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Ghana's 2024 Elections

Monitoring of Indecent Campaign Language on Radio

ON AIR

Findings for January 1-31, 2025

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Monitoring Indecent Language on Radio: Findings for January 1-31, 2025

Contents

1.0 Introduction

This report presents findings from the daily monitoring of selected programs on 30 radio stations in Ghana. The data was collected from 1st to the 31st of January 2025. It specifically cites the number of indecent expressions recorded, categorizes these expressions, and identifies the individuals who made the remarks. Additionally, it lists the radio stations where these expressions were made as well as hosts who made indecent remarks. The report concludes with recommendations for relevant stakeholders.

1.1 Background

For the past 31 years, Ghana has maintained a relatively peaceful and democratically stable environment, earning global recognition and favourable rankings. Notably, in the 2022 Global Peace Index (GPI) Report, Ghana was ranked as the most peaceful country in West Africa, 2nd in Africa, and 40th worldwide—an improvement over its 2019 and 2020 rankings. However, the 2023 index saw a significant decline, with Ghana falling to 51st globally, 4th in Africa, and 2nd in West Africa. This decline in rankings is attributed to several factors, including divisive narratives that exacerbate polarization along partisan, ethnic, religious, and chieftaincy lines, as well as the rise of radicalism. These narratives often manifest through hate speech, inflammatory language, political propaganda, and misinformation disseminated via radio.

During election periods, Ghana often witnesses the use of abusive and inappropriate language directed at political opponents, institutions, and other groups. Unfortunately, some radio stations allow political parties and their representatives to misuse the airwaves, with little or no intervention from hosts or presenters. This unchecked behaviour tends to escalate political tensions every four years. In a proactive move to address this issue, the Media Foundation for West Africa (MFWA) has been implementing a language monitoring project since 2012. This initiative monitors, reports, and publicly identifies individuals who engage in hate speech and indecent expressions on radio.

Building on insights gained from the 2012, 2016, and 2020 language monitoring projects, the MFWA is once again monitoring radio broadcasts during the 2024 election season. The goal is to contribute to Ghana's peace and democratic stability by fostering a national culture that rejects hate speech, incitement to violence, and other divisive narratives while promoting a narrative of

peaceful coexistence and respectful political discourse. The project involves daily monitoring of selected programs on various radio stations to track and report the use of hate speech and other inappropriate language by politicians and other participants. It also assesses the effectiveness of presenters or hosts in moderating these programs.

2.0 Methodology

The project involves the daily monitoring of expressions used by politicians and other actors who feature on radio programmes such as news bulletins, political discussions and current affairs discussions. It also involves assessing and reporting how presenters or moderators of selected programmes on radio stations handle their programmes and whether they tolerate the use of hate speech and other indecent language on their programmes. This report covers the monitoring of 30 radio stations in Ghana from January 1 to January 31, 2024. The stations were selected based on findings from previous reports, perceived allegiance to or ownership by politicians or politically exposed persons, and geographical spread. Table 1 presents names and regional locations of the 30 radio stations that were monitored under the current phase of the project.

Table 1: Radio stations monitored under the current phase

No.	Name of Radio Station	Region
1	Accra Fm	Greater Accra
2	Adom FM	Greater Accra
3	Akpini Radio	Volta
4	A1 Radio	Upper East
5	Angel FM	Ashanti
6	Asempa FM	Greater Accra
7	Ashh Fm	Ashanti
8	Happy FM	Greater Accra
9	Haske FM	Ashanti
10	Holy FM	Volta
11	Kesben FM	Ashanti
12	Kingdom FM	Greater Accra
13	Link Radio	Bono East
14	Maxx Empire FM	Upper East
15	Nananom FM	Ahafo
16	North Star Radio	Northern
17	Okay FM	Greater Accra
18	Oman Fm	Greater Accra
19	Onua FM	Greater Accra

No.	Name of Radio Station	Region
20	Oyerepa Fm	Ashanti
21	Power Fm	Greater Accra
22	Radio Gold	Greater Accra
23	Radio Justice	Northern
24	Radio Tamale	Northern
25	Shaft FM	Ashanti
26	Suncity Radio	Bono East
27	Tain FM	Bono
28	Winners FM	Bono East
29	Wontumi Radio	Ashanti
30	Zaa Radio	Northern

The monitoring is done based on a validated monitoring instrument. Thirty (30) language monitors have been recruited (one monitor per station) and trained on the use of the monitoring instrument. Each monitor is assigned a digital recorder for purposes of recording the programmes they monitor. Monitors send daily reports to the MFWA which are analysed by a team of programme staff and researchers for a consolidated report to be produced.

