

REPUBLIC OF RWANDA
HIGH COUNCIL OF THE PRESS
Rwanda Media Monitoring Project

**An Analysis of Media Coverage of
the First Multiparty Legislative
Elections after the Independence
of Rwanda**

November 2003

About the Rwanda Media Monitoring Project (RMMP)

The RMMP started in October 2003 as part of the supporting structure of the High Council of the Press in its mission to promote and regulate the media sector.

Through periodic reports based on quantitative and qualitative analysis of media items, the RMMP aims at enhancing professional standards of the Rwandan media, in providing key stakeholders with systematic data and clear picture of deficiencies and performances in the sector.

Mission statement of RMMP

1. To develop professionalism in the media through balanced, fair, accurate, informative and ethical coverage of all fields of Rwandan life.
2. To promote principles of democracy, integrity, diversity and a high work standard through monitoring the media within the framework of human rights.

Objectives of RMMP

1. Work towards professionalism in the media,
2. Monitor the media in Rwanda within a framework of human rights;
3. Through its monitoring, work to ensure legal adherence underpinned by democratic principles, the constitution, promotion and protection of Rwandan rights;
4. Inform the public, government, civil society, key stakeholders to enable them to make informed decisions;
5. Work towards fair and equitable treatment/coverage of all political actors in the media;
6. Protect the role of media as watchdog;
7. Ensure the protection of the interests of all Rwandan citizens.

The High Council of the Press is grateful for the assistance from **International Media Support** (Denmark) and **Norwegian People's Aid** in setting up RMMP.

It would also like to extend its sincere gratitude to MMP's trainers / South Africa, for their expertise and availability during RMMP monitors' first training session.

Abstract

This report provides an overview of Rwandan media representation of the First Multiparty Legislative Elections which were held in Rwanda between the 29th September and 3rd October 2003. The aim of RMMP, in its first monitoring exercise, was to determine whether Rwandan media coverage has been efficient in terms of free, fair, balanced and informative reporting.

Our monitoring has dealt with news items from Radio Rwanda, Rwandan Television and 12 newspapers issued during the period between 25th September and 10th October 2003. The monitoring started on 9th October and ended on 31st October 2003. Through 184 news items monitored, the following general characteristics in Rwandan media: have been identified.

- Most of the news items monitored focused on national issues than issues related to provinces and population in local areas.
- The Media were characterised by lack of educative information in the items monitored.
- High ranking leaders were the most used as sources in many news items. Among them are President Paul Kagame, NEC Chairman Professor Chrysologue Karangwa, and Vice-President of RPF-Inkotanyi Mr Christophe Bazivamo.
- Media coverage was characterised by lack of diversity of opinions; it lacks also deep analysis. Most of the items covered debates, campaigns and political leaders' speeches.
- Gender, youth and disabled representation was raised. Although this issue has been given an important place in media reporting, it has been observed that women as sources and mentions were not as many as men.
- Coverage on Parties and independent candidates varies according to the type of media. Government media had the obligation by

provision of electoral law to give equal treatment to both parties and independent candidates, especially in presenting their political agenda. This was the reason why their coverage seems to reach various parties and candidates. Private media, on their side, have a very little presentation of parties and candidates. However, the disqualification by NEC of the two independent candidates accused of forgery attracted the attention of almost all Rwandan media.

The RMMP appreciation of the Parliamentary election coverage is that Rwandan media have been fair while considering the number of biased and non biased information. However, some weaknesses have been observed like focusing their reports on high personalities while ignoring the rest of the population. Again, most of the private media failed to provide information with sources and fulfilling their educative role as well.

This report however, is not exhaustive since there were some limitations; A one-month period to monitor and write the report was not enough for such kind of report that requires accuracy and careful analysis. Also the first two weeks of the monitoring period were characterised by inadequacy of resources.

Despite these difficulties, the RMMP finds that its project has been successful while considering the findings mentioned above. This first monitoring work allows the RMMP to identify the Rwandan media weaknesses in their coverage of parliamentary elections. Based on this observation, RMMP would invite the media first, the government, civil society, NEC, and NGO's to be committed to their responsibility to promote free, fair, educative information as one of the pillars of democracy.

Contents

About the Rwanda Media Monitoring Project (RMMP).....	i
Abstract.....	iii
Contents.....	v
List of Abbreviations	vi
List of Tables	vii
List of Charts	vii
Introduction.....	1
2. Objectives.....	1
3. Methodology	1
Chapter 1. Main Findings.....	8
1.1. Situation of Media in Rwanda	8
1.2. Party Coalition.....	9
1.3. Presence of Independent Candidates	10
1.4. Gender, Youth and Disabled Representation	10
1.5. Party Campaign.....	10
1.6. Outstanding Events	11
Chapter 2. Campaign and Voter Education	13
2.1. Intimidation Coverage.....	14
2.2. Other Major Happenings During the Campaign.....	15
2.3. Voters Education and Registration	16
Chapter 3. Election Day News Coverage	19
3.1. Voter Rights:	19
3.2. Transparency:	20
3.3. Coverage of Election Day by Media	23
Chapter 4. Area Coverage Analysis	25
4.1. Area Breakdown of all Media.....	25
4.2. Area Coverage by Media.....	27
Chapter 5. Political Party, Independent Candidate, Organization and Personality Coverage.....	29
5.1. Party/Independent Candidate/Organization Breakdown	29
5.2. Personalities	31
Chapter 6. Gender, Youth and Disabled Representation Coverage.....	35
6.1. Gender Representation Breakdown	35
6.2. Female Mention Breakdown.....	37
Chapter 7. Fairness and Bias in the Media Reporting	39
7.1. Biased Stories by Medium.....	39
7.2. Fair Stories Vs Biased ones.....	40
7.3. Key Journalistic Elements about the Story.....	42
Chapter 8. Topic Analysis	45
8.1. Topic Coverage by all Media	45
8.2. Topic Coverage According to the Type of Media.....	46
Conclusion	48

List of Abbreviations

Dr: Doctor

EU : European Union

GLH: Grands Lacs Hebdo

HIV/AIDS: Human Immune Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome

IM.N.: Imvaho Nshya

KM: Kinyamateka

MDR: Mouvement Démocratique Républicain

Mr: Mister

NEC: National Electoral Commission

NGO: Non Gouvernemental Organisation

NRel: Nouvelle Relève

PDC: Parti Démocrate Centriste

PDI: Parti Démocrate Idéal

PL: Parti Libéral

PM: afternoon

PPC: Parti pour le Progrès et la Concorde

PSD: Parti Sociale Démocrate

PSR: Parti Social Rwandais

RMMP: Rwanda Media Monitoring Project.

RNA: Rwandan News Agency

RPF: Rwandan Patriotic Front

RRwa: Radio Rwanda

TNT: The New Times

TOT: Total

TVR: Télévision Rwandaise (Rwanda Television)

UDPR: Uion des Démocrates Progressistes Rwandais

Vs: Versus

List of Tables

Table 1. List of media monitored

Table 2. Topic codes used in our monitoring

Table 3. Areas used in our monitoring

Table 4. Newspaper editing language and periodicity

Table 5. Election coverage by media

Table 6. Area coverage by media

Table 7. Party/Independent Candidate/Organization coverage by media

Table 8. Personalities as mentions

Table 9. Gender mentions

Table 10. Bias and Fairness in media

List of Charts

Chart 1. Campaign coverage by media

Chart 2. Voter education by media

Chart 3. Participation in voter education

Chart 4. Fairness and Unfairness in elections

Chart 5. Election Day Coverage

Chart 6 Area Breakdown

Chart 7. Party coverage

Chart 8. Personality as source

Chart 9. Gender as source %

Chart 10. Bias vs. Fair breakdown

Chart 11. Favour and Oppose

Chart 12. Issues

Chart 13. Topic coverage

Chart 14. Topic coverage by type of media

Introduction

From September, 29 to October 3, 2003, Rwandans elected for the 1st time in the Multiparty Legislative election after the Independence of 1st July 1962. These elections were characterised by the presence of different political parties and a number of Independent candidates.

The aim of RMMP (Rwanda Media Monitoring Project) monitoring the 1st Multiparty Legislative Elections was to see whether Rwandan media have met their obligations of educating and informing voters about the elections. In addition, RMMP intended to see if the media have covered the elections in a free, fair and balanced manner. Special emphasis has been put on the equal coverage of different political parties in media, and respect of parties, candidates and voters rights.

2. Objectives

- See the importance given to parliamentary election by the media;
- Find out the most important issues raised by the media during the parliamentary election period;
- See if the reporting was fair;
- Inform the interested parties about the performance of the media;
- Cultivate a human rights culture and respect of professional ethics within election reporting;
- Propose the recommendations to the media of giving fair information, then to the administrative authorities, public, observers in terms of cooperation and good understanding.

3. Methodology

The RMMP started its monitoring work a week after the legislative election.

The monitoring period covered the election process from September 25th to October 10th, 2003. A team composed of 3 monitors started this activity after a 5-day training organized by the High Council of the Press in partnership with IMS and Trainers from MMP/ South Africa.

The methodology relies on both quantitative and qualitative content analysis and using purposive sampling techniques, every election related news item from print and audio-visual media was monitored and the essential information captured.

These include the origin of the information, the issues raised, the parties mentioned, and the biases in the items.

However, other special issues were monitored even though they were not directly related to elections namely, diplomacy, and unity and reconciliation ... because they had a certain link to voter education, campaign or monitoring the elections.

The following media were monitored:

Table 2. List of media monitored

Type of Medium	Name of Medium
A. Print	1. Gasabo 10
	2. Grands Lacs Hebdo 405
	3. Grands Lacs Hebdo 406
	4. Grands Lacs Hebdo 406
	5. Imvaho Nshya 1516
	6. Imvaho Nshya 1517
	7. Imvaho Nshya 1518
	8. Ingabo 101
	9. Ingabo 102
	10. Inganzo 14
	11. Inganzo15
	12. Inganzo 16
	13. Kinyamateka
	14. Kinyamateka 1631
	15. La Nouvelle Relève 474
	16. RNA News 25 sept-10 Oct
	17. Rushyashya 23
	18. The New Times 457
	19. The New Times 456
	20. The New Times 458
	21. Ubumwe 111
	22. Umuseso 147
	23. Umuseso 148
	24. Umuseso 149
B. Radio	Radio Rwanda
C. Television	Rwandan Television

As far as Prints are concerned, both Public and Private Newspapers published between the 25th September and 10th of October 2003 were monitored. The preference of this period was due to the presence of a special case of newspapers whose publication is either weekly, biweekly and/or monthly supposing that their publication would take a bit more time.

