

Elections' 97

Media Watch

MEDIA MONITORING IN KENYA
December 1997 Report



Media Monitoring is a project of the Kenya Human Rights Commission in Partnership with ARTICLE 19 (International Centre Against Censorship). It monitors KBC - the sole state-owned broadcasting media-programmes as they relate to party politics in the period leading upto the 1997 General Election.

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THE "ELECTIONS' 97 PROJECT"

The Elections' 97 Project focused on the 1997 General Election. It sought to take advantage of the pre-election mood and energy to invigorate the nation-wide campaign for a level playing field. The Project's work was carried out through three core activities:

1. Conducting advocacy and mobilisation activities around the movement for constitutional reform, through workshops and 'reform clinics'.

The activities were designed to raise public awareness, generate community and national support as well as activism for comprehensive constitutional reforms as a necessary prerequisite to the elections to ensure they took place on a level playing field.

2. Media-monitoring of the state-owned Kenya

Broadcasting Corporation (KBC) Radio and Television (TV) in an effort to document and release timely, accurate, and reliable data together with analysis on the coverage of news and other relevant programmes, such as documentaries, news commentaries, and press conferences. This data was widely distributed locally and internationally in monthly reports, with a view to pressurising KBC to maintain impartial and independent broadcasts. Closer to the elections, weekly releases were issued detailing KBC's coverage.

3. Investigating, monitoring, and documenting election-related violence in various parts of Kenya with the view of releasing reliable information.

THE MEDIA MONITORING COMPONENT

This was a joint initiative between the Kenya Human Rights Commission (KHRC) and ARTICLE 19 (The International Centre Against Censorship). The media monitoring component monitored and documented KBC's coverage of news commentaries, documentaries, and press conferences for the six month period leading up to the 1997 General Elections. The goal was to assess the impartiality and independence of KBC's coverage of the various political party issues and events, both in scope and substance.

The unit had 15 media monitors who worked in four-hour daily shifts. A total of 16 hours were monitored daily from 7.00 am - 11.00 pm on KBC's:

1. Television;
2. Radio: National Service (aired in Kiswahili); and
3. Radio: English Service (aired in English).

Additionally, KBC's Central, Western, and East-

ern stations were also monitored.

The monitors focused on news features, commentaries, and documentaries that had a political bearing. They also viewed Kenya Television Network (KTN) for comparative purposes. Beyond that, the monitors read national newspapers including, *The Daily Nation*, *The East African Standard*, *The Kenya Times*, and *People* for additional information.

Results of the monitoring were compiled into monthly reports that were disseminated to a wide audience in Kenya and abroad.

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INTRODUCTION AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

To the media, December was the year's most important month. It was when the campaigns for Presidential, Parliamentary and Civic positions kicked off in earnest, the elections were held and early results received.

It was also the month that the media played their most significant role in shaping Kenya's political destiny. Votes were won or lost on account of how the politicians and political bodies were presented in the media. And after weeks of Kenya Broadcasting Corporation seeming to acquiesce to the IPPG requirements that airtime be equitably distributed among the parties, the station finally turned out in full force for KANU in its hour of greatest need.

As a result, KANU airtime increased dramatically from 41 per cent in Week One to 91 per cent in Week Four. Part of the explanation for this was that what had previously been presented as Presidential events was now identified as KANU events, with Mr. Daniel arap Moi being referred to as "KANU Chairman". Besides, the KBC cameras and microphones were more readily available on the KANU campaign trail than the opposition's.

Party political broadcasts were aired during the month in accordance with the IPPG rules. Signifi-

cantly, the KBC was convinced to air, though reluctantly, programmes that were quite critical of the Government, such as Safina party's documentary. Initial refusal to air it sparked a controversy that overflowed to the print media, attracting attention that ensured that the programme arguably became the most-watched of the political broadcasts.

KBC ignored most of the events covered by the other media, with over 50 per cent of the items not reported. These were invariably pro-opposition or anti-government items, thus making omissions KBC's most productive censorship strategy against the opposition.

A curious development in the election results coverage was the suspension of the cumulative tally of the Presidential vote. Initially, the station would update the total votes received by the presidential candidates as the results trickled in. The fact that this was suspended at a time when Democratic Party's Mwai Kibaki appeared to be closing in on KANU's Moi could give credence to the view that the pattern of coverage was changed because KBC did not know how to handle the reality of an Opposition candidate doing well.

GENERAL KEY OBSERVATIONS

1. Election results were well covered by KBC. Television and radio relayed the results on a 24-hour basis, interspersing them with field reports.
2. Incidences of violence were down-played especially where KANU was blamed.
3. KANU airtime increased drastically, rising from 41 per cent at the beginning of the month to 91% by Week Four.
4. Opposition airtime decreased from 27 % in week one to 4 % in week four. Selective reporting characterised KBC's coverage.

KEY NEWS EVENTS

WEEK ONE

1/12/97 – The Ministry of Health warned striking nurses that they faced summary dismissal and said it would conduct a countrywide headcount of all its staff the following day. The ministry also recalled all its staff on leave and said whoever missed the headcount would be dismissed.

1/12/97 – The political careers of three cabinet ministers, Mrs. Nyiva Mwendwa, Prof Jonathan Ngeno and Mr. Darius Mbela – hang in the balance following an order by KANU chairman Daniel arap Moi for repeat nominations in 21 constituencies. The KANU leader issued the order on Saturday night. **NOT REPORTED BY KBC**

1/12/97 – Cabinet Minister Kamwithi Munyi lost the Runyenjes KANU nomination as the party suffered defections by protesting losers. Final results of the nominations trickled in but the outcome in some areas was still unclear. **NOT REPORTED BY KBC**

1/12/97 – The Ford Kenya nominations which began on Saturday and continued on Sunday were low-keyed in most parts of the country, although not without some controversy. In Bungoma District, the party's stronghold, confusion reigned in the exercise carried out through electoral colleges. Some aspirants protested that the poll was being rigged in favour of their opponents.

2/12/97 – Kenya's credibility will depend on "a non-violent, open, free, fair and incorruptible" election. This is the message delivered to President Moi, Opposition leaders and the clergy by United States special envoy for promotion of democracy in Africa, the Reverend Jesse Jackson, during meetings with them.

2/12/97 – Striking nurses remained adamant, dismissing the Health Ministry's sacking warning and saying they would ignore today's head count. The previous day, the Minister for Health, Mr Jackson Mulinge, urged the nurses to call off the strike as the Government was considering their memorandum to prevent any further loss of lives in public hospitals.

2/12/97 – Returns from Democratic Party nominations across the country indicated that they were marked by a low turnout and apathy. DP presidential candidate Mwai Kibaki was nominated unopposed to contest the Othaya parliamentary seat. **NOT REPORTED BY KBC**

2/12/97 – Kiambu politician Nginyo Kariuki wrote to the Electoral Commission claiming a KANU man in Kiambu had been using the provincial administration and the police in his campaign. Mr. Kariuki said the chief's and DO's offices had been turned into KANU campaign and propaganda offices where peaceful wananchi opposed to their political machinations were being threatened with dire consequences for not attending the just concluded KANU nominations. **NOT REPORTED BY KBC**

2/12/97 – Many candidates risked being locked out of the General Election if their parties did not send to the Electoral Commission the name and signature specimen of the person appointed to certify the validity of the nominations of candidates.

