

Reporting Elections and Democratic Accountability

A RESOURCE MANUAL





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TABLE OF ABBREVIATIONS

APCON – Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria

BH - Boko Haram

BON – Broadcasting Organisations of Nigeria

EMB – Election Management Bodies

EU-SDGN – European Union Support to Democratic Governance in Nigeria

INEC – Independent National Electoral Commission

ICCC- INEC Citizens Contact Centre (ICCC)

IPC – International Press Centre

IPI – International Press Institute

NBC – National Broadcasting Commission

NCC – National Communications Commission

NUJ- Nigeria Union of Journalists

NGE – Nigerian Guild of Editors

NIPR – Nigerian Institute of Public Relations

NPAN – Newspapers’ Proprietors Association of Nigeria

NPC – Nigerian Press Council

NPO – Nigerian Press Organisations

PVC – Permanent Voter’s Card

PWD- People With Disability

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It is hoped that this publication would contribute to the attainment of the intended objectives of providing industry-relevant media resource manual for journalists covering the electoral process and as well providing critical information knowledge on professional reporting of electoral and governance issues.

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FOREWORD

The media's indispensable role in information dissemination, public enlightenment and as the watchdog that safeguards the credibility and transparency of the electoral process are some of the reasons why this important institution is acknowledged globally as the cornerstone of democracy.

The important platform provided by a free and balanced media for electoral campaigns, public debate and voter education is also widely accepted as a vital prerequisite without which an electoral management body's ability to organise a free and fair election will undoubtedly be a difficult task.

However, the ever-expanding field of election coverage has given rise to the need for media

professionals to undergo capacity development programmes regularly. It is in this context that I find this resource manual on Election and Democratic Accountability Reporting a timely and welcome addition to existing literature, as our country prepares for the 2019 general elections.

I recommend this manual to journalists, media organisations and professionals, Mass Communication teachers and media training institutions because I believe that its rich contents will contribute immensely to knowledge and improve the quality of professional journalism and, ultimately, strengthen Nigeria's democratic system.

Professor Mahmood Yakubu

Chairman, Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC)



CHAPTER 1

WHY MEDIA COVERAGE OF ELECTIONS MATTERS

For democracy to be meaningful, citizens should, as a matter of right, have access to information during political campaigns and elections, to be well-informed about the process and to hold and express opinions about their government's activities generally.

Therefore, they must not only have unhindered access to accurate, up-to-date and full information about the programmes and policies of contesting political parties and their candidates; the issues being canvassed and the arrangements for the elections,

but also have opportunities for feedback.

- The media is strategically placed to reach a wide audience within the shortest possible time and there are justifications for journalists' coverage of elections
- The reporting/coverage of elections is to keep people/society informed about the conduct of the elections: time of arrival of electoral officers, security and monitors/observers; commencement of voting, how it is going, any hitches, winners, losers, etc.

- The reporting/coverage of elections helps voters with mobilising information (education), which tells them when to register, how to register, where to register as a voter; how to locate a voting centre, the process of accreditation, the vote, counting the votes, declaration of results; conveying of ballot boxes and results, compilation of results and declaration of winners
- The reporting/coverage of elections serves as a monitoring of the process

not only of the conduct of the election management body, INEC, but also the conduct of election officials (supervisors, presiding officers, pollen clerk and party pollen agents); the conduct of security personnel including vigilante groups; election monitors/observers; and, the conduct of the voters

- The reportage/coverage of elections is (a) an exercise in the documentation of the election experience (b) for the purpose of consolidating on good practices and correction of lapses (c) for research into the conduct of elections and media coverage.

During elections, the media serves as a major vehicle for

a two-way communication between the political parties and their candidates and the citizens. The media's role is to inform and educate the citizens about all the processes involved in the elections, to enable them to make informed choices. This is more so in Nigeria, where democratic elections have consistently been challenging.

Fair media access implies issues such as equality of time and space allotted to political parties and candidates; the type of access time or space given to them, whether there is proportionality in the presentation of opposing parties or candidates in the media, and so on.

The African Charter on

Democracy, Elections and Governance imposes an obligation on State Parties to the Charter - member-countries of the African Union - to "ensure fair and equitable access by contesting parties and candidates to state-controlled media during elections."

The broad principles upon which responsibility is placed on the media to provide fair and adequate coverage for elections and the political process derive from the rights of people to participate in the government of their countries and the right to freedom of expression which are protected by international human rights instruments. These instruments provide the basis upon which national governments may make such

guidelines to ensure fair and equitable media coverage of the political process and elections.

The United Nations Draft General Principles on Freedom and Non-Discrimination in the Matter of Political Rights provides that “freedom of opinion and expression and freedom of peaceful assembly and association are essential to the enjoyment of political rights. These freedoms, and the access to the facilities and means for their exercise, shall be ensured to all persons at all times.”

Although laws exist in Nigeria which have the capacity to inhibit media coverage of the political process, in general, the guidelines and regulations

are designed to ensure fair coverage of the electoral and political processes such that opposing political parties and candidates have a fair access to the media.

Nevertheless, one area of deficiency in the law is in political financing: in the 2015 elections, for instance, it became controversial following the non-disclosure of the sources of huge contributions by politicians and other individuals to political campaigns.

For the 2019 elections, this and any other guideline impeding making political campaigns more open, have to be addressed.

REFERENCES:

- Article 17 (3) of the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance, (The Charter, wherein member-states reaffirmed their commitment to regularly hold transparent, free and fair elections, was adopted by the African Union in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on 30 January 2007 and came into force on 15 February 2012).
- Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, Annex to Resolution 1(XIV) adopted by the 14th Session in 1962. (See the report of 14th Session (E/CN.4/830-E/CN.4/Sub.2/218). Para. 159.)
- Draft General Principles on Freedom and Non-Discrimination in the Matter of Political Rights, Article III.



CHAPTER 2

INEC: NURTURING THE SYNERGY AND COOPERATION WITH THE MEDIA

INTRODUCTION

Paragraph 15, Part 1, Third Schedule of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria empowers the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to, among other things:

- Organise, undertake and supervise all elections to the offices of the President and Vice-President, the Governor and Deputy Governor of a State, and to the membership of the Senate, the House of Representatives and the House of Assembly of each state of the federation;
- Register political parties in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution and Act of the National Assembly;
- Monitor the organisation and operation of the political parties, including their finances; conventions, congresses and party primaries.
- Arrange for the annual examination and auditing of the funds and accounts of political parties, and publish a report on such examination and audit for public information;
- Arrange and conduct the registration of persons qualified to vote and prepare, maintain and revise the register of voters for the purpose of any election under this constitution;
- Monitor political campaigns and provide rules and regulations

which shall govern the political parties;

- Review electoral boundaries and create/delineate constituencies/ electoral boundaries.

The Electoral Act 2010 (as amended), also permits the Commission to:

- Conduct voter and civic education;
- Promote knowledge of sound democratic election processes;
- Conduct any referendum required to be conducted pursuant to the provision of the 1999 Constitution or any other law or Act of the National Assembly;
- Create polling units and assign

voters to them, and

- Create wards in the Federal Capital Territory and conduct elections into Area Councils.

INEC's vision is to be one of the best Election Management bodies in the world and satisfy the aspirations of Nigerian citizens. Its mission is to serve as an independent and effective organisation, committed to the conduct of free, fair and credible elections for sustainable democracy in Nigeria.

To that extent, the Commission undertakes to be guided always by the values of autonomy, transparency, integrity, credibility, impartiality, dedication, equity, excellence and teamwork in the performance of its duties.

As the Commission prepares for the 2019 general elections, there is a firm commitment by its entire management and staff to ensure that the elections turn out to be the freest and fairest of the previous general elections conducted since 1999.

INEC'S COMMUNICATION POLICY

In compliance with the Freedom of Information Act 2011 and in full recognition of the role and importance of the Press in the sustenance of democracy, and in line with Objective 4 of its 2017-2021 Strategic Plan to interact nationally and internationally with relevant stakeholders, the Commission has reviewed its Communication Policy which was instituted in 2013.

The Policy serves several

purposes aimed at promoting transparency and accountability in the Commission's activities. It responds to internal and external communication needs and guarantees a smooth flow of information between the Commission and stakeholders.

To broaden the knowledge about its processes and procedures, the Commission also holds regular quarterly consultative meetings with major stakeholders including the media, during which all issues are discussed in a frank, holistic manner. The INEC Press Corps is also in place. Membership is open to journalists assigned to cover the Commission's activities, upon the presentation of official introductory letters, signed by authorising officers of legitimate media organisations (print, broadcast,

online).

The INEC Citizens Contact Centre (ICCC), which serves as a two-way communication channel between the Commission and the public, further demonstrates our commitment to inclusivity.

Voter Education

Besides registration of voters and political parties, INEC places priority on Voter Education. This is done through a variety of channels, to enlighten the citizens on:

- procedures for registration, appropriate conduct before, during and after elections;
- procedures for voting, including how to handle the ballot paper;
- what constitutes an electoral

offence and

- such other information in respect of the CVR, transfer and replacement of PVCs.

INEC'S EXPECTATIONS OF THE MEDIA

Chapter II, Section 22 of the 1999 Constitution recognises the obligation of the press as follows: The press, radio, television and other agencies of the mass media shall at all times be free to uphold the fundamental objectives contained in this Chapter and uphold the responsibility and accountability of the Government to the people.

The media thus plays an indispensable role in ensuring the proper functioning of a democracy. Elections are legal processes involving several steps, but they

are not just about the right to vote. Knowledge of the voting process, information about political parties, candidates and their programmes are also crucial. In a paper titled, “*The Role of the Media in the Nigerian Electoral Process*”, delivered in May 2018 at the 69th General Assembly of the Broadcasting Organisations of Nigeria (BON), INEC Chairman, Prof. Mahmood Yakubu, listed the obligations of the media in facilitating the full participation of the citizenry in democratic elections as:

- Educating voters on how to exercise their democratic rights;
- Reporting on election campaigns;
- Providing a platform for political parties and candidates to communicate their messages to

the electorate;

- Providing a platform for public feedback, concerns, opinions and needs to political parties and candidates, the Election Management Bodies (EMBs), government and other electoral stakeholders, thus facilitating interactions on governance issues;
- Allowing political parties and candidates to debate with each other;
- Reporting results and monitoring vote counting;
- Scrutinising the electoral process itself, including electoral management, to evaluate the fairness of the process, its efficiency and its probity;

- Providing information in a manner devoid of inflammatory language and helping to prevent election-related violence.

Besides, the *Nigerian Media Code of Election Coverage*, (2014, revised edition, 2018) to which media stakeholders and some civil society groups in Nigeria subscribed, largely captures INEC’s expectations of the media, which include but are not limited to:

Balance, Fairness & Accuracy

While the Commission undertakes to make information available to the media regularly, and as the situation demands, it expects journalists and their media organisations to report on elections and electoral processes fairly, objectively and in a balanced manner.

Any allegation made against either a political party, its candidates or the Commission shall be verified with the views of all sides adequately reflected in the report to the published or aired.

Media organisations are also expected to provide information extensively on voter education for the benefit of all Nigerians, especially the marginalised groups, in local and English languages. In addition, the right of Nigerians to free expression must be upheld during electoral processes.

Equitable Access

It is expected and important for the media to provide a level playing ground for all political parties and their candidates taking part in elections. This applies to the allocation of time, coverage of

campaigns, participation in political debates and the length of time/space allotted to the airing and publication of views and activities of parties and their candidates.

