

NBC Engages Broadcast Media, Stakeholders Ahead of Ondo Gov. Election



L:R: Mrs Gloria Makinde, Director of Investigation and Enforcement, National Broadcasting Commission, NBC, Abuja; Mr. Olufemi Ayeni (rtd.), former Director of Investigation and Enforcement, NBC; Acting Director General of NBC, Prof Armstrong Idachaba; Dr Tony Anigala, Director of Broadcast Monitoring, NBC, and Dr Akin Akingbulu, Executive Director of the Institute for Media and Society, IMS, in Akure, Ondo State during the week.

The need for journalists and the media to uphold professionalism ahead of the Ondo state governorship election was on the front burner during a Political Broadcast Stakeholders' Meeting organised by the National Broadcasting Commission, NBC, in collaboration with the Institute for Media and Society, IMS.

The event in Akure, the Ondo State capital, drew participants from the media; journalists, presenters and managers of radio and television stations, and media unions and stakeholders from the security agencies, other government agencies and political parties.

In his welcome address, the Acting Director General of NBC, Prof. Armstrong Idachaba, reiterated the commitment of the Commission "to a free, decent and enlightened election process through the instrumentality of broadcasters".

He further added that, "As broadcasters you are required to set the tone for the conduct of elections. The content of your broadcasts either moderate or spike the tempo of elections. You should not allow politicians and other interested parties to use you to heat up the polity".

The NBC boss who urged the broadcasters to embrace the use of technology in the discharge of their duties further charged them to be abreast of the new broadcasting code and work within the ambit of other extant laws governing the election.

In his presentation, the Executive Director of IMS, Dr. Akin Akingbulu, commended the media for the professional work they have been doing so far on the coverage of the elections.

He commended the media in Ondo State for their pluralism and lauded the highly educated and experienced professionals operating the praiseworthy presence of federal, state, privately owned and community radio and television stations there.

Dr Akingbulu, who however, stated, that "the 2020 governorship election in Ondo State has its uniqueness as it occurs during the fight to overcome COVID-19 and the tension and potential for conflict created by politicians," listed expectations from the broadcast media in the area of voter education to ensure turnout on voting day, to make sure there is peaceful conduct of the election and voter education against electoral malpractices in the area of vote buying and selling, and inclusion of the previously disadvantaged groups like women, youth and people living with disabilities.

While he charged the media to play the watchdog role and ensure transparency and accountability of the electoral process, he pointed out that the attention of the world was focused on Ondo State and the media and cannot afford to fail.

In his paper presentation, titled: *Political Coverage in the Broadcast Media: The Need for Professionalism*, a former Director at NBC, Mr Olufemi Ayeni, insisted that media practitioners must be professional in the conduct of their reportage.

He noted that media coverage in the country has been on mixed bag of the good and not too good and blamed military rule and the rapid increase of broadcast media for the negative impact on media professionalism

He said: "The increase in number of stations necessitate training of more professionals to run these stations and content providers to drive programming, professional training institutions, establishment of content production studios, technologists, technicians and engineers, structures and alternative power investments. All these did not come

from prepared nor sustained efforts as the effects of long military interventions and disruptions to democratic rule, psyche and social life of citizens resulted in apprehension and slumber of media professionals. The steam and willingness to be astute professionally, has waned, compared to the late 70s.

"Those that once benefitted from advanced broadcast professional training were mostly wasted away over the years, some hounded into early retirement and disillusionment while others moved on to other areas like public relations, advertising, etc. Some of those who remained as broadcast professionals either stagnated at their positions when non-professionals, imposed political heads took over their duties, or who became disenchanted at their positions, also devised means to swim with any government in power, military and civilian, that could butter their bread at a high cost to professionalism.

The enthronement of cronies and mediocrity by successive governments, bred general indiscipline in the rank and file of professionals, abuse of integrity, credibility and gradual erosion of the high ethical standards the industry was once known for, he maintained. "Let's face it; is there a regime change in Nigeria that occurred without the positive and negative role of the press in it?", he asked rhetorically.

