

## **Journalists' Level of Safety at Election Seasons in Southwest Nigeria**

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### **Abstract**

The study used survey-style descriptive research. All of southwest Nigeria's media outlets made up the population. 200 respondents made up the study's sample, using a multi-stage sampling approach that included stratified random and simple random sampling techniques. A questionnaire titled "Level of Safety of Journalists Questionnaire" was used to gather data (LSJQ). The instrument's reliability was assessed using the Cronbach Alpha technique, and a reliability co-efficient of 0.81 was found. The validity of the instrument was proven through the face and content validity. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used to examine the data acquired; more specifically, descriptive statistics were utilized for the research question and t-tests were employed for the research hypothesis. The study found a modest level of safety for journalists covering elections, and there is no discernible difference between male and female journalists' perceptions of this safety. Considering the results of this investigation, it was suggested that media organizations step up their efforts by offering the required protective gear to reporters during election seasons. Government and non-governmental organizations should work together to protect journalists during election seasons. There should be public awareness campaigns and programs against election-related violence against journalists.

**Keywords:** Election, Environment, Media, Journalism, Journalists, Safety

### **Introduction**

The Nigerian Constitution recognizes several organizations, including media groups. Nigeria's lack of press freedom is increasingly concerning as more journalists continue to be killed and more cases go unsolved. This invalidates the Constitution's safeguards of press freedom. According to Section 39 (1) of the Federal Republic of Nigeria's 1999 constitution (as amended), "Every individual shall have the right to freedom of expression, including the freedom to have opinions and the freedom to receive and transmit ideas and information without hindrance. Without limiting the generality of Subsection (1) of this Section, Everyone

Has the Right to Own, Establish, and Operate Any Medium for the Dissemination of Information, Ideas, and Opinions, states Subsection 2. Nigeria's highest number of journalist deaths since independence in 1960 occurred in 2012, when 13 journalists were slain while working.

The 10 characteristics of a journalist listed in the Reuters Handbook, 2008 contain the definition of what a journalist is, even though different scholars define journalists in various ways: Always strive for impartiality and accuracy, and never hesitate to admit when you have made a mistake. Never invent or plagiarize; never modify a still or moving image beyond what is necessary for standard image enhancement; always respect private information; never expose a conflict of interest to management; never express their opinion in a news report; never protect their sources from authorities, avoid paying for stories and rejecting bribes. The field of journalism is a noble one. The current administration and the general public pay attention to it because it is the fourth estate of the realm. Journalists should be viewed as friends of the nation rather than enemies because they bring information that can help to enrich the nation and foster sound minds. In this situation, their hope should not be dashed. Journalists are there to protect the interests of the public. They are there to observe, investigate, and report on the activities of the general public and government.

In one of his remarks during the 2013 Press Conference, former UN Secretary- General Ban Ki-Moon urged governments, society, and people to take every precaution to ensure the safety of all journalists. He mentioned that the UN system has a Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Problem of Impunity; the Plan's Goals are to Raise Awareness and Support Practical Steps to Create a Free and Safe Working Environment for Journalists. Governments, societies, and people make every effort to ensure the safety of all journalists, both offline and online, on World Press Freedom Day 2013.

Everyone has a voice; everyone must be able to speak freely and without fear, according to Adeja (2012). Over the past ten years, more than 600 journalists have died, including at least 120 only this year. Numerous journalists have been taken into custody. Attacks against journalists are attacks on everyone's right to the truth, raising worry that so many of the culprits go unpunished. The risks are not only physical: from cyber-attacks to intimidation, the powerful are using several of tactics to prevent the media from exposing misrule and wrongdoing. According to Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the right to freedom of expression is a fundamental human right. It is essential to sound government, long-term growth, and stable peace and security. "However, media professionals and journalists are attacked every day worldwide. Governments, businesses, criminals, or other forces who want to stifle or restrict them, intimidate, threaten, and use violence against them.

