

MEIN

MEDIA AND EXPRESSION IN NIGERIA

JULY 2023



MEDIA AND EXPRESSION IN NIGERIA (MEiN)

July 2023 Report



Institute 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:

IMS - Institute for Media and Society

MEiN - Media and Expression in Nigeria

NBC - National Broadcasting Commission

NUJ - Nigeria Union of Journalists

BACKGROUND

Media and Expression in Nigeria (MEiN) is a monthly report by the Institute 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.

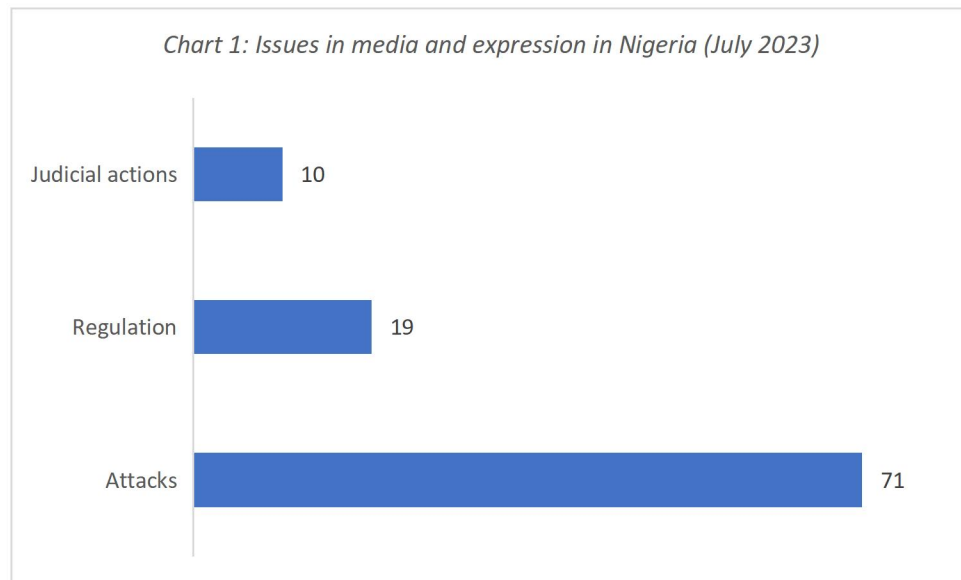
The coding process is done by trained media monitors who follow a coding scheme that defines the categories and sub-categories of each unit of analysis. The coding scheme also specifies the rules and criteria for assigning codes to the data. The coded data is then translated into a spreadsheet for further 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 15 stories, was the most prominent topic as it represented 71% of 21 applicable reports.

Examples:

1. "Opposition party behind vandalization of Kogi radio – Govt alleges," [Daily Post reported](#) on July 4.

"The Kogi State Government has accused opposition parties in the state of vandalising the booster station of the State Broadcasting Corporation in Ochaja," the report said.

"The government, however, failed to mention the specific political parties behind the attack on the booster station.

"DAILY POST recalls that in June 2023, suspected hoodlums invaded the state-owned radio station in Ochaja, Kogi East, carted away things, and also destroyed broadcasting equipment. The Kogi State Commissioner for Information and Communication, Kingsley Fanwo, described the act as senseless and politics taken too far."

2. On July 19, [Sahara Reporters published a story](#) titled, "Zimbabwe Authorities Detain Nigerian Journalist, David Hundeyin, Cite Visa Issues".

"A Nigerian investigative journalist and activist, David Hundeyin, has been detained by the Zimbabwe government at the Harare Airport," the story read.

"Hundeyin was detained inside 'a smelly locked room for nearly seven hours' according to an account the journalist shared on his Twitter.

"According to him, the Zimbabwe government claimed that Hundeyin needed a visa to be in the country.

"The journalist, who appears to still be in detention as of press time, said, 'I landed in Zimbabwe earlier today, and I have been detained at Harare Airport inside a smelly locked room for nearly 7 hours. They said that despite using the travel document of a country with a visa-free relationship, my nationality is still Nigerian, and thus, I need a visa.'"

3. "Robbers attack journalist, rape female passengers in Benue," [The Sun reported](#) on July 20.

"Robbers have reportedly attacked passengers, among them, a Journalist, Amos Aar, a Reporter with the National Record Newspapers," the story said.

"According to Aar, they were attacked on Tuesday at about 9 p.m. along Naka-Makurdi road, a few kilometres from Makurdi, the Benue state capital, when a passenger vehicle they boarded from Otukpo to Makurdi, ran into the robbery scene.

"Narrating his ordeal, Aar, said the robbers also raped two female passengers during the operation that lasted for more than an hour without any security intervention. He said, the robbers numbering about 10 also collected their phones and other valuables on them, while threatening to kill those who did not have a handset or money on them."

