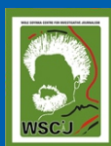




A SURVEY REPORT ON THE STATE OF MEDIA INDEPENDENCE IN NIGERIA

2022



MacArthur
Foundation

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Wole Soyinka Centre for Investigative Journalism (WSCJ)
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A SURVEY REPORT ON THE STATE OF MEDIA INDEPENDENCE IN NIGERIA

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AMAC	Abuja Municipal Area Council
C-MEDIA	Collaborative Media Engagement for Development, Inclusivity and Accountability
CPJ	Committee to Protect Journalists
ETC	Et Cetera
FCT	Federal Capital Territory
FOI	Freedom of Information
NUJ	Nigeria Union of Journalists
RSF	Reporters without Borders
SJ-ICAP	Strengthening Journalism Independence, Capacity and Presence
SMI	Safer-Media Initiative
TV	Television
WSCIJ	Wole Soyinka Centre for Investigative Journalism

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

This report on The State of Media Independence In Nigeria presents the findings of a survey of 120 practicing journalists across 29 media outlets in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja. The survey was conducted by Safer-Media Initiative through the project “Strengthening Journalism – Independence, Capacity and Presence” being implemented under the Collaborative Media Engagement for Development, Inclusivity and Accountability (C-MEDIA) Project of the WSCIJ and supported by the MacArthur Foundation.

STUDY OBJECTIVES

The general objective of this survey is to ascertain the current state of media independence in Nigeria with the FCT-Abuja as the study sample. Specifically, to:

1. Determine the degree to which journalists are harassed.
2. Ascertain the main actors responsible for the attack and harassment meted on journalist.
3. Establish the level of government or political powers interference in journalists' work.
4. Gauge the implementation and use of the Freedom of Information Act by journalists.
5. Establish the percentage of journalists who access public information using the FOI Act

KEY FINDINGS

1. 65% of respondents have been harassed in their day-to-day work as journalists.
2. At least 4 out of 10 journalists were harassed, attacked or unlawfully detained more than once between 2017 and 2022. That's 42% of respondents.
3. Security agents were responsible for 48% of harassment and attack meted on journalists, while politicians and their supporters were responsible for 23%.
4. Police tops the detention of journalists (28%) followed by the (DSS 12%)
5. 52% of respondents have been pressured by government, corporate agencies or political interest to shape report shared with the public to align with their interest.
6. Access to public information through FOI Act is poor as only 32% of respondents have accessed public information using FOI requests. 63.16% out of the number of respondents who have made FOI request say the response was not timely.

CHAPTER ONE

1.1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Independent media is integral to national development. It holds authorities to account both in the public and private sector and ensures inclusivity of voices on issues. But when journalists with their visibility are attacked, crimes against them go unpunished, there is increased regulation, intimidation and harassment then Self-censorship grows – absence of editorial autonomy.

Hence the public is unable to get credible information to help them make informed decisions and hold leaders accountable while poverty continues to ravage the people and cutting a deadly path across communities.

While Nigeria had witnessed crackdown on the media and journalists were the target of harassment in the era of military dictatorship, violations and assaults on journalists have continued unabated under a supposed democratic system of governance.

In the 2015 World Press Freedom Index prepared by the Paris based organization, Reporters Without Borders (RSF), Nigeria ranked 111 out of 180 countries examined. Seven years after, the country went into a slump, dropped by 18 places and ranking 129 out of 180 countries listed in the current year 2022. The media in Nigeria being routinely subjected to attack by security forces and the public, and threats as well as intimidation from politicians and their supporters has been attributed as the reason for this sharp drop.

Similarly, the global impunity index published annually by the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), Nigeria is consistently ranked among countries in the world where journalists are slain and the killers circumvent justice. Nigeria has featured on the index multiple times since CPJ began to compile it in 2008. According to CPJ's reports, the murderers escape justice through political influence, wealth or intimidation.

Quick checks with the records available show between 2017 and 2022 alone, at least 10 journalists have been killed in Nigeria. No one has been held to account. The journalists who lost their lives include: Famous Giobaro of Glory FM 97.1 Yenagoa, Bayelsa State, April 2017. Lawrence Okojie, Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) Benin, Edo State, July 7, 2017. Ikechukwu Onubogu, Anambra Broadcasting Service (ABS) Onitsha, Anambra State. November 15, 2017. Precious Owolabi, Channels Television, Abuja. July 22, 2019. Maxwell Nashan, Federal Radio Corporation (FRCN), Adamawa State, January 15, 2020.

Alex Ogbu, Regent Africa Times, Abuja. January 21, 2020. Pelumi Onifade, an intern with Gboah TV, an online television on October 24, 2020 during #EndSARS protests. Titus Badejo, Naija FM, Killed on June 19, 2021 in Ibadan, Oyo State. Olubunmi Afuye (a.k.a. 'Bumbam') Of Ondo State Radiovision Corporation (OSRC) and Orange FM, July 15, 2021 and Tordue Salem who worked with the Vanguard Newspaper, Abuja, killed on November 11, 2021.

This survey further reveals the current state of media independence in Nigeria as presented in the report.

1.2 OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The general objective of this survey is to ascertain the current state of media independence in Nigeria with the FCT-Abuja as the study sample. Specific objectives of the study is to:

1. Determine the degree to which journalists are harassed.
2. Ascertain the main actors responsible for the attack and harassment meted on journalist
3. Establish the level of government or political powers interference in journalists' work.
4. Gauge the implementation and use of the Freedom of Information Act by journalists.
5. Establish the percentage of journalists who access public information using the FOI Act.

1.3 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The scope of the work in this assessment involved the collection of quality data through questionnaires, data processing (cleaning and analysis), and reporting.

CHAPTER TWO

2.1 SURVEY METHODOLOGY

2.1.1 Study Site

The survey was conducted in the Federal Capital Territory. Deliberate effort was made to cover all media type.

2.1.2 Study Population

Respondents for the survey were journalists working in various media houses; ranging from print, TV/Radio to online, in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). The respondents were met and engaged in the survey.

2.1.3 Measuring Instrument

Questionnaire was the measuring instrument of this study. Accordingly, 120 questionnaires went out to selected media houses around the FCT.

2.2 IMPLEMENTATION

2.2.1 Pretesting of Survey Questionnaire

There was a pretest exercise with 10 questionnaires distributed across the Municipal Area Council. The objectives of the field test were as follows;

- To test the survey tools in the field for clarity, understanding, order of flow of the question and adequacy of questions.
- To assess the length of time it takes to complete questionnaire.

At the end of field work, a debriefing session was held with the Executive Director and the questionnaire was amended based on the pretest findings.

2.2.2 Data Collection

The field data collectors received a debriefing on the survey methodology and sampling method. Following which the guideline was sent to them for reference purpose. The debriefing was facilitated by the Executive Director.

2.2.3 Data Processing and Analysis

All 120 questionnaires were returned from the field to SMI's office and then forwarded to the Analysts for data processing; which included, editing, data entry and data cleaning.

Further editing and data analysis were done using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Following data entry and cleaning, the results were presented in tables and graphs.

2.2.4 Ethical Considerations

Each questionnaire had an informed consent attached to it and was given to be read to every respondent. Each gave their consent to be interviewed and was also assured of anonymousness of data collected.

2.3 LIMITATIONS

Every care has been taken to ensure the accuracy of the data collected and presented in this report. However, data are consistently being updated. Therefore, it will be necessary to consult the original sources if current data is required.

