



Training for Community Broadcasters on Coverage of COVID-19



COVID -19: IMS/NCRC Train Broadcasters On Misinformation and Disinformation

Journalists have a professional duty to pass verified information on Covid-19 to their readers, listeners.

As part of efforts towards strengthening media professionalism, and ensuring ethical coverage and reportage of COVID-19 pandemic in Nigeria, the Institute for Media and Society (IMS) in collaboration with the Nigeria Community Radio Coalition, NCRC, organized training for broadcasters from community radio stations, and their counterparts in commercial and government owned stations across Nigeria.

The training titled *Online Training for Broadcasters on Misinformation and Disinformation on COVID-19 in Nigeria*, held on Wednesday, May 27, 2020, with over 35 participants, which included: reporters, editors and presenters from radio stations across the six (6) geo-political zones of the country.

In his opening remarks at the event, the Executive Director of the Institute for Media and Society, Dr Akin Akingbulu noted that the objective of the training was to develop the capacity of broadcasters in understanding the various misconceptions and disinformation on COVID-19 and how to address them professionally.

He expressed concern over the growing trend of misinformation and disinformation on Covid-19 in the public domain in recent times, and observed that the media has a vital role to play in

addressing the situation at hand. He pointed out that capacity building would help media practitioners acquire the much required skills in the discharge of their responsibility as information disseminators. He urged the participants to make use of knowledge acquired from the training to improve on their job.

Delivering his presentation titled: *Misinformation and Disinformation in the COVID-19 era: What Are They? How Should Journalists Deal with them?* Dr. Tunde Akanni, a lecturer and media trainer from the Lagos State University, noted that misinformation and disinformation have further added to the challenge at hand in the COVID-19 era.

He observed that with the increasing social media space and public participation almost everyone has become journalist. In view of this, he appealed to media professionals to intensify their use of investigative journalism and verify information before dissemination, as the public relies on the media for authentic information.

He also urged the media professionals to be Internet savvy, so that they can separate counterfeit sources of information from the real ones, thereby curtailing the circulation of false news in the media space.

Mrs Anthonia Akanji of the Federal

Radio Corporation of Nigeria, FRCN, Ibadan Network Centre, took the second presentation for the day, titled; *Dealing with Misinformation and Disinformation: Experience from the COVID-19 Frontline*.

She decried the spate of misinformation and disinformation in the public media space and the new media and encouraged media practitioners to always intensify their search for the truth and insist on it and ensure that they don't share information from unverifiable sources.

According to her, that variety of media contents should be deployed as tools for information dissemination to correct misinformation on Covid-19, adding that the media can use voices of important personalities in the society to reach out to the public.

In their reactions, participants expressed their satisfaction with the training content, and assured organizers of their readiness to put knowledge acquired to use in their various broadcast stations. Dr Abiodun Ogidan of the University of Lagos moderated the event.

In his closing remarks, Akingbulu disclosed that the second stage in the series of the online training involves activities that would be carried out in the broadcast station soon.

Abducted NTA Manager Regains Freedom

The Assistant Manager, News and Current Affairs of Nigeria Television Authority (NTA) Channel 6 Aba, Abia State, Mrs. Chinyere Okoye who was kidnapped on Wednesday has reportedly regained her freedom.

Mrs. Okoye was kidnapped on Wednesday night after close of work in front of her compound near Obikabia junction and was taken to an unknown destination.

The kidnapers were said to have driven her away in her own car. Mrs. Okoye was been released on Friday after operatives of the State Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) and other police tactical units of Abia State Command of Nigeria Police Force (NPF) stormed the kidnapers den.

A source disclosed that Mrs. Okoye, after her release was taken to the SARS facility in Aba, where she was later joined by her family members and friends.

According to the source, the police team acting on information stormed a compound in Mgboko, Obete in Obingwa Local Government Area of the state and cordoned off the area. The victim was a staff of the Enugu NTA Zonal Office before she was recently transferred to Aba.

Journalist Raises Alarm over Safety

A journalist in Abuja, Mike Idakosa, on Tuesday raised the alarm over his family's safety after a bullet pierced through the ceiling of his home and landed in one of the rooms.

Idakosa who took to his Facebook to raise the danger, said his family members were playing inside their compound when they heard an unusual sound in the sitting room of his home located at the New Karu area of Abuja.

He said they rushed into the house and found a bullet on the floor that had pierced through the roof. He was quoted as saying "My family told me that they were at my backyard and heard a sound in the sitting room and when they went to check, they initially noticed sand from no where on the rug carpet.

