



Journalist Fellowship Paper

# No easy solutions: Zambian journalism's 'Blalizo' problem

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June 2023

Hilary Term

Sponsor: Thomson Reuters Foundation

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# Introduction

In *Killing the Story*, acclaimed investigative journalist Tèmoris Grecko recounts the dark tactics of a repressive Mexican regime determined to silence journalists in whatever way they can – even to the point of killing them.

Grecko’s book is a masterful record of both how hostile environments can become for journalists, and the extraordinary mettle of those who rise above oppression to uphold the highest standards and ethics of our profession.

Culturally and politically, my home country of Zambia is a world away from Mexico, although we do share similar rankings on the [Freedom in the World Survey 2023](#).<sup>1</sup> And while journalists in Zambia do not routinely face the threat of death like our colleagues in Mexico, there is more than one way to “kill a story”.<sup>2</sup>

## Freedom in the World 2023

Mexico and Zambia are ranked 54th and 60th respectively by the Freedom in the World Survey 2023.

|                  | Mexico      | Zambia      |
|------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Political Rights | 27/40       | 23/40       |
| Civil Liberties  | 33/60       | 31/60       |
| Designation      | Partly Free | Partly Free |

Source: Freedom House

*Freedom House rates people’s access to political rights and civil liberties in 210 countries and territories through its annual Freedom in the World report.*

Here, a surefire route of controlling what is published is through manipulation of a monetary payment known as *blalizo* – a “transport refund” issued to journalists by the organisers of events and news conferences seeking coverage.

Some journalists consciously and wilfully kill their own story because they have not received *blalizo*. Others might sensationalise their coverage to please a source who has been excessively generous with monetary perks for attending an event.

Should *blalizo* be considered a form of corruption or is it a question of personal ethics? The answer may seem straightforward to journalists working in wealthy countries who receive good pay and workplace protections.

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<sup>1</sup> Freedom in the World 2023. Available at: <https://freedomhouse.org/countries/freedom-world/scores?sort=asc&order=Total+Score+and+Status> (Accessed: 28 July 2023).

<sup>2</sup> In journalism, “to kill a story” is to ensure it is not published.

But, as you'll see here from the survey and interviews I conducted, it is rather more complicated in a country where [average monthly earnings were US\\$211](#) in December 2021, and there is no minimum wage for journalists.<sup>3</sup> To paraphrase what I was told: "Morals do not feed the family."

A nuanced outlook also requires that the reader understand that both urban and rural [public transport options in Zambia](#) are almost entirely limited.<sup>4</sup> A [2013 paper](#) by the Zambia Institute for Policy Analysis and Research, describes public transport as "blighted by problems", including poor service quality, poor route configuration and unaffordable passenger fares.<sup>5</sup>

And yet, pay and conditions notwithstanding, what price is paid by Zambian journalism in the long-term if journalists continue to accept *blalizo*? Local commentators on social media are quick to dismiss the good and hard-won work of journalists, citing *blalizo* as evidence of corruption. Bad actors can attempt to use these levers to censor or alter information.

What, if anything, can be done?

### **The difference between adverts, "paid content", and *blalizo***

For the avoidance of doubt, let's define the difference between these three forms of payment for content.

Advertising: a stakeholder pays a media owner (newspaper, magazine, radio, television, or digital outlet) for the placement of supplied content in a clearly denoted advertising slot or section. This may include TV and radio ads, print advertising, sponsorships, or pay-per-click (PPC) ads on digital platforms.

Paid content: a stakeholder pays a media owner (newspaper, magazine, radio, television, or digital outlet) to create an approved story, which is similar in style to the medium it is carried in. It is common practice that this content is clearly labelled as "paid content". The genre might include competitions or giveaways. Note that money is not paid to an individual journalist but to the media house.

Blalizo: Transport or logistics refund, also referred to as 'blalizo', given directly to journalists covering events by event organisers to cover the cost of travelling to the venue. Not always commensurate with actual cost incurred.

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<sup>3</sup> Available at: <https://www.ceicdata.com/en/indicator/zambia/monthly-earnings>

<sup>4</sup> Available at: <https://africaportal.org/publication/institutional-preparedness-urban-public-transport-reforms-zambia/>

<sup>5</sup> *Trip Modeling and Cost Analysis for public road transport system for the City of Lusaka* (2020) Zambia Institute for Policy Analysis and Research. Available at: <https://zipar.org.zm/download/trip-modeling-and-cost-analysis-for-public-road-transport-system-for-the-city-of-lusaka/> (Accessed: 31 July 2023).

