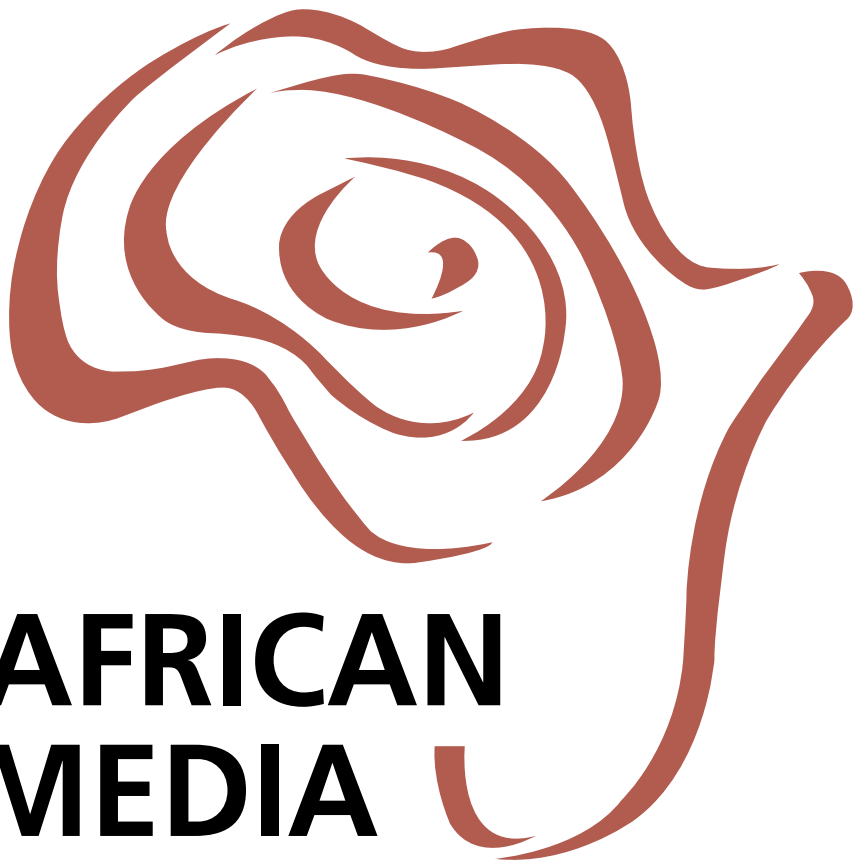




AFRICAN MEDIA BAROMETER

A home-grown analysis of the
media landscape in Africa

NIGERIA 2019



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The African Media Barometer (AMB) is a perception index. The findings, interpretations and conclusions reported are those of panelists drawn from civil society and media organisations for the purposes of conducting the AMB, and do not necessarily reflect the views and opinions of *fesmedia* Africa, the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) or the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA).

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The African Media Barometer

The African Media Barometer (AMB) is an in-depth and comprehensive description and measurement system for national media environments on the African continent. Unlike other press surveys or media indices the AMB is a self-assessment exercise based on home-grown criteria derived from African Protocols and Declarations such as the Declaration of Principles on Freedom of Expression in Africa (2002) by the African Commission for Human and Peoples' Rights. The instrument was jointly developed by *fesmedia* Africa, the media project of the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) in Africa, and the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) in 2004.

The AMB is an analytical exercise to measure the media situation in a given country which at the same time serves as a practical lobbying tool for media reform. Its results are presented to the public of the respective country to push for an improvement of the media situation using the AU-Declaration and other African standards as benchmarks. The recommendations of the AMB reports are then integrated into the work of the 20 country offices of the FES in sub-Saharan Africa and into the advocacy efforts of other local media organisations such as MISA.

Methodology and Scoring System

Every three to four years a panel of 10-12 experts, consisting of at least five media practitioners and five representatives from civil society, meets to assess the media situation in their own country. For 1½ days they discuss the national media environment according to 39 predetermined indicators. The discussion and scoring is moderated by an independent consultant who also edits the AMB report.

After the discussion of one indicator, panel members allocate their individual scores to that respective indicator in an anonymous vote according to the following scale:

- 1 Country does not meet indicator
- 2 Country meets only a few aspects of indicator
- 3 Country meets some aspects of indicator
- 4 Country meets most aspects of indicator
- 5 Country meets all aspects of the indicator

In 2009, 2013 and 2019 some indicators were replaced to align with changes in the media landscape. Consequently, in some instances, the comparison of indicators of previous reports is not applicable (n/a), as the indicator is new or has been amended considerably.

The sum of all individual indicator scores is divided by the number of panel members to determine the average score for each indicator. These average indicator scores are added up to form average sector scores.

Outcome

The final, qualitative report summarises the general content of the discussion and provides the average score for each indicator. Panellists are not quoted by name in the report, in order to protect them from possible repercussions. The reports can be used as a tool for possible political discussion on media reform.

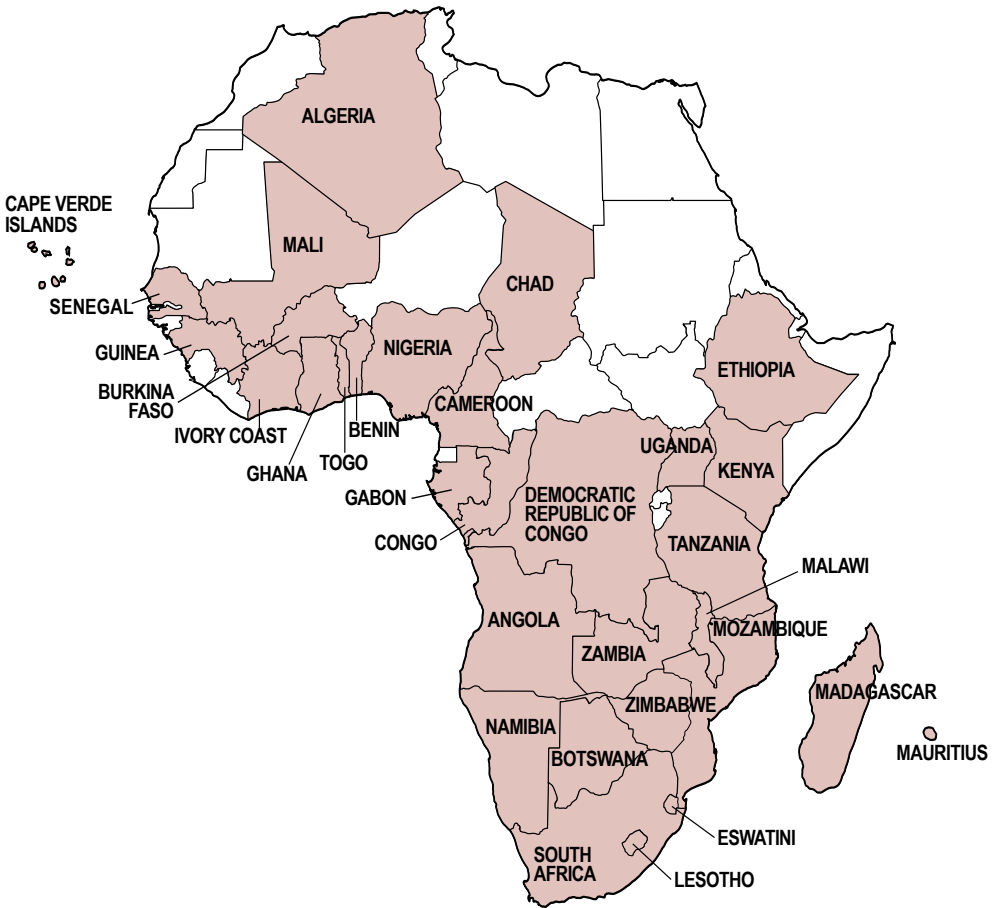
In countries where English is not the official language, the report is published in a bilingual edition.

In facilitating the AMB, the FES and MISA only serve as a convener of the panel and as guarantor of the methodology. The content of the discussion and the report is owned by the panel of local experts and does not represent or reflect the view of FES or MISA.

By the end of 2019 the AMB had been successfully completed 121 times in 32 african countries, in some of them for the sixth time already.

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See above 32 AMB Countries (2005-2019)

African Media Barometer Nigeria 2019

Summary

Under the constitution, Nigerian citizens have a right to free expression and free media – along with several other fundamental rights. In principle, no other laws should take away these rights, since the constitution serves as supreme law. However, there are several pieces of legislation, including clauses contained within the constitution, that restricted the full enjoyment of these rights. Beyond legal limitations, citizens and journalists are by and large unable to exercise freedom of expression without fear, due to a culture of intimidation and harassment perpetrated by public authorities and private citizens alike. Additionally, criminal libel and other similar laws that infringe on the freedom of the media have remained in force despite progress in other areas; such as the passing of a Freedom of Information (FOI) Act in 2011.

It is possible that the climate has remained relatively hostile because of the government's reluctance to honour regional and international instruments that guarantee these rights. While Nigeria has signed most international conventions on human rights and subscribes to the ideals contained in the African Charter on Human and People's Rights and the Declaration of Principles of Freedom of Expression in Africa, panellists said the authorities' commitment to these instruments is not apparent in practise.

There are, however, positive factors. For instance, Nigeria places no legal restrictions on the opening and running of newspapers and websites and there seem to be no attempts to restrict access to these news sources – either through the law or the use of technological tools. The enactment of the FOI Act was pivotal to the evolution of the Nigerian media landscape, even though its implementation faces resistance from some authorities, especially those in the defence forces. While journalists still come under pressure to give up their sources, the protection of journalistic sources is increasingly recognised as a fundamental principle in a democratic society.

The landscape has been shaped by a vibrant civic space, marked with collective and individual actions to foster an independent media. However, most media legislation does not evolve from meaningful consultation among state institutions, citizens and interest groups.

Nigeria is awash with news sources, from a vibrant but struggling newspaper industry to expanding online news and information services. Radio is huge in the country, particularly in the north. The collection of news sources largely includes politically biased newspapers owned and run by state governments. In the private sector, media ownership is largely opaque, making it hard to tell who controls media narratives.

Weak anti-trust laws have led to monopolies and concentrations in the media industry. Over the years, empires that own and run several television channels and radio stations have developed, such as Daar Communications and Steam Broadcasters. The emergence of a diverse media landscape with economically sustainable and independent outlets is further hampered by the lack of public incentives such as tax breaks and state subsidies.

Gender mainstreaming is topical in Nigeria, but the media have failed to break ranks with a society that has remained vastly patriarchal. Beyond gender, Nigerian media actively reproduce the affinities, affiliations, divisions, biases and stereotypes that give the country's politics and culture its supercharged character. More progress has been made over the years in covering a diversity of subjects, with private broadcasters delivering high quality public interest content.

Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) have been central in improving citizens access to information sources, but panellists said the policy was still patchy, lacked coherence and fell short of serving as a barrier to ICT expansion.

Advertising has not been a force for the creation of a free and strong press. While the government uses its advertising power to influence editorial content, the size of the advertising market is too small to sustain the industry.

Broadcasting legislation has produced a conducive environment for three-tier (public, commercial and community) broadcasting, even though panellists said the licensing processes were riddled with political interference. According to panellists, the Nigerian Broadcasting Commission which regulates the sector lacks independence from government and political forces. Therefore, in the case of government-run broadcasting services which have not been converted into truly public broadcasters, (despite the strong political influence of these services) they dominate the sector and offer the widest diversity in terms of content and reach.

Nigeria has one of the most vibrant journalism industries in Africa, which has produced a growing number of award-winning journalists over the past decades. Yet, panellists found more problems than praiseworthy experiences with Nigerian journalism – from the inaccuracy of news reporting to the lack of fair analysis and commentary. Several codes of ethics developed by media organisations and newsrooms are not fully implemented and corruption in the industry is rife.

Part of the problem with the quality of journalism in Nigeria is low pay and poor working conditions. Trade unions and other media organisations have also not been very active in representing the interests of their members. In addition, as journalists practise under increasingly harsh conditions, self-censorship has become widespread.

On a positive note, a range of universities and training opportunities are available to practising and aspiring journalists throughout Nigeria. News organisations have also become more inclusive, with more women practising and holding editorial positions and serving a wide range of interests.

*The panel discussion took place in Sokoto State,
from 16–18 June 2019.*



SECTOR 1:

Freedom of expression, including freedom of the media, is effectively protected and promoted

1.1 Freedom of expression, including freedom of the media, is guaranteed in the constitution and supported by other pieces of legislation

The Constitution of Nigeria recognises freedom of expression and of the media as fundamental rights protected by law. These rights are granted in Section 39, which states that:

- (1) Every person shall be entitled to freedom of expression, including freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart ideas and information without interference.
- (2) Without prejudice to the generality of subsection (1) of this section, every person shall be entitled to own, establish and operate any medium for the dissemination of information, ideas and opinions: Provided that no person, other than the Government of the Federation or of a State or any other person or body authorised by the President on the fulfilment of conditions laid down by an Act of the National Assembly, shall own, establish or operate a television or wireless broadcasting station for, any purpose whatsoever.