2/12/97 – The Social Democratic Party (SDP) will not accommodate defectors who have just lost in the KANU civic and parliamentary nominations, the party's secretary general announced. **NOT REPORTED BY KBC**

2/12/97 – Supporters of the outgoing Kajiado Central MP David Sankori gave President Moi upto Friday to nullify KANU nominations in the constituency or they would defect to the opposition *en masse*. Mr. Sankori lost the nomination to former envoy to Japan, Mr. Stephen Leken. **NOT REPORTED BY KBC**

3/12/97 – Mr. Justice Zacheaus Chesoni, the much maligned chairman of the Electoral Commission, is back on the bench as Kenya's new Chief Justice. He replaced Mr. Justice Abdul Majjid Cockar who retired on attainment of the mandatory retirement age of 74. The President also appointed Mr. Samuel Kivuitu the new chairman of the Electoral Commission.

3/12/97 – The Kenya Medical Practitioners and Dentists Union said nurses' grievances were genuine and blamed the government for mishandling the strike. Meanwhile, laboratory technicians and clinical officers joined in the strike which entered its fifth day yesterday. **NOT REPORTED BY KBC**

3/12/97 – Journalists will for the first time be allowed to escort ballot boxes to and from counting halls to ensure fairness, the Electoral Commission said. **NOT REPORTED BY KBC**

3/12/97 – The Democratic Party of Kenya (DP) announced its party nomination results.

3/12/97 – Embu Catholic Bishop John Njue on Sunday accused powerful politicians of starting ethnic violence in various parts of the country on the eve of the General Election for selfish political reasons. Bishop Njue was preaching to the Tharaka-Igembe ethnic clash victims at Chuka Catholic Church. **NOT REPORTED BY KBC**

4/12/97 – The Electoral Commission cleared President Daniel Arap Moi and seven challengers to contest in the most crowded race for the presidency in independent Kenya's history. Two others who presented themselves, Mr. Koigi wa Wamwere and Prof Wangari Maathai, failed to meet set criteria and were required to present themselves before the Commission later.

4/12/97 – As his appointment continued to draw criticism, the new Chief Justice Zacheus Chesoni said his priority will be to root out all forms of corruption in the judiciary before embarking on a project to rid the whole country of the menace. **NOT REPORTED BY KBC**

4/12/97 – The SDP presidential candidate Charity Ngilu appealed to Kenneth Matiba's supporters to vote for her during the December 29 General Election. Mrs. Ngilu told Mr. Matiba's supporters that by voting for her, they would enable Mr. Matiba to realise his dream of removing President Moi from power. **NOT REPORTED BY KBC**

4/12/97 – NDP presidential candidate Raila Odinga dismissed the idea of a single opposition candidate and said his party would only form a government of national unity with some political parties. Mr. Odinga was addressing a rally at Uhuru Park after presenting his nomination papers to the Electoral Commission.

5/12/97 – Seven more candidates were cleared to run for the presidency, bringing the total number of those officially in the race to 15.

5/12/97 – The ongoing national health crisis continued to bite as the nurses' strike entered its eighth day with no solution in sight. The nurses kept up their demonstrations in various urban centres while Ministry of Health officials were said to have been holding high-level meetings on the strike.

6/12/97 – Ford Kenya presidential candidate Kijana Wamalwa said he expected a free and fair election. Mr. Wamalwa was addressing a rally after presenting his nomination papers to the Electoral Commission.

6/12/97 – Police hurled teargas canisters to break up a meeting where presidential contender Charity Ngilu was addressing striking nurses in Nairobi. Security agents blocked her entourage on Uhuru Highway before throw-

ing the canisters at the crowd. **NOT REPORTED BY KBC**

6/12/97 - The Electoral Commission rejected symbols of four political parties set to participate in the elections and gave them until Monday to submit alternative symbols to be printed on the ballot papers.

6/12/97 – NDP accused KBC of renegeing on its agreement with political parties regarding coverage during the election period. In a three-page letter to the Electoral Commission, the personal assistant to party leader Raila Odinga, Ms. Sarah Elderkin, said that by no stretch of anyone's imagination were opposition parties given anything like equitable treatment. **NOT REPORTED BY KBC**

6/12/97 – Presidential candidate Charity Ngilu and former Ford Asili chairman Kenneth Matiba held a 15-minute discussion at the latter's College House office in Nairobi. The meeting was behind closed doors. **NOT REPORTED BY KBC**

6/12/97 – Several presidential candidates were granted round-the-clock police protection, Police Commissioner Duncan Wachira said. He said the candidates who had applied for it would get police escort and protection during public rallies.

WEEK TWO

7/12/97 - A fund-raising lunch hosted by KANU Chairman Daniel Arap Moi netted Sh100 million for the party's campaigns. Top businessmen, politicians and civil servants attended the function at Nairobi's Hotel Inter-Continental. Some guests paid as much as Sh5 million for the privilege of dining next to President Moi.

7/12/97 - Kenyatta National Hospital was badly hit by the nurses' strike. The few senior nurses working at the hospital were living in fear of harassment by their striking colleagues. **NOT REPORTED BY KBC**

7/12/98 - Former FORD Asili Chairman Kenneth Matiba said neither he nor his supporters will support any opposition presidential candidate. He asked opposition leaders "who were duped into participating in the elections" to reconsider their stand. **(NOT REPORTED BY KBC)**

WEEK TWO

8/12/97 – Scenes of despair and death prevailed at public hospitals countrywide as the nurses' strike entered its eleventh day. Many of the hospitals remained virtually closed, some with desperate relatives of the ailing hovering in the compounds hoping that the situation would somehow improve. **(NOT REPORTED BY KBC)**

8/12/97 – Mr. Amos Kiprotich Kandie, who announced a few months ago that he intended to challenge President Moi for the Baringo parliamentary seat, last evening declared he was still in the race. Mr. Kandie said that he had been nominated by the Social Democratic Party (SDP). **NOT REPORTED BY KBC**

8/12/97 – Assistant Ministers Agnes Ndeti and Willy Komen lost KANU's repeat nominations in selected constituencies held between Friday and yesterday. This brought to 16 the number of Assistant Ministers who lost in the KANU nominations. Six Cabinet Ministers were also trounced.

8/12/97 – Kenya is not ready for a woman president, NDP presidential candidate Raila Odinga argued. He urged women to rally behind him instead. Mr Raila said that even America, the world leader in democracy, had never had a woman president. (Mr Odinga later placed a paid-for advertisement denying that he made these comments).