4. "Tukur Mamu: Lawyers, journalists, others barred from ex-terrorists negotiator's trial," [The Punch reported](#) on July 21.

"Lawyers, litigants, including journalists, were on Friday, ordered to vacate Courtroom 7 of a Federal High Court, Abuja where the trial of ex-terrorist negotiator, Tukur Mamu, was holding," the story read.

"When the matter was called, counsel from the office of the Attorney-General of the Federation, E. A. Kaswe, who is prosecuting the case on the federal government's behalf, told the court that their witnesses were in court for the trial.

"Kaswe then urged Justice Inyang Ekwo to enforce the order granted to the prosecution on Wednesday when the matter came up."

5. "Police go after journalist's kidnappers in Rivers," [The Punch reported](#) on July 23.

"Gunmen on Friday night abducted a senior journalist and staff of the Rivers State Broadcasting Corporation, Port Harcourt, Mrs Priestba Nwokocha," the story read.

"Mrs Nwokocha, who is the Director of News in the corporation, popularly called 'Radio Rivers', was allegedly whisked away by the gunmen on the Ogonigba/Elelenwo Bridge leading to the old Slaughter Market in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area on Friday night.

"Although details of the abduction were sketchy as of press time, the leadership of the Nigeria Union of Journalists in the state confirmed the incident.

"Meanwhile, the police in the state said it had launched a manhunt to ensure Nwokocha was released unhurt and the suspects apprehended."

6. "NUJ, Anambra Govt. bicker over alleged shut down of newspaper," [BusinessDay reported](#) on July 25.

"The Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ) has criticised Gov. Chukwuma Soludo- led administration in Anambra for allegedly shutting down the state-owned National Light newspaper," the report read.

"The Chairman, NUJ Anambra Council, Emeka Odogwu, told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) last weekend in Enugu that the latest move by the government remained 'an open ill-treatment' of journalists by the Soludo administration.

"He said the latest move also portrayed the state government as one without a human face."

7. "Gunmen Kidnap Journalist In Imo," [Tori NG reported](#) on July 27.

"A broadcast journalist, Chinonso Uba, popularly known as Nonso Nkwa has been reportedly abducted by gunmen in Owerri, the Imo state capital on Thursday, July 27," the report read.

"According to eyewitnesses, Uba was accosted by heavily armed masked men who rode in a Hilux vehicle, a Lexus 350 keep, and an ES 330 car.

"He had just finished anchoring his morning program on Ozisa FM, Owerri in the premises of Assumpta Cathedral of the Owerri Catholic Archdiocese and was riding in his Highlander SUV when the attackers, who were laying siege, double-crossed him in front of Holy Ghost College Secondary School junction.

"The source said that the gunmen forced the activist-journalist into one of their vehicles and sped off. Confirming the incident, the manager of Ozisa FM, Rev Fr Raymond Nzereogu, said he was yet to ascertain if the journalist was arrested or kidnapped."

8. "Kidnapped RSBC Female Journalist Regains Freedom," [Tori NG reported](#) on July 27.

"Kidnappers have released Mrs Priestba Anthony Nwokocha, Director of News, Rivers State Broadcasting Corporation RSBC," the report said.

"Recall that she was kidnapped last Thursday in Port Harcourt. The Director of Administration RSBC of Ebi Ogolo, her colleague who broke the news of her kidnap has confirmed her release in the early hours of Thursday.

"The abductors had demanded N150 million ransom but reduced it to N10 million. It is however not clear if ransom was paid before she was released in the early hours of today."

9. "Police arrest popular Imo broadcast journalist," [The Punch](#) reported on July 27.

"Some policemen on Thursday morning in Owerri, the Imo State capital, arrested a popular broadcast journalist, Chinonso Uba, popularly known as Nonso Nkwa," the report read.

"Uba was accosted and arrested by the cops after he finished anchoring his morning programme on Ozisa FM, Owerri Housed by Assumpta Cathedral of the Owerri Catholic Archdiocese.

"He was driving in his Highlander jeep when the operatives who were laying siege, double-crossed him in front of Holy Ghost College Secondary School junction.

"An eyewitness told our correspondent that the policemen operated in a Hilux vehicle, a Lexus 350 Jeep, and an ES 330 car.

"The source said that the operatives forced the activist journalist into one of their vehicles and zoomed off. His vehicle was abandoned at the scene."

Regulation

Regulation was the second most reported topic, being the focus of four stories or 19% of the reports.

Examples:

1. "Kogi guber: Govt will support NBC to ensure credible poll — Fanwo," [Nigerian Tribune reported](#) on July 4.