Nigerians consider the constitution to be supreme. 'It is deemed that any other law will be consistent with the constitution and any law that is inconsistent with the constitution is null and void,' said one panellist. In principle, therefore, all other laws should uphold the right to freedom of expression and of the media. Indeed, legislative and legal developments over the years seem to sustain this principle. For example, Nigeria passed a Freedom of Information Act in 2011 which, among other things, repeals the country's Official Secrets Acts, protects the confidentiality of information sources and facilitates citizens enjoyment of the right to freedom of expression and of the press.

Yet, panellists pointed out that several pieces of legislation, including clauses within the constitution, limited the full enjoyment of these rights. Panellists felt that parts of Section 36 of the constitution, which gives judges the power to hold trials behind closed doors under certain circumstances, infringed on the ability of journalists to cover court proceedings. Additionally, they felt that Section 39 (3), was a blank cheque to public officials that can be used indiscriminately to deny journalists access to certain news sources and locations. The sub-section states that:

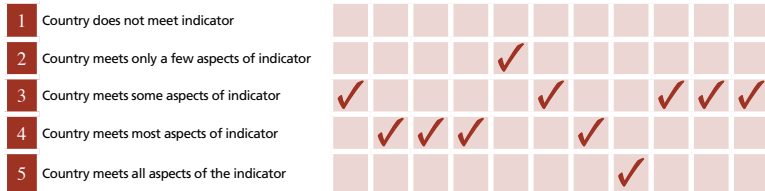
- (3) Nothing in this section [referring to Section 39 (1&2)] shall invalidate any law that is reasonably justifiable in a democratic society – (a) for the purpose of preventing the disclosure of information received in confidence, maintaining the authority and independence of courts or regulating telephony, wireless broadcasting, television or the exhibition of cinematograph films; or (b) imposing restrictions upon persons holding office under the Government of the Federation or of a State, members of the armed forces of the Federation or members of the Nigeria Police Force or other Government security services or agencies established by law.

In the view of one panellist, the constitution (in laying down these provisions) finds a way to circumvent a right it has granted.

Some panellists agreed with the spirit of the constitution and argued that no freedom was absolute. Among others, they said the protection of the rights of other citizens (such as the right to privacy and the needs of national security and defence) were enough grounds for the denial of freedom of expression and of the media. Similarly, laws against libel and slander were necessary for protecting private citizens and holding journalists and the media to account.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score:

3.5

Score of previous years:

2008: 2.3; 2011: 3.5; 2015: 3.2

1.2 The right to freedom of expression is practised and citizens, including journalists, are asserting their rights without fear

Femi Fani-Kayode, a politician, poet and essayist, has become both revered and reviled for his unrestrained commentaries. The former minister frequently attacks the Nigerian authorities, labelling them as incompetent and does not shy away from stoking the ethnic and religious divisions and tensions that characterise Nigerian politics and public life. He promotes a brand of nationalism modelled after the likes of the President of the United States Donald Trump and British Prime Minister Boris Johnson.¹ With more than 800,000 following his @realFFK account, the Twitter social media platform is his preferred medium for spreading views that can range from spirit-lifting to brash and hateful. ‘He says a lot,’ said one panellist. ‘If it was during the military regime, I don’t think this guy will still exist.’

In so many ways, Fani-Kayode and many others like him reflect the progress Nigeria has made in tolerating free speech, according to panellists. With the growth of social media, Nigerians from all walks of life can express themselves and fully participate in the country’s usually supercharged political debates. Despite politics becoming more hostile and incapable of accommodating the plurality of views, newspaper columnists have mostly remained critical. Similarly, radio and television commentators are still very outspoken and have created more avenues for open debates through phone-in programmes. In addition, the

growth of private broadcasting has overshadowed the measured reporting of federal and state-owned news media, which by their very nature are designed to serve the narrow political interests of those in power.

'Journalists and media have been asserting their [through the courts] rights and winning,' said one panellist. For example, a 2015 ruling by the ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States) Community Court of Justice stopped attempts by the authorities to censor political programmes through a new directive that required radio stations and television channels to give the NBC 24-hours-notice of live political programmes. The court, basing its ruling on the African Charter on Human and People's Rights and the Universal Declarations on Human Rights, said the directive was an infringement on freedom of the media.² In March 2019, a court in Akwa Ibom threw out criminal defamation charges against journalist and editor John Nsibiet, arrested in January 2017 for alleging that the State Deputy Governor Moses Ekpo had embezzled some N250 million (US\$691,775) in monthly security votes from the state government.

However, Nigerians continue to face threats for expressing themselves. Panellists described instances where citizens and journalists have been harassed for what they said or did to express themselves. Examples emerging from the panel discussions included a comedian "chased down" for publishing political satire, to journalism students reprimanded for reporting power outages on campus radios, to well-known investigative journalists arrested for reporting about corruption and abuse of power.

Some harassment receives more publicity than others. Others gain international infamy. According to panellists, the editor of the *Weekly Source* Jones Abiri was in and out of police custody between 2016 and 2019. In May 2019, after he was again arrested and this time charged with crimes under anti-terrorism, cybercrime and anti-sabotage laws, a senior official of the Committee to Protect Journalists said it '[showcased] once again the brazen willingness of the Nigerian government to intimidate and harass the press'.³

Panellists said both the federal and state governments try to instigate fear among citizens and journalists. In their view, state-authorities have been particularly unrelenting in using state security apparatus to muzzle critical media and make it hard for citizens and journalists to speak openly. Some panellists saw a new plan to criminalise hate speech as a disguised attempt to clamp down on the right to freedom of expression.

Nigeria's longstanding problem of interethnic and interreligious violence also creates a chilling effect. Citizens and journalists, panellists described, are increasingly concerned that their words and actions could ignite violent backlashes from certain groups. 'When reporting terrorism in the north-east,' one panellist said, 'journalists are careful about what they say or fail to say.'

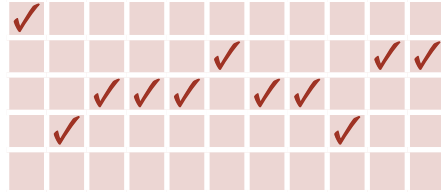
Scores:

2 Oguche vs National Broadcasting Corporation (NBC). ECW/CCJ/APP/1015.

3 Committee to Protect Journalists. Available online at: www.cpj.org/2019/05/nigeria-charges-jones-abiri-weekly-source-terrorism.php.

Individual scores:

- 1** Country does not meet indicator
- 2** Country meets only a few aspects of indicator
- 3** Country meets some aspects of indicator
- 4** Country meets most aspects of indicator
- 5** Country meets all aspects of the indicator



Average score:

2.7

Score of previous years:

2008: 2.4; 2011: 2.3; 2015: 3.4

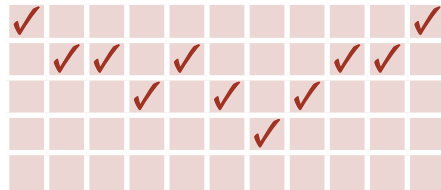
1.3 There are NO legal restrictions to freedom of expression or laws that interfere with the functioning of the media. (e.g. official secret, libel acts and legal requirements)

Even though the constitution recognises and grants freedom of expression as a fundamental right, a range of laws and pieces of legislation restrict the full enjoyment of that right. These restrictions may be laws that directly affect the practice of journalism, such as criminal libel. Others are loopholes in the country's collection of laws and regulations that can be abusively evoked to infringe on freedom of expression, such as the cybercrimes, anti-terrorism and official secrets acts. Still, others are archaic laws that are often dug up and used to charge journalists and other outspoken citizens (such as the law on sedition, which was declared inapplicable by an appeal court judgement, but has not been formally repealed). Panellists also viewed The Nigerian Press Council Act, which has been in place since the 1970s, as a perpetual restriction of freedom of the media. A legal battle to have it repealed is now at the supreme court. Taking advantage of public hearings in senate, journalists successfully shut down an attempt to reform the law before a definite court ruling.

Scores:

Individual scores:

- 1** Country does not meet indicator
- 2** Country meets only a few aspects of indicator
- 3** Country meets some aspects of indicator
- 4** Country meets most aspects of indicator
- 5** Country meets all aspects of the indicator



Average score:

2.3

Score of previous years:

2008: n/a; 2011: n/a; 2015: 2.8

1.4 Government honours regional and international instruments on freedom of expression and freedom of the media

Nigerian authorities have signed and ratified almost all international instruments dealing with freedom of expression and of the media. Among them are the African Charter on Human and People's Rights and the Declaration of Principles of Freedom of Expression in Africa. The country is also a party to more than a dozen UN human rights conventions.⁴ Some of these instruments have been domesticated and the principles they uphold integrated into certain media laws.

According to panellists, the Nigerian authorities have adopted a half-hearted approach to honouring international conventions and instruments. While current laws have permitted a diverse media landscape to emerge, media regulation is still not independent. Criminal defamation, which is universally considered unacceptable, is still in force. At the same time, state-media (federal and state government-owned media) have not been transformed into public media in the spirit of the Principles of Freedom of Expression in Africa. Commenting on the national situation, one panellist said:

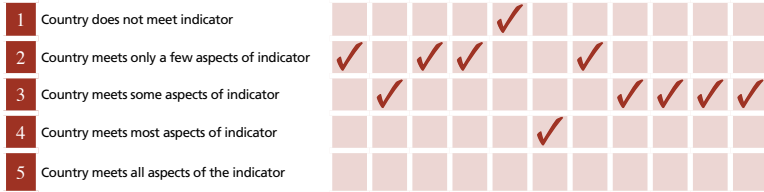
In as much as we are signatories to these instruments, honouring them remains a challenge because [the authorities] still want to control the media. Honouring [international instruments] requires going beyond ratification to implementation, otherwise, it is only a partial commitment. State governments have been even more reluctant in integrating universal principle in state laws.

Domestication is only one problem. Panellists said citizens have not sufficiently claimed rights contained within international instruments through the courts. 'Without that, there is no way of telling if they are honoured or not,' said one panellist. There are, however, a few notable exceptions. In 2015, a lawyer sued the federal government for censoring the media by imposing a 24-hour notice of live political broadcasts. The court, applying the African Charter on Human and People's Rights and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, ruled that the government-directives, issued through the NBC were illegal. In March 2019, the Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project, a human rights non-profit organisation, dragged the Nigerian government to the ECOWAS Community Court of Justice over 'the frequent and repressive application of the Cybercrime Act to harass, intimidate, arbitrarily arrest, detain and unfairly prosecute anyone found publishing views or facts perceived to be critical of the government at the federal and state levels and government officials'. A ruling is still pending.

⁴ See list of UN Human rights convention signed and ratified by Nigeria. Available online at: https://lib.ohchr.org/HRBodies/UPR/Documents/Session4/NG/NHRC_NGA_UPR_S4_2009anx_RatifiedHumanRightsInstruments.pdf.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score:

2.5

Score of previous years:

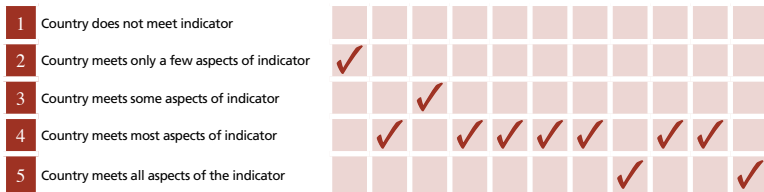
2008: n/a; 2011: 1.2; 2015: 2.6

1.5 Print publications are not required to obtain permission to publish from state authorities

No form of licensing is required to start a newspaper or other print publications in Nigeria. However, newspaper publishers are required to register as a business. Some states expect publishers to meet certain administrative requirements such as registering with a state authority or submitting copies to public libraries and archive services. However, panellists were of the view that none of these measures amounted to official permissions to publish.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score:

3.9

Score of previous years:

2008: n/a; 2011: 2.1; 2015: 2.3

1.6 Confidential sources of information are protected by law and/or the courts

Nigerian laws and court decisions are not definite on the protection of confidential sources of information. On one hand, the FOI Act of 2011 acknowledges the general principle of ‘journalism confidentiality privilege’.⁵ On the other hand, a long-standing appeals court judgement in the case *Momoh vs the Senate* (1982) takes the view that journalists enjoy no special privileges, which has been broadly interpreted to include the protection of journalistic sources. These apparent contradictions make it hard to determine if confidential sources enjoy legal protection in Nigeria.

