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MEDIA AND EXPRESSION IN NIGERIA

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CEMESO

MEDIA AND EXPRESSION IN NIGERIA (MEiN)

August 2023 Report



Centre for Media and Society

Nigeria

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

This section of the report provides a list of the abbreviations used in this document. Each abbreviation is listed in alphabetical order, followed by its full form.

These are the abbreviations used in this report:

ARCON - Advertising Regulatory Council of Nigeria

CEMESO - Centre for Media and Society

CRRAN - Civil Rights Realisation and Advancement Network

INEC - Independent National Electoral Commission

MEiN - Media and Expression in Nigeria

MRA - Media Rights Agenda

NBC - National Broadcasting Commission

NUJ - Nigeria Union of Journalists

PROWIF - Protect the Weak International Foundation

SERAP - Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project

BACKGROUND

Media and Expression in Nigeria (MEiN) is a monthly report by the Centre for Media and Society. The report focuses on the developments that affect freedom of the media and expression in the country. This initiative involves monitoring the editorial content of various media sources and the actions of pertinent stakeholders.

METHODOLOGY

This combines quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis. The data is coded by media monitors using a content analysis method that assigns codes to the units of analysis categorised under the following headings:

- **Issues:** the topics or themes that relate to MEiN during the period in review. The topics include various types of attacks on the media and other victims, regulation of the media space, and other related themes.
- **Actors:** the individuals or groups that are involved in or influence the issues. These actors include the government and its agencies, journalists and the media in general, as well as politicians and political parties.
- **Victims:** the individuals or groups that suffer harm or loss as a result of the issues or actions of the actors, and could be any of the individuals or groups identified under actors.

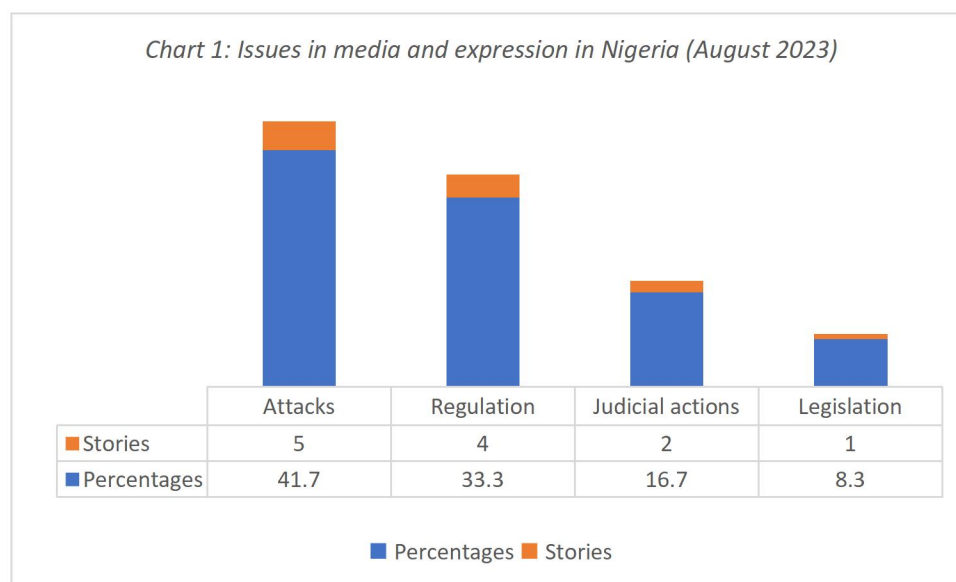
The coding process is done by trained media monitors who follow a coding scheme that defines the categories and sub-categories of each unit of analysis. The coding scheme also specifies the rules and criteria for assigning codes to the data. The coded data is then translated into a spreadsheet for further analysis.

The analysis of the data employs description and visualization techniques such as graphs, charts and tables to present the results clearly and concisely.

The research also employs a qualitative method that complements the quantitative method by highlighting some of the contents driving the data trends.

ISSUES

These were the topics that dominated the contents tracked during the period in review.



Attacks

According to Chart 1, attacks on the media and other victims, with five stories, was the most prominent topic as it represented 41.7% of 12 applicable reports.

