

# Zimbabwe

	2013	2014		
<b>Internet Freedom Status</b>	<b>Partly Free</b>	<b>Partly Free</b>	Population:	13 million
Obstacles to Access (0-25)	16	15	Internet Penetration 2013:	19 percent
Limits on Content (0-35)	14	15	Social Media/ICT Apps Blocked:	No
Violations of User Rights (0-40)	24	25	Political/Social Content Blocked:	Yes
<b>TOTAL* (0-100)</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>55</b>	Bloggers/ICT Users Arrested:	Yes
			Press Freedom 2014 Status:	Not Free

\* 0=most free, 100=least free

## Key Developments: May 2013 – May 2014

- General elections took place in July 2013, which President Robert Mugabe's ZANU-PF party overwhelmingly won. In the week leading up to the elections, the telecommunications regulator issued a directive to mobile phone providers to block the dissemination of bulk SMS messages (See **Introduction** and **Limits on Content**).
- An anonymous Facebook user, using the pseudonym Baba Jukwa, continued to incite the ruling party, reportedly leading President Mugabe to post a US\$330,000 reward in July 2013 for any individual willing to unmask the elusive whistleblower (see **Limits on Content**).
- A new constitution was adopted in May 2013, providing for press freedom and freedom of expression (see **Violations of User Rights**).
- Two ordinary Facebook users were arrested for their posts, one for alleging that President Mugabe had died, the other for posting an image of an electoral ballot displaying a vote for opposition candidate, Morgan Tsvangirai (see **Violations of User Rights**).
- Mass surveillance and illegal interception activities by security agencies reportedly increased following the July elections, for both national security and politically motivated purposes (see **Violations of User Rights**).
- The Postal and Telecommunications (Subscriber Registration) Regulations, enacted in October 2013, expanded the scope of subscriber registration requirements to broadly include all telecommunications services and provided the authorities with access without a court order (see **Violations of User Rights**).

## Introduction

In 2013, a new constitution that somewhat improved media and freedom of expression rights was passed in a referendum and signed by President Robert Mugabe in May,<sup>1</sup> while on July 31, a general national election was held, keeping President Mugabe and the ruling ZANU-PF party in power with a supermajority. During these events, the internet was a key platform for citizen discussions and engagement on political issues. The constitutional referendum and general election became the most internet-fueled political contests to date, as citizens, political parties, and civil society took to the net to campaign for their positions, policies, and platforms. Contestations over the election results also played out on the internet, with many images and discussions of alleged vote rigging posted on social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube.

The July 2013 general elections also served as a basis for many internet freedom violations in Zimbabwe during the coverage period. For example, in the lead-up to the elections, an independent community radio station reported frequent internet disconnections in its office, and internet cafe owners reported slow internet connectivity. The dissemination of bulk SMS messages was banned prior to the election, with the exception of bulk SMS messages from the ruling ZANU-PF. Various ruling party officials frequently expressed a desire and intent to increase control over ICTs throughout the year, such as the proclamation made during the party's annual conference in December 2013 that called for the blocking of foreign-based radio stations that are broadcast over the internet. Meanwhile, the anonymous Facebook user, Baba Jukwa, continued to goad the ruling party since his or her appearance in March 2013, reportedly leading President Mugabe to post a US\$330,000 reward in July 2013 for any individual willing to unmask the elusive whistleblower.

A crackdown on user rights intensified in 2013 following the July elections, beginning with reports of increasing surveillance by the Central Intelligence Organization (CIO) in an effort to stem potential post-electoral unrest. Two ordinary Facebook users were arrested for their posts, one in July for posting an image of an electoral ballot displaying a vote for the opposition candidate, Morgan Tsvangirai; the other in January 2014 for alleging that President Mugabe "had died and was being preserved in a freezer."

Mass surveillance and illegal interception activities by security agencies reportedly increased following the July elections, for both national security and politically motivated purposes. On October 1, 2013, the government enacted a new so-called "spy law" known as the Postal and Telecommunications (Subscriber Registration) Regulations, which expanded the scope of subscriber registration requirements previously limited to SIM cards to broadly include all telecommunications services. In addition to requiring providers to avail law enforcement officers with copies of their subscriber registers upon request without a court order, the "spy law" established a Central Subscriber Information Database, which POTRAZ can access to "assist law enforcement agencies on safeguarding national security." The Parliamentary Legal Committee (PLC) declared the new regulations unconstitutional in March 2014, leading to an amended version enacted in July 2014 that provided for judicial oversight but left open a loophole for abuse.

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1 "Zimbabwe's Mugabe signs new constitution," *Al Jazeera*, May 22, 2014, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/africa/2013/05/2013522105015147596.html>.

## Obstacles to Access

Zimbabwe's internet access has continued to expand steadily, growing from a penetration rate of 17 percent in 2012 to nearly 19 percent in 2013, according to estimates by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU).<sup>2</sup> By contrast, official government statistics report an internet penetration rate of 42 percent in December 2013, up from 30 percent in 2012,<sup>3</sup> though the government's data includes both fixed-line and mobile internet subscriptions, the latter of which comprise over 98 percent of all internet subscriptions.<sup>4</sup> The ITU reported a mobile broadband penetration rate of 38 percent in 2013.<sup>5</sup>

The sector's rapid growth can be attributed to widespread mobile phone penetration, which stood at 96 percent in 2013, per ITU statistics, while government reports noted a mobile penetration rate of 104 percent as of December 2013.<sup>6</sup> Service providers have indicated that Zimbabwe has reached mobile phone saturation levels, enabling them to provide enhanced services such as mobile banking and mobile internet.

Similar to most countries in Africa, Zimbabwe benefits from low-cost, internet-enabled imitation mobile phones from Asia. Internet access on mobile phones has been further facilitated by the introduction of 3G, 4G, and EDGE technology in the past few years.<sup>7</sup> The decreasing price of mobile internet access—which dropped from US\$1.50 per megabyte (MB) in 2011 to US\$1 per MB as of April 2014—has also facilitated increased access. Subscription fees for 3G services cost US\$30 per month for 10 GB, and other service providers offer 3G services on a pay-as-you-go basis for as little as \$0.10 per MB.<sup>8</sup>

Meanwhile, competition within the sector has generally forced prices for mobile broadband and Wi-Fi to decrease from US\$75 for 20 MB to US\$59 for speeds of up to 1 Mbps.<sup>9</sup> In October 2013, Econet introduced a Facebook mobile package that allows its subscribers to access Facebook through special data bundles for as little as US\$0.95 per week or US\$3 per month.<sup>10</sup> Zimbabwe is estimated

2 International Telecommunication Union, "Percentage of Individuals Using the Internet, 2000-2013," <http://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/Statistics/Pages/stat/default.aspx>.

