

Media Complaints Analysis Report

2018

A Report by the Voluntary Media Council of Zimbabwe (VMCZ)

1. Media Complaints Committee Chairperson's Remarks



There is no question that the period leading up to 2018 was marked by significant developments that had an impact on the country's trajectory and by extension the profession of journalism in Zimbabwe.

The July 30, 2018 election was the first vote to be held since the fall of former President Robert Mugabe in November 2017 after 37 years in power. Given the contentious and disputed nature of previous elections, the interim President and Government's expressed commitment to a "free, fair and peaceful" election largely resulted in the widening of the democratic space for media and other players to operate in the pre-election period.

The pre-election environment recorded less cases of assault and intimidation against journalists and media houses compared to previous periods and elections, although there was a notable increase in the post-election period.

While the environment largely allowed for freedom of expression and media freedom, freedom of movement, association and campaigns by the contesting political parties, as well as several legal and administrative changes to the election management, concerns continued to linger around achieving a genuinely even playing field. In addition, journalists continued to operate under the ever present threat of repressive legislation that criminalises journalistic work.

It is against the above background that the VMCZ continued with its core mandate of adjudicating complaints against the media, thereby underlining citizens' need and demand for reliable and credible information, especially in an increasingly complex news and information ecosystem.

This regular Report contributes to documenting analysis of the media landscape and key trends in Zimbabwe, as well as deepening public understanding of the work the VMCZ does.

Some key highlights in the Report include increased demand for accountability on election coverage as highlighted by the complaints filed by the country's biggest opposition coalition, the MDC-Alliance, against what they deemed to be partisan and biased coverage by some sections of the media. Female politicians also weighed in with concerns related to portrayal of female candidates by the media which they deemed as sexist and stereotypical.

This Report, the fourth edition since 2014, therefore provides a snapshot of the complaints received in 2018 as well as the broad trends emerging from the complaints.

As the Media Complaints Committee, while we do not claim success in our work, our strength lies in a decentralised complaints mechanism that remains free of charge and promotes speedy and amicable resolution of complaints as a way of promoting media freedom and accountability. This is unlike the court system, which takes time and can cost an arm and a leg.

Many thanks to the Media Complaints Committee (MCC) and Provincial Complaints Adjudication structures across the country that worked with me through the election period, and indeed throughout the year, to attend to complaints brought before the MCC. A word of appreciation to the editors as well who continued to demonstrate their commitment to the media complaints mechanism through their interactions with the MCC; and to the public for continuous and consistent support.

We are also particularly thankful to our partners whose support kept the media complaints mechanism functional and accessible and facilitated the publication of this Report.

Retired Judge Justice Smith
Media Complaints Committee Chairperson

National Complaints Committee Members



Retired Justice George Smith (Chairman) Retired Justice Smith is a legal consultant. He worked in the offices of the Federal Attorney-General and then Southern Rhodesia Attorney General from 1956 to 1979, ending that service as Director of Legal Drafting and Solicitor General. He was awarded the Independence Commemorative Decoration and Commander of the Legion of Merit in 1971. In 1979 he was appointed Secretary to the Prime Minister (Muzorewa) and Cabinet of Zimbabwe/Rhodesia.

In 1980 he became Secretary to the Prime Minister (Former President Mugabe) and Cabinet of Zimbabwe. In January 1984 he was appointed a Judge of the High Court and remained a Judge until June 2003. After his retirement he became an arbitrator. He is currently the Chairman of the Southern Africa HIV and AIDS Information Dissemination Service.



Cris Chinaka (Vice Chairperson) has over two decades of work at Reuters International News Service where he was the agency's chief correspondent in Zimbabwe since 1995. He has over 30 years experience in journalism and is one of Reuters' most experienced reporters in Africa. Cris is involved in journalism mentoring projects in Zimbabwe and the region. He has been a Board member of the VMCZ since its formation in 2007 and has served on its training committee. He also chairs the Board of Trustees of the Media Centre (of

Zimbabwe) and the board of trustees of The Source, an independent business and financial news agency project in Zimbabwe.



Precious Chakasikwa - Legal Practitioner and partner at Kantor and Immerman. She holds a Bachelor of Laws degree from the University of Zimbabwe and a higher national diploma in Marketing. Ms Chakasikwa Chairs the Population Services International Zimbabwe (PSI Zim) Board and is Vice Chairperson of Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights. She is a member of the Women's University in Africa Steering Committee, a Board member of the National Aids Council and a trustee at the Law Society of Zimbabwe Compensation Fund. She is a member of the Law Society of Zimbabwe, Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights and the Estate Administrators Association Zimbabwe.

2. Media Complaints Procedure:

2.1 Formation of Code of Conduct

2.2 Functions of the MCC

The MCC is guided by a desire to promote and protect a set of common professional standards of conduct for media practitioners, media institutions, media owners and publishers, and to provide all parties, including members of the public, with an adequate opportunity to obtain a redress where there has been a violation of the Code.

The MCC will consider a complaint by any individual or institution concerning possible breach/es of the Code by any media practitioner, media institution, media owner or publisher in Zimbabwe, whether a member of the VMCZ or not.

2.3 Independence of MCC

The MCC is independently constituted and carries out its mandate and functions with complete impartiality. The MCC media practitioners, media institutions, media owners and publishers have voluntarily bound themselves to the Code in their desire to ensure voluntary regulation of the media profession.

The authority of the MCC rests in the willingness of media practitioners, media institutions, media owners and publishers to cooperate fully with the MCC and to accept and respect its adjudications, irrespective of the outcome thereof. Where a media practitioner, media institution, media owner or publisher has agreed to be bound by the Code and has submitted to the disciplinary jurisdiction of the Committee, the adjudication of the MCC will be final and binding.