Examples:

1. 'Bandits kill 8, kidnap late Zamfara NUJ Chairman's children, wife,' [Tribune reported](#) on August 1.

"Armed bandits have attacked the residence of late NUJ Chairman killed 2, abducted 8 including two children, wife of late journalist at Mayanchi town in Maru Local Government Area of Zamfara state," the report said.

"A family member of late Ibrahim Aliyu Mayanchi, Chairman of NUJ legacy newspaper chapel, Mohammed Mayanchi disclosed to Nigerian tribune in Gusau, lamented that the incident happened in the early hours of Tuesday when the armed bandits besieged Mayanchi town.

"According to the family source, the two children of the late journalist were abducted along with their mother (widow) and eight other persons in the area."

2. "Lagos Taskforce Manhandles, Detains Daily Independent Journalist," [the newspaper reported](#) on August 8.

"Members of the Lagos State Taskforce on Monday manhandled, arrested, and detained a Daily Independent journalist, while he was covering the closure and seizure of goods at the railway crossing in the Agege Local Development Area of the state," the report read.

"The journalist, Ikechi Nzeako, who was reporting on the crackdown and seizure of goods worth millions of naira, was arrested, manhandled, and detained in a Black Maria,

despite telling them that he is a journalist and showing that he is a journalist and was doing legitimate work."

3. "MRA berates Enugu Governor over attacks on Journalists," [The Sun reported](#) on August 7.

The report read:

"Media Rights Agenda (MRA) has called on Governor Peter Ndubuisi Mbah of Enugu State to immediately discontinue the harassment and intimidation of journalists in the State, saying the ongoing attacks on the media by his government in violation of the Constitution amounts to a breach of the oath he took on becoming Governor just two months ago, particularly his pledge to preserve, protect and defend the Constitution."

4. "Police Harassment: Rights Group Raises Alarm, Alleges Plot to Arrest 3 Enugu Journalists," [Politics Nigeria reported](#) on August 11.

"Touched by a perceived plan to gag the press and stop the free flow of information in Enugu state, the Civil Rights Realisation and Advancement Network (CRRAN) has petitioned the Inspector General of Police to rise to the occasion and stop the anomaly," the report read.

"The rights group while writing on the lingering crisis at the Federal Neuropsychiatric Hospital (FNH) Enugu that has culminated in the closure of the school's Mental Health Nursing at the instance of the Medical Director, Dr Monday Nwite Igwe, called on the IGP not to allow the police to be used to harass and bully journalists from performing their lawful duties.

"The petition, which was signed by President of CRRAN, Barr. Olu Omotayo, alleged that three journalists and a human rights activist were summoned to the police headquarters in Abuja, allegedly orchestrated by the MD of the hospital, Dr. Igwe.

"Omotayo urged the IGP to wade into the matter to avoid the police being used as lap dogs to hush journalists in Enugu and elsewhere in Nigeria."

5. "NUJ condemns attack on journalists in Opu-Nembe," [The Sun reported](#) on August 16.

"The Bayelsa State Council of the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ) has condemned the recent attack on Journalists who were carrying out their legitimate duties by some armed youths in Opu Nembe, Nembe Local Government Area of Bayelsa State," the report read.

"A statement signed by the Council Chairman, Samuel Numonengi and Secretary, Ogio Ipigansi expressed sadness that cameras, phones and ATM cards belonging to the said Journalists were also taken by the armed youths.

"The council leadership therefore called on those responsible to return the said items pointing out that journalists are not enemies of anyone or groups, but are friends of society who only carry out their lawful duties as Watchdogs of society.

"The duo while commending the police for rescuing the journalists appeal to them to carry out their duties professionally without bias and restore peace in Opu Nembe.

"They further called on the youths in Nembe to sheath the sword and resolve their differences without any form of violence."

Regulation

Regulation was the second most reported topic, being the focus of four stories or 33.3% of the reports.

Examples:

1. "SERAP urges Tinubu to call Alake to order over social media regulation comment," [The Chronicle reported](#) on August 3.

"The Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project (SERAP) has advised President Bola Tinubu to call the Special Adviser to the President on Special Duties, Communications, and Strategy, [Dele Alake](#), to order over utterances he made on the need to regulate social media in Nigeria," the report read.