On his part, the Director of Broadcast Monitoring of NBC, Dr Tony Anigala, in his lecture titled: *Political Broadcasts: What the Code Says*, insisted that the broadcast media would be held responsible for any violation of the broadcast code by guests in the station. He gave the recent example of Nigeria Info in Lagos that became the first station to be fined N5m for a live broadcast by a prominent Nigeria, where an unsubstantiated claim was made. He said the broadcast stations should acquire the right technology to cut off a guest who is making claims likely to cause a breach of peace. He also brought to the notice of the participants the provisions of the new broadcast code dealing with election coverage.

Other guests that delivered goodwill messages at the event include the Ondo State Director of National Orientation Agency, NOA, the deputy director DSS, representative of the Ondo State Commissioner of Police among others.

Governor Commends Media for Support in Fight Against COVID-19 Pandemic

Governor Abdullahi Sule of Nasarawa State has commended the media for their support in the “collective fight against COVID-19 pandemic in the state.”

He stated this while unveiling the remodeled Government House Press Centre in Government House, Lafia, during the week.

He stated that his administration is not unaware of the independence of the press in the discharge of its statutory obligations and said that government shall continue to encourage members of the Fourth Estate of the Realm to discharge their onerous responsibilities to the society considering the critical role the media plays in information dissemination and enlightenment of the citizenry, particularly on Government policies and programmes.

He commends the men of the Fourth Estate of the Realm for the significant role they have continued to play towards the dissemination of government policies and programmes for the accelerated development of the State and the country at large.

“Indeed, your support in the last one year greatly assisted in the sensitization of our people, as well as bridging the information gap for public consumption.

“Let me, therefore, express my profound appreciation to the members of the press for your doggedness and resilience in our collective fight against the COVID-19 pandemic in the State. This is evident through your daily reportage, which has continued to enlighten the populace on the danger of the Coronavirus pandemic. This effort is highly commendable and I urge you to sustain the tempo”.

According to Governor Sule, government is not unaware of journalists support to its development agenda of turning around the fortunes of the people of Nasarawa State.

“I must say that without the media support, our development aspirations would not have been visible. Indeed, your role has continued to set agenda in our determination to entrench an all-inclusive governance for the benefit of our people”.

He said, the remodeling of the edifice is informed by his administration's desire to provide conducive environment for the Government House Press Crew and other related press activities to enhance the execution of their responsibility in the most

effective and proficient manner.

“In the same vein, Government also renovated and furnished the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ) complex. We have also allocated five (5) houses to the State Council of the NUJ in Karu, among other logistics support.

“In furtherance of our commitment to appreciate the efforts and contributions of journalists in the State, we have organized End of the Year Media Award Night, last year. This was to recognize outstanding performance of our journalists who have excelled in their field of endeavour.

“Let me at this juncture, implore you to ensure the maintenance of the facility in this complex for durability and sustainability”.

He then commended journalists in the State for their understanding, cooperation and support in their commitment to ensure a serene environment for all and sundry.

Also speaking at the unveiling of the remodeling edifice, the Director General, Nigerian Television Authority, (NTA) Yakubu Ibn Mohammed said, Governor Abdullahi Sule has set a pace for others to follow hence he urged journalists to make judicious use of the edifice for which it was meant for.

In a welcome address, Ibrahim Adara, the Chief Press Secretary to Governor said his boss single-handedly renovated the edifice from his private pocket and appealed to Governor to provide the facility with CCT camera aimed at meeting the world standard.

Fani-Kayode Threatens to Sue Daily Trust for N6b for Libel

Embattled former Minister of Aviation following torrents of negative reactions trailing his verbal assault of a journalists during a media parley, has given the management of *Daily Trust* newspaper a 14-day ultimatum to enter into negotiation with him or risk being sued for six billion naira as libel.

The ex-Minister, Mr Femi Fani-Kayode threatened to sue the Media Trust Limited, publishers of *Daily Trust* and other publications for an article he deemed offensive on him by the newspaper.

A columnist with the newspaper, Iliyasu Gadu, had in the Sunday edition of the publication, ridiculed Fani-Kayode for his conduct during a press conference in which he described a *Daily Trust* reporter in Calabar, Eyo Charles, as 'stupid' after the journalist asked, who was bankrolling his current tour of governments of southern states.

Gadu claimed Fani-Kayode, who attended Cambridge University, was once “a drug addict” and had sought rehabilitation in Ghana but “till today had not been cured of the habit”.