Consequently, journalists routinely face pressure to reveal their sources. Panellists cited several examples, including that of a reporter who was “chased down” by the military to report on who had given him information on human rights violations, theft of relief material by troops deployed in the troubled north-east and that of a journalist pressured to reveal his source after reporting plans to relocate a tribunal on riots in Kaduna.

Despite the amount of pressure that journalists face, it emerged from discussions that it is highly unusual for journalists in Nigeria to reveal their sources. In the examples cited above, both journalists stood their ground. However, refusing to reveal journalistic sources often comes at a great cost. In January 2019, joint forces of the Nigerian military and police raided the offices of the *Daily Trust* newspapers in Abuja, Lagos, Maiduguri and Kaduna after it ran a story alleging troops were planning an assault to retake Baga and several other towns under the control of a Boko Haram faction in Borno state. The troops took away computers and arrested several editors and journalists. The story cited unnamed sources claiming a military build-up for an offensive that would include ground troops, airmen and naval officers.⁶ Panellists, citing the general public view, said the newspaper had been raided for failing to reveal its sources. However, the army said the story ‘divulged classified military information, thus undermining national security’, according to a report by the *Premium Times*.⁷ The *Daily Trust* denied it breached any official secrecy laws.

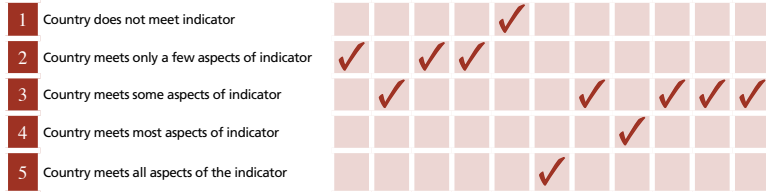
Panellists said the lack of a clear legal position on the protection of the confidentiality of news sources left journalists vulnerable. It was stated that public officials, security forces and even the courts, were among the most notorious for trying to extort information on news sources from journalists. In addition to the *Daily Trust* and numerous lesser-known cases of attempts to force journalists to give up their sources, panellists said *Premium Times* journalists and editors have been in and out of police and military detention over the years, allegedly over failure to disclose confidential news sources.

6 Hamza Idris and Uthman Abubaka (2019). “Military prepares massive operation to retake Baga, others.” Available online at: <https://www.dailytrust.com.ng/military-prepares-massive-operation-to-retake-baga-others.html>. Last accessed 31 July 2019.

7 Sani Tukur (2019). “Why we invaded Daily Trust – Nigerian Army”. Available online at: <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/304461-why-we-invaded-daily-trust-nigerian-army.html>. Last accessed on 31 July 2019.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score:

2.8

Score of previous years:

2008: 1.1; 2011: 1.9; 2015: 2.7

1.7 Public information is easily accessible, guaranteed by law, to the public

The signing of the FOI Act in 2011 after years of intense advocacy was considered a turning point in the story of the Nigerian media. The Act grants citizens the ‘right of access to records’ along with requirements for public services and agencies to comply with FOI requests. Under the Act, citizens can also turn to the courts to force public information holders to comply with their requests.

After eight years, the FOI Act has yet to demonstrate a perceptible difference in citizen’s ability to access public information and records. Panellists said multiple factors make the FOI ineffective. The top factor being the unwillingness of public services to comply with the law. One panellist said:

If they do not outrightly refuse or claim they do not have the information you are seeking, they make you wait forever. A lot of bottlenecks have been put in place to ensure that it is hard to get information. Frequently, you are asked to write to a more superior official, who will send you to an even more superior official, who is usually not very reachable. They don’t tell you that “we cannot give you this information” but create conditions that make the process burdensome.

In addition to administrative hurdles, federal and state authorities, as well as the defence forces, have resisted the FOI Act since its enactment. According to one panellist:

In 2015, 36 out of 217 FOI requests that had been made were denied.⁸ In a May 2018 case, a human rights lawyer was denied information on fuel imports by the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation. The corporation argued that it was established “by law to manage the commercial interests of Nigeria in the oil and gas sector of the economy

8 See www.foia.justice.gov.ng. Last accessed on 15 August 2019.

and conduct trade therein” and was therefore not a public institution within the meaning of the Freedom of Information Act.⁹

The following month, a Nigerian court denied an access to information request for details of the President Muhammadu Buhari’s medical bills. The request was filed to the Central Bank of Nigeria by the Advocacy for Societal Rights Advancement and Development Initiative.¹⁰

‘They do not understand the objectives of the Act and do not feel any obligation to give citizens access to information,’ said another panellist. Since 2017, the Nigerian military has systematically ignored FOI requests from civil society organisations (CSOs) to give account of the anti-terrorism war effort in the north-east. In other cases, authorities have used long appeal processes to stall releasing information (for instance, in Oyo, where some citizens have taken state officials to court for FOI refusals). Ironically, the National Assembly is considered one of the leading violators of the FOI Act.

Other hurdles are technical in nature. Panellists said Nigerian public services and agencies were poor at record keeping. Information is usually held in forms that are neither easily retrievable nor readily useable. Federal and state budgets, for example, often constitute hundreds of pages and volumes of information. Additionally, ‘access requires that this information is available online proactively,’ said one panellist. However, this is not the norm.

Many commentators have identified a range of obstacles to the implementation of the FOI Act in Nigeria. Pastor Elijah Ogbuokiri, the director-general of the Public Administration and Management Development Institute (PAMDI), noted quite early that Nigeria’s FOI Act ‘came with many deficiencies’. Five months into the Act, he observed that:

...the Act contains more exemption sections and clauses than sections that grant access to information, alerting that some mischievous public officers can use these sections for unjust and mischievous purposes. For instance, only Sections 1 and 3 grant access to information; but as many as ten sections (Sections 7, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19 and 26) are meant to deny the public access to information.¹¹

Nonetheless, panellists observed that except for the National Assembly, federal institutions made more effort to honour the FOI Act than other public services and agencies.

9 See Ade Adesomoju (2018). FoI: NNPC refuses to give fuel import details to Falana. Available online at <https://punchng.com/foi-nnpc-refuses-to-give-fuel-import-details-to-falana/>. Last accessed on 15 August 2019.

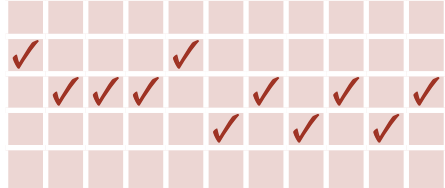
10 See Evelyn Okakwu (2018). Court refuses request for compulsory disclosure of Buhari’s medical bills. Available online at: <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/271284-court-refuses-request-for-compulsory-disclosure-of-buharis-medical-bills.html>. Last accessed on 15 August 2019.

11 Pastor Ogbuokiri (2011). Nigeria: The limits of Freedom of Information Act. Available online at: <https://www.right2info.org/recent/nigeria-the-limits-of-freedom-of-information-act>. Last accessed on 31 July 2019.

Scores:

Individual scores:

- 1 Country does not meet indicator
- 2 Country meets only a few aspects of indicator
- 3 Country meets some aspects of indicator
- 4 Country meets most aspects of indicator
- 5 Country meets all aspects of the indicator



Average score:

3.1

Score of previous years:

2008: 1.6; 2011: 2.9; 2015: 2.6

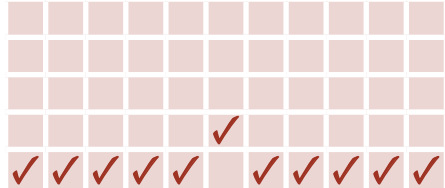
1.8 Websites, blogs and other digital platforms are not required to register with or obtain permission from state authorities

Website, blogs and other digital platforms are not required to register with or obtain permissions from state authorities. Panellists were not aware of any other requirements or practices that contravened this.

Scores:

Individual scores:

- 1 Country does not meet indicator
- 2 Country meets only a few aspects of indicator
- 3 Country meets some aspects of indicator
- 4 Country meets most aspects of indicator
- 5 Country meets all aspects of the indicator



Average score:

4.9

Score of previous years:

2008: n/a; 2011: 4.7; 2015: 4.6

1.9 The state does not seek to block or filter Internet content unless in accordance with laws that provide for restrictions that serve a legitimate interest and are necessary in a democratic society, and which are applied by independent courts

Panelists believed that Nigerian authorities have not yet blocked or filtered websites and internet content. ‘The authorities would love to but fear a strong public backlash,’ said one panellist. ‘This is not Rwanda or Uganda. Nigerians are very assertive. Authorities can only monitor but they cannot block or filter the internet. If they could filter or block the internet, they would have done so.’

Another panellist said:

The governments are restrained by political considerations that stop those in power from taking certain actions. We are in a trial democracy and each government wants to be viewed as being democratic.

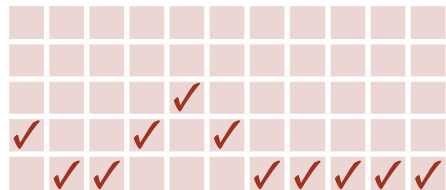
Some panellists felt that it was likely that the authorities lacked the technical capacity to interfere with internet content. Shortly before the 2015 elections, there were rumours that federal authorities had signed contracts with foreign computer technology providers to block or filter certain internet content. However, panellists stated was no evidence of any such interference.

Authorities have resorted to more classical means of silencing the online public, such as the harassment of citizens based on their communication via the internet and social media. Panellists claimed that cybercrimes policing has sometimes been misdirected towards online communities critical of the authorities, adding that security officials have openly stated they would clampdown on social media communications that breached public peace.

Scores:

Individual scores:

- 1 Country does not meet indicator
- 2 Country meets only a few aspects of indicator
- 3 Country meets some aspects of indicator
- 4 Country meets most aspects of indicator
- 5 Country meets all aspects of the indicator



Average score:

4.5

Score of previous years:

2008: n/a; 2011: 4.2; 2015: 3.2

1.10 Civil society in general and media lobby groups actively advance the cause of media freedom

Nigeria has a vibrant civic space, working collectively and individually. Among the most prominent civil society groups are the Nigerian Union of Journalists, Nigerian Guild of Editors, Newspaper Proprietors' Association of Nigeria, Media Rights Agenda, Institute for Media and Society, the International Press Centre and the International Centre for Investigative Reporting. Other organisations that promote media causes include the Social and Economic Rights Centre, the Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre, Right to Know and the Policy Alert and Paradigm Initiative.

Panellists cited the 2011 passing of the FOI Act as one example of successful media rights activism and collaboration between organisations with different vocations to promote media freedom causes in the country. Media and non-media organisations have also rallied to shut down controversial bills, such as a recent attempt to pass an NGO Act and a Social Media Act that were all deemed restrictive; and have sometimes taken to the streets to protest arrests and other forms of harassment suffered by journalists. One panellist explained why the collaboration is strong:

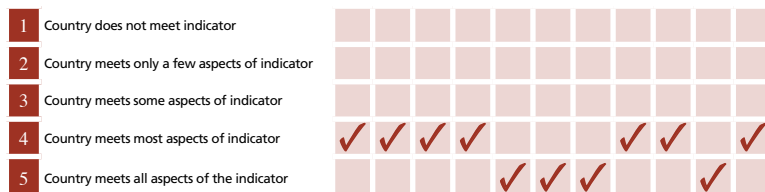
NGOs rely on the media to advance their different causes and meet the organisational objective. It is thus in their best interest to ensure that the media is free. They understand that injury to one, is an injury to all. Proactive and reactive support for media causes is quite evident.

Whilst collective actions tend to be more prominent, organisations sometimes undertake individual actions that are less visible but contribute to promoting free media. An example is the media capacity development work by organisations such as the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, the European Union, the British Council and other foreign public and non-governmental organisations.

Some panellists said despite clear examples of civil society participation in advancing media causes, such actions are often limited in scope. For example, massive mobilisation followed the withdrawal of the broadcasting licence of the Africa International Television in 2019, but not the several arrests of Kemi Omololu-Olunloyo, a blogger, social media personality and self-styled activist against gun violence. Panellists explained that media rights advocates select their fights carefully and therefore hesitate to rally behind controversial journalists or other media personalities. Media organisations and other groups, the panellists said, were more willing to rally behind legislation and policy issues than dabble in the personal woes of individual journalists.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score:

4.4

Score of previous years:

2008: 4.4; 2011: 4.7; 2015: 4.6

1.11 Media legislation evolves from meaningful consultations among state institutions, citizens and interest groups

Nigerian parliamentary procedures allow citizens to directly initiate new laws by sponsoring a public bill. Additionally, through advocacy and lobbying, citizens can indirectly participate in law-making by influencing the private members' bills of elected lawmakers or the public bills tabled in parliament by the executive branch of government. The law-making process further provides an opportunity for public debate (public hearing), allowing all interested parties to have their say on bills before they are voted by parliament.