"[SERAP](#), in a tweet via its verified Twitter handle on Thursday, stated that 'President [Tinubu](#) should call Mr Alake to order over his push to regulate social media'.

"Alake stated that he will support any proposal by the Senate to regulate social media in Nigeria. The ministerial nominee made the remark while answering questions during Wednesday's ministerial screening on the floor of the Senate."

2. "NBC asks defaulting stations to renew licenses or risk revocation," [The Guardian reported](#) on August 8.

"The National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) on Monday gave up till 9th September 2023 to all broadcasting stations indebted to the commission to liquidate their liabilities or risk revocation," the report read.

"The broadcasting regulatory agency is demanding license renewal debtors and defaulters of 2.5 per cent annual income remit.

"Addressing broadcasting practitioners and media owners at stakeholders meeting in Kano, NBC Director General Mal. Balarabe Shehu Ilalah worried about the poor compliance of stations that have failed to remit the statutory due to the commission."

3. "Tinubu didn't order removal of 'All Eyes on the Judiciary' billboards" the Director-General, Advertising Regulatory Council of Nigeria, Dr Olalekan Fadolapo, [told The Punch](#) in an interview published on August 19.

He was quoted to have said:

"Our people are extremely biased. Now, this advert has nothing to do with the presidency, I hope we all know this. These adverts have a lot to do with the judiciary; it has absolutely nothing to do with the presidency. I don't know why they would say that the President asked us or the presidency asked us to punish them. How will the presidency interfere with this? The presidency has not at any point in time interfered in this issue. This is an administrative procedure. Someone erred and we looked at it to confirm that they erred and you did not fire them."

4. "Agency behind 'All eyes on judiciary billboard' to face disciplinary panel," [The Punch reported](#) on August 27.

"Intercontinental Marketing & Communication Consortium Limited has apologised to the Advertising Standard Panel, Advertising Regulatory Council of Nigeria, over the usage of an unapproved advert billboard tagged, 'All Eyes On the Judiciary'," the report read.

"The company responded to the letter of violation received by the company from ARCON through its Managing Director, Stephen Ogboko.

"Ogboko stated, 'We sincerely apologise for this and state that our action was not intentional. The truth is that immediately after we received the brief for the said campaign, we sent the artwork to Mr Markus Inji Lukman, an ARCON liaison officer who has helped us vet campaign materials in the past. Mr Lukman assured us that the material would be approved, as he had seen a similar one.'

"The company apologised for causing any inconvenience, adding that it would never do anything to threaten or cause disrepute to the country's judiciary.

"Reacting to the development, the ARCON Director-General, Dr Olalekan Fadolapo, stated that despite the apology, the company would face the tribunal."

Judicial actions

Two reports were focused on judicial actions, representing 16.7% of the stories.

Examples:

1. "Journalist Writes NCS, Demands Payment Of N.5m Judgement Debt," [Daily Independent reported](#) on August 6.

The report read:

"The Comptroller General of Customs, Nigeria Customs Service has been written a letter by a journalist, Otunba Gbenga Adebayo, to prevail on one of his senior officers, Mr. Adamu Abdulkadir, a one-time Comptroller of Customs Service, Oyo/Osun state area, Ibadan, Oyo State, to pay him a sum of N500,000 being the judgement debt in a suit he filed against him (Abdulkadir) in 2021.

"Adebayo had instituted a suit against the Commissioner of Police, Oyo State and Mr Adamu Abdulkadir at the Federal High Court sitting in Akure, Ondo State capital, for infringing on his fundamental human right.

"The applicant had in Suit No: FHC/AK/CS/108/2021 alleged that on the instruction of Abdulkadir as Comptroller of Customs Service, Oyo/Osun state area, the police had in Akure, on October 12, 2021, arrested, naked, harassed, tortured, humiliated, beaten and detained him at Anti-Kidnaping Squad, Dugbe, Ibadan for two days without committing any offence considered illegal or unconstitutional."

2. On August 18, [Sahara Reporters published an article](#) titled, "Court Orders Nigeria Police To Release Journalist, Nonso Nkwa, Detained For Allegedly Insulting Gov. Uzodinma, Asari Dokubo".