2.4 Informal Nature of Procedure of the MCC

The MCC places a strong emphasis on the speedy, cost-effective and informal resolution of complaints, wherever possible. Preliminary Requirements in Complaints Procedure. Where a complainant alleges that there has been violation/s of the Code, and the complaint cannot reasonably be said to be frivolous and vexatious, s/he is first encouraged to take reasonable steps to resolve the matter amicably with the media practitioner, media institution, media owner or publisher concerned by writing a letter of complaint and/or

speaking to the media practitioner, head of the media. Institution, media owner or publisher concerned to request an explanation and/or clarification and/or correction of the alleged violation of the Code. Where such action is unsuccessful in resolving the complaint, the complainant may then approach the MCC for assistance.

2.5 Filing a Complaint

Within thirty days of the date of the alleged violation of the Code, the complainant must complete the Complaint Form, clearly and succinctly stating the following:

1. the name of the complainant;
2. her/his/its full contact details;
3. the name of the media practitioner, media institution, media owner or publisher against whom the complaint is directed;
4. the date/s of publication and/or broadcast;
5. the page number of the publication, together with the edition (in the case of a major metropolitan newspapers), or the time of broadcast;
6. the main points of complaint;
7. the provision/s of the Code which is/are alleged to have been violated.

The complainant must make a cutting or a clear photocopy or a recording (where available) of the material which is alleged to have breached the Code and enclose this with the Complaint Form.

The complainant must send the complaint to the Executive Director by post, facsimile or electronic mail. Even when not provided initially, the complainant will be required to complete the Complaint Form, so that the MCC has a clear understanding of what the complainant sees as the main areas of concern.

A complainant who makes a complaint more than thirty days after the initial publication or broadcast must explain the delay and give reasons why the complaint is one of those rare, special cases where the thirty-day guideline should be waived. In those circumstances, the Executive Director will have discretion as to whether to accept or reject the complaint.

2.6 Lodging of complaint by legal practitioner

As the procedure is designed to be a speedy, inexpensive and informal means of redress for violations of the Code, the MCC will not accept the direct involvement of a legal practitioner in the complaints procedure and a legal practitioner will not be entitled to appear before the Complaints MCC to represent his or her client.

Where a complaint has been lodged by a legal practitioner acting on behalf of a client, the Executive Director will request that the legal practitioner ensures that the correspondence is passed on to the complainant and that the latter be responsible for dealing with the matter.

The only exception will be where the legal practitioner is representing the interests of a child who is alleging a breach of the Code.

3. Introduction

In this issue, the MCC not only provides an overview of the complaints handled by the Committee in 2018 but also a 5-year comparative analysis of complaints lodged with the MCC.

During the period under review, a total of 50 complaints (26 formal and 24 informal) were lodged with the MCC led by Justice Smith, which is the Board Committee responsible for handling complaints. This is in contrast to 55 complaints in the previous year and 54 the year before that.

The period under review marks the highest number of election-related complaints since the formation of the VMCZ in 2007 and as such indicates acceptance of the VMCZ as an alternative avenue for the resolution of election-related grievances. It also indicates strengthened buy-in and awareness of the media complaints mechanism.

In a break from previous trends and in reflection of the prevailing national developments, the most common complaint during the period under review was the reportage of the election process which was deemed to be unfair, unbalanced and in some instances inaccurate and, gender insensitive,. Reflecting trends from the previous years, the other most common complaints were on:

- Accuracy, fairness, balance, misrepresentation
- The portrayal of children in the media
- Plagiarism

4. Summary of complaints received by the MCC in 2018

The following is a breakdown of complaints received by the MCC between January 2018 and December 2018. A total of 50 complaints were received during this period, 26 of which were formal and 24 were informal.

4. Summary of complaints received by the MCC in 2018

Table 1 below, which is inclusive of both formal and informally lodged complaints, demonstrates the number of complaints received from 2014 to 2018:

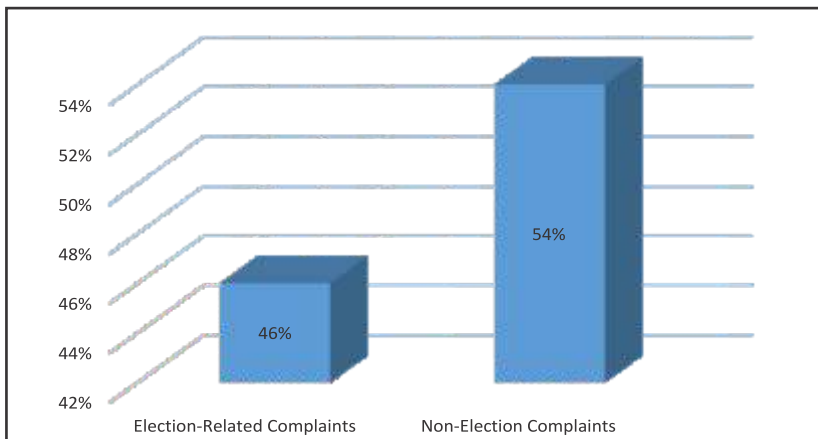
Table 1: Total number of complaints (inclusive of both formal and informal)

Year	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014
No. of complaints	50	55	54	43	33

4.1 Election- related complaints vs. Non-Election related Complaints

The media has a central and pivotal role to play during important national processes such as elections, as there is a heightened need for solid, credible and reliable information that enables citizens to participate in an informed and meaningful way. Section 11 of the Media Code of Conduct enjoins the media to ensure that coverage is balanced, comprehensive and fair; to ensure that parties and issues are given gender sensitive and equitable coverage and to avoid gifts, rewards or inducements that may compromise the journalist's integrity among other ethical requirements. Election-related complaints constituted 12 of the 26 filed formal complaints as depicted in Figure 1.