For the Radio, the information collected was broadcasted by Radio Rwanda from September 26 to October 4th, 2003. In this case the Kinyarwanda news bulletins were chosen simply because at that time, Radio Rwanda has a collection of all national information from different provincial correspondents, whereas other bulletins are just a replica of the one of 19:00 hours.

The above statement is also true for Rwandan Television (TVR) where the monitoring of the 19:30 hours Kinyarwanda bulletins was sufficient to get the necessary information. Recorded audio-visual tapes from both Radio Rwanda and TVR respectively covering the period between 25th September and 4th October 2003 were used.

While collecting the information, codes corresponding with their own specific information were used to ensure accuracy and reliability.

The information was recorded in a form in which the following information is presented:

- The **date** and **time**
- The **medium**
- A brief **summary** of the item
- **Type** of information and **issues** raised
- **Topic**: The “election topic” was too broad. To be specific, the following **topic codes** were used:

Table 2. Topic codes used in our monitoring

Codes	Topic
A	Economics and Business
AA	Poverty
B	Politics
BB	Health
C	Diplomacy
CC	HIV/AIDS
D	Disaster
DD	Discrimination
E	Political Violence and Intimidations
EE	Campaign
F	Demonstrations, Strikes and Protests
FF	Justice
G	Corruption-Government and Party
GG	Security
H	Election Fraud
HH	Culture
I	Voter Education and Registration
II	Environment
J	NEC
JJ	Transport
K	Election Problems (Including Funding, Demarcation, etc.
KK	Election Day
L	Coalitions and Party Co-operation
LL	Unity and Reconciliation
M	Party Defections
MM	Any Other Matter Related to Elections
N	Labour/Unemployment
O	Education
P	Crime
Q	Housing
R	Land
S	Taxes
T	Gender Issues
U	Ethnicity and Divisionism
V	Human Rights
W	Media
X	Elections Results
Y	Observers Group
Z	Development

- The **origin of information**: In the monitoring process, the source of the information whether provincial, national, regional¹ or international. Was mentioned.

Below are different areas code used:

Table 3. Areas code used in our monitoring

Codes	Origin
A	National
B	Provincial
C	Regional
D	Butare
E	Byumba
F	Cyangugu
G	Gikongoro
H	Gisenyi
I	Gitarama
J	Kibungo
K	Kibuye
L	Kigali City
M	Kigali-Ngali
N	Ruhengeri
O	Umutara
P	International

- The **sources** and **mentions**.
- The **gender** of the sources and mentions, either **Male**, **Female** or **Unspecified**.

¹ Regional information means the information related to the region where Rwanda is located (for example, *Great Lakes Region*).

- The **biases** and **fairness**: In this regard, monitoring concern was to find out if the author of the news item had biases like **Exaggeration, Generalization, Omission**, ... whether he opposes or favours a particular person, party or any organization.

Chapter 1. Main Findings

In this chapter, the monitoring team sets a brief presentation of the media in Rwanda, with emphasis being laid on points that have been a major focus by most of the media in the election.

1.1. Situation of Media in Rwanda

As it can be observed in Table 1, three types of media are operational in Rwanda. There is only one television and one radio in Rwanda. Both of these are government media. Radio Rwanda broadcasts 24 hours a day whereas Rwanda Television broadcasts from 1:00 to 11:00 PM local time. Radio Rwanda broadcasts in Kinyarwanda, Kiswahili, French and English, while TVR, on the other side, uses the above languages except Swahili.

As for print media, there are 2 public newspapers namely *Imvaho Nshya* and *La Nouvelle Relève*. All others are private newspapers some of which are just briefcase and their periodicity and editing languages vary from one newspaper to another as shown in the table below:

Table 4. Newspaper editing language and periodicity

Name of Newspaper	Editing language	Periodicity
1. Gasabo	Kinyarwanda	Monthly
2. Grands Lacs Hebdo	French	Weekly
3. Imvaho Nshya	Kinyarwanda	Biweekly
4. Ingabo	Kinyarwanda	Monthly
5. Inganzo	Kinyarwanda	Weekly
6. Kinyamateka	Kinyarwanda/French	Bimonthly
7. La Nouvelle Relève	French	Bimonthly
8. RNA News	French/English	Daily
9. Rushyashya	Kinyarwanda	Monthly
10. The New Times	English	Biweekly
11. Ubumwe	Kinyarwanda	Weekly
12. Umuseso	Kinyarwanda	Weekly

The above table is not exhaustive though, it only shows the newspapers monitored. There is a great number of other newspapers listed that do not come out at a regular time or have totally disappeared.

All Rwandan media head offices are located in Kigali City, which explains partly their limited information coverage countrywide. Consequently, this is a failure to media's mission of being informative and educative.

1.2. Party Coalition

Before the beginning of legislative campaigns, there were 8 recognized political parties in Rwanda. As it were in presidential elections, the legislative ones were also characterized by party coalition with a small difference that during presidential elections almost all political parties were in coalition with the President's Party (RPF-Inkotanyi). The only

political party which was not in coalition was PPC which had presented its candidate who finally joined the coalition just a day to the polls. During the legislative elections, this party coalition changed its form. Four small parties remained in coalition with RPF-Inkotanyi, whereas PSD, PL and PPC stood on their own.

1.3. Presence of Independent Candidates

It was a remarkable event that a number of candidates (20 persons), decided to stand for the parliamentary seats independently as the New Rwandan Constitution allows them to do so. This situation was a shift from the customary conception that each candidate has to be under the umbrella of a political party or organization.

1.4. Gender, Youth and Disabled Representation

According to provision of the New Rwandan Constitution, women should be represented by at least 30 % in all decision making institutions. The same constitution provides 2 seats for youth and 1 seat for the disabled in parliament. Gender, Youth and Disabled representation was not given due coverage by media. Although it is a new issue that Rwandan society deserved to be informed about, the media did not report it sufficiently.

1.5. Party Campaign

Multiparty elections were to be held for the first time in Rwanda after the Independence. Another special characteristic of these parliamentary elections was that parties and independent candidates had to campaign for seats in a bicameral Parliament (two chambers); namely the Senate and the Chamber of deputies.

The public media gave an equal chance to all parties and independent candidates to present their political agenda to the public. Political rivalry characterized the parliamentary race. Some parties and almost all independent candidates lacked means to reach all the corners of the country during their campaign. According to the media reports, the population in the countryside expressed the common complaints of not knowing the candidates that they would vote for at the end of the day.

Also, some media, especially the private ones, reported some cases of intimidation. During the monitoring process, it has been observed that the campaign coverage by the media was not based on enough reliable sources. Most of the News papers never indicated their source of information that is to say, the by-lines were either left blank or nothing at all.

1.6. Outstanding Events

Some events have been given a special focus by the media monitored. Comments and interpretation on them were various according to the reporter's point of view.

Among others, candidate disqualification was one of the events that gave rise to considerable comments in media. The main figures of opposition whose names are Célestin Kabanda and Jean Baptiste Sindikubwabo, all independent candidates, were disqualified by National Electoral Commission (NEC) few days before the elections. According to the NEC statements, the two independent candidates were accused of "forgery" of signatures endorsing them for candidacy.

The majority of media, including all government ones, based their reports on the sources provided by NEC. Their tendency was to present the above candidates as being guilty. However, some private media which seemed to

favour the opposition side commented the matter as being the ruling party's alibi, in connivance with NEC, to exclude the opposition candidates from the competition.

The media also reported a considerable presence of National and International Observers who monitored the legislative elections. The contradictions that appeared in observers reports have raised the comments of media. According to the media monitored, the observers generally showed satisfaction in how the elections were conducted. However, the European Union (EU) Observers remarked some irregularities. Most media discussions queried the differences in reports by election observers mainly how and why the European Union seemed alone on most of its conclusions.

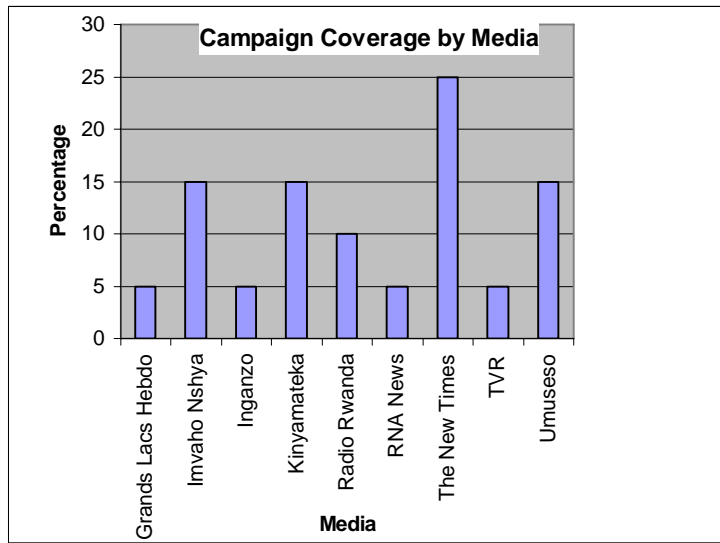
Chapter 2. Campaign and Voter Education

This chapter highlights the main characteristics of the legislative campaign as commented by Rwandan media. As it can be remarked, the campaign was not brilliant. Most of political parties and independent candidates have been hindered by lack of means. Another reason for the campaign coldness is that the strongest party (RPF-Inkotanyi) held a disguised campaign under some get-together activities like unity and reconciliation ceremonies “*ubusabane*”, development programs, youth and women mobilization, victory festivities organized in different areas of the country in thanking the population for their voting to President Paul Kagame. This can be found for example in:

- “Kagame visits Kigali Ngali” (**TNT** N° 457, 29/9-1/10/2003, p. 2; **TVR**, 26/09/2003, 19:30 pm, item 1)
- The First Lady Attended victory party in honour to mark President Kagame’s Victory prepared by Muslims (**Imvaho Nshya** N° 1517, 29/9-1/10/2003, p. 3)
- RPF is trying to corrupt the population through unity and reconciliation ceremonies “*ubusabane*” (**Umuseso** N° 147, 24/9-1/10/2003, p. 7).

Also, the other fact which proves that the campaign was weak is that only 20 news items out of 184 monitored in different media talked about the campaign.

The following chart shows the campaign coverage by different media.

Chart 2. Campaign coverage by media

The above chart shows that public media gave less importance to the campaign coverage.

