



## Keeping an eye on the campaign: Monitoring media coverage of the 16 Days of Activism Campaign 2005



### What we did and why

The annual 16 Days of Activism Campaign began on the 25<sup>th</sup> of November 2005. As a human rights organisation, and following on from previous years' research, the Media Monitoring Project (MMP) monitored the South African media's coverage of the campaign, gender-based violence, and woman and child abuse. The Heinrich Böll Foundation and the Foundation for Human Rights funded the MMP's monitoring and research. The MMP monitored around 50 print, radio, and television media, from across South Africa, for the duration of the campaign. The monitoring resulted in a database of just fewer than 6000 news items.

### Rating the media

In order to highlight strengths and weaknesses in coverage, and to make the wealth of information gleaned from the monitoring quickly and easily accessible to key media stakeholders during the 16 Days Campaign, the MMP, together with statistical expertise from the University of the Witwatersrand, developed a media rating system. The data captured in the database was analysed and run through a series of automated queries. The results, from 30 queries per medium, were then fed into the rating system, which produced three ratings for each medium monitored. Nearly 30 different criteria made up the ratings. Criteria were weighted and calculated statistically to ensure validity, balance and fairness.

Media were rated on their coverage of gender issues and coverage of children during the campaign. Column B and C reflect each of these ratings respectively. The overall rating takes all of the monitoring criteria into account, including the size of the item, its placement in the medium, the topic, sources accessed for comment, key messages used, and the ethical principles either violated or supported.

### MMP's 16 Days Ratings

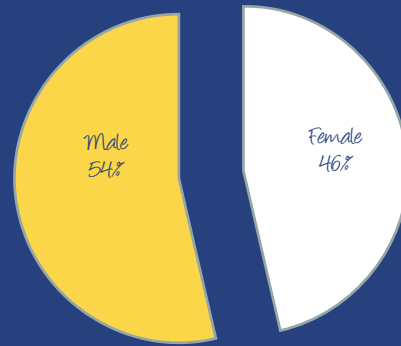
	A Overall	B Gender	C Children
<b>Television media</b>			
SABC 2	1	2	1
SABC 3	2	1	2
e-tv	3	4	3
SABC 1	4	3	4
<b>Radio media</b>			
CKI	1	1	2
Kaya Fm	2	2	1
Jozi Fm	3	4	3
Motsweding Fm	4	5	7
SAfm	5	6	5
RSG	6	8	4
Radio 702	7	7	9
Ukhozi Fm	8	3	10
Lesedi Fm	9	11	6
Umhlobo Wenene Fm	10	10	8
Metro Fm	11	9	11
<b>Daily print media</b>			
Die Burger	1	2	1
The Star	2	1	3
The Citizen	3	3	10
Daily Dispatch	4	4	9
EP Herald	5	9	2
Daily News	6	5	11
Sowetan	7	7	6
Beeld	8	11	4
Die Son	9	8	5
Nova	10	10	7
The Voice	11	13	8
Daily Sun	12	12	12
Cape Times	13	6	13
Business Day	14	14	14
<b>Weekly and bi-weekly print media</b>			
Laevelder/Lowvelder	1	1	1
Sunday Independent	2	3	3
Isolezwe	3	9	2
Weekend Argus	4	5	4
Sunday World	5	8	5
Sunday Times	6	4	9
Saturday Star	7	7	8
Ilanga	8	2	14
City Press	9	13	6
Sunday Tribune	10	12	11
Capricorn Voice	11	15	7
Sunday Sun	12	14	10
Independent on Saturday	13	10	13
The Mirror	14	16	12
Rapport	15	11	15
Mail & Guardian	16	6	16



## Achievements

A major achievement for media is the high number of women who spoke in the news during the campaign period. People who speak in the news are identified as sources. The 2005 16 Days of Activism Campaign accessed the highest number of female sources that the MMP has monitored in any of its more than 100 monitoring projects conducted over the last 13 years. This is something for South African media to celebrate! Another major achievement of the 2005 campaign was the broad-based media support of the campaign, most notably by the Independent Group and the SABC. 2005 also showed greater coverage than in 2004.