3 Postal and Telecommunications Regulatory Authority of Zimbabwe (POTRAZ), "Postal and Telecommunications Sector Performance Report – Fourth Quarter 2013," accessed August 20, 2014, [http://www.potraz.gov.zw/images/files/stats/Sector\\_Performance\\_4th\\_Quarter%202013.pdf](http://www.potraz.gov.zw/images/files/stats/Sector_Performance_4th_Quarter%202013.pdf).

4 POTRAZ, "Postal and Telecommunications Sector Performance Report – Fourth Quarter 2013."

5 International Telecommunication Union, "Zimbabwe Profile (latest data available: 2013)," *ICT-Eye*, accessed August 1, 2014, <http://www.itu.int/net4/itu-d/icteye/CountryProfileReport.aspx?countryID=8>.

6 International Telecommunication Union, "Mobile-Cellular Telephone Subscriptions, 2000-2013"; POTRAZ, "Postal and Telecommunications Sector Performance Report – Fourth Quarter 2013."

7 EDGE is a faster version of the globally used GSM mobile standard. Also see, "Econet Wireless Zimbabwe launches 4G network," *VictoriaFalls24*, August 22, 2013, [http://www.zimbabwesituation.com/news/sc\\_econet-wireless-zimbabwe-launches-4g-network-victoriafalls24/](http://www.zimbabwesituation.com/news/sc_econet-wireless-zimbabwe-launches-4g-network-victoriafalls24/).

8 As of mid-2014, ISP, data and VoIP provider service, Africom offers 4GB for \$25. Mobile telephony company Telecel offers a promotional mobile phone internet data for \$0.11 cents unlimited use per day, and state fixed telephone operator, TelOne, offers bandwidth for \$61 per month for 15GB through fixed line phone services and wireless devices.

9 L.S.M. Kabweza, "Zimbabwe Broadband: ZOL launches even lower priced unlimited internet," *TechZim*, July 18, 2013, <http://www.techzim.co.zw/2013/07/zimbabwe-broadband-zol-launches-even-lower-priced-unlimited-internet/>.

10 L.S.M. Kabweza, "Econet introduces unlimited Facebook access for \$3 a month," *TechZim*, October 21, 2013, <http://www.techzim.co.zw/2013/10/econet-introduces-unlimited-facebook-access-3-month/>.

to have 1.2 million Facebook users, and with Econet being the market leader, this promotion is set to enhance access and use of the social media platform.

Despite the increasing number of users, access to the full range of internet services via computers remains expensive for many Zimbabweans whose households earn an average monthly income of approximately US\$180,<sup>11</sup> though market competition among service providers is slowly bringing down prices. For example, the cost of wireless 3G modems has remained steady at US\$30 and is accessible on prepaid wireless access devices. In the past year, the state-owned fixed-line operator TelOne cut its internet access costs from US\$30-\$40 per month (including installation fees) to \$25. Computer prices have maintained a steady price of an average of US\$350 and \$450 in 2013, with some promotions selling laptops at US\$250.

Although competition has decreased the cost of internet access, effective broadband for home and individual users has not been fully realized due to the poor infrastructure of the state-owned TelOne. In 2013, fixed broadband subscriptions remained low at approximately 103,500 subscriptions, with broadband penetration increasing slightly from 0.5 percent in 2012 to 0.7 percent in 2013.<sup>12</sup> Nevertheless, TelOne worked to extend ADSL broadband services across the country throughout 2013, reaching almost all small towns across the country,<sup>13</sup> and providing broadband to its clients through a prepaid service.<sup>14</sup> Meanwhile, Econet launched its 4G network in August 2013, which has a speed of 65 Mbps—10 times faster than the current 3G network—and costs US\$90 for access via a USB modem.<sup>15</sup>

Despite increasing access to broadband, internet speeds are still slow, averaging 1.7 Mbps (compared to a global average of 3.9 Mbps), according to May 2014 data from Akamai's "State of the Internet" report.<sup>16</sup> In addition, Zimbabwe's broadband adoption (characterized by connection speeds greater than 4 Mbps) was about 7 percent of the internet population, while the country's narrowband adoption (connection speeds below 256 kbps) was over 8 percent.<sup>17</sup>

While most Zimbabweans access the internet via mobile phones, cybercafes are still playing a key role as internet access points. A combination of web surfing, gaming, and music and video downloads is attracting mostly urban youth back to internet cafes, which are increasingly found in nearly every rural district center.<sup>18</sup> Nonetheless, there remains a significant urban-rural divide in access to both internet and mobile technologies, particularly as a result of major infrastructural

11 "Poverty Income Consumption and Expenditure Survey, 2011/12 Report," ZimStat, April 2013, accessed August 20, 2014, <http://catalog.ihnsn.org/index.php/catalog/4658/download/58930>.

12 International Telecommunication Union, "Fixed (Wired)-Broadband Subscriptions, 2000-2013."

13 Golden Sibanda, "Telone Connects Vic-Falls," *The Herald*, August 9 2013, <http://www.herald.co.zw/telone-connects-vic-falls/>.

14 Chipso Mtasa, "TelOne Improves Performance," *NewsDay*, January 10, 2014, <https://www.newsday.co.zw/2014/01/10/telone-improves-perfomance/>.

15 Kevin Muza, "Econet launches 4G LTE in Zimbabwe," *TechZim*, August 21, 2013, <http://www.techzim.co.zw/2013/08/econet-launching-4g-in-zimbabwe/>.

16 Akamai, "Average Connection Speed: Zimbabwe," map visualization, *The State of the Internet Q1 (2014)*, <http://www.akamai.com/stateoftheinternet/soti-visualizations.html#stoi-map>.

17 Akamai, "Broadband Adoption (connections to Akamai >4 Mbps): Zimbabwe," map visualization, *The State of the Internet, Q1 2014*; Akamai, "Narrowband Adoption (connections to Akamai <256 kbps): Zimbabwe," map visualization, *The State of the Internet, Q1 2014*, <http://www.akamai.com/stateoftheinternet/soti-visualizations.html#stoi-map>.

18 From research via calls to relatives and friends who live near rural business centers as well as personal visits to some rural centers.

limitations in rural areas, such as poor roads and electricity distribution. Even in urban areas, electricity is regularly rationed for six to seven hours a day, leading to uneven access to internet and mobile phone services. Power outages affect both households and business entities such as cybercafes, while prolonged power blackouts often affect mobile telephony signal transmission equipment, resulting in cutoffs of both mobile networks and internet connections.