CHAPTER THREE

3.1 SURVEY FINDINGS

3.1.1 Core Indicators

S/N	CORE INDICATORS
1	Sex of Respondents
2	Age Range of Respondents
3	Media Type
4	Respondents work experience
5	Abuse faced by Journalists
6	Experience in the last five years
7	Who was responsible for the harassment and attack meted?
8	Who carried out the unlawful detention?
9	Ever been pressured to reveal news source?
10	Ever been prosecuted for defamation in an attempt to silence report?
11	Ever been pressured by Government, Corporate agencies or political interest to shape report shared with the public to be line with certain interest(s)?
12	Ever secured public record(s) through the freedom of information act?
13	Was the response to the FOI timely?
14	Times you requested for information from any public institution using the freedom of information act and was refused?
15	Number of times the request for public information using the FOI was refused?

Table 1: Core Indicators

3.1.2 Sex of Respondents

SEX		
Column1	%TAGE	NUMBER
MALE	51.67%	62
FEMALE	48.33%	58
TOTAL	100.00%	120

Table 2: Sex of Respondents

The chart below shows the percentage of male and female respondents interviewed across the media houses visited

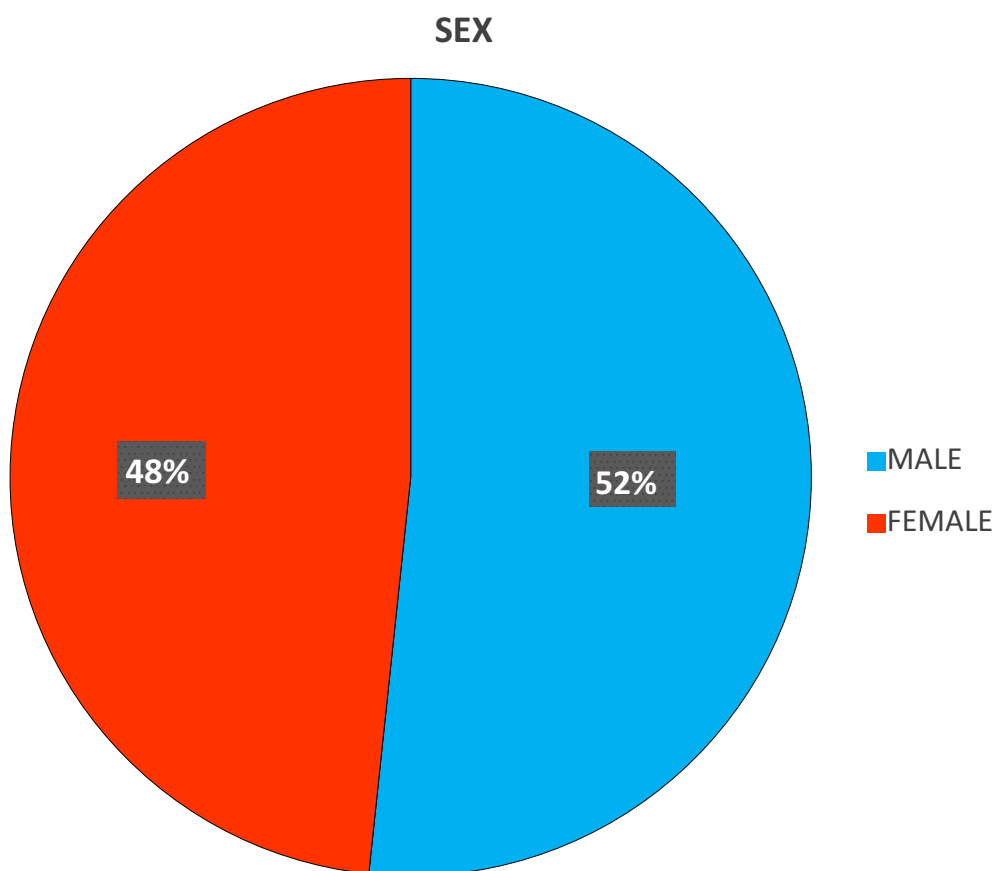


Figure 1: Sex of Respondents

3.1.2 Age Range of Respondents

AGE		
Column1	PERCENTAGE	NUMBER
18-27	15.00%	18
28-50	66.67%	80
ABOVE 50	18.33%	22
TOTAL	100.00%	120

Table 3; Age Range of Respondents

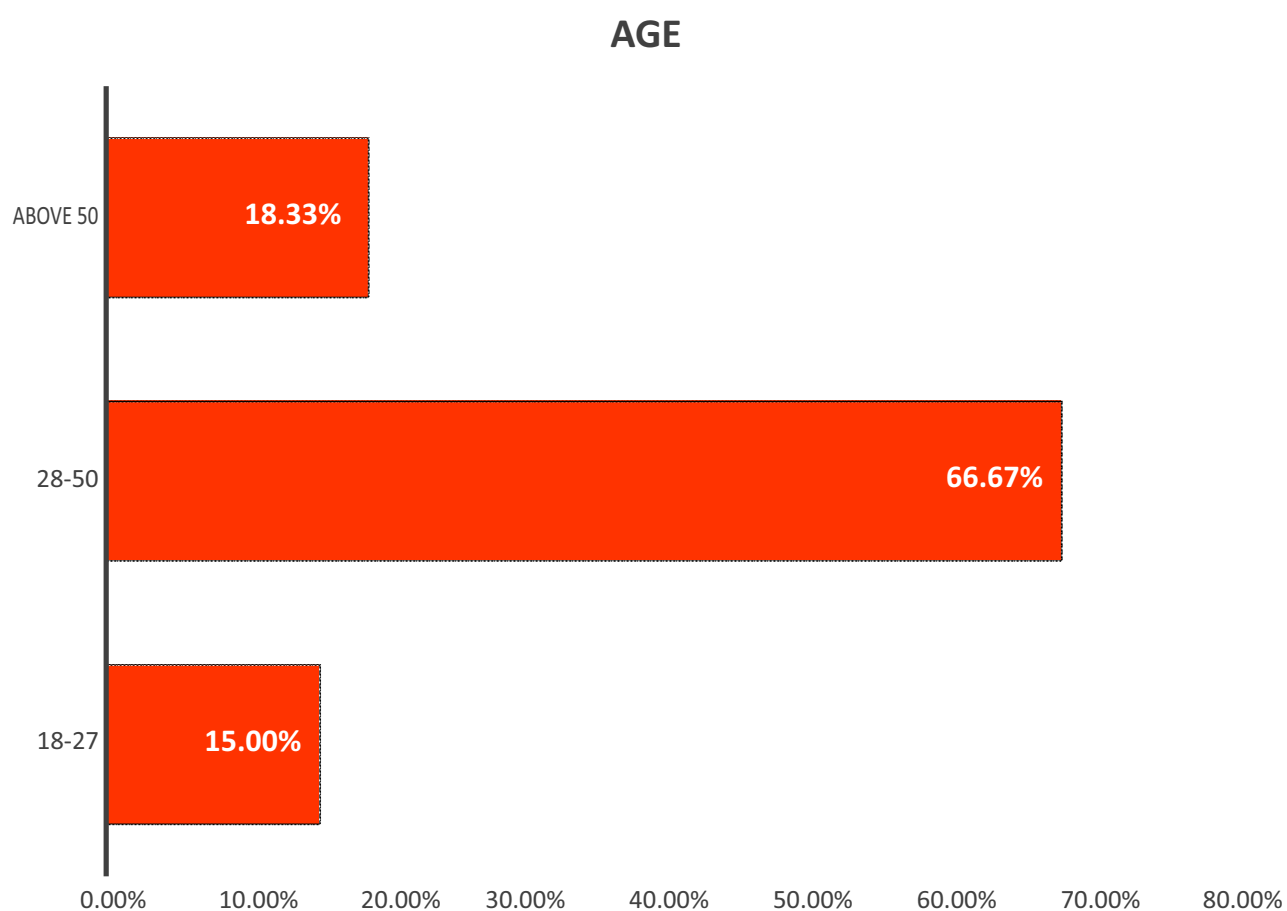


Figure 2: Age Range of Respondents

3.1.3 Media Type

The table and the chart below show the type of media outlet the respondents work with