## Breakdown of sources 2004



*55% female sources is an impressive achievement and represents a 9% increase from the 2004 findings*

## How were people represented?

The roles of sources, how people are represented in the stories, are in line with the 2004 findings. Government, legal, and activist voices dominated in the media. The roles of "victim" and "perpetrator" were similarly accessed at 4%. One of the MMP's challenges to the media in 2004 and in 2005 was to encourage the media to access women and children who had been abused as "survivors" of the abuse, rather than as "victims". The use of the term "survivor" can result in a far more positive representation of the women as having agency, in comparison with the objectification that tends to accompany representations of passive victims. 2% of all sources were accessed in the role of survivor. While this is not a large proportion, the higher percentages of sources accessed as citizens or residents (4%), parents (3%) and family members (2%) are encouraging. The results suggest that while there is still scope for improvement, the media is making an effort not to represent women as "victims" of abuse.

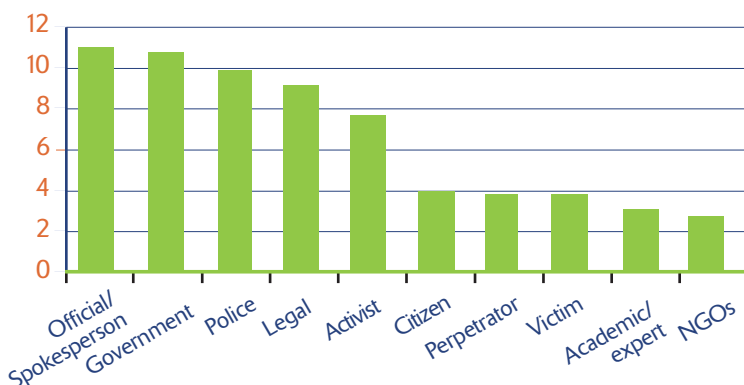
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## What were the stories about?

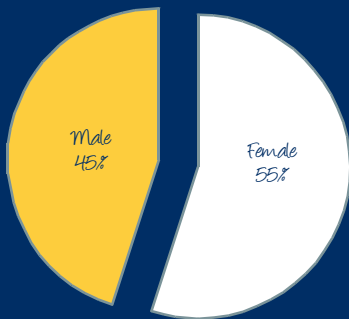
The central subject or topic of the news items monitored provides some sense of what the media chose to cover during the 16 Days Campaign. In 2004, child abuse, including neglect, and physical and sexual abuse, comprised a relatively large portion of the items monitored at 20% of all topics. In 2005, child abuse, including physical and sexual abuse, maintenance, teenage pregnancy, neglect, kidnappings, and child trafficking had risen to 21% of all topics. In 2004, domestic violence comprised a significant 6% of the total topics. In 2005, the coverage of domestic violence was negligible and was included in the "abuse of women" topic code, which covers not only physical and sexual abuse of women, but also economic, emotional, and non-physical violence against women. The abuse of women as an encompassing term comprised 33% of the total topics in stories about the campaign and woman and child abuse.

The number of stories that focused on murder remained the same in both years, at 14%, while the number of stories that focused on advocacy more than doubled over the two years. In 2004, advocacy comprised 6% of the total coverage, while in 2005, 16% of all stories monitored focused on advocacy. This increase is impressive, and shows that the media were far more aware of, promoted or acknowledged the 16 Days of Activism Campaign, the related consciousness-raising activities, and the key figures or participants in 2005.

## Top 10 sources roles 2005



## Breakdown of sources 2005

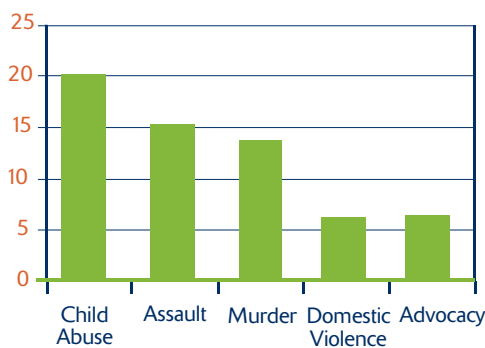


59% of all stories were written by female journalists, an increase from last year's 55%.

## Who told the stories?

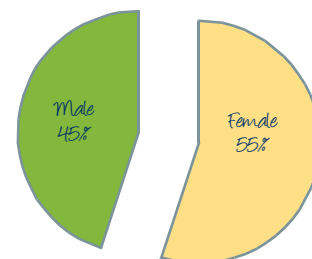
The MMP's findings with respect to the authors of the items monitored, who contributed the stories, indicated a similar trend to that observed with the breakdown of male and female sources. Where the sex of the journalist or author could be identified, women accounted for 59% of all items. This finding can be seen as incredibly positive, especially considering that the results increased steadily as the campaign progressed.