9/12/97 – Administration police officers fired several shots in the air after NDP supporters demonstrating against Siaya DC Kiritu Wamai grabbed a G3 rifle from one of them. The rowdy NDP supporters claimed the DC was used by the Government to rig in KANU candidates during the elections. NDP parliamentary candidates were later arrested. **NOT REPORTED BY KBC.**

9/12/97 – Nomination of civic and parliamentary candidates went smoothly in many constituencies but there were several reports of violence, delays, lateness and lack of required documents. An SDP aspirant for Baringo Central, Mr Amos Kiprotich Kandie, was blocked by KANU youths from entering the Kabarnet County Hall where he had gone to present papers to oppose President Moi. **NOT REPORTED BY KBC**

9/12/97 – The National Council of Churches in Kenya and the Movement for Dialogue and Non-Violence asked the Government to urgently end the 11-day strike by nurses in public hospitals. NCCCK General-Secretary Mutava Musyimi said the nurses were required to be on duty now more than ever before due to the pending General Election and the Christmas festivities. **NOT REPORTED BY KBC**

9/12/97 – Fighting nearly broke out between supporters of two rival parliamentary candidates who confronted each other in Kerugoya-Kutus Constituency in Kirinyaga District. Trouble started when supporters of Mr. Matere Keriri (DP) and Mr John Ngata Kariuki (KANU) traded insults as Mr. Kariuki was being escorted to present his nomination papers at Kaitheri Polytechnic. **NOT REPORTED BY KBC**

9/12/97 – Violence marred the presentation of nomination papers in Tinderet Constituency when a Ford Kenya civic candidate, Mr. Jimmy Ngeny, was stabbed twice with a sword. Mr. Ngeny was stabbed by a group that confronted him in Nandi Hills town as he went to present his nomination papers at the county council hall. He was admitted to Kabsabet Nursing Home and later transferred to an Eldoret Hospital. **NOT REPORTED BY KBC**

10/12/97 – President Moi stood opposed for the first time in his long political career after SDP's Amos Kandie was cleared to vie for the Baringo Central parliamentary seat. **NOT REPORTED BY KBC**

10/12/97 – The Kenya Television Network (KTN), Kenya's premier private station, finally changed hands. Members of the Board of Directors all resigned apparently to pave way for a new board. The station was taken over by Mr Mark Too and Mr Bob Holt who are directors of Magnet Media.

10/12/97 – Kanu is assured of five parliamentary seats after the Opposition failed to present challengers in their constituencies.

10/12/97 – Safina announced that it will field 48 candidates to contest parliamentary seats. Seventeen of the candidates will vie in Central Province, nine in North Eastern, eight in the Rift Valley, four in Eastern, three in Nyanza and one in Western Province. **NOT REPORTED BY KBC**

10/12/97 – The Electoral Commission will form a committee to monitor compliance with the Electoral Code of Conduct by political parties, the Chairman, Mr. Kivuitu, said. The committee, comprising electoral commissioners, will be constituted by today.

10/12/97 – Presidential candidate Raila Odinga ruled out possibilities of fielding a single opposition presidential candidate. He termed the fielding of such a candidate as contrary to the principles of multi-party democracy.

11/12/97 – The number of unopposed KANU parliamentary candidates rose to 10 after returns showed that there were no opposition challengers in five other constituencies.

11/12/97 – Three major election monitoring organisations said the recently-concluded party and General Election nominations were afflicted by malpractices. They blamed these "disturbing flaws" on the autocratic behavior of some party bosses of imposing leaders; ostentatious and wanton display of pomp and opulence; massive bribery and use of violence. **NOT REPORTED BY KBC**

12/12/97 – The Electoral Commission released a provisional list of 689 candidates contesting in 169 constituencies whose returns had been filed. Kanu topped the list followed by DP, which had 106, Ford Kenya, 86, and the National Development Party, 83.

12/12/97 – A meet-the people tour organised by the Mathioya Ford People parliamentary candidate, Mr. Njakwe Maina, was disrupted when KANU youths hijacked it on Wednesday. Mr. Maina had just addressed his supporters at Gacharageini market when KANU youths arrived and blocked the route using three matatus. **NOT REPORTED BY KBC**

12/12/97 – Outgoing Gachoka MP Norman Nyagah poured scorn on his elder brother, Mr. Joseph Nyagah, saying there was no love lost between them. The DP legislator said he had shifted to Nairobi's Kamukunji Constituency to save the Nyagah family from splitting. **NOT REPORTED BY KBC**

13/12/97 – One person was killed and scores injured – four of them seriously – during a fierce fight between KANU and DP supporters in Karatina Town. Four cars were extensively damaged during the two-hour battle, which broke out at around 3 p.m. **NOT REPORTED BY KBC**

13/12/97 – DP presidential candidate Mwai Kibaki accused the Government of running down the economy through "high level corruption" and called on Kenyans to reject KANU. Addressing supporters at Wote, Makueni, Mr. Kibaki alleged that some Ksh 180 billion collected by the Government as taxes in the 1996/97 financial year could not be accounted for. **NOT REPORTED BY KBC.**

13/12/97 – DP presidential candidate Mwai Kibaki blamed the high incidence of banditry in North Eastern Province on Government laxity. Addressing a rally at the Garissa Primary School playground, Mr. Kibaki said the Government had the machinery to eradicate banditry from the province. **NOT REPORTED BY KBC**

14/12/97 – Former FORD Asili chairman Mr. Kenneth Matiba said a nationwide Constitutional Conference to collate views on reforms will be held from January 3 next year when the incumbent Government's term ends. He said an "Assembly for Citizens" will appoint neutral persons drawn from religious bodies, the legal fraternity and civil society to chair and lead the conference. Mr. Matiba was addressing thousands of his followers at Kamukunji grounds in Nairobi. **NOT REPORTED BY KBC**

14/12/97 – Police arrested Limuru FORD Asili parliamentary candidate Kuria Kanyingi along with four of his campaign aides and son Kuria. Mr. Kanyingi was picked

up at 11.00 a.m. on the Limuru-Tigoni road and the others at the Lari police station when they went to inquire about him. It was understood that Mr. Kanyingi would be charged with being in possession of dangerous weapons. **NOT REPORTED BY KBC.**

14/12/97 – Presidential candidate Raila Odinga termed his competitors Martin Shikuku, Kijana Wamalwa and Mwai Kibaki as KANU moles and asked Kenyans to reject them. Mr. Odinga said during a meet-the-people tour that the three candidates participated in the IPPG talks which clearly indicated that they were working with KANU. **NOT REPORTED BY KBC**

14/12/97 – Presidential aspirant Charity Ngilu blamed rising unemployment countrywide on bad policies pursued by the KANU government which, she said, had led to the closure of many local industries. Mrs. Ngilu blamed the collapse of the milk factory at Mariakani in Kilifi District, where she addressed her supporters on Friday, on lack of vision by the outgoing government. **NOT REPORTED BY KBC**

WEEK THREE

15/12/97 – Mainstream Christian churches prayed for peaceful polls and asked Kenyans to accept the results. In an inter-denominational ceremony, the Christians asked all Kenyans to shun violence during the electioneering period. The service was presided over by Catholic prelate Ndingi Mwana á Nzeki.

16/12/97 – Reports of campaign violence, harassment and intimidation continued to be received as the Electoral Commission admitted that it lacked sufficient authority to deal firmly with such incidents. Chairman Samuel Kivuitu told a press conference that his hands were tied on matters of criminal nature related to the conduct of elections.

16/12/97 – Kiambu politician Kuria Kanyingi denied charges of corruption and preparing to commit a felony. Kiambu Principal Magistrate Florence Muchemi released him on a cash bail of Sh. 50,000.

16/12/97 – The Nakuru branch of DP accused KBC of bias in airtime allocation. The party said the media house was breaching the IPPG agreement by its continued neglect of the Opposition presidential candidates while allocating much of the prime time to the KANU candidate. **NOT REPORTED ON KBC**

16/12/97 – Ford Kenya Presidential candidate Kijana Wamalwa criticised President Moi's Jamhuri Day messages and warned that corrupt millionaires would become billionaires if KANU won the election. Kenya, he said,

needed fresh blood committed to change and asked voters to assess KANU's record before making their decisions in the December 29 poll. **NOT REPORTED BY KBC**

16/12/97 – Presidential candidate Charity Ngilu promised to give former Ford Asili chairman Kenneth Matiba a prominent role in the government for successfully crusading for multi-partyism. She was addressing wananchi during a meet-the-people tour of Kiambu District. **NOT REPORTED BY KBC**

17/12/97 – Two people were killed, 62 injured and 50 arrested over election-related violence countrywide since November 15, police said. **NOT REPORTED BY KBC**

17/12/97 – Prof. Wangari Maathai's meeting called to endorse a single Kikuyu presidential candidate flopped in Ol Kalou after other aspirants stayed away. Prof. Maathai, who was running on a Liberal Party ticket, was the only one who turned up.

