



Democracy and Freedom of the Press

A presentation by Toivo
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Overview: Namibia media landscape: Who owns (controls?) what?

- ❖ Govt: NBC TV and 10 radio stations
- ❖ Govt: New Era & Nampa
- ❖ Albe Botha et al: Namibia Media Holdings (Namibian Sun, Republikein, Allgemeine Zeitung)
- ❖ Free Press of Namibia (Gwen Lister et al): The Namibian
- ❖ Sybille Moldzio et al: Hit Radio Namibia
- ❖ Gary Stroebel et al: Future Media (Radio Wave, Nova FM, Fresh FM, Omulunga Radio and recently 99 FM and One Africa TV)

Who owns (controls?) what?... continued

- ❖ John Walenga: Eagle FM & The Villager
- ❖ Martin Shipanga: Shipi FM
- ❖ Swapo Party through Kalahari & Zebra Holdings: Energy FM
- ❖ Swapo party/Kalahari Holdings: MultiChoice Namibia (50%)
- ❖ Dr Kock and Frankfort: Namib Times
- ❖ Lazarus Jacobs & Desmond Amunyela/Paragon: Windhoek Observer
- ❖ Max Hamata: Confidente
- ❖ Quinton van Rooyen: Informante



What is democracy?

- Conventional meaning: Rule by (will of) the majority (tyranny of the majority??)
- More sensibly: Democracy is a system of government in which state power is vested in the people or the general population of the state.
- QUESTION: Which of these definitions do Namibian leaders and the general populace understand the most?



Understanding press freedom

- 01 Simple definition: The right of the media (newspapers, radio, TV etc) to report news without being controlled by government.
- 02 Namibian Constitution, Article 21 (Fundamental Rights): “All persons shall have the right to freedom of speech and expression, which shall include freedom of the press and other media (social media, too?)”
- 03 “Freedom of the press is **firmly anchored in Namibia**, historically one of Africa's best-ranked countries in RSF's World Press Freedom Index.” – Reporters Without Borders, France.



Press regulatory environment in Namibia

- Broadcasting regulated by Communication Regulatory Authority of Namibia (CRAN)
- Print and electronic media subjected to Code of Ethics (truth, accuracy, balance, independent (etc).
- Self-regulation: Media Ombudsman (creation of the Editors Forum of Namibia) enforces Code of Ethics.
- Like everyone else, media must abide by Namibian Constitution (e.g. protection of rape victims etc)
- State media often subjected to state control



Current state of press freedom in Namibia

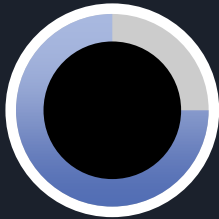
- ✓ Namibia currently No. 1 in Africa in press freedom
- ✓ No journalist arrested for 34 years (but is this enough yardstick)?
- ✓ New Era managing editor suspended for questioning Judiciary
- ✓ Verbal and legal threats rife
- ✓ Delayed Access to Info Act breeds secrecy
- ✓ Don't forget: Advert ban on The Namibian



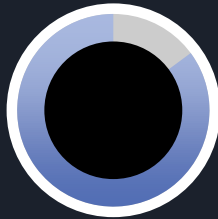
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Where free press meets democracy

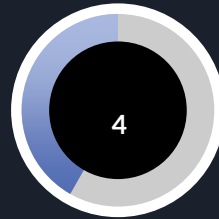
- ❑ Free press uncovers truth for citizens
- ❑ Free press holds power accountable without fear of retribution
- ❑ Free press helps citizens make informed democratic decisions (elections etc)



Truth



Accountability



Informed
citizenry



Voltaire:

”I disapprove of what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it.”