Zimbabwe currently has 12 licensed internet access providers (IAPs) and 28 internet service providers (ISPs),<sup>19</sup> the former of which offer only internet access while ISPs may provide additional services. Of the 12 IAPs, 11 have Class A licenses which allow them to offer VoIP services in addition to public data and internet service. ISP connections remain constrained by the limited infrastructure of IAPs through which they must connect. As set by POTRAZ the license fees for IAPs and ISPs range from US\$2-4 million, depending on the type of service to be provided, and must be vetted and approved by the regulator prior to installation.<sup>20</sup> Providers must also pay 3.5 percent of their annual gross income to POTRAZ. Application fees for operating a mobile phone service in Zimbabwe are also steep, and in 2013, the regulator increased the license fees for mobile networks from US\$100 million to \$137.5 million.<sup>21</sup> Only one mobile service provider, Econet, had paid this fee in full by end of 2013, while the second largest network, Telecel, had paid a deposit.<sup>22</sup> Zimbabwe has no stringent fees or regulations that hinder the establishment of cybercafes.

While POTRAZ handles the official licensing process for telecoms, insider reports have revealed that the Zimbabwean military may be involved in screening and approving license applications, demonstrating that ICTs are regarded as a security matter for the state. Nevertheless, there have been no reports of harassment or license denials on the basis of political affiliation. Otherwise, internet access prices in Zimbabwe are set by ISPs and cybercafe owners and have thus far been free from state intervention. Individual ISPs submit tariff proposals to POTRAZ, which approves proposals on a case by case basis.

Zimbabwe currently has five international gateways for internet and voice traffic, two of which are operated by the state-owned fixed network, TelOne, and mobile network, NetOne. The private mobile operators—Econet, TeleCel and Africom—operate the other three international gateways.<sup>23</sup> There are also two trunk switches for the TelOne fixed network and nine mobile switching centers,<sup>24</sup> set up by the country's three mobile operators.<sup>25</sup> Though private actors are allowed to operate their own gateways, analysts believe they are beholden to a "gentlemen's agreement" with POTRAZ, which gives the government some level of informal control over the privately-owned telecoms.

19 Zimbabwe Internet Service Providers Association membership list, <http://www.zispa.org.zw/members.html>.

20 L.S.M Kabweza, "Zimbabwe Raises Telecoms Licence Fees, Migrates to Converged Licensing," *TechZim*, March 12, 2013, <http://www.techzim.co.zw/2013/03/zimbabwe-raises-telecoms-licence-fees-migrates-to-converged-licensing/>.

21 Tawanda Karombo, "Zimbabwe sets telecom license fees at \$137.5mn," *IT Web Africa*, June 3, 2013, <http://www.itwebafrica.com/telecommunications/154-zimbabwe/231106-zimbabwe-sets-telecom-license-fees-at-1375mn>.

22 "Econet settles \$85 million of the \$137.5 million licence renewal fees," *Bulawayo24*, May 31, 2013, <http://bulawayo24.com/index-id-business-sc-companies-byo-30983.html>.

23 Econet Wireless, "Statement on the Operation and Management of International Gateways," via *Kubatana*, October 3, 2006, [http://www.kubatana.net/html/archive/inftec/061002econet.asp?sector=inftec&year=2006&range\\_start=1](http://www.kubatana.net/html/archive/inftec/061002econet.asp?sector=inftec&year=2006&range_start=1).

24 A "trunk switch" is a system that provides network access to many clients by sharing a set of lines or frequencies instead of providing them individually. A "mobile switching center" (MSC) connects calls by switching the digital voice data packets from one network path to another (also called routing). The MSC also provides information that is needed to support mobile service subscribers, such as user registration and authentication information.

25 L.S.M Kabweza, "An Overview of Zimbabwe's Telecommunications—POTRAZ Presentation Download," *TechZim*, March 5, 2010, <http://www.techzim.co.zw/2010/03/zimbabwe-telecoms-overview/>.

There have been few cases of deliberate disruptions in connectivity in Zimbabwe, though in the lead-up to the July 2013 general elections, the independent community radio station, Radio Dialogue, reported frequent internet disconnections in its office, and internet cafe owners reported slow internet connectivity.<sup>26</sup> While the government's hand in the disruptions could not be confirmed, state control over two of the country's five international gateways, as well as the state's ability to issue directives to private telecom providers, increase the likelihood of deliberate government interference.

ISPs and mobile phone companies are regulated by the telecommunications regulatory body, POTRAZ, whose leaders are appointed by the president in consultation with the minister of transport and communication. POTRAZ has been widely accused of partisanship and politicized decision-making, such as demanding Econet to reconnect Telecel after the former argued that Telecel was operating illegally without paying license fees.<sup>27</sup> In August 2013, POTRAZ also intervened in a price war between Econet and Telecel that involved Econet charging 10 cents per minute for its mobile voice service instead of the set tariff of 25 cents. In a move widely seen as an attempt to protect the state-owned network NetOne as well as TeleCel—the latter of which is owned by individuals with links to the ruling party—POTRAZ ordered Econet to revert back to the set tariffs. POTRAZ stated that Econet could not affect a price cut of more than 50 percent without seeking approval. For the first time in many years, Econet publicly complained about POTRAZ's perceived bias, adding that while the other two providers had also slashed prices, no action had been taken against them.<sup>28</sup> Another case of political protection of state-owned telecoms players was evidenced in January 2014 when the license fees payment grace period for the state-owned NetOne was extended from June 2014 to 2016, while Econet and Telecel were required to pay the increased license renewal fee of US\$137.5 million.<sup>29</sup>

In late 2013, POTRAZ also attempted to interfere with the operations of Zimfon, a company owned by Zimbabweans based in the United States, after it had launched an unlimited VoIP calling service at a cost of US\$13 per month.<sup>30</sup> Zimfon planned to sell VoIP lines to Zimbabweans in the diaspora that would operate via an application from Google play or iTunes, while Zimbabweans in the country would connect through mobile phone devices connected on the Africom network. POTRAZ announced, however, that Zimfon's operations were illegal due to non-compliance with national telecoms regulations,<sup>31</sup> though the regulator did not specify which regulations were being violated. POTRAZ's interference was seen by some as motivated by a concern over potential revenue losses for fixed-line services.

26 George Mpofu and Nicolette Zulu, "FFZE: Zim Internet, Phones 'Jammed' Day Ahead of Vote," Free & Fair Zimbabwe Election, July 30, 2013, <http://zimbabweelection.com/2013/07/30/ffze-zim-internet-phones-jammed-day-ahead-of-vote/>.

27 Tarisai Mandizha, "Econet, Telecel disconnection continues," *NewsDay*, August 9, 2013, <https://www.newsday.co.zw/2013/08/09/econet-telecel-disconnection-continues/>.

28 L.S.M. Kabweza, "POTRAZ orders Econet to revert to 25 cents per minute," *TechZim*, August 20, 2013, <http://www.techzim.co.zw/2013/08/breaking-news-potraz-orders-econet-to-revert-to-25-cents-per-minute-mobilewars/>.