MEDIA TYPE		
Column1	PERCENTAGE	NUMBER
PRINT	25.00%	30
TV/RADIO	56.67%	68
ONLINE	18.33%	22
TOTAL	100.00%	120

Table 4: Media Type

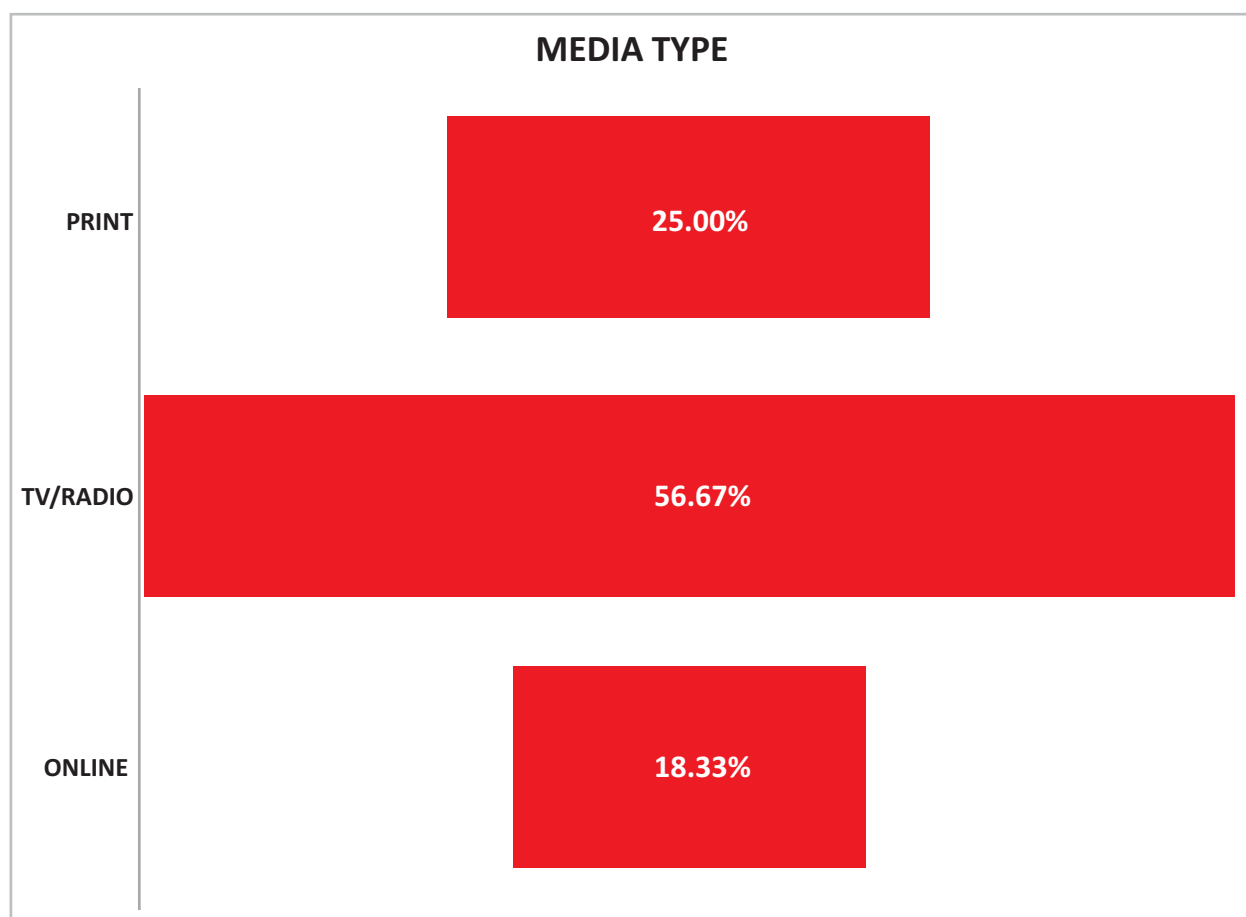


Figure 3: Media Type

3.1.4 Working years as a Journalists

The table below shows how long the respondents have been working as journalist

WORK EXPERIENCE		
Column1	PERCENTAGE	NUMBER
1YEAR AND BELOW	11.67%	14
2-5YEARS	21.67%	26
5YEARS AND ABOVE	66.67%	80
TOTAL	100.00%	120

Table 5: Work Experience as a Journalist

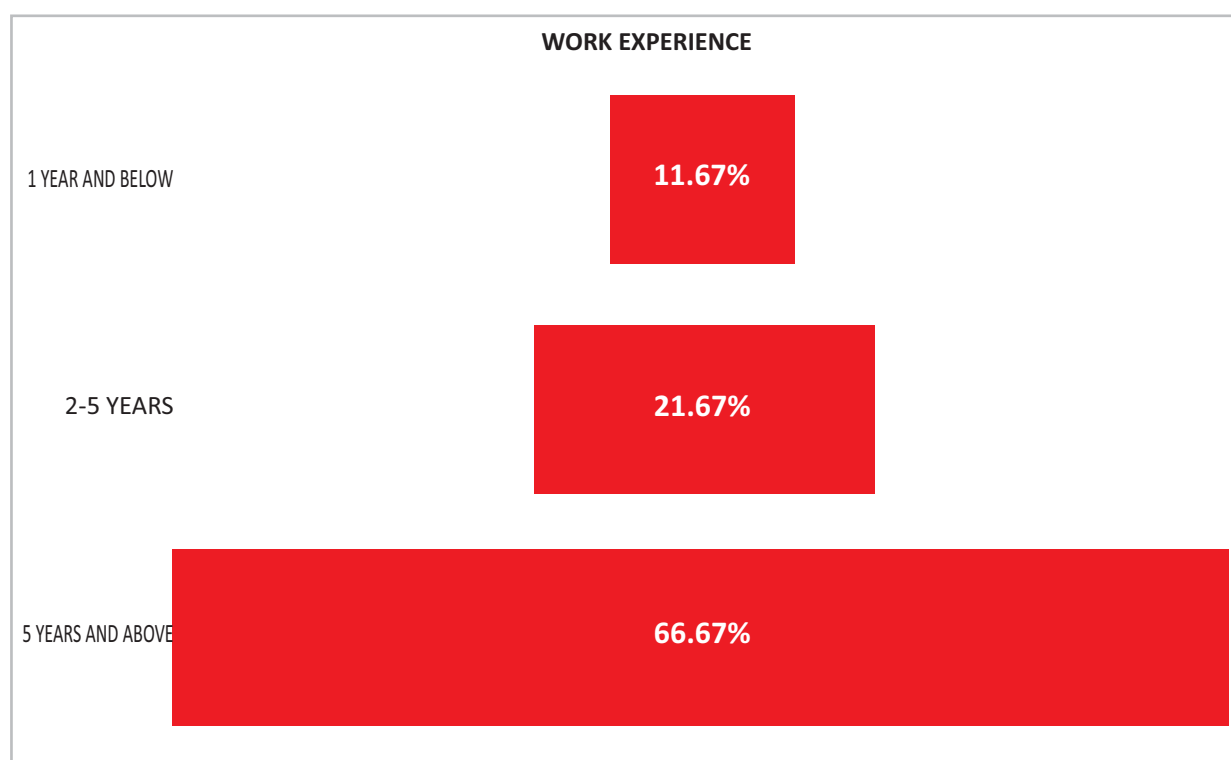


Figure 4; Work Experience as a Journalist

3.1.5 Abuse Faced by Respondents

The result below shows that 65% of respondents have experienced harassment in their day-to-day work as journalists. 10% have experienced attack and another 10% have experienced unlawful detention.