Mr Adeola Adesipe, a lawyer representing the former minister, in a letter addressed to the Managing Director of *Daily Trust*, described the article as libelous and demanded an apology from the newspaper, which must be published in other national dailies.

The letter reads in part; “Be aware that our client has not only suffered immeasurable loss of goodwill, he is currently confronted with unbearable opprobrium by his fans, followers, and colleagues across the globe.

“Our client is alive to his rights both in law and equity but is disposed to an opportunity to undo the evil you have done by retracting the said insalubrious remarks on the same platform it was published and apologising to him in two other national dailies.

“You are also advised to enter into negotiations with us for the sum of N6bn being a token amount for penitence as opposed to the magnitude of infraction caused to our client's nobility.”

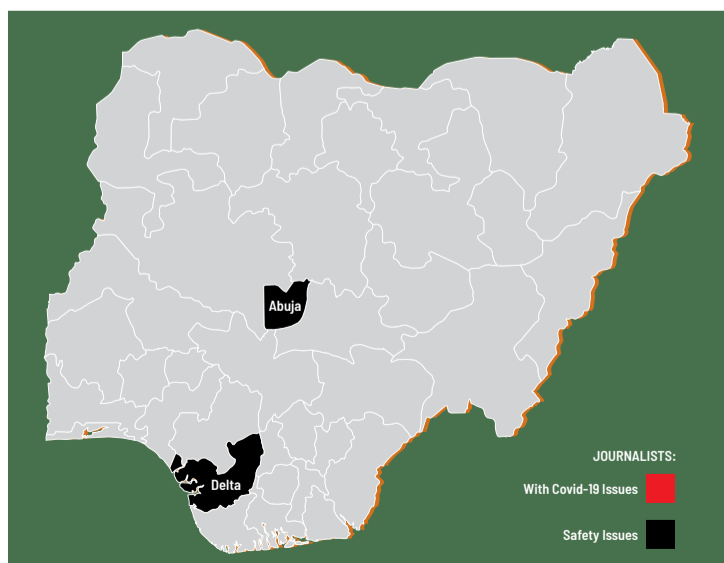
Court Orders IGP To Pay Journalists N350,000

For causing their unlawful arrest and detention in Warri, Delta State, recently, the Inspector-General of Police, Mr Mohammed Adamu; the Officer in-Charge of the IGP Monitoring Unit, DCP Abba Kyari; and detective Reuben Noah, has been ordered to pay three Delta State-based journalists the sum of N350,000. A Delta State High Court sitting in Otor-Udu handed down this order on Friday. The affected journalists are Matthew Omonigho, Christopher Odamah and Onyekachukwu Meluwa of the *Daily Post*, *Delta Trumpet* and *The PUNCH*, respectively.

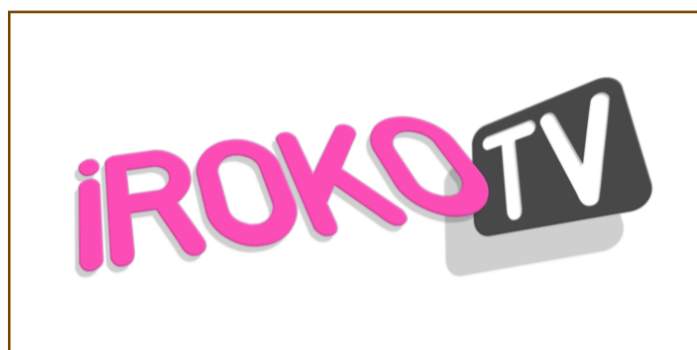
Justice Roli Harriman also directed the respondents to tender an apology to the applicants in three national dailies within 14 days.

The three journalists had separately approached the court for the enforcement of their fundamental human rights through their counsel, Oghenejabor Ikimi, and sought N10m each as damages in suit numbers: OUHC/FHR/85/2020, OUHC/FHR/86/2020 and OUHC/FHR/87/2020. The court, in its judgment stated that in the circumstances, it found that “the actions of the respondents were calculated and did breach the fundamental rights of the applicants, who are entitled to compensation.” The Police wrongfully detained all three journalists during the enforcement of COVID-19 lockdown, on May 25, 2020.