29 Paul Nyakazeya, "Concern over NetOne License," *The Financial Gazette*, January 16, 2014, <http://www.financialgazette.co.zw/concern-over-netone-licence/>.

30 L.S.M. Kabweza, "An interview with Zimfon representative, Brett Chulu," *TechZim*, October 15, 2013, <http://www.techzim.co.zw/2013/10/interview-zimfon-representative-brett-chulu/>.

31 L.S.M. Kabweza, "Zimfon's VoIP service does not comply with regulatory requirements, says POTRAZ," *TechZim*, October 16, 2013, <http://www.techzim.co.zw/2013/10/zimfons-voip-service-comply-regulatory-requirements-says-potraz/>.

## Limits on Content

Bulk SMS text messages were blocked during the July 2013 general elections in an apparent effort to restrict opposition campaigning. The government actively tried to silence the anonymous whistleblower using the pseudonym Baba Jukwa, who gained immense popularity and influence on Facebook for his or her daily posts that named and shamed politicians for alleged corruption and informed on the ruling party's supposed secrets.

In 2013 and early 2014, there were no reports of internet content being blocked or filtered, though in the week leading up to the July 31 elections, the telecommunications regulator POTRAZ issued a directive to the private mobile phone provider, Econet, to block the dissemination of bulk SMS messages sent through its international gateway until after the elections.<sup>32</sup> The ban, which was not made known to the public, effectively obstructed the ability of civil society groups to send SMS messages with election-related information, and there were no mechanisms in place for appeal.<sup>33</sup> Meanwhile, ZANU-PF members routinely sent bulk SMS messages via all networks on behalf of President Robert Mugabe's campaign and other ZANU-PF party candidates.

Though no internet content was blocked during the coverage period, there were numerous indications that the government has the intention to do so. In late November 2013, the online independent news outlet *ZimEye* reported that ZANU-PF was preparing to ban and block all access to Facebook and other social networking platforms, which are regarded as sources of political subversion. The news stemmed from an anonymous report that was circulated on email networks following reports that a 15 member media delegation from ZANU-PF had recently flown to China for a special exchange program with the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) on methods of controlling the internet.<sup>34</sup> The ZANU-PF Secretary for Information, Rugare Gumbo, denied the allegations, instead stating that the visit to China was intended "primarily to exchange ideas on how to modernize the print and electronic media in so far as information dissemination is concerned."<sup>35</sup>

In addition, at the party's annual National People's Conference in December 2013, ZANU-PF members reportedly urged the government to block foreign-based radio stations, many of which are broadcast over the internet, shortwave frequencies, and satellite. These included London-based Short Wave Radio Africa, Radio Dialogue, Washington DC-based VOA Studio 7, Voice of the People, and Community Radio Harare.<sup>36</sup> According to news reports, the Zimbabwean government has repeatedly jammed the broadcasts from Short Wave Radio Africa since 2005, with equipment and

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32 Brandon Gregory, "Zimbabwe Authorities Block Award Winning SMS Service for 'Political Reasons,'" *Humanipo*, July 30, 2013, <http://www.humanipo.com/news/7611/Zimbabwe-authorities-block-award-winning-SMS-service-for-political-reasons/>; Zimbabwean regulator 'blocks' bulk SMS as election nears - See more at: <http://www.itwebafrica.com/ict-and-governance/273-zimbabwe/231381-zimbabwean-regulator-blocks-bulk-sms-as-election-nears#sthash.lwjQp075.dpuf>; [http://www.kubatana.net/html/archive/media/130726misaz1.asp?sector=INFTEC&year=0&range\\_start=1](http://www.kubatana.net/html/archive/media/130726misaz1.asp?sector=INFTEC&year=0&range_start=1)

33 One such ICT based Civic network Kubatana.net issued a statement stating that, "...in the run-up to Zimbabwe's 2013 election, our ability to send bulk text messages has been blocked. We have been informed by Econet that their regulator, Potraz, has issued a directive blocking the delivery of bulk messages from international gateways. "Potraz Bans Bulk SMS," *Newsday*, July 26, 2013, <https://www.newsday.co.zw/2013/07/26/potraz-bans-bulk-smss/>.

34 "Zimbabwe Gvt Set to Block Facebook, Twitter – Report," *ZimEye*, November 27, 2013, <http://www.zimeye.org/zimbabwe-gvt-set-to-block-facebook-report/>.

35 "Zimbabwe Gvt Set to Block Facebook, Twitter – Report," *ZimEye*, November 27, 2013.

36 "ZANU PF ups anti-pirate radio stations rant," *Zimbabwe Situation*, December 17, 2013, [http://www.zimbabwesituation.com/news/zimsit\\_zanu-pf-ups-anti-pirate-radio-stations-rant/](http://www.zimbabwesituation.com/news/zimsit_zanu-pf-ups-anti-pirate-radio-stations-rant/).

training from China,<sup>37</sup> and has pressured Britain and the United States to shut down the independent radio stations altogether. Apart from this, According to an inside source who attended the December 2013 conference, participants were “taught how to ‘intercept’ broadcasts by the foreign based stations, amongst other things.”<sup>38</sup>

Suspicion remains that employees of government agencies are restricted in what they can access on the internet while at work. State employees, including those working for state-owned media, exercise self-censorship when sharing politically sensitive information. In the past certain words and names such as “MDC,” and “Morgan Tsvangirai” were blocked at the Central Bank and other government ministries.<sup>39</sup> This suspicion is bolstered by ZANU-PF’s persistent hostility toward the opposition and independent media, and various ruling party officials often expressed a desire and intent to increase control over ICTs throughout the year.

The pronounced lack of anonymity on social media platforms coupled with the attendant fear of repercussions tends to limit politically oriented statements, since they can be traced back to their authors. Although many journalists contribute to online news platforms, quite a number use pseudonyms when writing about sensitive issues for fear of harassment, and citizens are increasingly using pseudonyms online to discuss political topics.<sup>40</sup> Debates on the country’s political and socioeconomic issues as well as reactions to online articles about Zimbabwe are mostly confined to chat rooms and feedback sections of online news sites. Concerns over state surveillance have also led to increasing self-censorship, and journalists and human rights defenders who feel threatened often resort to secure email platforms such as Hushmail for correspondence out of concern that the Zimbabwe domain name .co.zw is an open book for state security.