JOURNALIST EXPERIENCE		
Column1	PERCENTAGE	NUMBER
HARASSMENT	65.00%	78
ATTACK	10.00%	12
UNLAWFUL DETENTION	10.00%	12
NOT APPLICABLE	15.00%	18
TOTAL	100.00%	120

Table 6: Abuse faced

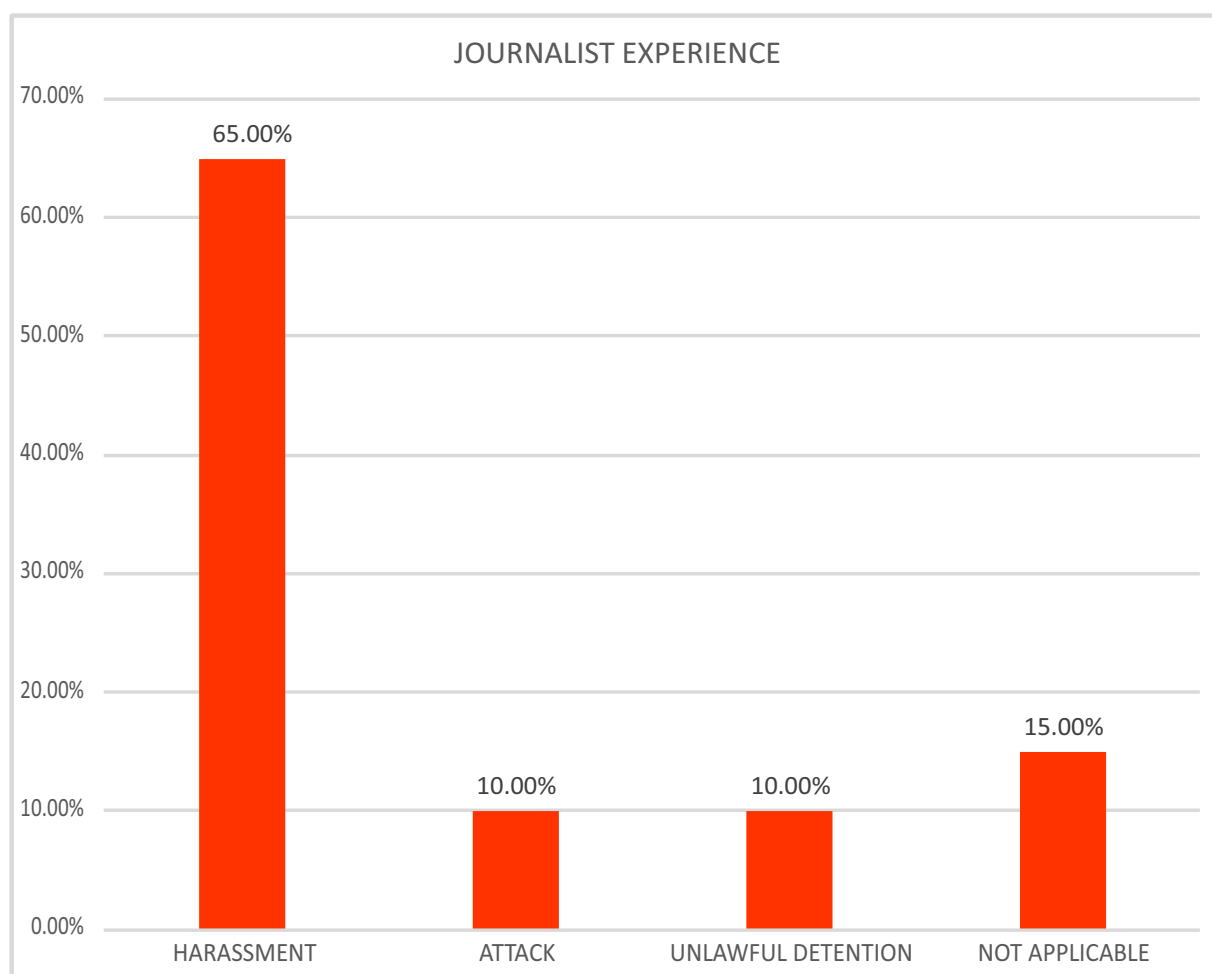


Figure 5: Abuse faced

3.1.6 Harassment, attack or unlawful detention in the last five years

The result below shows how often the respondents experienced either harassment, attack or unlawful detention in the last five years. 42% of respondent said to have experienced them more that once, 27% have this experience at least once while 7% of respondents said it was a frequent occurrence.

HARASSMENT, ATTACK OR UNLAWFUL DETENTION IN THE LAST FIVE YEARS			
Column1	PERCENTAGE	NUMBER	
AT LEAST ONCE	27%	32	
MORE THAN ONCE	42%	50	
FREQUENTLY	7%	8	
NOT SURE	7%	8	
NOT APPLICABLE	18%	22	
TOTAL	100%	120	

Table 7: Harassment, Attack Or Unlawful Dentention In The Last Five Years

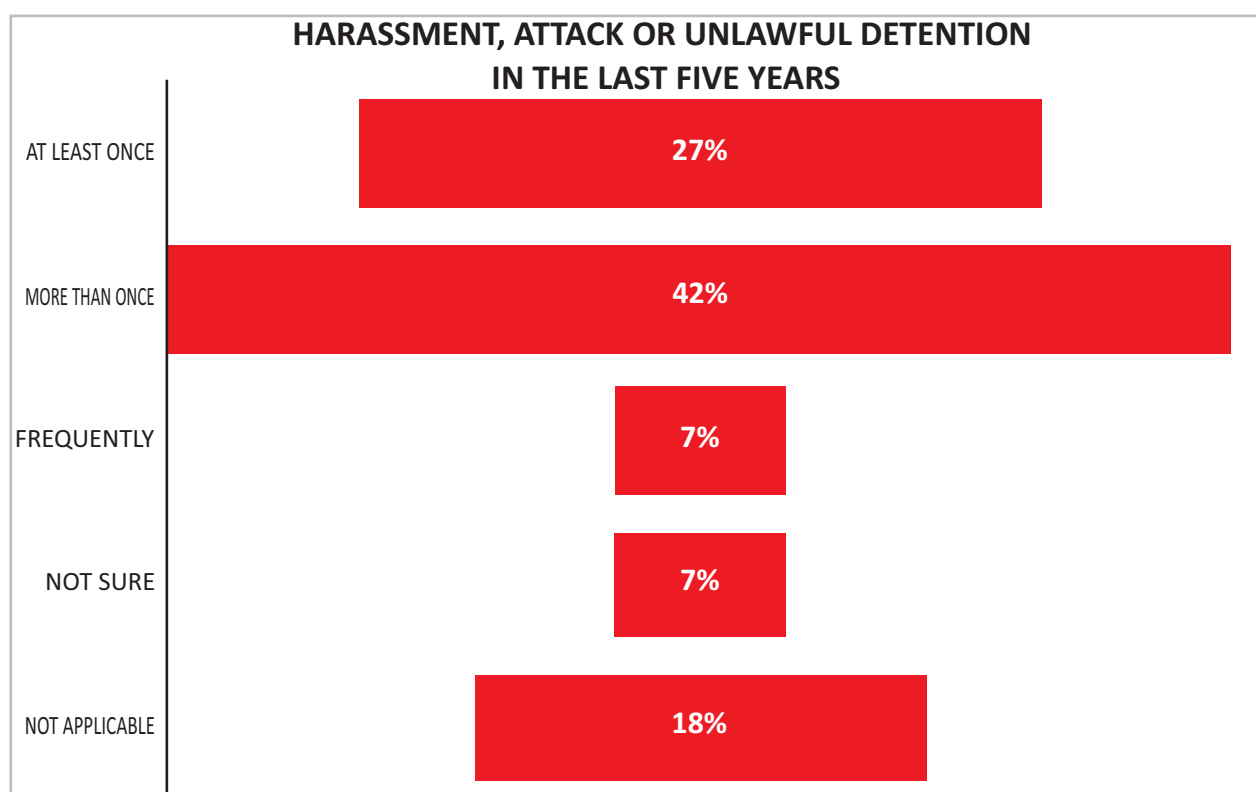


FIGURE 6: HARASSMENT, ATTACK OR UNLAWFUL DETENTION IN THE LAST FIVE YEARS

3.1.7 Who was responsible for the harassment and attack meted?

The result shows that 48% of the harassment and attack meted on respondents was carried out by security agents and 23% by politicians and their supporters.

