



# FREEDOM OF THE PRESS 2010

Draft Report

## Zambia

**Status: Not Free**

**Legal Environment: 19**

**Political Environment: 25**

**Economic Environment: 20**

**Total Score: 64**

Survey Edition	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Total Score, Status	65,NF	64,NF	64,NF	64,NF	65,NF

- The local independent media in Zambia continued to face harassment and physical intimidation in 2009. The Zambian President Rupiah Banda promised to stop the ongoing violence against journalists after the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) called for his intervention.
- Freedom of speech is guaranteed in the constitution, but the relevant language can be broadly interpreted. The new draft constitution currently under debate explicitly guarantees freedom of expression.
- On 28 January 2009, the Ndola High Court banned *The Post*, the leading independent newspaper, from covering former president Fredrick Chiluba's case currently before the Magistrate court because they allegedly published a "highly prejudicial" article about the case.
- In July, an obscenity case was brought against *The Post* newspaper editor Chansa Kabwela after she sent photos of a woman giving birth in the street due to a healthcare workers strike to Zambia's vice president, health minister and other officials to highlight an ongoing health sector crisis. Later in October, Fred M'membe, editor in chief of *The Post* newspaper, appeared before a magistrate to answer a contempt charge after he published an editorial by a U.S.-based professor that criticized the case. The obscenity case was later thrown out, but M'membe's trial began in December and continued at year's end.
- Physical harassment of Zambian journalists occurs regularly. In February, 11 plainclothes police officers beat up and pepper sprayed *The Post* photojournalist Abel Mambwe and detained him together with reporter Mutuna Chanda after he took a

photograph of them assaulting a “pirate” taxi driver. Later the same month, supporters of the ruling Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD) beat up *The Post* photojournalist Thomas Nsama because they “had had enough” of the newspaper reporting on their president.

- In addition to the *Zambia Daily Mail*, the government controls the *Times of Zambia*, both of which are widely circulated. Content is reviewed prior to publication and many journalists practice self-censorship. Several private newspapers operate freely, though officials use legal means to suppress criticism of the government.
- A number of private radio and television stations broadcast alongside state-owned stations, and international outlets are not restricted. The local private stations carry little political coverage, as the government uses the libel and security laws to discourage it. The government-owned Zambian National Broadcast Corporation (ZNBC) is the primary outlet that covers local issues.
- The government does not restrict internet access, though only 5.9 percent of the population used the medium in 2009. At least one foreign national faced repercussions after posting anti-government remarks on her blog, while another was threatened, according to the U.S. State Department.