## The trouble with ‘blalizo’

In November 2019, *Zambia Daily Mail*’s editorials editor and Integrity Committee secretary, Emelda Musonda, [wrote a column](#) decrying *blalizo* and calling it an “affront to media credibility”.

*“The corporate world, civil society organisations and members of the public who interact with journalists from time to time have lamented how they have been harassed for failure to provide transport refund,” she wrote.*

As a steering committee member for WAN-IFRA Women In News, Musonda recounted her own encounter with journalists demanding *blalizo*:

*“Journalists swamped the project manager from Zimbabwe demanding lunch coupons and transport refunds. They refused to leave; they followed her wherever she went until she organised some funds outside the event budget. Even then the money ran out because the journalists were too many. As the host and a journalist, I was terribly embarrassed, to say the least.”*

### A magnet for scam artists and imposters

The title of “journalist” has become one of the most abused in Zambia because of *blalizo*. Anyone with a smart phone can pose as a qualified journalist. There are smaller outlets who go so far as to employ enthusiastic poseurs at offensively low wages, give them a media card, and – in not so many words – say, “use this position to help yourself”.

As Musonda puts it, *blalizo* has attracted “quacks” into the industry. “These are people masquerading as journalists when they are not,” she said. “They move from one event to the other soliciting for transport refunds.”

I’ve witnessed this phenomenon myself, where non-journalists are so bold as to pose questions at press conferences with government ministers – one memorably posing a reporter from a famous beauty brand!

In a [radio interview](#), Director and spokesperson for the Ministry of Information and Media, Thabo Kawama, labelled them “chief *muzungu ani konde*”. (Roughly translating as “white man’s boot licker”, a colloquialism in this case used to refer to

journalists publishing stories that will please their sources who they have received *blalizo* from.)

“Scribes even attend pressers and other functions with people they know very well are not journalists and only purporting to be but won’t call them out,” he said.

“They all just line up and sign for *blalizo*. [...] You have to put some seriousness in your profession first and get rid of imposters then stand united as one to call for better conditions.”

### Journalistic efforts to curb ‘blalizo’

At one community radio station in the Copperbelt province of Zambia, sources were not allowed to make direct contact with journalists. Instead, they were required to call the station manager who will then assign a journalist to attend the event. Any transport refund received was returned to the station manager, and the funds used to buy fuel for the station vehicle enabling them to cover more stories.

It was a helpful strategy from the perspective of editorial integrity, but workers at the station complained that they were already overworked and underpaid, and that the strategy disadvantaged them compared to other journalists.

This begs the question: is *blalizo* a journalistic problem to be solved through ethics training, or a media ownership problem to be solved through fair labour practices and employment conditions? As Musonda said: “The responsibility to provide logistics for covering events lies squarely on the shoulders of their employers.”

Musonda said that *Zambia Daily Mail* (ZDM) had invested in work tools such as laptops, cameras, recorders and vehicles to ensure that journalists carry out their duties without any difficulties.

*“Recently the company, through its Integrity Committee, developed a Gifts and Benefits Policy aimed at protecting the company’s reputation against unprofessional conduct that may arise from the influence of gifts and benefits given to, or received by, some employees internally and externally.*

*The policy is a guide for Zambia Daily Mail employees on the expected standards of behaviour when offered or when giving gifts or benefits during the course of their official duties or by virtue of their employment status.*

*The policy forbids employees from soliciting or receiving gifts for a job they are employed to do and subsequently remunerated for, or using the company name to obtain favours.*

*In other words, no Zambia Daily Mail journalist is permitted to receive or solicit for transport refund. The company provides transport for its journalists.*

*Zambia Daily Mail recognises the importance of professional and ethical conduct among journalists and other employees in maintaining a good corporate image and financial sustainability.”*

### **Institutional efforts to curb ‘blalizo’**

Doctors, pilots, accountants, and lawyers subscribe to an ethical code of conduct. Any practitioner found in breach can be stripped of their licence. Should there be a similar code and statutory body for journalism?

The immediate fear is whether such an institution might be used to censor or limit access for journalists. But a voluntary self-regulatory body does exist. The [Zambia Media Council](#) (ZAMEC) was launched in 2012 to replace the defunct Media Council of Zambia.