According to Bartholomew (2013), sections 39 (1) and (2) of the 1999 constitution establish the legal foundation for journalism practice in Nigeria. Subsection 1 states everyone shall be entitled to freedom of expression, including the freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart ideas and information without interference" " This concept of "everyone" enables you to sit in the comfort of your home and start sharing, receiving, and to disseminate information. It has a significant benefit for the journalism industry. According to Beckett

(2008), it is also an issues that has stuck like an albatross on the leading players in the media. We frequently learn that because the industry is so open-minded, organizations like the Guild of Editors, the Nigerian Union of Journalists, NUJ, and others cannot represent everyone on their business line. There are many restrictions on someone who can genuinely call himself a police officer, unlike in policing, for example. Because of this, it is challenging to claim that the individual is a false journalist.

If somebody claims to work for a specific media outlet when he does not, you can only charge him with impersonation and claim that he is a phony journalist. Otherwise, many people out there truly work in the media, and it is very challenging to confine them to a particular outlet.

Without limiting the breadth of subsection (1) of this provision, Day (2006) further states that everyone has the right to own, establish, and run any media to transmit of information, ideas, and opinions under sub-section 2 of the Nigerian Constitution. The security agencies believe that the media contribute to the unfavorable perception that most public members have of them, noting that this perception characterizes the relationship between the media and law enforcement agencies. Journalism is a practice that is so all-encompassing that, unlike a farmer, who would not have anywhere to operate outside of his farm, journalists operate practically from everywhere.

Ettema and Glasser (2008), the police and the media must work together to establish a partnership that must be nurtured for things to advance. There must also be a shift in both parties' perspectives and mutual respect. Both law enforcement organizations and journalists should uphold ethical standards. The Nigerian media must abandon its adversarial attitude toward law enforcement. In Nigeria, there is a long history of media crusades. The threat of violence in journalism has altered the dynamics of the work, with several journalistic values—such as truth, impartiality, and objectivity—becoming casualties. Karlekar (2008). In journalism, there are more frequent instances of deaths, threats to lives, and beatings, and dread is no longer far from the surface in newsrooms. Nothing in the history of journalism has required more of our combined efforts than creating a secure and safe setting for journalists to operate in. Our present circumstances require it, our prior experiences urge it, and our future demands it.

The truth is more than in danger when men and women not involved in hostilities are brutally murdered for disclosing people's lives and affairs. Even more so now that those who share information online are included in the threat to journalists and journalism, many of the internet liberties would be infringed upon if the definition of intimidation and harassment were stretched to encompass reports made online. Procedures for safeguarding the security of reporters covering the elections:

- The Police should make contact information for emergency circumstances and quick responses to queries and explanations from the media on breaking news problems available to the media at the national, regional, divisional, and district levels.

- In an emergency or a situation that puts the journalists' safety at risk, the police should assist journalists who need assistance.

- The police should inform the media of any new security measures that might impact the journalists' security while covering the elections.

- Journalists should be aware of the closest police stations in the locations they are covering and should introduce themselves to any police or security personnel they encounter.

- The media should contact Public Relations Personnel at the GPS's regional commands in the regions for emergency contact information and information on how to reach designated officers.

- Tags on their clothing should identify journalists covering elections.

- Journalists should become acquainted with the socio-cultural and political climate of the regions they are sent to cover.

- Journalists must follow strict ethical standards and security guidelines Journalists must follow strict ethical standards and security guidelines when covering the elections,

- Journalists should refrain from stirring up controversy and engaging in activist arguments to avoid drawing undue attention to themselves.

- Journalists should collaborate or work in teams to cover.

- Journalists should refrain from actions that could incite violence.

- Journalists should refrain from improperly interfering with election officials' activities.

- Media companies should make an effort to educate election coverage volunteers on safety risks. Foundation for West African Media (2016).

According to statistics for the murder of journalists worldwide in 2012, sixty-three percent of journalists who covered politics and fifty-one percent of those who covered combat were killed. The death toll is scarcely shocking in nations where politics is like warfare. 9% of journalists covering business, 13% of those reporting corruption, 16% of those covering crime, 14% of those covering culture, 40% of those covering human rights, and 3% of those covering sports are among the other beats displaying percentages of slain journalists. With 22 journalists dying in 2012, Syria has the highest number of journalist fatalities due to the civil war there.