2.1. Intimidation Coverage

As regards to the parties and independent candidates' rights to campaign, there were not many cases reported in the media monitored. Only 6 news items out of 184 reported such cases. As an illustration, 2 opposition parties, namely PL and PPC, accused RPF-Inkotanyi of harassing their party supporters in various parts of the country. They also accused some local leaders who are, according to those parties, RPF sympathisers of undermining their campaign. For the case of PSD, its language was not accusing. However, they recognized that a presence some minor cases mainly due to misunderstanding; and these cases were solved "amicably," according to PSD.

These are examples of news items that commented on intimidation:

- "Bazivamo remarks irk PL" (**TNT** N° 456, 25-28/9/2003, p. 3)
- "PPC alleges harassment in Gisenyi" (**TNT** N° 456, 25-28/9/2003, p.

4)

- RPF attempt to intimidate other parties (**Umuseso** N° 147, 24/9-1/10/2003, p. 4).

2.2. Other Major Happenings During the Campaign

The disqualification of two independent candidates a few days before the election has been given a large place in the media reports. The two Candidates are Mr Kabanda Céléstin and Sindikubwabo Jean Baptiste both former members of the dissolved party MDR (Mouvement Démocratique Républicain). They were accused of forgery during the campaign. According to NEC, these people have presented a list with false signatures to endorse them for candidacy. This event has been interpreted by *Umuseso* newspaper as tactics used by RPF-Inkotanyi through NEC to exclude the opponents (**Umuseso** N° 148, 2-9/10/2003, p.4).

For other media, they tackled this issue without providing neither details nor deep analysis. They just reported the NEC version. This is the case, for example, of the following newspapers:

- **Ubumwe** N° 111, Oct 2003, p. 1.
- **The New Times** N° 457, 29/9-1/10/2003, p. 1
- **TVR** 25/09/2003
- **Radio Rwanda**, 26/09/2003
- **Inganzo** 10-17/10/2003
- **RNA News** 25/09/2003
- **Kinyamateka** Sept II, 2003.

Other independent and women candidates withdrew their candidacy earlier before the elections. As media stated, the letters addressed to NEC by these candidates did not reveal any specific reasons for the withdrawal. But some reports mentioned financial constraints, others withdrew “in favour of their opponents either on personal or their political organisations’ understanding” (**TNT** N° 456, 25-28/9/2003, p. 2).

2.3. Voters Education and Registration

One of vital mechanism in influencing public opinion is to use the extensive power of the media to educate and inform the public on issues of vital concern. The media coverage on this activity focused most of the time on the role played by different institution, including NEC, media, local authorities, and associations.

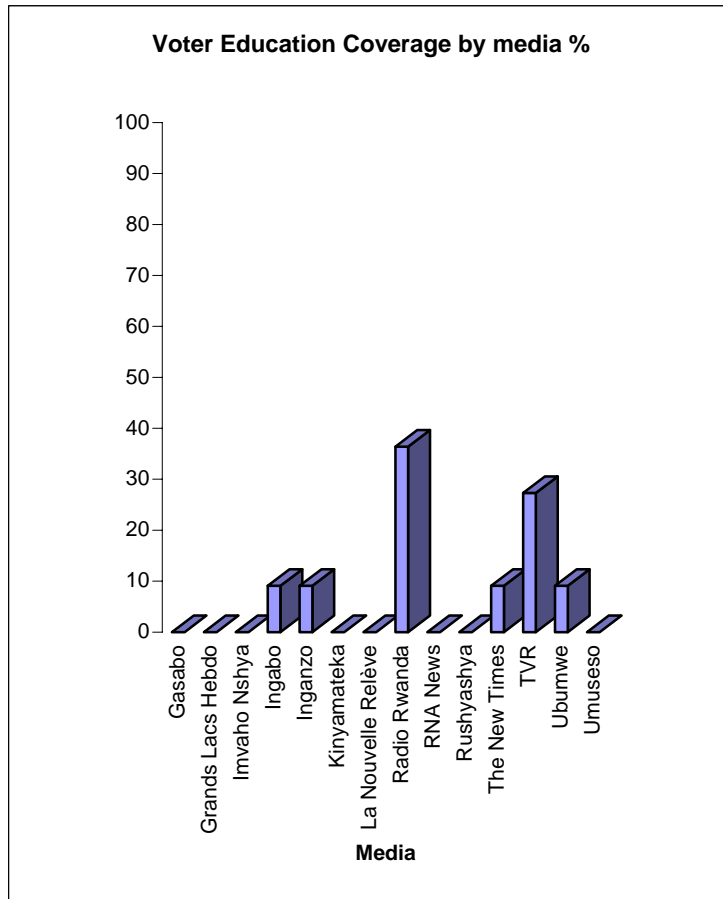
It is evident that media have failed to fulfil their role of educating the public about the elections. A proof to that is only 10 news items covered about voter education. Again, some of items were issued as announcement from NEC not as a news item in its proper sense.

The following are media in which one can find items related to voter education:

- **Ingabo** N° 101, Sept 2003, Supplementary page 3.
- **Inganzo** N° 015, 27/09-04/10/2003, p. 8.
- **Radio Rwanda**, 26, 28 and 29/09/2003.
- **The New Times** N° 457, 29/09-01/10/200, p. 2.
- **TVR**, 25 and 26/09/2003, item 1, 6.
- **Ubumwe** N° 111, 1/10/2003, p. 9.

Voter Education coverage can be viewed through the following chart:

Chart 2. Voter education by media

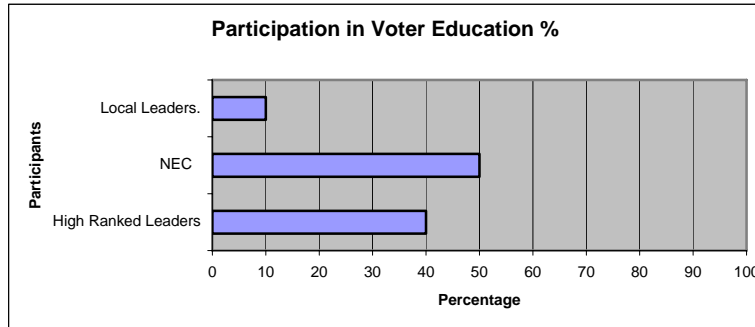


As it can be observed to the above chart, Radio Rwanda and Rwandan Television (TVR) are vanguards in Voter Education coverage. The weakness of other media in this matter can be attributed firstly to the periodicity of newspapers (some are bi-weekly, weekly, bimonthly or monthly): due to the long publication period, newspapers would have appeared when the campaign period have been closed. Secondly, most of newspapers do not have means to track the information all over the country.

Even though media coverage on voter education was poor, institutions or personalities played a big role in that matter. Among them are the High

Ranking Leaders, the NEC and the Local Leaders. Participation on Voter Education is shown in the following chart:

Chart 3. Participation in voter education



As it can be noticed in the chart, NEC and High Ranking Leaders played the most important role in educating the population about elections. However, it can be pointed out that most media reported the role of NEC and High Ranking Leaders than they did for Local Leaders and Civil society (Youth and Women Association, Religious Organizations). This confirms again the weakness of media to adequately cover the events from various sources and various areas.

Chapter 3. Election Day News Coverage

All the media monitored have at least one news item related to Election Day. The news about elections reported various points enough focusing on voter rights, transparency during the elections, counting and publication of results and other election problems.

3.1. Voter Rights:

Voter rights would be understood in the sense of secret ballot, voters' security and free choice. On a total of 34 news items on the Election Day, 29 reported the elections as being fair in terms of freedom, secret ballot and voter security. On the other side, 5 news items out of 34 reported some unfairness and voters' intimidation.

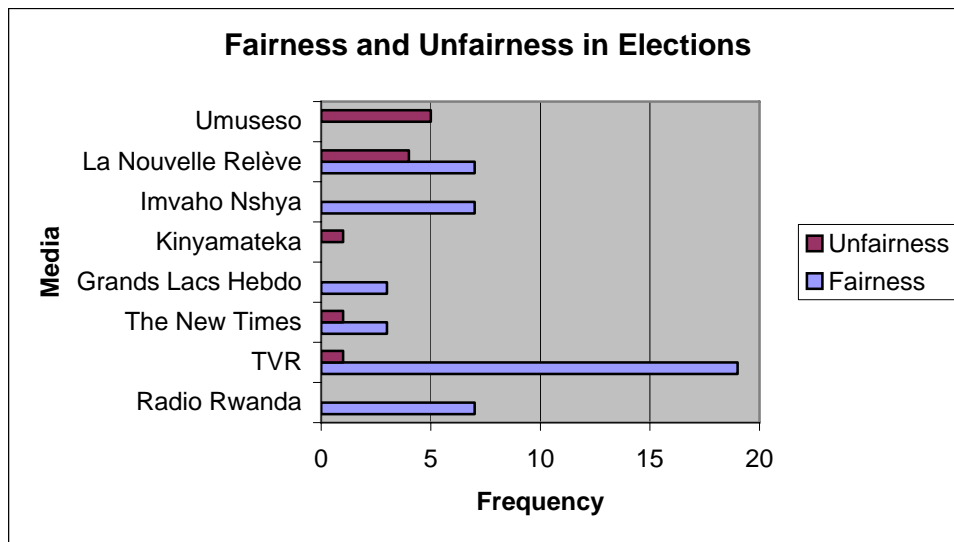
Here are media that reported election fairness:

- **Imvaho Nshya** N° 1517, 06-12/10/2003, pp. 2, 4, 6, 8.
- **La Nouvelle Relève** N° 474, 30/09-30/10/2003, pp. 12-15.
- **Radio Rwanda** 29/09/2003, 30/09/2003, 02-05/10/2003.
- **The New Times** N° 458, 2-5/10/2003, p. 4.
- **TVR**, 30/09/2003, 02/10/2003, 03/10/2003.
- **Grands Lacs Hebdo** N° 406, 8/10/2003, pp. 3, 4.

The following one reported some irregularities in elections.

- **Kinyamateka** N° 1630, September II, 2003, p. 16.
- **Umuseso** N° 148, 2-9/10/2003, p. 2; **Umuseso** N° 149, 10-17/10/2003, p. 2, 3, 7.

The following chart compares fairness and unfairness in election according to the above media:

Chart 4. Fairness and Unfairness in elections

On one hand, those which reported fairness in elections based their information on sources from NEC, local leaders, observers and candidates. On the other hand, those which reported unfairness in election rarely mentioned sources and even the few sources mentioned were unspecified. One of the examples is *Umuseso* newspaper which uses, in most cases, language like “*abantu benshi bavuga ngo*” (many people say that...), or “*amakuru atagira gihamywa ariko yemezwa n’abantu benshi*” (the information which does not have proof but which are asserted by many people), Ref. **Umuseso** N° 148, 2-9/10/2003, p. 7. While monitoring, it is difficult to judge the credibility of such sourceless information.