Facebook, Google, Yahoo, and YouTube are among the most popular websites among Zimbabwean internet users. In response to the high unemployment rate, many young people are using social media platforms to solicit business and sell various products. Twitter has been popularized by individual and civil initiatives as a platform to discuss pressing social issues. One such example is the Twitter account @263chat that describes itself as a “start-up media company created to encourage [and] participate in dialogue” and has a following of nearly 32,000 users as of mid-2014.<sup>41</sup> Media surveys indicate a continuing decline in readership of newspapers coinciding with the rising use of ICT-based platforms for news and other information.<sup>42</sup> This trend has prompted newspapers to work on integrating online platforms, with nearly all mainstream newspapers now employing online staff and developing strategies for such integration processes.

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37 “ZANU PF ups anti-pirate radio stations rant,” *Zimbabwe Situation*, December 17, 2013.

38 In its report at the conference ZANU-PF accused the radio stations, which its labels pirate radio stations, of being sponsored by the west to effect regime change as well as “spewing anti-ZANU PF propaganda” to the effect of “distorting people’s national pride.” See, “ZANU PF ups anti-pirate radio stations rant,” *Zimbabwe Situation*, December 17, 2013.

39 Open Net Initiative, “Country Profile: Zimbabwe,” 2009, <http://opennet.net/research/profiles/zimbabwe>.

40 Vladimir Mzaca, “What Online News Means for Zimbabwe,” *Free African Media*, April 5, 2011, <http://www.thezimbabwemail.com/opinion/7745.html>; Tendai Chari, “Ethical Challenges Facing Zimbabwean Media in the Context of the Internet,” *Global Media Journal - Africa Edition*, Zimbabwe, 2009, Vol 3 (1), [globalmedia.journals.ac.za/pub/article/download/19/51](http://globalmedia.journals.ac.za/pub/article/download/19/51); Committee to Protect Journalists, “Sweeping Surveillance Law to Target ‘Imperialist-Sponsored Journalists,’” press release, August 9, 2007, <http://allafrica.com/stories/200708090943.html>; Barbara Borst, “African Journalists Struggle to Find their Role in Building Democracies,” *Perspectives on Global Issues*, Volume 2, Issue 2, spring 2008, <http://www.perspectivesonglobalissues.com/0301/borst.htm>.

41 @263Chat’s Twitter page: <https://twitter.com/263Chat>.

42 L.S.M. Kabweza, “Newspaper readership in Zimbabwe continues to decline –ZAMPS 2013,” *TechZim*, October 15, 2013, <http://www.techzim.co.zw/2013/10/newspaper-readership-in-zimbabwe-continues-to-decline/>.

Independent news websites and other digital media outlets based outside Zimbabwe continue to play a key role as sources of information, especially on sensitive topics that local media groups are afraid of covering. These platforms are used by local journalists and citizens to report on sensitive issues under the cover of pseudonyms. Social media and ICT-based platforms are increasingly being used to mobilize communities around various issues, though growing mobilization efforts have yet to manifest in concrete social, political, or economic change in Zimbabwe.

In March 2013, a self-proclaimed disaffected ZANU-PF member created a Facebook page under the moniker Baba Jukwa, who had drawn a Facebook following of nearly half a million users at its peak. Characterizing himself as a “Concerned father, fighting nepotism and directly linking community with their Leaders, Government, MPs, and Ministers,”<sup>43</sup> Baba Jukwa quickly became a social media sensation for daily posts that named and shamed politicians for alleged corruption and informed on the ruling party’s supposed secrets. Most notably, the anonymous informant was credited with predicting the death of a ZANU-PF member of parliament, Edward Chindori Chininga, who died in a suspicious car accident in June 2013, nine days after Chininga had released a report on widespread corruption in the country’s diamond mines.<sup>44</sup> While the whistleblower’s efforts on Facebook effected little concrete change on the country’s political and social landscape, Baba Jukwa’s popularity was described as representing “the Zimbabwean people’s growing appetite for information and transparency, which will only be fuelled by increasing access to information technology.”<sup>45</sup> Threatened by the Facebook page’s growing influence, Mugabe reportedly offered a US\$300,000 reward for Baba Jukwa’s identity in July 2013,<sup>46</sup> and subsequent efforts ultimately led to the unexplained takedown of the anonymous user’s Facebook page in July 2014 (see “Violations of User Rights”).<sup>47</sup>

The 2013 general election became the most internet-fueled election in Zimbabwe’s history, as many social media and information platforms were launched to monitor the electoral process as well as report on electoral fraud. For example, the London-based online news agency, *Nehanda Radio*, played a key role as a source of information on electoral fraud through its citizen reporting project that allowed citizens to share stories, pictures, and videos on the 2013 elections. Many of the noted electoral irregularities were recorded and shared through platforms such as YouTube,<sup>48</sup> though Robert Mugabe still won the presidency, as expected.

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43 Baba Jukwa’s Facebook page, accessed July 1, 2014, <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Baba-Jukwa/232224626922797>. Inaccessible as of September 2014.

44 “The Spirit of Wrath is Upon Us,” *Economist*, June 19, 2013, <http://www.economist.com/news/middle-east-and-africa/21580163-mysterious-facebook-character-predicting-murder-and-mayhem-spirit>.

45 Rebecca Regan-Sachs, “Baba Jukwa vs. Mugabe – the Man On Facebook Standing Up to Zimbabwe’s President,” Think Africa Press via *All Africa*, July 24, 2013, <http://allafrica.com/stories/201307241382.html?viewall=1>.

46 Mary Ann Jolley, “Mugabe Offers \$300,000 for Outing of Anonymous Whistleblower Baba Jukwa,” *ABC News*, July 17, 2013, <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2013-07-17/mugabe-offers-243002c000-for-outing-of-anonymous-whistleblower/4824498>.

47 “What Exactly Happened to Baba Jukwa’s Page,” *TechnoMag*, September 5, 2014, <http://www.technomag.co.zw/2014/09/05/what-exactly-happened-to-baba-jukwas-page/#sthash.xiNZX5ns.dpbs>.

48 “Vote cheating in Zimbabwe 2013,” video posted by jim osaro, August 3, 2013, YouTube, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sZFsgw582XE>.

## Violations of User Rights

A new constitution was adopted in May 2013, providing for press freedom and freedom of expression, though arrests of citizens for their online activities increased during the coverage period, particularly around the period of the general elections in July 2013. One user was arrested for insulting the president on his Facebook page. The anonymous Baba Jukwa Facebook page continued to incite the authorities, leading to aggressive attempts to silence the whistleblower via hacking attacks and other measures. Government surveillance of citizen communications reportedly increased after the July 2013 general elections, and surveillance powers were strengthened with the passage of the Postal and Telecommunications (Subscriber Registration) Regulations in October 2013. The Parliamentary Legal Committee (PLC) declared the new regulations unconstitutional in March 2014, leading to an amended version enacted in July 2014 that provided for judicial oversight but left open a loophole for abuse.