3.0 Findings

Table 2 presents the main subjects of news stories, programs, or discussions monitored on the 30 radio stations in Ghana during January 2025. The monitoring data captures post-election discussions, reflecting the political and social climate following the December 7, 2024, elections and the swearing-in of the new president on January 7, 2025. With election-related issues accounting for 17% of all recorded subjects, it is evident that political discourse remained highly relevant even after the electoral process concluded. Beyond election matters, governance issues dominated the airwaves.

Discussions on Parliament (11%), constitutional matters (11%), and presidential affairs (9%) reflected the focus on political transitions, legislative priorities, and executive actions following the inauguration of the new president. Given the sharp political divisions that often emerge after elections, these discussions likely involved critical assessments of the electoral process, potential legal disputes, and the implications of new policy directions. The prevalence of these themes is

also consistent with Ghana's shifting political landscape, where discussions about governance tend to intensify after a new administration takes office.

Apart from governance, other national concerns featured prominently in radio discussions. Illegal mining (9%), development projects (9%), and security (6%) were widely debated, indicating that the post-election period was not only about politics but also about pressing socio-economic and security issues. Illegal mining, commonly referred to as "galamsey," has remained a contentious issue due to its environmental impact and alleged connections to political interests. Given the transition in government, discussions around this topic revolved around anticipated policy changes, enforcement actions, and criticisms of past handling of the issue.

The inclusion of security (6%) in the discussions highlights ongoing concerns about national stability, law enforcement, and possible post-election tensions. Security matters often gain prominence after elections due to uncertainties surrounding political transitions, the handling of electoral disputes, and potential unrest in communities where tensions may have risen during the campaign period. While no major incidents of post-election violence were reported, the discussions around security suggest that there were concerns about the need for peace and stability in the aftermath of the elections.

Despite the significant focus on governance and national issues, discussions on business and finance, religion, corruption, and conflicts or demonstrations each accounted for only 3% of the monitored subjects. The relatively low occurrence of corruption in discussions suggests that the post-election narrative was more focused on political power transitions rather than accountability for past governance actions.

Political party activities and issues (3%) also had limited representation in discussions, suggesting that while the elections had concluded, the focus may have shifted from active campaign rhetoric to governance matters and national policy concerns. The diversity of topics covered in the monitoring exercise demonstrates that while political and election-related discussions were dominant, broader national concerns also featured in media programming.
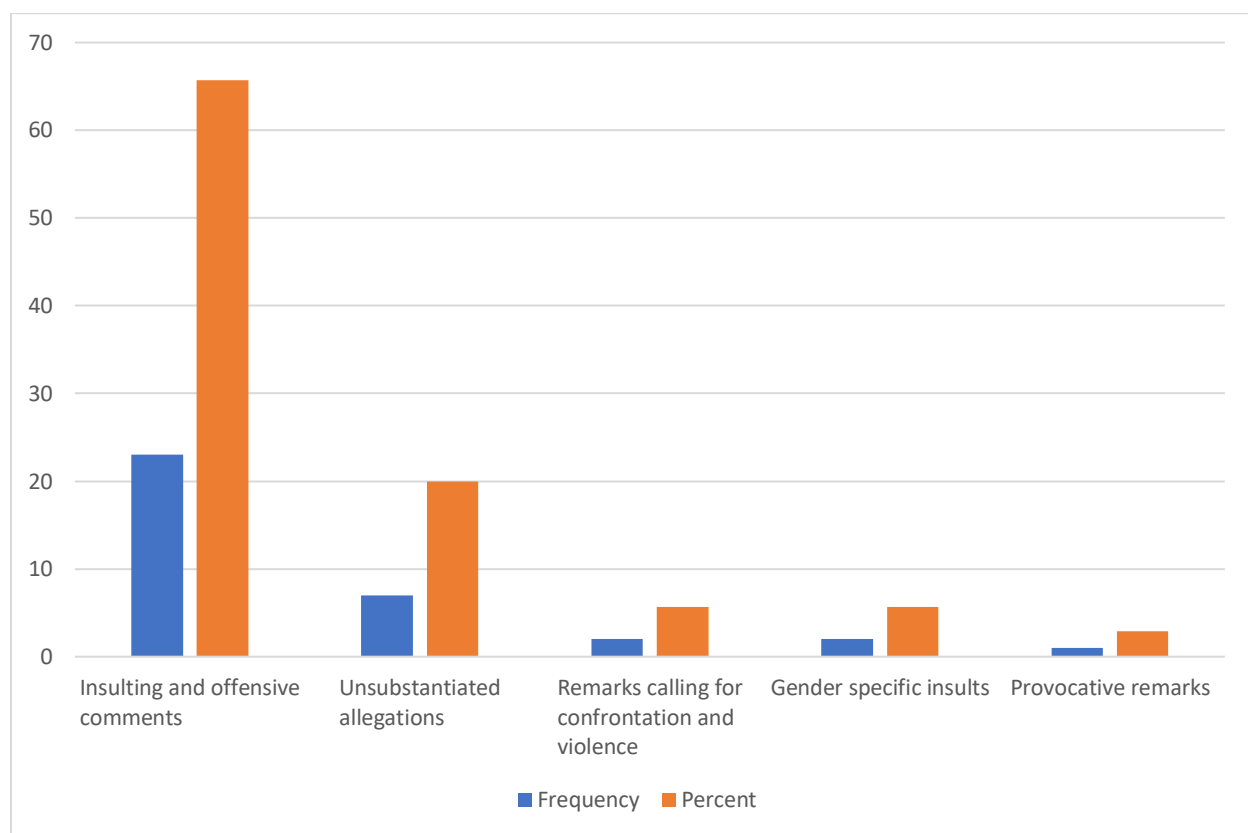
Table 2: Main subject of news story/programme/discussion

