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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:

CEMESO - Centre for Media and Society

CPJ - Committee to Protect Journalists

ECOWAS - Economic Community of West African States

FIJ - Foundation for Investigative Journalism

I-CSPJ - IPC's Centre for Safety and Protection of Journalists

IPC - International Press Centre

MEiN - Media and Expression in Nigeria

MRA - Media Rights Agenda

NBC - National Broadcasting Commission

NGO - Non-Governmental Organisation

NDR – Nigeria Democratic Report

NPF-NCCC - Nigeria Police Force National Cybercrime Centre

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 because of the issues or actions of the actors and could be any of the individuals or groups identified under actors.

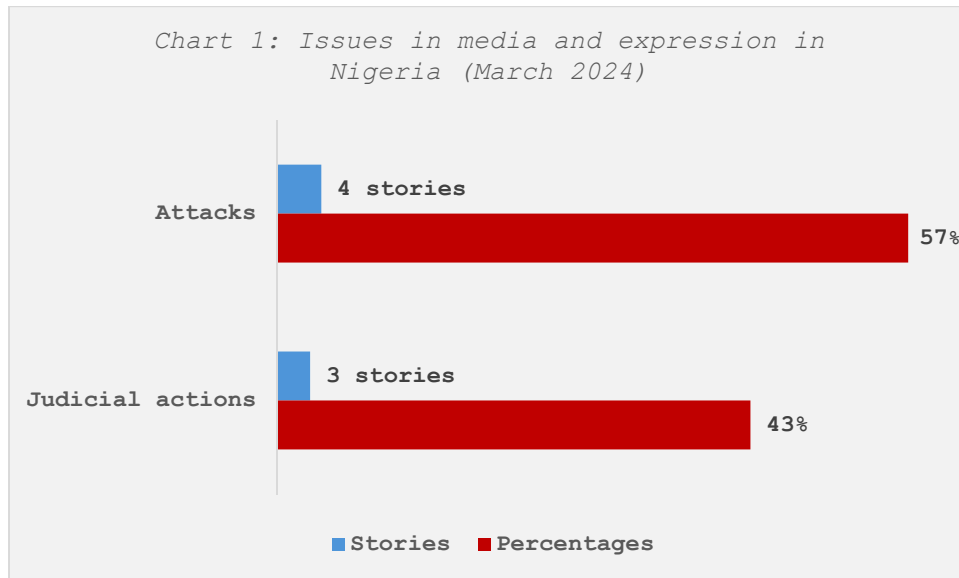
The coding process is done by trained media monitors who follow a coding scheme that defines the categories and sub-categories of each unit of analysis. The coding scheme also specifies the rules and criteria for assigning codes to the data. The coded data is then translated into a spreadsheet for further 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 constituted four or 57% of seven applicable stories analysed during the period under review.

Examples:

1. On March 11, [Nigeria Democratic Report \(NDR\) published press statement](#) titled, "IPC Safety Centre Decries Threats to Journalist Ebule Metsese's Life in Delta State,"

"The Centre for Safety and Protection of Journalists (I-CSPJ), International Press Center has expressed concerns about the alleged reported threats on the life of the Editor-in-Chief of Fresh Angle International Newspaper, Ebule Anthony Metsese," the report read.

"Information reaching the I-CSPJ, states that Ebule Metsese has raised an alarm over alleged recurring threats to his life as a result of the controversial developments in Warri Kingdom.

"Ebule stated that the most recent of such threats was connected to the incident that happened at Okere Community in Warri, on Saturday, March 2, 2024.

2. "Gunmen abduct FirstNews editor in Lagos," [The Punch reported](#) on March 16.

"Gunmen suspected to be soldiers have reportedly abducted the editor of FirstNews newspaper, Segun Olatunji, from his home in Lagos State," the report read.

"Olatunji, a former Kaduna State correspondent of The Punch, was reportedly kidnapped on Friday by gunmen from his home in the Iyana Odo, Abule Egba area of the state."

Olatunji, it turned out, was 'abducted' by Nigerian soldiers. This was according to the editor who recounted his ordeal after regaining freedom.

"How soldiers blindfolded, tortured me in Abuja cell – Abducted editor," [the Punch reported](#) on March 29, providing an update to the story.

"The kidnapped Editor of FirstNews Online Newspaper, Segun Olatunji, on Thursday, recounted his ordeal at the Defence Intelligence Agency following his abduction by military men on March 15, 2024," the report read.

"Olatunji regained his freedom on Thursday after spending nearly two weeks in the DIA detention, while his family and colleagues worried about his whereabouts.

"After keeping mum throughout, military authorities, on Thursday, yielded to pressure and released Olatunji.

"His release followed sustained pressure by the Nigerian Guild of Editors, Nigeria Union of Journalists, International Press Institute, his employee, and The Punch, which did a series of cover stories demanding the release of the abducted editor."

3. "Journalists held hostage in Osun court," [the Punch reported](#) on March 19.