WHO WAS RESPONSIBLE?		
Column1	PERCENTAGE	NUMBER
POLITICIANS	23%	28
SECURITY AGENTS	48%	58
MOB	12%	14
NOT APPLICABLE	17%	20
TOTAL	100%	120

TABLE 8: WHO WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE HARASSMENT AND ATTACK METED?

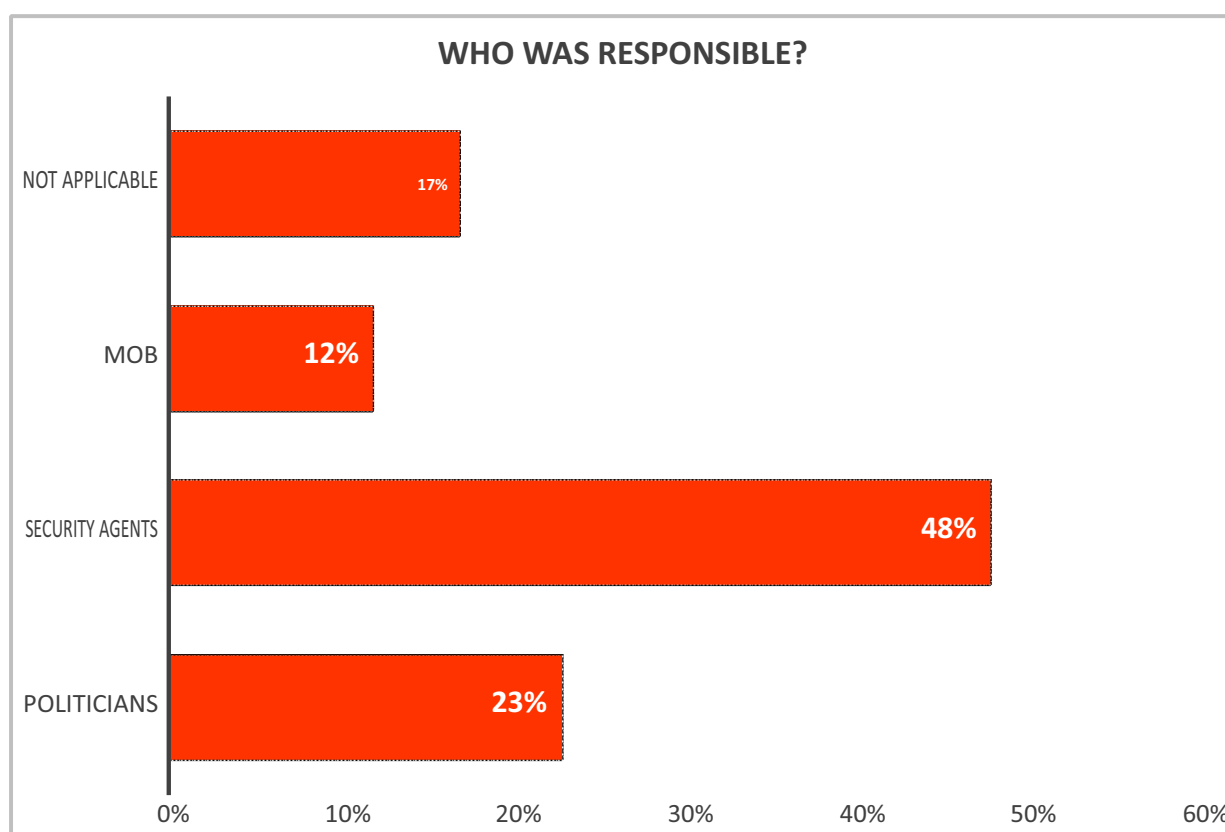


FIGURE 7: WHO WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE HARASSMENT AND ATTACK METED?

3.1.8 Who carried out the unlawful detention?

UNLAWFUL DETENTION		
Column1	PERCENTAGE	NUMBER
POLICE	28%	34
DSS	12%	14
OTHERS	22%	26
NOT APPLICABLE	38%	46
TOTAL	100%	120

Table 9; Who carried out the unlawful detention?

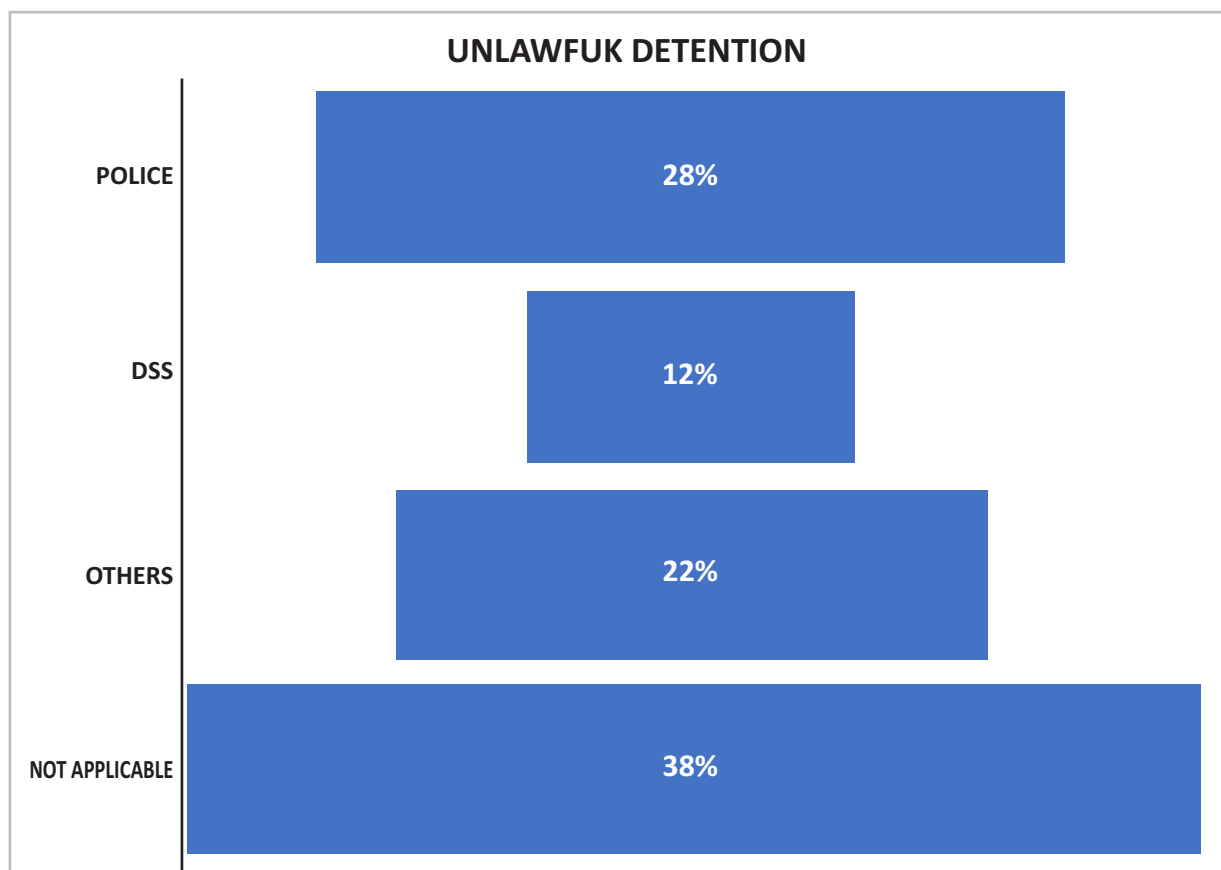


Figure 8: Who carried out the unlawful detention?