Main subject of news story/programme/discussion	Frequency	Percent
Elections-related issues	6	17
Other	5	14
Parliament	4	11
Constitutional matters	4	11
President/Vice President/ Presidential affairs	3	9
Development Projects	3	9
Illegal mining	3	9
Security	2	6
Business/ Finance	1	3
Religion	1	3
Corruption	1	3
Conflicts, demonstrations, etc.	1	3
Political party activities/issues	1	3
Total	**35**	**100**

3.1 Categories of Indecent Expressions Recorded

Figure 1 categorizes the types of indecent language violations identified during the period under review, revealing the nature and severity of inappropriate comments made on radio. The data reveals concerning patterns in post-election discourse. Insulting and offensive comments were the most prevalent form of language violations, constituting 66% of all recorded instances. Unsubstantiated allegations accounted for 20% of language violations, indicating a significant level of misinformation or unfounded claims being propagated on radio. Although less frequent, remarks calling for confrontation and violence (6%) and gender-specific insults (6%) are particularly troubling. Calls for confrontation and violence, even if subtle, can escalate tensions in a post-election environment where emotions are already high. The presence of gender-specific insults suggests that political discourse continues to include targeted attacks against women in leadership or political discussions, reinforcing gender-based discrimination in the public sphere. Provocative remarks, though recorded only once (3%), still indicate that some discussions were deliberately aimed at inciting reactions from opposing sides. Such language, while not overtly violent, can contribute to political polarization and undermine efforts to foster unity and constructive dialogue after elections.

Figure 1: Categories of Indecent Expressions Recorded

3.2 Radio Stations and Incidents of Indecent Expressions Recorded

The data from Table 3 provides a breakdown of various types of language violations across the 30 radio stations monitored in January 2025. The distribution of language violations across the monitored radio stations reveals notable patterns in the post-election media landscape. Power FM recorded the highest number of violations, accounting for 13 out of the 35 incidents (37%). The majority of these were insulting and offensive comments (11), along with two cases of unsubstantiated allegations. Oman FM followed closely, recording nine instances of language violations. Unlike Power FM, which was dominated by offensive comments, Oman FM had a more varied pattern, with five unsubstantiated allegations, three insulting and offensive comments, and one remark calling for confrontation and violence.

Adom FM recorded three violations, including one instance of a remark calling for confrontation and violence. While this number is lower than that of Power FM and Oman FM, the presence of

calls for confrontation is concerning, particularly in the immediate aftermath of elections when political stability is crucial.

Radio Justice and Radio Tamale, two Tamale-based radio stations were the only stations that recorded gender-specific insults with two cases each. Other stations such as Ashh FM, Akpini Radio, Kesben FM, Oyerepa FM, Haske FM, and Shaft FM recorded only one violation each. While their overall contributions to the total count were minimal, the presence of such remarks across multiple stations indicates that inappropriate language was not isolated to a few platforms but was rather spread across various media outlets.