These safeguards do not, however, guarantee broad participation in law-making processes. Panellists said both the legislative and executive branches of government have devised ways of minimising citizen inputs. For example, the public hardly heard about a recent bill to revise the NBC Act – not even NBC staff – until it was on its way to the presidency for signature, said one panellist. Another bill revising the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) Act to allow the NTA to expand its revenue sources went through parliament without any public consultation or hearing. One panellist said:

Even if the public is consulted or a public hearing is held, the authorities already have their minds made up in advance to push a specific agenda. Consequently, the views of the public are hardly reflected in the final law. The state frequently appropriates the voice of the people with the creation of GONGOS or Government NGOs (a reference to government-sponsored NGOs created with the sole purpose of counteracting independent NGOs).

Another panellist added:

Usually, the authorities only invite people who are likely to support the proposal of the executive to consultations, or they invite their supporters to attend public hearings and defend the interest of the executive.

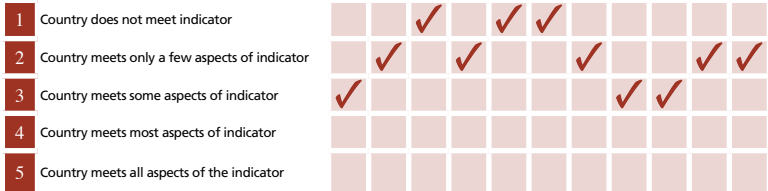
Citizens have also not been successful in using public bills to participate in law-making. In the uneven distribution of power and influence, public legislative initiatives are least likely to successfully become law, compared to private members bills and executive bills, in that order. One panellist explained:

The chances of public bills surviving [legislative processes] are slim, even though they usually arise from broad consultation and reflect public perceptions. The success of private members’ bills depends on how influential the private member is in the house [of parliament] and how well they can lobby other lawmakers and executive interests. And, executive bills are traditionally more successful and results from the lowest amounts of public consultations.

The FOI Act, which was pushed on the national agenda by CSOs, is a notable exception. Despite a more than ten-year delay by the authorities, it was finally voted and signed into law in 2011. ‘No bill has ever attracted [such] public interest as the FOI Act,’ said one panellist. ‘A lot more discussion on the bill took place in the public arena rather than within the government.’

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score:

2

Score of previous years:

2008: n/a; 2011: 4.4; 2015: 1.5

Overall Score for Sector 1:

3.3



SECTOR 2:

The media landscape, including new media, is characterised by diversity, independence and sustainability

2.1 A wide range of sources of information (print, broadcasting, internet, mobile phones) is accessible and affordable to the public

Nigeria is awash with news sources, from a vibrant but struggling newspaper industry to an expanding online news and information services.

The use of newspapers in Nigeria is declining.¹² Panellists stated that circulation numbers have fallen sharply across all titles, as newspapers grapple with an ageing readership and steep competition from cheaper and more accessible sources of information such as social media. According to estimates provided by one panellist, the total circulation was hardly a million for a population of 200 million people. Newspapers have also been cutting back on the number of editions, regularity on the stands and distribution to far-flung parts of the country. More than a dozen titles have closed down in recent years.¹³ Local and regional papers have been hardest hit, with many shutting down before making any impact.

Tough economic forces, such as ever-increasing costs of production, have forced surviving newspapers to raise prices. Average copy prices have increased from 50 kobos or naira cents in the 1980s to N200-300 (US\$0.55-0.83).¹⁴ This has further shrunk newspaper readership, leading to a rise in the number of free readers' associations across the country.¹⁵

Once a major source of information, newspapers and other print media products are now only reaching a few, mainly city dwellers. In rural areas, newspapers arrive several days late, if ever. One panellist said it was common for readers in some towns to travel to the nearest city to purchase often outdated papers.

The broadcast sector has been rapidly expanding, seemingly without disruption from social media. Private broadcasting has become very popular over the past decade, with almost every town or city having access to radio stations and television channels, however, federal and state-owned radios and TVs remain major players. The NTA has more than 110 stations throughout the country and remains the largest television network. The government-funded Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria and its subsidiary *Radio Nigeria*, have more FM and SW stations than any other news organisation.

Broadcast audio-visual media are by far more affordable and accessible than print media sources. Audience numbers have held steady over the years. In the north of the country, listening to the radio is a way of life. The prices of handheld radio sets have dropped over the years, enabling more people to listen to the radio.

12 Read more about newspapers published in Nigeria at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Newspapers_published_in_Nigeria.

13 Newspapers that have closed down during the past years include PM News, the Champion, the Triumph, the Concord, the Sketch, the Daily Times, News Watch, This Week and Tell Magazine.

14 NGN1 = USD 0.0028

15 Unable to pay the full price of a newspaper, free readers pay vendors a small fee to flip through several newspapers. Some are so well-organised that Nigerians now talk of free readers associations in almost every major town.

Even though shifts in television broadcast technology mean that citizens must switch to more modern television sets or purchase analogue-to-digital converters, panellists said television audiences have remained high. 'No matter what language you speak, no matter where you live, no matter how poor you are, there is an opportunity for you [to watch something you enjoy],' said one panellist.

However, broadcast services are unevenly distributed between urban and rural areas. Most city-dwellers get television through expensive satellite providers and have a wider range of choices than rural dwellers who rely on a shrinking number of free to air services. Other factors are cultural. 'Because they spend more time in the fields, [the] rural community member[s] are less likely to find time to sit down to watch television than their urban relatives,' said one panellist.

The country's broadcast licensing strategy has helped to enforce the disproportionate access to broadcast services between rural and urban populations. It emerged from discussions that most broadcast licences have been granted to media owners based in the major cities to the detriment of those in rural areas. Even though progress has been made, community broadcasting with about 30 stations nationwide has remained marginal to public and commercial broadcasting.

Easily the most disruptive change to citizens' access to information has come from the explosion of internet-based news sources such as news sites and social media. The NCC reported 119.5 million mobile telephone subscribers and 64 million broadband users (33.7% penetration) in April 2019. Most connect to the internet through mobile telephone data plans. Internet payment plans vary across mobile telephone operators but include offers for almost all categories of users.

With a growing number of citizens getting their information from online sources, traditional print and audio-visual media are also migrating to digital platforms (mobile applications and websites), joining an increasing number of online content producers. Most newspapers now have online versions, some with separate newsrooms and dedicated staff. However, unresolved monetisation problems have forced media organisations to keep their digitisation strategies conservative and unambitious.

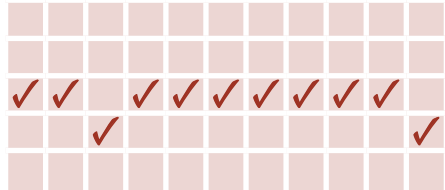
Across all media types, access is constrained by multiple infrastructural problems. Despite the impressive number of broadcast and online content consumers, some of the most far-flung parts of Nigeria with unreliable power supply and telephone signals have remained cut-off from information channels. One panellist said, 'as you move towards the border, there is less broadcast coverage, forcing residents to rely on foreign services'.

Numbers do not also mean that citizens are getting quality information, panellists said. Online sources are notorious for propagating unverified information and fake news, while radio and television channels air more entertainment than informational and educational content.

Scores:

Individual scores:

- 1 Country does not meet indicator
- 2 Country meets only a few aspects of indicator
- 3 Country meets some aspects of indicator
- 4 Country meets most aspects of indicator
- 5 Country meets all aspects of the indicator



Average score:

3.2

Score of previous years:

2008: 3.4; 2011: 2.8; 2015: 3.6

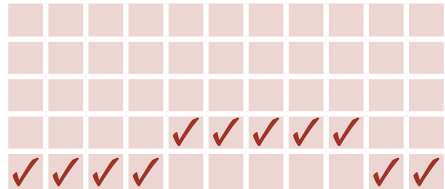
2.2 The public access to domestic and international media sources is not restricted by state authorities

The public's access to domestic and international media sources is not restricted by state authorities. Citizens have unrestricted access to foreign sources, notably the British Broadcasting Corporation, Voice of America and Deutsche Welle, which broadcast locally on the FM band radio spectrum.

Scores:

Individual scores:

- 1 Country does not meet indicator
- 2 Country meets only a few aspects of indicator
- 3 Country meets some aspects of indicator
- 4 Country meets most aspects of indicator
- 5 Country meets all aspects of the indicator



Average score:

4.5

Score of previous years:

2008: 4.5; 2011: 3.9; 2015: 4.3

2.3 The editorial independence of print and online media published by a public authority is protected adequately against undue political interference

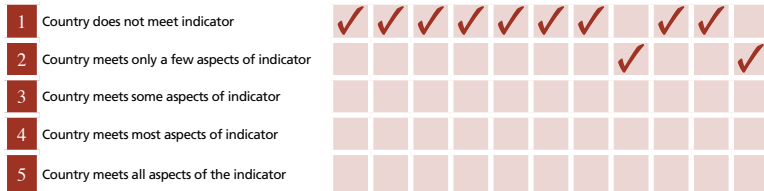
Nigeria’s federal government does not currently own a newspaper. However, almost every state government owns and runs a newspaper. Panellists said these newspapers are set up to be dependent on and controlled by state authorities, who determine editorial policies and recruit both management and editorial staff. In most states, the state newspaper is supervised directly by the state’s Chief Press Officer (CPO), who with a phone call, can give editorial directives, including how to cover certain stories. Describing the relationship between state authorities and state newspapers, one panellist said, ‘The governor is the law and the CPO is the law officer and hitman.’

Panellists were unsurprised that things were the way they were. One said:

State newspapers are set up primarily to defend state interests and project state actions and anything else will be a contradiction. They understand that their job is to serve the [state] government of the day. They are image builders and not news organisations.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score:

1.2

Score of previous years:

2008: 1.1; 2011: 1.1; 2015: 2.3

2.4 Transparency of news media ownership is guaranteed by law and enforced

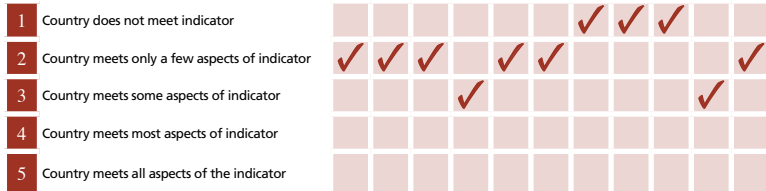
Nigeria’s media laws do not expressly make the transparency of news media ownership mandatory. However, indirect means of verification such as media licensing and company registration procedures or corporate beneficial ownership registries can tell the public who owns what media. In respect of a long-standing tradition in the newspaper industry, publications routinely carry a masthead, which sometimes includes ownership information.

Panellists said the transparency of news media ownership was a problem, despite the availability of different avenues for finding such ownership information. Politicians interested in controlling dominant narratives in the media were

becoming media owners, usually through proxies, several panellists said. ‘Most times, those who the public know as owners of certain media organisations are not the true owners,’ said one panellist.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score:

1.9

Score of previous years:

2008: n/a; 2011: n/a; 2015: 1.6

2.5 Adequate legislation/regulation seeks to promote competition and prevent media concentration and monopolies

President Muhammadu Buhari signed the Federal Competition and Consumer Protection Act (Competition Act) into law in February 2019. The anti-trust law established a Competition Commission and a Competition Tribunal. It also repealed the less stringent Consumer Protection Act.¹⁶ The aim of the new Act, according to analyst Wole Obayomi, was to ‘ensure that market distortions across all sectors are minimised and rules of fair play are respected in the marketplace’.¹⁷ ‘All sectors’ is understood to include news media organisations, which in Nigeria are required by law to register as a business.

Media concentration is more directly addressed in the Nigerian Broadcasting Act, which states that ‘it shall be illegal for any person to have controlling shares in more than two of each of the broadcast sectors of transmission’.¹⁸ In the panellists’ interpretation, the law limits media concentration within the broadcast sector but leaves room for cross-ownership, which has emerged as a common practice. One panellist stated that thanks to this loophole, many newspaper companies were setting up radio and television channels. Some examples include *The Guardian* and the *Independent* newspapers, which have obtained TV licences. *This Day* owns Arise TV, which describes itself as ‘a 24-hour international television news channel reporting on major global news with a strong focus on Africa’.

16 See Competition Policy International at <https://www.competitionpolicyinternational.com/nigeria-competition-act-signed-into-law/>. Last accessed on 06 Aug. 2019.

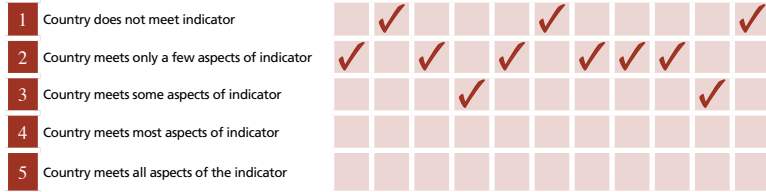
17 See analysis at <https://home.kpmg/ng/en/home/insights/2019/03/Federal-Competition-and-Consumer-Protection-Act.html>. Last accessed on 06 Aug. 2019.