"Wondering where the sand came from, they looked at the ceiling only to see a hole there. While sweeping the sand, they saw the bullet."

He said some unknown persons had earlier stormed his house and damaged his generator and poured fuel under his car. He said he had reported the incidents to the New Kawu Police Station.

Detained Journalist Regains Freedom, Seeks Probe of SSS



L-R: Kufre and his lawyer, Inidehe

Radio XL 109.6 FM presenter Kufre Carter in Uyo, the Akwa Ibom state capital, on Wednesday breathed the air of freedom after spending 30 days in the Directorate of State Security, DSS, detention, courtesy of the state government.

Kufre whom the government claimed defamed the Commissioner for Health Dr Dominic Ukpong over his handling of Covid-19 pandemic in the state regained freedom when the Director –General of the SSS, Alhaji Yaya Bichi directed the state command of the agency to obey the subsisting court order on his release.

Lawyer to Kufre, Mr Inihehe Effiong urged Bichi to probe the involvement of state command while he demanded a public apology from the state government.



IGP, Mohammed Adamu

Police Arrest, Release Four Journalists Without Disclosing Their Offense

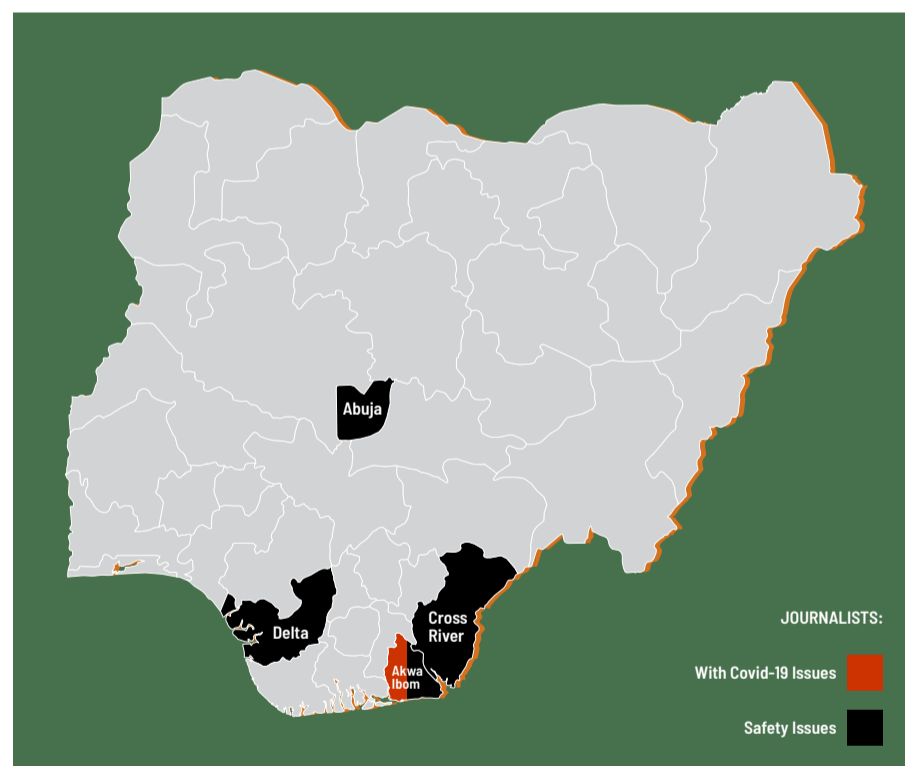
The four Warri, Delta State based journalists who were arrested Tuesday by police detectives from Abuja have regained their freedom.

Police detectives said to be the Inspector General of Police (IGP) team from the force headquarters, Abuja, had stormed the Press Centre of the Warri Correspondent Chapel of the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ) to arrest them.

The arrested journalists are Mr. Matthew Omonigho of the Daily Post Online, Mr Edeki Egafe of the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN), Mr. Francis Sadhere of Business Day and Mr Christopher Odamah, a freelance journalist.

The three other journalists, are the leadership of the Chapel sent to know the crime Omonigho committed and were reportedly arrested and detained by the operatives. No reason was given for the arrest of the Daily Post reporter and the other three journalists.

It was gathered that the journalists were freed following the intervention of the Commissioner of Police in Delta State, Mr. Hafiz Inuwa and the chairman of the state council of NUJ, Comrade Michael Ikeagwu.