3.1.9 Ever been pressured to reveal news source?

NEWS SOURCE		
Column1	PERCENTAGE	NUMBER
YES	27%	32
NO	73%	73
TOTAL	100%	120

Table 10: Ever been pressured to reveal news source?

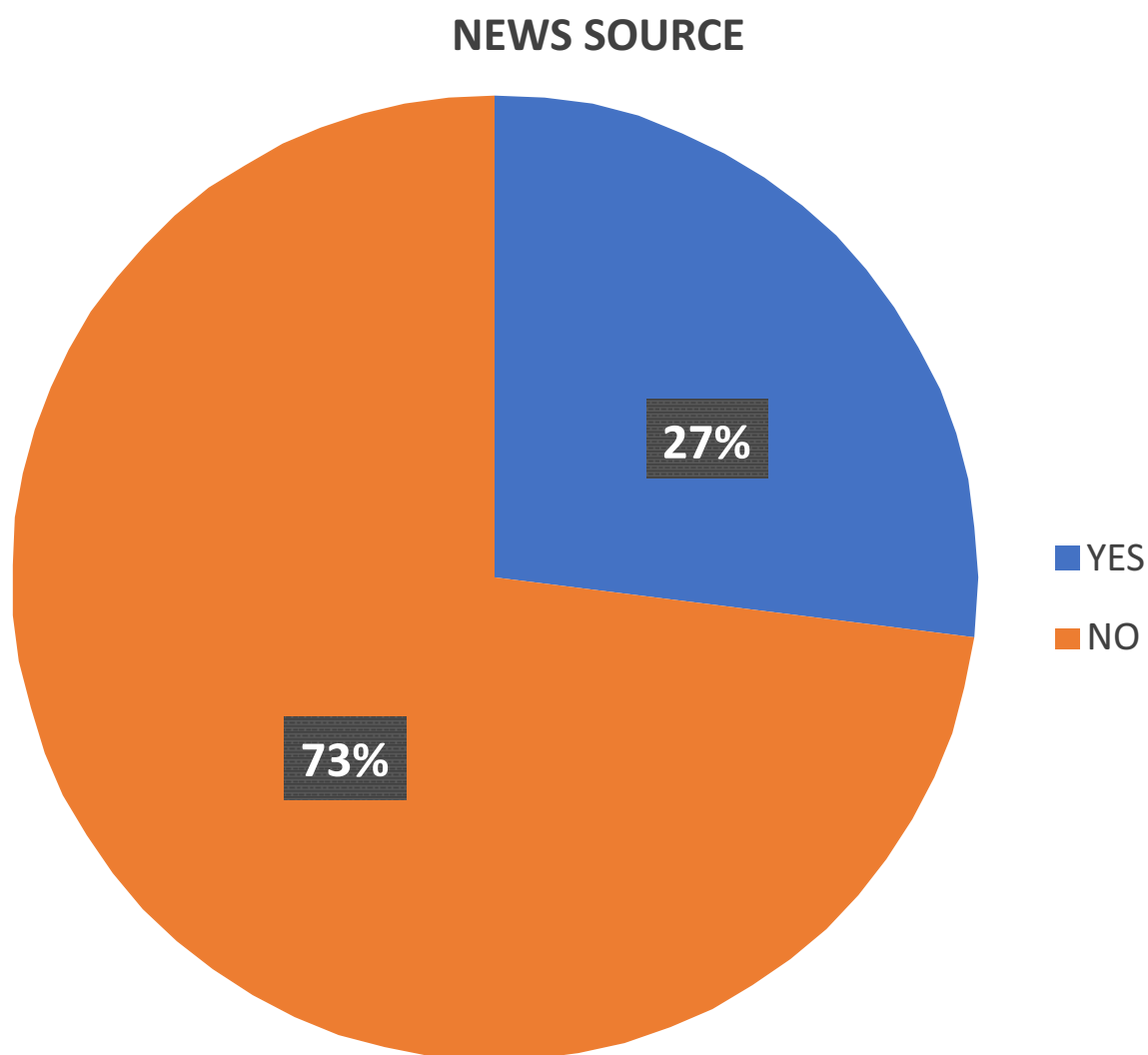


Figure 9; Ever been pressured to reveal news source?

3.1.10 Ever been prosecuted for defamation in an attempt to silence report?

PROSECUTION		
Column1	PERCENTAGE	NUMBER
YES	10%	12
NO	90%	108
TOTAL	100%	120

Table 11; Ever been prosecuted for defamation in an attempt to silence report?

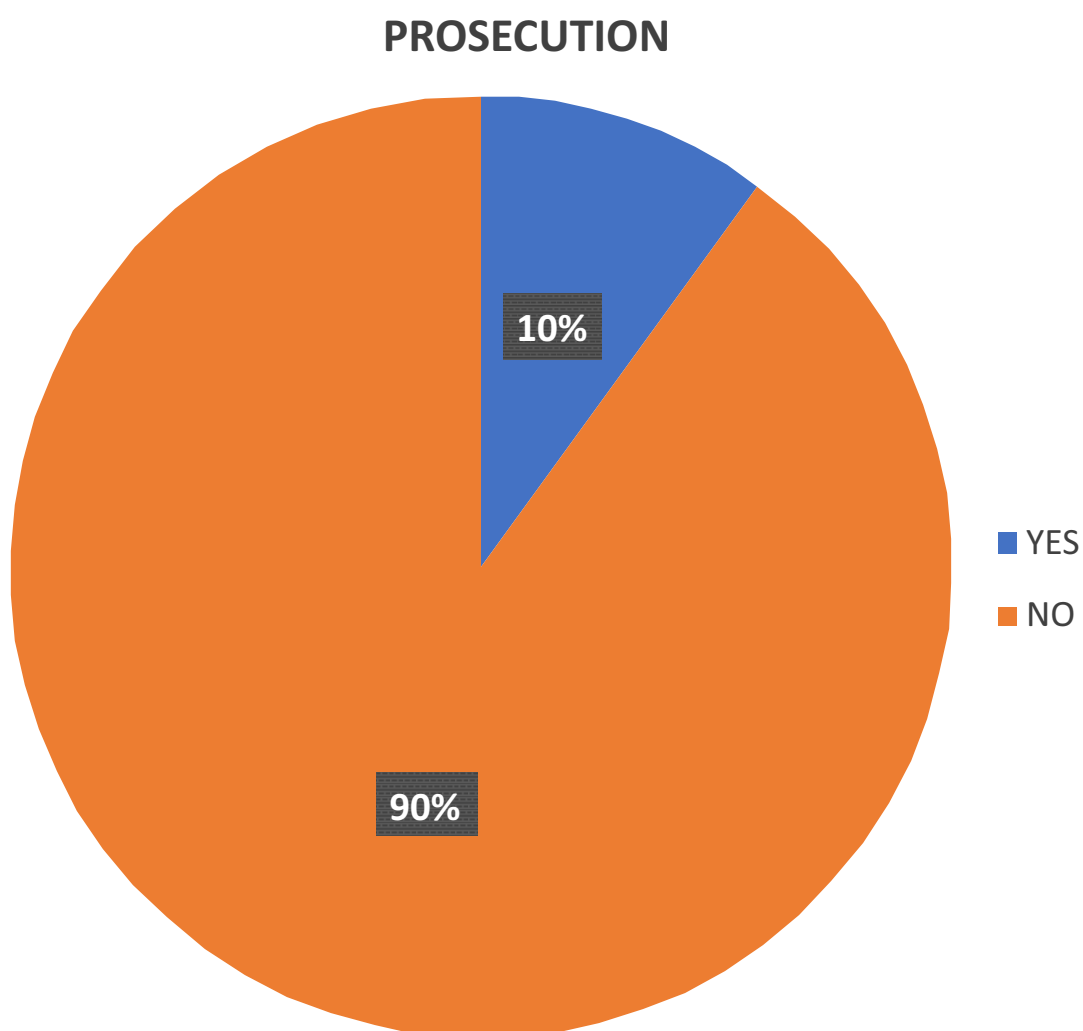


Figure 10: Ever been prosecuted for defamation in an attempt to silence report?

