

FRAMING DEMOCRACY

MEDIA COVERAGE OF TANZANIA'S 2020 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS: A focus on opposition candidate Tundu Lissu

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SUMMARY

This report is a reflection of the performance of selected local media outlets in Tanzania's 2020 elections. It presents findings on reporting trends that were observed in the run-up to the October 28th presidential poll. The main objective of this study was to assess the performance of a selected cross-section of Tanzania's mainstream media in their coverage of the 2020 elections to create an evidence base on the quality of reporting observed in the local media. It is also intended that it will help inform future interventions on improving the nature of election reporting in the country.

Tanzania's 2020 elections presented a unique opportunity for the media and their audiences alike. In the recent past, the local press has been accused of complacency and failure to check on government excesses, especially concerning protecting the democratic space and freedom of expression. While the media landscape in Tanzania remains fragile due to repressive laws, providing fair coverage to all candidates participating in the October polls would have sent a message about their commitment to playing their roles in a fragile democracy such as this one.

In the period reviewed in this study, Tanzania's newspapers provided a seemingly balanced coverage of all the top candidates in this election. They, however, shied away from criticizing or even reporting on criticisms of the current administration's policies that have been interpreted as rolling back on decades of democratic gains when such was raised in the campaign trail. The broadcast media, specifically television stations also seemingly favoured the incumbent by providing his campaigns with more live coverage. The extensive use of state resources by the ruling party and its candidate was also neither featured nor criticized by the Tanzanian press.

BACKGROUND

Tanzania heads to the polls on 28th October 2020. The incumbent John Pombe Magufuli of Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM) will be fighting it out with [14 other candidates](#).¹ for the country's top job.

His main challenger is Chama Cha Demokrasia Na Maendeleo (Party for Democracy and Progress, commonly known as Chadema) presidential candidate, Tundu Antipas Lissu, who returned to the country in August after three years in exile following an assassination attempt that left him nursing 16 gunshot wounds in 2017. Others are Bernard Membe of ACT Wazalendo, an ex-foreign minister who was expelled from CCM in February, Prof. Ibrahim Lipumba of CUF, Hashim Rungwe of Chaumba, Ms Queen Sendiga of ADC as the only female candidate in the race, and nine others.

While CCM has dominated Tanzania's politics for decades, Chadema's popularity has been growing over time, especially in the urban areas and among the youthful voters. For context, in the 2005 elections Chadema's presidential candidate, Freeman Mbowe, finished third out of 10 candidates, with almost 6% of the ballots polled. Chadema further increased its share in the national assembly, managing to install 11 Members of Parliament, in addition to 103 Councillors and the party retained the district councils of Kigoma, Tarime, and Karatu.

Between then and the next election, Chadema continued to solidify its base and popularity as the numbers attest. In the 2010 general elections, Chadema's candidate Dr Willbrod Peter Slaa – the party's then Secretary-General (until August 2015) – garnered 27.1% of the vote in the presidential election. That's a four-fold growth from what the party had managed just five years earlier. In 2010, the party won 48 MP seats which in turn made it the second-largest party in the National Assembly. This was a first for Chadema. A further 467 Councillors and seven District Councils were claimed by Chadema. Most of the councillor seats that this party won are constituencies found in major towns and urban areas of Tanzania, including Arusha, Moshi, Mwanza – all three in the north, Mbeya, to the south, and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania's financial capital and its largest city.

¹ *Tanzania electoral commission clears 15 candidates for presidential election* by CGTN on 26th August 2020: <https://africa.cgtn.com/2020/08/26/tanzania-electoral-commission-clears-15-candidates-for-presidential-election/>

In the general election of October 2015, Chadema joined with other political parties: CUF (Civil United Front), NLD (National League for Democracy), and NCCR-Mageuzi to form Umoja wa Katiba ya Wananchi (UKAWA) and the union was represented by one presidential candidate, Edward Lowassa who, with a 40% share of the vote, came second to President Magufuli who garnered 58%.

With the 2020 elections nearing, Lissu returned to the country to a rapturous welcome on 27th July. His arrival saw hundreds through the Julius Nyerere International Airport in Dar es Salaam waving Tanzanian and Chadema flags.

The opposition politician is known for his harsh criticism of the CCM led government of President Magufuli. Then an MP, Lissu took issue with the government's high-handedness which included attacks on the press and opposition politicians through intimidation by state officials and arbitrary arrests. Before the attempt on his life, Lissu had been arrested eight times during the current administration with the latest one being two weeks before he was shot. More than three years since the incident that almost cut his life short, Lissu told Kenya's Radio Citizen that no investigations have been done to ascertain who was behind the attempt on his life.