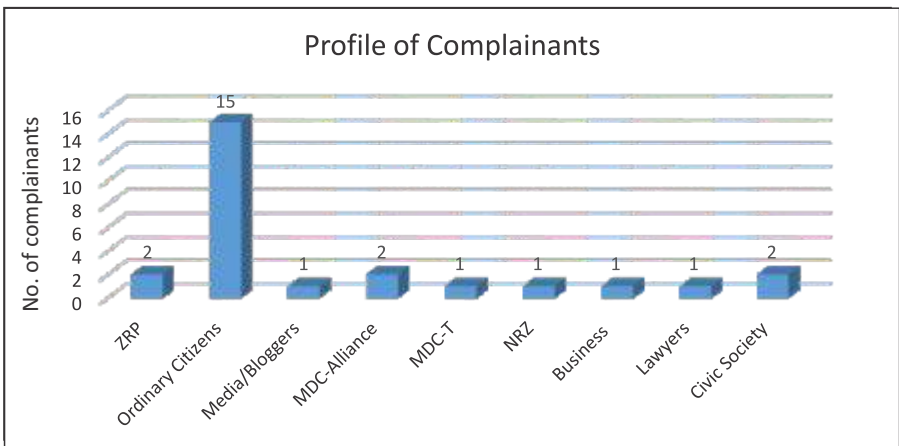
Fig. 1: Election-Related Complaints vs non-election-related complaints



4.2 Profile of Complainants

The broad and diverse social spectrum of complainants accessing the media complaints mechanism demonstrates its continued viability as an alternative platform for the resolution of grievances against the media. Complainants registering their grievances during this period included political parties such as the MDC-Alliance and the MDC-T, lawyers such as the Law Society of Zimbabwe, institutions such as the National Railways of Zimbabwe (NRZ) and civic society organisations such as ChildLine Zimbabwe. In line with previous trends, ordinary members of the public continued to constitute the majority of complainants. This is depicted in Fig. 2 below:

Fig. 2: Profile of Complainants



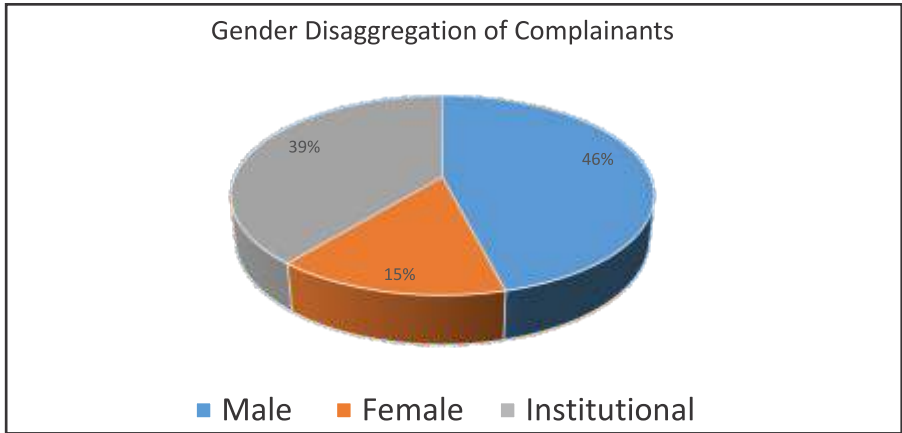
4.3 Gender disaggregation of complainants

The VMCZ revised and gender-mainstreamed the Code of Conduct in 2014 as a measure to promote gender-sensitive and ethical portrayal of women in the media. Hence gender-sensitivity in the media remains a vital cog in the VMCZ's mandate to professionalise the media.

As with previous trends, males continued to constitute the majority of complainants in 2018, constituting 46% of the complaints filed compared to 15% for females and 39% institutional complaints. Female complainants

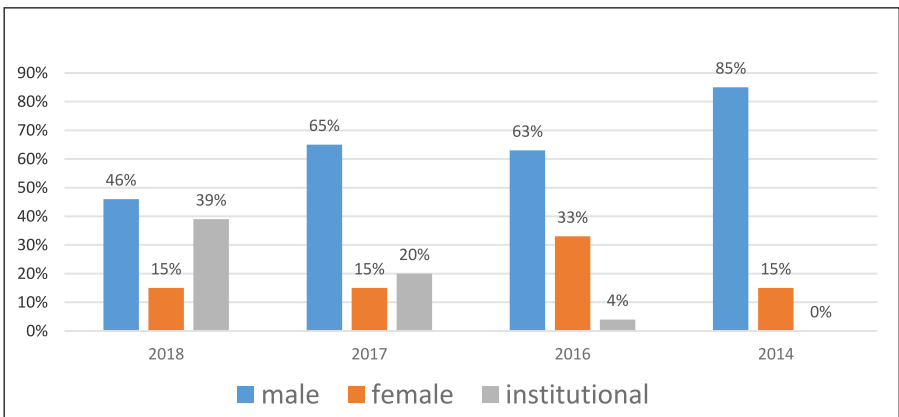
have averaged 21% in the period 2014 to 2018, compared to an average of 63% for males.

Fig. 3: Gender disaggregation of complaints in 2018



The gender-disaggregation of complainants in the period 2014 to 2018 is captured below:

Fig. 4: Gender disaggregation of complaints, 2014 to 2018



4.4 Geographic spread of complaints

The majority of complaints received during this period were from the capital city, Harare, which registered 18 (69%). Other places registering complaints included Bulawayo 3 (12%), Masvingo 2, (8%) and South Africa 3, (12%).

Although the media complaints mechanism has continued to file an increasing number of complaints from beyond Harare such as Bikita, Mutare, Gweru, Kariba and Zvishavane , the concentration of complaints in Harare during the period under review is an indicator of the capital as the epicentre of election activity.

