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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:

ACJA - Administration of Criminal Justice

CEMESO - Centre for Media and Society

CWPPF - Coalition for Whistleblowers Protection and Press Freedom

FIJ - Foundation for Investigative Journalism

IRT - Intelligence Response Team (of Nigeria Police Force)

MEiN - Media and Expression in Nigeria

NBC - National Broadcasting Commission

SCID - State Criminal Investigation Department (of Nigeria Police Force)

VON - Voice of Nigeria

WPF - World Press Freedom Day

## 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.

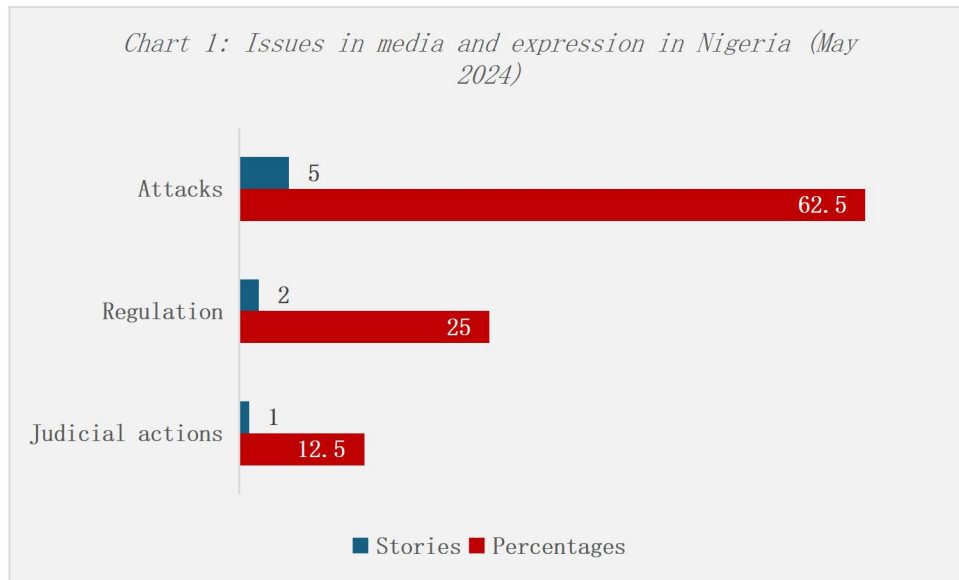
The coding process is done by trained media monitors who follow a coding scheme that defines the categories and sub-categories of each unit of analysis. The coding scheme also specifies the rules and criteria for assigning codes to the data. The coded data is then translated into a spreadsheet for further 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 accounted for five or 62.5% of eight applicable stories analysed during the period under review.

*The stories are:*

1. "Nigerian journalist abducted by police, another faces threat," [Premium Times reported](#) on May 4.

"A journalist with the Foundation for Investigative Journalism (FIJ), Daniel Ojukwu, has been abducted by the Intelligence Response Team (IRT) of the Inspector General of Police, the platform reported on Friday," the report read.

"He is currently being held incommunicado at the State Criminal Investigation Department (SCID), Panti in Lagos on the orders of the Inspector General of Police.

"Another journalist with WikkiTimes, Yawale Adamu, is being threatened by a political aide to the member of the House of Representatives representing the Jama'are Itas Federal Constituency in the National Assembly over a story he did accusing the lawmaker of a politicised distribution of aid from the North-East Development Commission (NEDC).

"The aide, Mustapha Abdurrahman, accused the platform of tarnishing the image of his principal, Rabilu Kashuri. He threatened the reporter, in a telephone

conversation, stating that the State Security Service (SSS) had been contacted as he vowed to take 'action' against the reporter.

"Mr Ojukwu's abduction and Mr Adamu's threat became public on Friday as the World Press Freedom Day (WPDF) was being celebrated across the globe. The day is set aside to remind governments of the need to respect their commitment to press freedom and emphasise the importance of a free press."

2a. "How Katsina Hisbah detained journalist for requesting interview over death of resident," The [Daily Post reported](#) on May 15.

"A journalist, Jamil Mabai, has narrated his ordeal at the hands of officials of the Katsina State Hisbah Board, alleging he was detained and threatened by the Islamic police outfit," the report read.

"Mabai said the development followed his request for a follow-up interview on an incident that led to the death of a resident.

"He said he was at the Hisbah office to get a clearer picture of what transpired at a wedding ceremony where Hisbah operatives fired shots to disrupt the event because a disc jockey, DJ, was performing."

2b. In a follow-up to Mabai's story, "Coalition condemns 'arrest of journalist' by Katsina Hisbah police," [TheCable reported](#) on May 15.