Table 3: Radio stations and the category of violations recorded

Name of Station	Insulting and offensive comments	Unsubstantiated allegations	Remarks calling for confrontation and violence	Gender specific insults	Provocative remarks	Total
Power Fm	11	2	0	0	0	13
Oman Fm	3	5	1	0	0	9
Ashh Fm	1	0	0	0	0	1
Akpini Radio	1	0	0	0	0	1
Adom FM	2	0	1	0	0	3
Kesben FM	1	0	0	0	0	1
Oyerepa FM	1	0	0	0	0	1
Haske FM	1	0	0	0	0	1
Shaft FM	0	0	0	0	1	1
Radio Tamale	2	0	0	0	0	2
Radio Justice	0	0	0	2	0	2
Total	**23**	**7**	**2**	**2**	**1**	**35**

3.3. Social Media Broadcast

The data on whether hosts or programs announced or referred listeners to a live stream of the shows where language violations were recorded indicates that 37% of such programs were actively promoted for live listening. This means that in 13 out of the 35 recorded violations, the hosts or program organizers intentionally directed audiences to follow the discussions in real time. The fact that these programs were publicized suggests that the language violations that occurred during these broadcasts may have reached a wider audience, increasing the potential impact of divisive rhetoric or misinformation.
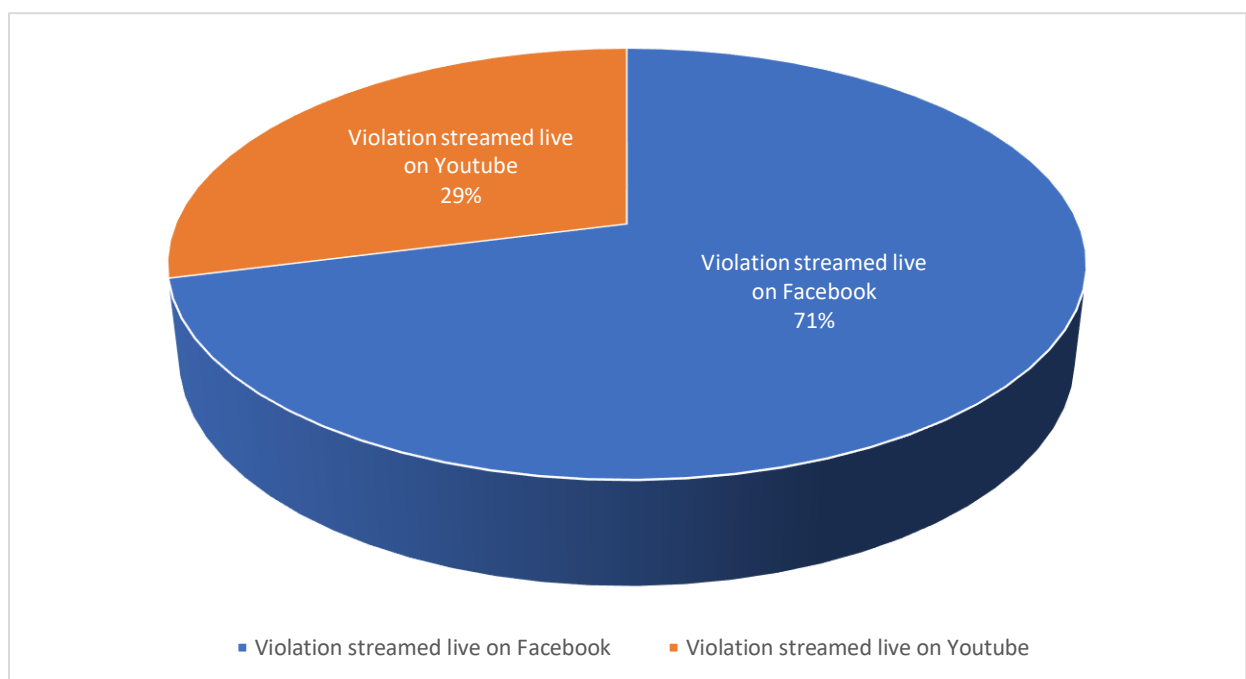

Figure 2: Social Media platforms that broadcasted violations live on radio

The fact that over a third of the violations occurred in programs that were actively publicized raises concerns about the responsibility of media hosts in shaping discussions. When presenters announce or refer audiences to a live stream, they are essentially amplifying the messages shared on their platforms. In cases where these broadcasts contain offensive remarks, unsubstantiated allegations, or inciting language, their wider reach may contribute to political polarization and social tensions, particularly in a sensitive post-election environment. The data on the streaming of language violations across social media platforms shows that a significant portion of violations (71%) were broadcast live on Facebook, while 29% were streamed on YouTube.