MEDIA AND ELECTIONS

The media has traditionally played an agenda-setting role during elections across the world. In more stable democracies with free media, election content such as news coverage of both government and opposition campaigns, interviews of candidates, and presidential and vice president's debates are usually the norm.

In Tanzania's case, there have been growing fears over the conduct of the media in the recent past. This has been occasioned by declining press freedoms in the country since 2015 when Magufuli ascended to power. In the five years of his presidency, the country has fallen a record [53 places in the Reporters Without Borders' \(RSF\) 'World Press Freedom Index'](#)².

The media landscape here has been characterized by rampant self-censorship, the shutdown of media outlets, and the enforcement of repressive media laws.

² RSF Country Report on Tanzania: <https://rsf.org/en/tanzania>

Tanzania has suffered an unprecedented decline in press freedom under President John Magufuli. Freedom House, a non-governmental organization that works to promote human rights and democratic change, says a [2016 media law allows for harsh penalties](#)³ for content deemed defamatory, seditious, or illegal. It says attacks on journalists have contributed to "an atmosphere of fear and repression" for independent media.

In the last five years, [over a dozen media outlets have been shut down](#)⁴. In October 2015, the state-run Zanzibar Broadcasting Commission also [shut down Swahiba FM](#)⁵, a radio station that reported on the re-run of the 2015 elections. In October 2015, the Zanzibar Electoral Commission (ZEC) nullified the election results citing fraud, a charge the opposition said was made up. The ruling party candidate in the semi-autonomous Zanzibar was declared the winner in the re-run of presidential elections boycotted by the respectable opposition parties. During the 2020 campaign period, at least two media houses were suspended for seven days by Tanzanian Communication Regulatory Authority for among other things broadcasting unapproved election content.

These developments have created an environment of fear and increased self-censorship within Tanzania's media landscape. It is against this backdrop that we decided to conduct a study on how the local media are covering this election with a special focus on the kind of coverage given to opposition candidate Lissu *vis-à-vis* coverage given to the incumbent.

TANZANIA'S MEDIA LANDSCAPE

A [report](#)⁶ by RSF on media ownership in Tanzania released in 2018 reveals a high level of audience concentration for the print, TV, and radio sectors. This means that Tanzania's population receives its news mostly from an outlet belonging to one of the four major companies in each sector – which then gains a potentially high influence on public opinion. The print market is concentrated around Mwananchi Communication Ltd., a subsidiary of the Nation Media Group, by far the most dominant market player in terms of readership. The IPP

³ *Freedom House country report on Tanzania (2018):* <https://freedomhouse.org/country/tanzania/freedom-world/2018>

⁴ *RSF country report on Tanzania:* <https://rsf.org/en/tanzania>

⁵ *Oppressive' laws come under the spotlight by The Citizen on 29th October 2019:* <https://www.thecitizen.co.tz/news/1840340-5328760-9sly1f/index.html>

⁶ *Who owns the media in Tanzania by RSF:* <https://rsf.org/en/reports/who-owns-media-tanzania>

Media Group, New Habari (2006) Ltd. and the state-run Tanzania Standard Newspapers (TSN) follow with considerable distance.

IPP Media Group dominates the broadcast sector, especially in free-to-air TV. The state-run Tanzanian Broadcasting Corporation (TBC), Azam Media Ltd., and Clouds Entertainment join in the top four in terms of viewership. While the radio sector in itself seems slightly more diverse as popular stations vary from region to region, Clouds Entertainment, IPP Media Group, and TBC are once again the key players, demonstrating a predominant position across media sectors according to the report.

Part of this study's aim is to determine to what extent media ownership in Tanzania and the regulatory environment will influence election coverage, especially of JPM's main challenger Tundu Lissu.

This study sampled five newspapers with a national circulation: *The Citizen*, *The Guardian*, *Mtanzania*, *Mwananchi*, *Nipashe* and *Uhuru*. Also polled were four television stations with a national reach. These are ITV, TBC1, Azam TV and Clouds TV broadcasting in Swahili. So did the four radio stations we sampled (Radio Free Africa, Radio One, TBC *Taifa* and Clouds Radio).