The geographic spread of complaints during the period under review is demonstrated below:

Table 2: Geographic spread of complaints

Area	Number of complaints received
Harare	18
South Africa	3
Bulawayo	3
Masvingo	2

4.5 Media complained against

Members of the public and other sectors of Zimbabwean society filed complaints against various media houses, inclusive of both State-controlled public media, online media and privately-owned media during the period under review. The high number of complaints against State-controlled public media is mostly a reflection of the election-related complaints that were registered against these media. This is demonstrated in Table 3

Table 3: Media complained against

Media House	Number of complaints filed against
TellZim	2
NewsDay	5
Chronicle	1
The Herald	2
ZBC	8
General media	2
DailyNews	2
Star FM	1
The Standard	1
Pindula News	1
Byo24.com	1

4.6 Sections of the code of conduct breached

The complaints received were evaluated and assessed against both the mainstream media code of conduct, and where relevant, the digital media code of conduct, especially for websites and blogs publishing online. As a reflection of the national elections held in 2018, the analysis of complaints received demonstrates that breaches to section 11 of the Code of Conduct on “Reporting Elections” was the most breached during this period. This is in contrast with previous trends in which section 4 of the media Code of Conduct, which specifically enjoins the media to ensure fairness, balance and accuracy in reporting, was the most breached section of the media Code of Conduct. This section accounted for the next highest number of violations during this period while other breaches were on interviewing and/or photographing children (section 15) and plagiarism (section 22).

Table 4: Sections of the Code of Conduct breached

Section of the Code breached & nature of complaint	Frequency
Section 4: Accuracy, fairness, balance, misrepresentation of facts	9
Section 22: Plagiarism	2
Section 11: Reporting on elections	11
Section 15: Interviewing or photographing children	2
Withdrawn	2

5. Conclusion:

The VMCZ continues to function in the interests of a free and accountable press, giving the ordinary citizen a chance to clear his or her name quickly and at no cost when aggrieved by the media. It costs nothing to lodge a complaint, unlike the court system that takes time and is likely to be costly.

Members of the public continue to be the majority of complainants coming forward to file their complaints, demonstrating the strengthening visibility, growing public awareness and buy-into the media complaints mechanism. Furthermore, the high number of election-related complaints filed during this period against biased, inaccurate and unfair reportage demonstrates that the VMCZ is consolidating its position and relevance as an independent, industry-led body for the professionalisation of the media sector. Although challenges persist and media self-regulation is still work in progress, it however remains a viable and functional alternative to criminalisation of journalistic conduct and statutory regulation of the media.

6. Summary of Complaints

Parties Involved	Nature and Status
<p>Commissioner General of Police, T.G Matanga</p> <p style="text-align: center;">vs.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">NewsDay (March 2018)</p>	<p>The Commissioner General of the Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP), Mr. T.G. Matanga, filed a complaint with the MCC over a story published by the NewsDay on 27th February 2018 headlined, “Mufuka launches book on Mugabe”.</p> <p>The ZRP raised the following issues in the letter of complaint:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · That the Commissioner General of Police, denies ever speaking to Mr. Ken Mufuka or any of his associates as alluded to in the article <p>The Commissioner General also urges journalists to verify information provided by sources before publication. He is therefore demanding a retraction of the statements attributed to him in the article.</p> <p>Status: Finalised</p> <p>The MCC engaged both Newsday & the police (ZRP) led by Senior Ass Commissioner Charity Charamba to resolve the matter. The police thereafter indicated they would not pursue the matter further following their subsequent engagement with the Newsday editor of AMH ombudsman.</p>

Parties Involved	Nature and Status
<p data-bbox="188 316 362 384">Law Society of Zimbabwe</p> <p data-bbox="258 432 286 456">vs</p> <p data-bbox="191 544 356 612">DailyNews (March 2018)</p>	<p data-bbox="449 316 995 459">The Law Society of Zimbabwe filed a complaint with the MCC over a story published by Daily News on 10th March 2018 headlined, “Lawyers speak on ED's Legal Acumen.”</p> <p data-bbox="449 467 995 531">The Law Society raised the following concerns in its letter of complaint:</p> <ul data-bbox="449 539 995 1393" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="449 539 995 1034">• That the article gave an impression that the Executive Secretary of the Law Society of Zimbabwe, Edward Mapara, had commented on the Presidents' legal acumen, yet two weeks prior to the publication of the story, the reporter had only made an inquiry about the registration status of President Mnangagwa and the year he was registered as a legal practitioner. Mapara was therefore aggrieved that the reporter infused their conversation under an article that suggested he had commented on the legal acumen of the President. <li data-bbox="449 1042 995 1289">• Mr Mapara argued that the concerned reporter, Gift Phiri, failed to report and interpret news with scrupulous honesty and felt it was clear instance of deliberate distortion and fabrication of facts aimed at building up a story that substantiated own deductions. <li data-bbox="449 1297 995 1393">• Mr Mapara said he had tried to discuss with Phiri for a retraction or correction, but the reporter is not forthcoming.

Parties Involved	Nature and Status
	<p>Status: Finalised The Daily News published a retraction and an apology on 25 April 2018, following a VMCZ facilitated engagement.</p>
<p>Donald Manenji and Shamiso Tavaruva</p> <p>vs.</p> <p>TellZim</p> <p>(March 2018)</p>	<p>Donald Manenji and Shamiso Tavaruva registered their complaint with the (MCC) over an article published by TellZim on 2nd - 8th March 2018 headlined. “Mhunga Up for Assault”.</p> <p>The complainants were aggrieved as they argued that the whole article was false and characterised by misrepresentations of the actual events being reported on. They raised the following issues of concern:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · That neither of them assaulted anyone as reported in the article. They argued that the correct position was that they and their friends cited in the story were actually the victims of violence and complainants in the matter which was subsequently reported to the police; · Mr Manenji also disputed allegations in the story that he filed a medical affidavit for one of the victims of assault. He stated that he is a nurse by profession and as a result of this false claim in the story and other related false allegations, his employment had been affected as his practising certificate was suspended.