"The Federal High Court in Abuja, on Friday, ordered the Nigeria Police Force to release the detained Imo-based radio journalist, Chinonso Uba, popularly known as Nonso Nkwa," the report read.

"SaharaReporters reported on Wednesday that the force headquarters arraigned the rights activist, Chinonso Uba, before the court.

"Uba, who is also the coordinator of the Protect the Weak International Foundation (PROWIF), was arraigned on two counts bordering on insulting Governor Hope Uzodinma and Niger Delta militant leader, Asari Dokubo.

"The police in charge No: FHC/ABJ/CR/367/2023 between Inspector General of Police Vs Chinonso Uba told the court that Uba's offence contravenes the Cyber Crime Prohibition Act.

"The journalist was picked up in Owerri on July 27, 2023, and has been detained at the force headquarters, Abuja for three weeks without being granted access to his family members and lawyers.

"SaharaReporters had reported that the journalist was dragged from his car to an unknown place after work at Ozisa FM, Assumpta Owerri, where he had told his listeners and admirers that he could be abducted by unknown gunmen.

When the whereabouts of Uba could not be ascertained, residents and civil society organisations started accusing Governor Uzodinma's administration of being behind his

disappearance. Following several reports, the Imo State Government confirmed that he was arrested by the police.

"Human rights groups have complained that Uba is being held illegally and denied access to his family and doctor. They maintained that his detention without granting him access to his lawyers and family members violated his fundamental and constitutional rights.

"However, following his detention without arraignment in court, his lawyer, P.A.N. Ejiofor, filed a fundamental rights suit against the police.

"Delivering judgement on Friday, in the suit numbered FCT/HC/CV/7128/2023, the presiding judge, Justice E. N. Okpe, held that Uba's 'arrest, detention, and torture are illegal, unconstitutional, reckless, and a violent infringement of his fundamental human rights'.

"The court consequently ordered the police to release him within 24 hours."

Legislation

Legislation was the least reported topic. It got one report or 8.3% of the stories.

Example:

1. "INEC seeks law allowing journalists, security agencies, others to vote," [The Guardian reported](#) on August 3.

"Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), yesterday, called for amendment of electoral laws to permit voting by Nigerians carrying out essential duties during elections," the report read.

"The commission noted that such persons include journalists, INEC officials, security personnel and medical practitioners.

"INEC Chairman, Prof. Mahmood Yakubu, made this known during the Post Election Review of 2023 General Elections with Media Stakeholders in Lagos, yesterday.

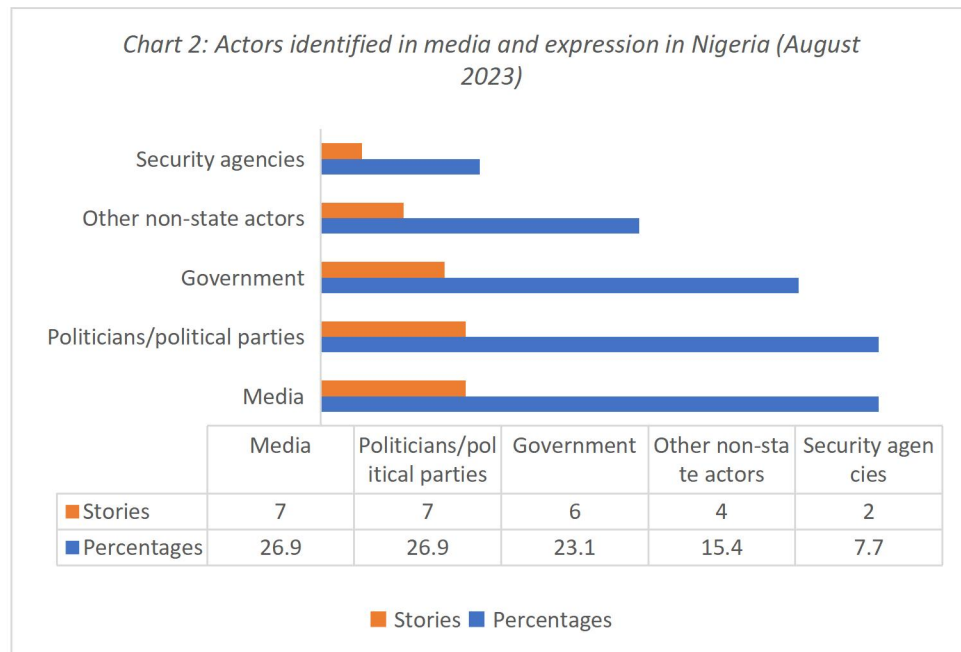
"He said many Nigerians do not get the opportunity to vote because the law says one could only do so where he or she was registered.