## Breakdown of top 5 topics 2004

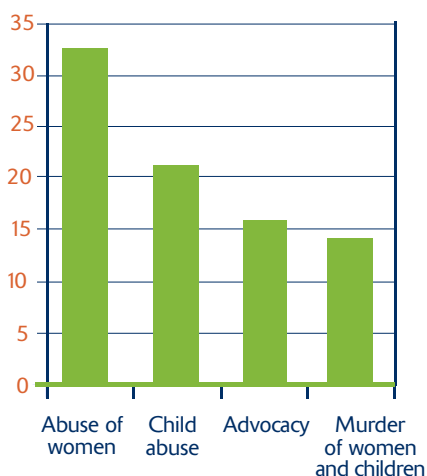


The MMP's 1998 research found that male journalists contributed most of the stories about rape, abuse, and gender-based violence; women comprised less than 5% of the journalists, where the sex of the journalist was clear. While the sex of the journalist writing the story does not necessarily have a significant impact on the content, it is positive that more women are able to make their voices heard on these critical issues.

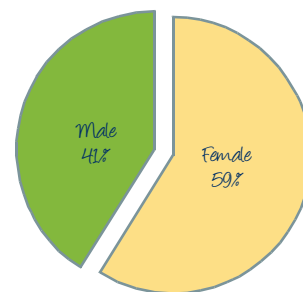
## Breakdown of journalists' sex 2004



## Breakdown of topics 2005



## Breakdown of journalists' sex 2005



Along the same lines, the media made a concerted effort to make use of journalists', rather than agencies', contributions to determine the news content. A substantial 86% of all items originated from journalists and guest writers, with only 14% of items sourced from agencies. This finding also represents an increase from the 2004 results, where journalists and guest writers contributed 68% of the coverage monitored.

## Challenges

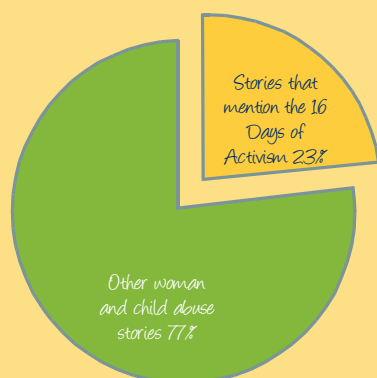
While the media's performance overall was impressive and the achievements many, there are still some areas of coverage of the campaign that could be improved. Part of the MMP's monitoring methodology included a qualitative assessment of whether the media supported or violated key ethical principles. The principles were compiled drawing on internationally accepted, ethical standards of journalism. The 9 principles used outline clear ethical guidelines that promote respect for human rights and best media practice.

The most commonly violated ethical principle was "to minimise harm". In other words, in 30% of all stories that violated key ethical principles, the media brought about further harm, most often by identifying "victims" of abuse or crime. The media also seldom made the link between HIV and the sexual abuse of women and children. Given the prevalence of the pandemic in South Africa, it could be expected that the media acknowledge the impact of HIV/AIDS in instances of sexual abuse.

The MMP's monitoring showed that during the campaign period only a small percentage of stories about woman and child abuse acknowledged the 16 Days of Activism Campaign. Only 23% of all articles relating to woman and child abuse mentioned the instance of abuse in relation to the campaign that was running throughout the country. While the media reported on instances of woman and child abuse, they did not make the link between the instances of abuse and the advocacy efforts being made to combat abuse in South Africa.

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### Breakdown of stories that acknowledge the 16 Days Campaign 2005



HEINRICH BÖLL STIFTUNG  
REGIONAL OFFICE FOR SOUTHERN AFRICA

## A quick guide to the 16 Days of Activism Campaign

The 16 Days of Activism: No Violence Against Women and Children Campaign is a campaign supported by the South African government, civil society, non-governmental organisations, big businesses, and the media. The campaign is run parallel to the international 16 Days of Activism: No Violence Against Women campaign, which is endorsed by the United Nations. Both campaigns run annually between the 25<sup>th</sup> of November (International Day of No Violence Against Women) and the 10<sup>th</sup> of December (International Human Rights Day). The 16 Days Campaign promotes peace and encourages the prevention of violence against women and children, widely acknowledged as the most vulnerable members of society and the most affected by crime. The campaign aims to address violence against women and children in all forms, not only the extreme instances of physical or sexual violence, but also other less common forms of abuse, such as emotional, psychological, and economic abuse.

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## Contact details

Media Monitoring Project  
2 Art Centre, 22 6th Street  
Parkhurst, Johannesburg  
Tel: +27 11 788 1278  
Fax: +27 11 788 1289

[mmpinfo@mediamonitoring.org.za](mailto:mmpinfo@mediamonitoring.org.za)

For more information or to read the full report go to:

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