Parties Involved	Nature and Status
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Mr Manenji said his professional reputation had been affected as he was currently blacklisted and could not be employed elsewhere pending investigations. He said this situation had resulted in loss of income; · Ms Shamiso was also further aggrieved by the association of her family name, “Mhunga”, with the story and incidents of assault reported on. She argued that while she uses the name Taruvinga rather than the family name “Mhunga”, her family had nevertheless been tarnished by the allegation as her father is a prominent businessman in Masvingo; • Ms Shamiso also said that she was not given an opportunity to present her side of the story; · Both complainants also disputed that police records were the source of the story as indicated by TellZim in an earlier engagement between the parties. The complainants argued that this position had not been corroborated by the police. They further argued that, according to the available police documents, they were the victims and complainants rather than the aggressors as portrayed

Parties Involved	Nature and Status
	<p>in the article published by TellZim.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The complainants were seeking relief in the form of an audience with the editor as well as an apology and retraction. <p>Status: Finalised</p> <p>The matter was amicably resolved following a VMCZ facilitated dialogue between the complainants and the editor, Passmore Kuzipa. Mr Kuzipa conceded to publish another article with both sides of the story, based on the report filed by the complainants, which was overlooked in the first article published by TellZim. He acknowledged that the initial article was solely based on the counter-report filed by one of the parties to the assault matter, Zivanai Cikwanda, at Chikato Police Station. Mr. Kuzipa indicated that he did not report on the first report filed by Mr Manenji and Ms Tavaruva as TellZim journalists were informed that the case was dismissed. The complainants however, clarified that the case was not dismissed, but postponed on the basis that the medical reports had some omissions.</p>

Parties Involved	Nature and Status
<p style="text-align: center;">Zimbabwe Republic Police</p> <p style="text-align: center;">vs.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">NewsDay</p> <p style="text-align: center;">(February 2018)</p>	<p>The Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP) registered a complaint with the MCC over a story published by the NewsDay on 6 February 2018 headlined, “ZRP Masvingo Projects Collapse”.</p> <p>The ZRP raised the following issues in its letter of complaint:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · That the NewsDay story in question was recycled from an article published by the Masvingo Mirror in April 2015 headlined, “Junior Cops up in arms against forced contributions”. · That the story was designed to continue denigrating the integrity and image of the ZRP and represented unethical and unprofessional conduct. <p>Status: Finalised</p> <p>The MCC engaged both Newsday & the police (ZRP) led by Senior Ass Commissioner Charity Charamba to resolve the matter. The police thereafter indicated they would not pursue the matter further following their subsequent engagement with the editor and AMH ombudsman.</p>

Parties Involved	Nature and Status
<p style="text-align: center;">Michael Shoko</p> <p style="text-align: center;">vs.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Chronicle</p> <p style="text-align: center;">(February 2018)</p>	<p>ZimBuzz editor, Michael Shoko, filed a complaint with the MCC over a story published by the Chronicle on 28 February 2018 headlined, “Candice Rejoins ZiFM”. Mr Shoko complained that the Chronicle story replicated a ZimBuzz article published on 27 February 2018 headlined, “Candice Mwakalyelye rejoins ZiFM Stereo”.</p> <p>Mr Shoko argued that this was just one of several instances in which the Chronicle had used (ZimBuzz) content without consent and demanded that the newspaper desists from doing so.</p> <p>Status: Finalised</p> <p>The Chronicle Editor, Mr. Innocent Madonko, in his response acknowledged publication of the ZimBuzz story by the weekly newspaper but indicated that the newspaper attributed the source of information, as is the newspaper's standard practice with content from the internet or any other external source. He also added that, going forward, the Chronicle would also desist from republishing ZimBuzz stories.</p>

Parties Involved	Nature and Status
<p style="text-align: center;">Dewa Mavhinga</p> <p style="text-align: center;">vs</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Pindula News</p> <p style="text-align: center;">(July 2018)</p>	<p>Dewa Mavhinga (Southern Africa Director with Africa Division at Human Rights Watch), filed a complaint with the MCC against Pindula News over a story published by the online site on 5 July 2018 headlined, "Counselling Services Unit Responds to Suspension of Funding by the United States".</p> <p>Mr. Mavhinga, in his complaint, stated that he was wrongly linked with the mentioned civic society organisation (s), inclusive of Counselling Services Unit (CSU). He said he has never worked with the stated organisations or been involved with any of them in any capacity. He was also not happy with the (unauthorised) publication of his picture by Pindula to accompany the story.</p> <p>Mr. Mavhinga demanded a retraction and apology from the website. In addition, he also wanted the inaccurate article deleted from the website.</p> <p>Status: Resolved</p> <p>After engagement with the VMCZ, Pindula News, on July 6, issued an apology and a retraction as follows:</p> <p><i>"We incorrectly stated that Dewa Mavhinga is the leader of CSU. We apologise unreservedly for any damage done to Dewa Mavhinga's credibility. We</i></p>

Parties Involved	Nature and Status
	<p><i>have since learned that he was actually very instrumental in highlighting the abuse of funds by NGOs."</i></p> <p>The complainant, Mr. Mavhinga, found the resolution of the complaint satisfactory as he subsequently posted on his Facebook and Twitter a testimonial which reads as follows:</p> <p><i>"My thanks to @VoluntaryMedia & Faith Ndllovu for intervening to ensure accurate media reporting. Much appreciated"</i></p>
<p>Dewa Mavhinga</p> <p>vs</p> <p>Bulawayo24.com</p> <p>(July 2018)</p>	<p>Dewa Mavhinga (Southern Africa Director with Africa Division at Human Rights Watch), also filed a complaint with the MCC over the unauthorised usage of his photographs by the website Bulawayo24.com in two articles headlined: "US confirms NGO Funds Abuse, Hints at probe" published on 3 July 2018 and "US suspends funding for political NGOs ahead of polls" published on 2 July 2018.</p> <p>Status: Resolved</p> <p>After the engagement with VMCZ, Bulawayo24.com published an apology to Mr. Mavhinga on 6 July 2018. Below is the apology:</p>