17/12/97 – Mr. Amos Kandie, the man fighting to unseat President Moi in Baringo Central on an SDP ticket, said he was being frustrated and his campaign programmes disorganised. The aspirant urged Opposition presidential candidates to tour the constituency and help stop President Moi's re-election as an MP. **NOT COVERED BY KBC**

17/12/97 – As the race for State House continued, President Moi and his former vice-president, Mr. Mwai Kibaki, traded accusations over the poor state of the economy. President Moi attributed the problem to an over-stretched Budget and limited resources. But the Democratic Party chairman blamed the collapse of infrastructure on misappropriation of public funds under the KANU government.

17/12/97 – SDP presidential candidate Charity Ngilu said President Moi was right when he referred to her as a spoiler because her candidature threatened to spoil his plot to loot this country forever. **NOT REPORTED BY KBC**

17/12/97 – More than 200 KANU supporters in Bomet District sacked as campaign co-ordinators on Monday by former Cabinet Minister Kipkalya Kones defected to the Democratic Party. **NOT REPORTED BY KBC**

18/12/97 – DP supporters in Nakuru town heckled the town's KANU parliamentary aspirant Alicen Chelaite and escorted her out of a planned campaign venue. Mrs. Chelaite, who was accompanied by the co-ordinator of the KANU presidential candidate's campaign in Nakuru, Prof. Karanja Njoroge, had planned to launch the campaign outside the town's Railway Station. **NOT RE-**

PORTED BY KBC

18/12/97 – An anti-Kanu demonstration was held in Kajjado town to denounce the KANU presidential candidate, Mr. Daniel arap Moi. The demonstrators carried placards with slogans saying "Moi you have no votes in Kajjado and Narok" and "Saitoti is the worst enemy of the Maasais". **NOT REPORTED BY KBC**

18/12/97 – The printing of ballot papers by a London-based private firm is almost complete and the documents will be airlifted to the country before December 21, the Electoral Commission announced.

18/12/97 – An expected 27,635 observers representing 25 foreign and eight local organisations will monitor the December 29 elections. Most of them will represent the National Council of Churches (NCCK), the Catholic Peace and Justice Commission (CPJC) and the Institute of Education in Democracy (IED).

19/12/97 – Political parties met with the Electoral Commission with the Opposition raising several issues ranging from poor coverage on State-owned media to ineffective implementation of minimum reforms agreed upon under the IPPG package.

19/12/97 – Scores of people were injured and a number of cars stoned in Kisumu when rowdy youths pounced on motorists, smashing wind-screens and looting property, following a meeting of three key presidential candidates in the town. Trouble started when supporters of President Moi, Charity Ngilu and Raila Odinga met face to face.

20/12/97 – The declaration of violence-torn common borders of four districts in Nyanza and Rift Valley provinces as security zones had no legal effect, two constitutional lawyers argued. Dr. Gibson Kamau Kuria and Mr. Kathurima M'Inoti said the declaration did not, as required by Section 42 of the Preservation of Public Security Act, take the form of a gazetted declaration backed by regulations. **NOT REPORTED BY KBC**

20/12/97 – KENDA presidential candidate Koigi wa Wamwere accused KBC of bias in covering political parties. Mr. Wamwere said he had entered into a contract with KBC for the production of a programme but they had failed to honour it. The programme, which was not televised, was to give Kenyans the different presidential candidates' ideas on the IPPG reforms package. **NOT REPORTED BY KBC**

20/12/97 – Teargas, stampedes and running battles between police and Charity Ngilu's supporters rocked Kisii town moments after armed police blocked the presiden-

tial candidate's way at the tension-filled Gucha Transmara border. Mrs. Ngilu had gone to the border with the intention of entering the district to campaign but was stopped by police with cocked guns aimed at her at the border. President Moi on Thursday declared the area a security operation zone out of bounds for outsiders.

20/12/97 – Two GSU officers and two civilians were killed following a fight on Thursday night between them and villagers in Nyamecho, Gucha District. Six other GSU officers and an Administration Police officer were admitted to Kilgoris Mission Hospital and Tabaka Mission Hospital.

WEEK FOUR

21/12/97 – The requirement by the Electoral Commission that journalists covering the elections be accredited to it is untimely and uncalled for, the Media Institute said. It said the move was tantamount to "prior censorship" and asked the Commission to shelve the plans.

21/12/97 – Safina said it would reject a Moi win in the December 29 General Election claiming that the poll was already massively rigged in the President's favour. The party will consequently organise mass action in the first week of January to agitate for a government based on a new constitutional order.

21/12/97 – The Electoral Commission will find out from the Government how it intends to ensure accessibility to voters in the security zones, its chairman said. The commission was, meanwhile, waiting for official communication about the security zone.

21/12/97 – A man was killed when pro-KANU youths armed with axes and sticks attacked NDP supporters after a rally addressed by its presidential candidate in Kisumu. The rally, held at the Kenyatta Sports Ground, dispersed at 6.00 p.m. after a heavy downpour with most attendants jamming the main dais for shelter, before they were attacked by youths ferried into the grounds in two four-wheel-drive vehicles decorated with President Moi's campaign portraits. **NOT REPORTED BY KBC**

WEEK FOUR

22/12/97 – KENDA presidential candidate Koigi wa Wamwere insisted that KBC failed to air his party's campaign programme because of bias, not a breached contract. He said a contract he had entered into with the corporation did not specify that he deposits any money before the programme could be aired. **NOT REPORTED BY KBC**

22/12/97 – Uncertainty surrounded the accreditation

of journalists who intended to cover the 29 General Election. The Electoral Chairman, Mr. Samuel Kivuitu, appeared to differ with accreditation requirements contained in a signed press statement he issued on Friday.

22/12/97 – Two more people were killed in campaign violence over the weekend, bringing the total of those dead since November 15 to 5.

22/12/97 – Word was spreading in Kitui Central and two other Ukambani constituencies that KANU agents were buying and destroying votes. It was also said that KANU agents were taking identity and voters' card numbers for the purposes of rigging the Election. **NOT REPORTED BY KBC**

23/12/97 – SDP presidential candidate Charity Ngilu said KANU candidate Daniel Arap Moi had turned his campaign into a personal attack on her. Mrs. Ngilu said President Moi perceived her as his greatest threat. **NOT REPORTED BY KBC**

23/12/97 – The Electoral Commission summoned senior representatives of the five leading political parties to a meeting tomorrow in a bid to stem violence as the registrar of societies warned a sixth party that it risked being deregistered for inciting people to be unruly.

23/12/97 – At least four senior managers and about 25 employees of the privately-owned Kenya Television Network were fired in a major restructuring programme by its new owners.

24/12/97 – Two key KANU leaders were accused of instigating violence and risked the Electoral Commission censure and possible disqualification as candidates. Former Minister Kipkalia Kones and Energy Minister Kirugi M'Mukindia were implicated by other political parties at a meeting at County Hall, Nairobi.

