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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

CPJ - Committee to Protect Journalists

DSS - Department of State Services

FCT - Federal Capital Territory

FIJ - Foundation for Investigative Journalism

IRT - Intelligence Response Team (of Nigeria Police Force)

MEiN - Media and Expression in Nigeria

NAFDAC - National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control

NUJ - Nigeria Union of Journalists

SSS - State Security Service (also known as DSS)

## 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:** these are the topics or themes that relate to MEiN during the period in review. The topics include media-related attacks, regulation, legislation, judicial action and other related subjects.
- **Actors:** these are the individuals or groups who are involved in or influence the issues. These actors include the government and its agencies, journalists, and the media in general, political entities and other non-state actors.
- **Victims:** these refer to the individuals or groups who suffer harm or loss because of the issues or actions of the 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 optimised 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 referencing the data sources.

# ISSUES

These were the topics that dominated the stories tracked during the period under review.

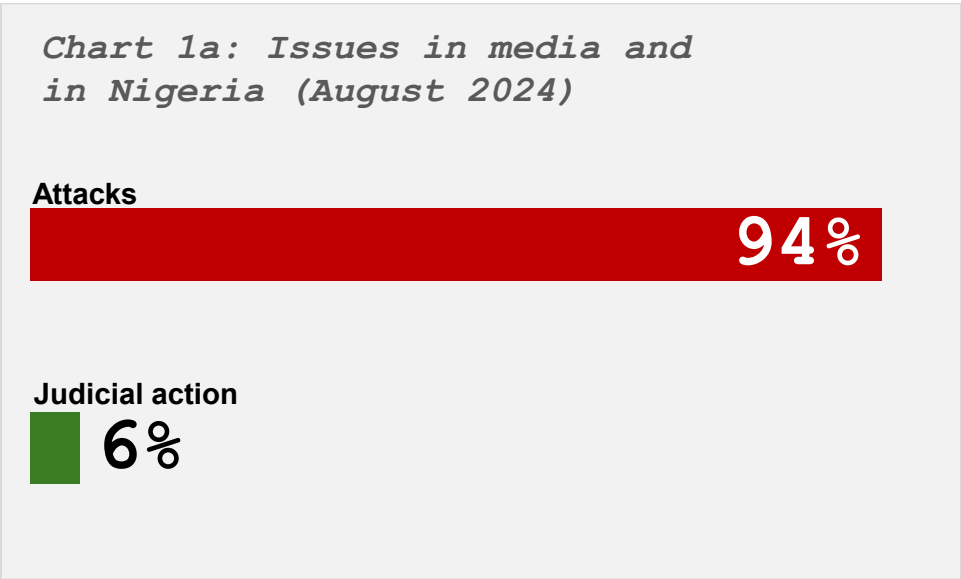
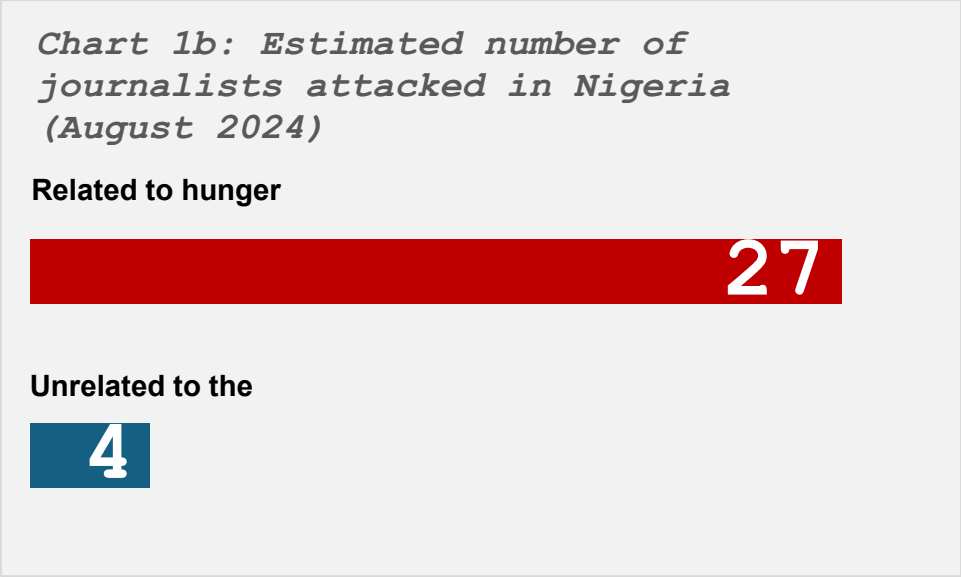