In May 2013, the Zimbabwean parliament approved a new constitution, which the president signed into law shortly thereafter.<sup>49</sup> Sections 61 and 62 of the constitution guarantees freedom of expression, press freedom, access to information, protection for sources of information, and the editorial independence of state-owned media.<sup>50</sup> While these provisions are focused on the traditional media, it is expected that the new rights will extend to the online sphere, which will potentially allow online journalists, bloggers, and social media users to seek protection under the new constitution. Bloggers, however, are not eligible for accreditation as journalists under the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA), which provides guidelines for the registration of media organizations and journalist accreditation, as well as punitive measures for violations of these requirements. AIPPA also places restrictions on reporting government information.<sup>51</sup>

The judiciary has sometimes demonstrated a degree of autonomy through rulings that are not favorable to the state, including some freedom of expression cases, though the government often ignores such decisions. An appointment process that allows for high levels of executive interference further compromises judicial independence. No major rulings related to internet freedom occurred during this report's coverage period.

Meanwhile, restrictions on certain types of speech under the Criminal Law Codification and Reform Act (CODE) remain on the books and apply equally to reporters in the traditional media and online. The CODE punishes anyone who publicly undermines the authority of the president or insults him in any printed or electronic medium with a sentence of up to 20 years in prison,<sup>52</sup> though a landmark ruling by the Zimbabwean Constitutional Court in July 2014 declared criminal defamation under the CODE unconstitutional.<sup>53</sup> Nevertheless, Zimbabwe maintains restrictive access to information and media laws, which include the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA), the Criminal Codification Act, the Public Order and Security Act, and the Officials Secrets Act, among

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49 Cris Chinaka, "Mugabe Signs Zimbabwe Constitution, Paving Way for Vote," *Reuters*, May 22, 2013, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/05/22/us-zimbabwe-constitution-idUSBRE94LORT20130522>.

50 See, "Zimbabwe 2013," [https://www.constituteproject.org/search?q=zimbabwe&cons\\_id=Zimbabwe\\_2013](https://www.constituteproject.org/search?q=zimbabwe&cons_id=Zimbabwe_2013).

51 Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act, Acts 5/2002, 5/20013, <http://www.sokwanele.com/pdfs/AIPPA.pdf>.

52 Criminal Law (Codification and Reform) Act [Chapter 9:23], Act 23/2004, Government Gazette, June 3, 2005, [http://www.kubatana.net/docs/legisl/criminal\\_law\\_code\\_050603.pdf](http://www.kubatana.net/docs/legisl/criminal_law_code_050603.pdf).

53 Thulani Ndllovu, "Zimbabwe court strikes down criminal defamation, implementation to be seen," Committee to Protect Journalists (blog), July 28, 2014, <https://cpj.org/blog/2014/07/zimbabwe-court-strikes-down-criminal-defamation-im.php>.

others. Combined with the extrajudicial actions of both state and non-state actors, these laws severely limit Zimbabweans' ability to access and share information.

Arrests of citizens for their online activities increased during the coverage period, particularly around the period of the general elections in July 2013. On Election Day, for example, 31-year-old opposition party activist Tonderai Rukato was arrested for posting a photo of a marked ballot displaying a vote for Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) candidate Morgan Tsvangirai on his Facebook page. Charged with contravening the Electoral Act, he was sentenced to ten months in prison, three of which were suspended on condition of good behavior, though he was released in September after serving 31 days in prison when a magistrate ruled in favor of the appeal lodged by MDC lawyers.<sup>54</sup> The day after Rukato's release, however, his family's local business was set on fire, destroying an estimated US\$2,000 worth of goods.

In January 2014, teenage Facebook user Gumisai Manduwa was arrested for allegedly insulting the president after he posted on his Facebook page that President Mugabe "had died and was being preserved in a freezer."<sup>55</sup> Manduwa was released on bail two days after his arrest. His case remains on the court's docket as of mid-2014.

Meanwhile, the anonymous Facebook user Baba Jukwa continued to incite the ruling party throughout 2013 and 2014, leading President Mugabe to post a US\$330,000 reward in July 2013 for any individual willing to unmask the elusive whistleblower.<sup>56</sup> Party officials repeatedly tried to have Facebook take down the Baba Jukwa page, the initial failure of which reportedly led the president to seek Chinese technical assistance in censoring the page and identifying its user.<sup>57</sup> The Facebook page with a following nearly half a million users was ultimately taken down in July 2014,<sup>58</sup> after an editor at the *Sunday Mail* state newspaper, Edmund Kudakwashe Kudzayi, was arrested in June on accusations of running the Baba Jukwa account.<sup>59</sup> His case remains unresolved as of late 2014.

Despite Baba Jukwa's eventual silencing, political activists inspired by the anonymous Facebook user made phone calls to senior politicians and security chiefs in the lead-up to the general 2013 election, demanding an end to politically motivated violence and a clean election. Unfortunately, the activism resulted in the arrest of Josiah Mahovoya in July 2013 on charges of insulting Police Commissioner General Augustine Chihuri and senior ZANU-PF member Dexter Nduna over the phone. Mahovoya was sentenced to four months in prison, though the nature of the insults was not revealed. He

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54 Tichaona Sibanda, "Jailed for Posting Presidential Ballot on Facebook," *SW Radio Africa*, September 13, 2013, <http://www.swradioafrica.com/2013/09/13/jailed-for-posting-presidential-ballot-on-facebook/>.

55 Tawanda Karombo, "Zimbabwean boy arrested for 'Mugabe is dead' Facebook post," *ITWeb Africa*, January 20, 2014, <http://www.itwebafrica.com/ict-and-governance/273-zimbabwe/232268-zimbabwean-boy-arrested-for-mugabe-is-dead-facebook-post>.

56 Mary Ann Jolley, "Mugabe Offers \$300,000 for Outing of Anonymous Whistleblower Baba Jukwa," *ABC News*, July 17, 2013, <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2013-07-17/mugabe-offers-243002c000-for-outing-of-anonymous-whistleblower/4824498>.

57 Jane Flanagan, "Mugabe hunts for internet mole 'Baba Jukwa' revealing his secrets," *The Telegraph*, July 4, 2013, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/10178570/Mugabe-hunts-for-internet-mole-Baba-Jukwa-revealing-his-secrets.html>.

58 Adam Taylor, "Has Baba Jukwa, Zimbabwe's infamous anonymous whistleblower, really been caught?" *Washington Post*, June 25, 2014, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/worldviews/wp/2014/06/25/has-baba-jukwa-zimbabwes-infamous-anonymous-whistleblower-really-been-caught/>.