"Most journalists, on election day, worked in places other than where they registered, so they didn't have the opportunity to vote. This doesn't apply only to journalists; it also applies to officials of INEC, the regular and ad-hoc officials, including security agencies.

"Through this kind of interaction, we get recommendations from stakeholders and see what area to approach the National Assembly to amend the laws,' he said."

ACTORS

This section concerns the personalities and groups who were prominent in the relevant stories tracked in August 2023. It also concerns the actors identified as the major instigators or perpetrators of attacks against the media and (or) citizens' right to freedom of expression.

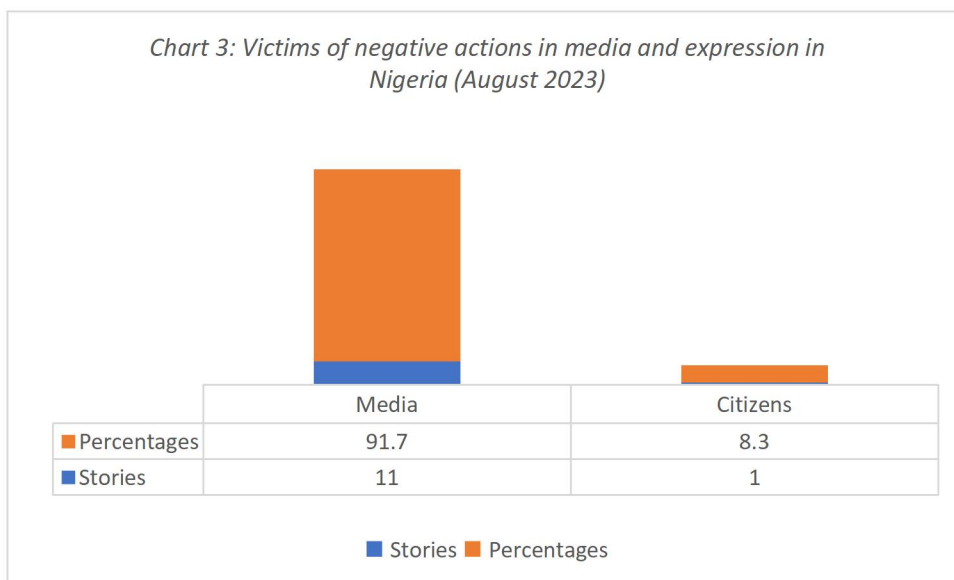


According to Chart 2, the media and politicians/political parties were the most prominent actors as each group was identified in seven or 26.9% of 26 applicable reports. The government was identified in six reports or 23.1% of the total. Security agencies were identified in two reports or 7.7% of the total. Other non-state actors were the focus of four reports or 15.4% of the total.

VICTIMS

These were the individuals or groups that suffered harm or loss as a result of the issues or actions of the actors. The stories tracked for this section involved, but are not limited to, the following form of 'negative actions':

- arrests
- threats
- detention
- censorship
- assault



The media (91.7%; 11 in 12 applicable reports) were the biggest victims identified in this section, Chart 3 shows. Citizens fell victim to negative actions once, representing 8.3% of the reports.

CONCLUSION

MEiN analyses for the period under review showed that attacks on the media and other victims was the most featured topic, accounting for 61.1% of the stories. The media and politicians/political parties were the most prominent actors while the media and ordinary citizens were the victims of the negative actions recorded in the timeframe.

MEiN is published

by

Centre for Media and Society (CEMESO)

3, Emina Crescent, Off Toyin Street,

Ikeja Lagos, Nigeria

Phone:

Email: info@cemesong.org, cemeso2004@hotmail.com

Website: www.cemesong.org



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