Reporting of Conflicts

Although, violent acts during electoral processes are prohibited by law, it could happen. Media organisations are expected to:

- work for the de-escalation of violent conflicts if they occur during elections;
- avoid using offensive language and images;
- show restraint in reporting figures and identities of casualties of violent conflicts; and

- stick to the facts in their narratives.

Hate Speech

Hate speech and incitement are capable of igniting violence that could threaten not only the electoral processes, but also democracy itself. Media organisations are enjoined to disallow or reject statements, advertorials or documentaries classified as hate speech or which are capable of inciting violence.

CONCLUSION

Democracy cannot thrive or survive in the long term without a free and vibrant press. The Commission regards the Fourth Estate of the Realm as critical to the exercise of its mandate. Therefore, it will continue to nurture the current synergy and cooperation with the media and other stakeholders.



CHAPTER 3

GETTING THE OBLIGATION ON DEMOCRATIC ACCOUNTABILITY RIGHT

“It is believed that if a society puts into place a constitution and a body of laws, they get the structure and institutions of a democracy”. (Grace L et al, 2012).

INTRODUCTION

Ample literature exists on the contributions of the media to Nigeria’s democracy. While some scholars have criticised the performance of the media as often partisan, non-critical, personality-focused, unethical, elite and urban-centred, and

highly-commercialised; others have, however, acknowledged and praised the role of the media in educating and moulding the opinions of the people on democratic processes as well as upholding the tradition of monitoring issues of transparency and accountability in electoral matters. In many instances, the media had risen to investigate and challenge wrongdoings in the process (Omu, 1978; Ogbondah, 1994; Yusuf, 2001;

Nwosu, 2003; Oso, 2010 and Pogeson, 2015; Pate and Oso, 2017).

Impressive as the performance may be, studies by groups and individuals including UNDP, 2015; IMS, 2015; and Arogundade, 2015 have shown that media coverage and reporting of democratic accountability and specifically electoral accountability among political office holders have, over time, been observed to

be characterised by numerous weaknesses.

Since 1999 when Nigeria returned to civil rule, the media have been noted to be weak in effectively being able to document, track and monitor electoral promises made by candidates during election campaigns, and more importantly, the extent to which such officials at all levels have been able to implement electoral promises while in office.

Generally, coverage of democracy and electoral activities was characterised by partisanship in the public broadcasting stations, high cost of media visibility and weak investigative and non-critical

posture of media output. Other challenges include: weak capacity, ownership pattern, mind-sets, poor accountability culture and widespread corruption.

Media attitude to accountability

Currently, the behaviour of the media on issues of accountability and transparency can be categorised based on their conduct.

First, there is the category of media organisations which strive to raise issues of electoral accountability with political office holders and the political parties. Such media channels are dominantly in the private sector.

The second category comprise of government owned media organisations which are hardly critical and dominantly dependent on directives and defined interests of political office holders and ruling parties.

The third category, though in the minority, are media outfits which hardly reflect major positions but simply follow the direction of the wind at any point in time. In most cases, such organisations are weak with no major financial backers or muscles. But for a better appreciation of the performance of the media, one can recommend for a detailed analysis of how the media have been reporting issues of electoral accountability in

Nigeria.

Context for reporting accountability

There are national, regional and international legislations and instruments that provide the context for reporting democratic accountability during elections.

Two of such are the Nigerian constitution and the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (ACDEG).

Section 22 of the 1999 Constitution states: The press, radio, television and other agencies of the mass media shall at all times be free to uphold the fundamental objectives contained in this Chapter

and uphold the responsibility and accountability of the Government to the people. The use of *shall* makes this a mandatory obligation.

Article 13 of ACDEG says the media should continue to promote political and social dialogue; ensure public trust and transparency between political leaders and the people, to consolidate democracy and peace. Other relevant articles provide as follows:

- Democracy and constitutional order are supreme. The media must continue to demand that government put measures in place to ensure its perpetuation (Articles 14 - 16).

- The media must demand the account of a whole gamut of administrative, legislative and institutional measures; mechanisms for transparent and credible elections (Articles 17 - 22).
- The media must demand measures for advancing political, economic and social governance through the important roles that political parties, civil society, youths, the media, the private sector, the traditional institutions, etc can play (Articles 27- 43).

These provisions are pursuant to the role of the media to service the political system and ensure democratic accountability.



“Let the public know what has been promised and when they are supposed to be fulfilled.”

The critical steps to take in reporting accountability

Election reporting should not stop with covering campaigns and the conduct of the election. The good election reporter must therefore be concerned with what happens after the elections, when winners assume offices.

During campaigns:

- Monitor or track campaign promises using or relying on a variety of sources including especially:
 - Parties’ manifestoes or programmes;
 - Parties’ websites and social media platforms’
 - Individual candidates’ manifestoes or programmes;
 - Individual candidates’ websites and social media platforms;
 - Reports in newspapers, radio, TV and online media;
- Recordings of Television (and possibly) radio debates;
- Websites of civil society groups working on elections and monitoring and recording campaign promises;
- Document all the campaign promises of the candidate of your interest (House of Assembly, Governorship, Senate, House of Representatives, Senate and Presidency) and develop a database for them;
- Journalists covering specific beats such as education, health, sports, business/economy, aviation,



“The electoral system would be more credible and democratic if the media increasingly investigate and report on the conduct of politicians.”

transportation, etc, should document campaign promises related to their beats by presidential and governorship candidates and create a database for

them;

- Engage experts on campaign promises during elections. If, for example, a governorship candidate or presidential candidate says that he/she would construct certain kilometres of roads, ask construction experts on what that may cost;
- Document and recall past promises and ask candidates seeking re-election on what has happened to them;
- Regularly cross-check information on documented campaign promises with parties’ spokespersons to ensure that their candidates have not been misquoted;

- Obtain information and document campaign expenses for cross-checking, after the elections, with INEC and report on the state of compliance with section 91 of the Electoral Act specifying the amount of money candidates for particular offices could spend.

Post-elections

- Seek for information on timelines for the fulfilment of campaign promises;
- Let the public know what has been promised and when they are supposed to be fulfilled;
- Monitor the budget and report on the extent to which it captures or does not

capture campaign promises by the President and the Governors;

- Visit communities for which promises were made and ask if such have been fulfilled;
- Engage INEC to know if the political parties have filed their annual returns in compliance with section 89 of the Electoral Act; report findings but reflect the side of the political parties;
- Engage INEC to know its findings on compliance with section 91 of the Electoral Act on spending limits by candidates; be sure however to reflect the side of the candidates while reporting your findings;

- Maintain communication amongst all parties and non-partisan actors and regularly publish information on the state of fulfilment of their campaign promises;
- Use news, special reports, documentaries, editorials, investigations features, discussion programmes, etc, to constantly demand fulfilment of documented campaign promises;
- Demand for and publish information on the cost (with detailed breakdown) of conducting the elections from INEC;
- Demand for and publish information on the cost of policing during the elections

from the Police and Civil Defence authorities.

CONCLUSION

Media owners and managers should understand that they would be falling short of fulfilling their constitutional obligation if they do not pay attention to the issue of democratic accountability. They should therefore provide the needed resources for their reporters and editors to monitor and document campaign promises and report their findings.

In general, the electoral system would be more credible and democratic if the media increasingly investigate and report on the conduct of politicians, the state of

fulfilment of promises by incumbents, the behaviour of institutions like the Police and INEC during the electoral process.

It is all about strengthening democracy.

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- African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (ACDEG)
- Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999.
- Electoral Act (2010) as amended



CHAPTER 4

GETTING GUIDED BY THE LAWS OF THE LAND

INTRODUCTION

While it is persuasive that good journalism can bring about changes in laws, media professionals should also note that there are laws which affect how well they can function.

Media laws are a set of rules governing the dissemination and reception of ideas and information through the media of mass communication, the role of the press and the public, their rights and duties to the individuals and the state in general.

Journalists should know how to receive and give pieces of

information or intelligence legally or rightfully. Reason: individuals have their rights and can sue journalists when their rights have been violated.

Some of the laws to note are:

COPYRIGHT LAW

It is a common law of nature that a person shall reap from his/her labour. It stands to reason therefore that where someone publishes a work - book, literal, artistic, musical, film etc., it is his/her exclusive rights to continue to enjoy the benefits and the exclusive rights to preserve such work from invasion

from others.

Note:

- Journalists sharing manuscripts and rewriting colleagues' manuscripts should give credits and insert quotation marks appropriately.

PRIVACY LAW

The right to privacy is to a person's peace of mind. The law simply seeks to prevent the media from prying into people's private life. The law restrains journalists from too much probing into the personal domain of individual members of the society. This law protects the right to be free

from unwarranted exploitation of one's personality, the publicising of one's private life that has no concern being in the public domain.

Note

- Section 37 of the 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria guarantees the right to privacy. It states thus: The privacy of citizens, their homes, correspondence, telephone conversation and telegraphic communication is hereby guaranteed and protected.
- The election reporter must avoid this pitfall by striving not to breach the right to privacy.

CONFIDENTIALITY VS SECRECY

Is privacy the same as confidentiality

or secrecy? Privacy is a separate concept to both confidentiality and secrecy.

Confidentiality, Privacy and Secrecy are often thought of as the same and the terms are often used interchangeably.

Secrecy comprises techniques to prevent information coming to the knowledge of others. Governments, corporations and individuals may have secrets, but only individuals have privacy rights. Governments may use secrecy to serve other public interests, such as protection of national security or the integrity of law enforcement investigations.

Note

- Journalists need to note that Confidentiality is a separate legal concept where information is given to a

person under an obligation to keep the information confidential (for example, a trade secret, or information confided to someone). Confidential information is usually not available or readily accessible to the public, and may be information, which is not recorded in some form.

What Is Right to Privacy?

The legal term 'invasion of privacy' refers primarily to a person's right to keep his or her life private and free from the intrusion of others. It is often associated with a public figure's right to be left alone by the media, although many public aspects of a celebrity's life are not protected.

Note

- Journalists need to know that invasion of privacy charges

are usually presented in a civil law suit against an organisation which has crossed a perceived line into a celebrity or other person's private life or have used his or her likeness or name in an unauthorised public manner. Besides, they need to know that national tabloids would face an invasion of privacy law suit than private citizens.

PUBLIC DISCLOSURE

The second type of invasion of privacy is public disclosure of private facts. This occurs when someone publishes hurtful, embarrassing or offensive facts about a person's private life. If the media digs up private facts regarding a high-profile person and makes these facts public knowledge, the victim of the disclosure can sue the media

for invasion of privacy.

Placement in False Light

The third type of invasion of privacy is false light publicity, which occurs when someone produces false statements about a person or frames that person in a false light. If, for example, a writer embellishes, distorts or fictionalises a news story, he may place someone in a false light that distorts the truth.

APPROPRIATION

This is the last type of invasion of privacy, appropriation of name or likeness, refers to the unauthorised commercial use of a person's name or image without his knowledge or approval. Copywriters cannot use a celebrity's name or image to endorse a product without the celebrity's consent.

Note

o Newsmen need to know

generally that a court does not consider photographs in newsworthy stories, or incidental references to real people in books and films, as appropriation.

DEFAMATION LAW

Defamation commonly refers to an unjustified and damaging attack on the good reputation of a person, or a company. If someone sues you for

defamation and is successful, you can be liable to pay damages, which could be quite substantial and lead to bankruptcy of media organisations.

However, not all criticisms of, or disagreements with people are defamatory. Defamation, according to Okoye (2007:81) is the transmission to a third party, either orally or written of information which tends to damage

the reputation of another person. It is the publication of a statement which exposes a person to hatred, ridicule, contempt or causes him to be shunned or avoided by right thinking members of the society.