"The Coalition for Whistleblowers Protection and Press Freedom (CWPPF) has condemned the arrest and detention of Jamil Mabai, a freelance journalist with the Daily Trust newspapers, by operatives of the Katsina Hisbah police," the report read.

"On May 14, Mabai reportedly went to the Hisbah office for an interview with the public relations officer after an alleged shooting of a resident by operatives of the outfit but was arrested and detained."

3. "Benue killings: Journalist raises alarm over threat to life," [Radio Nigeria reported](#) on May 22.

"Victoria Ojeme, a journalist with Vanguard Newspapers, has appealed to the authorities to protect her from 'faceless, unscrupulous, and callous individuals' who have continued to send threatening messages to her over an alarm she raised about the "senseless killing" of her kinsmen in a bloody communal crisis," the report read.

"Ms Ojeme raised the alarm in February over the crisis in her community following bloody clashes between the people of Mbarvu and Mbasombo communities in Gwer

East Local Government Area of Benue State, which have claimed many lives, including her loved ones.

"According to her, among those killed in one of the attacks was her aunt, the only surviving woman in her father's house.

"She had called for an end to the crisis that has resulted in the sacking of communities and displacement of people from their ancestral homes over disputed farmlands."

4. "Again, police abduct Nigerian journalist," [Premium Times reported](#) on May 23.

"The Publisher and Editor-in-Chief of the Globalupfront Newspaper (Online), Madu Onuorah, has been abducted by the police from his house in the Lugbe area of Abuja," the report read.

"The management of the online news platform, in a statement on Thursday, said Mr Onuorah was whisked away at about 6 p.m. on Wednesday in the presence of his wife and children.

"He was taken away by 'stern looking operatives,' according to the management of the news platform.

"It further said Mr Onuorah was neither shown an arrest warrant nor told the reason behind his arrest upon request from the family. He was also denied contact with his lawyer."

## **Regulation**

Regulation represented 25% (2 stories) of the issues recorded during the period in review.

*The stories are:*

1. "VON, NBC Unite To Champion Positive Narratives On Nigeria, Africa," [VON reported](#) on May 8.

"Voice of Nigeria, VON, and the National Broadcasting Commission, NBC, are forging a new partnership to enhance storytelling and foster positive narratives about Nigeria and Africa," the report read.

"This was made known during a courtesy call made by the Voice of Nigeria management team, led by the Director General, Mallam Jubrin Baba Ndace to the office of the Director General of the National Broadcasting Commission, NBC, Charles Ebuebu, in Abuja, the capital of Nigeria.

“Baba Ndace underscored the importance of collaboration in rebranding Nigeria’s image, emphasising that foreigners’ perceptions of individuals often hinge on their country’s portrayal.”

2. “NBC, CEMESO set agenda for community broadcasters,” [The Guardian reported](#) on May 21.

“Director-General of the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC), Charles Ebuebu, and Executive Director, Centre for Media and Society (CEMESO), Akin Akingbulu, have stressed the need for community broadcasters to embrace professionalism and sound management practices, which promote sustainability,” the report said.

“They spoke in Abuja during a capacity-building workshop jointly organised by NBC and the CEMESO. Ebuebu highlighted the power of community radio stations to amplify diverse voices, promote dialogue and drive collective action towards shared community goals.”

## **Judicial actions**

Judicial action was the focus of one story, representing 12.5% of the reports.

*Example:*

1. On May 20, [Sahara Reporters published another article](#) titled, “Nigerian High Court Rejects Ijele’s Oral Bail Application, Orders Remand Of Social Media Influencer In Prison”.

“The Federal High Court sitting in Lagos on Monday rejected an oral bail application made by Chizorom Harrison Ofoegbu, popularly known as Ijele,” the report read.

“In April, a magistrate court sitting in Abuja struck out the case bordering on criminal intimidation, threat to life, cyberstalking, and cyberbullying filed against the social media influencer, Ijele.