3.2. Transparency:

Based on the media reports, transparency is to be seen in consideration of the following elements:

- publishing the lists of voters
- showing ballot box to the voters before using them
- allowing observers to monitor the election
- respect of the time to start and end the election activity then to start counting the votes

- public counting of votes and official result publication by NEC to allow interested people to ask for clarification.

As far as publishing the lists of voters is concerned, most of the media did not spend more time in analysing whether there were done fairly or unfairly. This issue appeared in Radio Rwanda and TVR programmes simply as notices issued by NEC. However, there are some news items which criticised the way some lists were done. This is the case of **Umuseso** (N° 149, 10-17/10/2003, p. 2) which reported that the disabled voters' list contained non-disabled persons. Also, this issue of voters' list was mentioned in some news items. The emphasis was not put on transparency but on another issue of two independent candidates, namely Kabanda Célestin and Sindikubwabo Jean Baptiste, who used them to complete their forged list of people to endorse their candidacy. Ref. **Inganzo** N° 015, (27/9-4/10/2003, p. 1); **Radio Rwanda**, (26/10/2003, 19:00 hours, item 5), **TVR**, (27/9/2003, 19:30 hours, item 3), **TNT** N° 458, 2-5/10/2003, p. 23).

For showing ballot box to the voters before using them was an issue commented by TVR and Radio Rwanda, especially in their 30th September 2003 reports. The reason was that they had correspondents in various areas of the country. All of them reported that the exercise was fairly done. There is no other medium which contest this act.

Most of the Media have reported that observers were scattered all over the country monitoring the elections. Generally, various reports insure that there were no obstacles in their mission. In some news items, these observers were cited as sources; they asserted that their monitoring work was done freely. Example of items to illustrate this are: **Radio Rwanda**, (3/10/2003, 19:00 hours, item 1), **Radio Rwanda**, (4/10/2003, 19:00 hours, item 1, 2), **TVR**, (3/10/2003, 19:30 hours, item 1), **La Nouvelle Relève** N° 474, (30/9-30/10/2003, p. 12). Nevertheless, some cases of intimidation, especially those of political parties and independent

candidates' observers, have been reported by some media. This is the case of **Umuseso** N° 148, (2-9/10/2003, p. 2); **Kinyamateka** N° 1630 (September II, 2003, p. 16).

The respect of election starting and ending time was appeared mostly in *Radio Rwanda* and *TVR* Election Day reports. The two media were the ones which had enough means to reach different areas of the country. Generally, they reported that the election starting and the ending time was respected except in some areas because of either lack of materials or quorum absence during senators' election. This was observed in **TVR** reports from Kibungo (2/10/2003), Butare (2/10/2003), Gikongoro (2/10/2003), Kigali City (2/10/2003). The newspaper which rose a case that seems to be a major problem is **Umuseso** N° 148, (2-9/10/2003, p. 7). It reported that in some areas of the country election would have started earlier (at 4:00 am). The reporter mentioned that this was rumours.

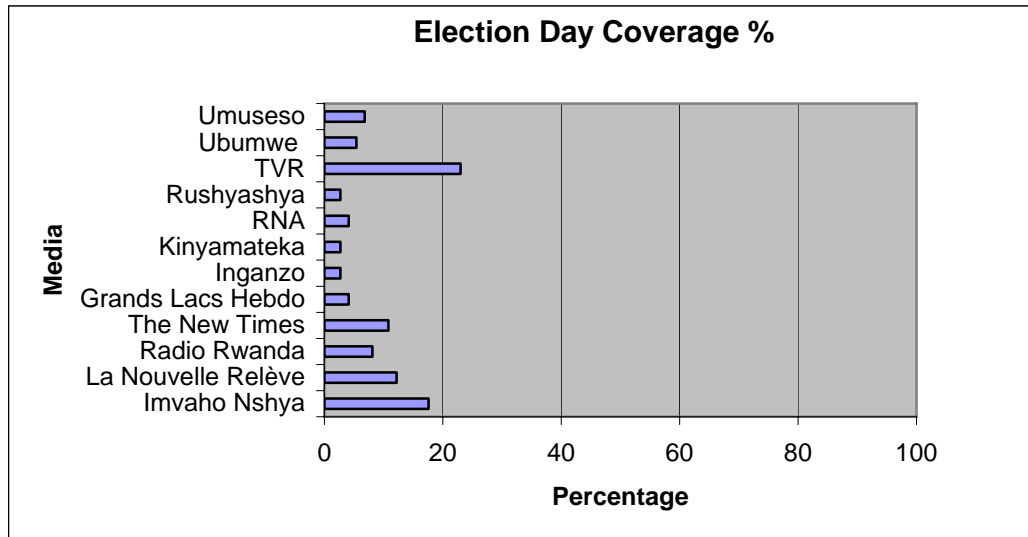
Reports on the issue of public counting of votes and official result publication by NEC are few and less analytical. Radio Rwanda and TVR presented this issue as report issued by NEC without comment or interpretation. However, some newspaper tried to make a critical analysis on this. In **Kinyamateka** N° 1630, (September II, 2003, p. 16), a journalist expressed his scepticism about the one hour time period between the ending time of the elections and the starting time of vote counting. According to him, this time can allow cheating. The scepticism was also expressed by EU observers reported in **Kinyamateka** N° 1631, (October II, 2003, p. 14) in terms of the way the results were consolidated.

3.3. Coverage of Election Day by Media

In our monitoring, 12 out of 14 media covered the Election Day events. The importance attributed to those events by various media can be statistically represented by the figures in the table and chart below:

Table 5. Election coverage by media

Media	Number of Items	%
Imvaho Nshya	13	17,6
La Nouvelle Relève	9	12,2
Radio Rwanda	6	8,1
The New Times	8	10,8
Grands Lacs Hebdo	3	4,1
Inganzo	2	2,7
Kinyamateka	2	2,7
RNA	3	4,1
Rushyashya	2	2,7
TVR	17	23,0
Ubumwe	4	5,4
Umuseso	5	6,8

Chart 5. Election Day Coverage

The chart N° 5 shows that government media played a big role in covering the Election Day events. The reason of this was that they had correspondents in different parts of the country who had to send their reports at a due time. For private media, lack of means made them unable to reach many places, and their reports were published later.

Chapter 4. Area Coverage Analysis

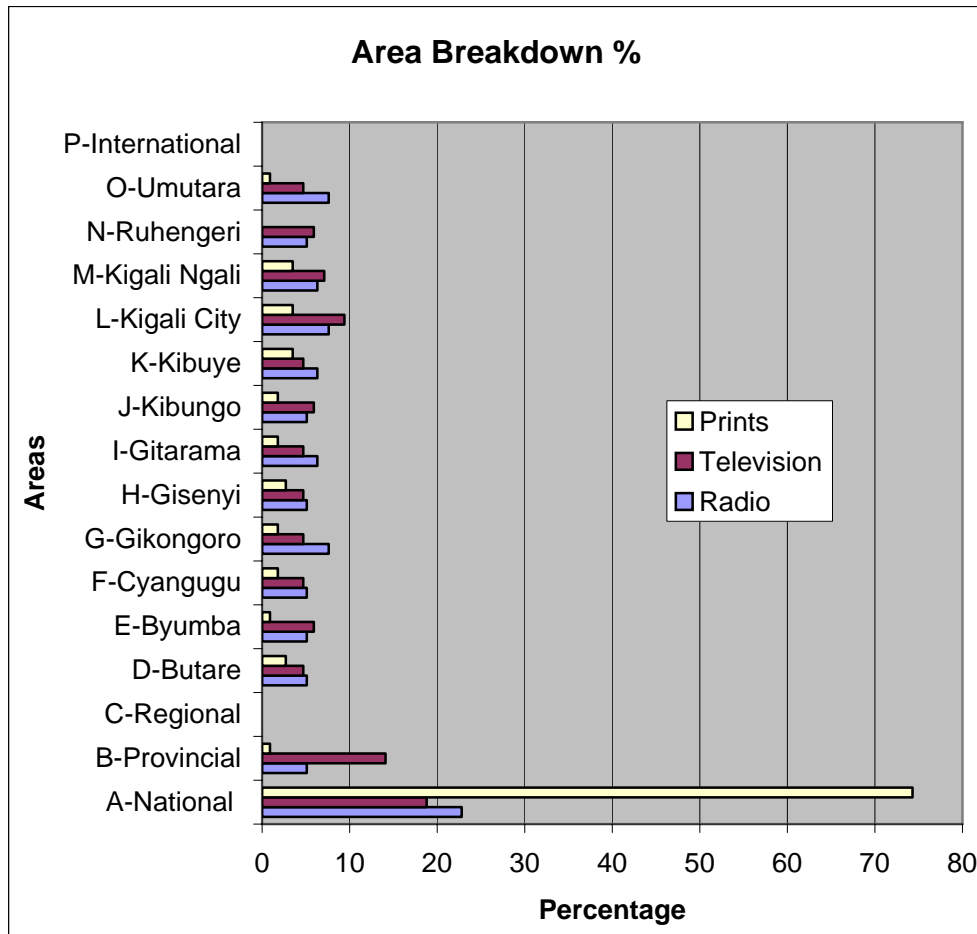
The Members of Parliament and Senators are voted by the citizens to represent them and to defend their interests. One of the roles of the media coverage of the elections in different areas of the country would be to verify if the population is aware of its rights and to clarify its expectations.

Media reporting can help in having different ideas from various areas to have possessed a general view of the situation. Regard to this matter, media do not have only the responsibility of reporting the event but also educate and inform voters about the voting process, policies, and help candidates and political parties to present their political agenda to the population.

During our monitoring, we set up criteria that have to help us to classify information according to its area of origin. Information addressed to the population in general without focusing on a specific region was captured as national one. An event covering more than one province was classified as provincial. Provinces were attributed specific codes to and the information linked to a specific one was recorded under its corresponding code.

4.1. Area Breakdown of all Media

During Legislative elections, Rwandan Government media and some Private press enterprises sent reporters in provincial cities to gather news about local events. Area coverage of the election can be viewed in the chart bellow:

Chart 6 Area Breakdown

It is clear from the chart N° 6 that coverage of issues of the national significance is the most dominant. Also, almost the total coverage of prints (74.3 %) was about the national issues. As mentioned above, this is an evidence of the weaknesses of most of Rwandan media, especially prints ones, to cover the information from remote areas.

This election coverage unveiled certain Rwandan media laziness to reach the source of information from different areas of the country. As consequence to that, there is limitation of quantity and variety of information especially from rural areas. Apart from that, some media reports do not have sources or are just rumours.

