

# MEIN

MEDIA AND EXPRESSION IN NIGERIA

Vol 2, No 5  
May 2023



# **MEDIA AND EXPRESSION IN NIGERIA (MEiN)**

*Vol 2, No. 5 • May 2023*



**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:

ABC - Adamawa Broadcasting Corporation

ADVAN - Advertisers Association of Nigeria

CGGEJA - Coalition for Good Governance and Economic Justice in Africa

FIJ - Foundation for Investigative Journalism

IMS - Institute for Media and Society

MEiN - Media and Expression in Nigeria

MRA - Media Rights Agenda

NBC - National Broadcasting Commission

NCS - Nigeria Computer Society

NDLEA - National Drug Law Enforcement Agency

NITDA - National Information Technology Development Agency

NUJ - Nigeria Union of Journalists

PEPC - Presidential Election Petition Court

PRIMORG - Progressive Impact Organization for Community Development

RSF - Reporters Without Borders

VIP - Very Important Person

## 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.

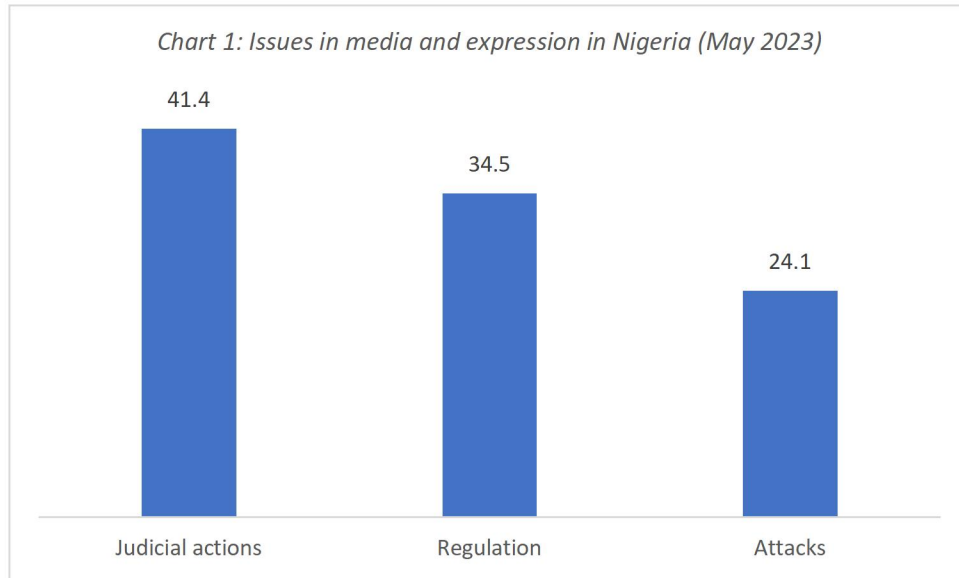
The coding process is done by trained media monitors who follow a coding scheme that defines the categories and sub-categories of each unit of analysis. The coding scheme also specifies the rules and criteria for assigning codes to the data. The coded data is then translated into a spreadsheet for further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



### Judicial actions

Chart 1 shows the distribution of 29 stories across topics related to media and expression in Nigeria in May 2023. Judicial action, with 12 stories, was the most prominent topic, representing 41.4% of the distribution.

*Examples:*

1. On May 8, [Sahara Reporters published a news story](#) titled, “Court Grants Group Permission To Sue Nigerian Broadcasting Commission Over Failure to Disclose Details Of 302 Sanctioned Stations”.

“Justice Nkeonye Evelyn Maha of the Federal High Court sitting in Abuja has granted Media Rights Agenda (MRA) permission to sue the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) in two separate cases,” the report read.

“MRA sued the Commission for its failure to grant the organisation's requests for information on the scope of independence reportedly granted it by President Muhammadu Buhari and details of the 302 broadcasting stations it said it sanctioned in four months after campaigns for the 2023 elections began in September 2022.

“This is contained in a statement signed by Idowu Adewale (Mr.), Communications Officer, Media Rights Agenda.”

2. “Court Bars NBC from Imposing Fines on Broadcast Stations,” [ThisDay reported](#) on May 10.

“A Federal High Court Abuja, on Wednesday, gave an order of perpetual injunction restraining the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) from imposing fines henceforth on broadcast stations in the country,” the report read.