"Ahead of the Kogi gubernatorial election scheduled for November 11, the Kogi State government has reassured the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) of its commitment to supporting the Commission in ensuring that broadcast stations adhere to the regulations aimed at ensuring a credible poll in the state," the story read.

"The Commissioner for Information and Communications, Hon. Kingsley Fanwo, made this known during a sensitisation program organised by the Commission to educate broadcast stations in the state about their roles in ensuring free, fair, and credible elections.

"The Information Commissioner urged broadcast stations to remain dedicated to providing their platforms for all political parties and candidates, thereby creating a level playing field for everyone involved."

2. "Expert advocates self-regulation to combat fake news, others," [The Guardian reported](#) on July 15.

"Former Director General of the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC), Dr Nasir Danladi Bako, OON, has identified self-regulatory mechanism as an antidote to the menace of information disorder plaguing the media industry in Nigeria," the report said.

"In a presentation titled, 'Harnessing African Solutions to Combat Fake News, Malinformation, Misinformation and Disinformation', at the first international symposium of the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN), Bako said: 'We must reintroduce civic education and history as subjects in primary school through secondary school to imbibe nationalism, national interest and high moral standard and values. This is because our moral fabric is too weak.'"

3. "NBC Plans To Increase Licence Fee, Broadcasting Code Review," [SolaceBase reported](#) on July 19.

"The National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) has unfolded plan to increase television and radio station licence fee," the report read.

"The commission said it will soon meet with stakeholders in the broadcasting industry to review the Nigeria Broadcasting Code. NBC Director-General Balareba Shehu Ilelah disclosed this at a press conference on Tuesday, in Lagos."

Judicial actions

Two reports were focused on judicial actions, representing 10% of the distribution.

Examples:

1. "NBC Asks Court to Set Aside Judgment Restraining it from Imposing Fines on Broadcast Stations," [Media Rights Agenda](#) reported on July 14.

"The National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) has filed a motion at a Federal High Court in Abuja asking the court to set aside its May 10, 2023 judgment in which it, among other things, issued an order of perpetual injunction restraining the Commission from further imposing fines on radio and television stations," the report read.

"In the motion filed on its behalf by Mr. Babatunde Ogala (SAN), the Commission is asking the court to set aside the judgment, claiming that the court lacked jurisdiction to render the verdict and that it arrived at the decision in ignorance of relevant facts.

"The judgment arose from a suit instituted by Abuja-based lawyer, Mr Noah Ajare, on behalf of Media Rights Agenda (MRA), challenging the powers of NBC to fine broadcasters, following a March 1, 2019 announcement by the then Director General of the Commission, Mallam Ishaq Kawu, that the Commission had imposed a fine of N500,000 each on 45 broadcast stations for alleged contraventions of the Nigeria Broadcasting Code.

"In his judgment delivered on May 10, 2023, Justice James Omotosho ruled that fines are sanctions imposed on a person who has been found guilty of a criminal offence and that by the law in Nigeria, only Courts of law are empowered to impose sanctions for criminal offences. In setting aside the fines of N500,000 each imposed on the stations, he held that the NBC "is neither a Court nor a judicial tribunal to make pronouncements on the guilt of broadcast stations notwithstanding what the NBC Code says," adding that the Commission's action violated the Constitution."

2. On July 28, [Sahara Reporters published a report](#) titled, "Nigerian Court Declares That Residents Have Right To Video, Take Pictures Of Arrests, Others In Public Places."

"An Edo State Magistrate Court has struck out a charge against a Nigerian for riding a tricycle in a Government Reserved Area (GRA) and another charge against another person for videoing a police arrest," the report read.

"The operatives of the Nigeria Police Force, New Etete Division on July 26, 2022, arrested one Brighton Odion, a tricycle rider who was riding along Limit Road, off Sapele Road in Benin City, where the riding of tricycles has been barred.

"The police accused him of violating the governor's order on riding in a restricted area and was subsequently charged to court when he refused to bribe them. The police also arrested one Mr Vision Nelson for taking pictures of Odion's arrest.

"He was charged alongside Odion for being an unregistered photographer and unlicensed journalist and for using his Android phone to record the arrest.

"But delivering judgment on Thursday, the court ruled in favour of the accused and consequently struck out the charges against the duo.

