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MEDIA AND EXPRESSION IN NIGERIA

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CEMESO

MEDIA AND EXPRESSION IN NIGERIA (MEiN)

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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

FIJ - Foundation for Investigative Journalism

FRCN - Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria

ICIR - International Centre for Investigative Reporting

MEiN - Media and Expression in Nigeria

NPF-IRT - Nigeria Police Force's Intelligence Response Team

NPFL - Nigeria Professional Football League

NUJ - Nigeria Union of Journalists

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.

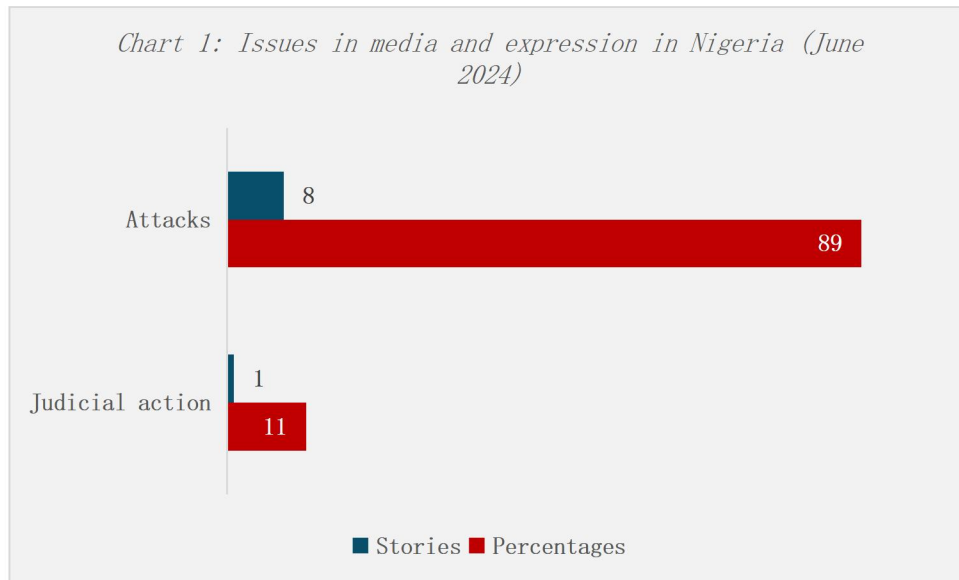
The coding process is done by trained media monitors who follow a coding scheme that defines the categories and sub-categories of each unit of analysis. The coding scheme also specifies the rules and criteria for assigning codes to the data. The coded data is then translated into a spreadsheet for further 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 eight or 89% of the nine stories analysed in June 2024.

The stories are:

1. "Kano Hisbah arrests TikTokker over 'inappropriate remarks' about Quran," [TheCable reported](#) on June 3.

"G-Fresh al-Amin, a popular TikTokker, has been arrested by operatives of the Hisbah Command in Kano state," the report read.

"Aliyu Usman, chairman and officer in charge of operation 'Kai da Badala' surveillance, confirmed the arrest on Sunday. Usman said G-Fresh was arrested around 1 pm at his residence in the Badawa area of the state. He said the TikTokker was arrested for allegedly making inappropriate remarks. G-Fresh was said to have recited Fatiha, the first chapter of the Quran, improperly during the last Salah celebration."

2. "Police Invite Premium Times Reporter Over Yet-to-Be-Published Story," [FII reported](#) on June 4.

"The Nigeria Police Force's Intelligence Response Team (NPF-IRT) has invited Emmanuel Agbo, a reporter with Premium Times, over a story that he is still working on," the report read.

“Agbo’s ongoing story relates to disputed plum land located in Guzape, Abuja, involving Homadil Realty Limited, a property developer, and a family in the city. To get the company’s reaction to the story, Agbo, according to the media outlet, contacted Bilkisu Aliyu, the company’s chief executive officer (CEO), and she responded to the allegations against her.

“Surprisingly, the police sent a formal invitation to the reporter through Premium Times without providing adequate context about the petition reportedly being investigated.

“Premium Times said Ezemba Ezekiel, a police officer attached to the Intelligence Response Team under the office of the Deputy Inspector-General of Police, had previously contacted Agbo informally. But at the request of Agbo for a formal invitation, Ezekiel sent a letter dated May 31 on Monday. Commenting on its readiness to aid police investigations, Premium Times asked to be furnished with adequate information on the alleged petition in order to prepare ahead of June 5, when the reporter is expected to honour appear at the NPF-IRT office.”

3. “Police detain journalist over report on Lagos businessman,” [The Punch reported](#) on June 6.

“Men of the Nigerian Police Force from the Zone 2 Command, Lagos State, have arrested a journalist and publisher of News Platform, Precious Eze,” the report read.

“The publisher of the online newspaper was said to have been picked up by policemen at his Gbagada, Lagos home on May 27, 2024. His arrest, according to a statement by the journalist’s colleagues, was allegedly instigated by a complaint from a prominent businessman and politician.