4.2. Area Coverage by Media

Rwandan media are totally based in Kigali City. In their reporting, they all show an interest in national issues more than provincial ones. The government media report better this issue. They are the ones who have permanent correspondents who can trace information everywhere in the country.

Bellow is a table presenting the area coverage by each media monitored:

Table 6. Area coverage by media

Medium	National	Provincial	Butare	Byumba	Cyangugu	Gikongoro	Gisenyi	Gitarama	Kibungo	Kibuye	Kigali City	Kigali Ngali	Ruhengeri	Umutara	International
Gasabo	1														
Grands Lacs Hebdo	8										2				
Imvaho Nshya	11	1	2	1		1		1	1		4	2			
Ingabo	2														
Inganzo	6										1				
Kinyamateka	5									2	0				
La Nouvelle Relève	5	0	1	1		1	1	1	1	1				1	
Radio Rwanda	18					2		1		1	2	1		2	
RNA News	7	0									3				
Rushyashya	2														
The New Times	17		0	1			2			1	1	1			
TVR	16	8	0	1					1		4	2	1		
Ubumwe	5														
Umuseso	15										3	1			

Apart from *The New Times*, Government media are the ones which cover the information from different areas of the country, as it can be observed

in the table above. Other newspapers reports information from Kigali City or the one tackling issues on the national level. Since members of parliament and senators had to be elected by the Rwandan population and given the mandate to represent the people's interests, it would have been interesting for the media to report the electors' views and comments from different areas of the country than national issues.

Chapter 5. Political Party, Independent Candidate, Organization and Personality Coverage

In this chapter, we will examine the place taken by political parties, independent candidates, organizations and personalities in Rwandan media during the legislative elections.

5.1. Party/Independent Candidate/Organization Breakdown

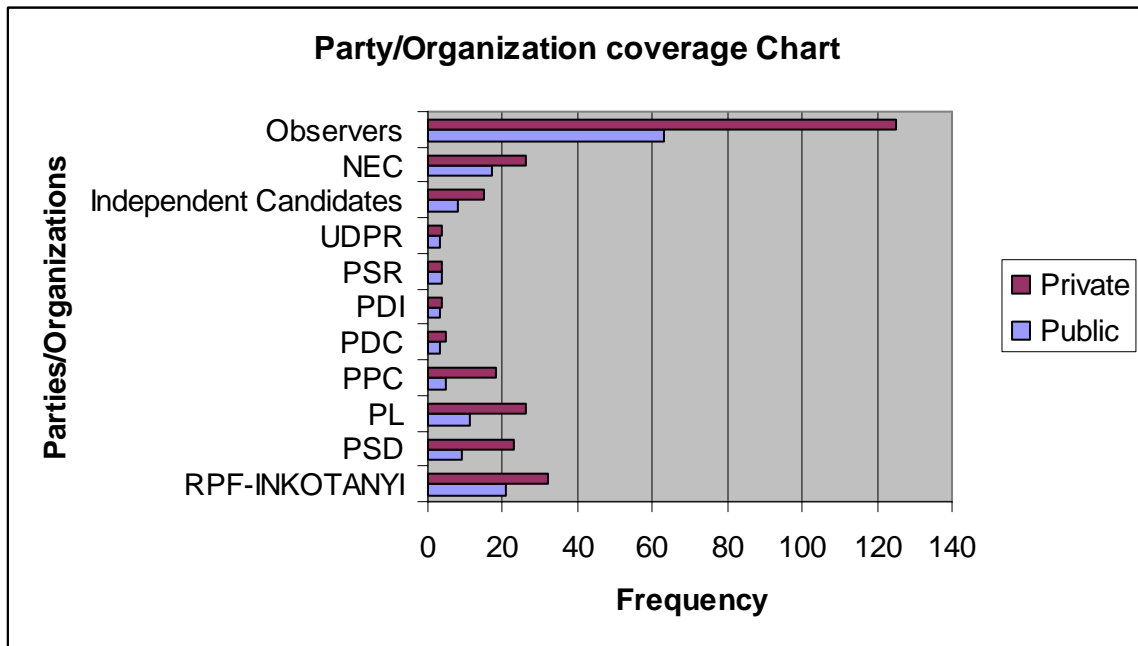
The table below shows how political parties, independent candidates and organizations have been mentioned per media monitored.

Table 7. Party/Independent Candidate/Organization coverage by media

	Political Parties and Organization	Gasabo	Grands Lacs Hebdo	Imvaho Nshya	Ingabo	Inganzo	Kinyamateka	La Nouvelle Relève	Radio Rwanda	RNA	Rushyashya	The New Times	TVR	Ubumwe	Umuseso	TOTAL
Parties	RPF-INKOTANYI	0	3	5	0	4	2	5	5	3	1	7	6	0	12	53
	PSD	0	3	1	0	1	4	4	1	4	0	5	3	2	4	32
	PL	0	3	3	0	2	4	5	1	3	0	6	2	3	5	37
	PPC	0	3	0	0	1	1	3	1	2	0	4	1	2	5	23
	PDC	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	2	1	0	0	8
	PDI	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	7
	PSR	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	2	0	0	8
	UDPR	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	7
Independent Candidates	Independent Candidates	0	3	3	1	4	1	1	3	1	0	1	1	1	3	23
Organisations	NEC	0	2	1	0	2	2	5	5	8	1	7	6	0	4	43
	Observers	0	18	12	1	10	16	18	15	22	1	28	18	8	21	188

The table above shows the mentions of various political parties, independent candidates and organizations in Rwandan media. As it can be seen, either National, African or International Observers were the most mentioned (43.8 %). This was due to the fact that observers were dispatched in different areas cited by reporters. RPF-Inkotanyi was mentioned at second place (12.3 %) because it is the ruling party and the strongest one. NEC (10 %) was also given a large place due to its first role in organizing, supervising and educating voters about the election. Other parties are mentioned according to their importance. Big parties like PL (8.6 %), PSD (7.4 %) and PPC (5.3 %) received a considerable coverage whereas small parties (PDC: 1.8 %, UDPR: 1.6 %, etc.) received very low coverage. Surprisingly, independent candidates got a little coverage (5 %) despite their big number to the legislative election (20 candidates in total). Also, the few items where independent candidates were mentioned were talking about disqualification of two independent candidates (Kabanda Célestin and Sindikubwabo Jean Baptiste). This low coverage of independent candidates was due to their absence on the scene during the campaign, elections and after the elections. None of the independent candidates has been able to organize his/her campaigning tour all over the country and none of them won a seat in the Parliament. That may be the reason media did not attach any importance to them.

Media coverage varied following that they belong to government or private. The following chart illustrates party/organization mention by medium:

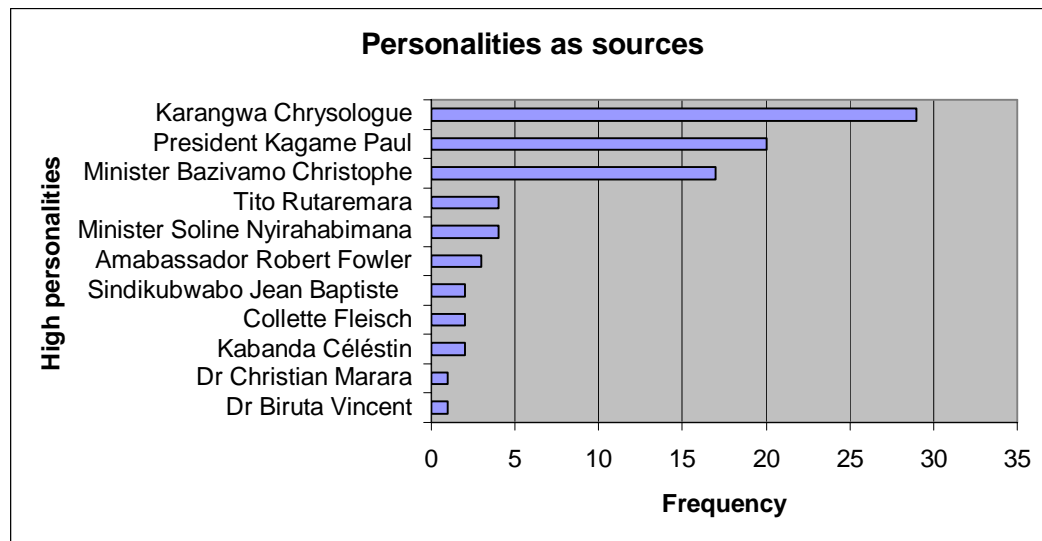
Chart 7. Party coverage

After grouping government media and public ones, media coverage did not change its tendency. Party/Independent candidate and organization coverage order remains the same. Observers are the most mentioned both in private and public media. RPF-Inkotanyi and NEC hold the same position when the small parties and the independent candidates come at the last position. Comparing private and public coverage from the above chart, private coverage seems to be dominant. The reason is that after grouping private and public media, private media represent the big number (10) and the public ones are only four.

5.2. Personalities

The personality coverage analysis is necessary in order to determine how far Rwandan media have gone in accessing the variety of sources to insure an equitable coverage. For the information to be complete, media should have access to varied views.

The chart below shows personalities used as sources in media.

Chart 8. Personality as source

The prominent persons who have been the most presented as sources by almost all media were the NEC Chairman Professor Chrysologue Karangwa, the President Paul Kagame and the Minister of Local Government Mr Christophe Bazivamo. In contrast, none of the candidates or political leaders received a greater coverage in media reports.

The NEC chairman, Chrysologue Karangwa, intervened in most reports as source due to his main role in organizing and conducting elections, educating people and publicising election results. He received greater coverage mostly in public media.

President Paul Kagame and Minister Christophe Bazivamo have got such a dominant coverage due principally to their position in the government. They played an important role in sensitizing people to keep order during elections, preserve security, unity and reconciliation and to avoid divisionism. Apart from that, the two prominent figures are respectively president and vice president of RPF-Inkotanyi. As the top leaders of the strongest political party, they were given greater opportunity by some media to present RPF political agenda.

It is clear that number of media, especially private media, failed to inform the population about candidates and their political agenda. Apart from Radio Rwanda and Rwandan Television which had to provide to each candidate a ten- minutes period in its night programmes to present its political agenda to the population during the campaign, the rest of media reports had attached lesser importance to that issue. As a consequence, one day before Election Day, in many areas of the country, people were still complaining that they did not know anything about the candidates they were going to vote for (**Kinyamateka** N° 16530, September II, 2003, p. 13).