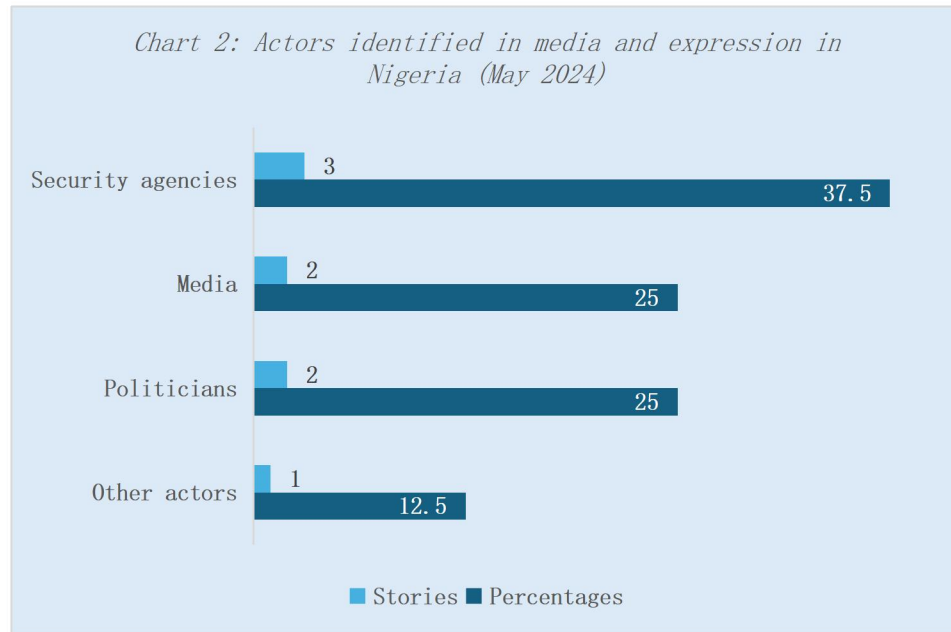
“Chief Magistrate Emmanuel Iyanna while ruling on the bail application filed through his lawyer struck out the case for lack of jurisdiction.

“The judge, however, ordered the police to arraign the blogger before a competent court of law to enable the defendant to take his plea in line with the provisions of the Administration of Criminal Justice (ACJA) 2015.”

## **ACTORS**

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



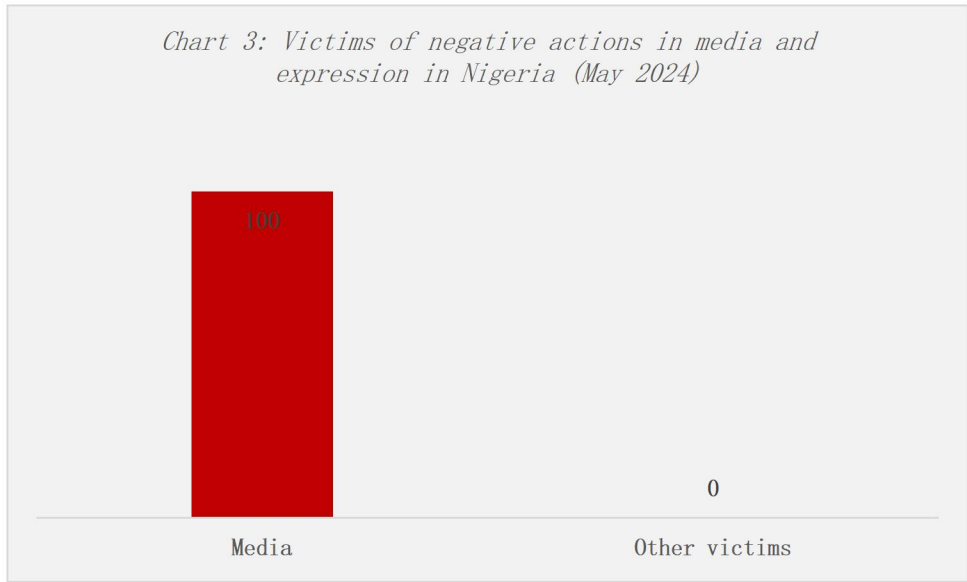


According to Chart 2, security agencies were featured in three or 37.5% of eight applicable stories analysed in the context of this section. Whereas the media and politicians were each featured in two stories (25%), other actors were the subject of one story (12.5%).

## 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 11 applicable reports.

**CONCLUSION**

The MEiN analyses for May 2024 showed a disturbing pattern of assaults targeting the media, with security agencies identified as the perpetrators in 37.5% of the cases. The findings indicate that the media, being featured in 100% of relevant reports, was the exclusive subject of these attacks — which accounted for 62.5% of the themes.

Regulation constituted 25% of the focus areas, with discussions stressing the imperative for authorities to refrain from misusing current frameworks to intimidate journalists or from instituting new regulations that could undermine the freedom of the press. Additionally, there were dialogues centred on establishing an ideal agenda for community broadcasters and encouraging the media to do ‘good PR’ for Nigeria.

Moreover, 12.5% of the narratives concentrated on judicial actions.

The analyses underscore a paradox within Nigeria’s democratic framework: despite the nation’s commitment to democratic principles, journalists—who play an essential role in upholding democratic governance—find themselves navigating a climate polluted by intimidation and suppression.

**MEiN** is published

*by*

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