“The statement added that Eze’s colleagues, under the umbrella of the Society of Digital Newspaper Owners of Nigeria, learnt of his arrest after one week he had been detained and attempts to secure his release on bail proved abortive.”

4. “How bank security guards assaulted me during labour strike — Journalist,” [Premium Times reported](#) on June 7.

“A journalist in Abia State was on Monday allegedly attacked and assaulted by two security guards attached to the First City Monument Bank (FCMB) in Umuahia, the state capital,” the report read.

“The journalist Emmanuel Nwazue, who works at Afia TV, was assaulted by the security guards while he was monitoring the indefinite strike declared by the labour unions.

5. "Chaos in Sporting Lagos vs Plateau Utd match. Fans attack Referee, Brila FM Reporter," [Brila FM reported](#) on June 13.

"It was a chaotic scene in Lagos on Wednesday during the NPFL match between Sporting Lagos and Plateau United as fans assaulted officials and media personnel," the report read.

"Sporting Lagos lost their first home game of the season 2-1 to Plateau United, struggling to avoid relegation as Jonathan Alukwe's goal was not enough to save them.

"However, 15 minutes before regulation time, fans began hauling missiles at the referee, hitting him on the head multiple times. The tension intensified due to a delay in updating match statuses on online apps. These apps continued to display the match as being in the 85th minute, even though it had progressed beyond that point.

"Fans, already upset with the potential relegation of Sporting Lagos and the first home game loss to Plateau, were further infuriated. Immediately after the final whistle, fans attempted to storm the pitch, but security intervened. Media personnel covering the incident were also attacked, with reporters from Brila Media and the social media teams beaten and having their phones seized. They were forced to delete their footage, although some videos were recovered. This incident comes just days after a similar event during the Rangers vs Enyimba match, where fans invaded the pitch, threw missiles, and attacked a linesman."

6. "NUJ condemns attack on journalists in Ebonyi community," [Daily Post reported](#) on June 16.

"The Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ), Ebonyi State Council, has condemned Saturday's attack on its members invited to cover a coronation ceremony at Nkomoro community, in Ezza North Local government Area of Ebonyi State," the report read.

"The journalists – Mr Uchenna Inya, The Sun Newspaper, Sir Godwin Oguta and Dr Chinelo Okoro, both of FRCN, Unity FM, Abakaliki, were attacked by the hoodlums who blocked them as well as other guests who attended the coronation, on their way out of the community.

"A Toyota Corolla belonging to Inya was also smashed by the hoodlums."

7. "Police accused of brutalising Kaduna journalist for snapping cattle in officers' custody on highway," [ICIR reported](#) on June 21.

"A Kaduna-based journalist, Idibia Gabriel, said he has been brutalised by officers of the Nigerian Police Force (NPF) in the state for taking their pictures while transporting a herd of cattle they seized from a forest," the report read.

"Idibia said he suffered eye injuries as a result of the torture and inhumane treatment meted out to him by the aggrieved officers. The Police have however denied claims of torture and brutalisation.

"In a chat with The ICIR on Thursday, June 20, Idibia said the incident happened on a public road on Tuesday, June 11."

8. "Journalist found dead in Abuja days after missing," [ICIR reported](#) on June 21.

"An Abuja-based journalist, Joel Waksi, was found dead on Wednesday, June 19, five days after he was declared missing," the report read.

"Waksi, an On-Air Personality (OAP) with Atar Communication, owners of Liberty TV/Radio reportedly left the office around 9 p.m. on Friday, June 14, and was supposed to return to work at the station's Mpape office by 2 p.m. the following day.

"The Group General Manager (GGM), Atar Communication, Balarabe Muhammad, in an interview with Daily Trust, said the police in Mpape Division of the nation's capital had declared that Waksi's body was found near the Panteka neighbourhood and had been transferred to the morgue at Kubwa General Hospital.

"According to Muhammad, the OAP was stabbed around his neck, and his phone could not be found. He said his organisation assumed that phone snatchers had attacked him. Muhammad added that the deceased had escaped a similar attack in which he had been stabbed below the belly two months earlier.

Judicial action

Judicial action was the focus of one story, representing 11% of the reports.

Here is the story:

On June 14, [Sahara Reporters published an article](#) titled, "Nigerian High Court Grants Social Media Influencer, Ijele N50 Million Bail".

"A Federal High Court sitting in Lagos State has granted the bail application filed by a social media influencer Chizorom Harrison Ofoegbu, popularly known as Ijele," the report read.