As for personality mentioned, the frequency of appearance in reports is different from what was observed in sources. That is showed by the table bellow:

Table 8. Personalities as mentions

High Personalities	Gasabo	GLH	IM.N.	Ingabo	Inganzo	KM	NReI	RRwa	RNA	Rushyasha	TNT	TVR	Ubumwe	Umuseso	TOT
President Kagame Paul	0	1	2	0	2	2	4	1	1	1	6	4	0	2	26
Twagiramungu Faustin	1	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	1	0	4	1	0	0	10
Kabanda Célestin	0	1	2	0	2	2	4	1	1	0	3	1	1	2	20
Sindikubwabo Jean Baptiste	0	1	2	0	2	2	4	1	1	0	1	1	1	2	18
Karangwa Chrysologue	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	2	5
Minister Bazivamo Christophe	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Collette Fleisch	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2

From the observation of the table above, President Kagame received greater mention. It should be noted that in most cases where he was mentioned, he was either favoured or opposed.

For the two independent candidates (Sindikubwabo and Kabanda), although they rarely appeared as sources (2 times), they were given a large place in mentions due to their disqualification by NEC accusing them of forgery. This asserts the observation that Rwandan media do not approach various persons to publish full information including different views.

Chapter 6. Gender, Youth and Disabled Representation Coverage

Rwanda, in its programme of building a democratic society, set a policy of greater representation of women and other vulnerable groups which were previously either underrepresented or unrepresented at all in policy making institutions.

According to the provisions of the New Constitution, women should be given at least 30 % of seats in Parliament and other decision making institutions. The youth and the disabled on the other hand were given 2 and 1 seats respectively.

Women, youth and the disabled had to elect their representatives to the House through their structures stretching from the Sector, District, then to the Provinces and national levels where women and youth MP's were voted respectively. In this topic, the monitoring concern is to observe the manner in which Rwandan media attached importance to that issue of woman representation as well as women's role in the election process.

The media coverage of that process including the campaign on the grassroots level is very low. Women representation received a bit more coverage, especially in government media, when the process was at provincial level, the last step to determine two woman representatives from each of the 12 Provinces of the country. Cases of gender discrimination and gender violence were of less importance because such cases during elections were extremely rare.

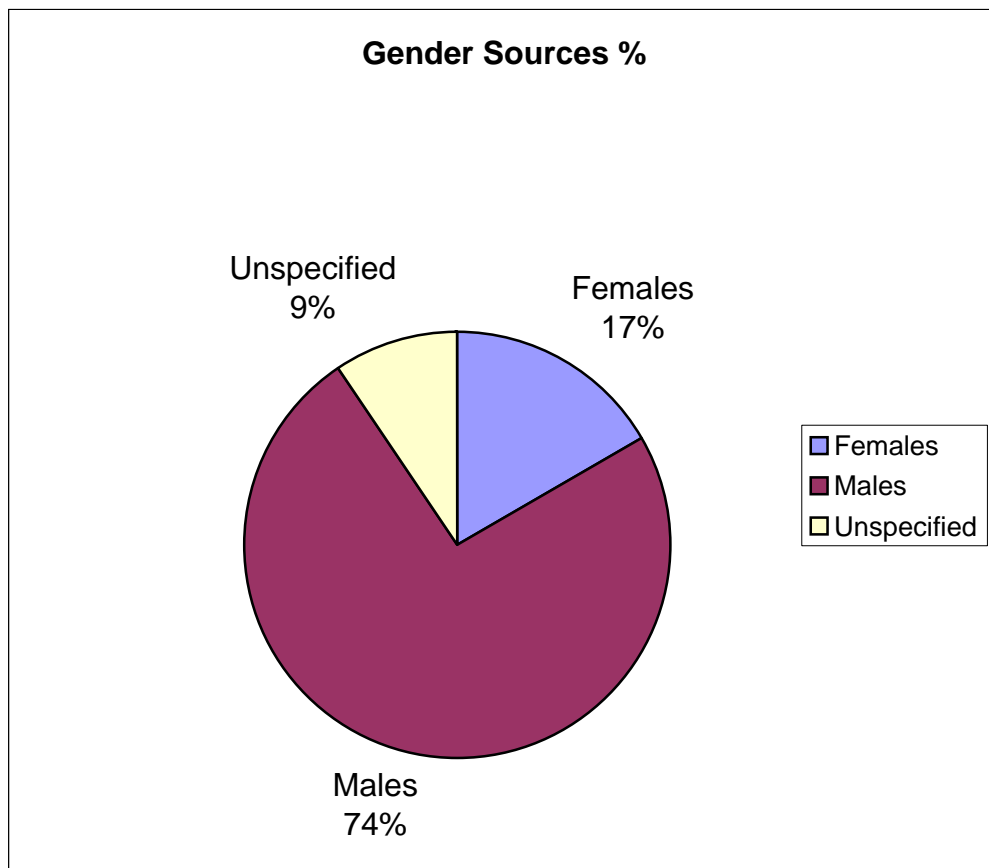
6.1. Gender Representation Breakdown

While considering the proportion of news items related to gender representation in comparison with other issues, it is clear that gender issue was given less importance in the media. As an illustration, on the

total number of 184 news items monitored, only 14 news items reported issues related to woman representation either during the campaign or elections.

The low coverage of gender issue can also be observed in media reporting while considering the items in which women intervened as source of information.

Chart 9. Gender as source %



Although the statistics of voters with respect to their gender are not known, it is obvious that the proportion of women as a source is very low compared to women registered for voting. It has been observed that the media tended to focus more on personality and profiles than woman candidates.

Women who were the most cited in many news items are the Minister of State in Charge of Social Affairs, Odette Nyiramirimo, who is also the Secretary General of PL. Another woman who received more coverage is Aloysia Inyumba, the Prefect of Kigali Ngali.

The gender issue coverage by media is disappointing in the context of these Rwandan parliamentary elections where women were massively represented and played a big role either in the organization of elections or in the vote itself. Such a gender representation, being an unusual event in Rwanda should have been given more attention in media reports.

6.2. Female Mention Breakdown

Different media have mentioned differently the gender issue in their reports.

Table 9. Gender mentions

Medium	Females	Males	Unspecified	Total
Gasabo	0	2	1	3
Grands Lacs Hebdo	2	5	3	10
Imvaho Nshya	9	21	53	78
Ingabo	2	2	5	9
Inganzo	3	16	16	35
Kinyamateka	2	14	29	45
La Nouvelle Relève	5	17	64	86
Radio Rwanda	28	30	74	132
RNA News	2	11	47	60
Rushyashya	0	1	2	3
The New Times	17	38	60	115
TVR	9	27	46	82
Ubumwe	0	6	12	18
Umuseso	3	31	39	73
Total	78	220	451	749

The table above illustrates the frequency of women being mentioned by various media in their reports. Generally, male mentions are greater than female mentions in all media. This is a clear indication that women are

under-represented in institutions, in political parties and in various activities in the country.

The low coverage of women by media indicates that women are not only underrepresented in institutions or political parties but also in the media itself. There is however the expectation that this situation may change due to the big number of women who accessed to high posts in government and Parliament. There is a need for Rwandan population, especially woman representatives and other political leaders, to sensitise women to stand first for their rights and take part in all activities of national interest including the media.

Chapter 7. Fairness and Bias in the Media Reporting

Fairness is one of the basic indicators of a good media report during the election. While monitoring the legislative elections, the RMMP main objective was to ascertain whether fairness has characterized Rwandan media while covering the above elections. This element was viewed in terms of how reporters presented their news items in an unprejudiced way. Unbiased reports helped us to determine whether elections were free, fair and balanced.

Another element which tends to characterize other election reports is bias in reporting. Bias was first viewed in terms of the language used. The monitoring team endeavoured to check if the language was used without **exaggeration**, **generalization** or **trivialization** in the stories. Second, bias was examined through the items that contained **omission** of the important information that can deform the meaning of the remaining part of the issue treated. Third and last, bias was viewed in the **presentation** angle. The way information was presented in the media helped in identifying the side taken by the reporter.

7.1. Biased Stories by Medium

Language and presentation biases occurred in the media monitored. On television, radio or in print, these biases were characterized by the language or presentation that clearly and distinctly favour one side or substantially disfavour or tarnish the image of a party, organization or independent candidates.

This is the case of some articles from the following media:

- **Gasabo** N° 10, (8-9/2003, p. 3)
- **Grand Lacs Hebdo** N° 406, (08/10/2003, p. 9)
- **Kinyamateka** N° 1630, (September II, 2003, p. 17)

- **The New Times** N° 458, (02-05/10/2003, p. 23)
- **Ubumwe** N° 111, (1/10/2003, p. 3)
- **Radio Rwanda**, (26/09/2003, item 6)
- **Umuseso** N° 148, (02-09/10/2003, pp. 2, 4, 7); **Umuseso** N° 147, (24/09-01/10/2003, pp. 3, 5, 6).

Some news items appeared as allegations against a certain party, candidate or a certain organization.

The bias of omission was identified where the accused side was not given the opportunity to respond to considerable allegations or to a serious issue that disfavour it.