Note

- Defamation law is one of the most serious dangers facing journalists and publishers today. Journalists may feel that they have the right to say or publish whatever they feel, after all, the constitution provides for freedom of expression, conviction or opinion. But even in the most liberal society, freedom of expression is not absolute.
- Journalists should note that while the 1999 Constitution (Sections 22 and 39) provide that everyone has the right to

freedom of expression, as well as hold opinions and to receive and impart information and ideas without interference by public authority and regardless of the frontiers, the same constitution makes provisions that restrict this freedom in the interest of national security, territorial integrity or public safety, for the prevention of disorder or crime, etc.

Action Points

- To prevent cases of libel (print) or slander (broadcast), journalists should bear the following in mind: **verify all possible defamatory material**, check all facts that question persons competence on their job, allegations that indict persons, that people commit crimes or stories that imply

or directly state persons are mentally unstable or are afflicted with diseases.

- Besides, journalists should exercise caution with arrest reports, damage suits and criminal court proceedings.
- Journalists are also enjoined to be careful of statements made by the police or court officials outside the court. They need to note that truth is a defence but good intentions are not.

SEDITION LAW

This was one of the earliest press laws enacted during the British colonial era in Nigeria to curtail the spate of criticisms against the administration and put a check on the press. This law was intended to curtail the operation of the nationalist press

of the time. Known then as the **Seditious Offence Ordinance of November 6, 1909**, it was to restrict the press from publishing the railway scandal, which was widely reported by the nationalist journalists such as Sir Herbert Macaulay. A statement or publication is said to be seditious when it is intended to incite the people against the federal or state government and to make the people call for a change of government through unlawful means.

Note

- Although an Appeal Court had in 1982 ruled that the law should not have any place in a democratic society, the Nigerian Police prosecutors still regularly charge journalists and civil society activists with it. The cases have to be heard first, before lawyers cite judicial precedent.

CONTEMPT OF COURT

This is described as any action calculated to be embarrassing, and that could hinder or obstruct the smooth administration of justice or that could undermine the authority and dignity of the court.

Note

- Journalists should note that it is considered a matter of severe consequence to comment on, broadcast or publish an opinion on a matter that has not yet been determined by the court in a manner that could adversely influence the direction of the verdict.

OBSCENE AND HARMFUL PUBLICATIONS ACT, 1961

Section 3 (1) of the **Obscenity Act of 1961** states that an article shall be deemed obscene if its general effect tends to deprave and corrupt

audience or readers who might have either read or heard the matter.

Note

- Two critical issues here can be exploited to sue journalists: tendency to **deprave** and **corrupt** and the audience who are likely to read and the matter embodied herein.
- Another danger zone is the state's enabling instrument, which guards against publication of books and magazine that can negatively affect children as expressed in Children and Young Persons (**Harmful Publications Act of 1961**). The Act defines harmful publication as, publication, which consists wholly and mainly of stories told in pictures (with or without the addition of written matter)..."

CYBERCRIME ACT 2015

The (Nigeria's) 2015 Act seeks to provide an effective, unified and comprehensive, legal regulatory and institutional framework for the prohibition, prevention, detection, prosecution and punishment of cybercrimes in Nigeria.

Journalists are advised to read the provisions of this law, which defines cybercrime as any crime that involves computer and a network. The computer must have been used in perpetrating a crime or may be a target.

Part II of Section 3 of the Act is titled, Designation of computer systems or networks as critical national infrastructure”.

Note

- This law gives the President powers to make orders, among others, to prescribe minimum

standards, guidelines, rules and procedures on access to, transfer and control of data in any critical information infrastructure.”

- This is a danger zone for journalists. There is a specific provision on Cyber Stalking, which is gathering information to harass, or sending multiple emails to annoy, embarrass, intimidate or threaten a person. The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission holds the power here in trust for the state.

ELECTORAL LAW

Since 1922 when the Clifford's Constitution began the elective principle, the Nigerian media has been active in political reporting and so has been alleged as an

accessory after the fact of violence in most elections in Nigeria. Therefore, political reporters, especially, should be conscious of some provisions in the law that affects the media and elections (coverage).

Note

- **Sections 101-105** of the Nigeria's Electoral Act 2010 address squarely the do's and don'ts of mass media during elections.
- **Section 101** deals with limitation on political broadcast and campaign by political parties.
- **Section 102** concerns the various limitations in political broadcasts and campaign by another person.
- **Section 103** affects campaign

for elections.

- **Sections 104 and 105**, outline how to structure campaign without whipping up religious and tribal sentiments.

Political editors and reporters should note that they can be prosecuted if the authorities are interested in pursuing electoral offences at tribunals.

For instance, Section 101 of the Act states:

- i. For the purpose of this Act, the period of campaigning in public by every political party shall commence 90 days before polling day and end 24 hours prior to that day.

Section 102 states:

- ii. A government-owned print and electronic medium shall give equal access on daily basis to all registered political parties or candidates of such political parties.

So, a denial of such access and equal time constitutes an offence punishable in the first instance with a maximum fine of N500, 000 and a withdrawal of the licence of the offending electronic media house by the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) for a period of 12 months on any subsequent violation. There are more offences therein.

In summation, journalists should not discount the importance of legal education and awareness in reporting and writing about any election as a process.

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CHAPTER 5

RECKONING WITH ETHICS AND CODES

INTRODUCTION

For any news organisation or journalist to be effective, they must be *trusted* by their audiences and communities. Thus, being credible or *ethical* is imperative for journalists, whether they are working as independents or for organisations. Just as well for the media organisations.

To establish public confidence and trust, therefore, a journalist or news organisation must be guided by a high standard of ethical and professional conduct; elements of which

include but are not limited to fairness and accuracy.

Frameworks for Ethical Journalism

The Ethical Journalism Network outlines the following common themes constituting ethical conduct, namely: truth and accuracy putting out the *facts* always; independence not acting on behalf of special interests whether political, corporate and cultural and giving full disclosure of any affiliation, financial arrangement and possible conflicts of interests; fairness and impartiality



presenting every side of a story and providing context; and accountability ensuring that when they make any error, it is admitted and genuinely corrected and provide remedies when necessary.

Code of Ethics for Nigerian Journalists

Adopted in March 1998 by the Nigerian Press Organisations (NPO) - made up of the Newspapers Proprietors Association of Nigeria (NPAN), the Nigerian Guild of Editors (NGE) and the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ), the Code provides for general standards of professional journalism practice, including the importance of factual, accurate, balanced and fair reporting. It also highlights the social responsibility of a

journalist to promote universal principles of human rights, democracy, justice, equity, peace and international understanding.”

In addition to these general principles and standards, the Code specifically provides in Article 7 that:

- i. A journalist should neither solicit nor accept bribe, gratification or patronage to suppress or publish information.
- ii. To demand payment for the publication of news is inimical to the notion of news as a fair, accurate, unbiased and factual report of an event.

Although there are no specific provisions in the Code relating

to election coverage, Article 7(ii) is directly relevant in the context of election coverage in Nigeria. Many media organisations, both state-owned and private, consider election periods simply as an opportunity to boost their financial fortunes.

So, they issue rates for the coverage of various political activities in their news programmes in blatant disregard for professional ethics and the specific provisions of Article 7(ii) of the Code of Ethics which states that, *“To demand payment for the publication of news is inimical to the notion of news as a fair, accurate, unbiased and factual report of an event.”*

This tendency is most prevalent in the broadcast media where

charges are openly specified for coverage of items and activities such as press releases, press conferences, and political rallies.

Besides that, this is a breach of the Code, it also has negative implications for the fairness and credibility of the electoral process as only rich political parties and candidates are likely to be able to afford to have their activities covered by the media where such payments are required.

Besides, the rich political parties and candidates are also able to pay the expensive charges of some of the privately-owned television stations to have cameramen and reporters permanently attached to them for all their campaigns and rallies

thereby ensuring that they have constant media coverage for all their activities, while by the same token, they deprive coverage to less-endowed political parties and candidates.

The Nigerian Media Code of Election Coverage

Recognising the inadequacies of the existing ethical frameworks for the media regarding elections, media stakeholders have sought to fill the gap by adopting “The Nigerian Media Code of Election Coverage”, which was first published in 2014/2015, ahead of the 2015 General Elections in Nigeria, but has been recently revised and updated and is now known as “The Nigerian Media Code of Election Coverage (Revised Edition, 2018)”.

The revised Code was launched in Abuja on 22 June 2018 as part of the programme of activities at the 67th World Congress of the International Press Institute (IPI) after it was validated by media stakeholders at a meeting held in Lagos on 22-23 May.

The Code provides detailed guidelines for the ethical conduct of journalists and their media organisations in the coverage of elections, based on a number of roles outlined for the media which include the performance of oversight functions on governments and other actors, public enlightenment and civic education, creating platforms for public discourse and conflict management roles during elections.

The Code states in its preamble that the 'effective performance of these important roles requires the observance of the highest standards of professionalism, maximum compliance with regulatory frameworks and deference to the public good and interest'.

It identifies the motivation behind the Code as the need to have a set of guidelines that regulates the professional and ethical conduct of the media and journalists during elections and enjoins practitioners that "compliance with the guidelines will contribute to the conduct of credible elections and corresponding social order."

The Code contains a Statement of Broad Principles which outlines

the roles and obligations of Governments, Political Parties, Election Management Bodies, as well as Civil Society Organisations and Media Support Groups.

In its substantive sections, it addresses issues such as equitable access to the media for political parties and candidates in an election as well as for under-represented groups; the professional and social responsibilities of the media, outlining the applicable standards for journalists and media organisations, regarding fairness, accuracy and balance.

Other issues addressed in the Code include Integrity, Credibility, the conduct of Opinion Polls, Endorsement of candidates or political parties by the media;

Political advertisement; Hate speech and Incitement; and conflict sensitivity. It also contains provisions relating to Monitoring, Implementation and Enforcement of the Code, including internal mechanisms which individual media organisations can adopt to ensure that they are complying with the provisions of the Code.

It is recommended that the revised Code should be a companion document for all Nigerian journalists, particularly those charged with election coverage duties, as it is designed to address specific professional and ethical issues which arise during electioneering and elections.

The Nigeria Broadcasting Code

In addition to these frameworks, media workers and organisations in the broadcast sector are also bound by, and obliged to comply with the Nigeria Broadcasting Code, now in its sixth edition which outlines “the minimum standard for broadcasting” in Nigeria. As part of these standards, it lays out general principles to guide the conduct of broadcasting as well as guidelines for the editorial and technical aspects of broadcasting. It also contains specific guidelines for political news and current affairs broadcasts in different contexts.

The general guidelines relate specifically to issues such as live coverage, news interviews and discussion programmes. Political News and Current Affairs broadcasts are regulated under

Paragraph 5.3 of the Code and Political Advertisement under Paragraph 7.6.

“Political adverts, campaigns, jingles or coverage of any political activity outside the campus are completely prohibited from campus broadcasts stations. Although it allows the broadcast of campus politics on the stations, it stipulates that this must be in decent language and guided by broadcast regulations and other relevant laws.”

The Code contains sanctions, which can be imposed on a station for any breach of the guidelines contained in it. Possible sanctions include the revocation of a station’s licence if it commits a serious breach of either the technical or non-technical aspects of the Code;

reprimand or warning; fines; suspension of license, seizure or forfeiture of transmitting equipment, etc., depending on the gravity of the offence.

Most of the ethical and professional standards contained in the Code are of a general nature, similar to those contained in other professional codes of conduct. However, regarding the regulation of political broadcasts, the Code contains additional requirements such as enjoining broadcasters to avoid inflammatory and divisive matters in using political material for news.