The presidential campaigns in the runup to the October 28th elections most of the time involved the party presidential candidates, their running mates and senior party officials campaigning separately and attracting separate media coverage. For this study on qualitative and quantitative analysis of media coverage given to the two candidates, we also looked at the coverage given to those campaigning on behalf of the parties' candidates.

The official campaign period in Tanzania began on the 26th August 2020 when the National Electoral Commission (NEC) approved candidates to vie for various electoral positions in the October polls. This study looked at media trends from that date till 11th October 2020 – about two and a half weeks before the election date. For the sole purpose of context, this report from time to time refer to events outside that timeline, but which do not make part of the study's conclusions.

CAMPAIGN LAUNCH AND MANIFESTO COVERAGE

Tundu Lissu's party launched its manifesto on August 4th 2020, while the party's official campaign would be launched on 28th August at Zakhem Grounds, in Mbagala, Dar es Salaam.

The Citizen covered Lissu's campaign launch on the front page with a headline reading, "Chadema's justice plea," accompanied with a photo of the candidate alongside other party officials at the launch. Full coverage of the event took the entire third page of the newspaper with two smaller photos from the rally. The article focused on Lissu, reliving the assassination attempt on him, and his calls for justice for Chadema councillorship and parliamentary aspirants who were disqualified for running in the October elections.

The campaign launch was covered by all leading media houses including a partial live transmission by the state broadcaster TBC1. Chadema chairman Freeman Mbowe was however angered by the channel's frequent stoppage of the rally's proceedings and [ordered the television station's crew out of the rally venue](#)⁷. He accused the station of acting as if they were serving the interests of CCM.

That evening, TBC's management issued a statement condemning the actions of Mr Mbowe. In a two and a half minute [statement](#)⁸ aired during the evening bulletin, the state broadcaster reiterating that they have a duty of ensuring that content sent out on their media platforms adhere to the industry's professional code of conduct. They also announced that they will cease live coverage of all Chadema events until their staff are assured of their safety and that of their equipment.

The confrontation between Chadema and TBC was also reported by *The Guardian*, *The Citizen*, *Mwananchi*, *Mtanzania* and *Nipashe* among other publications.

While the launch of Lissu's campaign did not provide much detail into the specifics of the Chadema manifesto subsequent media coverage, especially by private media, has provided a deeper insight into his plans for Tanzania.

Appearing on ITV's [Ndani Ya Dakika 45](#)⁹ (Within 45 Minutes) hosted by Farhia Middle on 3rd September 2020, also aired on the station's sister radio station; Radio One, Lissu had a chance to explain his manifesto for the first time.

⁷ Pg. 3 *The Citizen* 29th August 2020.

⁸ *Tamko la TBC baada ya kufukuzwa kwenye mkutano wa Chadema leo by TBC on 28th August 2020:* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RgiIWgAFNf8>

⁹ *'Ndani Ya Dakika 45' by ITV on 3rd September 2020:* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pEvf8VrLdde&t=2038s>

In the 56-minute interview, the Chadema presidential candidate talked about restoring Tanzania to its founding principles that were based on freedom. Economic freedoms and social freedoms. Tanzania's administration in the recent past, especially under President Magufuli's reign, has been accused of clawing back on these freedoms. Taking a swing at his development record, he likened CCM's acclaimed infrastructural projects over the last five years with South Africa's infrastructural development under the oppressive apartheid regime that did not benefit a vast majority of the population.

"Our citizens still fear the government, in everything they do they have to keep looking behind them so that they don't get into trouble with the government. We do not have freedom. How do you fight poverty, illiteracy and disease in an environment where everyone is looking up to the government for help? We have to put in place systems that allow people to develop themselves," says Lissu in the interview.

He said his government will guarantee press freedoms, freedom of speech, freedom of association, and economic freedoms as the building blocks for developing policies on education, universal health coverage, and organized public transport. The interview also featured his policies on economic growth, employment creation, agriculture, taxation, and foreign policy.

John Pombe Magufuli's campaign was launched on 29th August in an event that doubled up as the launch of CCM's manifesto. He promised to accelerate the gains made in the last five years and complete unfinished projects.

In a rally held at Jamhuri Stadium in the capital Dodoma, he promised to maintain the momentum and make Tanzania "a great nation." Banking on his five-year record as proof of performance, he mentioned some of the flagship projects he championed in the last five years including the construction of standard gauge railway, Julius Nyerere Hydropower Project, increased university entries, student loans and revitalization of Air Tanzania.