Its creation was spurred by a challenge from former Information Minister Ronnie Shikapwasha, who warned media in 2009 that they must either regulate themselves or expect that parliament would create a regulatory body.

Although ZAMEC’s constitution and code of ethics had been prepared by April 2010, proceedings were stalled when the government labelled the group “toothless” by announcing that all state-owned media would not be allowed to participate. Public Service Media employ around two-thirds of the journalists in Zambia.

Despite this ZAMEC has created a suggested regulatory framework that was met [with some concern](#) last year.<sup>6</sup> It is currently on hold as the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) and other stakeholders weigh in on the proposal.

As it stands, journalists have no unified code of conduct other than the basic ethical principles taught in colleges and universities.

One suggestion has been the creation of a Pan African Media Code of Conduct that journalists can voluntarily subscribe to. This could help restore the integrity of the profession, not only in Zambia but further afield.

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<sup>6</sup> *The Disquieting Questions about ZAMEC as Means for Media Self-Regulation in Zambia* (August 2022), Lusaka Times. Available at: <https://www.lusakatimes.com/2022/08/13/the-disquieting-questions-about-zamec-as-means-for-media-self-regulation-in-zambia/>

## Focusing in on ‘blalizo’ in radio journalism

Community radio – often classed as “old” or “legacy” media in other countries – remains a highly popular and influential medium in Zambia. It plays a vital role in society, particularly in rural districts.

Despite the importance and proliferation of the medium, many staff members – particularly at community radio stations – lack formal media training and reporting experience.

Mike Daka, former head of the Zambia Institute of Mass Communication and founder of Breeze FM, said: “The only training [most people] working for community radio stations experience are occasional thematic workshops held by organisations seeking to work with the media. These workshops regularly follow the old-fashioned approach to journalism training, placing little attention on how to make radio more effective in providing relevant and meaningful content and giving real voice to the majority of people. As a result, most community radio stations are underutilized or misused.”

Nevertheless, for many Zambians, radio has been [a reliable companion](#), providing crucial information for both personal and national development.<sup>7</sup>

In a [February 2022 interview](#), Mario Maniewicz, Director of the Radiocommunication Bureau at the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), said radio remains a dominant medium in Africa, boasting the unique ability to reach the widest audience.<sup>8</sup> “Radio is a powerful medium for celebrating humanity in all its diversity and constitutes a platform for democratic discourse,” he said.

Some Zambians turn to radio over other mediums due to financial constraints, as not everyone can afford a television set, which requires an added government levy. This is especially true in rural areas, where more than half of the population resides.

Community radio stations play a crucial role in this context, broadcasting primarily in the languages of the communities they serve. This emphasis on linguistic representation fosters trust in radio's independence and ensures better representation of diverse ideas.

A significant endorsement of this: on World Radio Day last year, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) [announced funding](#) for the establishment of Community Radios in Zambia in February 2022, and continues to monitor the sustainability and growth of these radio stations in Mazabuka, Chama, Mongu, Mkushi, Samfya, and Isoka.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Chanda, DM (Feb 13, 2014) *Airwaves Liberalisation Commendable*, Times of Zambia. Available at <https://www.times.co.zm/?p=9528>

<sup>8</sup> Available at: <https://allafrica.com/stories/202202210093.html>

<sup>9</sup> Available at: <https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/celebrating-radio-and-trust-zambia>



As UN Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres, said in [remarks](#) marking 2019 World Radio Day: “Even in today’s world of digital communications, radio reaches more people than any other media platform.”<sup>10</sup>

### **A brief history of radio in Zambia**

Mike Daka, author of [A Zambian Journalist-in Pursuit of Three Freedoms](#), says the roots of broadcasting in Zambia can be traced back to 1941 when the Northern Rhodesia Government established a small radio station in Lusaka.<sup>11</sup>

This station, equipped with special sets known as a "saucepan," served as a communal broadcast platform for six vernacular languages, catering mainly to the African audience, while white settlers tuned in to the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) and the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC).

In 1964, upon Zambia's independence, the broadcasting station was nationalised as Zambia Broadcasting Services (ZBS), becoming a department under the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Services. Later, in 1987, an Act of Parliament transformed ZBS into the present Zambia National Broadcasting Corporation (ZNBC).

For several years, broadcasting remained under state control until the liberalisation of the airwaves in 1994, which paved the way for the emergence of community, religious, and commercial radio stations, breaking the monopoly held by ZNBC.

