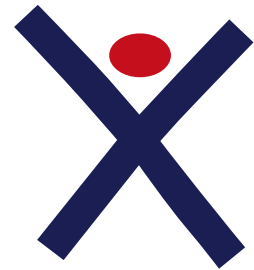


Election Watch Namibia



MEDIA RELEASE: NBC television news coverage of 2014 elections Week 2

November 17 2014

As part of its Election Watch project, the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) is monitoring the coverage of the impending election (November 28) on NBC television's evening news bulletin throughout November 2014. The focus on the Namibian Broadcasting Corporation arises from Namibia's commitment to the SADC Principles and Guidelines Governing Democratic Elections which state that there should be "equal opportunity for all political parties to access the state media" (2.1.5). The African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance also calls on state parties to "ensure fair and equitable access by contesting parties and candidates to state-controlled media during elections" (Chapter 7, Article 17). Namibia has signed but not yet ratified the African Charter.

Highlights

Highlights from the results for the week of November 9 to November 15 2014:

- News relating to the Electoral Commission of Namibia (ECN) and general election issues dominated the evening news broadcasts – rising to 53 percent of all election-related content (from 33 percent in the previous week).
- Out of the 16 competing parties, Swapo continued to receive most coverage – with 45 percent of coverage devoted to political parties (down from 54 percent in the previous week). The level of Swapo coverage was much lower than five years ago when in the equivalent week before the 2009 elections the party had 83 percent of the NBC's party political coverage on the evening news.
- Together the opposition accounted for 55 percent of coverage devoted to political parties. The opposition coverage was split between seven parties with only the DTA and Nudo being featured more than once in the week. Over the two weeks of news coverage monitored so far, CoD, DPN, MAG, NEFF, and WRP have not featured on the evening news. This may be because these parties have organised few or no campaign events.
- Overall the NBC evening news bulletin devoted 71 minutes to elections coverage – almost the same as in the previous week. Coverage of parties surprisingly dropped from 48 minutes to 33 minutes despite the intensity of campaigning appearing to pick up.



Table of results

Table 1: NBC television news November 9 to 15 2014: Election coverage

NBC	Minutes	No. of items	% of total election coverage	% of total party coverage
Swapo	15	7	21	45
Nudo	4	2	6	12
DTA	4	2	6	12
RDP	2	1	3	6
APP	2	1	3	6
Swanu	2	1	3	6
NDP	2	1	3	6
UPM	2	1	3	6
ECN/General	38	13	53	-
Total	71	29		

Comment

News relating to the Electoral Commission of Namibia (ECN) and general election issues dominated the evening news broadcasts – rising to 53 percent of all election-related content (from 33 percent in the previous week). This was in part due to a series of news features on the Windhoek West by-election, voting for seagoing personnel, and voting at diplomatic missions abroad, as well as several reports on the ECN's voter education efforts. However, it was noticeable that coverage of party events was significantly reduced from the previous week – from 48 minutes to 33 minutes. The NBC also dropped its Elections Corner focus in the middle of the bulletin and instead spaced elections reports throughout – with general/ECN focused reports and items on the ruling party gaining most prominence. On Wednesday November 12 two election items featured on the news ticker at the bottom of the screen but not as reports in the bulletin – 'DTA president concerned about unemployment' and 'RDP receives 80 new members at Aranos'.

*Further details from the IPPR on (061) 240514
For more electoral analysis and commentary see*

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