“Justice James Omotosho, in a judgment, also set aside the N500,000 fines imposed, on March 1, 2019, on each of the 45 broadcast stations.

“Justice Omotosho held that the NBC, not being a court of law, had no power to impose sanctions as punishment on broadcast stations.

“He further held that the NBC Code, which gives the commission the power to impose sanction, conflicts with Section 6 of the Constitution that vested judicial power in the court of law.

“He said the court would not sit idle and watch a body imposing fine arbitrarily without recourse to the law.”

3. Also on May 10, [Premium Times reported](#) that “ECOWAS Court to rule on controversial NBC Code, after Nigerian court judgement against agency”.

“The ECOWAS Court has fixed 27 September for judgement in a suit challenging some provisions of the Nigerian government’s national broadcasting code,” the report read.

“The contested provisions of the code empower the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) to impose fines on any erring Nigerian broadcast station. NBC can shut down broadcasting stations that fail to comply with its sanctions.

“Major Nigerian broadcast stations have been strained by exorbitant fines for breaches of the code in the last few years, some of which have triggered court actions.

“Coincidentally, a Nigerian court, in a judgement on Wednesday, invalidated NBC’s power to impose fines on the country’s broadcast stations.”

4. “Editors hail court for declaring NBC fines illegal,” [The Punch reported](#) on May 11.

“The Nigerian Guild of Editors has commended the Federal High Court Abuja, for making an order of perpetual injunctions restraining the National Broadcasting Commission from imposing fines on broadcast stations in the country,” the report read.

“The court, in a judgment on Wednesday by Justice James Omotosho, held that not being a court of law, NBC had no power to impose sanctions as punishment on broadcast stations.

“The judge made the pronouncement while ruling on a suit marked FHC/ABJ/CS/1386/2021, filed against the NBC by the Incorporated Trustees of Media Rights Agenda.

“In the judgment, Justice Omotosho set aside a fine of N500, 000 each imposed by NBC on 45 broadcast stations on March 1, 2019. The judge ruled that the NBC Code, which gives the commission the power to impose sanction on broadcast stations, conflicted with Section 6 of the 1999 Constitution that vested judicial powers in the court of law.”

5. “NBC To Appeal Court Judgement That Barred It From Fining Broadcast Stations,” [Solace Base reported](#) on May 12.

“The National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) has reacted to an order of a Federal High Court in Abuja which restrained it from imposing fines on broadcast stations across the country,” the report read.

“It could be recalled that in a ruling in a suit filed by Incorporated Trustees of Media Rights Agenda, MRA, Justice James Omotosho, held that NBC lacked the power to impose fines on broadcast stations.”

“The Commission will appeal against the judgment when found to conflict with previous judgments of the Court, which empowers the Commission to regulate broadcasting in Nigeria,” NBC reportedly said in a statement.

6. On May 17, [Sahara Reporters published a story](#) titled, “Kidnappers Of Nigerian Female Journalist Bag Life Imprisonment In Adamawa”.

“A High Court in Yola, Adamawa State has convicted and sentenced three kidnappers of a female journalist, Amra Ahmad Diska, to life imprisonment,” the story read.

“Justice Danladi Mohammed on Wednesday sentenced the trio, Muhammad Habib Maki (aka Dram), Barde Usman and Umar Mammanjoda (aka Umar Mbamba) to life imprisonment after they were convicted.

“The journalist, a staff member of Adamawa Broadcasting Corporation (ABC), Yola, Amra Ahmad Diska, was abducted on May 4, 2021, at her residence in the Yola-South Local Government Area.

“She was later freed by her abductors after payment of an undisclosed ransom, as widely reported on May 31, 2023.

“While sentencing them on Wednesday, Justice Mohammed also sentenced one of the accomplices to 10 years imprisonment with an option of N1 million fine and sent one other to five years in prison without an option of a fine.

“Similarly, Husseini Hamman (aka Awilo) was sentenced to 5 years imprisonment without an option of a fine, while Umar Abubakar (aka Naibi) bagged a 10-year prison term or N1 million option of a fine.”

7. “ADVAN to sue FG over new advertising regulation,” [The Punch reported](#) on May 24.