By 2018, Zambia had witnessed the proliferation of over 100 new independent radio stations throughout the country, making radio the most potent mass medium in Zambia. Its extensive reach into rural areas and districts gave voice to previously marginalised communities, which had limited access to television or newspapers. The success of radio can be attributed to its ability to transcend language and literacy barriers, enabling localisation of content and influencing hundreds of thousands of people.

However, despite radio's growth and influence, Daka raises concerns about the lack of emphasis on upholding fundamental journalistic standards, political and economic analysis, and media ethics.

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<sup>10</sup> Available at: <https://news.un.org/en/story/2019/02/1032591>

<sup>11</sup> Available at: <https://www.amazon.co.uk/Zambian-Journalist-Pursuit-Three-Freedoms/dp/9982241176>

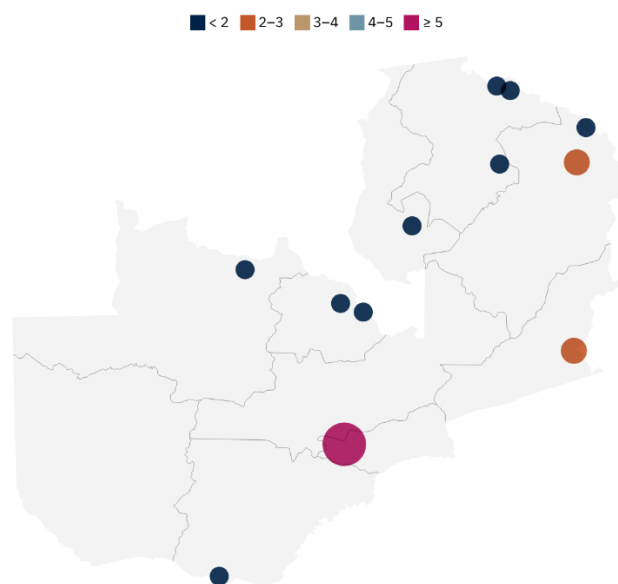
## Radio journalists and ‘blalizo’: a survey

I am a journalist by trade. But, inspired by my surroundings at the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, I used my time there as a journalist fellow to conduct some of my own informal research.

To get to grips with the challenges facing Zambian radio journalists and how these inform their opinions around *blalizo*, I sent out a questionnaire via email and WhatsApp and received feedback from a total of 21 radio journalists working in eight different provinces across Zambia.

The questionnaire was built using Google Forms. Respondents had the option to remain anonymous or provide their names for follow-up interviews.

**Location of radio journalists polled**



*Map shows the locations of radio journalists who took part in the survey and interviews*

I followed up with some respondents by phone and video call. I also spoke to radio station managers, owners and communication consultants for their response to the findings.

### A summary of questionnaire findings

The survey began by asking radio journalists to describe what they disliked most about their job. Most respondents said, “feeling disrespected” and “low wages”.

A second question asked if they thought the practice of receiving *blalizo* should be maintained, 42.9% said “yes”, 23.8% said “no”, 28.6% were undecided, and 4.7 % of participants did not answer.