59 Charles Laiton, "Sunday Mail Editor 'is Baba Jukwa,'" *The Standard*, June 22, 2014, <http://www.thestandard.co.zw/2014/06/22/sunday-mail-editor-baba-jukwa/>.

reportedly retrieved Chihuri and Nduna's phone numbers from Baba Jukwa's Facebook page, and the police had traced the SIM card registration to his name.<sup>60</sup>

In the meantime, a court case against 21-year old Shantel Rusike is still being dragged through the magistrate courts in Bulawayo as of mid-2014.<sup>61</sup> Rusike was arrested on December 24, 2012 and held for four days after she was reported to the police for sending an image depicting President Mugabe in a nude state via WhatsApp on her mobile phone.<sup>62</sup> Rusike faces charges of "causing hatred, contempt or ridicule of the president," as delineated in the CODE.<sup>63</sup>

Though the government has proactively endeavored to reveal the identities of certain influential critics on social media sites—such as Baba Jukwa on Facebook—there are no restrictions on users' ability to communicate anonymously on websites, blogs, or social media platforms. Nonetheless, anonymous communication and user data are compromised by SIM card registration regulations implemented in 2011, which require mobile phone users to submit personal identity details to mobile operators, ostensibly to combat crime and curtail threatening or obscene communications.<sup>64</sup> In August 2013, POTRAZ ordered all unregistered mobile lines to be disconnected in an apparent effort to expand its access to user information for law enforcement purposes.<sup>65</sup>

On October 1, 2013, the government gazetted a new so-called "spy law" known as the Postal and Telecommunications (Subscriber Registration) Regulations (Statutory Instrument 142/2013), which expanded the scope of subscriber registration requirements previously limited to SIM cards to include "cellular and fixed mobile operators, internet access provider[s] and any other telecommunication licensees or designated agents who provides telecommunication services."<sup>66</sup> Registration details require a full name, permanent residential address, nationality, gender, subscriber ID number, and national ID or passport number to be submitted to network operators, who are then required to retain such personal information for five years *after* either the subscriber or operator has discontinued service. In addition, the regulations require ISPs to provide POTRAZ with copies of their subscriber registers to be stored in a Central Subscriber Information Database to enable POTRAZ to "assist law enforcement agencies on safeguarding national security," among other aims.<sup>67</sup> Officials could petition POTRAZ for access to the subscriber database without a court order. Following the law's enactment, the Zimbabwe Internet Services Providers Association released a statement stating that none of its members would participate in email surveillance, though penalties for breaching the new law include both fines and imprisonment.

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60 "Man arrested for insulting Chihuri after getting phone number from Baba Jukwa," *iHarare*, July 30, 2013, <http://www.iharare.co.zw/man-arrested-for-insulting-chihuri-after-getting-phone-number-from-baba-jukwa/>.

61 Siilas Nkala, "'Naked Mugabe' case drags on," *Southern Eye*, June 18, 2013, <http://www.southerneye.co.zw/2013/06/18/naked-mugabe-case-drag-on/>.

62 Alex Bell, "'Naked' Mugabe Picture Lands Woman in Court," *Nehanda Radio*, January 9, 2013, <http://nehandaradio.com/2013/01/09/naked-mugabe-picture-lands-woman-in-court/>.

63 Section 33(2)(a)(ii) of the Criminal Law (Codification and Reform) Act/CODE Chapter 9:23.

64 "POTRAZ Issues Mobile Phone Registration Reminder," *Technology Zimbabwe*, January 31, 2011, <http://www.techzim.co.zw/2011/01/potraz-registration-reminder/>.

65 "Potraz orders mobile phone operators to switch off illegal subscribers," *NewsDay*, August 5, 2013, <https://www.newsday.co.zw/2013/08/05/potraz-orders-mobile-phone-operators-to-switch-off-illegal-subscribers/>.

66 Garikai Dzoma, "Zimbabwe's new online spying law," *Techzim*, October 9, 2013, <http://www.techzim.co.zw/2013/10/zimbabwes-new-online-spying-law/>; Postal and Telecommunications (Subscriber Registration) Regulations, 2013, [https://docs.google.com/file/d/0B006T\\_7m0f19NTR2b1BsZjZza2s/edit](https://docs.google.com/file/d/0B006T_7m0f19NTR2b1BsZjZza2s/edit).

67 Section 8 (1) and (2); [https://docs.google.com/file/d/0B006T\\_7m0f19NTR2b1BsZjZza2s/edit](https://docs.google.com/file/d/0B006T_7m0f19NTR2b1BsZjZza2s/edit).

In a positive step in June 2014, the government repealed the legal provisions in the new Subscriber Registration Regulations (Statutory Instrument 142/2013) that allowed security agents to access user information from a central database without a court-issued warrant, after the Parliamentary Legal Committee (PLC) found provisions of the new regulations unconstitutional.<sup>68</sup> An amended version of the regulations—Statutory Instrument 95/2014—were subsequently enacted in July, which revised section 9(2) to allow law enforcement agents to request information from the central database, “provided that a prior written request is received by the Authority from an official of the law enforcement agency who is in possession of a warrant or court order to obtain such information.”<sup>69</sup> Analysis by the Zimbabwean legal watchdog Veritas found this amendment to fall short of judicial oversight, since it requires either a court order or a warrant, the latter of which “can be issued by police officers who have been designated as justices of the peace.”<sup>70</sup>

Government surveillance of citizen communications is also enabled by the Post and Telecommunications Act of 2000, which allows the government to intercept suspicious communications and requires a telecommunications licensee, such as an ISP, to supply information to government officials upon request.<sup>71</sup> The act also obligates telecoms to report any communications with “offensive” or “threatening” content. Meanwhile, a Monitoring of Interception of Communications Center was established under the Interception of Communications Act of 2007 and has the power to oversee traffic in all telecommunications services and to intercept phone calls, emails, and faxes under the pretext of national security.<sup>72</sup> The Act further requires telecommunications operators and ISPs to install necessary surveillance technology at their own expense and to intercept information on the state’s behalf.<sup>73</sup> Failure to comply is punishable with a fine and sentence of up to three years in prison. Warrants allowing the monitoring and interception of communications are issued by the minister of information at his discretion; consequently, there is no adequate judicial oversight or other independent safeguard against abuse,<sup>74</sup> and the extent and frequency of monitoring remains unknown.

Suspicious of Chinese technical assistance in controlling ICTs remain strong, particularly following news reports of a ZANU-PF delegation sent to China in November 2013 for a special exchange program on methods of controlling the internet (see “Limits on Content”). In March 2013, the news and internet radio station Nehanda Radio also reported news about a “massive” cyber training

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68 “No more snooping into phone conversations,” *NewsDay*, June 25, 2014, <https://www.newsday.co.zw/2014/06/25/snooping-phone-conversations/>; “Adverse Report of the Parliamentary Legal Committee on Statutory Instruments, 142 of 2013, Postal and Telecommunications (Subscriber Registration) Regulations, 2013,” <http://www.veritaszim.net/node/1029>.