“Advertisers under the aegis of the Advertisers Association of Nigeria are set to sue the Advertising Regulatory Council of Nigeria over its controversial advertising regulations,” the report said.

“ADVAN President, Osamede Uwubanmwen, made the disclosure when he spoke in an exclusive interview with The PUNCH on Tuesday.

“Uwubanmwen said legal action had become necessary after all necessary channels aimed at resolving the impasse with the regulatory council failed.

“According to him, ADVAN’s contention hinges on the fact that the newly introduced advertising law is in breach of Nigeria’s constitution, and therefore unacceptable to practising advertisers.”

## **Regulation**

Regulation was the second most reported topic, getting 10 stories or 34.5% of the total.

### *Examples:*

1. “PREMIUM TIMES reconstitutes ombudsman board for public oversight of its journalism,” [the news platform reported](#) on May 13.

“Nigeria’s leading investigative and pro-democracy newspaper, PREMIUM TIMES, has reconstituted its ombudsman board, six years after the oversight organ was first created,” the report said.

“The body, first named on May 3 2017, has now been restructured into a compact three-member panel down from its initial seven-person format.

The committee, consisting of excellent media professionals, scholars and veteran journalists, is charged with reviewing complaints from members of the news medium’s audiences from around the world.

“A statement by the newspaper’s Editor-in-Chief, Musikilu Mojeed, gave the names of the new members of the ombudsman committee as Gbemiga Ogunleye, Ruqayyah Aliyu Yusuf and Udeme Nana.”

2. “Experts push for withdrawal of NITDA bill,” [The Sun reported](#) on May 14.

"The umbrella body of Information Technology (IT) professionals in the country, Nigeria Computer Society (NCS) has urged the National Assembly’s upper and lower chambers to immediately rescind the bill that would amend the National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA) Act 2007 that is currently before them," the report read.

"The association claims that the NITDA 2022 bill lacks input from stakeholders, has various flaws, and requires thorough review, warning that hastily approving it could be injurious to the nation’s IT sector and economy as a whole."

3. “Despite Raking Millions of Naira From Broadcast Stations, NBC Can’t Keep Its Website Working,” [FIJ reported](#) on May 14.

“The National Broadcasting Commission (NBC)’s website has been inactive for more than a month without information on what is responsible for its inactivity,” the report read.

“The commission is Nigeria’s broadcast media regulator established by the National Broadcasting Commission Act. The act empowers the commission to regulate and control the broadcasting industry, among other duties.

“As an important information agency, the NBC operates a publicly accessible portal, <https://nbc.gov.ng>, where professionals and members of the general public could check out for data without messaging the commission.

“On April 13, FIJ observed the website was down, and the situation is still the same. This persistent problem speaks too low of a media industry regulator with one of the highest numbers of license holders on the African continent.

“Hundreds of media radio and television stations have been sanctioned for various alleged infractions against broadcasting codes and paid millions of naira as penalty to the commission. It is not the first or second time the website has gone off the radar without a statement from the commission to the public. The commission is, however, active on social media.”

4. “Social Media Needs Regulation Against Fake News – Keyamo,” [Concise NG reported](#) on May 16.

“Barrister Festus Keyamo, the Minister of State for Labour and Employment, has highlighted several strategies to combat the menace of fake news,” the report read.

“Speaking through his special adviser, Niyi Fatogun, at a media workshop titled ‘Balancing Ethics and Patriotism: The Obligations of Journalists to Their Country,’ organized by the



Coalition for Good Governance and Economic Justice in Africa, Keyamo emphasized the importance of enacting regulations to regulate and cleanse the social media landscape.

“Acknowledging the prevalence and significance of social media in Nigeria, Keyamo stressed the need for comprehensive laws that would effectively address the issue of fake news.

“He expressed concerns about the potential harm caused by false information, which can undermine the unity and stability of the nation. To tackle this challenge head-on, Keyamo advocated for the eradication of fake social media accounts as a critical first step.”

5. “Sanctions on broadcast stations not media gag – NBC clarifies,” [The News Guru reported](#).

“Against the growing concern by stakeholders that press freedom in Nigeria is threatened by broadcast regulations, the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) says its disciplinary measures and sanctions on erring broadcasting stations are not aimed at gagging the media,” the report said.