25/12/97 – Gatundu town in Thika District woke up to a massive demonstration that nearly turned violent over a parliamentary candidate said to have gone missing. Shops and other businesses, including banks and law courts, were closed as crowds joined in the demonstrations. **NOT REPORTED BY KBC**

25/12/97 – DP leader Mwai Kibaki said his party won't form a coalition government with KANU because the latter was corrupt. He said Western countries would not take a DP government seriously if it included KANU as a partner. **NOT REPORTED BY KBC**

26/12/97 – The controversy surrounding the whereabouts of a parliamentary candidate for Gatundu South which sparked demonstrations took a new turn when he denied

being abducted and taken to State House. The constituency's SDP candidate Ngang'a Mwhia, whose absence from the campaign trail alarmed his supporters, also disowned the protesters and apologised to residents who may have been inconvenienced by the demonstrations. **NOT REPORTED BY KBC**

26/12/97 – At least 48 more people died in the last 24 hours in Wajir District from a disease which experts have diagnosed as severe malaria.

27/12/97 – Campaign violence between KANU and Opposition supporters in Nyanza Province left two people dead and scores injured. Police fired in the air and used teargas in Homa Bay to separate KANU and NDP supporters who clashed following a rally addressed by KANU presidential candidate Daniel arap Moi. **NOT REPORTED BY KBC**

27/12/97 – KANU increased its tally of parliamentary seats to 13 ahead of Monday election following the withdrawal of the FORD Kenya parliamentary aspirants for Kacheliba in West Pokot and Wajir North.

27/12/97 – In the event of a run-off, presidential elections can be held even a year later, the Electoral Commission chairman announced.

27/12/97 – DP presidential candidate Mwai Kibaki reminded Kenyans they had only two days to decide on their fate, by wisely electing their president. Mr. Kibaki said that Busia farmers had been taken for a ride by President Moi when he promised to build the Busia sugar factory. **NOT REPORTED BY KBC**

28/12/97 – For the first time voters will be allowed to use their passports along with their voters' cards to vote if they do not have the national identity card, Electoral Commission chairman Samuel Kivuitu said.

28/12/97 – Five top presidential contenders took their campaigns to their backyards and strongholds as two of them made allegations of massive pre-poll rigging. These included DP's Mwai Kibaki, SDP's Charity Ngilu, FORD Kenya's Kijana Wamalwa, President Moi of KANU and Raila Odinga of NDP. Charity Ngilu failed to turn up for a rally scheduled for Uhuru Park, Nairobi.

WEEK FIVE

29/12/97 – The Electoral Commission advised Kenyans on what was needed to vote.

29/12/97 – Two candidates – Mr. Stephen Omondi Oludhe of the Economic Independent Party (EIP) and Prof. Wangari Maathai of LPK bowed out of the presidential race. Mr. Oludhe said he was stepping down in favour of President Moi while an official of Prof. Maathai's party said her departure was in favour of DP boss Mwai Kibaki.

30/12/97 - Three people were killed and scores injured in election day violence. The deaths occurred during fighting between KANU and NDP supporters. In Mathioya, four vehicles, including a candidate's, were burnt when rival supporters clashed. There were incidents of violence in Shinyalu, Kisumu, Rachuonyo and Muhoroni.

30/12/97 – Unprecedented chaos marked the General Election and the Electoral Commission extended voting until 6.00 p.m. today which will be another public holiday. Serious confusion, mostly involving ballot papers, delayed the opening of many polling stations and made the exercise a nightmare for voters and election officials.

31/12/97 - President Moi accused the Electoral Commission of trying to rig the election in favour of the Opposition. The President thus joined other party leaders who alleged a plot to rig the polls against them. They included Mr Mwai Kibaki, Mr Raila Odinga and Mr George Anyona.

31/12/97 - Prof Wangari Mathai denied that had withdrawn from the Presidential race in favour of Democratic Party's Mwai Kibaki. She threatened to sue the newspapers that reported her purported withdrawal and said the damage to her was colossal and affected other Liberal Party candidates. **NOT REPORTED BY KBC**

31/12/97 - Makueni District emerged top among the 66 districts and municipalities in the 1997 Kenya Certificate of Primary Education examinations.

31/12/97 - The NCEC said the General Election was null and void and called for the immediate establishment of a government of national unity. It said the government must within the first week of January open dialogue with the NCEC, Opposition parties, religious leaders and other stakeholders. **NOT REPORTED BY KBC**

COMMENT

KBC's coverage this month was characterised by a high incidence of omissions of Opposition events especially where the Opposition castigated KANU or where KANU was involved in election violence.

For example on 15/12/97 President Moi accused Charity Ngilu of being a spoiler, and the story was carried by KBC. In a rejoinder on 17/12/97 Mrs Ngilu said that President Moi was right as she would spoil his chances of winning. This was not reported by KBC. On 17/12/97, the *Daily Nation* reported that 200 KANU supporters in Bomet District sacked as campaign coordinators by former Cabinet Minister Kipkalya Kones defected to DP. This was not carried by KBC.

The announcement by Mr. Amos Kandie that he would oppose President Moi in Baringo Central made news in the local and international media since President Moi had never been opposed before, but not for KBC. On 7th December, Mr. Kandie was harassed and barred from presenting his nomination papers by President Moi's supporters. This made news, but again not for KBC. The station only touched the Kandie story

after President Moi's plea to his supporters to allow his opponent to present his nomination papers.

On 21/12/97, the *Daily Nation* reported that a man was killed when pro-KANU youths armed with axes and sticks attacked NDP supporters after a rally addressed by its presidential candidate in Kisumu. Youths ferried into the grounds in two four-wheel-drive vehicles decorated with President Moi's campaign portraits attacked the NDP crowd. This was not covered by KBC.

During the announcement of election results, KBC was quite thorough. However, it was interesting to note that KBC originally gave the tally of overall votes for each presidential candidate as the results came in. But when the margin between president Moi and Mwai Kibaki narrowed at some point, KBC stopped giving the tally.

In sum, almost 50% of the news items were omitted, making omission KBC's most productive censorship strategy against the opposition.

WHO IS TELLING THE TRUTH?

KBC's news this month was characterised by partial omissions and contradictory statements to those that featured in other print and electronic Media news. For example when president Moi visited Kisumu on 17th where he addressed a public rally, KANU, DP, and NDPK supporters met face to face resulting in violent skirmishes within the town. According to the *Daily Nation*: "Scores of people were injured and a number of cars stoned in Kisumu when rowdy youths pounced on motorists, smashing windscreens and looting property, following a meeting in town of three

