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MEDIA AND EXPRESSION IN NIGERIA

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CEMESO

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Centre for Media and Society

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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 Cooperation

ADVAN - Advertisers Association of Nigeria

AMDF - Africa Media Development Foundation

ARCON - Advertising Regulatory Council of Nigeria

CEMESO - Centre for Media and Society

ECOWAS - Economic Community of West African States

LASTMA - Lagos State Traffic Management Authority

MEiN - Media and Expression in Nigeria

NBC - National Broadcasting Commission

NCC - Nigerian Communication Commission

NFVCB - National Film and Video Censors Board

VOA - Voice of America

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.

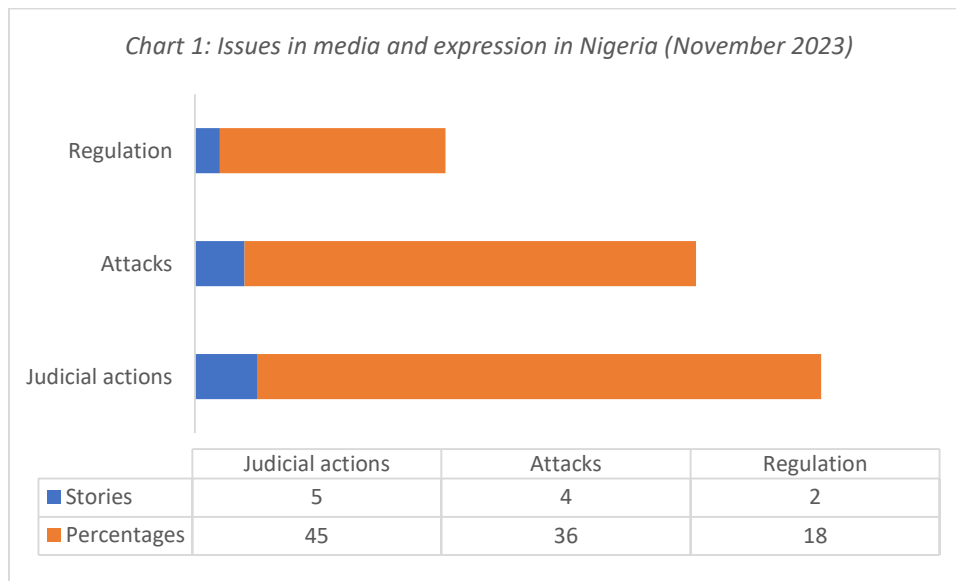
The coding process is done by trained media monitors who follow a coding scheme that defines the categories and sub-categories of each unit of analysis. The coding scheme also specifies the rules and criteria for assigning codes to the data. The coded data is then translated into a spreadsheet for further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



Judicial actions

There were five stories on judicial actions, representing, as Chart 1 shows, 45% of 11 applicable reports.

Examples:

1. “Court remands controversial Bayelsa blogger in Kuje correction facility,” [The Guardian reported](#) on November 2.

“The Federal High Court, Abuja, on Thursday, ordered the remand of controversial Bayelsa Blogger, Mr Saint Onitsha Mienpamo, in Kuje Correctional Centre following his arraignment on alleged cyberbullying,” the report read.

“He was arraigned for allegations bordering on defamatory publications against the Interim Administrator of the Presidential Amnesty Programme (PAP), Major General Barry Ndiomu (retd).

“Justice Emeka Nwite, in a ruling after Mienpamo took his plea, directed the defendant to be remanded in the correctional centre until Dec. 4, when the trial would commence.”

2. “Why we’re taking ARCON to court —ADVAN,” [Nigerian Tribune reported](#) on November 6.

“The Advertisers Association of Nigeria (ADVAN) has said that its decision to take the apex regulatory body in the nation’s advertising industry, the Advertising Regulatory Council of Nigeria (ARCON), to court is to challenge some of the aspects of the agency’s new law, which it described as ‘clearly unconstitutional in their provisions,’” the report read.