They should also accord equal airtime to all political parties or views, regarding the amount of time and belt, during political campaign periods while also

regularly announcing that every political party is entitled to equitable air-time during political campaigns.

Broadcasters must ensure that political broadcasts are in decent language and ensure that the only partisan political broadcast allowed is one in which the political party seeks to explain its manifesto and programmes.

They are also obliged to clearly identify political broadcasts as such, and not present them in a manner that would mislead the audience into believing that the programme is of any other type.

Broadcasters are prohibited from using any vote obtained at different polling stations or from exit polls, to project or speculate

on the chances of the candidates and are only allowed to relay election results or declaration of the winner as announced by the authorised electoral officer for the election.

Although a broadcaster may interact with politicians in the course of professional duties, this should not lead a reasonable person to believe that the broadcaster is either a member or sympathiser of any political party.

Broadcasters must also ensure that in programmes requiring the representation of political parties or affiliations, the panellists must be of comparable status and relevance.

Broadcasters are obliged to

implement decisions of the NBC, including granting of a *Right of Reply* or *Apology*, within 24 hours, and at the same level of prominence.

Implementation and Enforcement of Ethical Standards

Two major factors have been responsible for the lack of compliance with and implementation of various ethical frameworks over the years, namely the high level of ignorance among most journalists about the existence of these frameworks and their provisions as well as the absence of effective enforcement mechanisms.

The media community, particularly critical media stakeholders such as media owners, editors and

media professional bodies, need to take a serious look at these issues and find effective ways of addressing them.

Media owners and editors have a major responsibility to ensure that journalists who work for them are aware of and comply with applicable professional codes and standards to enhance the credibility of their news organisations.

The media community must find effective strategies for the dissemination of the ethical frameworks, particularly the Media Code of Election Coverage, and carry out sensitisation activities around them to ensure that journalists are aware of them and familiar with the provisions of the various frameworks.

But all journalists also have a responsibility to seek out the ethical and professional standards which regulate their professional conduct, familiarise themselves with the provisions and make the effort to comply with them.

These are critically important because lack of respect for and failure to comply with professional standards will ultimately erode the ability of the media to play its role effectively as the situation would create a crisis of credibility for the media and the media sector will continue to be weighed down by a moral burden as it tries to hold other actors accountable.

There is also a need to explore various enforcement

mechanisms to make the ethical frameworks effective. If the media community does not seriously address this challenge, it faces the risk that government could take legislative measures in response and this would most likely be in the form of criminal law.

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CHAPTER 6

ASCERTAINING THE TRUTH

“Truth is the cornerstone of journalism and every journalist should strive diligently to ascertain the truth of every event.”

This is the first statement in the Preamble to the Code of Ethics for Nigerian journalists.

In the course of his duties, a journalist should strive to separate facts from conjecture and comment, the Preamble adds. Yes, because facts, being verifiable evidence, are incontrovertible.

Charles Prestwich Scott (usually

cited as C.P. Scott), editor of the *Manchester Guardian* wrote in a 5 May 1921 essay titled *A Hundred Years*, published in that newspaper: Fundamentally (a newspaper) implies honesty, cleanness, courage, fairness, a sense of duty to the reader and the community. He concluded that, at the peril of its soul (the newspaper) must see that the supply is not tainted. Neither in what it gives, nor in what it does not give, nor in the mode of presentation must the unclouded face of truth suffer wrong. Comment is free, but facts are sacred.”

It is against this backdrop that

we will examine two out of many approaches available today to the political reporter to ascertain the truth.

FACT-CHECKING

During electioneering campaigns, politicians and their aides make claims, from the ridiculous to the grandiose. Nikita Khrushchev, First Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union from 1953 to 1964, said that politicians are the same all over. They promise to build bridges when there are no rivers.”

Fact-checking has grown to

become a subset of journalism for evaluating claims by public officials, for factual accuracy, or to uncover all the evidence, according to Angie Drobic Holan, editor of *PolitiFact*, which won the Pulitzer Prize for its coverage of the 2008 American election.

In Africa, Africa Check (www.africacheck.org), founded in 2012 under the aegis of the Agence France-Press (AFP) Foundation, has been holding “public figures to account for what they say.”

We are relying on Africa Check’s methodology on fact-checking which conforms with the best practices in fact-checking, recognised by the best non-partisan fact-checking organisations around the world.

The Claim

It starts with a claim which the media may have published, or the public figure put out in a press statement, or sent in by someone, for fact-checking.

In March 2018, a cleric, Tunde Bakare, , reportedly told his congregation (at the Latter Rain Assembly church, Lagos, Nigeria) that, ‘For 16 years of the PDP, they borrowed 6 trillion (while) for three years of APC, they borrowed N11 trillion.’”

That’s a claim - state or assert that something is the case, typically without providing evidence or proof.

Precise words

When you’ve decided that the claim needs fact-checking, AfricaCheck

recommends that you first establish exactly what was said. Take Bakare’s claim, for instance, another newspaper used the word ‘lent’” instead of ‘borrowed’, stating that PDP borrowed N6 Trillion in 16 years, APC has lent N11 trillion in 3 years. (When one lends, one is *giving* something to someone, for a certain period, usually short, and borrowing means *getting* something from someone, also for a stated period).

Proof of the claim from the speaker

It is important to seek from the claimant his or her evidence. He who asserts must prove. It is not impossible that the speaker has access to evidence that might not even be in the public domain, but the burden of proof is upon him who affirms...”

Dig deep

Whether or not the claimant provides a proof, it is the journalist's duty to carry out an independent verification of the claim. Digging deep into

publicly-available evidences should help in this task.

This is what Yinka Ogunnubi, a public analyst, did with Bakare's

claim, when no journalist did.

Source: <https://twitter.com/yinkanubi/status/970999199528574976>

Experts weigh-in

Ogunnubi carried out his analysis using data obtained from publicly-available sources such as the website of the Debt Management Office (DMO) Nigeria and the World Bank. Africa Check recommends that the "evidence obtained must be checked with specialist experts where necessary to help understand the data." The best practice, states Africa Check, is that the experts must accept to be on record as we do not use anonymous sources. Except, the information they provide is independently verifiable. It is important to check for the experts' interests, and where necessary in your report, do



a full disclosure.

The 4-Step-Way

Time to write. Africa Check states: “We write up our report, setting out, first, the claim that was made and the context in which it was delivered and reported; second the evidence that supports the claim; third any contrary evidence; and fourth, a balanced conclusion. For all evidence we quote we provide a link or quote the source.”

Finally, do not compromise attention to any detail.

VERIFICATION OF USER-GENERATED CONTENT ON THE SOCIAL MEDIA

The era of journalists laying claim to monopoly on information dissemination collapsed with the evolution of digital technology

(internet) and social platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and WhatsApp. Increasingly, these platforms have become sources of news for even the media. Welcome to User-Generated Content or User-Created Content or Citizen-Generated Journalism or Simply Citizen Journalism.

In 2006, TIME Magazine’s Person of the Year was awarded to YOU, according to Wikipedia, to recognise the millions of people who anonymously contribute user-generated content to wikis such as Wikipedia, YouTube, MySpace,



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Facebook, and the multitudes of other websites featuring user contribution.

In April 2005, the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), set up the User-Generated Content Hub. Based in its newsroom at the New Broadcasting House, in London, this team monitors audience reaction to breaking news and ongoing stories." Nieman Lab's Jonathan Stray found out from an interview with a UGC Hub team member, Silvia Costeloe, that the purpose of the hub is to find and connect with the people around news stories, wherever they are in the world and whatever tools or sites they use to communicate. Besides scouring the world wide web, the Hub also uses the BBC's own website to solicit content, sources, and stories. According to

the history of information.com, BBC expanded this team in 2005 in the wake of the 7/7 London bombings and the Buncefield oil depot fire of 11 December 2005. The UGC Hub is believed to be the first of its kind by any big media establishment and has received plaudits for its efforts.

According to a report in the Cable News Network (CNN), 8 March 2018, a study by three researchers (Sinan Aral, Soroush Vosoughi and Deb Roy) at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), published in *Science* magazine, fake news travels at a markedly faster rate on Twitter than accurate."

Reports CNN: The study, which Aral said took about two years to complete, found that it took true news stories about six times longer

to reach 1,500 people on Twitter than stories that were false. False stories, the study said, diffused significantly farther, faster, deeper, and more broadly than the truth in all categories of information."

It therefore becomes most crucial for journalists covering political elections to exercise utmost caution when they must depend on breaking news, sourced, particularly, from the social media. Perhaps, the best disposition would be to doubt first, and verify independently, no matter the pressure of deadline. Especially so when it is also realised that besides the pervasiveness of fake news, fake followers are also on the prowl. And they roam freely on the social media.

Unless you are sure of the sources

of images either on the web or the social media, do not hesitate to check for the authenticity. One approach is by doing a Reverse Google Image Search (screenshot below).

Or you can use the tineye (www.tineye.com) app.

Where verification becomes challenging, but there is a reason to believe the genuineness of an image or a footage for TV, it might be necessary to add a cautionary note suggesting that authenticity has not been established.

How to use TinEye

Using **TinEye**, you can search by image or perform what we call a reverse image search. You can do that by uploading an image, or searching by URL. You can also simply drag and drop your images to start your search.

TinEye constantly crawls the web and adds images to its index. Today, the TinEye index is over 26.5 billion images.

- (Screenshot source: Wikipedia).

Avoid the urge to be the first to get out the word, rather ensure that your content can stand the test of accuracy.

And, when you get it wrong, ensure that you admit your errors and

make the necessary amends.

FOR FURTHER READING:

- <https://africacheck.org/how-to-fact-check/tips-and-advice/>
- <http://www.bbc.co.uk/academy/journalism/article/art20150922112641140>
- <http://www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/collegeofjournalism/entries/1fbd9b88-1b29-3008-aae6-1cab15e13179>
- <http://ijnet.org/blog/bbcs-best-practices-verifying-user-generated-content>
- <https://www.poynter.org/news/how-journalists-verify-user-generated-content-information-social-media>

Reverse image search using your phone or tablet

1. Use the Chrome app to do a search.
2. Tap the image you want to search with to open a larger version of the image.
3. Touch and hold the image. In the box that appears, tap Search Google for this image.



CHAPTER 7

BANISHING HATE SPEECH

Hate speech diminishes a person, it makes the best of minds look like a fool guided only by the moment.

- NOSA OWENS-IBIE

Hate speech flows from passion rooted in anger or bitterness, but time often proves that they are unguarded. They are dishonourable and complicate issues. Hate speech generally refers to any communication which tries to undermine its target, by portraying same in negative light and therefore arouse in the mind of right-thinking members of the public,

unfavourable perceptions of the subject. It achieves this through mockery, an incitement to violence and discriminates based on gender, political persuasion, race, religion and other differences. It harms the reputation, identity and image of persons.

While it could be conveyed in face-to-face interactions, it is common in group and communal settings, and finds expression through traditional and mass media, with the implication of reaching wide audiences. It has the potential for stoking conflict, misunderstanding, disharmony,

chaos, instability, and even war. With the rising profile of social media which is less amenable to controls, given its speed, reach, configuration and options, greater attention is focusing on hate speech in this domain, given its capacity to amplify the scope of participation by audiences at national and global levels, of otherwise local messages and issues.

Major networks operating with different templates for participation and content sharing, provide options which make the transmission of hate speech easier. Although

legislations to regulate indiscriminate relay of hateful speech and content is getting attention, the problem remains despite the various codes of electoral conduct, including in Nigeria, which have provisions prescribing rules of engagement and sanctions for offenders. There are gaps in enforcement even at regulatory levels.