In the following news items, bias of omission was identified:

- **Imvaho Nshya** N° 1516, (27/09/2003, p. 1)
- **TVR** , (27/09/2003, 19:30 hours, item 7).
- **Umuseso** N° 147, (24/09-01/10/2003, p. 2), **Umuseso** N° 148, (02-09/10/2003, p. 2)

7.2. Fair Stories Vs Biased ones

In establishing the importance of biases and fairness in news items, the various media were compared. The following table shows the total number of fair and biased stories by each media monitored:

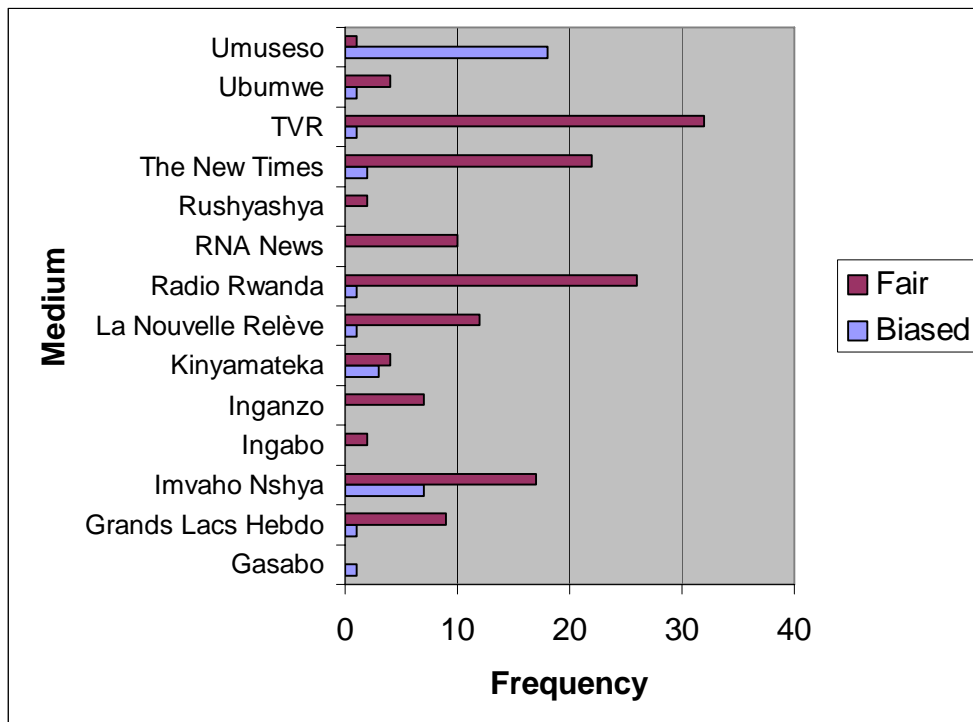
Table 10. Bias and Fairness in media

Medium	Biased	Fair
Gasabo	1	0
Grands Lacs Hebdo	1	9
Imvaho Nshya	7	17
Ingabo	0	2
Inganzo	0	7
Kinyamateka	3	4
La Nouvelle Relève	1	12
Radio Rwanda	1	26
RNA News	0	10
Rushyashya	0	2
The New Times	2	22
TVR	1	32
Ubumwe	1	4
Umuseso	18	1
TOTAL	36	148

The RMMP findings reveal that majority of the news items monitored were fair. The table above shows that fair items were 148, that is to say 80.4 %. The 36 remaining news items, that is to say 19.6 % showed a tendency to a partiality that prevents objective consideration of an issue or situation. These were items that the RMMP defined as biased.

By considering each medium coverage, the chart bellow illustrates the frequency of biased and fair news items per medium monitored:

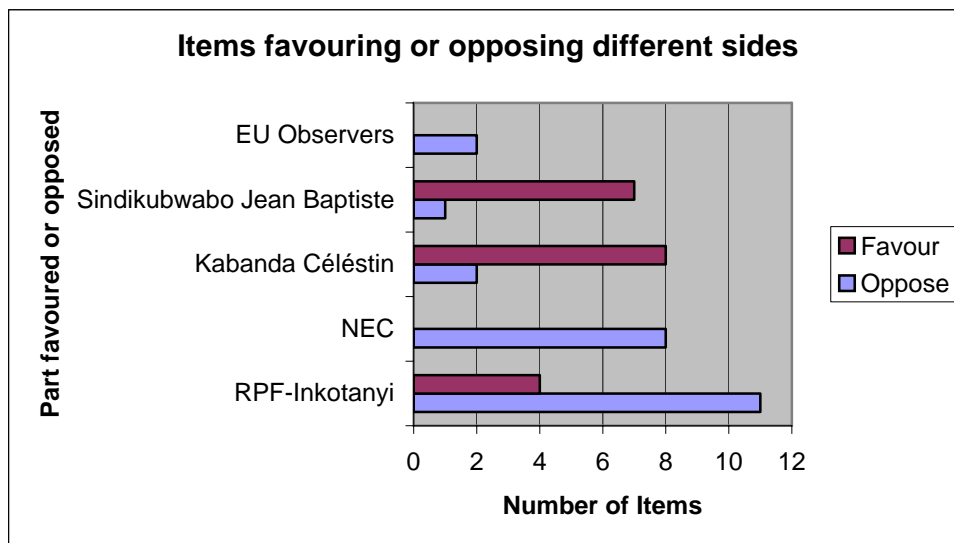
Chart 10. Bias vs. Fair breakdown



As it can be observed in the chart above, *TVR*, *Radio Rwanda*, *La Nouvelle Relève* and *Imvaho Nshya* all public media, tried to report their news stories in a fair way. The private media that made an effort to report fairly are *The New Times*, *RNA*, *Grands Lacs Hebdo*, etc. The very significant difference can be observed in *Umuseso* news items. In this newspaper, biased items (94.7 %) dominated its total coverage of items issued at the monitored period.

Another RMMP observation is that most of the items that favoured a party, an independent candidate, a high personality or an organization were unfair. Also, those that oppose any party, candidates or any organization seem to present allegations against the side they oppose. The chart below presents the parties, personalities and organizations which were favoured and opposed.

Chart 11. Favour and Oppose



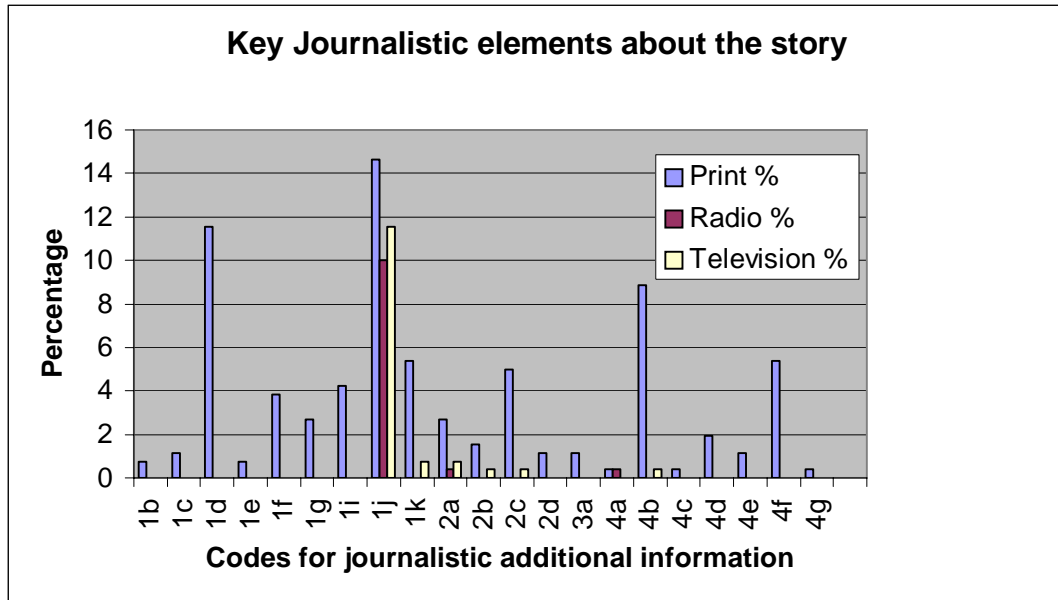
Considering the number of opposing items found during our monitoring, RPF-Inkotanyi was the most opposed party. It was followed by NEC. The allegations that come frequently were that RPF-Inkotanyi and NEC worked hand in hand to discourage the opposition side. The EU observers reports being different from other observers' meant to some media that the EU observers had a two-folded mission. There was no news item that openly favours NEC and EU Observers.

7.3. Key Journalistic Elements about the Story

There are other elements that help in capturing additional information about the news items monitored. These elements provide a standardised method of identifying key journalistic elements about the story. These

elements were called “issues” in the database. Bellow is the chart that shows how they appeared in the news items that were monitored.

Chart 12. Issues



Legend

The editorial interventions made the reports misrepresented (1b), dramatic and emotional (1c), opinion/analysis (1d), report which uses words that suggest some scepticism of what is being said (1e), report makes assumptions and draws unwarranted conclusions (1f), report with headline does not accurately reflect the story and/or introduces opinion (1g), report with an assertion/statement of fact made without accreditation/a supporting quote or supporting evidence or a source (1i), factual and event based story (1j), the report which lacks depth and analysis (1k).

As far as the sources are concerned, the items beginning with number (2a) means that the item has accessed a wide variety of relevant sources. When the statistics or Research Surveys referred to are sourced and are from an authoritative institution (2b), and item not balanced in terms of sources accessed (2c).

For Human Rights related issues (3a) means that the issue of human rights has been broadly raised.

As for Journalistic practice, (4a) means that the language used ridicules an issue; (4b) means that the item is explanatory. The report raises important issues (4c); the report fails to question and interrogate campaigning candidates (4d); report is vague and confusing (4e); item is critical (4f) and the language used as a congratulatory message (4g).

As it can be seen on the chart, the dominant key journalistic element is (1j) which means that the news items were factual and event based. Other dominant reports were explanatory, critical or opinion/analysis.

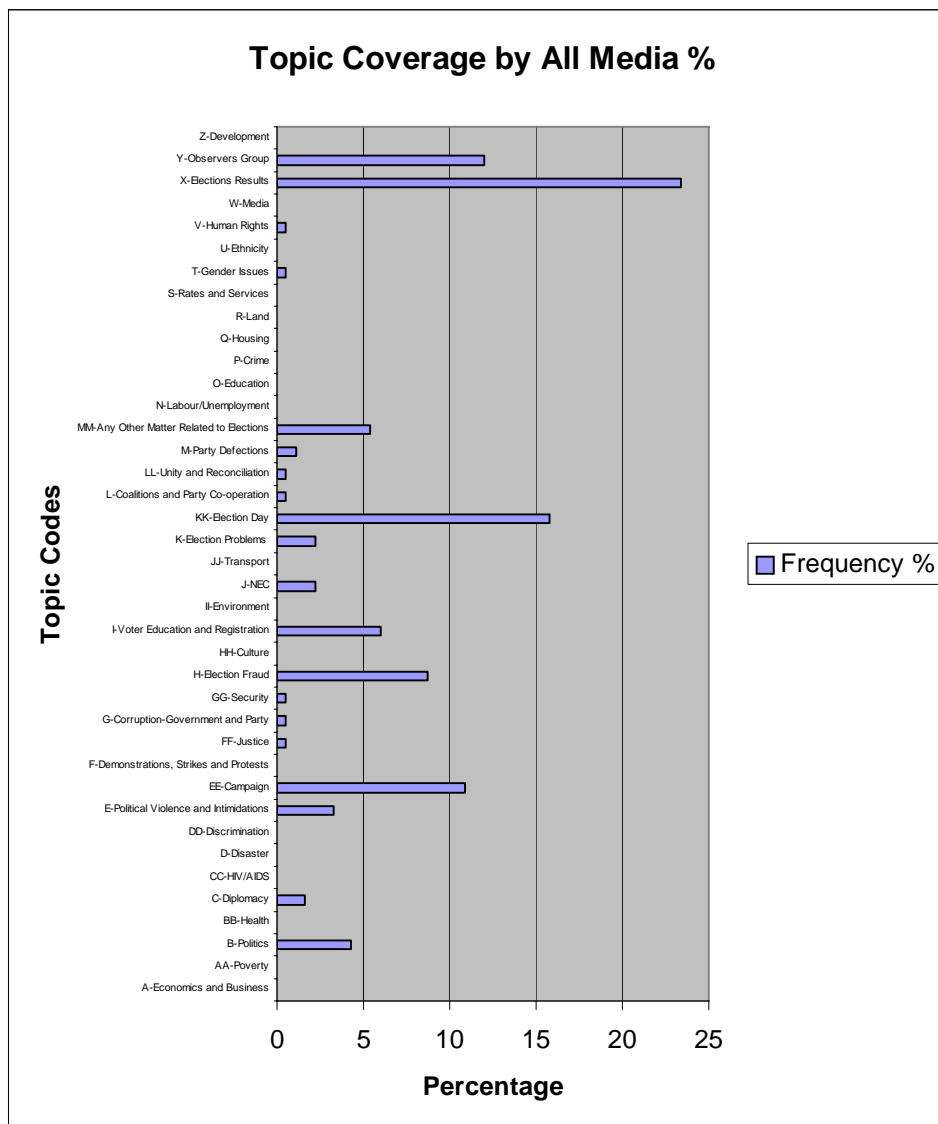
In short, reports with bias can lead to unfair coverage of the election. However, few biased items found would not transform the generally fair nature of the remaining items that characterized the overall election coverage.