“The Executive Council of the association, in a statement tagged ‘Reason for Suit Against ARCON’, stated that while the association is ready to support any reform geared towards industry development and pursued within the confines of the nation’s constitution, it will, however, challenge any of such laws that infringe on the constitutional rights of the advertisers.

“One of such, it stated, is the ARCON’s Remit of the Law, which it disagreed with, especially the section, which it said, gives ARCON the power to regulate advertisers.”

3. “Journalist Slams N100m Suit On LASTMA Over Rights Violations,” [Leadership newspaper reported](#) on November 9.

“A veteran journalist, Osa Director, has slammed a N100 million suit on the Lagos State Traffic Management Authority (LASTMA) before the state high court sitting in Ikeja over the violation of his fundamental rights,” the report read.

“Director, who is also a lawyer, in suit Number ID/16108MFHR/2023, demands the money as compensation for the damage he suffered when his car was seized by LASTMA officials.

“He also urged the court to order the agency to return the sum of \$1,700 and A52 Samsung Galaxy handset that went missing from his car after it was impounded.

“In an affidavit filed alongside the suit, the applicant claimed that on August 24, 2023, his car was ambushed, seized from him and driven to an unknown destination by two officials of LASTMA in the company of two thugs dressed in police uniform.

“He also averred that since that day, his Ford Edge SUV had been detained and kept in the custody of LASTMA in one of their car parks.

4. “Court refuses to reverse judgement stopping NBC from fining broadcast stations,” [Premium Times reported](#) on November 23.

“The Federal High Court (FHC), Abuja, on Thursday, dismissed the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC)’s motion seeking an order setting aside its judgement restraining the commission from imposing fines on broadcast stations in the country.

“The judge, James Omotosho, in a judgement, dismissed all the grounds put forward by the NBC, describing same as ‘an afterthought.’

“Mr Omotosho held that despite being served with the originating process and hearing notices in the case leading to the judgment, the commission failed to file its defence.

“The judge said contrary to the NBC’s argument that it was not served with court processes that led to the judgement, ‘the court file shows that services were effected on the respondent applicant (NBC) but failed to file and refused to enter appearance.’”

5. “ECOWAS court orders amendment of press council law,” [The Punch reported](#) on November 26.

“The Economic Community of West African States Court sitting in Abuja has said Sections 19 (1)(a), 27, and 37 of the Nigerian Press Council Act failed to recognise public interest media, including the rights of online and citizen journalists,” the report read.

“The court held that the sections violated Article 9 (1) of the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights, and Articles 8 (1) and 10 (2) of the Declaration of Principles on Freedom of Expression in Africa.

“The court consequently ordered the Nigerian government to amend these contested sections to align with international practices that promote free, pluralistic, and professional journalism.

“A statement on Sunday from the court said the judgment was delivered in a case brought by two Nigerian journalists alleging that the NPC Act of 1992 was discriminatory and violated their right to freedom of expression.”

Attacks

Attacks on the media and other victims, with four stories, represented 36% of the reports.

Examples:

1. “Abductors Of Trust TV Journalist Make Contact, Demand N10m Ransom,” [ThisAge reported](#) on November 3.

“Abductors of broadcast journalist/editor, Nten Ekpang, with Trust TV have made contact with family, demanding ten-million-naira ransom,” the report said.

“Ekpang was kidnapped on Wednesday, at a village near Lokoja in Kogi State. He was on his way back to Abuja, after taking his family for a holiday in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State. A close family contact, Kevin Chianan, who confirmed this to newsmen in Abuja on Thursday night, said the kidnappers called the wife and demanded ten-million-naira ransom for his release.”

2. “Police Rescue Abducted Adamawa Journalist,” [Leadership newspaper reported](#) on November 7.

“The police in Adamawa State have rescued Mr Usman Umar Sahabi, a staff of Adamawa Broadcasting Cooperation (ABC) Yola, who was kidnapped by gunmen,” the report said.

“Sahabi spent six days in captivity before he was rescued yesterday. The kidnappers whisked away the journalist at his Wuro Chekkere residence and demanded N5 million ransom.