The state broadcaster TBC1 aired live proceedings of the event that lasted for six hours and five minutes.¹⁰ Independent television stations ITV¹¹, and Clouds TV¹² also provided live coverage for more than three hours and one hour respectively.

¹⁰ *TBC1 Mbashara by TBC on 29th August 2020.*

¹¹ *ITV Mubashara by ITV on 29th August 2020.*

¹² *Clouds TV Live by Clouds Media on 29th August 2020.*

The Citizen, *Mwananchi* and *Mtanzania* had front-page coverage of JPM's campaign launch on the 30th August 2020 issue. *The Guardian* and *Nipashe* covered the event on the 31st August issue.

Chadema manifesto

The priorities of Lissu's government are outlined in [Chadema's 98- page manifesto](#)¹³, whose contents are being publicised at the ongoing campaign rallies. According to the manifesto, Chadema will to a large extent engage the private sector to have all its plans realised. The private sector would also be engaged in increasing employment opportunities that would enable young people to get higher incomes, as well as ensuring an adequate supply of clean and safe water to all people. The party also pledges to empower citizens to own land for sustainable use, while the private sector would also be engaged in improving roads infrastructure, markets, energy and raw material processing industries.

If elected, Lissu and his running mate Salumu Mwalimu are looking forward to transforming the leadership in Tanzania, to consolidate the principles of integrity, creativity and patriotism. The manifesto also features salary increments and promotions to civil servants, as well as engage the private sector in building a digital economy.

With regards to healthcare and education, the party promises to provide free education at all levels. It promises to pioneer provision of free maternal health care and health services to people with disabilities, children and elders, and build capacity for women to own economic investments.

Improvement of the mining sector and supporting small scale miners would also be considered as the sector plays a crucial role in the country's economy, with the private sector being involved in sports, arts and culture for them to operate commercially.

Lissu promises to start the process of changing the country's constitution to introduce federalism to decentralize power and allow regions to directly determine how they are governed.

¹³ *Ilani ya Chadema 2020 – 2025 by Uniforum TZ on 25th September 2020:*
<https://www.uniforumtz.com/ilani-ya-chadema-2020-2025-pdf-download-here/>

CCM manifesto

The [303-paged manifesto](#)¹⁴ identifies key areas that aim at bringing both political and social-economic changes, touching on jobs, industrialization, infrastructure, tourism, further improvement of education and health sectors, if the incumbent is re-elected on October 28th. The party is looking to implement various key socio-economic projects, which have been identified in seven categories. They include people-centred economic revolution, science and technology, peace and security, good governance and justice, international relations, implementation of crucial issues in Zanzibar's election manifesto and other areas of emphasis in the country development plans.

It promises the creation of eight million jobs, mainly targeting youths in both formal and informal sectors. It targets strengthening of the financial sector, the inclusion of the private sector in economic development, fighting poverty at both individual and national levels, improvement of entrepreneurship and strengthening Tanzania Social Action Fund (TASAF). Other key areas include the development of a blue economy, focusing on sustainable use of the marine resources for economic growth. It underpins the significance and the potentials of the marine and coastal environment in the country, which it says should not only rely on fisheries but also on other sectors such as maritime transport, coastal tourism and natural gas, which can contribute significantly towards national socio-economic development.

The CCM manifesto also envisages the proper use of the country's geographical advantage to boost the economy, create more employment opportunities, setting strategies for supervising cooperative unions, improvement of agriculture, livestock and fishing sectors and development of the industrial sector.

Of the five newspapers sampled in this study, *The Citizen* and its sister publication *Mwananchi* had the most detailed coverage of the campaign issues in the 2020 elections. Beginning 31st August,¹⁵ *The Citizen* ran a three-page feature from Page 3 that highlighted campaigns by the top presidential candidates and their agents, and a side by side comparison of what their manifestos said on key issues. *Mwananchi* had a similar two-page feature titled *Kuelekea Uchaguzi Mkuu 2020* (towards 2020 general elections) that ran on page 2 and 3 of the paper.

¹⁴ *Chama Cha Mapinduzi 2020 Manifesto Part I* by by Thomas j. Kibwana on 3rd September 2020: <https://medium.com/@thomasjkibwana/chama-cha-mapinduzi-2020-manifesto-part-i-ba3a05a03046>

¹⁵ Pg. 3 *The Citizen* by Nation Media Group on 31st August 2020.

Among the issues covered were policies on healthcare, education, infrastructure development, governance, job creation, constitutional review, agriculture and foreign policy.