### Should the practice of receiving 'blalizo' be maintained?

Yes Undecided No Declined to answer

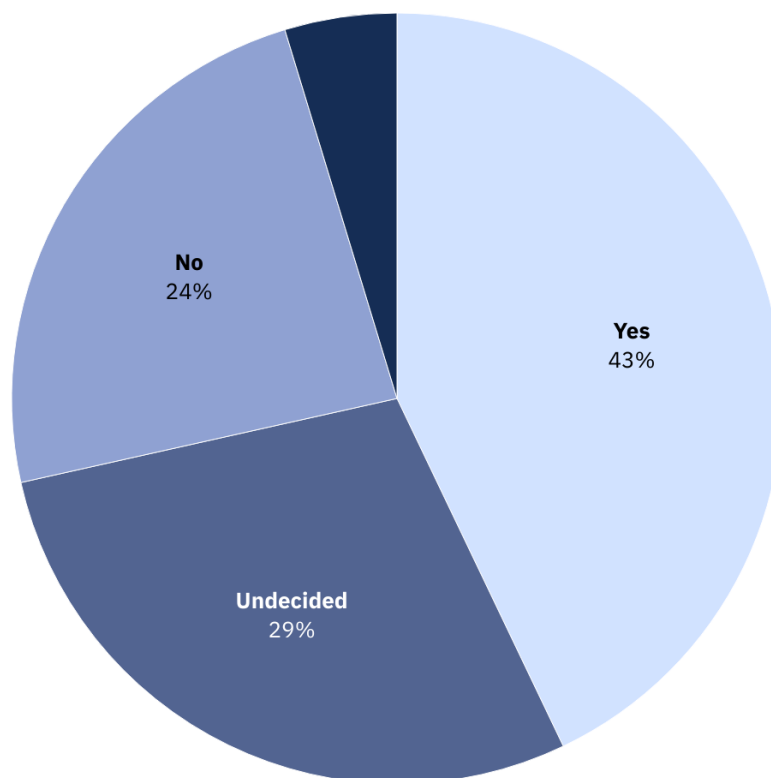


Chart: Laida C. Chongo

Asked for the reasoning behind their answer, the most popular answer among those who said “yes” to maintaining *blalizo* was that their wages were too low and *blalizo* worked as a supplement.

The most popular answer among those who said “no” to maintaining *blalizo* was that it was a form of corruption.

I have paraphrased all written-in answers received in the table below:

### What is the reasoning behind your answer?

Paraphrased and summarised comments on question two.

| Reasons given for keeping 'blalizo'   | Reasons given for ending 'blalizo'   |
|---|--|
| It's supplementary income   | It's a form of corruption  |
| It doesn't influence how I report   | It makes one feel indebted to sources  |
| It's a salary on its own for unpaid volunteer journalists   | It compromises my journalistic values  |
| It cushions the blow when our salaries go unpaid – they are often delayed                                     | You lose power over the story when you accept 'blalizo'                      |
| Our low wages are not commensurate with the hard work we do   | It shifts attention from what is newsworthy to what offers blalizo           |
| Keep it as an optional token to show appreciation for the work we do because media owners don't appreciate us | It compromises my objectivity  |
| It's necessary for logistics as some radio stations don't give us allowances                                  | It compromises the entire industry   |
| It's a way of respecting our time   | We are required to send a recording to the source as proof that you aired it |
| We have families to feed  |  |
| Media stations are struggling financially so organisations should subsidize our work to keep the doors open   |  |

In question three, journalists were asked if they thought Government should introduce a minimum wage for journalists.

The thinking behind this question: could a fair wage remove the impetus for accepting *blalizo*? The vast majority (85.7%) of the journalists polled said “yes”.

One worried that minimum wage proposed by Government might still be too low, another said employers might not be able to afford the minimum wage without government grants to supplement payroll – risking either reliance on government grants, or the closure of radio stations.

**Note:** On December 22, 2022, the Government of Zambia released a circular with recommendations to introduce a minimum wage for the media. This has yet to be translated into an actual law, and the specifics of how the minimum wage would be

implemented were not made clear. It also did not address the use of volunteers, nor did it specify whether the minimum wage would apply to private- and/or government-owned media. A request for an interview with Honourable Minister of Information and Media Ms. Kasanda Chushi was initially granted, but not fulfilled.

When I asked journalists if they would like to have a National Code of Conduct governing professional behaviour of journalists, the majority (71.4%) were in support of the idea.