“Sahabi also serves as the chief of staff to the speaker of the state House of Assembly, Hon Bathiya Theman. The police command had vowed to rescue the journalist alive and bring his perpetrators to justice. The command spokesperson, SP Sulaiman Nguroje, confirmed the release of Sahabi to newsmen.”

3. “Arrest, detention of another Kaduna journalist attempt to gag media – AMDF warns,” [The Sun reported](#) on November 17.

“Africa Media Development Foundation (AMDF) has described the arrest and subsequent detention of a Kaduna-based Journalist Mr. Achadu Gabriel Idibia over a publication as an attempt to gag the media by the security agents involved and their collaborators,” the report read.

“Idibia who writes for Daybreak Newspapers from Kaduna, Nigeria was detained over a report published on September 24th titled ‘Kaduna Hajj camp, a national shame, men, women sleep together in overcrowded hall – investigation’.

“AMDF Founder, Mr. Iliya Kure in a statement on behalf of the Press Freedom Surveillance Team noted that the report in question has video evidence and quoted sources supporting it, exposing the deteriorated and poor state of the Camp and the plight of Muslim Pilgrims at the Mando Hajj Camp, Kaduna.

4. “Outrage as Niger commissioner assaults Journalist,” [Blueprint Newspapers reported](#) on November 26.

“Practicing journalists in Niger state have expressed serious concern and disappointment over the attack on Voice of America (VOA) reporter, Mustapha Batsari, by the Commissioner of Homeland Security, Major General Bello Mohammed Abdullahi (retd),” the report read.

“The incident reportedly occurred at the weekend inside Government House, Minna, when the reporter approached the commissioner to confirm stories on the communal clash in the Beji area and the recent banditry attacks in Bosso local government area.

“Recounting his ordeal, Batsari stated that he called on the commissioner severally without response and went to his office and he was not on seat. He added that it took the intervention of people around to save him from the wrath of the commissioner.”

Regulation

Two stories were focused on regulation, representing 18%, the least in this category, of the reported issues.

Examples:

1. “Polls Coverage: NBC cautions broadcasters against compromise, violation of code,” [Peoples Gazette reported](#) on November 7.

“The National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) has cautioned broadcasters covering governorship elections in Bayelsa, Imo and Kogi to abide by the provisions of the broadcasting code and other regulations,” the report read.

“This is contained in a statement by NBC’s director-general, Charles Ebuebu, on Tuesday in Abuja, ahead of the governorship election scheduled for November 11 in the three states.

“Mr Ebuebu said the commission has observed, with deep concerns, how ethics have been thrown to the winds by politicians using broadcast media platforms.”

2. “NFVCB to sanction violators of digital content law,” [The Punch reported](#) on November 25.

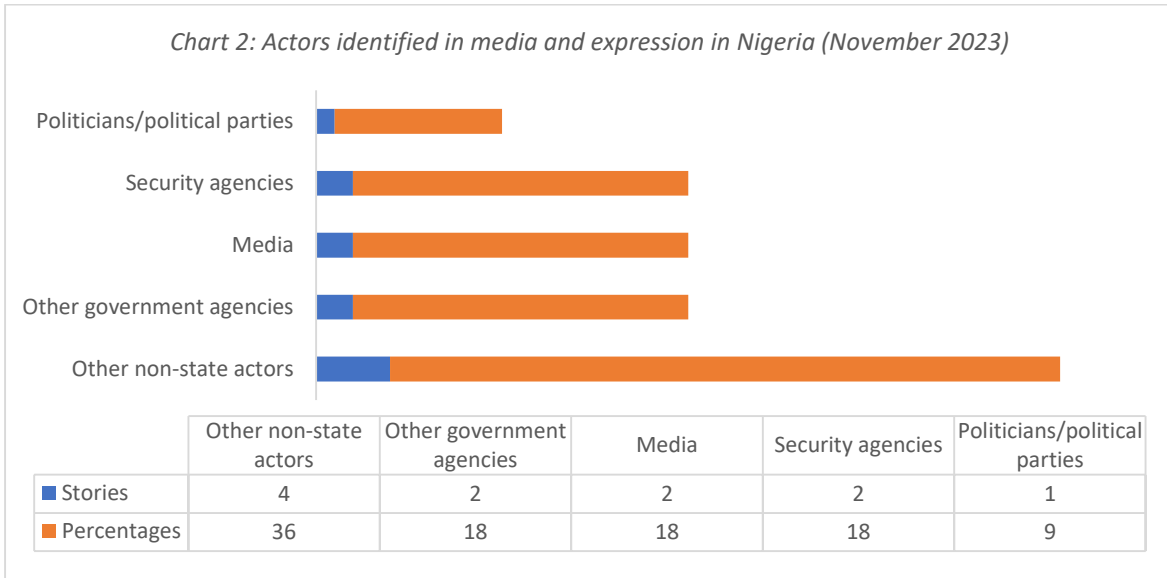
“The National Film And Video Censors Board, has vowed to sanction Over-The-Top streaming services that are violating the Nigerian digital content law,” the report read.