3.4 Culprits of Indecent Expressions Used on Radio

Table 4 shows the names of the individuals who authored the 35 indecent expressions. The findings reveal that Oheneba Boamah Bennie, accounted for 10 violations – the highest among all culprits. His infractions included nine instances of insulting and offensive comments and one unsubstantiated allegation. Several other individuals also contributed to indecent expressions, though to a lesser extent. Anthony Nukpenu was recorded making two insulting and offensive comments, while Robbicon Mornahson also engaged in two similar instances. Ernest Adade, on the other hand, was notable for making two unsubstantiated allegations.

Other notable culprits included Captain Smart and Frank Annoh Dompreh, both of whom were recorded making remarks calling for confrontation and violence. While these instances were fewer in number, they are particularly concerning given the potential for such rhetoric to incite unrest in a politically charged environment. Calls for confrontation, even when subtle, can contribute to heightened tensions, especially when supporters interpret them as justification for aggressive action.

Gender-specific insults, though less frequent, were recorded in remarks made by Alhaji Beniyuribuusheli and Hamza Mohammed. The presence of such remarks highlights the challenges faced by women in political discourse and the need for greater enforcement of ethical broadcasting standards. Gendered attacks often serve to intimidate or delegitimize female voices in politics and media, further reinforcing systemic biases in public discussions.

The data also indicates that a violation was attributed to an unknown individual, with the remark captured in a played video. This suggests that some instances of indecent expressions were not direct contributions from program participants but rather content aired on radio platforms. This underscores the role of media stations in amplifying harmful rhetoric, whether through live discussions or by rebroadcasting controversial material.

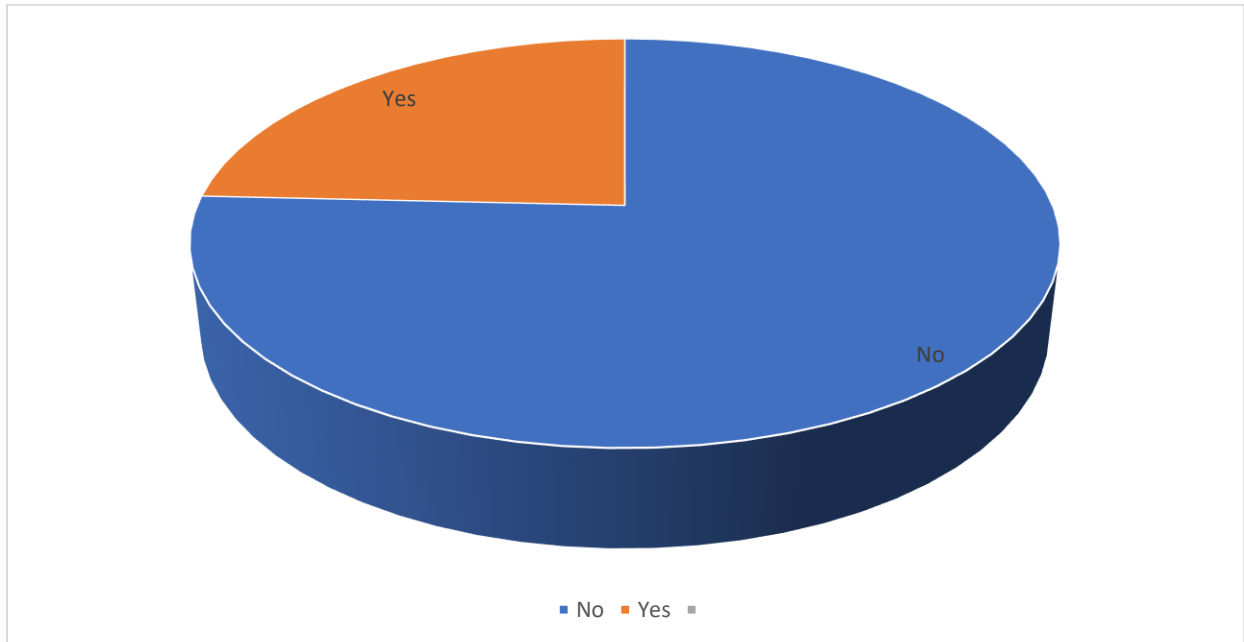**Table 4: Number and Categories of Expressions Authored by Culprits**