Parties Involved	Nature and Status
	<p><i>“In our articles regarding USAID’s unilateral funding cut we used Mr Dewa Mavhinga’s image, we apologise unreservedly for any damage done to Dewa Mavhinga’s credibility and we have since pulled down Mavhinga’s image...”</i></p> <p>The complainant, Mr. Mavhinga, found the resolution of the complaint satisfactory as he subsequently posted on his Facebook and Twitter a testimonial which reads as follows:</p> <p><i>“My thanks to @VoluntaryMedia & Faith Ndlovu for intervening to ensure accurate media reporting. Much appreciated”</i></p>
Parties	Nature of Complaint & Status
<p>Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition</p> <p>vs</p> <p>The Herald</p> <p>(July 2018)</p>	<p>The Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition (CiZC) filed a complaint over a story published by The Herald newspaper on 3 July 2018 headlined “US confirms funds abuse, hints at probe”.</p> <p>CiZC argued that the newspaper falsely stated that CiZC approached the USAID leading to investigations on its grantees on corruption-related charges.</p> <p>The CiZC expressed particular concern with the following quotation in the article published by The Herald “...Sources said investigations were instituted after some</p>

Parties Involved	Nature and Status
	<p><i>board members and the management committee of Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition raised concern on how the funds released under the US democracy and governance were being abused by some directors and their friends."</i></p> <p>It further argued that the above-referenced statement was not only false and malicious but also aimed at tarnishing the image of the CiZC.</p> <p>It also added that the institution never engaged in the actions/issues mentioned in the article and that the institution has no power to influence USAID processes, systems, action and decisions. CiZC therefore demanded an apology with the same level of prominence from The Herald.</p> <p>Status:Not Resolved</p> <p>The Herald editor, Caesar Zvayi, indicated that he would respond to the complaint. The MCC engaged with Herald editor and Zimpapers indicated the media house was still committed to resolving all outstanding issues but that they were however at the time bogged down by administrative issues.</p>

Parties Involved	Nature and Status
<p style="text-align: center;">MDC Alliance</p> <p style="text-align: center;">vs.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">(July 2018)</p>	<p>The Movement for Democratic Change, MDC Alliance, filed a complaint with the MCC over the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation's (ZBC) coverage and reportage during the election period which they deemed to be “biased, false and defamatory”.</p> <p>The MDC Alliance was aggrieved, stating that since the proclamation of election dates, ZBC had been brazenly biased in favour of the ruling party ZANU PF. The MDC Alliance added that, according to media monitoring statistics, ZANU PF had been accorded in excess of 70% coverage in news and over 50% in editorial space by ZBC and Zimpapers, in violation of the Constitution, the Electoral Act, Statutory Instrument 33 of 2008 and the media Code of Conduct.</p> <p>The MDC Alliance further expressed concern that the limited time which had been granted to the MDC Alliance by ZBC had been characterised by unfair, unbalanced and, in some cases, defamatory coverage.</p> <p>The MDC Alliance requested:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That ZBC allocates equal time and space for all contesting political parties • That coverage of the MDC Alliance should be accurate, fair and balanced

Parties Involved	Nature and Status
	<p>Status: Not Resolved</p> <p>The MCC brought the complaint to the attention of the ZBC Manager for News and Current Affairs Tazzen Mandizvidza for a response.</p>
<p>MDC Alliance</p> <p>vs.</p> <p>Zimpapers (July 2018)</p>	<p>The Movement for Democratic Change, MDC Alliance filed a complaint with the MCC over the Zimpapers' coverage during the election period which they deemed to be “biased, false and defamatory”. The MDC Alliance, in this regard noted that coverage and reportage by The Herald, The Sunday Mail and the Chronicle as being of “particular concern”.</p> <p>The MDC Alliance was aggrieved, stating that since the proclamation of election dates, Zimpapers had been brazenly biased in favour of the ruling party, ZANU PF. The MDC Alliance added that, according to media monitoring statistics, ZANU PF had been accorded in excess of 70% coverage in news and over 50% in editorial space by ZBC and Zimpapers. It added that this was in violation of the Constitution, the Electoral Act, Statutory Instrument 33 of 2008 and the media Code of Conduct.</p> <p>The MDC Alliance further expressed concern that the limited time which had been granted to the MDC Alliance by Zimpapers had been characterised by unfair,</p>

Parties Involved	Nature and Status
	<p>unbalanced and, in some cases, defamatory coverage.</p> <p>It also argued that of major concern were Zimpapers reports, which were allegedly proven and pronounced to be false, that the MDC-Alliance candidate, Nelson Chamisa, held a meeting with former President Robert Mugabe and his wife, Grace, in Dubai. They therefore stated that they were aggrieved that the statements above were yet to be retracted or corrected.</p> <p>The MDC Alliance was requesting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • that Zimpapers allocates equal time and space for all contesting political parties; • that coverage of the MDC Alliance should be accurate, fair and balanced; and • a retraction and apology for the false story of an alleged meeting between Advocate Chamisa and former President Robert Mugabe and his wife. <p>Status: Not Resolved</p> <p>The VMCZ brought the complaint to the attention of the Zimpapers Editorial Executive for a response. The Editorial executive reaffirmed commitment to resolving the matter but indicated that at the time they were bogged down with administrative issues.</p>