### Would you like to have a National Code of Conduct for journalism professionals?

■ Yes ■ No ■ Maybe

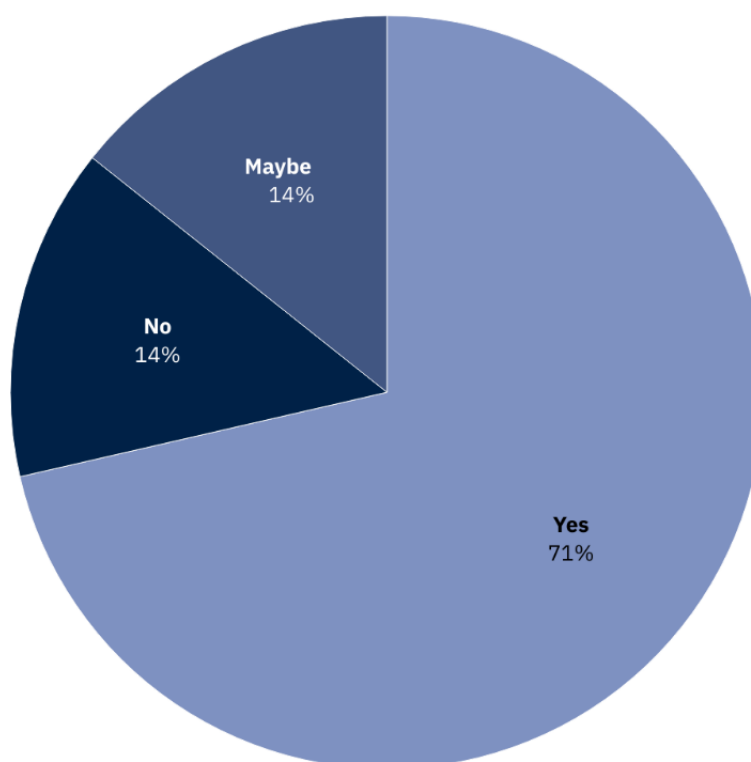


Chart: Laida C. Chongo

Asked for the reasoning behind their answer, the most popular answer among those who said “yes” to a code of conduct was that it could act as a guide to honest behaviour.

The most popular answer among those who said “no” to a code of conduct was that it may be misused to silence journalists reporting critical information.

A paraphrased version of written-in answers is included in the table below:

### What is the reasoning behind your answer?

Paraphrased and summarised comments on question four.

| Reasons for adopting a code   | Reasons against adopting a code  |
|---|--|
| It will restore sanity to the industry                                | It may be used to silence journalists  |
| It will encourage accountability and remove grifters                  | There is no need for a code as the current ethics are enough to act professionally |
| It will guide both media partners and journalists to operate honestly |  |

Table: Laida C. Chongo

**Note:** a legal framework for this may already exist in the form of the [Zambia Institute of Public Relations and Communication Act, 2022](#), which states: “The Council shall adopt and publish a code of ethics for practitioners which shall bind practitioners registered under this Act. A practitioner commits professional misconduct if the practitioner engages in conduct that is dishonest, fraudulent, or deceitful; or breaches the code of ethics or encourages another practitioner to breach or disregard the code of ethics.

## Managers and owners weigh in

Following the survey I spoke to managers and owners for the views on the matter. Not all interviewees were willing to speak on the record, but agreed to have their quotes included without attribution. Here are their opinions, broadly categorised into the subject areas of *blalizo*, minimum wage, a code of ethics, improving radio standards and improving the quality of journalism

### Overall perception of 'blalizo' is poor

Joe Chilaizya, a station manager for a privately owned radio station, said *blalizo* gives sources the impression that journalists are too poor to be principled. “A journalist is an agent of the truth and they have failed their mission when they accept *blalizo*,” he said, “as sources sometimes pay to even suppress information and this has a negative effect on the quality of stories.”

Maureen Nkandu, the founder and director of FM Nkandu Media Institute, said she discourages *blalizo* because it destroys professionalism. She recounted how some journalists were showing up well after the start of events, asking for a refund and a copy of a speech, then fabricating coverage. “Blalizo also destroys the quality of news as a journalist will not have full editorial control,” she said.

Mike Daka, a renowned veteran journalist and founder of Breeze FM, told me it was tantamount to corruption: “bribery with a fancy name”. He said that journalists should expose corruption and not take part in it.

A manager of a community radio station who asked not to be named, said he was paid very poorly in the past, which is why he accepted *blalizo*: “When I worked as a full-time reporter at a [well-known] radio station, transport refund made up 50% of my income.”

Albert Mwiinga, station manager at Byta FM, said: “Blalizo is wrong from whichever angle you look at it. It’s a form of mild corruption. Most politicians and public relations officials who give *blalizo* give it because they know the power it holds, which is to cover them favourably.”

### Managers are divided on the idea of a minimum wage

Radio Chimwemwe’s Station Manager, Isaac Kikanda, said the industry was suffering because there are too many radio stations. He thought introducing a minimum wage was a good idea, because it would weed out stations who could not afford to pay their workers correctly.

Chilaizya was not sold on the idea, and said most journalists are “totally oblivious” about how much it costs to run a radio station, and that media houses are straining under the weight of crippling tax obligations. Anyone setting out to open a radio

station in 2023, he said, would need to figure out how to make a profit without advertising, which is increasingly hard to sell.

Daka thought introducing minimum wage was the “only way to ensure journalists are paid well”. He added that commercial stations should be expected to pay well above the minimum, as they could afford to pay for good talent.

### **Most managers want a national code of ethics, but no one is sure how it would work**

Mwiinga said media houses were unlikely to co-operate and reach agreement without Government intervention: “This requires support of broader regulation; until we deal with this, it will be a thorn in the flesh. But journalists need to decide to bring back good conduct.”