69 Postal and Telecommunications (Subscriber Registration) Regulations, 2014 [SI 95/2014], <http://www.cfuzim.org/images/si9514.pdf>.

70 Veritas, “Bill Watch 29/2014 of 21<sup>st</sup> July,” *The Zimbabwean*, July 22, 2014, <http://www.thezimbabwean.co/politics/72630/bill-watch-292014-of-21st.html>.

71 Postal and Telecommunications Act 2000, Part XII, Section 98, “Interception of communications,” [http://www.potraz.gov.zw/files/Postal\\_Act.pdf](http://www.potraz.gov.zw/files/Postal_Act.pdf).

72 Reporters Without Borders, “All Communications Can Now be Intercepted Under New Law Signed by Mugabe,” news release, August 6, 2007, <http://en.rsf.org/zimbabwe-all-communications-can-now-be-06-08-2007.17623.html>. The law is available at *Kubatana*, [http://kubatana.net/docs/legisl/icb\\_070508.pdf](http://kubatana.net/docs/legisl/icb_070508.pdf).

73 Nqobizitha Khumalo, “Zim Internet Service Providers Struggle to Buy Spying Equipment,” *ZimOnline*, August 10, 2007, [http://www.kubatana.net/html/archive/inftec/070810zol1.asp?spec\\_code=060426commdex&sector=INFTEC&year=0&range\\_start=1&intMainYear=0&intTodayYear=2010](http://www.kubatana.net/html/archive/inftec/070810zol1.asp?spec_code=060426commdex&sector=INFTEC&year=0&range_start=1&intMainYear=0&intTodayYear=2010).

74 Interception of Communications Act, No. 6/2007, Section 6, “Issue of warrant,” [http://www.vertic.org/media/National%20Legislation/Zimbabwe/ZW\\_Interception\\_of\\_Communications\\_Act.pdf](http://www.vertic.org/media/National%20Legislation/Zimbabwe/ZW_Interception_of_Communications_Act.pdf).

program that had begun in 2007 with assistance from Iranian intelligence organizations.<sup>75</sup> According to the report, personnel from the Zimbabwean armed forces and the Central Intelligence Organization (CIO) have been undergoing intensive cyber training in “technological warfare techniques, counter-intelligence and methods of suppressing popular revolts among others, every six months.” Meanwhile, encrypted communication applications such as Skype remain accessible, though POTRAZ has maintained a September 2011 ban—reportedly enacted for security reasons—on the use of the BlackBerry messenger service that enables users to send free messages.<sup>76</sup>

In response to fears of civil unrest following ZANU-PF’s overwhelming victory in the July 2013 general elections, the ruling party via the CIO reportedly ramped up its mass monitoring and interception efforts. According to an inside source within the security forces, “targeted groups and individuals’ communication and social media activities are being monitored, and at times the CIO obtains recordings of voice calls from local cellphone providers under the guise of carrying out state security operations.”<sup>77</sup> One incident involving the interception and publication of emails belonging to Elizabeth Macheke, the wife of MDC leader and former Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai, illuminates the extent to which ZANU-PF abuses surveillance for political purposes. In August 2013, the front page of the state-owned *Sunday Mail* published a story alleging that Macheke was having an affair with a former lover.<sup>78</sup> The story was based on supposed email exchanges between Macheke and the alleged boyfriend, which were quoted extensively throughout the article. While Macheke never confirmed the authenticity of the emails, the MDC party dismissed the story as an attempt to distract the country from what they regarded as a stolen election.

Opposition political groups also reportedly monitor the social media activities of their members. While caught up in intraparty fighting in March 2014, the opposition party MDC-T, an offshoot of the MDC, stated that it monitors the activities of the party leaders on Facebook. MDC-T spokesperson Douglas Mwonzora said that the move was aimed at members who post hate speech, though the opposition party is reported to have used some Facebook posts as evidence of insubordination in suspending senior officials in the past.<sup>79</sup>

Extralegal harassment, attacks, and intimidation against media workers in the print, radio, and broadcast sectors is common in Zimbabwe, and as news outlets have increased their influence in the online sphere, attacks against online outlets have increased in tandem. One incident in April 2014 involved Bulawayo-based aspiring community radio station Radio Dialogue, which was raided by the police and POTRAZ officers who confiscated internet service payment receipts, reportedly to trace

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75 Itai Mushekwe, “Iran Helping Zimbabwe Snoop on Internet,” *Nehanda Radio*, March 27, 2013, <http://bit.ly/YKatMO>.

76 The ban went into effect in response to unfounded fears that the service had facilitated the 2011 Arab uprisings as well as the violent protests that took place in England in August of the same year. In mid-2011, POTRAZ director general Charles Manzi Sibanda announced that the regulator was examining the compliance of BlackBerry’s encryption technology with the Interception of Communications Act, which requires that all telecommunication services allow official interception. The POTRAZ decision was still outstanding as of December 2013. BlackBerry formerly operated as Research in Motion. See, “BlackBerry Messenger a Dream,” *The Zimbabwean*, June 5, 2012, <http://www.thezimbabwean.co.uk/technology/58636/blackberry-messenger-a-dream.html>.

77 Elias Mambo, “CIO steps up mass citizen surveillance,” *Zimbabwe Independent*, August 30, 2013, <http://www.theindependent.co.zw/2013/08/30/cio-steps-up-mass-citizen-surveillance/>.

78 “Liz Tsvangirai cheats on PM: report,” *New Zimbabwe*, August 11, 2013, <http://www.newzimbabwe.com/news-12000-Liz+Tsvangirai+cheats+on+PM+report/news.aspx>.

79 “MDC-T monitors Facebook posts,” *NewsDay*, March 18, 2014, <https://www.newsday.co.zw/2014/03/18/mdc-t-monitors-facebook-posts/>.

Radio Dialogue's online activities.<sup>80</sup> Technical attacks against critical websites and social media pages are also increasing. Most notably in 2013 and 2014, the authorities launched several hacking attacks against the anonymous whistleblower Baba Jukwa's Facebook page, resulting in the deletion of some of Jukwa's damaging posts in 2013 and its ultimate takedown in July 2014.<sup>81</sup>

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80 Peter Zwidekalanga Khumalo, "Police, Potraz raids Radio Dialogue," *Bulawayo24*, April 22, 2014, <http://bulawayo24.com/index-id-news-sc-local-byo-46311-article-+Police,+Potraz+raids+Radio+Dialogue.html>.

81 "Julian Assange, Baba Jukwa and Cyberpunks," ICT Africa, May 4, 2013, <http://ictafrica.info/FullNews.php?id=9002>.