10 Press Corp Members Test Positive for Coronavirus

10 members of Government House Press Corps, Akwa Ibom state have reportedly tested positive for the dreaded COVID-19. The tests carried out on Sunday indicated that the positive cases, which were among the 19 new active cases recorded in the state, are currently receiving treatment at the isolation centre in the state.

The chairman of the Warri NUJ, Mr. Okies Vicky, confirmed the release of the four journalists but added that they were released after the detective obtained statement from them.

According to management of the Daily Post, "The arrest, it was said is capable of instilling fear of possible clamp down among Journalists in the state particularly with the failure of the police to disclose their offences in accordance with the provision of Section 6(1) of the Administration of Criminal Justice Act 2015, a fundamental rights lawyer said."

Crunch: Stakeholders Suggest Way Out for Media Business In Post Covid-19 Era



Media owners, managers and practitioners can stay the blows of Covid-19 on the profession by adopting creative strategies.

Dwindling revenue and dried up sources of funding for the media already hard hit by measures on lockdown to contain Covid-19 pandemic is forcing many to downsize, cut pay for staff and put many others on forced leave while many journalists at the frontline reporting the pandemic are inadequately catered for.

Worried by the effect of the cost-cutting measure on the profession, some prominent media personalities have suggested ways out of the impending quagmire.

They are Lekan Otufodunrin, a former Editor at the Nation's newspaper, Ejiro Umukoro, General Manager Mega 89.1 FM Warri and Bayo Olopohunda of Opera News.

On measures to adopt to tackle financial crisis facing the media, Umukoro advised the media to consider staff welfare by planning ahead for all scenarios. Treating the essential service nature of Journalists, she argues, makes it mandatory for the payment of hazard allowances, attending regularly to their welfare as required by labour practice and providing a workplace that is conducive to work

Olopohunda argued that it would be a clear violation of contractual obligation on the part of media houses to cut or not to pay salaries. In fact, it may even be counterproductive in the end because of the high exposure of journalists to unprofessional conduct

Otufodunrin acknowledged the fact that the media have been hard hit with drastic drop in revenue. Patronage of the print, for example, has declined drastically due to the lockdown and restriction of movement. It's more difficult to circulate the publications despite being allowed to move around.

At another forum, a foreign media manager who x-rayed the dire situation facing the media in Nigeria suggested important strategies. He is Juan Senor, President of Innovation Media Consulting Group at Google. During his recent

meeting with media executives and managers in Nigeria courtesy of The Journalism Clinic, Senor shared his experience.

Confirming the devastating impact of the virus on the operations of media organizations, Senor called for "collaboration to reduce the cost of production and distribution, more engagements with the readers, development of digital revenue business model, more specialized reporting among others options."

He urged media managers and owners to brace up and take advantage of the opportunities presented by the Internet. He said it was time to be bold and earn maximum digital revenue.

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“You need to rethink your websites, ask for payment for some sections of your websites. You must build paywalls. Free is expensive in a digital age. You must diversify and build Reader Revenue,” Senor counselled, adding that for a start, online readers should be made to register to have access to the websites.” Considering the high cost of importing newsprint, ink, printing and distribution, Senor said there is an urgent need for the consolidation of operations and collaboration to reduce cost.

Otufodunrin, Umukoro and Olopohunda agreed that the media should adjust to the current realities to stay afloat.

For Otufodunrin, journalists are making lots of sacrifices to keep the people well informed and aware at the risk of being exposed to viral infection and all kinds of psychological trauma.

He noted that media professionals have been providing comprehensive coverage of all aspects of the pandemic and providing necessary insights on how people can cope. They have been helping to checkmate fake news and demystifying myths. They have been helping to galvanize support for the needy and vulnerable in our society and keeping government on its toes to rise up to the occasion.

“Our information gathering and dissemination role is so crucial and complementary to the success of the role of others involved in helping to find solutions and checkmate the spread.

He however noted that despite being on the frontline journalists are not well protected from getting infected with the pandemic. He called on the management of the media organizations to better protect and support their staff.

On her part, Umukoro lamented that journalists are not protected enough in Nigeria as she had observed in some other countries. She called for the provision of boom microphones to enable social distancing, and alternative tools for getting data in an open environment which she noted was lacking.

She also hinted that while on the job, journalists have been harassed, threatened and suffered brutality especially from police and by some government officials even after identifying themselves! Which should not be the case.

