CCM received 91 per cent of the time allotted in Radio Tanzania Dar es Salaam (RTD) news bulletins, 79 per cent of the time allotted to presidential candidates in RTD news bulletins, 64 per cent of the time allotted to political parties on Radio One News and 71 per cent of the time allotted by TVT to presidential candidates. According to the directives on allocation of airtime, this constitutes a breach of the provision whereby all contesting political parties should be allocated equal airtime in the state radio and television. No similar statistical analysis could be found for Zanzibar, but the trends were largely the same, with the ruling party enjoying the lion’s share of coverage in the state media.

While Radio Zanzibar did devote airtime to the presidential candidates of both parties, only the CCM stories were ever repeated in subsequent broadcasts. CUF stories were broadcast once, and then dropped. There were also several stories concerning CCM House of Representatives and local government candidates, but no House or local government candidates of the CUF ever received any coverage. In its daily morning political programmes Radio Zanzibar regularly carried speeches by President Salmin Amour, many of which contained negative comment on the opposition parties. The right of reply is unknown in the Zanzibar state media. No distinction was made between governmental and party-political activities.

Radio Zanzibar on two occasions failed to honour its contract with the CUF for live coverage of their campaign rallies, citing in one instance “power failure” and on the other occasion, “technical difficulties”, while the same

difficulties never seemed to affect rallies of the ruling party. On the day of the final presidential rallies, both CCM and CUF had initially planned to hold their rallies in the afternoon of 28 October. In order to avoid the conflict over airtime, CUF moved their rally to the morning and contracted with Radio Zanzibar for live coverage. Two days before the rallies were due to be held the CCM moved their own rally to the morning and succeeded in occupying the airtime on both Radio Zanzibar and Zanzibar Television.

.....
Radio Zanzibar on two occasions failed to honour its contract with the CUF for live coverage of their campaign rallies
.....

Monitors have found that TV Zanzibar was the most flagrantly biased of the three state media. The principle of equal access was ignored. The opposition complained on more than one occasion that, contrary to the ZEC directive, their programmes were being censored without prior consultation. The CUF produced a series of press conferences to discuss major issues such as the rule of law, the economy, health and education. They paid to have these programmes broadcast on television, but they were heavily edited and censored by the TV station before being broadcast.

In contrast, since the President enjoys the right to full live coverage of his official functions, it was far from unusual to find the President in attendance at CCM campaign activities, which were duly broadcast live and free of charge. On the opening day of the campaign CUF received for the first and only time lead story coverage. The rest of the time CUF stories were the fifth, sixth and lower item, while the CCM local councillors received coverage ahead of the CUF presidential candidate. It was noticeable that in the final 10 days of the campaign, many stories reflected accurately the CUF presidential candidate's speeches.

We also learned from the Zanzibar Electoral Commission about their voter education campaign on television and radio. This project was launched in June 2000 and all parties participated in its development. Political parties which were asked about the success of this project commended the Commission on the initiative, but said they wished to have more input in the development of the messages on television and radio. The opposition parties distanced themselves from some pronouncements on important issues, notably on the number of polling agents to be allowed in the polling stations. Political parties also informed us that they had undertaken extensive efforts to explain the essence of voting and the voting procedures to their supporters during rallies and in their media messages.

The orderly nature of the poll and the low rate of spoiled ballots – where counting took place – can partially be attributed to the various voter education programmes undertaken by the media, ZEC, NEC, and political parties in Zanzibar. However, as noted earlier more voter education could have been done.

We also noted efforts by the Tanzanian Gender Monitoring Project (TGMP) to promote gender awareness among media practitioners during elections and use the media for information-sharing on women's issues.

The Media Monitoring Project

The Observer Group noted the meaningful role played by the Media Monitoring Project in providing an objective assessment and analysis of media coverage. The monthly *Election Monitor* newsletter reflected an intensive

process of assessment and monitoring, with specific media statistical data which we found useful. We also noted various workshops conducted by the Media Monitoring Project to train journalists in election reporting and to popularise the code of conduct for media practitioners.

Life has never been easy for journalists in Zanzibar. It was reported that in the period between the opening of registration and polling day four journalists suffered at the hands of the police and ruling authorities:

- a *Guardian* journalist was arrested twice, most recently on the final day of the campaign after he reported having found the army beating up the police; his film was confiscated;
- a BBC correspondent was physically assaulted at a CCM rally and man-handled by the police on his way to the CCM press conference on the day following the elections;
- a journalist accredited to a mainland daily was summoned to the CCM office, rebuked and threatened for writing a negative story about a senior CCM official;
- a senior broadcasting executive was threatened with arrest after he refused to carry the CCM release on the 11 October shooting. The release was subsequently read by the TV announcer.

We regret that the highly commendable Media Code of Conduct for Election Reporting 2000 failed to impact on the situation in Zanzibar. It was also disappointing that the ZEC Directives for the State Media were more often than not honoured in the breach. Together, their implementation could have created a healthy media environment worthy of the citizens of Zanzibar.