Name of culprit	Insulting and offensive comments	Unsubstantiated allegations	Remarks calling for confrontation and violence	Gender specific insults	Provocative remarks	Total
Oheneba Boamah Bennie	9	1	0	0	0	10
Anthony Nukpenu	2	0	0	0	0	2
Ernest Adade	0	2	0	0	0	2
Robbicon Mornahson	2	0	0	0	0	2
Adwoa NDC	0	0	0	0	1	1
Alhaji Beniyuribuusheli	0	0	0	1	0	1
Alistar Tahir Nelson	0	1	0	0	0	1
ANTHONY NUKPENU	1	0	0	0	0	1
Captain Smart	0	0	1	0	0	1
Francis Atto Codjoe	0	1	0	0	0	1
Frank Annoh Dompreh	0	0	1	0	0	1
Hamza Mohammed	0	0	0	1	0	1
Joyce Zempare	1	0	0	0	0	1
Kofi Okyere Agyekum	0	1	0	0	0	1
Kwabene Sarpong	1	0	0	0	0	1
Kweku Amega	0	1	0	0	0	1
Madam Victoria Emefa Hardcastle	1	0	0	0	0	1
Mohammed	1	0	0	0	0	1
Mugabe Maase	1	0	0	0	0	1
Nana Yaw Mensah Joel	1	0	0	0	0	1
Not known but video was played	1	0	0	0	0	1
Solomon Quaye	1	0	0	0	0	1
SUHAIL ABDUL MUMIN	1	0	0	0	0	1
Total	**23**	**7**	**2**	**2**	**1**	**35**

4.0 Assessment of Moderation of Programmes by Hosts

As part of the radio campaign language monitoring, the role of moderators or show shoe hosts was assessed. The data shows that moderators made attempts to correct discussants in only 8 instances (23%), while in 27 instances (77%), no intervention was made. This pattern highlights a concerning trend where the majority of radio hosts or moderators failed to challenge discussants when they engaged in inappropriate language, unsubstantiated allegations, or inciting remarks.

The failure of moderators to intervene in most cases raises questions about the enforcement of journalistic ethics in Ghana's radio landscape. Given that the post-election period often features heightened political emotions and rhetoric, the role of moderators in ensuring responsible discussions is crucial. Their reluctance to correct discussants suggests either a lack of professional training, intentional bias, or commercial pressures that prioritize sensationalism over ethical broadcasting.
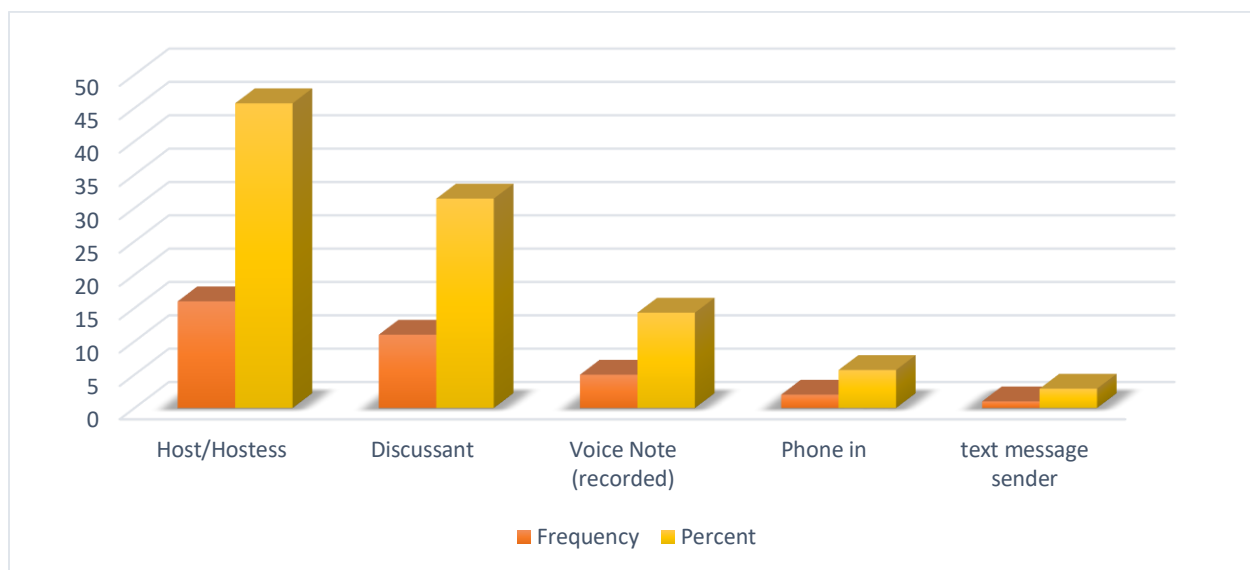
Figure 3: Attempts by show hosts/moderators to correct the use of indecent language on air