Enenche Akogwu, a reporter for Channels, was shot on January 20, 2012, in Kano, placing Nigeria among the nations listed for the deaths of journalists. However, there were more before that, and ideally, there will not be any more following Enenche's passing. Journalists' senseless deaths reduce the worth of press life and degrade the holiness and dignity of the human race. The ability of security forces to protect journalists from attacks by extremist organizations also caused them anxiety. While reporting rallies, several journalists have suffered beatings. According to reports, the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ) has decided to boycott reporting in Rivers state due to these attacks and explosions. On March 9, union members demonstrated peacefully in Port Harcourt, the state capital, urging the government to protect journalists.

On February 2, a bomb went off minutes after President Goodluck Jonathan and his motorcade left a rally in the north-eastern state of Gombe, injuring five journalists and causing damage to their bus at the hands of a mob. According to This Day, the injured journalists

included Williams Attah of National Mirror Newspapers, Abdullahi Tukur of Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria, Iliya Habila and Hajara Leman of the News Agency of Nigeria, and Adamu Saleh of The Daily Trust Newspapers. As the journalists escaped in their bus, which was identified as a press vehicle, a mob threw stones at them, according to Timothy Choji, chairman of the NUJ's Gombe state correspondents' chapel.

According to Choji, there were no police there to step in, and no arrests had yet been made. The state-owned Voice of Nigeria's north-eastern bureau chief, Choji, claimed that journalists in Gombe and the other five states in the region operate in dread.

In Gombe, NUJ is thinking of abstaining from the polls if sufficient protection for journalists cannot be ensured. We are entirely at our mercy, and our lives are not safe, claimed Choji. We have requested security protection from the police because, we might not be able to watch the elections without it. On February 10, 2015, while filming a brawl between supporters of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) and the main opposition, the All Progressives Congress (APC), in the south-eastern state of Imo, Eric Etuk, a cameraman for the state-owned Nigeria Television Authority, was assaulted and stabbed in the arm. Without the recorded tape, the police recovered Etuk's camera, but no one has been arrested as of yet.

On February 17, many journalists were attacked in Okrika, the hometown of Patience Jonathan, the wife of former president Goodluck Jonathan, and Charles Eruka, a reporter for the independent Channels TV. Eruka claimed that he was stabbed in the neck and head while conducting a live broadcast while gunfire and explosions rocked the rally of APC governorship candidate Dakuku Peterside. On the pretext that he was phoning for reinforcements to apprehend the hoodlums, some of the attackers who had been robbing individuals of their belongings surrounded him and attempted to grab his phone away from him. In the process, he was stabbed in the neck. TV channels.

However, no one who attacked the reporter has yet been identified, according to reports, despite police visiting him in the hospital and promising to look into the matter. The NUJ claimed in a press conference that he was specifically targeted because he was a journalist and that it is challenging for security forces to apprehend violent offenders. Nigeria has been unable to find a solution for the death of numerous journalists, and the majority, if not all, of its press attacks, have not yet been properly prosecuted.

Local media outlets feared assaults from insurgent organizations in the Niger Delta. In the southern state of Delta in November, a militant Ijaw ethnic group kidnapped and attacked 14 journalists, leaving a press conference hosted by the opposing Itsekiri ethnic community. The militants held the journalists from several newspapers and TV stations for six hours, assaulted them, and took their equipment and personal belongings. Emma Amaize, an editor who claimed to be abducted, claimed that while some equipment had been returned, the recordings had been erased. Between November and February, the International Press Centre in Lagos, which keeps track of assaults on journalists in Nigeria, recorded at least 32 instances of press violence. It was discovered that 24 cases were the fault of terrorists and security personnel.

Following the report, no one has been prosecuted. Added was: “In light of the upcoming elections, police and other security agencies have continued to be the main offenders in attacks against journalists and media professionals. It is especially concerning because the police and other security organizations are at fault”. Adaja (2012) Nigeria has a relatively new democracy. A crucial component of the democratic process is for the government, security services, politicians, party members, and the media to foster an atmosphere conducive to civil discourse and electioneering. By ensuring the elections are free from violence, fair, credible, and transparent, these organizations have the chance to build on the nation's achievements as the “Giant of Africa” and allow local and foreign journalists to cover them.