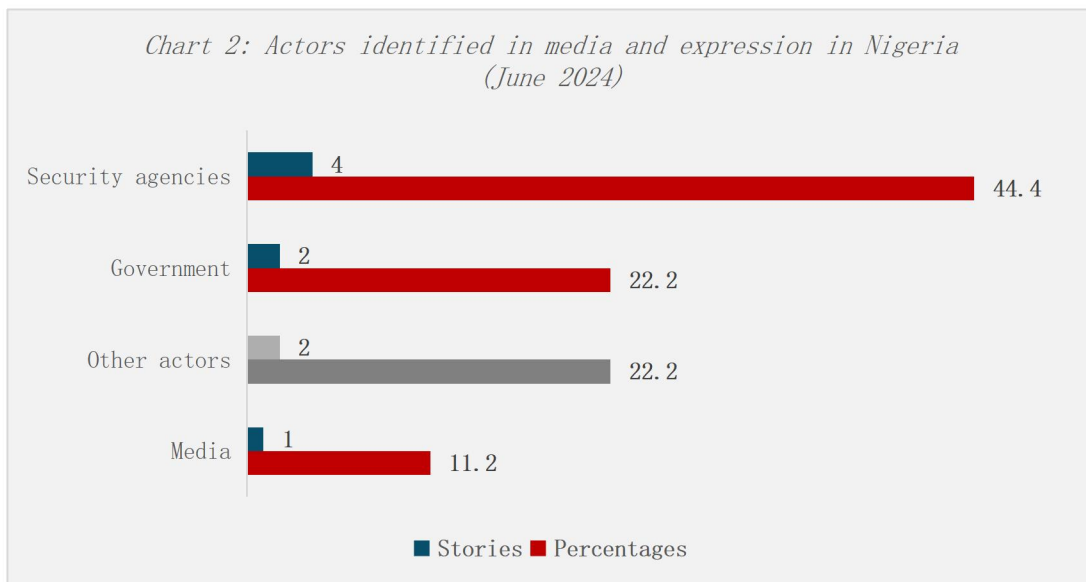
"SaharaReporters learned that the bail was granted in a ruling delivered by the trial judge, Justice Akintayo Aluko on Friday morning. The court mandated Ijele to provide N50 million bail bond with two sureties, adding that one of the sureties

must own a landed property in Lagos while the civil service cadre of other one must not be lower than level 14.

“SaharaReporters on May 30 reported how the Nigeria Police Force filed an amended three-count criminal charge against Ijele before the court. The three counts between the Inspector General of Police as the Complainant and Chizorom Harrison Ofoegbu as Defendant borders on conspiracy, criminal defamation, cybercrime and threats to life.”

ACTORS

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



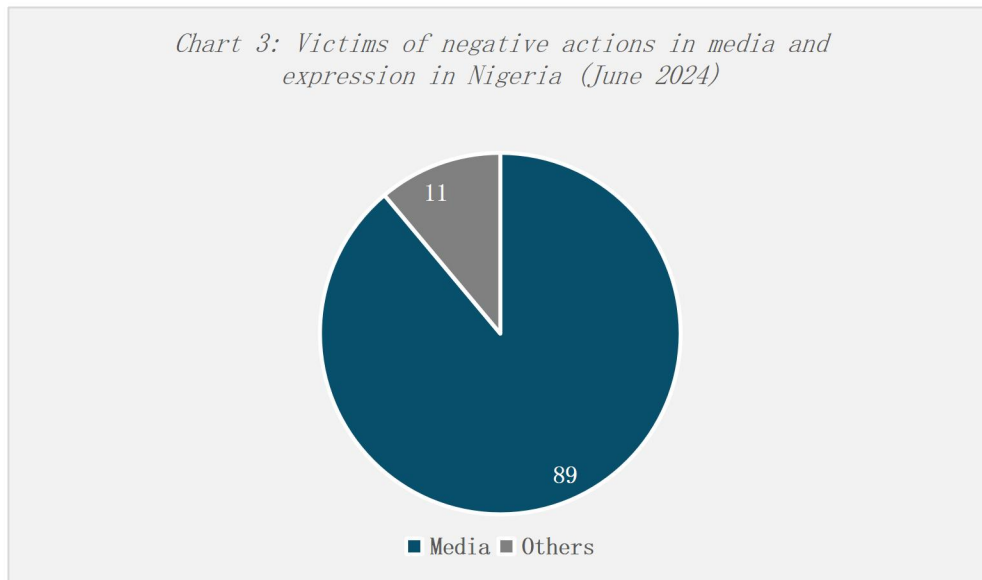
According to Chart 2, security agencies were featured in four or 44.4% of nine stories analysed in the context of this section while the government were featured in two stories (22.2%). The media were the main actors in one story (11.2%) while other actors were the focus of two stories (22.2%).

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 victims identified eight or 89% of nine stories, with one report (11%) focusing on other victims.

CONCLUSION

According to the MEiN analyses conducted in June 2024, a staggering 89% of the stories examined in this report centred around attacks. Among these incidents, 89% specifically highlighted the media as victims while 44.4% implicated security agencies as the perpetrators. Judicial action accounted for only 11% of the focus areas during this period.

The data further reveals that multiple media outlets reported on nine distinct instances of attacks. One of these incidents resulted in a loss of life.

These patterns underscore a concerning threat to press freedom in Nigeria, prompting calls from various stakeholder organisations for vigilance in safeguarding media independence and freedom in the country.

MEiN is published

by

Centre for Media and Society (CEMESO)

3, Emina Crescent, Off Toyin Street,

Ikeja Lagos, Nigeria

Phone: (+234) 913-427-3950

Email: info@cemesong.org; cemeso2004@hotmail.com

Website: www.cemesong.org



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