



Zimbabwe National Editors Forum Declaration

Keeping the Media in Focus: Editors Dialogue on Electoral and Governance Matters in Zimbabwe

**16, December 2017
Kadoma, Zimbabwe**

We, the Zimbabwe Editors gathered at the Zimbabwe National Editors Forum in Kadoma on 16 December 2017 under the theme ***Keeping the Media in Focus: Editors Dialogue on Electoral and Governance Matters in Zimbabwe*** took the opportunity to express our views and reflect on the state of the media.

Cognisant of the fundamental role the media in shaping opinion and setting the agenda on electoral and governance matters in Zimbabwe.

Concerned about the threats to media freedom and free expression in the current context. The media is wallowing in self-censorship on the key developments in Zimbabwe.

Noting the institutional and operation shortcomings and weaknesses related to finances, human resources, and technology of media houses to cover the upcoming election comprehensively.

Coming together in our diversity to reassert our commitment to the highest standards, ethics and professional conduct of the media.

We make the following instructive demands:

1. Government of Zimbabwe must not interfere in the operations of the media and leave them alone to report professionally, objectively, accurately, factually and truthfully without undue interference and obstacles.
2. Media should be free from shareholder and commercial interference
3. The government should embrace media reforms that are critical to the opening up of media space for journalist to work freely cover issues without fear or favor.

4. Urge the Government Repeal of Access of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA), Criminal Law Codification Act, Broadcasting Services Act and Public Order and Security Act (POSA) which violates the right to access and free expression as expressed in the 2013 Constitution.
5. An urgent end of harassment, intimidation and arrest of media workers and journalist inline of duty. The Government of Zimbabwe must guarantee safety of journalist.
6. We encourage the government to work with the media to implement recommendations of Information and Media Panel of Inquiry (IMPI) report whose process has been left hanging.
7. Authorities of Zimbabwe not limited to the Zimbabwe Election Commission (NO SHOW BY ZEC) and Zimbabwe Republic Police to engage timely, efficiently and effectively with the media and stakeholders.
8. We call on the government to reinstate the special voting mechanisms for journalists so that they can be able to cast their vote and cover the election freely.
9. Unfettered access to information and to the diversity of the electorate by the media to cover electoral issues more comprehensively in Zimbabwe

We also took time to reflect and put on record the Media We Want and commit to:

- Adhere to principles of fairness, inclusiveness, truth telling and ethical coverage of electoral and governance processes in Zimbabwe.
- Deliberately put in place and push for reforms in the media houses aimed at fair coverage of gender and women's issues in the Media We agreed to hold media houses accountable to gender equality and equity in the work place .
- Work towards an end to sexual harassment in our newsrooms as well as improving women's representation, portrayal and participation in electoral coverage and media debates
- In relation to institutional and operation shortcomings we commit to strengthen our capacity (financial, technological, human resources and technical) to ensure comprehensive coverage of elections in Zimbabwe.
- Continue facilitating knowledge sharing and enhancement for journalists on electoral and governance matters.
- Commit to giving fair media access to candidates and political parties in the upcoming elections in 2018.
- Provide voters with factual information to make informed decisions.