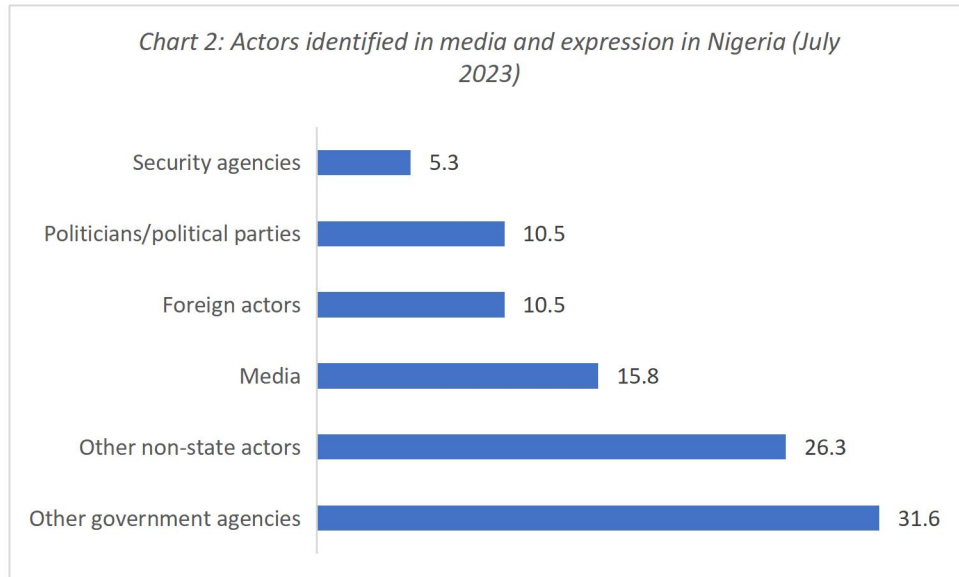
"The Chief Magistrate in Evbuoriarua Magistrate Court 5, Sapele Road, Benin City, held in his ruling in the case between NPF and EDOCSO that 'videoing or recording in a public place is not an offence, citizens have rights to do recordings anywhere, anytime.'

"The magistrate also held that there is no law in Edo State banning or restricting the movement of tricycles (keke) from major roads or streets. 'Tricycles can move from one point to another without any form of restriction,' the court said.

“The court in striking out the charges, held that the case lacks merit, adding that the police were unable to prove their case beyond a reasonable doubt. The judge, therefore, ruled that the case should be struck out for lack of merit before the law.”

ACTORS

This section concerns the personalities and groups who were prominent in the relevant stories tracked in July 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.

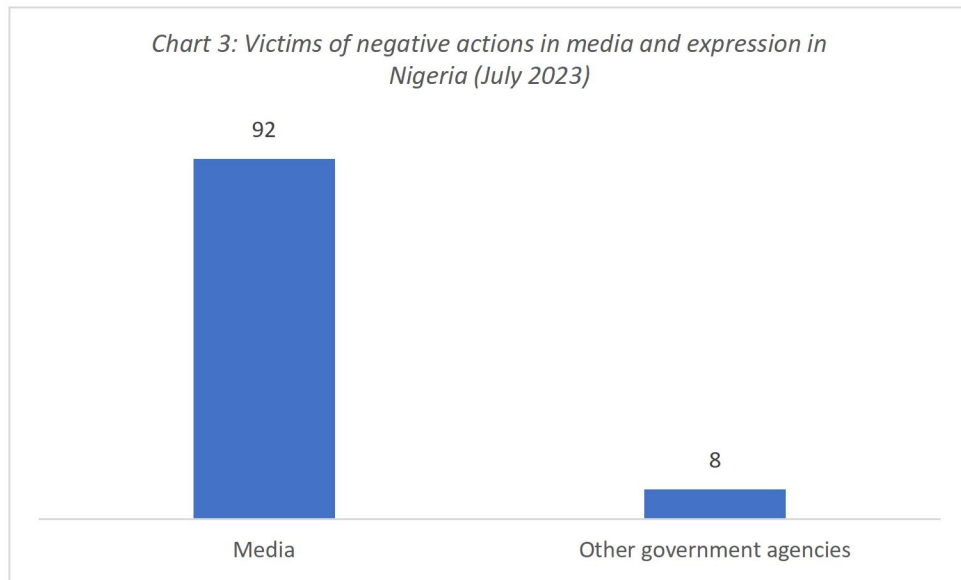


According to Chart 2, other government agencies were the most prominent actors as they were identified in six stories or 31.6% of 19 applicable reports. Other non-state actors were identified in five reports or 26.3% of the total. The media were featured in three reports or 15.8% of the total. Foreign actors were identified in two reports or 10.5% of the total, and the same was true for politicians/political parties. Security agencies were the actors identified in one report, representing 5.3% 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 (92%; 12 in 13 applicable reports) were the biggest victims identified in this section, Chart 3 shows. Other government agencies fell victim to negative actions once. That represented eight per cent of the reports.

CONCLUSION

MEiN analysis for the period in review showed that attacks on the media and other victims was the most featured topic, accounting for 71% of the stories. Regulation and judicial actions were also featured. Government agencies and non-state actors were the most prominent actors. The media and government agencies were the victims of the negative actions recorded during the period under review.

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