According to Mc Quail (2010), media professional bodies in various nations use codes of ethics to act as ambassadors for the advancement of social responsibility. The theory's guiding concepts are as follows:

1. Media ownership is a public trust, and the media have a duty to society.

2. News media should be accurate, fair, impartial, objective, and pertinent.

The media should adhere to established norms of ethics and professional conduct.

3. The media should be free yet self-regulatory.

4. The government may need to step in in some situations to protect the public interest.

### **Significance of the study**

It will also provide data and reports on the current situation of journalists in Nigeria and the extent of crime committed against journalists. It will provide data to the Nigerian government and policymakers so that they may assess the safety of journalists during and after the election and contribute ways of protecting journalists during the election season.

### **Statement of the research problems**

It is impossible to overstate how horrible the series of murders of journalists during the Nigerian elections have been for the country both at home and abroad. It appears that the government of Nigeria has not taken the necessary steps to ensure the safety of journalists, including educating the public about the work that journalists do and their value to society. It also appears that the security agencies are not doing enough to protect journalists before, during, and after the elections. Everyone has a responsibility to ensure the security of journalists both during and after the election.

### **Purpose of the study**

This study means aims is to look into how safe it is for journalists to cover elections in southwest Nigeria and to assess what the print and broadcast media are doing throughout election seasons.

### **Research questions**

1. In Southwest Nigeria, how safe do journalists feel during election times?

**Research hypotheses**

Ho1: There is no significant difference between the perception of male and female journalists on the safety of journalists in times of election in southwest Nigeria.

Ho2: The perception of print media and broadcast media on the safety of journalists in times of election in southwest Nigeria is the same.

**Research methodology**

The descriptive research design of the survey type was adopted in this study.

The population for this study consisted of all media houses in southwest Nigeria.

The sample of this study consisted of 200 respondents' selected using a multistage sampling procedure. The first stage involved the use of a simple random sampling technique to select Oyo State out of six states in southwest Nigeria. The Second Stage involves using a simple random sample technique to select three media houses: Nigeria Television Authority, Ibadan (NTA), Nigeria Tribune Newspaper, Ibadan, Fresh FM 105.9 Ibadan, Splash FM 105.5 and Broadcasting Corporation of Oyo State (BCOS). The last stage involved using a stratified random sampling technique to select 100 print media journalists and 100 broadcast media journalists from selected media houses.

A questionnaire designed by the researcher tagged Safety of Journalists in Times of Election in Southwest Nigeria (LSJQ). The instrument is divided into two sections. Section A sought the respondents' bio-data such as the Sex, and Name of the media house. Section B consists of twenty (20) structured items. It measured the general understanding and familiarity of respondents with the safety of journalists in times of election in Nigeria. The scale adopted a 4-point Likert scale format rating from very high, high, moderate, and low.

Experts ascertained the instrument's validity in Tests, Measurement, and Evaluation. The experts determined the face and content validity of the instrument by rejecting some items in the instrument and replacing them with appropriate ones.

The instrument's reliability was estimated using Cronbach Alpha in trial testing 20 journalists administered the instrument (LSJQ). The respondents were drawn from Osun State. Cronbach Alpha was applied to the responses of the respondents for the estimation of the internal consistency of the items. The formula yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.81, adjudged high enough to make the instrument reliable and useful for the study.

Two research assistants were trained to assist in administering instruments to the respondents. The researcher visited media houses to be used for the study and sought permission from the respondents. The researcher also discussed the relevance of the research with them. This enables the researcher to solicit their cooperation and request the date and time convenient for the instruments administration. The instrument was administered to the respondents by the researcher with the help of trained research assistants. The researcher was able to retrieve all the questionnaires immediately from the respondents.

The data collected were analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics such as percentage, mean and standard deviation were used to answer the

research question raised, while the hypotheses formulated were tested using inferential statistics of t-test. All hypotheses were tested at a 0.05 level of significance.