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 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.



COVID-19: iROKO TV To Sack 150 Workers in Nigeria



The devaluation of the Naira against major global currencies as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic is taking its toll on the media business in Nigeria.

Recently, broadcast and print media in the country adopted measures to cope with the operating hostile business climate. Apart from cutting pay of staff, many of the media houses sent workers on forced leave, downsized and turned their editorial staff to free lancers, opting to pay for published stories only.

Following in the trend, the Chief Executive Officer of iROKOTV, Jason Njoku, one of Africa's first mainstream online movie streaming websites, during the week, announced measures to stay in business and disclosed that the company will prune down its staff up to 150 as part of a resizing process.

Njoku disclosed in an article on its website that the business has been battling with the effects of the naira devaluation since 2016 which has reduced its subscription by half and costs from N3,000 (\$18) in 2015 to N3,000 (\$8.33) by 2017.

At N477/\$, the iROKO TV subscription cost is now \$6.3 while the average revenue per user in the west, according to Njoku, is between \$25 and \$30.

"We couldn't adjust prices as the primary aim was to defend revenues and cash flows, so cutting subs revenues and vanity subscribers weren't going to contribute to salaries come month's end," he noted.

He continued; "Internationally, we were effortlessly growing. All of the macro and individual issues plaguing West Africa were essentially not major issues in the West. Yes, jobs were being lost. Yes, economies were contracting, but with all the stimuli leaders were injecting, it made the impact on the average person marginal."

"Our annual ARPU internationally is \$25-30. When people talk to me about Netflix and their impact globally, and then in Africa, I always smile. My response is the same. Globally, streaming media is booming. In Africa, it is regressing. It's impacting everyone."

The iROKO TV boss also said the recent amendment to the broadcasting code by the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) has had a "had a massive impact on the decision to discontinue investing" in Nigeria.

He said; "Between the COVID-19 fallout, rapidly devaluing the currency and hostile regulatory environment, it's time to pause the burn. It's time to hunker down and see what the next 18 months bring," Njoku said.

"Over the next week, iROKO will be defocusing our Africa growth efforts and we will revert to focusing on higher ARPU customers in North America and Western Europe.

"Even after pushing incredibly hard in Africa for the last 5 years, our international business represents 80% of our revenue today, so by taking out Africa growth-related costs, we cut our \$300k/month burn to \$50k/month.

"This will, unfortunately, lead to a pretty dramatic change in the size of our Africa teams. There will be around 150 job losses.

"We are still working on the numbers, and in order to soften the blow, we are speaking with a number of companies who have taken an interest in our highly trained telesales agents.

"The ambition in this terrible job market is to try and give our departing teams the best odds of success in what is, unfortunately, one of the worst job markets in decades. We wish them well on their adventures, it is no fault of their own. They definitely tried their best. We all did."

MultiChoice Nigeria Increases Tariff



In a bold move, MultiChoice Nigeria, which had been summoned by a House of Representatives Committee a fortnight ago and asked to reduce its tariff, announced new charges on some DStv and GOtv packages from September 1, 2020.

According to Mr John Ugbe, Chief Executive Officer of the company, this decision was made after careful consideration of the market and a review of its business operations.

He said, "We have made efforts to contain any price adjustments on subscription prices. However, in order to ensure the sustainability of the business we have to consider financial impacts, including inflation as well increased content and operational costs.

According to him, the company had to review the prices of some of our bouquets so that "we can continue to survive as a business and bring quality entertainment to our customers."

"To arrive at the decision to adjust prices, we took into account many factors, including the impact on the customer, current inflation, which stands at 12.82%, the highest in 27 months; content costs and efficiencies within the company.

"Please, be assured that we have worked hard to keep this year's tariffs manageable,".

He said, that the company's packages will continue to be available at varying pricing points to allow subscribers flexibility in price and choice without compromising quality or variety.

"To this end, only the prices of some of the bouquets have been reviewed upwards while the lower bouquets have been left untouched. We will continue to give our customers the best experience.