Chart 1a shows that judicial action accounted for 6% (1 out of 18) of reports analysed in August 2024. Most of the reports (17) were focused on attacks on the media, and they accounted for 94% of the stories.

# ATTACKS



According to Chart 1b, no less than 31 journalists were attacked during the period in review, 27 of whom were victimised in relation to their coverage of the countrywide demonstrations tagged '#EndBadGovernance' protests which happened during the period under review. Four additional cases of media attacks were unrelated to the anti-government protests.

There were two other unrelated attacks which were not added to the total — one of a journalist who was indirectly attacked as three family members were kidnapped, and the other involving a government official making a blanket threat against journalists.

## SOURCES

- **Stories on attacks on journalists:**

1. **“Hoodlums Attack TVC News’s Kano State Correspondent, Ibrahim Isah,” [TVC News reported on August 1.](#)**

“TVC News’s Correspondent In Kano State, Ibrahim Isah, has been attacked by hoodlums while covering the #EndHardship protest in Kano,” the report read.

“He suffered a cut to his hands during the attack while his car was damaged with the windscreen, headlights and other vital parts of the car all suffering differing degrees of damage.”

2. **“PUNCH photojournalist arrested in Abuja,” [The Punch reported on August 1.](#)**

“A photojournalist with The PUNCH newspaper, Kayode Jaiyeola, is currently held at the FCT police command,” the report read.

“Jaiyeola in a distress call to one of his colleagues said he was arrested at the Eagles Square by an officer attached to the Office of the National Security Adviser. Jaiyeola said the officer then handed him over to men of the FCT police command while he was currently being held.”

3. **“HUNGER PROTEST: Four Journalists Attacked in Delta,” [FRCN’s Positive FM reported on August 1.](#)**

“No fewer than four journalists covering the peaceful protest against hunger and hardship in Asaba have been attacked by anti protest group of over fifty persons,” the report read.

“The attackers swooped on the innocent journalists on sighting them interviewing some of the peaceful protesters who came out in their numbers with various placards depicting the sufferings in the country. One of the journalists attacked by the hoodlums, Matthew Ochei of Punch Newspaper said it took the intervention of a military officer for their rescue.”

4. **“EndBadGovernanceInNigeria Protest: Hoodlums attack journalists in Kano,” [The Punch reported on August 1.](#)**

"A bus belonging to the Channels Television carrying about 11 journalists from different media houses, both print and broadcast, covering the hardship protest, was attacked by the rampaging hoodlums," the report read.

"The attackers who were carrying sticks and machetes along Sokoto Road, were said to have smashed the glasses of the vehicle and those inside were showered with glass particles with a TVC Correspondent receiving minor injury.

"Earlier in the morning, some hoodlums were also reported to have smashed the rear glass of the WAZOBIA FM radio official vehicle while covering the protest. As the protest continues, some youths were said to have set ablaze the Nigerian Communications Commission Office located along State road after looting the place."

**5. "Journalists, Unarmed Protesters Arrested By Police In Calabar #EndBadGovernance," [Osun Defender reported on August 1.](#)**

"Several journalists covering the ongoing hardship protest as well as right activists have been arrested by security agent in Calabar, Cross River State," the report said.