Parties Involved	Nature and Status
<p style="text-align: center;">Blessing Vava</p> <p style="text-align: center;">vs.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">ZBC TV</p> <p style="text-align: center;">(July 2018)</p>	<p>Blessing Vava filed a complaint with the MCC over ZBC TV's coverage of the election, especially during the station's 8.00 pm news bulletin.</p> <p>Vava complained that ZBC TV's coverage was biased in favour of the ruling party, ZANU PF, which was getting major publicity compared to other contesting political parties.</p> <p>Vava further argued that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · ZTV news coverage gave the impression that other parties were not holding any rallies as the bulletin was dominated by almost 95% of ZANU PF campaigns · Coverage of ZANU PF was positive while the opposition was afforded negative publicity · That this biased coverage was in violation of the Constitution and Electoral Act which provides for equal access to public media for all contesting parties <p>Vava was requesting that ZTV provides all contesting political parties with equal coverage that is also not biased.</p> <p>Not Resolved</p> <p>The VMCZ brought the complaint to the attention of the ZBC Manager for News and Current Affairs Tazarn Mandizvidza for a response.</p>

Parties Involved	Nature and Status
<p style="text-align: center;"> Linda Masarira vs. Zimbabwean media (July 2018) </p>	<p> Movement for Democratic Change (MDC-T) spokesperson, Linda Masarira, registered concern with the MCC over unequal media coverage of female Presidential candidates and female Parliamentary candidates. Masarira argued that election reportage by the media had been reduced to a two-man contestation, resulting in unfair advantage to ZANU PF Candidate, interim President Emmerson Mnangagwa and MDC-Alliance leader Nelson Chamisa. </p> <p> Ms Masarira further added that when female Presidential candidates were covered it was be in small and obscure articles, thereby undermining Zimbabweans’ rights to access information. She further contended that the print media is quick to publish negative and scandalous stories of female candidates at the expense of positive news about them. </p> <p> Status: Finalised The concern was raised and deliberated with editors at a meeting between editors and contesting political parties hosted by the VMCZ. The VMCZ is also in partnership with Gender and Media Connect (GMC) to promote accountability around the portrayal of women in the media. </p>

Parties Involved	Nature and Status
<p style="text-align: center;">Six Harare residents' complaints against ZBC</p> <p style="text-align: center;">(July 2018)</p>	<p>Six residents, who are members of the Combined Harare Residents Association (CHRA), registered their complaints with the MCC over “biased, unbalanced and partisan” coverage of the electoral process and contesting political parties and candidates by the State-controlled public broadcaster, ZBC.</p> <p>They were demanding that the broadcaster provides fair, balanced and accurate coverage of all contesting political parties and candidates.</p> <p>Status: Not resolved</p> <p>The VMCZ brought the complaint to the attention of the ZBC Manager for News and Current Affairs Tarzan Mandizvidza for a response.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Khumbulani Maphosa</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Vs</p> <p style="text-align: center;">NewsDay</p> <p style="text-align: center;">(September 2018)</p>	<p>Khumbulani Maphosa registered his complaint with the MCC over an article published by NewsDay on 5 September 2018 headlined, “Violence Mars Byo Mayoral Poll”.</p> <p>Mr. Maphosa raised the following issues in the letter of complaint:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That there is nothing in the body of the article that substantiated allegations or incidents of violence at the large City Hall in Bulawayo, on 4 September 2018. Mr Maphosa argued that the article only mentioned that

Parties Involved	Nature and Status
	<p>residents “heckled”, and “boomed” the Town Clerk and went on to “demonstrate” outside the Large City Hall. Therefore, he stated that, in truth and intent, booing, heckling, and demonstrating cannot be interpreted to be violence.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The complainant further contended that, as a resident of Bulawayo who attended the event and witnessed what happened, he felt aggrieved and misrepresented as: • the NewsDay is a leading private daily newspaper in the country and its reach extends to even the diaspora, as it also publishes online. He argued that as a result of the foregoing, the newspaper had therefore misled the nation and the world about the truth of what actually transpired in Bulawayo on the afternoon of 4 September 2018. • there are some tribal stereotypes and perceptions by some sections of the country's social groupings that perpetuate the mythical belief that people from Bulawayo and Matabeleland are disruptive and violent. The complainant stated that he was therefore concerned that, in the absence of valid and factual evidence from NewsDay, the article only served to further perpetuate and entrench such stereotypes. • newspapers are increasingly being regarded and used as academic sources of information

Parties Involved	Nature and Status
	<p>that informs the broader academic discourse and thus the article may be used as evidence of the 'disruptive and violent' nature and behaviour of the people of Bulawayo. He said that when this happens, challenging that thought process will be difficult as the residents would have not challenged the source in the first place.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • media have a duty and obligation to respect the rights of people and to treat people with dignity. Mr Maphosa stated that the NewsDay article was however not only lacking evidence but also did not give dignity to the people of Bulawayo by “lying” about their behaviour. He argued that while violence should be exposed when it occurs, it was in this case unfair to falsely ascribe violence to the people of Bulawayo when it had not occurred. <p>The complainant was asking for rectification of the “misrepresentation” through a correction and apology.</p> <p>Status: Finalised</p> <p>NewsDay Deputy Editor, Zerubabel Mudzingwa, raised the following issues in the newspaper's response to the matter:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the story was a fair representation of what happened on the day in question as violence indeed occurred. He added that the complainant in his letter to the newspaper acknowledged just