Minimum conditions to be fulfilled, at various levels to address the challenges posed by hate speech include:

Journalists:

- A journalist shall ensure the use of acceptable language in writings and even while reporting others, paraphrase, rather than quote sources, whose statement, have the

potential of doing harm to the reputation of others;

- Broadcasters shall avoid the use of words or terms which inflame listeners against persons, and refrain from quoting verbatim any source whose language is hateful;
- Journalists and broadcasters have the responsibility to state rules of engagement on hate speech before interviewing news sources, to moderate responses;
- Reporters on the beat in LIVE programmes shall, with the support of production staff, quickly activate processes to deploy technology to either delay transmission or suspend a broadcast, when

the language is found to conflict with editorial policy of the medium or regulatory provisions;

- Journalists shall refrain from social media postings which portray them as supporting hate speech; they shall contribute to lessening tensions deriving from such misleading posts generated or reposted by other sources, by publishing the facts of a case using civil language, or toning down the hate elements in such postings through their interventions;
- Although journalists have a responsibility to function in news gathering and dissemination, using credible opportunities, they shall

avoid other actions which could be interpreted as surreptitious support for hate speech through their personal involvement or participation in groups which have a profile of commitment to stoking conflict through hate communication;

- Journalists shall ensure that they are conversant with all laws and provisions on hate speech in Nigeria.

Media Organisations:

- Media organisations shall have style manuals containing sample words or expressions portraying hate speech to guide its journalists in their output. Such style manuals shall be updated periodically to reflect lessons learned

from other publications within and outside Nigeria. They shall ensure clear frameworks for journalistic performance through effective dissemination of guidelines, including on hate speech to staff. They shall refrain from accepting materials or content assessed to purvey hate. They shall ensure efficient moderation of their social media platforms, to assure temperate language is used both in the stories on the platform, and the contributions of users of the site. They shall have in place responsive internal mechanisms for tracking the output of journalists to ensure compliance with the style guidelines on hate speech. Media organisations

shall sign Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with sponsors of LIVE programmes, with express provision disallowing hate speech in the course of such LIVE broadcast. Such MoU should include provisions which, despite the payment by such sponsors, authorises the media organisation to discontinue such broadcasts.

Professional Bodies/ Associations:

Nigeria Union of Journalists, NUJ; Nigerian Guild of Editors, NGE; Newspapers Proprietors Association of Nigeria, NPAN; Broadcasting Organisations of Nigeria, BON, etc.

- Professional bodies shall nominate hate communication

focal persons within media organisations to track their output and those of journalists and broadcasters. They shall evolve mechanisms for periodic communication of official response to show disapproval of hate speech. They shall use the opportunity of internal communication with members to demonstrate in very specific ways, their disapproval of hate communication through the works of media organisations or workers.

Regulatory Bodies: National Broadcasting Commission, NBC; Nigeria Press Council, NPC; National Communications Commission, NCC; Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria, APCON; Nigerian Institute of

Public Relations, NIPR, etc.

- All regulatory agencies shall ensure clearly communicated policy level guidelines disallowing hate speech by all organisations and workers within their jurisdiction. Regulatory agencies shall ensure the full implementation of their guidelines. Regulatory agencies shall ensure wholesale respect of the provisions of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, and Laws of the Federation in discharging their responsibilities on implementing their mandate in relation to issues of hate speech. Regulatory agencies shall widely publish monthly, all cases of infraction of hate speech guidelines, sanctions applied, and evidence of the

“The electoral process would remain a terrain for passion and tensions, but journalists must remain the voice of reason.”

implementation of such sanctions. The National Universities Commission and National Board for Technical Education shall ensure that courses on Media Ethics include the exhaustive teaching and com-

prehension of issues of hate speech.

Civil Society

- Civil Society Coalition shall promote the involvement of its members on issues of hate speech in traditional and social media, its tracking, and ways to effectively address them. Civil Society shall designate members to lead initiatives on hate speech and its remedy. Civil Society shall adopt and keep a record of infraction of hate speech guidelines - as endorsed by it (whether developed by the Coalition or other sources). Civil Society shall, using its local and international network (including through online platforms), publish a HATE SPEECH HALL OF SHAME list

of regulatory agencies, media organisations and journalists infringing such hate speech guidelines monthly before, during and after election periods. Civil Society shall initiate well-publicised advocacy and other initiatives (including legal action) to address issues of hate speech.

The Nigerian Constitution saddles the media, and by extension, journalists, with the responsibility of being at the vanguard of the democracy and good governance. This is an acknowledgment of their mediatory role, which places them at vantage position to ensure that the rules of political engagement and contests are respected. This responsibility is unique and demands that

all stakeholders in the media, ensure accountability in outlined areas of interventions.

The electoral process would remain a terrain for passion and tensions, but journalists must remain the voice of reason, conscious of the consequences of hate speech for the future of Nigeria.

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CHAPTER 8

BEING CONFLICT-SENSITIVE

THE POWER OF THE MEDIA

“Were it left to me to decide whether we should have a government without newspapers, or newspapers without a government, I should not hesitate a moment to prefer the latter.”

Thomas Jefferson (1787), above, long underscored the enormous powers of the media although Michael Schudson (Power of News, 1996) has cautiously submitted: *The power of the mass media lies*

not in the direct influence of the mass media on the general public but in the perception of experts and decision makers that the general public is influenced by the mass media.”

Ivor Gaber, Professor of political journalism in UK, however cites the prominence of the media among the democratic prerequisites as evidence of its power. They are:

- Without informed consent, there is no democracy;
- Governments must recognise the value of opposition;

- Public/state media must be free to criticise Government;
- Private media need strong advertising market and diversity of ownership;
- Effective laws on media freedom essential;
- Strong journalists and media organisations required;
- Above all a spirit of tolerance and freedom;

In line with these prerequisites, some national, regional and

international frameworks conscientiously protect the power of the media. Section 36 of the Nigerian Constitution affirms the right to free expression while the Freedom of Information Act (2011) protects journalists against disclosure of privileged information.

Preventing abuse of power of media during elections

The power of the media often plays out during the electoral process especially at elections. Its abuse could have dire consequences.

Bayo Olupohunda (#NigeriaDecides: Media, Hate Broadcasts and 2015 elections, prior to the 2015 elections) recalled how the media (especially the state radio and television stations) were used to propagate an atmosphere of fear

and hate leading to the violence that marred it and ultimately the demise of the Second Republic.”

At least 70 people were slaughtered in Ondo State during the media-induced electoral violence and Olupohunda expressed shock that the purveyors of hate campaigns and propaganda in the state media were never investigated and prosecuted for their roles in the violence.

Although he warned that “the role of the media and the violence engendered by the 1983 violence in Ondo State must teach valuable lessons on why the media should always remain independent in times of national crisis or during national events such as elections”, various observation and monitoring reports still documented cases of

hate reporting of the 2015 elections.

Preventing the abuse of media power during elections, therefore, is the cornerstone of conflict-sensitive election reporting.

Section 5 of The Nigerian Media Code of Election Coverage (revised edition 2018) addresses the issue of conflict sensitivity in election reporting. It states: Violent conflicts are obstacles to the conduct of free, fair and peaceful elections as they could lead to voter apathy and hinder the free performance of media roles and responsibilities during electoral processes.

With this background explanation the code says the following should be the responsibilities of journalists:

- A journalist shall be conflict-sensitive and report early warning signals of possible outbreak of violent conflict during elections;
- A journalist shall work for the de-escalation of violent conflicts, should they occur during elections;
- A journalist shall give equitable opportunity to diverse sides of a political or electoral conflict to state their case;
- A journalist shall use temperate language and non-offensive images in reporting political/electoral tensions and conflicts;
- A journalist shall keep to the facts of a political/electoral

conflict;

- A journalist shall be cautious in reporting figures and identities of casualties of violent conflicts;

The code also imposes the following obligation on media organisations:

- A media organisation shall work for the reduction of conflict and promote the common values of peace without compromising the duty to inform;
- A media organisation shall exercise professional discretion in news reporting and casting of headlines to avoid publishing or broadcasting information that

may lead to or escalate violent conflict.

HOW TO BE A CONFLICT-SENSITIVE ELECTION REPORTER

1. Make it a social responsibility.

Denis McQuail reminds: One of the principles of the social responsibility theory is that the media should avoid whatever might lead to crime, violence, or civil disorder or give offence to minority groups.

- Be a socially-responsible election reporter;
- Do not cast headlines or report stories you know may lead to violent crisis.

2. Understand election as conflict.

Agberemi, et al (2006) refers to conflict as “an expressed struggle between two or more inter-dependent parties who perceive scarce resources, incompatible goals and interference”.

Conflict also involves “using the common imagery of war, blood and violence, physical destruction of lives and property or normal everyday occurrences of disagreement, strained relationships and tensions generated by contending interests and opinions.

Election is conflictual because it entails inevitable competition for power, divergence of views on problems and disagreement on solutions as well as clash of ideas,

ideologies and personalities.

The essence of conflict-sensitive election reporting is to navigate the various circumstances of conflict in elections to prevent outbreak of violence; and ensure that peaceful solutions are quickly found where such outbreaks become inevitable as they often do.

3. Acquire capacity to do conflict analysis. It is simple!

- Context: Political conflicts do not just happen. They have background. Investigate the background to put the issues in perspective.
- Stakeholder(s): Every political conflict has multiple stakeholders - those directly affected, those indirectly affected. Those stoking the fire

because they benefit from the conflict. Those suing for peace because, otherwise, they lose. A stakeholders’ analysis of actors in the political conflict process enriches the diversity of your reporting. Who the stakeholders in an election conflict are, why they are stakeholders, what their issues are, where they are, how to report their issues and indeed when to report their issues should be well- understood by the conflict-sensitive election reporter to aid fair and solution-driven reporting of an election conflict.

4. Have eye and ear for Early Warning Signals (EWS). It is possible!

Like other types of conflicts, violent political conflicts are often preceded by early warning

signs. Reporting of such could aid relevant authorities, especially the election management body and the security agencies, in taking actions that may forestall violence.

Do not ignore but report:

- Rumours with a view to providing correct information;
- Exchange of hot words;
- Sudden arms movements;
- Demonstrations or Protests;
- Happenings in new/social media; activities of so-called citizen journalists.

5. Ask pertinent questions.

Think! Pause! Before you report.

Bob Steele's 10 questions to make good ethical decisions should be taken to heart by the conflict-sensitive election reporter and editor. These are:

1. What do I know? What do I need to know?
2. What is my journalistic purpose?
3. What are my ethical concerns?
4. What organisational policies and professional guidelines should I consider?
5. How can I include other people, with different perspectives and diverse ideas, in the decision-making process?
6. Who are the stakeholders — those affected by my decision?

What are their motivations? Which are legitimate?

7. What if the roles were reversed? How would I feel if I were in the shoes of one of the stakeholders?
8. What are the possible consequences of my actions? Short term? Long term?
9. What are my alternatives to maximise my truth-telling responsibility and minimise harm?
10. Can I clearly and fully justify my thinking and my decision? To my colleagues? To the stakeholders? To the public?

In other words, the conflict-sensitive election reporter and



Learn and respect diversity (religion, culture) – do not call people what they do not call themselves

editor should always ask such pertinent questions as:

- Is this necessary news?
- What is the public interest in this report and will it serve public good?
- Will the news escalate or de-escalate conflict?