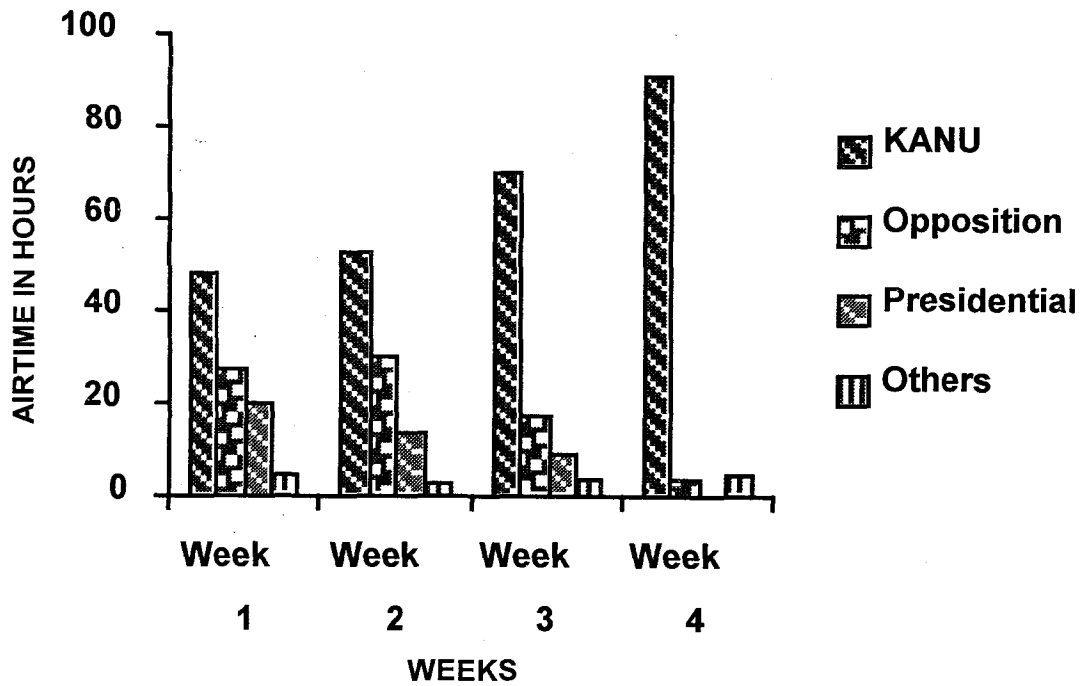
key presidential candidates."

KBC on the other hand did not report on this violence. Instead it claimed during the same 9.00 p.m. news, that "The political face of Nyanza has drastically changed as political tolerance takes root in the region which voted almost to the man in the region (sic). All political parties competing for votes are getting the chance to explain their agenda without harassment unlike in 1992 when animosity among various parties was rife."

WHO'S BEING AND HEARD FOR HOW LONG?

KANU, PRESIDENTIAL AND OPPOSITION AIRTIME

Radio & Television



Notes

This month KANU events got 66 % of the airtime, Opposition 20 %, presidential events 11 % and other news items 3 %.

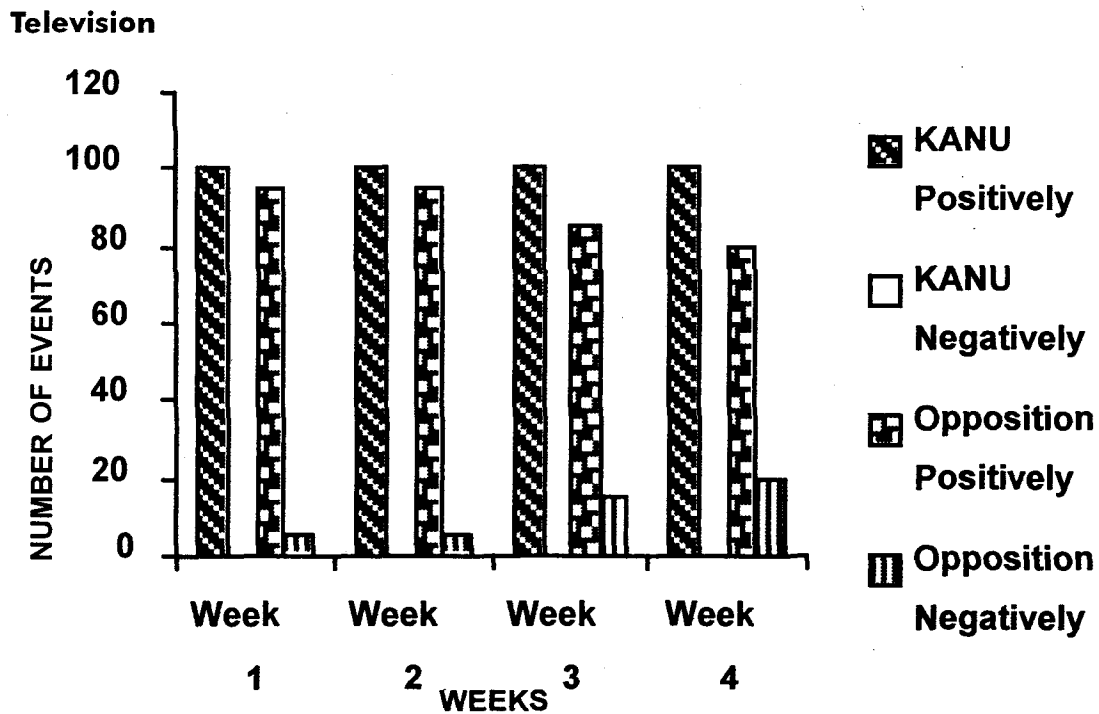
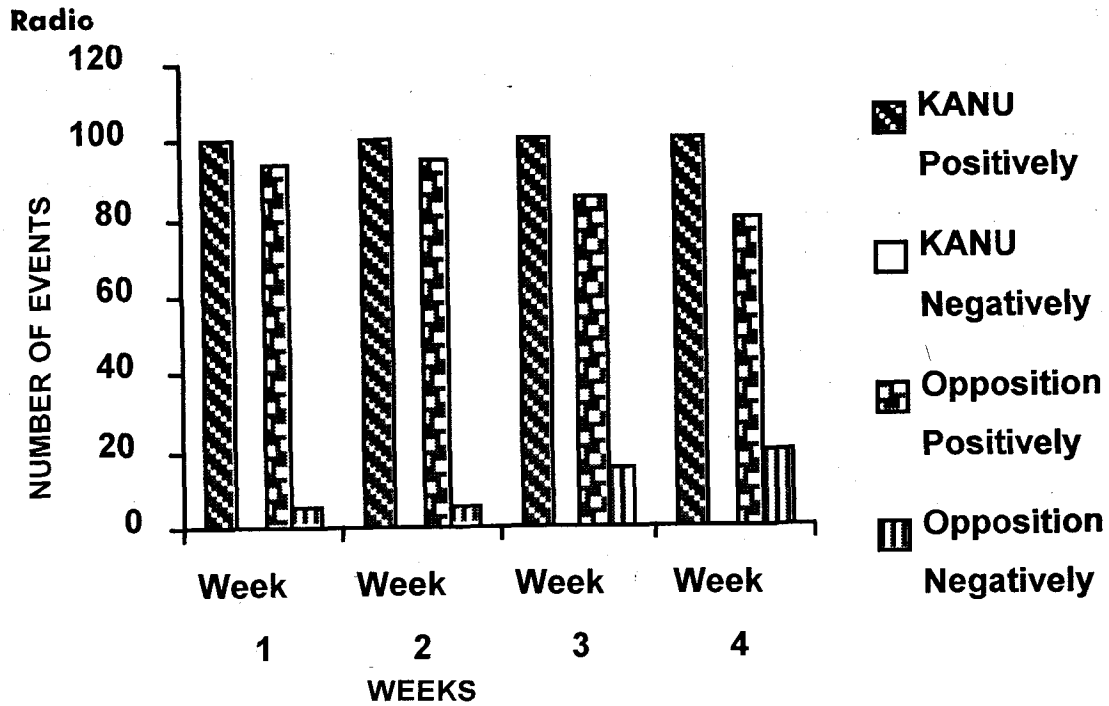
The presidential airtime awarded to executive presidential functions reduced from 20 % to 0 % in Week Four. This is mainly due to the fact that KBC made an effort to distinguish between presidential executive functions and Mr Moi's Kanu activities. When President Moi presided over KANU functions, KBC has made an effort to refer to him as the KANU chairman. The great increase in KANU airtime, on the other hand, can be attributed to the campaign activities of the KANU chairman Moi and the coverage of KANU nominations and campaigns. Opposition nomina-

tions, on the contrary, were fleetingly covered.