Daka agreed that *blalizo* was an alarm sounding to show the need for clearer expectations around what good journalism entails. He said the code should apply to people who pay *blalizo*, and not just those receiving it.

Chilaizya said he felt the code was necessary, but questioned who would enforce it.

“Journalists already have journalism ethics, so I don’t think some media houses will accept having a national code of ethics,” said Nkandu. “Besides, untrained journalists may not even understand this or abide by them.”

### **Reducing the number of stations will improve overall quality**

Both Nkandu and Chilaizya felt there was a need to reduce the number of licenses available. “The licensing body should examine investment capacity of people coming into media,” Chilaizya said. “What they set aside for salaries, how much they are paying their workers and so forth? Quite a lot of that isn’t examined by the licensing bodies. Simply, protection has to start from this.”

Daka urged media owners to improve the conditions of service for their employees. “Some media houses can afford to pay better but most of these are privately owned and are under no obligation to,” he said. “It entirely depends on them, but they need good will to appreciate the work and respect the profession.”

### **Sustainability is about quality, not lower costs**

Radio stations with good programming and high standards will attract listeners, according to Daka. And listeners will attract advertisers. “When people get *blalizo* they begin to cover press releases as news,” he said, which is a surefire route to lower quality.

He agreed with Chimwemwe’s Station Manager’s view that there are too many frequencies: there about 74 community radio stations and 70 commercial ones operating in Zambia. Advertising spend is not increased because of more licenses being granted; it is simply diluted between ever



more players. And Government support is only available for a select few stations.

“Another thing is that there too many things to pay for. Instead of paying for one license, you pay Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA) and The Zambia Information and Communications Technology Authority (ZICTA). You also pay for transmitters and other bills, so they should stop giving out too many licenses as the cost of running a radio station is too high,” he said. “All people need is just one or two radio stations at each provincial centre, not for instance 14 in the Eastern province alone!”

“Money is exchanged for value, and if radio stations begin to provide value, very few will struggle with paying well,” he said.

### **Plurality of voice is not a major concern, but some community stations need help**

Senior reporter at Radio Icengelo, Ackim Mugala, said he was not concerned about losing plurality of voice to closures because there was enough diversity of thought among the top performers.

Plurality, Daka said, is not just in numbers: some radio stations just play music and have discussions that don't address their community or specific audience needs.

Kikanda and Mwiinga said certain community stations could do with support because of the importance of local radio in rural communities.

### **They all want to see improvements to overall standards**

“We need a generation of journalists who are professionally trained,” said Nkandu. “They have lost understanding of what news is and dented it very badly.”

Daka urged more Zambian journalists to read widely. “When reporting, they should go beyond the basic facts; there is a need to provide context. News nowadays lacks analysis and interpretation. That's not journalism as it lacks knowledge.”

Mugala urged radio stations to take advantage of training opportunities offered by institutions like MISA to ensure that their staff keep advancing.

Moreover, Kikanda urged journalists to seek more commentary from the public and not just officials who pay *blalizo*.

Mwiinga added: “Journalism is the fourth estate of government; it's a very high ranking but we fail to live up to that ranking. We need to do our best and not disappoint the expectation.”

## Conclusion

As I said at the outset: there is no easy solution to the problem that is *blalizo*.

A suggestion by Government to introduce a minimum wage has the potential to ensure that journalists are paid a living wage, making it feasible to start an open conversation about the ethical implications of accepting *blalizo*.

Once that conversation has begun in earnest, a secondary conversation can begin about industry support for eradicating *blalizo*. Ending the payment entirely may prevent bad actors from abusing the job title for personal gain.

But Government and the industry itself will need to undertake a serious nationwide consultation to understand the full implications of all policies before they are implemented, however well intentioned.

In the meantime, untrained radio volunteers should be provided with free learning opportunities to ensure they are exposed to industry ethics and norms, and understand the pitfalls and possibilities of the work journalists undertake.

I believe it is possible for the media to self-regulate to ensure its freedom from government control, but it will require all outlets to come together – including government-funded outlets. Once this happens, a further conversation can begin about the principles we plan to uphold nationally, the routes to complaint and remedy, and the implications for those found wanting.

What is clear to me is that, regardless of whether any of these changes happen, the owners and operators of radio stations need to be put on notice to improve working conditions as a matter of national urgency.

I hope this work serves as that notice.