Voices from Marikana

Analysis on how media have reported Marikana over the past 10 years

Key findings

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The year 2022 marks 10 years since the murder of mine workers in Marikana. On 16 August, 2012, 34 mine workers in Marikana, North West were murdered by the South African Police Service after a week-long strike demanding salary increments. According to the South African Jewish Report, this incident is regarded as one of most deadly use of violence by the South African security forces against its own civilians since the Sharpeville massacre that happened in 1960.

Since 2012, every year, there has been a deliberate effort to commemorate and remember the deaths of the miners by various stakeholders such as political parties, communities and government.

The media in South Africa has also not been left out of the commemoration. Every year around the anniversary, various media report on the massacre and issues relating to the event.

Media Monitoring Africa (MMA) decided to monitor and analyse various South African media to determine how they have reported the event in the past 10 years. The monitoring was conducted to determine trends in coverage. Over 19 media[1] were monitored and analysed over a 10-year period and MMA looked at aspects such as how many stories relating to Marikana were reported in the media, what the issues reported were, the sources in the stories and, the quality of information that the stories provided. MMA paid particular attention to sources to determine who held the most power in issues relating to Marikana as it is known that the louder the voice, the more power that source holds. Here, the voice of citizens was of particular interest to MMA in order to ascertain whether ordinary citizens were represented in the coverage. All the sources were analysed further to check their affiliation, gender and race. Further, topics in media coverage relating to the event were analysed in order to determine what issues were prioritised on the agenda by the media.

Ten years’ worth of data was monitored and is being analysed into a report which will be published soon. MMA has however decided to release the key findings from the monitoring before the full report is published. While the full report will show results for each year to show how the story grew, the key findings below have been collated from all the ten years monitored in order to give a snapshot of the coverage.

The monitoring results show that only 1% of stories during the 10-year monitoring period were related to Marikana. This means that even though the event was regarded as one of the most gruesome acts by the police, it still did not sufficiently dominate media coverage. In terms of issues that the media reported, focus was placed more on stories on the justice system. These included stories that reported on families of the victims seeking compensation from the government. Some of the justice system stories were related to the Farlam commission inquiry and its findings.

The results also show that the government has been a dominating voice in media coverage of Marikana followed by political parties. Albeit with a small voice share, citizens also made it to the top five most dominant sources in Marikana coverage.

Below are graphs showing the collated key findings from the 10-year monitoring period.
Marikana stories vs Other stories not related to Marikana but published in the same 10 year period

- Stories related to Marikana: 1%
- Stories not related to Marikana: 99%

Figure 1: Amount of coverage of Marikana

Geographical representation of Marikana

- North West: 82%
- Gauteng: 8%
- KwaZulu-Natal: 1%
- Limpopo: 1%
- Western Cape: 8%

Figure 2: Geographical representation of stories on Marikana
Top 5 topics in Marikana coverage (which is 65% of all stories on Marikana)

- Justice system: 25%
- Marikana commemoration: 21%
- Crime: 8%
- Demonstrations / Protests: 6%
- Economics: 6%

Figure 3: Topics reported in Marikana coverage

Top 5 sources in Marikana coverage (which is 51% of all sources in Marikana coverage)

- Government: 19%
- Political parties: 15%
- Citizens/ residents: 7%
- Unions: 6%
- Experts: 4%

Figure 4: Top 5 sources in Marikana coverage
Gender breakdown of sources

Figure 5: Gender breakdown of sources

Racial breakdown of sources

Figure 6: Racial breakdown of sources
Quality of information provided in Marikana coverage

![Bar chart showing percentage of information provided for each category: Basic context: 100%, Causes: 76%, Consequences: 27%, Solutions: 4%, Relevant Policy: 1%, Self-help: 0%]

Figure 7: Quality of information provided in Marikana coverage
Questions? Contact us.

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Please note that the full detailed monitoring report will be released soon!