18 NBC Act, Section 9 (5). Available at <https://lawsofnigeria.placng.org/print.php?sn=276>. Last accessed on 06 Aug. 2019.

With a regulatory framework described by panellists as open and lenient, media concentrations have also developed in the broadcast sector. Steam Broadcasting owns more than half a dozen radio stations and a TV channel across Nigeria. Daar Communications, the owners of *Africa Independent Television (AIT)*, also own *Ray Power FM* and *Faji FM*.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score:

1.9

Score of previous years:

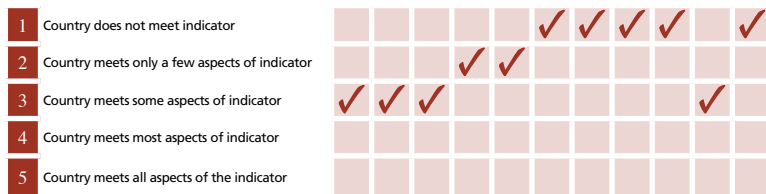
2008: 2.9; 2011: 1.3; 2015: 2.5

2.6 Government promotes a diverse media landscape with economically sustainable and independent media outlets

The media industry in Nigeria has grown mainly due to market forces. Indeed, panellists said through policy and practices, authorities have sought to curtail rather than foster a diverse, strong and independent media landscape. Despite its public service role, the media in Nigeria enjoy no state subsidies and are taxed in the same manner as other companies. Community broadcasting, which has a clearly non-profit and community service mandate, neither enjoys tax breaks nor benefits from special funds. ‘The media survive only by their ability to pay for the cost of production,’ said one panellist. Another added that if the government had the means, it would have made some media organisations ‘disappear’.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score:

1.9

Score of previous years:

2008: n/a; 2011: 2.5; 2015: 3.1

2.7 All media fairly represent the voices of all gender

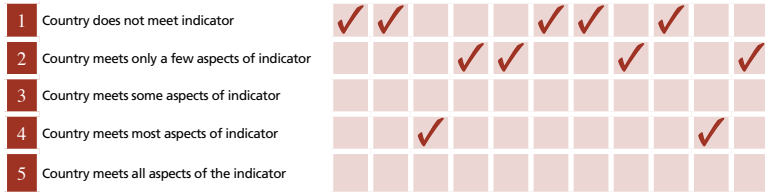
Media in Nigeria reflects a society still struggling with gender mainstreaming. Panellists said despite progress in increasing the voices of women in the media, gender biases and stereotypes continue to creep into news reporting and programming. One panellist said, ‘if women’s issues are not covered in a patronising way, they are trivialised’.

Strong gender activism in the country is helping change things by supporting training for journalists and by advocating for more gender-sensitive journalism practices. In a few newsrooms, panellists said the results have been impressive. Coverage of women has increased across media types, with newspapers running dedicated columns and broadcasters airing programmes that celebrate women.

Some panellists said a more gender-sensitive media will only emerge when the society changes how it represents and treats women. Despite years of progress, pockets of culture-based and religion-based discriminations against women still exist across the country. ‘What happens in the media is a reflection of the patriarchal society and sometimes media help to strengthen gender inequality,’ said one panellist.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score:

1.9

Score of previous years:

2008: n/a; 2011: 2.3; 2015: 3.2

2.8 All media fairly represent the diversity of voices of society

Nigeria is a country of more than 200 million people and is vastly characterised by tensions between diverse ethnic, religious and political groupings. Rather than attempt to challenge this complex social order, panellists revealed that the Nigerian media actively reproduce the affinities, affiliations, divisions, biases and stereotypes that give Nigerian politics and culture its supercharged character. Despite claiming a national coverage, media have therefore emerged that consciously or subconsciously align with or against certain social-political currents. For example, there is a clearly identifiable section of the northern media that promotes northern interests and, in turn, sections of the southern media that promote southern interests.

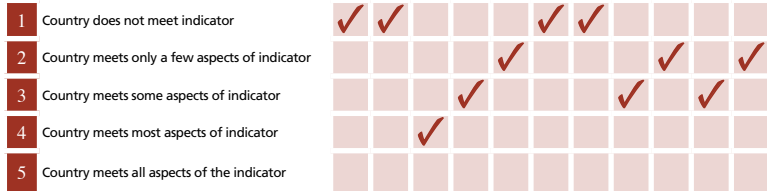
Language is an important indicator of Nigerian diversity. By and large, broadcast media attempt to use the dominant local language within the community they serve, in addition to English. Newspapers have been less successful in reaching readers with content in the local and national languages. Panellists said of the few attempts made, all had failed in part due to the low literacy levels in most local languages.

Nationally-minded news organisations concentrate their reporting efforts on the big cities, particularly Abuja, the centre of national political life. As a result, local content is compromised. Lagos, a city of more than 15 million people, does not have a truly metro-focused newspaper covering city life, said one panellist. The level of local coverage is worse in far-flung towns and villages, from where news organisations have been moving reporters and correspondents.

Several groups and issues remain under-reported, mainly due to the media's reproduction of the dominant social order and social representations which determine what is newsworthy or not. People living with disabilities and access issues still get very little coverage. Panellists said there was a total media blackout on lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex issues, as homosexuality is illegal in the country under the Same-Sex Marriage Prohibition Act.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score:

2.1

Score of previous years:

2008: n/a; 2011: 2.4; 2015: 2.8

2.9 Media cover the full spectrum of economic, cultural, political, social, national and local perspectives including through investigative reports

In the assessment of the panellists, the media attempts to cover all spectra of society in order to attract a large readership. Some newsrooms have clear strategies for broadening coverage, with dedicated sections, programmes and teams of reporters covering business, culture, sports and more. Nonetheless, major events often dictate the news cycle and focus. During elections, for example, political reporting eclipses everything else for several months. In Nigeria, it is often said that “politics is life” and the media reflects the nation's political vibrancy.

Reporting formats vary from single-source spot accounts of events to more in-depth multi-source stories, magazine programmes and documentaries. These variations depend not only on the newsroom orientations but on the resourcefulness of reporters and the means at their disposal. A rise in donor-funded journalism has increased the volume of in-depth reporting, marked by an increase in the coverage of underreported issues and the exploration of emerging techniques such as data-driven reporting and fact-checking. More recently, journalists have also delved into more technical areas. For example, Dubawa (a fact-checking site) specialises in the oil and gas sector.

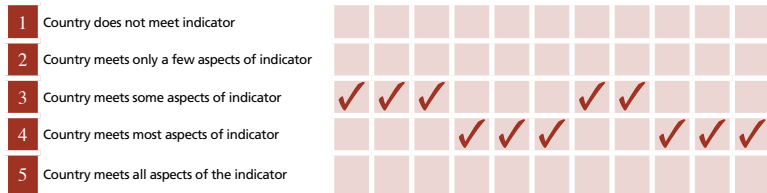
Despite apparent progress in other areas, panellists observed that investigative journalism has been on the decline. Developments in recent years, including training by organisations such as the McArthur Foundation and the passing of the FOI Act which eases access to information, have all attributed to this decline. According to one panellist:

Investigative journalism is one of our weak points. Those in the print media are supposed to break down what is breaking. But we do not have the capacity and funds. Investigative journalism costs money. The report that brought down [President Joseph] Estrada in the Philippines cost 8 million dollars.

In a nutshell, Nigerian media are open to all subjects and media formats, but only to the extent to which the resourcefulness of, and means available to, journalists allow.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score:

3.5

Score of previous years:

2008: 4; 2011: 3; 2015: 3

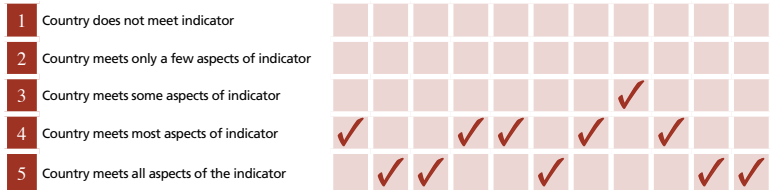
2.10 Private broadcasters deliver a minimum of quality public interest programmes

After years of experimentation, the quality of Nigerian private broadcast media productions has improved, with programming and productions aligned with public interest. An example is *Channels TV*, which is noted for authoritative and factual programmes that project multiple voices. *Television Continental* has earned respect for fair analyses and debates on its programme *Journalists’ Hangout*.

However panellists felt that entertainment programmes continue to trump other radio and television content. Additionally, some organs, such as AIT (which some panellists called the voice of the opposition) have maintained strong political leanings and promote single narratives.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score:

4.4

Score of previous years:

2008: n/a; 2011: n/a; 2015: 4.3

2.11 The country has a coherent and comprehensive ICT policy framework and/or the government promotes and implements measures, which meet the information needs of the public, including underserved communities

The Nigerian Ministry of Communication Technology published a national information and communication technology policy in 2012, which envisions Nigeria as a ‘knowledge-based and globally competitive society’. To realise this vision, the ICT policy was designed to “fully” integrate information and communication technologies into the socio-economic development of Nigeria. The policy seeks to create a conducive environment for the rapid expansion of ICT networks and services that are accessible to all at reasonable costs; and that contribute to the development of the various socioeconomic sectors of Nigeria.¹⁹

In addition to the Ministry of Communication Technologies, several government departments and agencies work to promote ICT integration across multiple sectors. These include the Nigerian Communications Commission, the National Information Technology Development Agency, the Nigerian Postal Service and two parastatals: the Nigeria Communications Satellite Limited and Galaxy Backbone Plc.

Initiatives to promote ICTs in Nigeria range from school access programmes to the deployment of a broadband backbone infrastructure. Private actors, notably mobile telephone, internet service providers and dealers in computer hardware and software have become active in shaping the country’s ICT sector.

¹⁹ Ministry of Communication Technology (2012), National Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Policy.

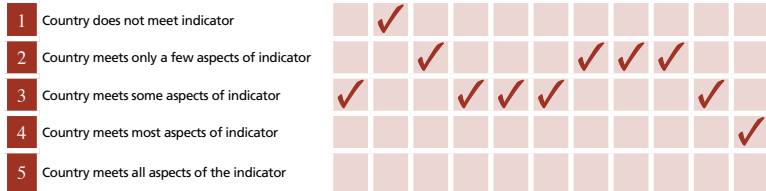
By and large, access to ICTs in Nigeria has increased over the years, with more and more citizens connected to the internet and using inexpensive computers, cell phones and other communication terminals. Panellists said it was hard to find a Nigerian without a cell phone, or a place without network coverage, even if of poor quality.

Some panellists said market forces, rather than comprehensive government policy, was responsible for the high ICT penetration in the country and that the authorities used laws such as the Cyber Crimes Act as a pretext to hamper the full enjoyment of ICTs by citizens.

Despite being among the most innovative countries in Africa, Nigeria has twice missed the deadline for migrating from analogue to digital broadcasting. According to some panellists, two former chief executives of NBC (the commission responsible for the digital switch) are facing corruption charges running into billions of naira. Furthermore, the authorities appear undecided on what setup boxes or digitisers old TV set owners would need to buy to make the digital switch. A company licensed to produce the set-up boxes failed to honour its deadline and a new contractor has now been commissioned to produce them in Korea, possibly at a lower cost.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score:

2.5

Score of previous years:

2008: n/a; 2011: 1.3; 2015: 2.6

2.12 Government does not use its power over the placement of advertisements as a means to interfere with editorial content

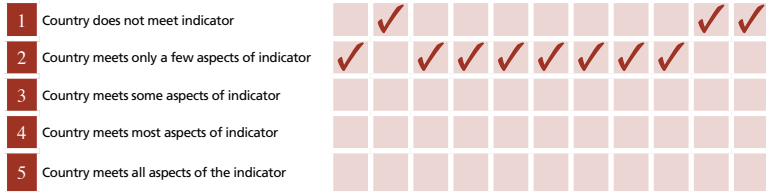
Both the federal and state governments are big advertisers in Nigeria. These authorities also have control over parastatals, which manage big advertising budgets. Panellists said federal and state governments have used this vantage position to weaponise advertising and use it to exercise editorial control over the private media. One panellist said:

Advert placing is discriminatory. Some state houses keep lists of friendly and hostile media, which they use to give or deny advertising.