LIVE CAMPAIGN COVERAGE

CCM's candidate John Pombe Magufuli got the lion's share of live coverage for campaign rallies on radio and television. [TBC1 covered all of JPM's rallies](#).¹⁶ in their day-time *TBC1 Mbashara*. ITV, Azam TV and Clouds TV also provided live coverage for the ruling party candidate in key locations during the campaigns. ITV provided live coverage in Dar es Salaam¹⁷, Tabora¹⁸, Mara¹⁹, Nzego²⁰, Shinyanga²¹ and Dodoma among [others](#). Clouds TV and Azam provided live coverage for different CCM campaign rallies in the country.

NEWS COVERAGE OF CAMPAIGNS

The five television stations under this study had a fairly balanced coverage of the campaigns. The state broadcaster TBC1, however, ran stories from CCM campaigns before the rest of the candidates in most of their prime time news bulletins. All the candidates were in most cases provided with two-and-a-half-minute to four-minute coverage during the major news bulletins with no specific candidate seeming to have an upper hand.

In terms of newspaper coverage, *Uhuru* openly came out as a pro-CCM newspaper. On 31st August, just a day after the launch of President Magufuli's campaign, they ran a headline that said: "*Ni Magufuli kila corner*" (it's Magufuli on every corner).²² On 2nd September the headline read: "*Magufuli achanja mbuga*" (Magufuli takes off).²³ On 3rd September the headline was: "*Magufuli awapa bure hekari 400*" (Magufuli issue free 400 acres).²⁴ On 10th October, the last day of this study, the paper's headline read: "*Foleni Dar kwisha*" (no more queues in Dar).²⁵

¹⁶ YouTube search of TBC1 live broadcast of CCM rallies:

https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=TBC+online+live

¹⁷ *ITV Mubashara* by ITV on 9th October 2020.

¹⁸ *ITV Mubashara* by ITV on 2nd September 2020.

¹⁹ *Live broadcast of CCM presidential campaigns in Mara* by ITV on 5th September 2020.

²⁰ *Live broadcast of CCM presidential campaigns in Ngega* by ITV on 2nd September 2020.

²¹ *Live broadcast of CCM presidential campaigns in Shinyanga* by ITV on 3rd September 2020.

²² *Pg. 1 Uhuru* by Uhuru Publications Limited on 31st August 2020.

²³ *Pg. 1 Uhuru* by Uhuru Publications Limited on 2nd September 2020

²⁴ *Pg. 1 Uhuru* by Uhuru Publications Limited on 3rd September 2020.

²⁵ *Pg. 1 Uhuru* by Uhuru Publications Limited on 10th October 2020.

highlighting JPM's plan on improving road infrastructure in Dar es Salaam, water supply, and welfare of the country's servicemen.

On 29th August, a day after the launch of Tundu Lissu's campaign, *Mtanzania's* headline read "Kitimtim" (as a team) and the coverage focused on Lissu's appeal for fairness to opposition candidates who were barred from contesting various seats in the October polls. Photos and text from the rally occupied three-quarters of the front page. At the bottom of the page was a smaller headline focused on CCM's campaign launch.

The Guardian, The Citizen, Mwananchi, Nipashe and *Mtanzania* all had a fair coverage of the campaigns by all the presidential candidates. For instance, the headline for *Mtanzania* on 4th September was *Mwendo wa ahadi* (a journey of promises).²⁶ and featured key promises and photos from the top three candidates campaigns – President Magufuli, Bernard Membe and Tundu Lissu. Page 4 of the same paper had a detailed reportage from JPM's campaign trail in Shinyanga and Lissu's campaigns in Tabora.²⁷

Similarly, *Mwananchi*, a sister publication to *The Citizen* on 4th September highlighted the key campaign issues among the top three candidates – job creation, agriculture, transport and provision of safe and clean water for the country's population.²⁸ Page 2 and 3 of the same paper delved deeper into these issues. Regarding Magufuli's promises, the paper highlighted his speech during the launch of CCM campaigns in Dodoma where he promised to focus on fighting poverty and unemployment through investing in sectors that have the potential of providing mass employment opportunities.²⁹ He promised to create 8 million new jobs within the next five years. The paper also highlighted his pledge on transport which involves the improvement of road, rail and air transport networks, and social services such as education and healthcare. The reportage on Lissu's pledges highlighted his policies on agriculture focusing on his intentions to support farmers through the provision of farm inputs, cash payment for cotton farmers. Regarding job creation, the paper says Chadema intends to reform the country's tax policy to attract more investment. The paper also covered Lissu's policies on infrastructural development, sports, and universal health coverage.³⁰

²⁶ Pg. 1 *Mtanzania* by New Habari Limited on 4th September 2020.