5.0 Categories of Culprits

The distribution of culprits responsible for indecent expressions on radio during January 2025 reveals that hosts and hostesses were the primary contributors, accounting for 46% (16 instances) of the violations. This is particularly concerning, as hosts are expected to moderate discussions and ensure that conversations remain professional and ethical. Instead, this finding suggests that many radio presenters actively participated in or facilitated the use of indecent language, reinforcing a media environment where offensive rhetoric thrives.

Figure 4: Status of Culprits

Discussants were the second most frequent violators, responsible for 31% (11 instances) of indecent expressions. Recorded voice notes were responsible for 14% (5 instances) of violations, indicating that pre-recorded messages aired on radio programs also contained inflammatory or offensive content. This suggests a lapse in editorial control, as stations could have reviewed and filtered out inappropriate voice notes before broadcasting them. Phone-in callers and text message senders were responsible for 6% (2 instances) and 3% (1 instance) of violations, respectively. While their overall contribution to indecent expressions was minimal, these findings highlight how audience participation segments can also serve as channels for inflammatory speech. Without proper moderation, open phone-in sessions and message boards can become breeding grounds for offensive remarks, misinformation, or even incitement.

6.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

This report presents the findings from the radio campaign language monitoring exercise conducted between January 1 and 31, 2025, on 30 selected radio stations across Ghana. Thirty (30) trained language monitors were assigned to these stations, where they used validated monitoring instruments and digital recorders to track and document instances of indecent expressions. The collected data was analysed to produce this report. The analysis focused on the language used by radio listeners, politicians, and other public figures during various programs, including news broadcasts, political discussions, and current affairs debates. Additionally, it assessed how program hosts managed their platforms, particularly in addressing or tolerating hate speech and other inappropriate expressions.

The data reveals that radio stations, hosts, and discussants played a central role in propagating indecent expressions, with Power FM (13 violations) and Oman FM (9 violations) emerging as the leading platforms where such language was recorded. Individual offenders also contributed significantly, with Oheneba Boamah Bennie being the most frequent culprit, responsible for 10 violations, primarily consisting of insulting and offensive comments. Other notable figures, including Anthony Nukpenu, Ernest Adade, and Robbicon Mornahson, also engaged in various forms of inappropriate speech, ranging from unsubstantiated allegations to remarks inciting confrontation and violence.

A particularly troubling trend was the role of radio hosts, who not only failed to moderate discussions effectively but were directly responsible for 46% of the recorded violations. Their inability or unwillingness to correct discussants further enabled the spread of offensive language and politically charged rhetoric. In 77% of cases, moderators did not attempt to intervene, allowing harmful speech to go unchecked. Additionally, social media significantly amplified these violations, with 71% of live-streamed content featuring indecent expressions appearing on Facebook and 29% on YouTube. This digital exposure extended the reach of harmful rhetoric beyond traditional radio audiences, making it more difficult to regulate and mitigate its impact.
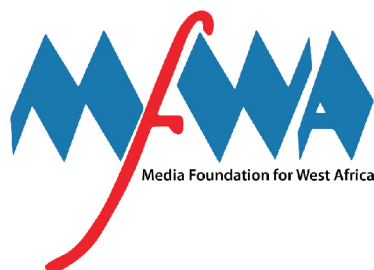
In consideration of the above findings, the MFWA makes the following recommendations:

1. Political party leaders should urge their representatives, affiliates, and communicators to prioritize issue-based discussions and avoid using indecent language.

2. Radio stations, particularly presenters and moderators, should maintain professionalism by refraining from indecent expressions and ensuring that their guests adhere to respectful, fact-based expressions.