"On Tuesday, September 1, 2020, prices for DStv, GOtv packages will be adjusted upwards as follows: Premium from N16, 300 to N18, 400; Compact Plus from N10,925 to N12, 400; Compact from N6,975 to N7,900 and GOtv max from N3,280 to N3,600, while prices for Confam, Yanga, Padi, GOtv Jolly, GOtv Jinja GOtv Lite remain unchanged."

"The price adjustments will allow us to keep delivering top-quality entertainment experience by telling the best local stories through our series and movies, give you access to nail-biting sporting action and up-to-the-minute news as well as the best international series, movies and documentaries, while ensuring that we offer your children movies and series that will keep them educated and entertained", he concluded.

Senate Charges NBC, Others to Become Self-Sustaining



Prof Armstrong Idachaba
Acting Director General of NBC

As part of the cost cutting measures of the federal government some agencies will now become self-sustaining, according to plans by the Nigerian Senate.

For that reason, the National Broadcasting Commission, NBC and 59 other federal agencies are to be excluded from getting federal allocation from the national budget from 2021.

The other agencies affected include Federal Inland Revenue Service, Nigeria Customs Service, Security and Exchange Commission and Oil and Gas Free Trade Zone Commission.

It is believed that the affected agencies are revenue-generating and can sustain fund their overheads, salaries and other expenses without government funding.

The Joint Senate Committee on Finance and National Planning are expected include the proposal in its report, which would be submitted to the Senate at plenary on resumption on September 15.

The joint panel recently concluded a five-day interactive session with the various Federal Government revenue-generating agencies based on the 2021-2023 Medium Term Expenditure and Fiscal Strategy Paper.

The Chairman of the joint committee, Senator Solomon Adeola, told the heads of the agencies after the session that many of them had no business receiving allocation from the federation account.

He said some of the agencies like the Oil and Gas Free Trade Zone Commission, had willingly pulled out of being funded from the federal budget, meaning they would no longer collect allocation for

salaries and overhead from the federation account.

A member of the joint said the panel had identified 60 agencies that would henceforth be funding the national budget and be responsible for their overheads and salaries of their workers.

He stated, "We want to put an end to indolence and wastage of revenue. Many of the agencies have more than enough to remain on their own but they are still being funded from the national budget. We are doing this in the interest of Nigerians because we are tired of passing budgets that are not implementable due to deficit."

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FG Transfers NIMC to Ministry of Communications and Digital Economy

To ensure that synergy and effective ministry supervisory mechanism is put in place to co-ordinate, monitor and track the progress of Federal Government's digital transformation initiatives, the Federal Government has approved the transfer of the National Identity Management Commission (NIMC) to the Federal Ministry of Communications and Digital Economy.

The Federal Ministry of Communications and Digital Economy, through its spokesman, Mr Uwa Suleiman in a statement, said the effort is "The approval for

the transfer was based on Mr President's consideration for the critical role of NIMC towards the realisation of the objectives of the National Digital Economy Policy and Strategy for a Digital Nigeria (NDEPS),"

The statement recalled that NIMC is mandated to create, manage, maintain and operate the National Identity Database established by the NIMC Act, 2007. In an effort to realise this, the Commission has so far registered around 41 million eligible enrollees for the National Identity Number (NIN). The Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) on the other hand has details of over 191 million mobile subscribers.

According to Suleiman, "The National Information Technology Development Agency has recorded huge successes in the development and implementation of the Nigeria Data Protection Regulation (NDPR), the country's first codified data protection regulation."

"The Agency has also reached an advanced stage on the implementation of the National Public Key Infrastructure (NPKI). Galaxy Backbone Limited (GBB) also provides services to Government Agencies – Infrastructure-as-a-Service, Platform-as-a-Service and Software-as-a-Service. The need therefore for NIMC, NCC, NITDA and GBB to work closely together under the supervision of one Ministry towards harnessing what has already been achieved cannot be overemphasized."

"The NIN, considered as social security as well as the civil number, is very important for economic planning and social intervention. With Federal Government's digitalization initiatives in line with the National Digital Economy Policy and Strategy, access to services and interventions will require it."

"We, therefore, urge all eligible individuals to enroll as soon as possible. Furthermore, the Honourable Minister is assuring Nigerians as well as residents that appropriate measures will be put in place to ensure that opportunities for enrolment are provided to all."