- Will the news encourage prejudice or promote hatred?
- Can the news be reported differently?
- Are there enough different voices in the report?
- Are diverse opinions from ordinary people expressed?
- Are there words and comments in the report which can offend people or cause prejudice?
- How well have I investigated the allegations?
- What facts do I have and how adequate are they?
- Maintain balance;
- Represent as many sides to the political conflict as possible for your report not to be seen as biased;
- Learn and respect diversity (religion, culture) – do not call people what they do not call themselves;
- Promote trans-ethnic/trans-religious voices;
- Deconstruct myths and stereotypes;
- Avoid gory details of violence;
- Leave out the ethnic and religion identities of victims of violent political conflict in headlines;
- Ensure that explanation of the violence takes more space than the details of the violence;
- Fact-check; Exercise discipline of verification;
- Include solutions in your report;
- Do not turn your opinion into fact;

REFERENCES:

- *Conflict Sensitive Reporting of Religion by International Press Centre (IPC), Lagos-Nigeria, (2006).*
- *The 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria*
- *The Nigerian Media Code of Election Coverage (Revised Edition 2018)*

The conflict-sensitive reportorial checklist



CHAPTER 9

KNOWING WHAT TO DO IN VIOLENT AND HOSTILE ENVIRONMENTS

CONTEXTUALISING ELECTION VIOLENCE

Nigeria is going into another round of elections in 2019. It would be the sixth round of elections since return to civil rule on 29 May 1999. One of the concerns about elections in Nigeria is the degree to which they degenerated into violence. The violence was instigated by politicians desperate to emerge winners. The key word used to refer to the manipulation of elections is rigging, which comes in various forms.

Rigging is a form of violence on the integrity of elections. The withholding of election materials, the use of thugs, stealing of ballot boxes, chasing away voters, vote- buying, stuffing of ballot boxes, multiple thumb-printing of ballot papers, changing the results, undercounting of votes, invalidation of valid votes, announcing wrong results, including blocking media coverage all constitute violence on the integrity of elections.

Violence is often narrowly understood to mean physical infliction of injury or pain on another person by physical force or use of instruments to ensure that the people's votes do not count. Various instruments have been reported to have been used including guns, swords, machetes, knives, cudgels, sticks, cutlasses, mob action, intimidation by uniformed men and the threat of the use of force to mar the election and achieve a desired result in favour of a political party

or candidate.

While individuals can organise to have elections to become disrupted using various ways of manipulation including violence, there are also situations when the election environment itself becomes both violent and hostile. This is the case in parts of the North East particularly in Borno, Adamawa and Yobe States where the group *Jamatu lahlus Sunnah Liddawa'atiwal Jihad* (People Committed to the Teachings of the Prophet and Jihad), popularly called Boko Haram has unleashed terrorist violence.

So, election violence is not restricted to the deliberate violent disruption of the election process, it also applies to situations where violence makes it difficult or, in

some cases, impossible to hold elections.

It is important to note that in both situations, journalists can be put in jeopardy. The security and safety of journalists can be put in danger or compromised outright. Journalists need to know how to conduct themselves in such situations in their important responsibility of covering elections for the public.

Identifying a Violent/Hostile Environment in Elections

Journalists need to pay attention to some vital signs when covering elections in violent and hostile environment:

- Expression of anger may not necessarily be hostile as it is an individual's strong feeling.

When it is targeted at you, it is usually to manipulate you to give in to the interests of the angry person. But an angry crowd could hold the potential for violence

- Expressions of hostile behaviour forms purposefully directed to antagonise, manipulate, put off-balance, intimidate, demean and cause you to feel guilty
- There could be verbal and non-verbal abuse designed to also intimidate such as shouting, swearing, threats, accusations, long hostile eye contact, chest thrusting, hissing, finger pointing, table banging, etc. Ordinarily this could stop there but it also has the potential of triggering violence

- There could be large presence of young unkempt and rude youth around the polling booth; the arrival of large number of youth in vehicles or on motorcycles with dangerous weapons
- Throwing objects at the polling station to disrupt voting or collection of results; tearing and damaging voting materials
- The presence of BH in the North East and militants in other parts of Nigeria is enough to suggest a violent environment

Covering Elections in Violent and Hostile Environment

The North East is suffering attacks from Boko Haram which makes the environment violent for holding elections. Journalists must be

alert and mindful of covering elections in such an environment.

- Election periods are potential areas of violence. Political campaigns can generally be tense and could turn violent with journalists caught in-between feuding parties and could be roughed up and even accused of being biased in reporting issues and events on the elections
- Political thuggery can be a good indication of violence in elections. It is common among Nigerian politicians to resort to thuggery to turn the results of elections in their favour. Journalists need to note that political thugs only have loyalty to either a political party or candidate or both. Journalists,

whether regarded as hostile or not, may become target of attacks because of the power of exposure they wield

- Danger of suicide bomb attacks are real, even after the successes recorded by the military in many battles against Boko Haram. Terrorists do no fight conventional wars as they practise hit and run, surprised attacks and suicide bombings or using car bombs. Having security around vulnerable polling stations may be necessary as a safeguard against terrorist violence in the form of suicide bombing
- Journalists themselves should understand that they can become targets of attacks in a violent environment. It is

important to remember that NTA Maiduguri lost one of its reporters, Zakariya Isa, to Boko Haram gun attack. He was targeted and fatally shot. Besides, in such environments, it is not impossible that desperate politicians may cause journalists bent on reporting the facts of the elections to be physically attacked or eliminated. Such targeted attacks may be attributed to Boko Haram

- Certain routes and areas may be prone to attacks by terrorists. Areas of uncertainty are potentially dangerous to the public and to journalists. Journalists would need to constantly check with security agencies and residents for information on potential areas

of risk during elections

Violent Conflicts Should Not Compromise Professionalism

Journalists need to understand that their profession is guided by certain values and ethics and need to ensure these are not compromised.

- Journalists play an important role for hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of people by giving out information considered to be true and accurate. The information from the media – newspapers, magazines, radio and television – are respected by the public because of the belief in the upholding of professional principles of truth and accuracy.
- Journalists need to recognise



PHOTO: MONICA MELTON

“Journalists should never play the role of primitive heroes/ heroines”

that they can rely on alternative sources to verify information from areas not visited by them in an election. They have security personnel, election monitors or observers, election officials including political party agents and, to a limited extent, postings on social media.

- Journalists should never play the role of primitive heroes/ heroines by going to areas known to be dangerous

with little or no guarantee of safety and security. So, taking safety measures is important. It is good to get orientation on keeping safe when reporting from areas of violent elections or known terrorists' locations.

- Journalists who are not conversant with the environment where there is terrorist activity should not be posted to cover elections. Instead, experienced journalists with a good working knowledge of the environment should be assigned without compulsion.
- It is important for all media organisations to relate with and secure commitment of the security agencies for protection and safety when reporting from

violent election environments. In addition, all journalists need to have training on hostile environment and risk awareness.

- Journalists need to understand the rules under which elections are conducted and be able to critically report in a context that has meaning to their audience. It is good to contextualise reports and ensure balance. This is important in the North East as Boko Haram attacked *ThisDay* newspaper premises in Abuja because it was said to be against them.
- Remember journalists must be alive to report issues and events including elections, particularly in hostile and violent environments.



CHAPTER 10

TAKING SAFETY SERIOUSLY

INTRODUCTION

Media professionals, including journalists and other media workers, face a variety of hazards during their professional activities, including killings, torture, enforced disappearances, hostage-taking, arbitrary arrests and arbitrary detentions, physical attacks, intimidation, harassment, threats, gender-based violence and sexual assault, as well as other forms of violence which affect their safety.

While some of these hazards arise from the actions of government officials and agents, particularly law enforcement and security

agents, the military, intelligence officials, among others, there is also a growing threat to the safety of journalists and other media workers posed by non-State actors, including terrorists groups, criminal gangs and organisations, as well as other powerful interests in society, as a direct result of the professional activities in information gathering and dissemination.

There are also specific threats to the safety of journalists arising from the digital age, including that many journalists are subjected to arbitrary or unlawful surveillance, the interception of their online

communications, and the violation of their right to privacy.

Obligation of Governments to Prevent and Protect Journalists Against Attacks

There is no doubt that the Government has an obligation to thoroughly investigate attacks against journalists and the media, to prosecute the perpetrators and punish those found to be guilty as it is duty-bound to protect all persons within its territory or jurisdiction, including media professionals.

A government's failure to prosecute perpetrators of attacks against

journalists constitutes a violation of the right to security of the person as well as the right to an effective remedy which is guaranteed by the international bill of rights contained in international human rights instruments.

The government's obligation in this regard is in part based on the recognition of the "crucial role of journalists and media workers in the context of elections, including informing the public about candidates, their platforms and ongoing debates as well as "concerns that attacks against journalists and media workers increase during election periods."

Arising from this recognition, the international community has, in recent years, prioritised the issue of the safety of journalists

and consistently engaged with it and through awareness-raising activities as well as by instituting measures to prevent attacks against journalists and underscoring the obligation of States to prevent, investigate such attacks and punish perpetrators to combat impunity, which has become pervasive.

In its latest effort on the issue, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution in December 2017 wherein it urged UN Member States "to do their utmost to prevent violence, threats and attacks against journalists and media workers, to ensure accountability through the conduct of impartial, speedy, thorough, independent and effective investigations into all alleged violence, threats and attacks against journalists and media workers falling within their

jurisdiction, to bring perpetrators, including those who command, conspire to commit, aid and abet or cover up such crimes to justice, and to ensure that victims and their families have access to appropriate remedies."

The UN General Assembly then called upon States "to create and maintain, in law and in practice, a safe and enabling environment for journalists to perform their work independently and without undue interference" and proceeded to outline various means through which these objectives should be achieved, including through:

- Legislative measures, i.e. adopting appropriate laws on the issue of safety of journalists;
- Supporting the Judiciary in

- considering training and awareness-raising;
- Supporting training and awareness-raising among law enforcement officers and military personnel, as well as among journalists and civil society, regarding international human rights and international humanitarian law obligations and commitments relating to the safety of journalists, including with a strong focus on sexual and gender-based discrimination, and violence against women journalists, as well as the particularities of online threats and harassment of women journalists;
- Regular monitoring and reporting of attacks against journalists;
- Collecting and analysing concrete quantitative and qualitative data on attacks or violence against journalists, that are disaggregated by, among other factors, sex;
- Publicly and systematically condemning violence and attacks;
- Dedicating the resources necessary to investigate and prosecute such attacks and to develop and implement gender-sensitive strategies for combating impunity for attacks and violence against journalists, including by using, where appropriate, good practices such as those identified in Human Rights Council resolution 33/2;
- Putting in place safe gender-sensitive investigative procedures, to encourage female journalists to report attacks against them and provide adequate support, including psychosocial support, to victims and survivors.

The Role of Media Organisations and Journalists in Ensuring Their Safety

Regardless of the obligation on States to protect journalists and other media workers and despite ongoing efforts at the international level to address the problem of the safety of journalists and the issue of impunity, journalists and media organisations also have a duty to take steps to ensure their own safety and security. It is indeed in their enlightened self-interest

to do so.

Even the UN General Assembly resolution on the Safety of Journalists also recognises and emphasises the important role that media organisations can play in providing adequate safety, risk awareness, digital security and self-protection training and guidance to journalists and media workers, together with protective equipment.

There are many steps that journalists and other media workers can take to ensure their safety. Many of these are outlined in the IFJ's 'A Survival Guide for Journalists', and include the following:

- A journalist working away from his or her base without his or her usual support may be at risk from illness, traffic and other

accidents; Violence, including targeted attacks on media; Exposure; Exhaustion; Emotional distress and low morale, etc. Journalists covering a wide range of stories and in a variety of situations should therefore prepare for a hostile environment and for the pressures that exist outside the normal routine.