3. The National Media Commission (NMC), the Ghana Independent Broadcasters Association (GIBA), and the Ghana Journalists Association (GJA) need to enhance regulatory and self-regulatory mechanisms to enhance media professionalism

4. Program moderators should establish and enforce clear ground rules for their shows to maintain decorum.

Appendix: Reference to Indecent Expressions Recorded in January 2025

Name Culprit	Designation	Date Reported	Radio Station	Voilation Type	Tittle Programme	Frequency
Adwoa NDC	Discussant	10-Jan-24	Shaft FM	Provocative remarks	Kase3 bo	1
Alhaji Beniyuribuusheli	Discussant	08-Jan-25	Radio Justice	Gender Specific	Justice Supper Morning Show	1
Alistar Tahir Nelson	Discussant	17-Jan-25	Power FM	Unsubstantiated allegations	Inside Politics	1
Anthony Nukpenu	Discussant	13-Jan-25	Power FM	Insulting and Offensive	Inside Politics	1
Anthony Nukpenu	Discussant	15-Jan-25	Adom FM	Insulting and Offensive	Trends on Dwaso ns3m	1
ANTHONY NUKPENU	Discussant	17-Jan-25	Akpeni Radio	Insulting and Offensive	CITI EYE WITNESS NEWS	1
Captain Smart	Discussant	20-Jan-25	Adom FM	Remarks calling for confrontation	Dwaso ns3m- Trends	1
Ernest Adade	Discussant	07-Jan-25	Oman FM	Unsubstantiated allegations	Boiling Point	1
Ernest Adade	Discussant	08-Jan-25	Oman FM	Unsubstantiated allegations	National Agenda	1
Francis Atto Codjoe	Discussant	14-Jan-25	Oman FM	Unsubstantiated allegations	Boiling Point	1
Frank Annoh Dompreh	Discussant	09-Jan-25	Oman FM	Remarks calling for confrontation	National Agenda	1
Hamza Mohammed	Host	08-Jan-25	Radio Justice	Gender Specific	Justice Supper Morning Show	1
Joyce Zempare	Discussant	22-Jan-25	Oman FM	Insulting and Offensive	National Agenda	1
Kofi Okyere Agyekum	Discussant	21-Jan-25	Oman FM	Unsubstantiated allegations	National Agenda	1

Name Culprit	Designation	Date Reported	Radio Station	Voilation Type	Tittle Programme	Frequency
Kwabene Sarpong	Discussant	23-Jan-25	Oman FM	Insulting and Offensive	National Agenda	1
Kweku Amega	Discussant	21-Jan-25	Oman FM	Unsubstantiated allegations	Boiling Point	1
Madam Victoria Emefa Hardcastle	Discussant	29-Jan-25	Kessben FM	Insulting and Offensive	Maakye (Discussion segment)	1
Mohammed	Discussant	31-Jan-25	Ashh FM	Insulting and Offensive	National Agenda	1
Mugabe Maase	Host	13-Jan-25	Power FM	Insulting and Offensive	Inside Politics	1
Nana Yaw Mensah Joel	Host	08-Jan-25	Oyerepa FM	Insulting and Offensive	Oyerepa Breakfast Show	1
Not known but video was played	Discussant	14-Jan-25	Adom FM	Insulting and Offensive	Trends on Dwaso ns3m	1
Oheneba Boamah Bennie	Host	08-Jan-25	Power FM	Insulting and Offensive	Battle Grounds	2
Oheneba Boamah Bennie	Host	13-Jan-25	Power FM	Insulting and Offensive	Battle Grounds	3
Oheneba Boamah Bennie	Host	06-Jan-25	Power FM	Insulting and Offensive	Swearing-In	2
Oheneba Boamah Bennie	Host	22-Aug-25	Power FM	Unsubstantiated allegations	Battle Grounds	1
Oheneba Boamah Bennie	Host	27-Jan-25	Power FM	Insulting and Offensive	Battle Ground	2
Robbicon Mornahson	Host	27-Jan-25	Radio Tamale	Insulting and Offensive	Be citizens not spectators	2
Solomon Quaye	Discussant	27-Jan-25	Oman FM	Insulting and Offensive	National Agenda	1
SUHAIL ABDUL MUMIN	Host	13-Jan-25	Haske FM	Insulting and Offensive	SAFIYAR HASKE	1

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