“Speaking at the third edition of the NFVCB’s Digital Content Regulation conference in Lagos, the Executive Director of the board, Adedayo Thomas, stated that the Nigerian Creative Industry law covered OTTs and streamers, hence the NFVCB was working closely with security agencies to ensure that violators faced the law.

“This was even as he commended digital streaming platform, Netflix, on its compliance with the law and collaboration with the board. He said, ‘Netflix is the best in compliance with the digital content law because they would not accept any film not classified by the NFVCB from any filmmaker.’”

ACTORS

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

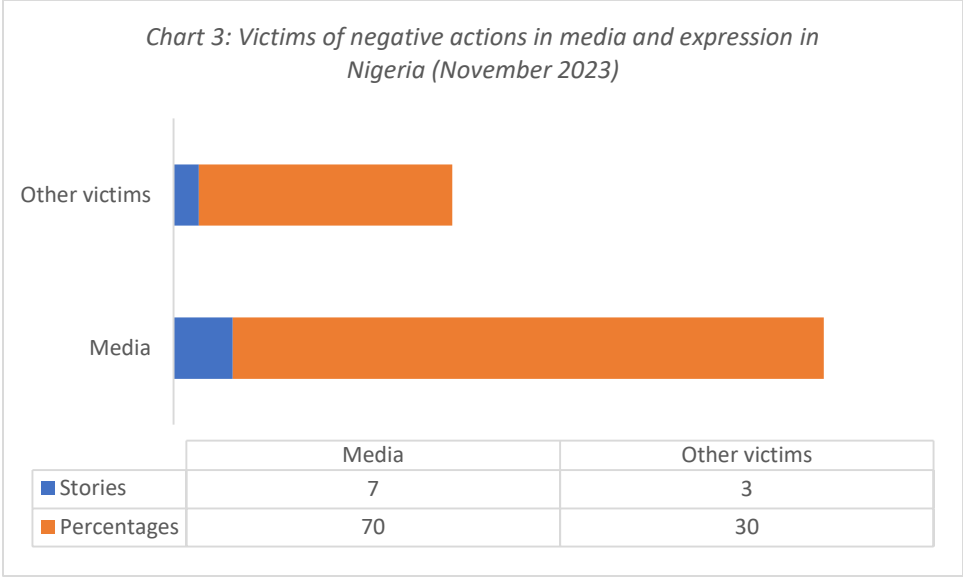


According to Chart 2, security agencies, other government agencies and the media each got 18% (2 in 11 stories) of the coverage. Other non-state actors and politicians/political parties got 36% (4 stories) and 9% (1 story) of the coverage respectively.

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, 70% (7 in 10 stories) of the applicable reports. Other victims were featured in 30% (3 stories) of the reports.

CONCLUSION

MEiN analyses for November 2023 showed that judicial actions were the most reported topic, representing 45% of the coverage, with attacks and regulation accounting for the rest. Non-state actors were the most featured were the most featured players while the media were the biggest victims of the negative actions recorded during the period under review.

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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