- Before going on any assignment, the journalist should ensure that he or she is physically fit for the assignment to a reasonable level and can walk or work all night, if necessary, or run for safety or function away from comfortable hotels.
- Before going on any assignment, the journalist should improve his or her knowledge of the local situation, such as the

political and social situation that he or she is entering into, who the main players are, recent developments in the area, the languages that are spoken there, their likely attitudes towards the media in general and towards the particular media company or title that the journalist represents, whether the journalist's ethnicity puts him or her at extra risk, and whether any groups in the area have a history of violence towards journalists or a history of atrocities to civilians. The journalist should also strive to know where the key borders are, whether there are any no-go areas, what permissions might be required and from whom, and what weight such permission might carry once the journalist is out on the road.

- The journalist should ensure that he knows his or her rights, including the applicable local or international law in the area or region, his or her right and independent, neutral observers, and in situations of conflict, the relevant protocols of the Geneva Conventions and humanitarian law that define the rights of non-combatants. The journalists should be briefed on the political and legal conditions of the area or region.
- The journalist should have in place social protection which can be useful when something goes wrong, such as insurance for medical care and rehabilitation, evacuation from the area, etc.
- The journalist should familiarise him or herself with the risks of disease, including what the prevalence of disease is where he or she will be reporting, whether any special immunisation is required, or whether he or she needs to have any medicines which may not be readily available locally, etc.
- The journalist should establish or clarify lines of communication with his or her news organisation and ensure that they keep a responsible person fully informed about their movements. They should agree when they will call in and explore with the newsroom problems that are likely to arise.
- Journalists should ensure that they are not bullied by zealous newsroom staff into taking foolish risks and by the same token newsroom staff or producers should reach an agreement that there are certain things, such as crossing a border, or going with a guerrilla force to conduct an interview, or going into a conflict zone, which require prior approval. Reporters, photographers and camera crews should make such agreements and stick to them. All field staff should be involved in a discussion resulting in agreements on risks and decision-making. These agreements should be recorded and, if a conflict or hazardous situation is likely to continue for some time, be updated in the light of experience in the field. This will gradually become a useful diary of experience.
- As protocols are updated,

information about contacts, special areas of risk and sources of help should be recorded or shared. Journalists must be willing to share information that could save lives. Journalists returning from the field should debrief so that the information kept in the office is as current as possible. One important part of these protocols is an agreement on what will happen if the journalist or crew has not been in touch for a specified period. If a journalist knows what steps their organisation will take, it will help them to make decisions if they are detained or in trouble. Every protocol should cover plans for evacuation in case of injury, illness or deteriorating conditions.

- Journalists should always take

the right equipment. There is almost no limit to the equipment that might come in useful, from an armoured vehicle, a satellite phone, waterproof matches, to bars of chocolate for barter. Journalists, photographers and camera crews have a large amount of equipment they need to carry. How much equipment a journalist can take will depend on where the journalist is and his or her resources.

- Some of the most important things a journalist needs to have include a press card which clearly identifies him or her and carries a photograph, which may be from the professional organisation or trade union or the employer. But be aware that the strength of an 'industry standard' card issued by a professional organisation is

that it reinforces the concept that journalists belong to a collective profession while the card of a specific news organisation may help or hinder, depending on its reputation among participants in a conflict.

- Journalists should carry a list of emergency telephone numbers with a note of who is to be called in the event of injury. When doing sensitive interviews which could lead to trouble for those being interviewed, the journalist should take steps to maintain confidentiality such as separating or disguising names with care taken to ensure that the system for disguising names does not look like a code.
- Money and essential documents should be tucked away safely out

of sight. However, the journalist needs easy access to small sums of money and something to hand over if robbed. So, it is a good idea for the journalist to carry a spare wallet with modest amounts of money. If robbed, these can be handed over.

- In situations of conflict, normally reliable sources of clean water may stop working or become contaminated. A person can survive many days without food but will be in a crisis without a daily supply of clean water. The journalist should therefore carry bottles of water where possible or filters and chemical purifiers.
- A first aid kit is vital for any journalist who is likely to be out of range of mainstream health care services. If possible carry

two kits, one on your person and a more comprehensive kit in the vehicle.

- One way for camera crews and photographers to improve their safety is to carry long lenses, putting them closer to the action even from distances. Less powerful lenses require operators to take greater risks for the same shots. The under-resourced journalist is at a disadvantage. The news organisation should be aware of the safety benefits of investing in long lenses and lightweight cameras, and the photographer or camera person should ensure this.
- The journalist should carry a whistle, in case he or she needs to attract attention or give

warnings. It is also a good idea to wear a Medic-alert bracelet indicating blood type and any medical conditions or allergies.

- When working away from base and lodgings, the journalist should ensure that he or she takes personal belongings to keep clean and keep morale up, including soap, wipes, toilet paper, a small trowel for sanitary use, etc.
- When away from base for a long period the journalist should, wherever possible, have a vehicle readily available, not just for faster travel and to get to safety, but because he or she also needs a base to keep material that is difficult to carry. Wherever possible, the driver should be a dedicated member



PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK

of the journalist's team. Note that the condition and quality of the car and driver are critical.

- International correspondents usually have access to armoured vehicles, the cost of which would probably exceed the entire budget of a small news organisation for months. However, the journalist should at least ensure that his or her vehicle is in good mechanical condition, that it has a good-quality spare tyre, and carries reserves of fuel and water.
- The journalist should consider whether to mark the vehicle PRESS or MEDIA in large letters. In some circumstances this will protect the journalist but in others it may make the journalist a target for sniper fire.

- Every vehicle should carry a good-quality first aid kit and a fire extinguisher. The driver should be someone who has experience, who is calm and who drives safely. Even when there is no accident, spending days being driven by someone that the journalist does not trust saps morale and interferes with rest.
- The journalist should take the right clothing, depending on the climate, season and length of time away from base.
- It is important to retain mobility and be able to walk for long periods of time, if necessary. A pair of lightweight, waterproof boots is best. They should be comfortable but should not be bought new just before leaving for the assignment. They should be big enough to wear two pairs of cotton socks, which will keep the feet warm and reduce friction. Footwear could be the most important piece of clothing.
- In most conditions, the journalist should wear several layers of clothing, so that some clothing can be taken off when it is too hot. Outer layers should be loose fitting while inner layers should be cotton or other natural fabrics. Care should be taken not to be mistaken for a soldier, particularly if wearing a flak jacket. Wearing contrasting colours top and bottom can make it clear that it is not a uniform.
- The journalist should avoid wearing bright colours that will make him or her a target but

should carry in a bag something bright that could be waved to attract attention, or white clothing to use as a white flag. The journalist should also take a good hat to protect him or her from the sun and to keep the head warm in the cold.

REFERENCES:

- *Preamble to the UN General Assembly resolution A/C.3/72/L.35/Rev.1 of 2017 on "The safety of journalists and the issue of impunity"*
- *Para. 10, UN General Assembly resolution A/C.3/72/L.35/Rev.1 of 2017 on "The safety of journalists and the issue of impunity"*
- *Para. 15, UN General Assembly resolution A/C.3/72/L.35/Rev.1 of 2017 on "The safety of journalists and the issue of impunity"*



CHAPTER 11

MAKING WOMEN VISIBLE AND VIBRANT

‘Women are under-represented in Nigerian politics as they occupy infinitesimal fraction of political positions despite that (they) make up about half the nation’s population’

- ABIGAIL OGWEZZY-NDISIKA

INTRODUCTION

Nigerian women are continually placed at the peripheries of political processes. Their political activities are under-reported, marginal or non-existent. This situation is reinforced by the small number of women in positions of power and leadership through elections

(Ogwezzy- Ndisika, 2013:152-155).

Patriarchal system in the society is reinforced by the media in the representation, signification and reportage of female politicians. This bias reflects in the prominence given, space and time allotted to them before, during and after elections.

Media representation of women which influence the understanding of the social world that women in politics are sociological males needs to be reversed, actively through creation of new perception of women in politics.

The coverage and reportage of women in politics and female aspirants and candidates, which has over the years been skewed in favour of men also needs to be reversed.

The National Gender Policy states that there should be at least 35 per cent representation of women in politics. There are pertinent issues militating against the attainment of this percentage by women in Nigeria.

WHAT SHOULD BE DONE?

Participation of women in politics should be an integral part of the

media agenda in the run up to the 2019 elections. The media must debunk the myth that the public sphere is the exclusive preserve of men. They should promote more, the thinking that women should not only vote but be voted for. .

Media coverage should therefore be underpinned by these issues, among others:

Equitable access

Female politicians have the right of equal access to the media during electoral process. The gender-sensitive election reporter should therefore strive to:

- Provide the platform or open forum for debate about women in politics to throw up pertinent questions and issues about the electoral process;

- Increase the frequency and prominence given to gender issues in Nigerian politics;

- Provide the space and time for female aspirants to talk about their aspirations;

- Provide the space and time for female candidates to talk about their manifestoes or programmes;

- Regularly reflect female voices – school girls, young girls, female professionals, workers, politicians, etc, - in stories about politics and elections; their views matter as much as those of men;

- Regularly obtain the view of gender experts especially in the civil society sector to

offer perspectives on political and electoral issues affecting women.

Use of language

Female politicians have often complained about negative or unfavourable portrayals in the media especially using language. The gender-sensitive reporter should:

- Avoid the use of demeaning and condescending language to qualify female politicians;
- Avoid prejudicial profiling through the resort to stereotypes;
- Avoid asking questions on the diversionary issues of fashion, beauty, etc while interviewing female aspirants and politicians; it is more helpful to ask questions

about planned programmes and past accomplishments;

- Avoid undervaluing the achievements of female candidates when they get elected into office; and
- In summary, change the angle/perspective of reportage of female politicians.

Messaging

In the age of social media, the gender-sensitive election reporter needs to exercise due caution in putting out messages about female politicians and women during elections. He/she should therefore:

- Push out correct media messages about women in politics and the low reportage of women during and after elections, through

news and programmes content e.g., news stories, features and discussions amongst others.

Projecting self-identity and not the other

Sometimes the personality and accomplishment of female politicians especially candidates do not register on the consciousness of voters because they are subsumed in those of their spouses. To correct this, the gender-sensitive election reporter should:

- Desist from referring to female politicians and candidates as the wife of this or that; let the public know who they really are;
- Highlight the accomplishments of female politicians and candidates and what they believe they are capable of

doing even where their spouses are seen to be more prominent.

Party nomination

Women suffer disadvantages during nominations where there is usually more of selection than election because of the pervasive culture of denial of internal democracy in the conduct of party primaries. The gender-sensitive election reporter should therefore:

- Obtain the constitution of the political parties and make public the processes outlined for electing candidates;
- Report on the state of internal party selection; this is the level where women are often schemed out.
- Report on whether affirmative

principles are adopted; Ask party leaders for explanation where such principles are not adopted;

- Project women and male voices asking for adoption of quota system in political parties; this can help to reverse the trend in which most women are unable to make it to the party list;
- Report how high costs of obtaining nomination forms hinder female politicians as most lack the resources; advocate level playing field by cancelling such fees or making it free for women.

Other dos

The gender-sensitive election reporter should generally conduct research, interrogate and provide in-depth analysis on the gamut of those other issues that hinder

effective female participation and representation. Journalists can make these subjects of campaigns with a view to getting commitment from parties, candidates and the election management body to address them. Among these are:

- **Registration challenges for female aspirants**

- Registration fee is too high and not affordable for most women.
- High cost of participating in elections
- Women are required to bring tax clearance certificates and other documents steeped in patriarchy.