Olopohunda said, “Safety should be a serious consideration for reporters and correspondents at the front-line of this pandemic. While journalists must take their personal safety seriously, managers and media owners must also provide measures to keep their staff safe.

Many news organizations have ordered staff to work from home whenever possible in order to reduce the chance of them contracting the virus. For those in broadcast, there should be pick-ups. They should be provided with safety kits. These suggestions, the stakeholders believe, may not be exhaustive but they would certainly make the desired impact if adopted by media houses in solving the challenges facing the media in the covid-19 era.

Broadcast media regulator, NBC; HoSF go tough on code violators

NBC fines 3 broadcast stations, sanctions 28 others

The National Broadcasting Commission (NBC), on Wednesday sanctioned three broadcast stations for violating the code for unverifiable claims and lack of professionalism in the broadcast of COVID-19.

The stations are Breeze FM, Akure, fined N250,000; Adaba FM, Akure, fined twice with N500,000 and Albarika FM, Ilorin, 250,000.

The commission in its first quarterly report for 2020, said 28 stations other stations were also sanctioned for violating areas of the NBC Code dealing with obscenity, political breaches, hate speech, unprofessionalism, unverifiable claims, advertisement, and technical.

Acting Director-General of the Commission, Prof. Armstrong Idachaba, while briefing



journalists in Abuja said the sanctions are the outcome of the first quarterly profile of broadcasting stations in the country. He said; "On the coverage and reportage of COVID-19, three broadcasting stations were specifically sanctioned for violating the code for unverifiable claims and lack of professionalism," Idachaba said.

In the area of digital switch over, Idachaba said the NBC is considering a new license fee regime and broadcast signal distributor carriage fees for the Digital Terrestrial Television (DTT) operators.

"The new rates would affect National Free-View DTT; Regional Free-View DTT; Local Free-View DTT. The Committee expects all licensed DTT operators to commence payment of the new fees, which are lower than the fees in the analogue era," Idachaba said.

On the reform of the NBC, Idachaba said following the approval by President Muhammadu Buhari, the commission conducted a public presentation of the Amendment of the 6th edition of the Nigeria Broadcasting Code to stakeholders.

"I am glad that the work is ready now and the commission has published the provisions of the Amendment of the Code," Idachaba said.

Leaks of Official Documents on Social Media To Attract Dismissal of Public Servants

The federal government has warned that it will dismiss civil servants caught leaking official documents on social media.

Head of Service of the Federation, Folasade Yemi-Esan, in a circular, described the "unfortunate unauthorized disclosure of official documents on social media" as "embarrassing and not acceptable".

The circular was entitled "unauthorized circulation of official documents/information on social media", Yemi-Esan said

"In some cases, official documents that have been minuted on are also leaked. This irresponsible and reckless action is an act of serious misconduct with a penalty of dismissal from service as provided for in Public Service Rules Nos. 030401 and 030402.



Dr Folasade-Yemi Eson, Head of Service of the Federation.

Why Nigerians Consume More Data in Lockdown - NCC



Executive Vice Chairman/CEO, Nigeria Communications Commission, Prof Umar Garba Danbatta

The Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) says telecoms consumers are witnessing faster data depletion since the beginning of the lockdown.

The Director of Public Affairs, NCC, Dr. Henry Nkemadu, in a notice, said: "The nature of technology (2G, 3G or 4G), the quality of the network, the speed of the download, the type of websites you visit, the specifications of your handset, and so many other factors contribute to your data consumption."

“ In some cases, official documents that have been minuted on are also leaked. This irresponsible and reckless action is an act of serious misconduct with a penalty of dismissal from service as provided for in Public Service Rules Nos. 030401 and 030402. ”

NCC disclosed that during the lockdown, which commenced on March 30th in some states, it received a total of 76 complaints, 58 of which were related to unsatisfactory data services.

It, however, added that 68 of the grievances lodged with the commission during that period had been resolved. The Commission stated: "Your data is used whenever your phone connects to the Internet. The following activities are the most common uses that reduce your data: Sending and receiving emails; downloading and uploading files (pictures, documents, videos, among others). The larger the file, the more the data consumption browsing the internet; the more pictures, videos or graphics on the websites visited, the more data is used.

"Instant Messaging – like WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger, Snapchat, etc, streaming music/ videos on YouTube, Hulu, Netflix and other channels and games use a lot more data than most people imagine due to the intense graphics and algorithms that power them. So also are Social media applications such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, Instagram, etc, video-chatting and conferencing applications like Zoom, Skype, WhatsApp Video, among others."