"The armless journalists were beaten and handcuffed before taken to unknown location in the state. Among the arrested journalists was the managing editor of the online newspaper CrossRiverWatch, Mr Jonathan Ugbal."

**6. "How FCT Commissioner Of Police, Benneth Igweh, Attacked, Arrested Journalists For Covering Protest In Abuja," [The Independent reported on August 5.](#)**

The police "harassed and intimidated journalists covering #End-BadGovernanceInNigeria protest at the Eagle Square Abuja," the report read.

**7. "National Protest: Hilary, other journalists suffer Police molestation," [The Authority reported on August 6.](#)**

"An independent journalist with DigiVation Network, Hilary Damissah has suffered brutalisation at the hands of some overzealous Nigeria security operatives," the report said.

"The editor with the organisation despite his visible media identification tag was in the midst of some protesters around the Berger Roundabout area on day three of the hashtag EndBadGovernanceInNigeria national protest when the unfortunate incident occurred.

"Hilary who came out in response to the call of duty to have a first-hand information about the goings-on on that fateful day became a victim of the dehumanisation of the Nigerian Police brutality against journalists. He was tear-gassed at close range from a



Stationed Police Hilux van while trying to take photographs of some protesters and onlookers which the officers considered unacceptable to them.

"While trying to scamper to safety, he was further assaulted including the use of baton to bruise him as he sustained serious injury and deep cut on his pointer finger.

"He thereafter managed to scupper to a safe place while gasping for breath before some of the protesting youths came to his aid and rushed him to a medical facility at Games Village, Kaura District of Abuja for medication."

**8. "Protest: How Police traumatise, grill Trust TV journalist," [Solace Base reported on August 6.](#)**

The report read: "Police officers attached to the Intelligence Response Team (IRT) from the Force Headquarters, on Monday, visited the corporate headquarters of Media Trust Group, owners of Daily Trust, Trust TV and Trust Radio, and interrogated a producer of one of the programmes of the television channel.

"The operatives, who drove in some vehicles at about 6 pm in search of one of the producers of the Daily Politics programme, Amina Ibrahim, said they were tracking 'a suspect', whom they said had had telephone conversations with the female producer.

**9. "Lagos Police Chase Journalists Away From Protest Venue, Watch as Hoodlums Assault Them," [FIJ reported on August 6.](#)**

"Policemen have begun forcefully evicting journalists from Freedom Park and its environs in Ojota, Lagos State, where the #EndBadGovernance protests entered Day 6 on Tuesday, and watched as hoodlums assault them," the report read.

"On Tuesday afternoon, the police told the journalists their gathering was unwelcome since #EndBadGovernance protesters were not at the venue. At about 12 noon, they told reporters from FIJ and other media outfits to get as far away from the location as possible.

"Pressmen protested this directive and challenged the police to provide credible reasons for imposing their decision on them, but the police said the journalists were posing a threat to the neighbourhood's peace.

"When FIJ asked a policeman for clarity, he said our gathering there would constitute problems, and that journalists were attracting attention.

"After the police began pushing journalists away, hoodlums emerged to take advantage of the situation and harm the retreating pressmen. As this was ongoing, the police turned away and did nothing."

**10. “EndBadGovernance: Thugs reportedly harass journalist, beat up protesters in Rivers,” [Daily Post reported on August 7.](#)**

“Thugs on Wednesday reportedly attacked a Channels Television journalist, Deborah Agbalam, while she was covering the #EndBadGovernance protest in Port Harcourt, Rivers State,” the report read.

“The thugs were said to have positioned themselves directly opposite the Federal Secretariat in Port Harcourt, intimidating and chasing away protesters.

“According to eyewitnesses, before the arrival of journalists, two protesters had already been beaten while police officers stood by and did nothing. The journalists were also said to have been surrounded and threatened by the thugs, who stated they were there to ensure no protest would take place.”