According to panellists, some states have developed contractual agreements in which states pay periodic lump sums to news organisations in exchange for advertising and positive coverage. To stay in business with states, news organisations are requested to promote the interest of state authorities and when required, attack their opponents.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score:

1.7

Score of previous years:

2008: 1.4; 2011: 1.8; 2015: 1.6

2.13 The size of the advertising market can support a diversity of media outlets

Banks, mobile telephone services, beverage companies and cement producers dominate the advertising market in Nigeria. Over the years, they have scaled back their advertising budget and expanded to other media, such as billboards. Companies that previously advertised in six or more news media outlets have scaled down to two, a panellist observed. Additionally, public relations companies serving as intermediaries for advertisers have reduced the amount of advertising spend reaching media organisations.

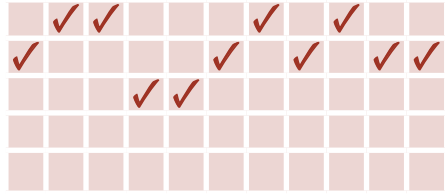
In the absence of an Audit Bureau of Circulation, the placement of advertising is discretionary, usually by public relations firms. Consequently, relationships built on personal and political relations have developed and the sector has grown increasingly opaque. Advertising distribution also discriminates against small regional outlets in favour of big national publications and broadcasters. Panellists stated that the bulk of advertising goes to the same media outlets.

The shrinking size of the advertising market has left the media vulnerable to direct and indirect editorial control. To stay in business, media houses routinely censor stories that would hurt advertisers. One panellist said Premium Times lost millions of naira’s in advertising from Dangote Cement, after resisting attempts by the cement manufacturer to kill a story on human rights violations at its factories. Symbiotic relationships between businesses and political parties or leaders have also resulted in the open display of political affiliation by the private sector in the media. Private companies are often unwilling to advertise in media deemed hostile to their political friends.

Scores:

Individual scores:

- 1 Country does not meet indicator
- 2 Country meets only a few aspects of indicator
- 3 Country meets some aspects of indicator
- 4 Country meets most aspects of indicator
- 5 Country meets all aspects of the indicator



Average score:

Score of previous years:

1.8

2008: 2.6; 2011: 2.3; 2015: 3.3

Overall Score for Sector 2:

2.5



SECTOR 3:

Broadcasting regulation is transparent and independent; the state broadcaster is transformed into a truly public broadcaster

3.1 Broadcasting legislation is passed and is implemented, and provides for a conducive environment for public, commercial and community broadcasting

The NBC Act was passed in 1992 and amended in 1999. Among other things, the NBC receives, processes and considers applications for the establishment, ownership and operation of radio and television stations; and recommends applications through the Minister of Information to the president for the granting of radio and television licences. It also upholds the principles of equity and fairness in broadcasting.

In 1993, the NBC published the Nigeria Broadcasting Code, which it said, 'shall be applied in the spirit as well as the letter, in accordance with the professional ideals of broadcasting'. The Code outlines various licensing categories, namely: networking, affiliations, syndication, satellite broadcasting (local, regional and global), free to air radio spectrum band, free to air television (terrestrial), cable satellite/cable/retransmission/MMDS, direct broadcast satellite (Direct-to-home and Direct-to-dish), community broadcasting, wireless programme distribution, equipment dealership and manufacturing.²⁰

A draft of the 6th edition of the code (last reviewed in 2012) recognises and defines community broadcasting as community-based with programming that caters to communal needs and is 'owned and controlled by the community through a trusteeship or foundation with a Board of Trustees'. Campus and rural broadcasting are categorised as two forms of community broadcasting.²¹

Under NBC regulation, a diverse broadcasting landscape has emerged with a mix of public, private and community outlets. Panellists said despite this apparent success, many terrestrial broadcasters were migrating to satellite broadcasting to bypass licence limitations on bandwidth and geographic reach. Signal distributors DStv and StarTime have become the main means through which citizens access television, with the shrinking offer of free to air services.

Operators have also found ways to circumvent the law. Faith-based organisations that are banned from the broadcast sector either buy up airtime or use fronts to obtain broadcasting licences. In some instances, panellists claimed that community radios are not truly community owned as required by law, but run by individuals through bogus committees. Campus radios, which are considered community radios, are said to be run by university management with little or no participation of the student communities that they serve.

Panellists felt that licensing fees were high and restrictive at N15 million (US\$41,506) for commercial broadcasters (potentially rising to N20 to N25 million

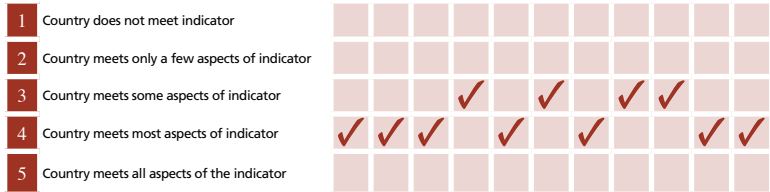
20 NBC (2002). Nigeria Broadcasting Code. Available online at https://www.nbc.gov.ng/uploads/nbc_documents/1466685527-code%20third%20edition.pdf. Last accessed on 07 Aug. 2019.

21 NBC (2016) Nigerian Broadcasting Code (6th Edition, Draft). Available online at https://www.nbc.gov.ng/uploads/nbc_documents/1494416213-NBC%20Code%206TH%20EDITION.pdf. Last accessed on 15 August 2019.

(US\$55,342-US\$69,177) in big cities), N1 million (US\$2,767) for campus radios and N250,000 (US\$691) for other community radios.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score:

3.6

Score of previous years:

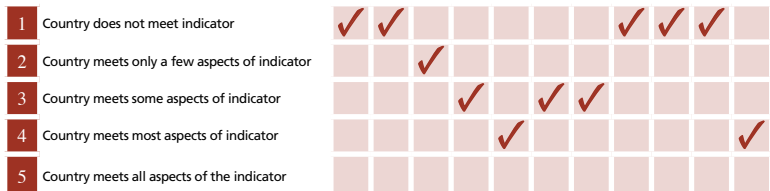
2008: 2.9; 2011: 1.8; 2015: 2.7

3.2 Broadcasting is regulated by an independent body adequately protected against interference by law, and whose board is appointed in an open and transparent manner involving civil society and is not dominated by any particular political party

By law, the management and board of the NBC are appointed by the president on the recommendation of the Minister of Information. However, panellists claimed that in practise the minister’s recommendations are often ignored and that the president hands out NBC board and management positions to his political allies. One panellist said, ‘the people at NBC dance to the tune of their payer and some of its actions are often politically motivated’.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score:

2.2

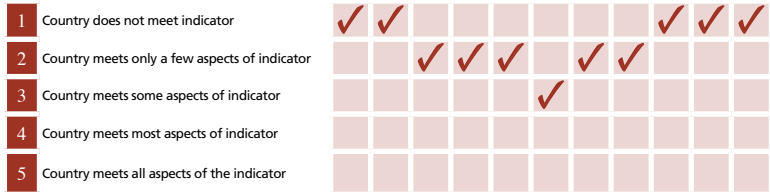
Score of previous years:

2008: n/a; 2011: 1.3; 2015: 2.2

services routinely receive editorial directives from federal, state and ruling party officials. '[State] press officers go as far as writing editorials and commentaries that radio stations must air without questioning,' said one panellist. 'In some cases, even political allies and relatives of state authorities use their connections in the State House (official residence of the state governor) to influence state media coverage.'

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score:

1.6

Score of previous years:

2008: n/a; 2011: n/a; 2015: 2.1

3.6 The state/public broadcaster is adequately funded in a manner that protects it from political interference through its budget and from commercial pressure

The NTA is now partially commercialised to enable it to raise funds through advertising to supplement the government subsidies it receives. Panellists said this arrangement has put pressure on the NTA to monetise almost all content, including news coverage. One panellist familiar with the practice within the NTA said a "let them pay" practice had cemented within the organisation. 'News can be bought and sold,' he said. 'Sources are literally being billed for news coverage.' With its new commercial vocation, the NTA has also set up several profit-making ventures (NTA Enterprises and NTA Properties) to expand its revenue sources.

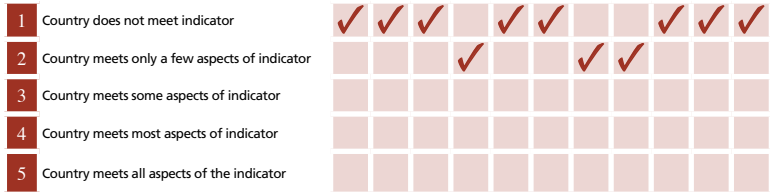
However, multiple revenue streams have not shielded the NTA from political influence and it has remained under the control of the authorities, who have the power to hire and fire executives.

On the other hand, the FRCN, VON and state broadcasting services rely almost entirely on government funding (FRCN and other state media also offer commercial services). Subsidies cover operational costs, including staff salaries. Sometimes, they get special allocations to cover major national events such as elections and sports tournaments. However, subsidies are not enough to guarantee quality and independent productions. This has left these broadcasting services, which are frequently inundated by free advertising from state entities, more vulnerable to political influence than the NTA.

Panellists said discussions about the financial state of government-funded broadcasting services was difficult because the processes are opaque. Some alleged that corruption was rife and that audits were poorly conducted across all state-funded broadcasters.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score:

1.3

Score of previous years:

2008: n/a; 2011: 1.9; 2015: 1.6

3.7 The state/public broadcaster offers diverse programming and formats that cater for all interests, including local content and quality public interest programmes

With more than 100 TV stations across the country, the NTA is considered the largest television network in Nigeria. It has TV stations in each of the 36 states and offers the widest diversity in content and reach. ‘NTA stations serve local interest programmes, including programmes in local languages,’ said one panellist.

With an almost similar deployment, the FRCN (also *Radio Nigeria*) with its scores of state and zonal stations is the leading radio broadcaster in the country with the widest reach. Its FM and SW spectrum band stations are highly geographically focused, delivering local content to a range of different geopolitical and socio-cultural interests.

Along with the federal services, states run broadcasting corporations intended to serve state and local interests.

A panellist said:

The reach of government-funded broadcasting was unmatched by content that served the interests of the different publics they intended to serve. Across the board, politics and propaganda serving the interest of federal and state politicians dominate the content of these services.

A panellist said:

Everything that you would expect a public broadcaster to focus on is lacking. Development and human rights issues such as female genital

mutilation, child rights, [six-month] exclusive breastfeeding, health – are hardly covered. NGOs and other non-profits are forced to pay for these thematic subjects to be covered, yet political reporting is still the priority for these stations.

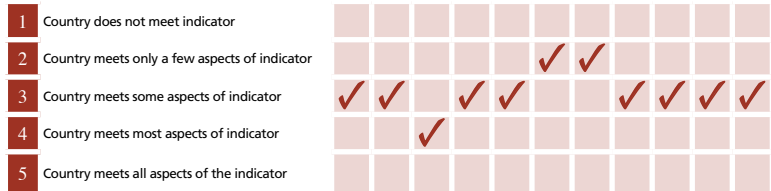
Another panellist said:

The civic space has shrunk. Citizens groups are not given room to contribute to the public conversation and agenda-setting because sometimes the agendas of civic organisations run contrary to that of the government. There is a clear lack of plurality and diversity of voices in the media run by state and federal authorities.

One panellist added that the unequal distribution of power between public authorities, citizens and other actors favours the authorities so that state media project government action while ‘other voices are lost’.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score:

2.9

Score of previous years:

2008: n/a; 2011: n/a; 2015: 3.4

Overall Score for Sector 3:

2.3



SECTOR 4:

The media practise high levels of professional standards

4.1 The standard of reporting follows the basic principles of accuracy and fairness

Nigeria is considered to have one of the most vibrant journalism industries in Africa, producing a growing number of award-winning journalists over the past decades. Yet, panellists found more problems than praiseworthy experiences with Nigerian journalism – from the inaccuracy of news reporting to the lack of fair analyses and commentary.

Accuracy

Panellists said journalists routinely get basic facts wrong, including names and numbers, as a result of sloppy newsgathering. In their reporting of the conflicts and tensions in the north and south-east of the country, panellists said reported facts usually vary across journalists, media houses and official accounts, leaving the public more confused than informed. As a fairly standard practice, the discussions revealed that the private press has a tendency to blow certain stories out of proportion, while the government-funded press plays down those stories that are likely to embarrass the authorities. One panellist said:

News reports are sometimes incomplete. Journalists lack the patience to verify and rely on social media to source information. NTA journalists usually tread with caution and worry more about the political and social fallouts of their stories than truth and accuracy.

Sensationalism is a common practice, with daily headlines that are misleading, ‘creating tensions and sending the wrong signal’.

In the assessment of some panellists, the print media make a better attempt to be accurate than the audio-visual and online media and routinely publish corrections and retractions. One panellist cautioned that ‘broadcast news content must be taken with a pinch of salt’.

Multiple factors account for the low levels of accurate reporting. Primarily, journalists lack the capacity to investigate or even the means to verify information. ‘Most media organisations and journalism work are poorly funded,’ said one panellist. ‘Akwa Ibom state, for example, has scores of local titles, but some are only able to publish twice a year and depend on politicians for a break.’