3.1.11 Ever been pressured by Government, Corporate agencies or political interest to shape report shared with the public to be line with certain interest(s)?

The result shows that 52% of respondent have been pressured by to shape their report to be in line with certain interest.

RESHAPE REPORT		
Column1	PERCENTAGE	NUMBER
YES	52%	62
NO	48%	58
TOTAL	100%	120

Table 12: Ever been pressured by Government, Corporate agencies or political interest to shape report shared with the public to be line with certain interest(s)?

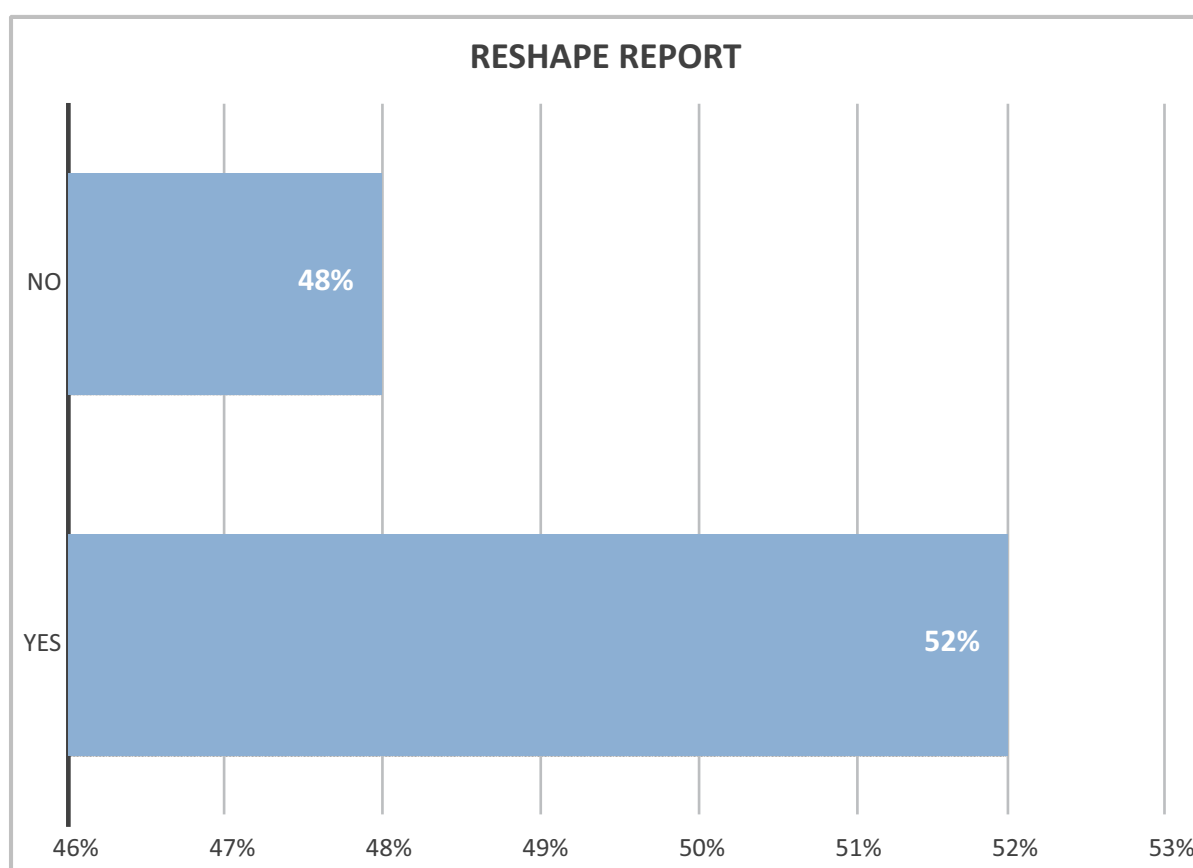


Figure 11: Ever been pressured by Government, Corporate agencies or political interest to shape report shared with the public to be line with certain interest(s)?

3.1.12 Ever secured public record(s) through the freedom of information act?

FOI ACT USED		
Column1	PERCENTAGE	NUMBER
YES	31.67%	38
NO	68.33%	82
TOTAL	100%	120

Table 13: Ever secured public record(s) through the freedom of information act?

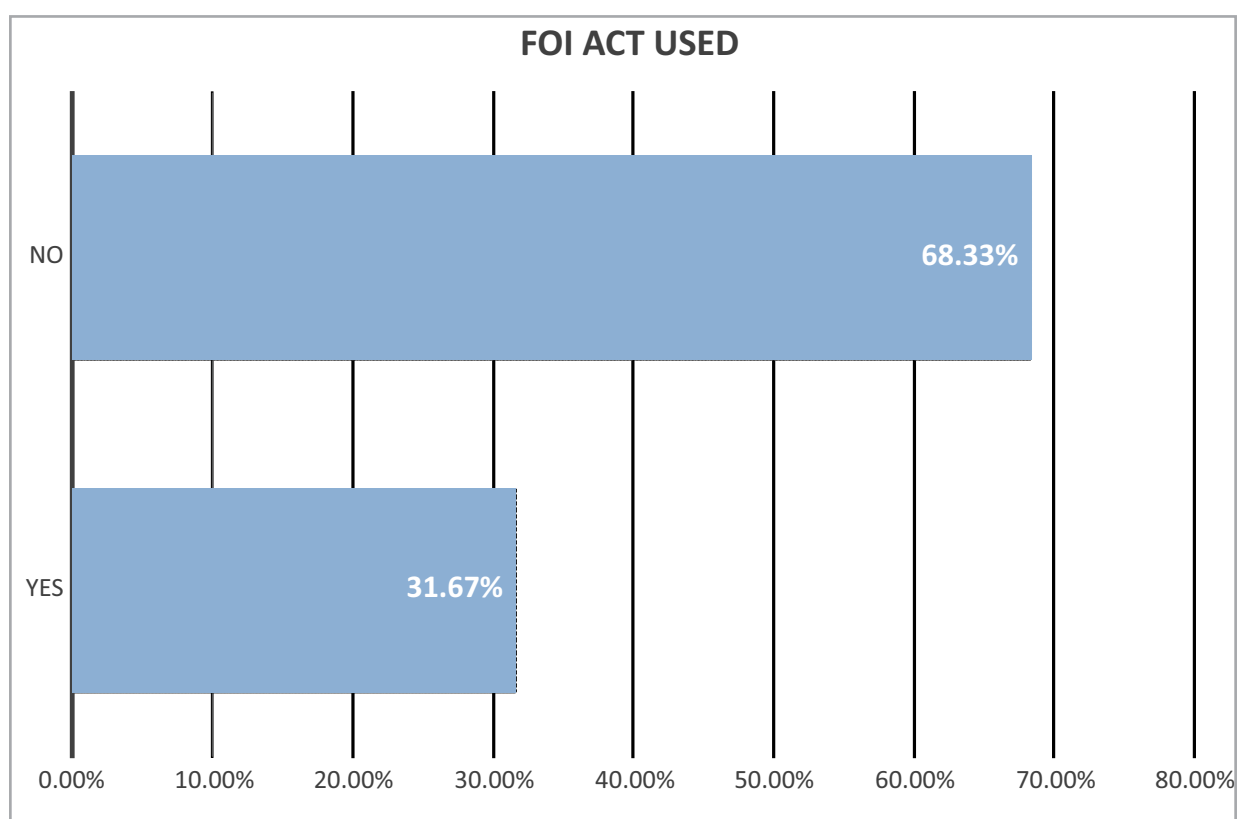


Figure 12: Ever secured public record(s) through the freedom of information act?

