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MEDIA AND EXPRESSION IN NIGERIA

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CEMESO

MEDIA AND EXPRESSION IN NIGERIA (MEiN)

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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:

CEMESO - Centre for Media and Society

FCT - Federal Capital Territory

FIJ - Foundation for Investigative Journalism

ICIR - International Centre for Investigative Reporting

MEiN - Media and Expression in Nigeria

NAN - News Agency of Nigeria

NBC - National Broadcasting Commission

NSCDC - Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps

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.

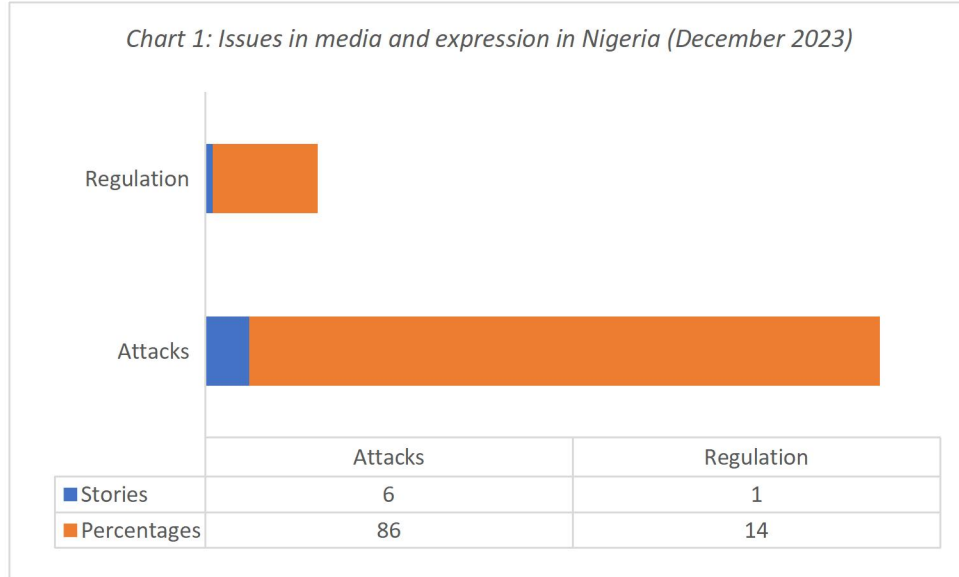
The coding process is done by trained media monitors who follow a coding scheme that defines the categories and sub-categories of each unit of analysis. The coding scheme also specifies the rules and criteria for assigning codes to the data. The coded data is then translated into a spreadsheet for further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



Attacks

According to Chart 1, attacks on the media and other victims, with six out of seven applicable stories, represented 86%, the most, of the reports.

Examples:

1. “NSCDC Personnel Accused of Assaulting Journalist During Anambra Event,” [Primus Media City reported](#) on December 6.

“Several members of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) in Anambra State allegedly assaulted journalist Izunna Okafor during the Anambra South Rally for the Soludo Ambassadors,” the report read.

“The incident occurred as Okafor, a reporter with 247ureports.com, was returning from Nnewi, where he covered the event. Over 10 NSCDC officers reportedly accused the media of contributing to Nigeria’s problems.

“Okafor’s ordeal began when he attempted to disembark at the UNIZIK Junction in Awka. Despite informing the driver, NSCDC officers insisted that everyone stay on the bus until the final stop.

“Only after raising his voice did some rally attendants instruct the driver to stop. As Okafor tried to retrieve his fallen phone, the officers ordered the driver to leave, causing him severe hand injuries as the door was slammed shut.

“Seeking an explanation at the designated bus stop, Okafor faced further aggression from an NSCDC officer. The situation escalated, with the officer questioning Okafor’s boldness, brandishing a gun, and calling for reinforcements. Okafor was subsequently physically assaulted

by around 11 officers, who kicked and hit him with their guns. Threats of shooting him were only averted by the intervention of Mr. Ossy Onuko, Managing Director of the Awka Capital Territory Development Authority.

“Although Okafor recovered his phone and received an apology from Onuko, the NSCDC officers continued to threaten him. Okafor reported the incident to the NSCDC Anambra State Command’s Public Relations Officer, Edwin Okadigbo, who promised an investigation. The State Commandant, Mr. Edwin Osuala, ordered a thorough investigation into the matter, emphasizing a commitment to address unethical conduct within the corps.

2. “For Taking Pictures at Eagle Square, Police Arrest ICIR Journalist,” [FIJ reported](#) on December 5.

“Marcus Fatunmole, the news editor of the International Centre for Investigative Reporting (ICIR), was detained at the Eagle Square car park in Abuja on Monday,” the report read.

“Fatunmole was conducting an investigation into a viral video of old buses allegedly being renovated for mass transit in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) when security operatives interrupted him.