**11. “Gunmen abduct journalist’s wife, two daughters in Kaduna,” [The Punch reported on August 9.](#)**

“The wife and two daughters of a Kogi-based journalist, Muhammed Bashir, were among the ten members of the same family kidnapped on Thursday in Kaduna State,” the report read.

“Bashir’s wife and his two daughters arrived in Kaduna earlier on Thursday for a holiday with her (the wife’s) family in a suburb of Kaduna.

“Bashir, a correspondent with the Nigeria Telegraph, disclosed this to colleagues on Friday in Lokoja, the Kogi State capital, in a terse statement.”

**12. “Bauchi: Governor’s security aides threaten journalists days after police assaulted physically challenged man,” [TheSun reported on August 9.](#)**

“Security operatives attached to Bauchi State Governor Bala Mohammed are threatening to deal with journalists while performing their duties,” the report read.

“The journalists who are members of the Correspondents’ Chapel were at the Palace of Emir of Katagum on Thursday when the Governor visited the local government after a violent protest where hoodlums razed the Council Secretariat, a former deputy governor’s house among others in Azare.

“The incident occurred inside the Palace Hall when the journalists were trying to find where to record the Governor’s speech before an operative of DSS simply identified as Abdul ordered them to vacate the hall.

“The journalists were looking for an alternative spot to get their job done within the hall before he went to them again to threaten them by saying: ‘This is just the

beginning,' even as the governor, in company with other dignitaries, had seated next to his host, the emir of Katagum.

"'You challenged me? You will see. This thing that you have done, this is the beginning,' he warned the journalists, much to the surprise of witnesses in the palace.

"One of the journalists replied saying this sounded like a threat, but he maintained his utterance that he would deal with the journalists. 'He once molested me at a function, he is quite aggressive,' a government House crew journalist who pleaded anonymity, said."

**13. "Kogi NUJ petitions CJ over journalist's detention," [The Punch reported on August 17.](#)**

"The Nigeria Union of Journalists, Kogi State chapter, has petitioned the Chief Judge of Kogi State, Justice Josiah Majebi, over the unlawful detention of the Publisher of Democracy Newslines, Olugbemi Femi, at the Kabba correctional facility in the state," the report read.

"The Kogi State NUJ, through its counsel J. U. Usman in the petition, noted that the President of Upper Area Court Kabba, Edwin Tebu, 'unlawfully' detained Femi over an alleged defamation of character."

**14. "DSS Harassing Journalist for Exposing Unregistered Sachet Water Factory in Sokoto," [FIJ reported on August 19.](#)**

"While Abdulrasheed Hammad, a freelance journalist, was working on an investigative story involving factories producing contaminated water in Sokoto State, he and his fixer visited a sachet water manufacturing factory in the Arkilla NEPA Grid area of the state," the report said.

"The name of the particular enterprise he visited was Al-Sharif Pure Water Factory and the National Agency for Food and Drugs Administration and Control (NAFDAC) registered number on the company's sachet water was E1-0164L.

"Prior to his visit, Hammad had run a background check on the NAFDAC number (E1-0164L) the company printed on its sachet water and found that it did not exist on the agency's verification portal.

"The reason he then decided to pay a physical visit to the factory was that he needed to be sure he had not made any error with the Al-Sharif water NAFDAC number he had tried verifying."

**15. On August 23, [Sahara Reporters published a report](#) titled "How Nigerian Police Dehumanised Undercover Journalist @PIDOMNigeria, Handcuffed Him For Days Without Food, Water In Solitary Hole".**

"The Nigeria Police Force (NPF) has reportedly subjected Isaac Bristol, a micro blogger and undercover journalist known popularly as @PIDOMNigeria, to inhumane treatment after he was picked on August 5, 2024," the report said.

"SaharaReporters reported earlier that the police authorities confirmed the arrest of a popular whistleblower, known only by his pseudonym @PIDOMNIGERIA.

"It had reported that the whistleblower was declared missing after his long absence from the digital space. He was well known for exposing high-profile corruption and human rights abuses in Nigeria, and had gone silent since August 15, 2024."