However, the last two weeks of December saw a reverse in KBC's coverage. KANU airtime increased from 48 % in week one to 91 % in the last week, while opposition airtime decreased from 27 % to 4 %. KBC's behaviour was reminiscent of the pre-IPPG reforms days, and in some occasions even worse.

KBC awarded a lot of airtime to election results, running on 24-hour basis from December 30. To a large extent the results coverage was commendable, indicating a fairly well coordinated network that effectively gave field reports of what was happening on the ground.

COVERAGE OF KANU, PRESIDENTIAL AND OPPOSITION EVENTS*



* Total number of events in a month as derived from KBC Radio and TV, KTN, KNA and the print media

Notes

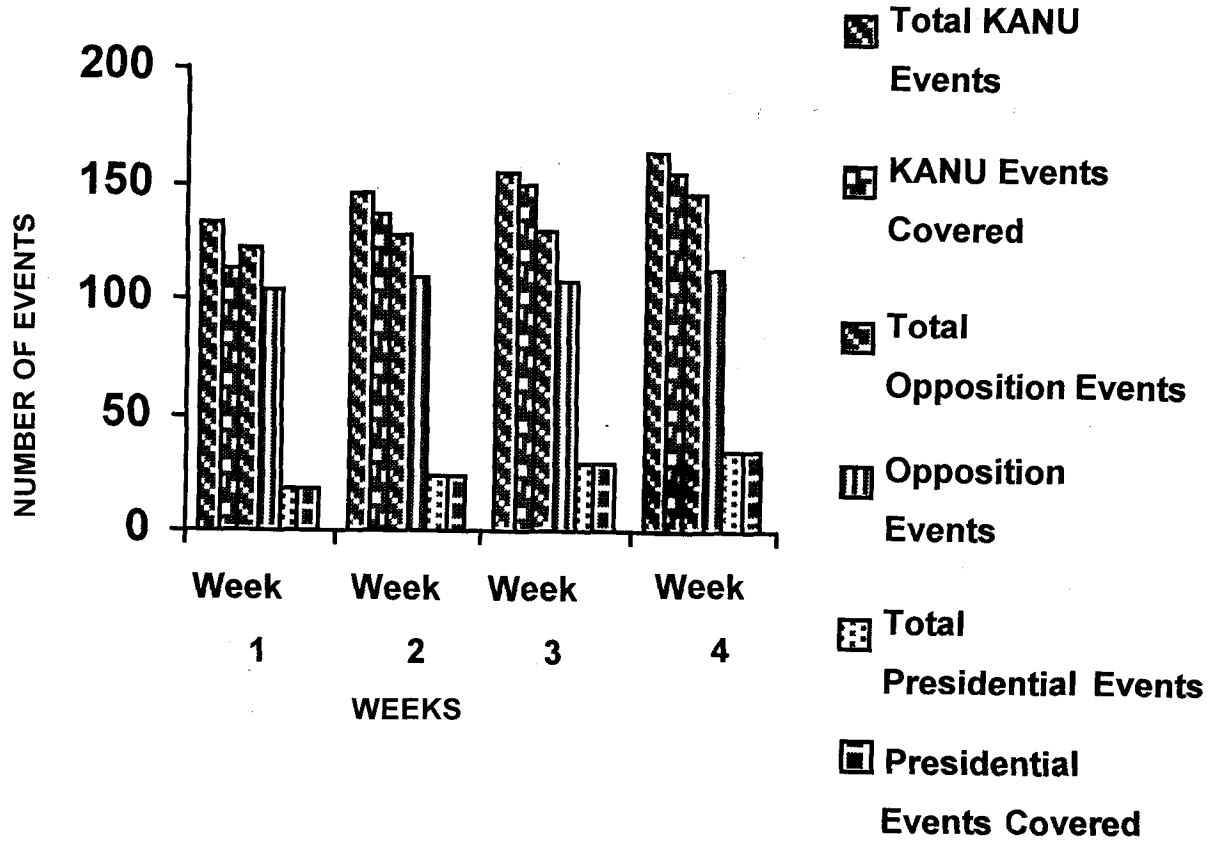
KANU positively: 100 % on KBC radio and TV, no KANU events were covered negatively, Opposition positively: 89 % and Opposition negatively: 11 %.

This month KBC basically reported the few cases of Opposition nominations without giving them a nega-

tive slant. The small percentage of negative portrayal of the opposition mainly revolved around the defections to KANU a few days before the elections. Defections from KANU to the opposition usually went unreported.

PORTRAYALS OF KANU AND OPPOSITION EVENTS*

Radio & Television



* The proportion of events covered by KBC that enhance or cast doubt on the credibility of a political party.

Notes

KANU events covered: 92 %, Opposition events covered: 82 %, Presidential events covered, 100 %.

Comments

Most Opposition events were covered but most of them got about 0.12 minutes each or certain sections of what was said was left out. For example, on

4/12/197, KBC reported that the SDP presidential candidate Charity Ngilu appealed to Kenneth Matiba's supporters to vote for her. But KBC left out the bit as covered by the *Daily Nation* " Mrs. Ngilu told Mr. Matiba's supporters that by voting her, they would enable Mr. Matiba realise his dream of removing President Moi from power."

CONCLUSION

In September, we recommended that KBC sets up its own news gathering machinery to ensure the failings of the Kenya News Agency (KNA), which currently provides the bulk of its news, do not show on the station's bulletins. Now KBC Managing Director Simeon Anabwani tosses the buck at KNA and says all the unfairness that prevailed in the coverage of Opposition candidates during the campaigns was because the station had to rely on the Government-run agency.

Press reports also quoted the MD saying the station was helpless in as far as fair and balanced coverage of the elections was concerned, and that they couldn't cover election campaigns in all parts of the country due to lack of facilities.

Mr Anabwani was talking less than two weeks before polling day when the station confounded everyone with the extent and thoroughness of its coverage, particularly when the results started rolling in. Which means the "lack of resources" excuse is better read as "lack of will": If the resources on show on polling day and afterwards had been used during campaigns, the elections would have been a totally different media experience.

Considering that the MD's comments came just as KBC was discarding its earlier attempts at fairness and doing all for the Kanu campaign, the view that he was preparing the way for the intransigence that followed his comments may well be accurate. The KBC had previously been doing commendably well in terms of complying with IPPG requirements that it allocates more airtime to the Opposition, but from about the time of the MD's comment things took a different turn, for worse.

The experience from December confirms that the recourse for the crusaders for fair national broadcasting lies in continuing to press for compliance

by the KBC, but also for freeing of the national airwaves so that all Kenyans can have an alternative source of broadcast information, and KBC can contend with some serious competition.

So far, radio and television licences have been issued either to FM stations that are dedicated to entertainment and restricted to Nairobi, or city-confined television outfits whose owners are invariably linked to the ruling party.