“‘I was taking pictures of the buses when they saw me. They said I didn’t have any authorisation to take the pictures,’ he said on a phone call to FIJ.

“The officers took his phone and illegally pried into its content, including his Google account. And despite proving to them that he was a journalist, he was detained for six hours before his eventual release.”

3. “Precious Eze, Online Journalist Abducted by Security Agents,” [Daily Legder reported](#) on December 17.

“Yet to be properly identified officials believed to be security agents have abducted Precious Eze, an Online journalist from his Lagos base and taken to Abuja,” the report read.

“Eze was abducted by men identifying themselves as members of a Special Police Taskforce from Abuja. The incident occurred on Tuesday, December 12th, at 1:24 am.

“During the abduction, the police confiscated Eze's laptop, phones, and other devices from his residence. A friend present at his house offered to accompany them, but the police declined, leaving the friend’s phone with him. They assured him that Precious would contact him in the morning to provide information about his whereabouts. Unfortunately, no contact has been made since then, and all attempts to reach Precious have proven unsuccessful.

“It has now been five days since the incident, and neither Precious nor the police officers involved have made any communication. Concerns are heightened as Precious is known to be hypertensive and is on medication. There is uncertainty about his well-being in police custody.

“The absence of communication or updates on his situation is causing growing concern.”

4. “Abuja Task Force, Staff of Development Control, assault, arrest, detain journalist,” [The Sun reported](#) on December 19.

“The staff of Abuja Development Control and members of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Task Force manhandled, beat, arrested, and detained Mr. Godwin Tsa, a journalist with Daily Sun,

while covering a peaceful protest by Abuja Mechanics and Spare parts dealers on Monday,” the report read.

“The traders staged a protest over 50 shops demolished during the pendency of their case in court.

“Tsa, who conspicuously displayed his staff identity card on his neck, had pleaded with his attackers that he was not part of the protesters but only carrying out his legitimate work.

“However, his plea fell on deaf ears as he was arrested and hauled in an Police Hilux pick-up truck, alongside some of the protesters and taken to the Utako police station where he was eventually locked up in a cell with criminals.

“While the assault on the defenseless journalist was going on, some of the staff pleaded that the journalist be spared as he was only doing his work.”

5. On the 21st of December, [247Ureports published a story](#) titled, “Ebonyi Journalists And Ebonyi Commissioner Engage In Violent Clash”.

“It was a melodrama as Commissioner for Internal Security in Ebonyi state, Prince Etta Uka Udeh ordered the arrest and beating of some Journalists for calling him on the phone over the missing motorcycle of staff of the Government House, Abakaliki,” the report read.

“It’s recalled that unknown hoodlums invaded old Ebonyi Government House, Abakaliki, and carted away the motorcycle of a staff of Internal Security.

“The Commissioner who faulted Journalists numbering over ten for calling his attention to the disappearance of the bike described the incident as unwarranted and a no-business to his office.

“Consequently, Prince Udeh who stormed the midst of the Journalists(Government Correspondents) with some thugs told them that it’s not his fault that the motorcycle went missing, hence, ordered the arrest of all the Journalists on duty”.

6. “Police confirm killing of Nigerian journalist,” [Premium Times reported](#) on December 26, citing the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN).

“The police in Edo State have confirmed the killing of a journalist in the state,” the report read.

“The journalist, Hillary Ochia, was shot dead on Christmas Eve by suspected cultists at a drinking joint near a police station in Benin City, the state capital. He was a staff member of Independent Television and Radio, Benin City.

“The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that there has been a surge in cult clashes and killings in Benin City, and that the police in the state have acknowledged the ugly trend in the state.

“Chidi Nwabuzor, the police spokesperson in the state, said in a statement on Tuesday in Benin that the police were fighting to bring the situation under control.

“A police officer who took part in an anti-cult operation was shot dead on 24 December in the Ugbowo axis of Benin City, Mr Nwabuzor, a superintendent of police, said.

“He said the loss of the operative underscored the police determination to combat cultism in Edo State.”

Regulation

One story was focused on regulation, representing 12.5% of the reports.

Example:

1. “Ministry of Women Affairs petitions NBC over 'false, misleading' reports by Arise TV on Uju,” [The Street Journal reported](#) on December 21.

“The Federal Ministry of Women Affairs has written to the National Broadcasting Corporation, NBC, seeking urgent petition against a Nigerian Television station, Arive TV,” the report said.