Fairness

A panellist said, ‘Faced with poor resources and tight deadlines, journalists are frequently forced to run with single-source reports that tell only part of the story.’ In other cases, newsrooms have poorly veiled political, ethnic and religious biases that are visible through their reporting and commentaries. Even when they speak to all sides, ‘journalists select only soundbites that support a certain narrative or discredit certain viewpoints,’ said one panellist. To eliminate certain viewpoints, panellists said some broadcasters have blacklisted pundits with whom the media houses do not share similar values.

Lack of follow-up

One panellist said journalists are frequently tossed about by the fast-changing news cycle and end up leaving the public in suspense. ‘Sometimes you are following a story and suddenly it trails off with nothing more,’ said one panellist. ‘Journalists owe the public responsibility for follow-up.’

Social media influence

Panellists said social media appears to put pressure on journalists to report faster than is required to get a fair and accurate story. ‘We are churning out half-baked stories in the name of speed’, said one panellist. ‘Sometimes, you are in a hurry to break the news, but the news ends up breaking you.’ Limited regulation of the online space means that journalists are forced to compete with content producers with no duties, responsibilities and ethical constraints.

Low pay and capacity

According to panellists, low professional standards in the media come down to two things, low pay and low capacities. ‘Truth can become a casualty of capacity issues,’ said one panellist, who added:

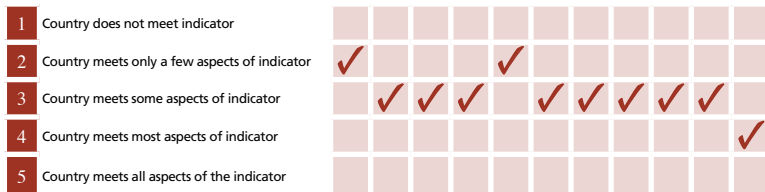
What we see are manifestations of some capacity issues such as capitalisation and lack of training in newsgathering. Journalists lack the means to undertake [proper] newsgathering and it is very difficult to work when you don’t have what you need. And, if you do not pay your reporters, someone else will pay them. Most journalists covering the National Assembly, for example, are not covering legislation but covering up [wrongdoing by] legislators.

Notable exceptions

A few journalists and media organisations seek to uphold professional standards and take remedial steps when they falter. A panellist cited the example of *Premium Times*, which had recently issued an apology and sacked a journalist after they got a story wrong. Still referring to *Premium Times*, one reporter said some journalists have taken ‘enormous’ risks to go undercover to report alleged human trafficking and ritual killings.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score:

Score of previous years:

2.9

2008: 2.8; 2011: 2.4; 2015: 2.9

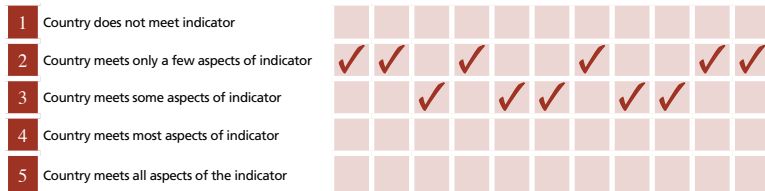
4.2 The media follow voluntary codes of professional standards, which are enforced by independent/non-statutory bodies that deal with complaints from the public

Journalists in Nigeria follow a range of code of ethics dispersed throughout the industry, from those serving specific media houses to more collective, yet fragmented ones. Media organisations, including the NTA and FRCN, have internal guidelines and other gatekeeping instruments. The Nigerian Press Organisation Code, Nigerian Union of Journalists, Nigerian Guild of Editors and the Newspapers’ Editors Forum all have codes of conduct and ethics that apply to their members and throughout the industry. Media groups and other CSOs have also developed specialised instruments, such as election reporting codes.

Despite this variety, panellists said existing codes are weakly enforced. Sometimes, for political and economic reasons, media offenses are played down. ‘You will find that when there is any form of reprimand against a journalist, then there is a powerful person behind the complaint,’ said a panellist.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score:

2.5

Score of previous years:

2008: 2.6; 2011: 3.1; 2015: 3.3

4.3 Salary levels and general working conditions, including safety, for journalists and other media practitioners, are adequate

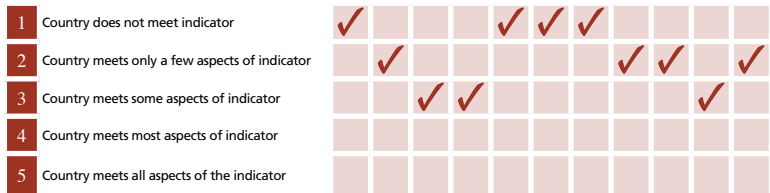
Monthly salaries vary throughout the media, ranging from N10,000 (US\$27) (for interns and volunteers) to a few millions per month (for senior executives and editors). These differences are determined by the economic strength of the news organisation, as well as the seniority of the media employees. In the government-funded media, journalists and other media workers are paid using the civil service salary scale, which has an entry salary of about N81,000 (US\$224) for a bachelor’s degree holder. Panellists said in worst cases, some media organisations do not pay their staff and require them to use their influence on news sources to earn a living. On average, ‘take-home salaries can’t take journalists home,’ said one panellist.

Working conditions have improved over the years, with the creation of more comfortable and better-equipped newsrooms. However, journalists work in increasingly hostile environments, particularly those covering the country's armed conflicts and ethnic tensions. Despite these evident workplace risks, few journalists have any form of insurance coverage. Where some protection exists, journalists who survive work-related attacks or accidents are usually only reimbursed after bearing the costs of treating themselves. A notable exception is the *Guardian*, which in addition to paying good salaries and allowances, provides healthcare coverage for its workers. The news organisation and a few others have in-house medical teams and standing contracts with medical facilities for emergencies and routine consultations.

In addition, female journalists are victims of sexual harassment perpetrated both by their colleagues and news sources. 'Producers will tell you that to go on air you must sleep with them,' said a panellist. 'This is the experience of a lot of women, who prefer to be quiet about it.'

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score:

1.9

Score of previous years:

2008: n/a; 2011: 1.3; 2015: 2.3

4.4 Journalists and other media practitioners are organised in trade unions and/or professional associations, which effectively represent their interests

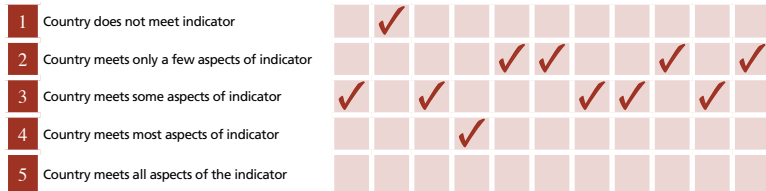
The Nigerian Union of Journalists (NUJ) is structured both as a professional association and as a trade union. It is considered the most prominent media trade union organisation, along with the Guild of Editors and the Newspaper Publishers' Association. Others include more thematically and sub-group focused associations such as the National Association of Campus Editors, Online Publishers Association of Nigeria, Association of Community Newspaper Publishers of Nigeria and the Radio, Television and Theatre Arts and Allied Workers Union.

Media associations and unions have not been very effective in defending the interests of its members and the industry, panellists observed. The Nigerian Union of Journalists, they said, was plagued by internal power struggles and embezzlement allegations and has been silent on many issues affecting journalists,

including the arrest and harassment of members. ‘Its leadership has gone to bed with politicians,’ remarked one panellist, ‘and in so doing compromised its authority and independence. The Guild of Editors, on its part, operates like an exclusive club of elite members.’

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score:

2.53

Score of previous years:

2008: 4.6; 2011: 4.3; 2015: 4

4.5 Journalists and media houses have integrity and are not corrupt

Without hesitation, one panellist said, ‘The Nigerian journalist, with hardly an exception, lacks integrity and is corrupt, in the same way as the country is.’

It came out of discussions that journalists at all levels are happy to accept bribes and favours from public officials and institutions in exchange for good press. Some news organisations have signed partnerships agreements with state governments under which they receive periodic sums of money and produce ‘patronised’ or sponsored stories in exchange. ‘The Nigerian media has lost its integrity,’ one panellist said, adding that:

Journalists have been severely compromised and the practice of commissioned stories²² is normal. Journalists without exception ask for some form of gratification before stories are published.

According to another panellist:

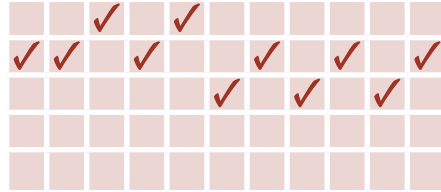
Brown envelope journalism is a big deal. Journalists do not accept bribes because of economic reasons, as some claim, but because they are part of the corruption culture in the country. They want to live bigger than their reality.

Major media houses have been working to change the disrepute. Publications like the *Punch*, *Daily Trust* and the *Guardian* have internal anti-corruption regulations. Some publish public notices urging event organisers and members of the public not to give their journalists money. ‘But it’s a drop in the ocean,’ said a panellist.

Scores:

Individual scores:

- 1** Country does not meet indicator
- 2** Country meets only a few aspects of indicator
- 3** Country meets some aspects of indicator
- 4** Country meets most aspects of indicator
- 5** Country meets all aspects of the indicator



Average score:

2.1

Score of previous years:

2008: n/a; 2011: 1.9; 2015: 2.8

4.6 All journalists and editors do NOT practise self-censorship

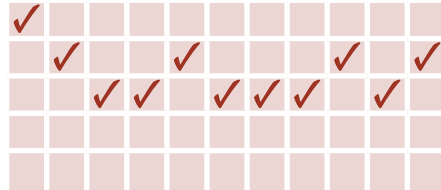
Attacks on journalists have left a chilling effect throughout the industry. ‘Even the bravest journalists think twice before publishing a story,’ said one panellist. ‘You cannot guarantee justice or your safety.’

Panellists recounted examples of journalists who have been forced to relocate because of harassment, which sometimes includes death threats. Some, it emerged, are sitting on stories that they cannot publish because they fear backlash. ‘Journalists fear both for themselves and those close to them,’ a panellist said.

Scores:

Individual scores:

- 1** Country does not meet indicator
- 2** Country meets only a few aspects of indicator
- 3** Country meets some aspects of indicator
- 4** Country meets most aspects of indicator
- 5** Country meets all aspects of the indicator



Average score:

2.5

Score of previous years:

2008: 1.3; 2011: 2; 2015: 3

4.7 Media professionals have access to training

facilities offering formal qualification programmes as well as opportunities to upgrade skills

A range of universities and training opportunities are available to practising and aspiring journalists throughout Nigeria. Most of the leading public and private universities run journalism degree programmes and an uncountable number of institutes offer diploma courses.

Donor-funded training is available but is often narrowly focused on specific topics or techniques. Themes such as gender, environmental change and disability issues have become popular in recent years, while new journalism techniques like data-driven journalism or fact-checking have attracted the interest of many trainees. Specialised training is quite popular among practising journalists seeking to take their journalism to a new level. Several professional training centres have been created around the country offering short courses, including in investigative journalism.

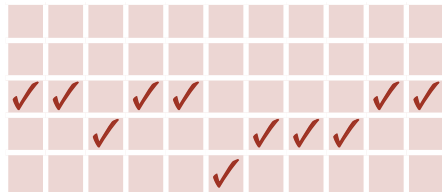
In-house training opportunities are not widespread but very well-structured in some news organisations. The NTA and FRCN have training centres which new recruits must attend. These centres increasingly receive students from other news organisations. Several private newspapers often organise seminars with experts to introduce reporters to certain technical fields such as law and economics.

Most training now takes place at home, but Nigerian journalists still travel abroad for additional or further education.

Scores:

Individual scores:

- 1 Country does not meet indicator
- 2 Country meets only a few aspects of indicator
- 3 Country meets some aspects of indicator
- 4 Country meets most aspects of indicator
- 5 Country meets all aspects of the indicator



Average score:

Score of previous years:

3.5

2008: 3.5; 2011: 3.3; 2015: 4.1

4.8 Equal opportunities regardless of race or ethnicity,

social group, gender/sex, religion, disabilities and age are promoted in media house

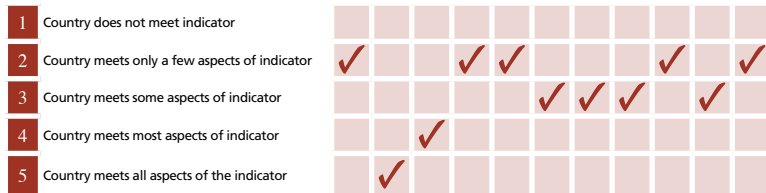
Inclusion is a work in progress within the Nigerian media. Over the years, news organisations have taken steps, usually with the prompting of NGOs, to mainstream issues such as gender and disability rights in their workplaces and reporting. The number of women in newsrooms has increased significantly, particularly in the audio-visual sector. However, this growth has not been accompanied by high rates of women occupancy in managerial and senior editorial positions. Newsrooms tend to prefer young single women over married women, one panellist said, because that means less absenteeism. In community radio stations there are generally more women than men.