Editor's Note

The moderating influence of the media and journalists during the electoral process and electioneering was again at the core of discussions at a stakeholders meeting held in Akure, the Ondo State capital during the week. The National Broadcasting Commission, NBC and the Institute for Media and Society, IMS, organized the conference, the repeat of a similar one held in Benin-City, the Edo State capital, a fortnight ago.

Governorship election are coming up in Edo state and neighbouring Ondo, on September 19 and October 10, 2020, respectively. Politicians, as usual, are throwing everything into the contest, including mudslinging and violence. Condemnable as they are, scheming politicians are confined within areas that security agencies can easily contain. Yet, the mere reporting and airing of these condemnable activities can confer on them a visibility and volatility that poses incalculable damage to the polity and society.

That is why the broadcast media regulator, NBC and the seasoned media NGO, IMS, have been collaborating in the training of media managers and journalists on the need to handle the electoral process in Nigerian with exceptional professionalism as part of building a democratic culture in the country. The Ondo meeting is our opening story for this edition.

The last is yet to be heard of the story concerning ex-Minister of Aviation, Femi Fani-Kayode and the media backlash that followed his verbal assault of a journalist a week ago. With condemnations still trailing that avoidable encounter, Fani-Kayode has taken the battle to reclaim some redress from the barrage of attacks. He has threatened to sue the Daily Trust newspaper, which published an article he considered libelous.

Then for the first time in a long while, the media has been commended substantially by a state governor for assisting his administration in the fight against COVID-19 pandemic. Governor Abdullahi of Nasarawa State during the week handed over to the state Council of the Nigeria Union of Journalists, NUJ, a remodeled press house, complete with ultra-modern facilities conducive for work.

The harsh business climate has continued to take its toll on the operations of the media in the country. Pay Tv is taking the heat this time and they are shedding staff, while some are increasing tariff to stay afloat. These stories and many more are in this edition for your delight. Happy Reading.

The Editor
Institute for Media and Society, Nigeria

NCDC Confirmed COVID-19 Cases by State, September 4, 2020

States Affected	No. of Cases (Lab Confirmed)	No. of Cases (on admission)	No. Discharged	No. of Deaths
Lagos	18,255	2,820	15,233	202
FCT	5,273	3,619	1,591	63
Oyo	3,168	1,173	1,958	37
Plateau	2,710	990	1,690	30
Edo	2,594	133	2,361	100
Kaduna	2,184	81	2,071	32
Rivers	2,172	92	2,023	57
Delta	1,756	113	1,595	48
Kano	1,727	72	1,601	54
Ogun	1,676	53	1,597	26
Ondo	1,550	138	1,380	32
Enugu	1,184	75	1,088	21
Ebonyi	1,005	37	941	27
Kwara	976	157	794	25
Katsina	812	331	457	24
Abia	807	87	712	8
Osun	795	34	744	17
Borno	741	34	671	36
Gombe	723	59	641	23
Bauchi	669	18	637	14
Imo	532	311	210	11
Benue	460	160	291	9
Nasarawa	437	127	298	12
Bayelsa	391	10	360	21
Jigawa	322	3	308	11
Ekiti	281	32	244	5
Akwa Ibom	280	34	238	8
Niger	244	16	216	12
Adamawa	228	33	180	15
Anambra	219	19	181	19
Sokoto	159	1	142	16
Kebbi	93	3	82	8
Taraba	87	9	73	5
Cross River	83	2	73	8
Zamfara	78	0	73	5
Yobe	67	0	59	8
Kogi	5	0	3	2

Highlights

- On the 4th of September 2020, 156 new confirmed cases and 3 deaths were recorded in Nigeria.
- Till date, 54,743 cases have been confirmed, 42,816 cases have been discharged and 1,051 deaths have been recorded in 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory.
- The 156 new cases are reported from 17 states - Lagos (36), FCT (35), Oyo (29), Kaduna (10), Abia (9), Osun (5), Ogun (5), Enugu (5), Rivers (4), Nasarawa (3), Ekiti (3), Imo (3), Edo (2), Kwara (2), Katsina (2), Plateau (2), Niger (1)
- A multi-sectoral national emergency operations centre (EOC), activated at Level 3, continues to coordinate the national response activities

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