“NBC’s Director-General, Balarabe Shehu Ilelah, clarified during PUBLIC CONSCIENCE, an anti-corruption radio programme produced by the Progressive Impact Organization for Community Development, PRIMORG, Wednesday in Abuja.

“Represented by the agency’s Director, Public Affairs, Susan Obi, revealed that imposition of sanctions on broadcast stations is not done hastily but requires a rigorous procedure and steps, insisting that the main aim has never been to gag the Nigerian media space but to get all stakeholders to play by the rules.

“Obi said the functions of the Commission were not just set up by NBC but were agreed on by broadcast stakeholders while urging the media to take responsibility for ensuring credibility and balancing their duties.

“She said NBC could contribute to Nigeria’s fight against corruption by ensuring that broadcast stations have programs or content that are authentic, that have been thoroughly investigated, and balanced contents.”

6. “NGO Advocates Self-Regulation, Technology as Best Approach to Ending Fake News,” [ThisDay reported](#) on May 16.

“The Coalition for Good Governance and Economic Justice in Africa (CGGEJA), has revealed that self-regulation is the key in curbing the disturbing trends and consequences of fake news in every society,” the report said.

“The CGGEJA said that since the use of technology has come to stay, fact-checking information on social media before further dissemination would help to mitigate the spread of fake news.

“The Country Director of CGGEJA, Mr John Mayaki, made this known in Abuja yesterday during a media dialogue with the theme ‘Balancing Ethics and Patriotism: The Obligations of Journalists to Their Country.’

“Mayaki said that the timeliness of this programme has been buttressed by the fact that experts in journalism and related fields are beginning to get worried about the scourge of fake news.

“He noted that the key points of the dialogue are centred on patriotism and how to identify fake news and help to fight it.

“He reiterated that the country would be set ablaze if fake news is allowed to continue.”

## **Attacks**

Seven reports were focused on attacks, representing 24.1% of the distribution.

*Examples:*

1. “Drama In Court As Lawyers, Policemen, Journalists Barred From Observing Witnesses’ Testimony Against DCP Abba Kyari,” [The Whistler reported](#) on May 16.

“There was mild drama at the Federal High Court sitting in Abuja on Tuesday when presiding judge, Emeka Nwite ordered litigants and parties not directly involved in the alleged drug trafficking case against suspended deputy Commissioner of Police, Abba Kyari, to leave the courtroom including those who have pending matters before him,” the report said.

“The order followed an application filed by the applicant, the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency, NDLEA, requesting protection of their witnesses.

“Nwite granted the application on Tuesday and the court rose for some minutes so that other lawyers, visitors and journalists could go out.

“The registrar announced that other lawyers who have no business in Kyari’s case should step forward and take another date for their cases.

“This provoked one of the lawyers who started railing in court, wondering why he should be asked to take another date, adding court should not be giving preference to some ‘VIP’ cases. The judge returned to the courtroom after parties refused to leave.”

2. “VIDEO: For ‘Demanding Due Process’, Katsina PPRO Drag Journalist Before Emir, Brand Her ‘Criminal’,” [FIJ reported](#) on May 26.

“Ruqaiya Aliyu Jibia, a Katsina-based journalist, has accused Gambo Isah, Public Relations Officer of the Katsina State Police Command, of assaulting her,” the report said.

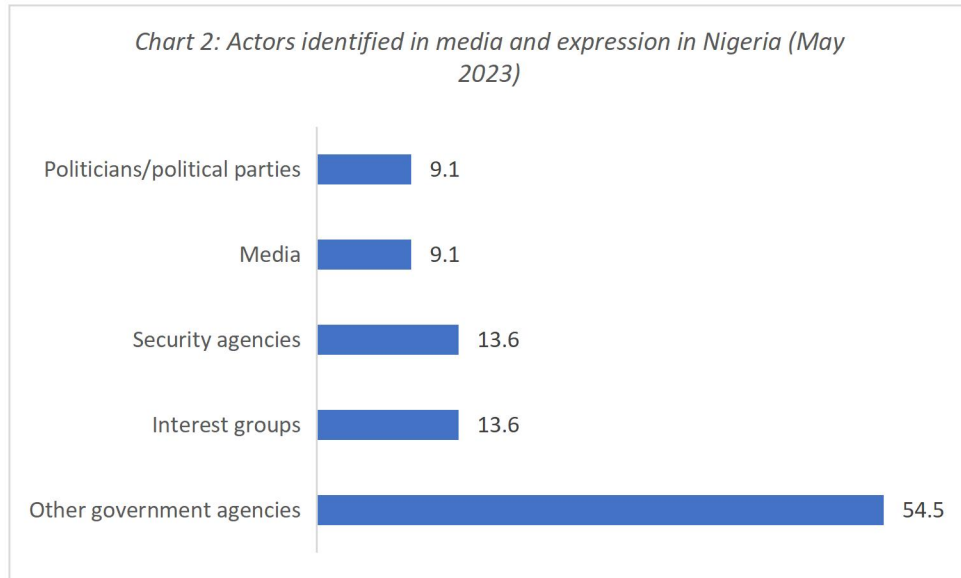
“Jibia, in a video posted on her Tiktok page @rukkyjibia on Thursday, said she challenged the police for branding and parading young girls as prostitutes without a court verdict.