**16. "SSS detains Nigerian journalist Adejuwon Soyinka," [Premium Times reported on August 25.](#)**

"The State Security Service has detained a Nigerian journalist, Adejuwon Soyinka, who is the West African Regional Editor of the Conversation Africa, PREMIUM TIMES learnt on Sunday," the report read.

"Mr Soyinka, a former pioneer editor of the BBC Pidgin Service, was detained by SSS operatives at the Murtala Muhammed International Airport in Lagos at about 5.40 a.m. on Sunday upon his arrival from the United Kingdom via a Virgin Atlantic flight

"As of the time of this report, no reason has been given for his detention by the security agency. When contacted over the matter, the spokesperson for the SSS, Peter Afunanya, said, 'I am not aware of the matter you have raised and have no comments on it, please.'"

"The award-winning journalist's colleagues said he has not been reachable as messages and calls to his phone have been unanswered."

**17. "Journalist in prison for sharing content critical of Kano governor, emir," [Premium Times reported on August 30.](#)**

"A journalist in Kano has been remanded in prison for sharing media content deemed critical of state government officials, including Governor Abba Yusuf and the reinstated emir, Lamido Sanusi," the report read.

"Muktar Dahiru, a staffer of Radio Nigeria, Pyramid FM Kano, was arrested by the police and remanded in a correctional facility on Thursday for allegedly sharing on Facebook content considered offensive by the state government.

“In several posts, Mr Dahiru shared a broadcast audio interview with an opposition politician accusing the governor of corruption.

“The opposition politician challenged the governor to allow federal anti-corruption agencies to investigate the Novomed scandal instead of the state anti-corruption agency.”

- **Story on judicial action:**

1. **“Court orders Lagos to probe killing of journalist during #EndSars,” [The Punch reported on August 7.](#)**

“A Federal High Court in Lagos has ordered the Lagos State Government to conduct a thorough investigation into the death of Pelumi Onifade, a 20-year-old reporter who was arrested by the police during the #EndSARS protests in 2020 and later found dead in a mortuary,” the report read.

“The court also directed the government to conduct a coroner’s inquest to determine the cause of death and identify those responsible for the journalist’s demise.

“In a statement by the Communications Officer, Media Rights Agenda, Idowu Adewale, the judgment was delivered by Justice Ayokunle Olayinka Faji in a suit filed by the MRA against the police and the state government.”

## ACTORS

This section concerns the personalities and groups who were prominent in the relevant stories tracked during the period under review.

*Chart 2: Actors identified in media and expression in Nigeria (August 2024)*

**Security agencies**

**61.1%**

**Non-state actors**

**33.3%**

**Government**

**5.6%**

According to Chart 2, security agencies were featured in 61.1% (11 stories) of 18 reports, with government appearing in 5.6% (1 story) of the accounts. Non-state actors were featured in 33.3% (6 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, Chart 3 shows, were the victims identified in 100% of 17 applicable reports.

## CONCLUSION

As Nigerians protested the perceived unfavourable government policies in August 2024, state security forces were deployed. Journalists were prominent victims of the crackdown on the demonstrations.

A significant majority (94%) of reports, the analyses in this report showed, were attacks on the journalists, with security agencies emerging as the actors in 61.1% of the analysed

reports. Non-state actors were featured in 33.3% of the reports. Both set of actors attacked the media. Twenty-seven journalists were targeted while covering the hunger protests during the period under review. Four more media attacks unrelated to anti-government protests occurred, totalling 31 cases. One journalist was indirectly attacked through the kidnapping of three family members. Additionally, a government official made a general threat against journalists.

The data suggests a major government crackdown on freedom of media and expression within the context of the suppression of the protests, with non-state actors like 'thugs' and 'hoodlums' also playing the villain. These findings raise serious concerns about the potential for human rights abuses during periods of civil protests in Nigeria.

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