Parties Involved	Nature and Status
	<p>as much, stating that "some residents beat up one gentleman and they were quickly restrained".</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • he also further pointed out that the complainant did not dispute the fact that the town clerk was heckled and booed as he tried to address residents on the change of venue, procedure and dates for the mayoral elections. He further argued that the act of heckling and booing on its own constitutes violence and the headline of the article therefore accurately summarised the events that unfolded at the meeting. • he concluded by stating that he does not believe the complaint warranted an apology and retraction as the complainant is not specifically named in the article and that the parties' differences on the matter is over semantics. The complainant accepted the newspaper's response to the matter as adequate.
<p style="text-align: center;">Khumbulani Maphosa</p> <p style="text-align: center;">vs</p> <p style="text-align: center;">DailyNews</p> <p style="text-align: center;">(September 2018)</p>	<p>The MCC received a complaint from Khumbulani Maphosa over an article published by the DailyNews on 5 September 2018 headlined, "Chaos as Byo Mayoral Elections are postponed". Mr. Maphosa raised the following issues in the letter of complaint:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the article misrepresented

Parties Involved	Nature and Status
	<p>some facts about the Bulawayo meeting to elect the Mayor and Deputy Mayor which happened at the Large City Hall on Tuesday 4 September 2018.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • allegations in the article that <i>“Bulawayo residents yesterday disrupted Council elections for the Mayor and Deputy...”</i> were not true. The complainant said that residents did not disrupt the meeting but sat and waited patiently until the Town Clerk came and announced that the planned meeting had been cancelled. He further stated that residents therefore disrupted the <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Town Clerk's announcement and not the meeting to elect the Mayor and Deputy Mayor. He further questioned how residents could have possibly disrupted a meeting that did not happen at all. He added that the article later conflicted itself by claiming that the meeting delayed by over 30 minutes and <i>“the residents and activists patiently waited for the councillors and council staff to pitch up...”</i>. He therefore questioned how residents and

Parties Involved	Nature and Status
	<p>activists could have been patiently waiting and yet disrupting the meeting at the same time?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · The complainant stated that it is also erroneous for the article to report that residents “<i>protested against the no-show by councillors at a new venue...</i>” He argued that the correct position is that residents protested when the Town Clerk announced cancellation of the meeting; and that protests only began when the residents were pressing the Town Clerk for reasons for the cancellation and there was no clear response. · He further stated that, as a resident of Bulawayo who attended the event and witnessed what happened, he felt aggrieved and misrepresented as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the DailyNews is a leading private daily newspaper in the country and its reach



Parties Involved	Nature and Status
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• extends even to the diaspora as it is also found online. He argues that this therefore meant the newspaper had misled the nation and the world about the truth of what happened in Bulawayo on the afternoon of 4 September 2018;• there are some tribal stereotypes and perceptions by some sections of the social groupings of the country that perpetuate the mythical belief that people from Bulawayo and Matabeleland are disruptive and violent. He stated that he was therefore concerned that, in the absence of valid and factual evidence, the article served only to further perpetuate and enforce such stereotypical attitudes.• newspapers are increasingly being regarded and used as academic sources of

Parties Involved	Nature and Status
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • information that inform the broader academic discourse and thus the article may be used as evidence of the 'disruptive and violent' nature and behaviour of the people of Bulawayo. He said that and when this happens, challenging that thought process would be difficult as the residents would have not questioned the source in the first place. • media has a duty and obligation to respect the rights of people and to treat people with dignity. The DailyNews article was however not only lacking evidence but also did not accord dignity to the people of Bulawayo by “lying” about their behaviour. He said that while violence should be exposed when it occurs, it in this case was unfair to falsely ascribe violence to the people of Bulawayo when it had not occurred.

Parties Involved	Nature and Status
	<p>The complainant was asking for rectification of the “misrepresentation” through a correction and apology.</p> <p>Status: Not resolved</p> <p>The MCC engaged the Daily News editor-in-chief who made a commitment to address the complaint. This commitment however remained outstanding as for Dec 2018</p>
<p>NRZ</p> <p>vs.</p> <p>NewsDay</p> <p>(November 2018)</p>	<p>The Media Complaints Committee (MCC) received a complaint from the National Railways of Zimbabwe (NRZ) over a story published by NewsDay on 17 October 2018 headlined, “Wheat Stuck at Beira as bread shortages persist”.</p> <p>The NRZ raised the following issues in the letter of complaint:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · the article provided misleading and false information in the paraphrase that: “NRZ Public Relations Manager Nyasha Maravanyika told NewsDay he did not know the status of the wheat shipment as he was out of office” · while the reporter had every right and responsibility to contact NRZ for a comment on the story, he did not do so · the reporter falsely claimed to have contacted the NRZ Public

Parties Involved	Nature and Status
	<p>Relations Manager when in actual fact he did not do so</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the reporter framed and fabricated a response which was not standard or synonymous with the NRZ spokesperson's professional response to media requests, enquiries and the NRZ media relations strategic conduct • the NRZ was also concerned that, given the blame-game between the institution and Grain Millers Association of Zimbabwe (GMAZ) over delays in procuring wheat, the story in question painted a picture that the NRZ was responsible for the situation • the article portrayed the NRZ as being unperturbed by the situation despite its mandate and central role in transportation of wheat • Mr Maravanyika also was aggrieved, stating that the article painted him as incompetent and tarnished his professional standing. He said that this was especially so as he was able to provide similar, relevant information to other media houses • he said that this depiction of lack of



Parties Involved	Nature and Status
	<p data-bbox="568 320 978 464">professionalism and incompetence was not only on his persona but by extension on the institution he works for, the NRZ</p> <p data-bbox="473 512 978 576">The NRZ was demanded an apology and retraction from the NewsDay.</p> <p data-bbox="473 624 669 647">Status: Finalised</p> <p data-bbox="473 659 978 1010">The NewsDay Assistant Editor indicated that the quote in question could be verified and substantiated through the reporter's notes which were readily available for review should the need arise. NewsDay therefore argued that the article did not reflect incompetence on the part of NRZ but simply a reflection of the conversations that the NRZ Public Relations Officer had with the newspaper's reporter.</p>