“She said she recorded a TikTok video condemning the move by the police, and demanding adherence to constitutional provisions. Isah called her a day after the video was published, and dubbed her a criminal.

“She said he invited her to the palace of an emir, whose name she did not disclose, but before she got to his palace, Isah and his policemen ambushed her, beat her and dragged her to the palace where he would get the blessing of the emir to prosecute her.”

## **ACTORS**

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

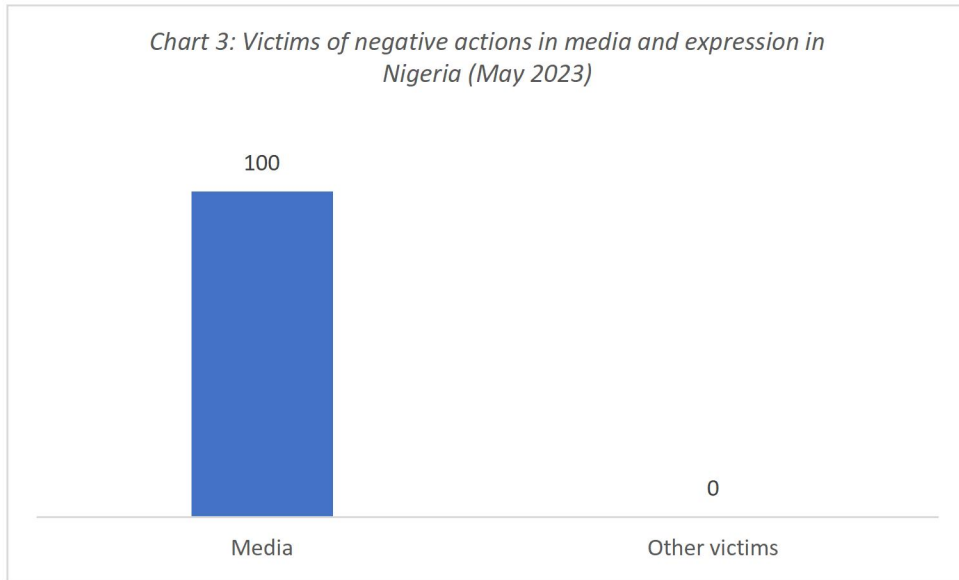


According to Chart 2, other government agencies were the most prominent actors as they were identified in 12 stories or 54.5% of 22 applicable reports. Security agencies were the actors identified in three reports, representing 13.6% of the total. The same was true for interest groups. The media and politicians/political parties were each featured in two stories or 9.1% 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 (100%; seven applicable reports) were the only victims identified in this section, Chart 3 shows.

## **CONCLUSION**

MEiN analysis for the period in review showed that judicial action was the most prevalent theme, accounting for 41.4% of the stories. Regulation and attacks on the media and other victims were also featured. Government agencies were the most prominent actors, with the media, interest groups and politicians getting minimal visibility. The media were the only victims of the negative actions recorded in this report.

**MEiN** is published

*by*

Institute for Media and Society (IMS)

3, Emina Crescent, Off Toyin Street,

Ikeja Lagos, Nigeria

Phone:

Email: [info@imesoimeso.org](mailto:info@imesoimeso.org), [imesoimeso@hotmail.com](mailto:imesoimeso@hotmail.com)

Website: [www.imesoimeso.org](http://www.imesoimeso.org)