²⁷ Pg. 4 *Mtanzania* by New Habari Limited on 4th September 2020.

²⁸ Pg. 1 *Mwananchi* by Mwananchi Communications Limited on 4th September 2020.

²⁹ Pg. 2 *Mwananchi* by Mwananchi Communications Limited.

³⁰ Pg. 3 *Mwananchi* by Mwananchi Communications Limited.

The radio stations sampled in this study provided news coverage on the campaigns during their 1.00 PM and 7.00 PM news coverage with a repeat of the main election stories run during a morning news bulletin at 6.30 AM.

While President Magufuli mostly received positive or fair news coverage, Lissu on two occasions received negative news coverage. On 28th of September, police officers lobbed teargas on Lissu's convoy to prevent it from holding a rally in Nyamongo village, Tarime district. Police were reported by Radio One and Radio Free Africa³¹ claiming that the grounds were not in the pre-gazetted list of campaign venues. In response, Lissu said that the police should have lodged a formal complaint against him and his party with the NEC instead of attacking his convoy and supporters. Even though he backed down, it has since been established that there were no legal grounds for preventing Lissu from addressing his supporters at the said venue. This incident was reported by most of Tanzania's leading media outlets.

On 2nd October, NEC's Ethics Committee suspended Lissu's campaigns for seven days for contravening election rules during his campaign rallies. The complaint against him was filed by CCM and the National Reconstruction Alliance (NRA). While campaigning in Mara, Lissu had alleged that JPM had convened a meeting in Dodoma with NEC's returning officers from all over the country with the intention of influencing the outcome of the presidential elections.

³¹ 6.45 AM news bulletin by Radio One on 29th September 2020, and 7.00 AM news bulletin by Radio Free Africa on 29th September 2020.

CONCLUSION

The media have an ethical obligation to ensure fairness and balance in their coverage of electioneering processes. The experience from Tanzania's media in this year's election is quite checkered. The newspapers sampled, particularly those owned by independent publishers made a good attempt at providing fair and balanced coverage of the main opposition candidate Tundu Lissu. However, some papers like *Uhuru* were openly leaning towards CCM with flattery headlines and at times dedicating up to 95% of space to reportage and commentary on the party. In many cases, their coverage was lacking in objectivity.

The broadcast media sampled provided biased coverage of the election candidates in favour of the incumbent, especially with live coverage of campaign rallies. This, however, could be partly attributed to the repressive Tanzanian media environment that perhaps had broadcasters choosing not to air the opposition's live events out of fear that the candidates or their supporters may make utterances that might cause them to have their broadcast licenses suspended or slapped with heavy fines. With the government being one of the top spenders in advertising, it's easy to see how that could have also skewed coverage in favour of the incumbent even among the so-called "independent media houses."

Tanzania's media failed to provide critical analysis of the incumbent's campaign promises. For instance, on Magufuli's claim on providing 8 million new jobs in the next five years, the media failed to interrogate how the number was arrived at, or his job creation record during the first term. The incumbent and the CCM party also extensively used state machinery in their campaign without scrutiny from the media. This included official vehicles assigned to the president and other senior government leaders and use of government staff in organizing rallies among other issues.

While social media was not part of the parameters of this study, its impact in this election for both candidates is difficult to ignore. Platforms such as Facebook, JamiiForums, Twitter and YouTube provided opposition parties, including Chadema, with avenues for communicating their messages as the broadcast media seemed compromised.

In this climate, Chadema is also making use of JamiiForums, Tanzania's most popular news and social media platform, to link with the voters. The forum has enabled Lissu to engage the electorate and to unpack Chadema's manifesto. Lissu is going through and has answered

some of the more than 1,000 questions that the platform's users asked him. Further, ordinary Tanzanians who own YouTube and Facebook channels were able to provide live streams for both Chadema and CCM campaign events with some receiving more than 100,000 views. Social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook also provided a platform for discussions on the issues in this election as well as almost real-time updates from both campaign events.

The repressive media environment in Tanzania coupled with business and political interests of media owners have no doubt played a key role in the un-impressive coverage given to opposition candidates in this election – especially Tundu Lissu.