## Results and discussion

### Analysis of the research question

**Research question:** What is the level of Safety of journalists in times of election in southwest Nigeria?

**Table 1** Level of safety of journalists in times of election in Nigeria

	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	St. Deviation
Low	20	10.0	2.31	0.644
Moderate	98	49.0		
High	82	41.0		
Total	200	100.0		

The level of safety in times of election in southwest Nigeria, as shown in table 1 revealed that 20 (10.0%) of the respondents confirmed that there is low safety while 98 (49.0%) of respondents sampled had a moderate level of safety of journalists in times of election; also 82 (41.0) of the respondents had a high level of safety of journalism in times of election. Based on this result, journalist's safety level in times of election is moderate.

### Analysis of the research hypotheses

**Hypothesis 1** There is no significant difference between male and female journalist's perception towards safety of journalists in times of election in southwest Nigeria.

**Table 2** t-test Comparison of Male and Female journalists' Perception of the safety of journalists in times of election

Higher Institutions	N	Df	Mean	Std Deviation	T	Sig	Remark
Male Journalists Perception	76	198	30.55	5.439	0.03	0.851	Not Significant.
Female Journalists Perception	124		30.69	4.954			

P>0.05

An Independent t-test was used to examine the sex difference in journalists 'perception of the safety of journalists in times of election. The result revealed that there was no significant difference in perception of towards safety of journalists in times of election ( $t(df=198) = 0.007$ ,  $p > .05$ ). This implies that the mean of male journalists (mean= 30.55, SD=5.439) is



significantly different from the mean of female journalists (mean =30.69, SD= 4.954). However, the null hypothesis was retained. Based on the table, the result revealed that significant difference between male and female journalists' perception towards the safety of journalists in times of election in southwest Nigeria.

**Hypothesis 2:** There is no significant difference between print media and broadcast media journalists' perception towards the safety of journalists in times of election in southwest Nigeria.

**Table 3** t-test Comparison of print media and broadcast media journalists Perceptions towards the safety of journalists in times of election

Higher Institutions	N	Df	Mean	Std Deviation	T	Sig	Remark
<b>Print Media Perception</b>	120	198	29.27	4.392		0.000	Not sig.
<b>Broadcast Media Perception</b>	80		32.70	5.485	0.02		

P>0.05

An Independent t-test was used to examine print media and broadcast media perceptions towards the safety of journalists in times of election. The result indicated that there was no significant difference in perception towards corruption ( $t(df=198) = 0.000, p > .05$ ). This shows that the mean of print media journalists (mean= 29.27, SD=4.392) is significantly different from the mean of broadcast media journalists (mean =32.90, SD= 5.485). The null hypothesis was equally retained. Based on table 3, the result revealed no significant difference between print media and broadcast media perception towards the safety of journalists in times of election in southwest Nigeria.

## Discussion

The results showed that journalists in southwest Nigeria are generally safe during election seasons. This is made feasible by the publics and the government's increased awareness of the need to protect journalists during election seasons. The results also showed no significant difference between male and female journalists' perceptions of the safety of journalists during an election. This may be conceivable because of what has happened to journalists during election seasons, which saw both of them being attacked and molested. The results showed no significant difference between print media and broadcast media journalists' perceptions during election seasons. This may occur due to of their journalism experiences; both print and broadcast media have seen the same public harassment.

## Conclusion

It was concluded that there is a modest level of journalist safety during election times in southwest Nigeria. Additionally, there are no significant differences between male and

female journalists' perceptions of election-related journalist safety. It also showed no significant differences between print and broadcast media journalists' perceptions of the safety of journalists during election seasons.

### Recommendations

1. Media organizations should increase their efforts by giving journalists the required protection during election seasons.
2. To protect journalists during election times, government and non-governmental groups should work together.
3. There should be public awareness campaigns and programs against election-related violence against journalists.
4. To gain the public's trust, journalists must be sufficiently clear about their research and reporting.
5. Both government and private media organizations should uphold the ethics of journalism.

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