Chapter 8. Topic Analysis

Throughout our monitoring, we examined items carefully to identify topics which dominated different stories. Then, we classified them in the topic list under the codes that seemed to be more suitable for them. In our analysis, we found out that there are some topics that have been reported more than others as it will be shown in the following clarifications.

8.1. Topic Coverage by all Media

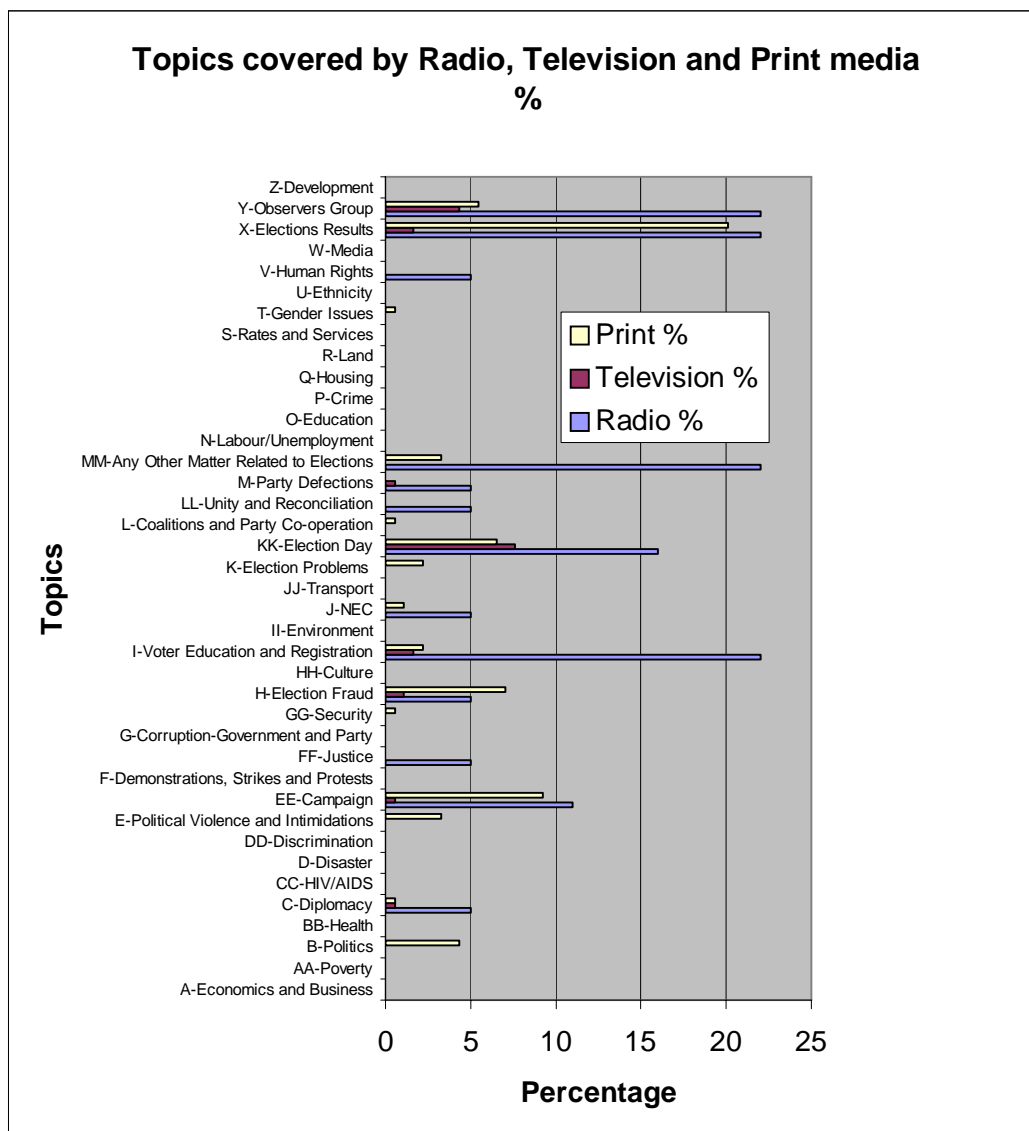
Chart 13. Topic coverage



Considering the chart above, topics related to people welfare during the campaign namely economy, business, health, HIV/AIDS, culture, education, labour, etc. were not tackled. The exposition of different parties or independent candidates' plans to enable voters to see what they would benefit from voting such and such party or candidates was neglected. Most of energy was spent on reporting events related to the place where the campaign took place, the number of people who attended the meetings, the publication of election results by NEC, the presence of a lot of observers and election fraud. In brief, a lot of reports lacked analysis.

8.2. Topic Coverage According to the Type of Media

Chart 14. Topic coverage by type of media



Compared to other kinds of media, *Radio Rwanda* comes to the first place to have reported with frequent appearances of topics tackled in its news items.

Overlooking some topics by media forced us to the question of whether the media had their own agenda for the elections or whether they followed the one set by politicians. If they had to follow to the letter the agenda set by politicians, reports related to their political agenda such as poverty alleviation or policies related to HIV/AIDS fighting would have appeared. What is evident is that the media missed reports with more relevant, educative and informative focus. Their reports simply reflect the ongoing debates, press conferences, politicians' activities and scheming.

Conclusion

This report is the outcome of the RMMP's monitoring of the coverage across news items related to the last parliamentary elections in Rwanda as reported in Rwandan media both public and private.

One of the focuses of the project was to determine whether the media had fulfilled their role of educating and informing the population on the electoral process and other related issues such as voters' rights and human rights in general. In this regard, most of the media have been unsuccessful. On one side, Radio Rwanda and TVR have devoted some of their programmes to the electoral process. Their coverage was not sufficient because they focused most on debates, speeches of high ranking political leaders, sometimes lacking critical analysis. On the other side, most of newspaper reports put more attention to events like the disqualification of the two independent candidates, sometimes making allegations without evidence but really no proper analysis of issues, nor an electoral coverage as such.

As far as fairness in party and candidate coverage is concerned, most of news items monitored were unbiased. There are not many cases where news reporters showed a clear opposition or favour to parties or independent candidates. Some news items which happened to be biased were concerning mostly opposition either to RPF-Inkotanyi, NEC or the two independent candidates (Célestin Kabanda and Jean Baptiste Sindikubwabo). It was noted however, that almost all news items monitored were characterised by lack of diversity of opinions.

Party and independent coverage may not escape criticism. Rwandan media have mostly devoted greater coverage to strong parties than they did to small parties and independent candidates.

The area coverage by the media deserves also criticism. The majority of news items monitored were about the national stories. The provinces and

rural areas received greater coverage in Radio Rwanda, TVR and Imvaho Nshya, whereas many prints reported national issues. The city of Kigali received more coverage and comes at the second place after national issues. This shows the weakness of most of Rwandan media to cover elections everywhere in the country.

The gender issue is being given considerable importance in the Rwandan society and in politics. For instance, the new parliament was to include at least 30 % of women representatives. Unfortunately, gender issues got very low coverage in Rwandan media during the electoral period. Even the few cases where the issue rose were not gender analysis as such, but only women personalities being involved in other activities.

While considering the media coverage with respect to human rights, it has been observed that human rights, especially voters' have received more attention in most media reports. Great number of government media based their reports to NEC members, local leaders, voters or some observers and the majority of them were of the same view that elections were free and fair and that voters were secure enough at the polling stations.

Another important issue that every one dreaded was the divisionism which would rise with the elections. The NEC and political leaders had warned everyone against campaign based on ethnicity or any kind of divisionism. This warning was concerning also the media. This issue has risen in very few cases and fortunately reports did not show any tendency to be involved in such misconduct. Their report on this issue has been fair.

In an attempt to compare government media with the private ones, the two categories showed similarities as well as differences. They all gave greater importance to national issues than the provincial ones. Again, they are all characterised by the lack of diversity of opinions. They also share the common tendency to focus mostly on personalities and profiles than the rest of the population. They only differ in their extent of coverage because

the government media, having a lot of means, represent the most coverage in various domains than the private ones which are very limited by the fact of means.

For Rwandan media to play their role of informing and educating people efficiently, more effort should be made in the sense of reporting diverse information through adequate area coverage. Information from all parts of the country must be presented in a balanced manner. There is also a greater need for diversity of opinions through approaching various sources of information. Prioritization of issues is also an important element. It is not convenient that an issue like women representation receives low coverage in the media when it is of great importance in Rwandan politics. Finally, media should make an effort to be analytical by comparing different sources of information so as to provide credible and unbiased information.

There is need to professionalize the media in Rwanda through training seminars and workshops to ensure that journalists get acquainted with professional ethics and skills necessary for proper, free, fair and balanced coverage.

Given the nature of Rwandan media both public and private and considering its economic vulnerability, it is necessary that the civil society, government, and other donors facilitate it through logistical support to ensure an even coverage.

In its first phase, the RMMP focussed on parliamentary election coverage. Its plan for the next phase of monitoring will be about various fields including economy, development, health, education, and culture to mention but a few. The outcome of its analysis will serve the High Council of the Press and any other interested person/s or institutions as a measuring tool to evaluate the performance of the media in Rwanda.