Greater freeing of the airwaves will mean that Kenyans all over the country will receive broadcast information other than what the Government wishes them to have, and that competition will enforce compliance where political and civil lobbying have failed to change KBC.

The outstanding lesson learnt in December, the most politically active month since the Media Watch series started, was that in Kanu's moment of need, KBC will turn to its side with alacrity and shed all pretensions to fairness. When push comes to shove, KBC will lend itself totally to the Kanu campaign machine and become one of its most valued tools.

In retrospect, it may have been a case of excess optimism to expect KBC to supervise its own re-engineering, its own re-invention, its own rebirth.

Just like the Electoral Commission required a reconstitution in the form of Opposition-nominated members for it to garner any semblance of impartiality, so does KBC require either a strong external body to enforce compliance or a major internal reconstitution to transform its institutional mind-frame.

The question of who KBC should be answerable to must be looked into; and as long as the answer remains the Government, then the intransigence will continue.

APPENDICES

A. DEFINITIONS AND CLARIFICATION OF TERMS AND PHRASES USED

Estimated number of KANU events: The approximate overall number of KANU events in a month, countrywide, as derived from newspapers, KBC, KTN and KNA.

Estimated number of Opposition events: The approximate overall number of Opposition events in a month, countrywide, as derive from KBC (Radio/TV) KTN, KNA and newspapers.

Estimated number of Presidential events: The approximate overall number of Presidential events in a month, countrywide, as derived from KBC (Radio/TV), KTN, KNA and newspapers.

KANU events: Those events and activities countrywide, presided over by KANU officials including Cabinet Ministers that are non-executive in nature and involve a discussion of the KANU agenda.

Inter Party-Parliamentary Group (IPPG): The KANU Parliamentary Group was formed in response to demands by pro-reformists for dialogue, and initially comprised of 37 KANU MPs. Initiatives by religious leaders to meet with the KANU group proved futile, as the KANU Parliamentary Group failed to attend several planned meetings. The KANU Parliamentary Group then co-opted 36 Opposition MPs, changed its name to Inter-Parties Parliamentary Group (IPPG), and positioned itself as the official group to spearhead constitutional reform discussions, sidelining the NCEC and religious leaders.

National Convention Executive Council (NCEC): The National Convention Executive Council is the executive arm of the National Convention Assembly (NCA) comprised of religious leaders, civic organisations, political parties, farmers organisations and other pro-

reform groups and individuals. The NCA was convened at the First Limuru Pro-Reform Convention on April 4, 1997. The NCEC's objective was to spearhead constitutional reforms in Kenya before the elections.

Negative coverage: All those events and activities of a political party covered by KBC with the seeming objective of undermining the credibility of that particular party and its members in the eyes of the public. For example on 13/8/97, the Machakos KANU chairman Mulu Mutisya criticised Opposition leaders who he said, continued to incite Kenyans into violence and lawlessness at a time when President Moi had already created a conducive atmosphere for constitutional reforms. This is negative coverage for the Opposition and positive coverage for KANU.

Number of KANU, Opposition and Presidential events covered: These are those events covered by KBC in the course of the month.

Opposition Events: All those events presided over by Opposition leaders and activists.

Opposition: The term Opposition is used to represent all Opposition political parties and individuals that represent opposing view-points from those of KANU. It is not meant to represent a cohesive group. Rather, it's meant to describe a movement in the country that seeks change and that stretches beyond the normal perimeters of politics and political players. For example, the Democratic Party of Kenya (DP), the National Democratic Party of Kenya (NDP), the National Convention Executive Council ((NCEC), and the National Council of Churches in Kenya (NCCK).

Politicised government events: All those events and activities, executives in nature that are used to front the agenda of a political party. For example, the Provincial Commissioner is a civil servant whose role is to carry out government prerogatives. When she/he starts preaching the policies of a political party during her/his governmental duties, then she/he is said to be politicising government events.

Positive coverage: All those events and activities of a political party covered by KBC that are intended to enhance the credibility of that particular party and its members in the eyes of the public. For example *Yaliyotokea* on August 25th 1997, whilst covering President Moi at a commemoration ceremony for the late Jomo Kenyatta, the first President of Kenya carried the following commentary: "When President Moi took over from the late Kenyatta, he started off

immediately to develop the country. Following his efforts in development, this country has made great steps in all sectors until multi-partyism began in 1991, the system that now seriously threatens to diminish this nation." This is positive coverage for KANU and negative coverage for the opposition.

Presidential events:

Those events and activities presided over by the President whether executive or non-executive. For the purposes of this study, executive functions are included because on many occasions, political issues are discussed during such functions.

B. KBC's PROGRAMME SCHEDULE

Typical weekday radio programme schedule

7.00 a.m	News
7.15 a.m	Announcements
7.20 a.m	Breakfast Club
8.00 a.m	News Headlines
8.05 a.m	Music
9.00 a.m	News
9.15 a.m	View Point
9.30 a.m	Music
10.00 a.m	News Headlines
10.05 a.m	Music
11.00 a.m	News Headlines
11.05 a.m	Music
12.00 noon	News Headlines
12.05 p.m	Music
1.00 p.m	News/Announcements
1.30 p.m	Music
2.00 p.m	News Headlines
2.05 p.m	Music
3.00 p.m	News Headlines
3.05 p.m	Music
4.00 p.m	News Headlines
4.05 p.m	Music
5.30 p.m	Documentary
6.00 p.m	News Headlines
6.05 p.m	Music
7.00 p.m	News
7.15 p.m	News Commentary
7.20 p.m	Announcements
7.30 p.m	Contact (A current affairs programme)
8.00 p.m	Documentary
11.15 p.m	Documentary
8.30 p.m	Documentary

9.00 p.m	News
9.15 p.m	Sports Roundup
9.30 p.m	Today in Parliament
10.00 p.m	Documentary

Typical weekday television programme schedule

7.00 a.m	Good Morning Kenya
7.30 a.m	News
8.00 a.m	Cartoon Hour
9.00 a.m	Documentary
9.45 a.m	Sports
11.15 a.m	Documentaries
12.00 noon	Cartoons
1.00 p.m	Deutsche Welle News
1.30 p.m	School Quiz
2.00 p.m	Deutsche Welle Feature
4.00 p.m	News in Brief
4.05 p.m	Music
4.50 p.m	Children's Movies
5.45 p.m	Features
7.00 p.m	News (Kiswahili) (Ukweli wa Mambo)
7.30 p.m	Wrestling
8.30 p.m	Press Conference or Yaliyotokea
9.00 p.m	News (English) (Heart of the Matter)
9.30 p.m	News Commentary
9.35 p.m.	Movies

* Variations to this schedule occur mostly with entertainment programmes. News features, documentaries, *Yaliyotokea*, *Ukweli wa Mambo* (and its English version 'Heart of the Matter') are standard.

N.B: The highlighted programmes are those that we monitored.

C. LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CTN:	Cable Television Network
IMF:	International Monetary Fund
IPPG:	Inter-Party Parliamentary Group
ITU:	International Telecommunications Union
KANU:	Kenya African National Union
KBC:	Kenya Broadcasting Corporation
KENDA:	Kenya National Democratic Alliance
KHRC:	Kenya Human Rights Commission
KNA:	Kenya News Agency
KP&TC:	Kenya Posts and Telecommunications Corporation
KTN:	Kenya Television Network
MP:	Member of Parliament
NEC:	National Executive Council
NCEC:	National Convention Executive Council
OAU:	Organisation of African Unity
TV:	Television