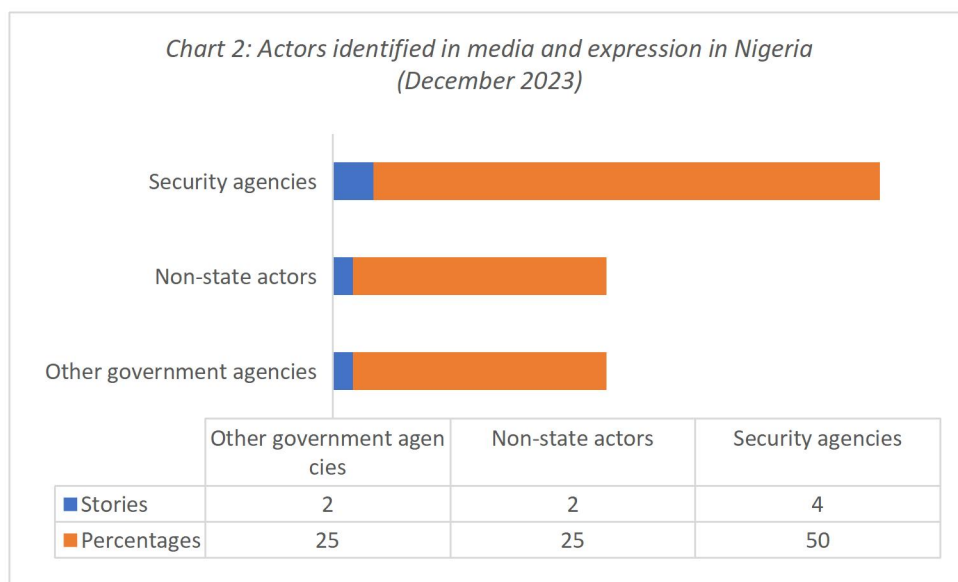
“The Ministry has faulted Arise TV over what it described as a false and misleading statement targeting the Minister of Women Affairs, Barrister Uju Kennedy Ohanenye.

“It expressed deep concern and dismay regarding the content of the Arise TV morning show broadcast on Tuesday, December 19, in which the ministry said during the program, the presenters claimed that the Minister is advocating for Nigerian women to be exempted from paying taxes to the Federal Government.

“In the letter titled 'Urgent Petition Against Arise Television Unethical Reporting', the Ministry also claimed that at the Anambra Investment Summit held on September 18, 2023, Arise TV during their morning show broadcast inaccurately portrayed the Minister in her statement.”

ACTORS

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

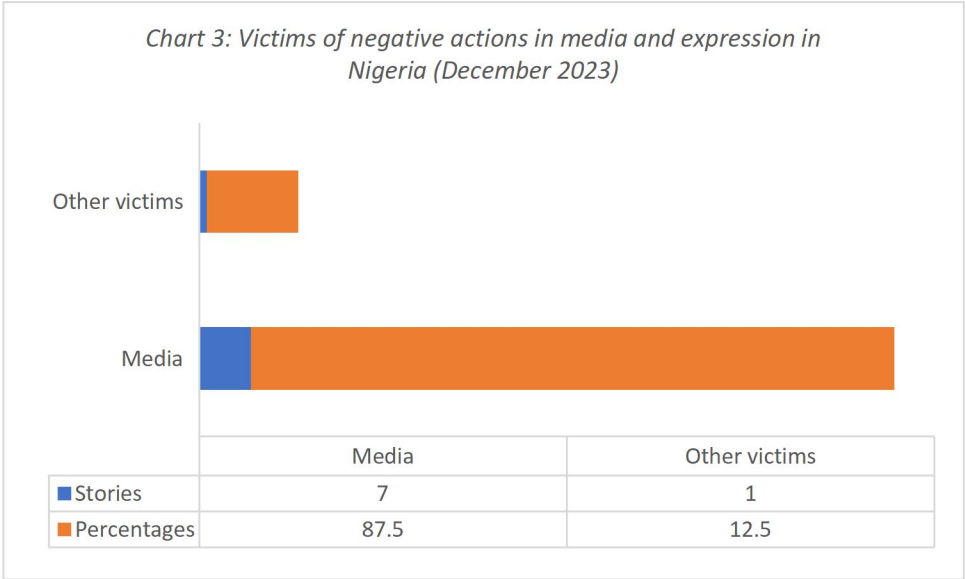


According to Chart 2, security agencies were the most covered actors, featuring in four or 50% of eight applicable stories. Other government agencies and non-state actors were each featured in two stories, each representing 25% of the reports.

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
- kidnapping/abduction



The media was the biggest victim identified in this section, featuring in, as Chart 3 shows, 87.5% (7 in 8 stories) of the applicable reports. Other victims were featured in 12.5% (1 story) of the reports.

CONCLUSION

MEiN analyses for December 2023 showed that the main theme of the stories was the attacks on the media and other victims which accounted for 86% of the stories, indicating a high level of violence and intimidation against the media. Security agencies were the most reported actors while the media were the most featured victims.

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