Panellists said religion-based discrimination was more common than other forms of discrimination in the media. Faith-based news organisations only recruit from among their faith. Indeed, ‘religious considerations are sometimes placed above competence,’ a panellist said.

Government-funded media have an obligation to serve all social interests irrespective of ethnicity, religion and physical condition. Therefore, they take deliberate steps to represent all major groups and cater for the interests of all ages. By and large, the NTA has more female journalists than men, many of whom anchor primetime newscasts.

Scores:

Individual scores:



Average score:

2.8

Score of previous years:

2008: n/a; 2011: 2.5; 2015: 3.3

Overall Score for Sector 4:

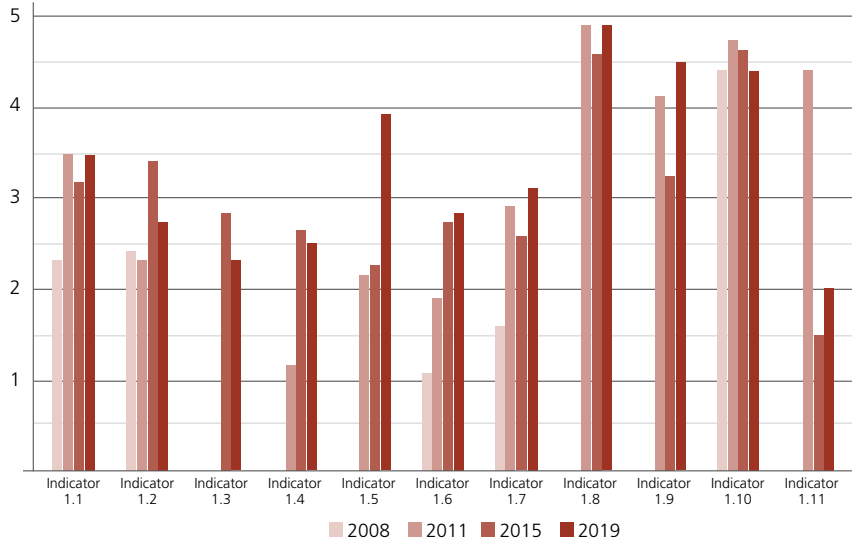
3.2



COMPARATIVE GRAPHS

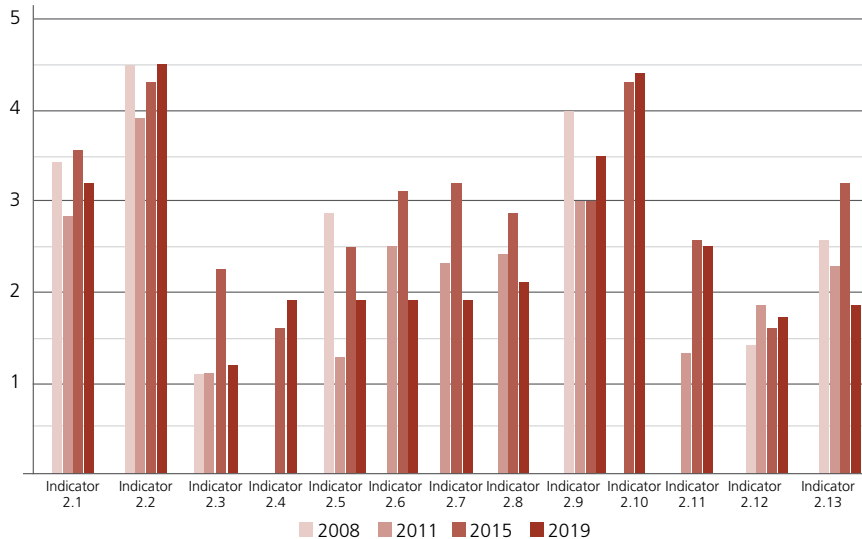
SECTOR 1:

Freedom of expression, including freedom of the media, is effectively protected and promoted



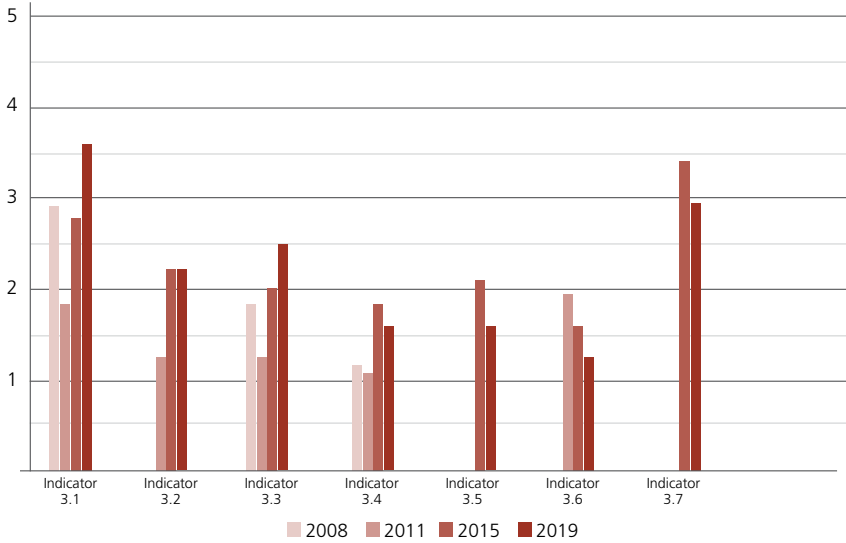
SECTOR 2:

The media landscape, including new media, is characterised by diversity, independence and sustainability



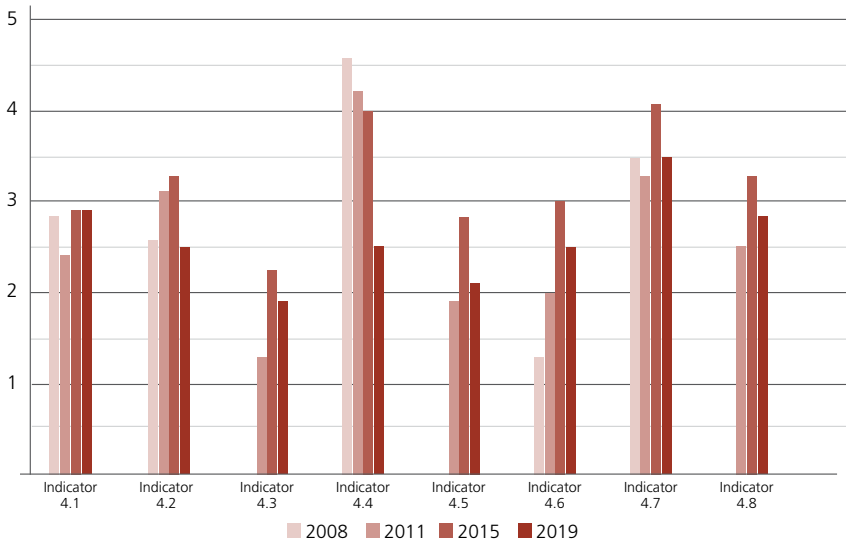
SECTOR 3:

Broadcasting regulation is transparent and independent; the State broadcaster is transformed into a truly public broadcaster

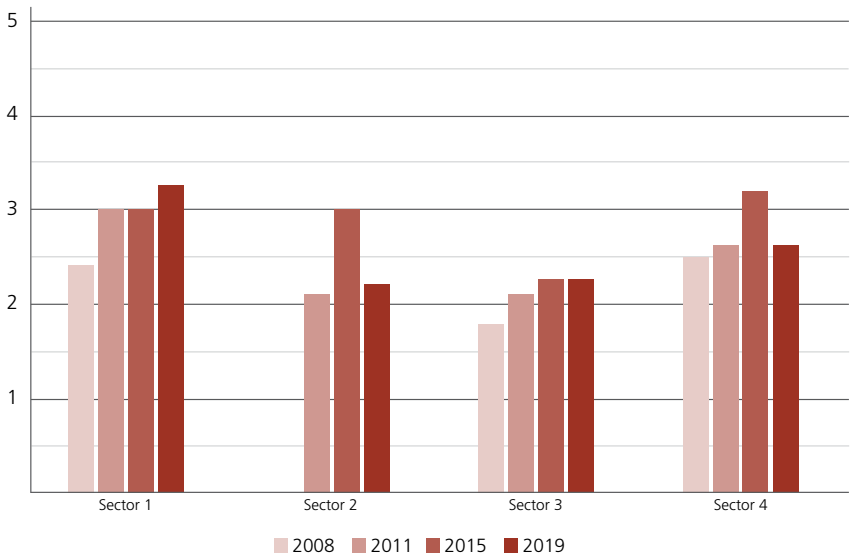


SECTOR 4:

The media practise high levels of professional standards



ALL SECTORS: COMPARING AVERAGE SCORES





THE WAY FORWARD

1. What were the developments in the media environment in the last three to four years?

Positive Developments

- A more stable democracy over the past few decades has opened the civic space and led to the proliferation of media and greater participation of citizens in public life.
- Recent stability of the Naira against the United States Dollar appears to be offering greater stability for media organisations following a period of high levels of market volatility and economic recession. However, this very recent, and this development is being monitored closely and with caution. This is not to suggest that there is general stability or improvement among media organisations.
- The adoption of the FOI Act offers greater opportunity and mechanisms to access public information, fostering open government and improving the climate in which media can play their role in a democratic society.
- The quantitative expansion of the broadcasting sector, particularly community broadcasting as a result of digitisation, brings greater opportunities for the expansion of the value chain in broadcasting and content diversity.
- Technological developments and digitalisation are stimulating the entrepreneurial spirit in the media industry.
- Increase in broadband penetration is putting users of news and information services at the centre of media production and evolution.
- The growth of people power and the role of media in amplifying this is improving the conditions for democratisation.

Negative developments

- Public and private sector corruption are not as adequately reported through government communication and media as was expected following the 2015 elections.
- The prevailing economic conditions and cost of living in Nigeria are severely influencing the low levels of integrity in journalism.
- The political and social divisions in Nigerian society are playing themselves out in media outlets. As a result, the apparent multiplicity of views in a rich and diverse media landscape takes on the dimensions of these divisions.
- The clamp-down on media by the state has created a greater sense of insecurity among journalists.
- The proliferation of digital media and news distribution platforms has substantially increased competition and reduced the available revenue streams traditional/legacy media have relied on.

- The take up of social media has also resulted in the proliferation of misinformation, disinformation and harmful speech online.
- There is an emergence of many bills (such as the Hate Speech Bill, NGO Bill, Press Council Amendment Bill) seeking to over-regulate speech and civic space.

2. What kinds of activities are needed over the next three to four years?

Civil society advocacy should stimulate and support appropriate government agencies to:

- develop converged and harmonised policy for the media and communication sector.
- reform broadcasting law to give the national broadcaster sufficient independence and financial stability.
- review regulatory instruments and institutions to improve their independence and harmonisation.

Media support organisations and media organisations should work in partnership to:

- support fact-checking efforts
- provide fact-checking training
- introduce fact-checking as a job function

Media organisations, particularly in legacy media, should collaborate more closely in order to build economic resilience and develop strategies for long-term sustainability.

Media organisations and civil society organisations should:

- campaign for and continue to shine a spotlight on the need for greater respect for rule of law, particularly in the public sector.
- coordinate their strategic litigation efforts to hold the public sector accountable for violation of the rule of law.

Professional media support associations and media organisations should update, promote, implement and enforce the media code of ethics.

Media organisations should make deliberate efforts to mainstream and provide more training opportunities issues, concerning people living with disabilities, gender and human rights.

The national human rights commission should provide more training and advocacy on people living with disabilities; gender and human rights.

Panellists:

Media (list in chronological order of surname):

1. Lukmon Akintola, Journalist/Peace and Security Expert
2. Tony Madu, Retired Journalist
3. Oruoma Cecilia Odum, Lecturer
4. Martin Oloja, Executive Editor/Editorial Board
5. Kunle Sanyaolun, Journalist/Lawyer
6. Ogechukwu Udegbonam, Journalist

Civil Society (list in chronological order of surname):

7. Akin Akingbulu, ICT Expert
8. Tijah Bolton, Environment/Climate Activist
9. Aderonke Ige, Gender/Community Activist
10. Hauwa Mustapha, Unionist
11. Ene Nwankpa, Media Activist
12. Apolmida Haruna Tsammani, Disability Rights Activist

Rapporteur:

Eugene N Nforngwa

Moderator:

Sekoetlane Phamodi