"Some journalists were held hostage in the premises of the Federal High Court in Osogbo, Osun State, on Tuesday, as the court heard applications for and against the bail of a member of Osun Park Management System, Olalekan Oyeyemi," the report read.

"Oyeyemi, popularly known as 'Emir', has been on trial on a 10-count that includes conspiracy, malicious damage, unlawful killing and acts of terrorism.

"He had pleaded not guilty, while his counsel, Edmund Biriomoni, filed a formal bail application for his release.

"In his ruling, Justice N. Ayo-Emmanuel, reserved the ruling on the applications, saying the date of the next sitting would be communicated to the parties in the matter.

"Meanwhile, suspected hoodlums, who had thronged the court in large numbers held some journalists covering the matter hostage within the court premises after the presiding judge had adjourned the matter.

"The hoodlums, who identified some of the journalists while the court was in session, threatened to attack them after the proceedings.

"The journalists involved could not leave the premises for about 40 minutes after adjournment, until some police operatives deployed to the premises escorted them out of the court, as the suspected hoodlums, who converged under a tree outside the court, were ordered to vacate the area by a female police operative."

FirstNews also provided several updates on the story. [An update from March 28](#) carried the following headline, "Abducted FirstNews Editor, Segun Olatunji, freed from DIA custody".

4. "Police Threaten FIJ's BoT Chairman, Declare Soyombo Wanted," [FIJ reported](#) on March 29.

"The Nigeria Police Force National Cybercrime Centre (NPF-NCCC) on Tuesday grilled Bukky Shonibare, the chairman of FIJ's Board of Trustees, at their Abuja office, only letting her go after making her promise to 'produce' 'Fisayo Soyombo, FIJ's founder," the report read.

"The NPF-NCCC had invited Shonibare to an interview with its director to answer questions about cybercrime and seek clarification from FIJ about a case it was investigating. With nothing to hide, Shonibare, herself a lawyer, honoured the invitation, accompanied by FIJ's legal counsel.

[Sahara Reporters also published an article on the matter](#) titled, "Nigerian Police Summon FIJ Board Chair For 'Cybercrime' Allegation After Exposing Customs Officers In Smuggling."

The Nigeria Police Force has summoned the chairman of the Foundation for Investigative Journalism (FIJ) Board of Trustees, Bukky Shonibare, to Abuja to answer questions about "cybercrime".

"The foundation which disclosed this in a post on X (formerly Twitter), said the invitation might be connected to its five-week-long investigative focus on smuggling and the Nigeria Customs Service," the article said.

"FIJ explained that the invitation, sent by the Nigeria Police Force National Cybercrime Centre (NPF-NCC), was dated Thursday, March 21 but was only emailed to her on Saturday, March 23."

Judicial actions

Three stories, representing 43% of the reports, were focused on judicial actions.

Examples:

1. "Sports journalist Chapele seeks justice after assault," [the Punch reported](#) on March 2.

The report read: "A sports journalist with Wazobia FM, Ugo Chapele, fondly known as 'Suo The Queen of Sports' is seeking justice at the Bode Thomas Magistrate Court in Lagos after she was brutalised by a motorist identified as Wisdom Moses, his pregnant wife and brothers on her way home after work, Saturday Punch reports

"Chapele ran the pidgin English match commentaries at the 2022 World Cup in Qatar.

"An eyewitness account stated that a car broke down along the Lekki-Epe Expressway with a truck from the Lekki Concession Company trying to tow it off the road, which forced motorists to drive slowly.

"The eyewitness said Moses rammed his car into Chapele's from the back and in the wake of the accident he came down and attacked her, hitting her severally, which left her battered and bruised with injuries on her face and her body."

2. "ECOWAS Court dismisses suit seeking N110m compensation for slain journalists," [News Diary reported](#) on March 4.

"The ECOWAS Court of Justice on Monday in Abuja dismissed a petition filed by Media Rights Agenda (MRA), an NGO, seeking to compel the Nigerian government to pay N10 million reparation each to the families of 11 deceased journalists," the report read.

"MRA had in the suit filed in 2021 also sought to compel the Nigerian government to properly investigate the unresolved killing of the journalists between 1998 and 2021, identify, and prosecute their killers.

"Delivering judgment, a three-member panel of the Court, presided over by Justice Gberibe Ouattara and delivered by Justice Dupe Atoki, held that the 11 journalists could not be equated as "public" with regards to proof of the victims' status and dismissed the group's petition.

"The Court also held that although the murder of the said 11 journalists was a gross violation of their rights, it was bereft of jurisdiction to entertain and award reparations for the victims."

3. "NBC appeals court order stopping imposition of fines on broadcast stations," [TheCable reported](#) on March 7.

"The National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) has filed a suit against the judgment of a federal court barring the agency from imposing fines on broadcast stations," the report said.

"The NBC filed the suit at the court of appeal in Abuja.