- **Funding**

- Setting up campaign

structures is daunting financially

- Lack of resources to establish a campaign structure

- **Educational level**

In some parts of the country, most female adults are excluded from the state assembly and cannot aspire to be in politics. This is because most of them lack the basic educational requirements of a secondary school certificate.

- **Lack of capacity building for female politicians**

Most women lack the finesse, inter-personal skills, and public speaking abilities needed in the political terrain. This should not be interpreted as an inability to lead.

- **Unfavourable political culture**

The culture of having political meetings in the evenings and nights excludes women. This is because women are home makers, so women sacrifice their political ambitions for their domestic responsibilities.

- **Campaign promises**

In the context of democratic accountability to women, the election reporter should strive to document campaign promises for them and monitor their implementation post-elections.

CONCLUSION

There are so many issues confronting women than can be captured in a short narrative like this. What is important is for the election reporter to constantly engage with these issues

particularly within the context of national, regional and international legislations and instruments that promote the fundamental and human rights of women.

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CHAPTER 12

DEALING WITH ISSUES OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES (PWD)

INTRODUCTION

At least 20 million Nigerians are estimated to be living with different disabilities. The challenges they face range from the economic to the social and to the political. During elections, there are discriminatory practices and absence of infrastructure which hinder their effective participation.

The PWD charter on elections states that “the right to

participate in elections through voting and being voted for is one of the most visible dividends of democracy that civilised societies facilitate to every politically mature individual, eighteen years and above, without prejudice to his or her socio-political status and condition of disability.”

The charter notes that this right is recognised and expressly provided for in the Nigerian Constitution alongside key

international human rights instruments, such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability (CRPWD) and the UN Charter on Human Rights which this country subscribes to.

The charter, nevertheless, observes that because of poor management of the political process and particularly the voting day machinery, majority of PWDs are often excluded from participating in elections.

Another problem highlighted by the charter is that since the attainment of political independence, there has been an apparent dearth of data on the participation of PWDs in elections as the numerous electoral bodies have not maintained such information at any level.

What should be done?

The issues of people with disability in elections are two-fold:

- Ensuring their effective participation in the electoral process especially during registration and voting; and
- Ensuring they get elected as candidates by parties and encouraging voters to elect

them into political offices.

In seeking to report these issues the election reporter needs to understand that the group referred to as PWD is not homogenous but heterogeneous as there are different types of disabilities. It is not in all instances that the same solution could be provided to their problems.

With this background, the good election reporter should take the following steps to address the issues.

▪ Access

The voices of PWD should as a matter of right be adequately projected during the electoral process especially campaigns and

voting. The election reporter should therefore:

- Provide the platform or open forum for PWDs to participate in political and electoral debate;
- Increase the frequency and prominence given to disability during election;
- Provide the space and time for aspirants and or candidates with disability to talk about their aspirations, manifestoes or programmes;
- Regularly reflect the voices of PWD as students, youths, professionals, workers, politicians, etc, in stories about politics and elections; their views matter as much

- as those without disability;
- Regularly obtain the view of disability experts especially in the civil society sector to offer perspectives on political and electoral issues affecting PWD.
- **Use of language**
The language of reporting should reckon with the sensibilities of PWD. In this regard:
 - Avoid derogatory or discriminatory words in your reports;
 - Avoid calling PWD what they do not call themselves; for example, People with Albinism do not like to be referred to as albinos;
- Presenters of live political or election programmes should watch out for negative comments against PWD and quickly intervene by demanding retraction and if necessary cutting off anyone who remains recalcitrant.
- Publishing information on programmes and manifestoes of candidates with disability;
- Report how high costs of obtaining nomination forms could hinder PWDs.
- **Other do's**
The election reporter should project the general and specific issues affecting PWDs during the electoral process including but not limited to:
 - **Calling on INEC to:**
 - Ensure the employment of qualified PWDs to be part of the electoral preparatory and mobilisation process;
 - Ensure that voting is simplified and voting
- **Party nomination**
Very few PWD get selected as candidates in elections while fewer still are elected into political offices. The election reporter should address this issue by:
 - Publishing information on whether parties have special quota for PWDs;
 - Publishing information on aspirants with disability;



environment made conducive for PWDs through the use of qualified PWDs to develop Braille for the visually impaired, audios and television-based sign language for the deaf, etc;

- Ensure that the names of all registered PWDs are verified on the voters' registers and printed in bold for easy identification during elections;
- Ensure that it organises adequate training for its staff on the management of the entire logistics for PWDs.
- **Calling on political parties to:**
 - Adopt quota principles in the selection of candidates

for elections to ensure that PWDs are given opportunity to contest for elective offices;

- Make provision for interpreters during party functions and campaigns;
- **Calling on civil society groups to:**

Contribute to the enlightenment of citizens on providing support or PWDs during the electoral process especially voting
- **Campaign promises**

In the context of democratic accountability to PWDs, the election reporter should strive to document campaign promises for them and monitor their implementation

post-elections.

CONCLUSION

The diverse electoral issues of PWDs deserve engaging attention of the media. The issues certainly extend beyond the summary that have been provided here and that is why the good election reporter should dig deeper and factor them into the reporting of the elections.

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CLASSIFIED 5

THE CONTRIBUTORS

Lanre AROGUNDADÉ

Lanre Arogundade, Director of International Press Centre (IPC) and Editor-In-Chief of its online news portal and media resource, *Nigerian Democratic Report* has for about 30 years worked as reporter and editor for newspapers and radio stations while passionately engaging in media research, defence of press freedom, free expression and right to information advocacy, journalism training and editing of media resource books.

A participant in the International Visitors Exchange Programme to the United States, 1997, he has consulted for International Centre for Journalists (ICFJ), International Research & Exchanges Board (IREX),

BBC Media Action, UNESCO, DFID and USAID in Nigeria, Liberia and The Gambia.

Besides defence of press freedom against military assault, the Lagos chapter of Nigeria Union of Journalists under his leadership in the 1990s published the authoritative book, 'Journalism in Nigeria – Issues and Perspectives'. He is a recipient of press freedom awards from the Nigeria Union of Journalists and West African Journalists Association. Member of Nigeria Guild of Editors (NGE) and Investigative Reporters and Editors (IRE), he has a first degree in psychology from the University of Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University), masters in peace and

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Funke-Treasure DURODOLA

Funke-Treasure Durodola is a broadcast journalist, certified media trainer, speech and leadership coach. She is the first female journalist to manage an all-news radio station in Radio Nigeria and indeed the Nigerian broadcast industry. She is a recipient of professional media fellowships and awards. She runs a social enterprise, the Media Mentoring Initiative (MMi). She is also an author, writer and media strategist. An alumnus of the Poynter Institute, Florida, USA;

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Taiwo Obe is Commonwealth Professional Fellow, Fellow, Nigerian Guild of Editors and Founder/

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Edetaen OJO

Edetaen Ojo is Executive Director of Media Rights Agenda in Lagos. He holds a master's degree in international journalism from City University in London and has been actively engaged in journalism and journalism-related activities since 1986. Mr. Ojo has also worked, for at least 25 years on Freedom of Information, freedom

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He is Co-chair of the National Steering Committee of the Open Government Partnership (OGP) in Nigeria and currently chairs the Steering Committee of the African Freedom of Expression Exchange (AFEX), a network of freedom of expression organisations in Africa. He is a member of the Boards of several other non-profit organisations, including the Media Foundation for West Africa based in Accra, Ghana, which he chairs; the International Press Centre (IPC), which he also chairs; and International Media Support (IMS) in Copenhagen, Denmark, among

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In 2013, he served as a member of the International Advisory Committee for UNESCO's project on "The Safety of Online Media Actors Doing Journalism" and was also in 2013 named an Internet Freedom Fellow by the U.S. State Department.

Martins OLOJA

Martins Oloja has been a newspaper Editor since 1990 when he was appointed Editor (1990-1993) of the premier newspaper in Nigeria's federal capital, **The Abuja Newswatch**. He was Lagos Bureau Chief of the newspaper before he was elevated. He was the pioneer Senior Associate Editor of **The Source** newsmagazine 1997-1999 when he was invited to **The Guardian** in (1999) as **Abuja Bureau**

Chief /Deputy Editor. He was appointed Editor of **The Guardian** in October 2012.

A member of the Nigerian Guild of Editors, Nigeria Union of Journalists and National Association of Black Journalists (NABJ) in the United States, he has since January 2016 been the Executive Head, Business and Content Development, **The Guardian**. He is a member of **The Guardian** Editorial Board, Chief Leader (Editorial) Writer and Columnist, (**Inside Stuff**) at **The Guardian**.

Oloja is a graduate of the Department of Mass Communication, University of Lagos (1984/5) where he bagged the *Daily Times* "Best Graduating Student", and the University of Liverpool where he has completed an M.Sc in

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He has delivered more than 260 papers on areas such as public policies, journalism, reputation management, and Christian studies. He has also participated in several radio and television public policy analysis programme. In 2007, he was appointed as an Executive Consultant/Analyst to the UNDP on the Nigeria's 2007 Elections.

Besides, he has covered international events in China, United States, South Korea, Australia, New Zealand, United Kingdom, etc including the U.S general elections and inauguration in 2008/2009.

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Oluwole OSAZE UZZI

Oluwole Osaze Uzzi was educated at the University College of Wales, (now University of Aberysthwyth), Wales, in the United Kingdom, where he obtained his

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His mandatory year of National Service was spent with the Nigerian Business Names Registry and on conclusion in 1983, he started private Legal practice. He also lectured law at the University of Benin while continuing for the

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In 1998, he was appointed the Special Adviser to the pioneer Chairman of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), overseeing the Chairman's office and proffering advice of Legal, Administrative and Operational Matters.

He has, in the last 16 years in INEC held various positions including Director of Legal Services, and Director of International Cooperation and Protocol. He is currently the Director of the Department of Voter Education, Publicity, Gender and Civil Society Liaison of INEC, responsible for all voter education, enlightenment and sensitisation programmes. The department is also responsible for

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Osaze-Uzzi has attended numerous conferences and delivered several papers in Law, Elections and the Democratic Process.

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A former Federal Government of Nigeria postgraduate Scholar, he is a Fellow of the International Institute of Journalism, Berlin, Germany and Salzburg Seminar, Austria, member of Nigerian Institute of Public Relations, International Association

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His journalism career, spanning 22 years, began at *The Guardian* newspaper, Nigeria where he rose from a Reporter to, at various times,

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Among other achievements, the widely-travelled Oyekanmi was selected for the International Visitor Leadership Programme (IVLP) in 2007, courtesy of the United States Department of State. He also undertook the Freedom Forum Fellowship programme at the Post Graduate Journalism School, University of California, Berkeley between January and May 2000.

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Umaru A. PATE

Professor Umaru Pate is the immediate past Dean of the Faculty of Communication, Bayero University, Kano. Before relocating to BUK, he served as a Professor in the Department of Mass Communication at the University of Maiduguri where he rose through the ranks beginning as a Graduate Assistant in 1988 to become an Associate Professor in 2002 and full Professor in 2007. He headed the Mass Communication Department in University for a total of seven years. Pate holds a PhD, Master of Philosophy and Bachelor of Arts degrees in Mass Communication

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Professor Pate is a Director representing Africa on the Board of Directors of the prestigious International Network of UNESCO Professors in Communication (ORBICOM). He is affiliated to several other national and international organisations. He is an editorial advisor to more than ten communication journals in and out of Nigeria as well as an external examiner to over 15 universities in Nigeria and abroad. Professor Pate has over 66 national and international publications comprising of journal articles, book chapters, monographs and books published in different parts of the world. He is a recipient of numerous academic awards and recognitions. He is widely travelled and has friends all over the world.