Editor's Note

Misinformation and disinformation about covid-19 pandemic could be deadlier than the virus itself. The reason is that deliberately planted, false information or unverified information on the diseases can create panic, fear, wrong diagnoses and medication with telling fatality.

This is so at a time when health experts and coordinating organizations such as WHO are yet to define, understand and correctly diagnose the virus. That is why the Institute for Media and Society, IMS and the Nigeria Radio Coalition has started an online training for broadcast journalists in Nigeria. The group recently organized an e-training for broadcasters with the theme: Misinformation and Disinformation on Covid-19 in Nigeria.

It took place on Wednesday, May 27, 2020. It was facilitated and moderated by seasoned media professionals and teachers and attended by 35 participants, which included: reporters, editors and presenters from radio stations across the six (6) geo-political zones of the country. It is our opening story in this edition.

There is no doubt this must be trying times for everybody. Covid-19 is impacting on many persons and institutions with reckless abandon. On this note, the continuous harassment of journalists by the Nigeria Police Force is becoming an epidemic. Charged with the enforcement of covid-19 measures on movements and curfew during the lockdown, the police rank and file have been serially harassing and maltreating journalists.

Few days after public outcry forced the Inspector-General of Police, Mohammed Adamu to make a U-turn on his standing orders to arrest anyone violating lockdown measures in clear violation of presidential orders exempting journalists and other essential, frontline staff handling covid-19 emergencies, the police struck again. This time it was in Warri, the Delta state economic nerve. They were eventually released after a day in detention but for no stated offense.

Unwavering, journalists are still doing their job and unfortunately testing positive of the virus, while some others are becoming soft targets for kidnappers. We bring updates on these reports.

The impact of Covid-19 on media operations is biting harder and many are adopting survival strategies to cope. What are the best strategies to adopt to stay in business? What measures are suitable and which are not?. We answer these questions in our page on media business.

The page on policy and regulation sizzle with information on sanctions and threat of sanctions, on the one hand, by the National Broadcasting Organisation, NBC, whose Director-General, Armstrong Idachaba, welded the big stick on some stations of broadcast station violating codes of the regulator, and on the other by the Head of Service of the Federation, Dr Eson, who plans to sack officials leaking memos.

Happy reading.

The Editor
Institute for Media and Society, Nigeria

NCDC Confirmed COVID -19 Cases by State, May 29, 2020

States Affected	No. of Cases (Lab Confirmed)	No. of Cases (on admission)	No. Discharged	No. of Deaths
Lagos	4,123	3,331	745	47
Kano	939	759	139	41
FCT	535	363	158	14
Katsina	358	293	51	14
Oyo	260	166	88	6
Borno	258	73	160	25
Ogun	246	109	128	9
Jigawa	241	159	78	4
Edo	240	158	69	13
Bauchi	234	22	205	7
Kaduna	221	77	138	6
Rivers	176	121	43	12
Gombe	154	32	119	3
Sokoto	116	9	93	14
Plateau	99	50	47	2
Kwara	87	49	37	1
Zamfara	76	5	66	5
Nasarawa	62	42	18	2
Delta	57	36	14	7
Yobe	47	32	8	7
Akwa Ibom	45	29	14	2
Osun	44	5	35	4
Ebonyi	40	32	8	0
Adamawa	38	15	20	3
Imo	34	27	7	0
Kebbi	33	0	29	4
Niger	30	20	9	1
Ondo	24	3	19	2
Ekiti	20	2	16	2
Taraba	18	8	10	0
Enugu	18	10	8	0
Bayelsa	12	5	6	1
Anambra	11	7	3	1
Abia	10	7	3	0
Benue	7	6	1	0
Kogi	2	2	0	0

Highlights

- On the 28th of May 2020, 182 new confirmed cases and 5 deaths were recorded in Nigeria.
- No new state has reported a case in the last 24 hours.
- Till date, 8915 cases have been confirmed, 2592 cases have been discharged and 259 deaths have been recorded in 35 states and the Federal Capital Territory
- The 182 new cases are reported from 16 states- Lagos (111), FCT (16), Akwa Ibom (10), Oyo (8), Kaduna (6), Delta (6), Rivers (5), Ebonyi (4), Ogun (4), Kano (3), Plateau (2), Gombe (2), Kebbi (1), Kwara (2), Bauchi (1), Borno (1)

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