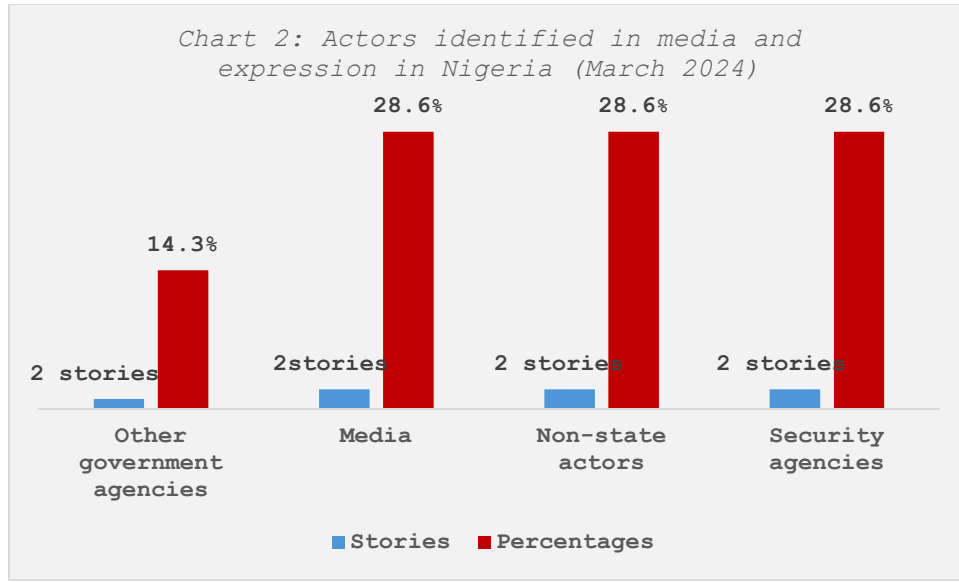
"In the four-point ground of appeal, NBC argued that James Omotosho, the presiding judge at the federal high court, Abuja, erred when he declined to dismiss the order barring the agency from imposing fines on broadcast stations.

"In May 2023, a federal high court in Abuja ruled that NBC does not have the power to impose penalties on broadcast stations. Omotosho set aside fines imposed on 45 broadcast stations by NBC.

“On March 1, 2019, NBC sanctioned 45 broadcast stations over alleged ethical infractions during the general election.”

ACTORS

This section concerns the personalities and groups who were prominent in the relevant stories tracked in March 2024.

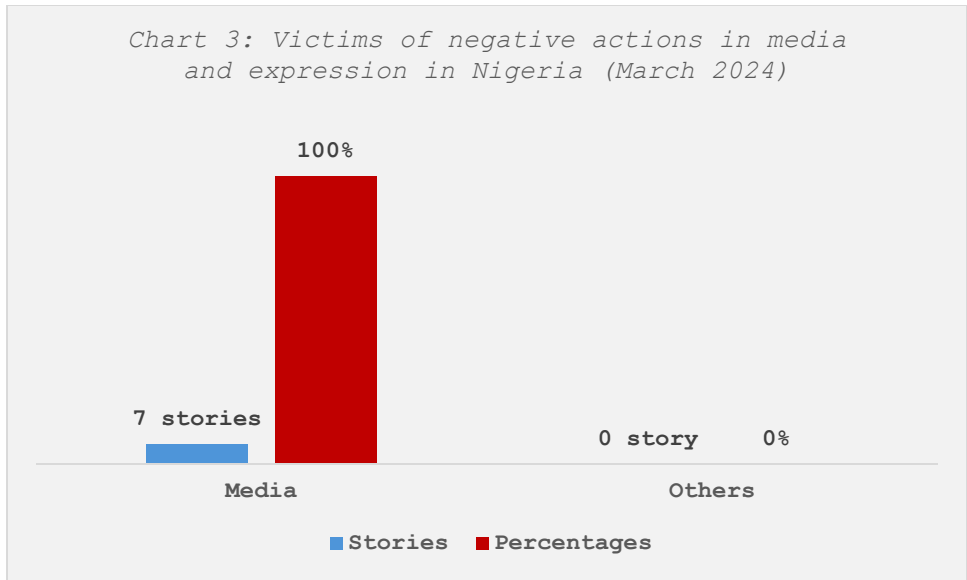


According to Chart 2, security agencies were featured in two or 28.6% of seven applicable reports, and so were the media and other non-state actors. Other government agencies were featured in 14.3% (2 stories) of the reports.

VICTIMS

These were the individuals or groups that suffered harm or loss because 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 were the only victims identified in this section, featuring in, as Chart 3 shows, 100% of seven applicable reports.

CONCLUSION

The MEiN analysis for March 2024 revealed the dominance of attacks (57%) on the media and other actors in the stories analysed during the period in review, with judicial actions, in contrast, making up the remaining 43% of the thematic focus areas.

Security agencies and non-state actors were equally featured in the reports, each being the actors identified in 28.6% of the stories.

The media, who are critical stakeholders in any democracy, emerged as the singular victims during the period in review. In the light of this outlook, it is imperative to Develop Comprehensive Safety Protocols for the press, foster and strengthen sustainable media-security-agencies collaborations, and promote for legal protections for the journalists and the platforms they work with.

MEiN is published

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