3.1.13 Was the response to the FOI request timely?

TIMELY FOI REQUEST RESPONSE		
Column1	PERCENTAGE	NUMBER
YES	11.67%	14
NO	20%	24
NOT APPLICABLE	68.33%	82
TOTAL	100%	120

Table 14, Was the response to the FOI request timely?

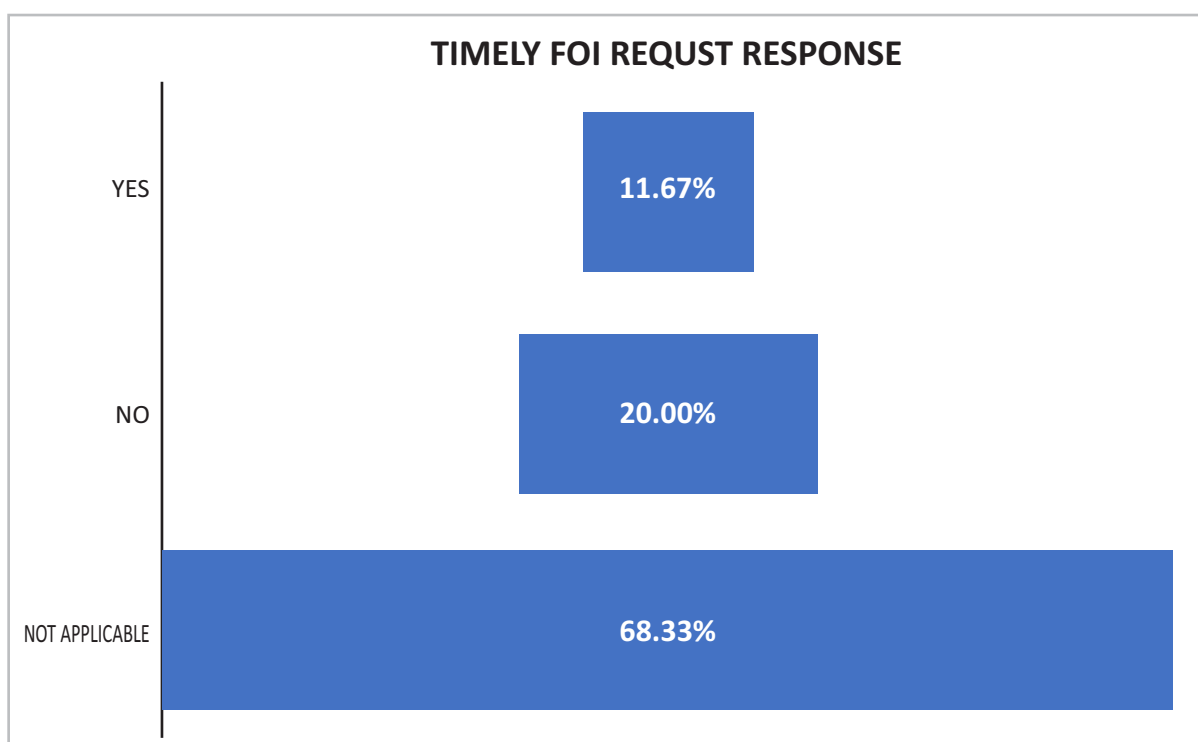


Figure 13; Was the response to the FOI timely?

3.1.14 Times you requested for information from any public institution using the freedom of information act and was refused?

FOI REQUEST REFUSED		
Column1	PERCENTAGE	NUMBER
YES	46.67%	56
NO	53.33%	64
TOTAL	100%	120

Table 15: Times you requested for information from any public institution using the freedom of information act and was refused?

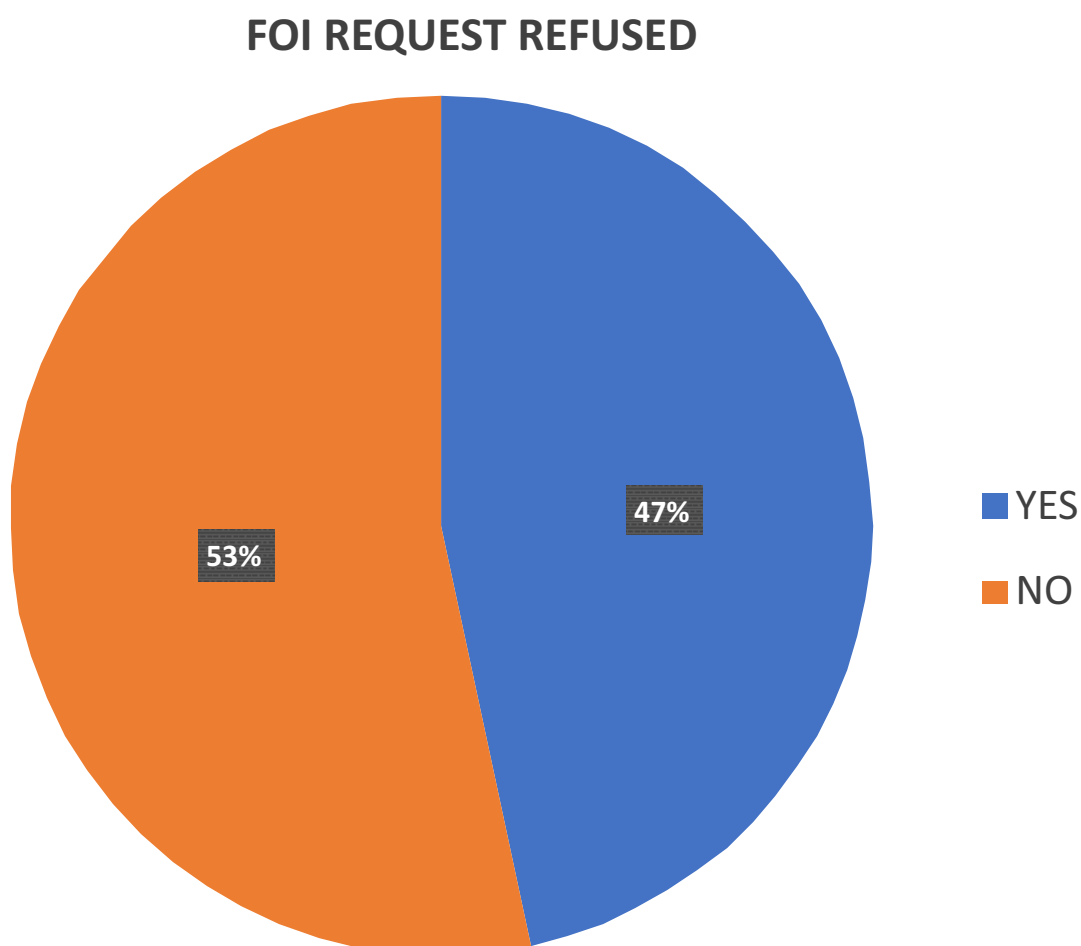


Figure 14: Times you requested for information from any public institution using the freedom of information act and was refused?

3.1.15 Number of times the request for public information using the FOI was refused?

The result below shows the number of times respondents used the Freedom of Information Act to request for documents from public institutions and was denied them.

NUMBER OF FOI REFUSAL		
Column1	PERCENTAGE	NUMBER
1-2 TIMES	30.00%	36
3-5 TIMES	15.00%	18
MORE THAN 5 TIMES	8.33%	10
NEVER	46.67%	56
TOTAL	100%	120

Table 16: Number of times the request for public information using the FOI was refused?

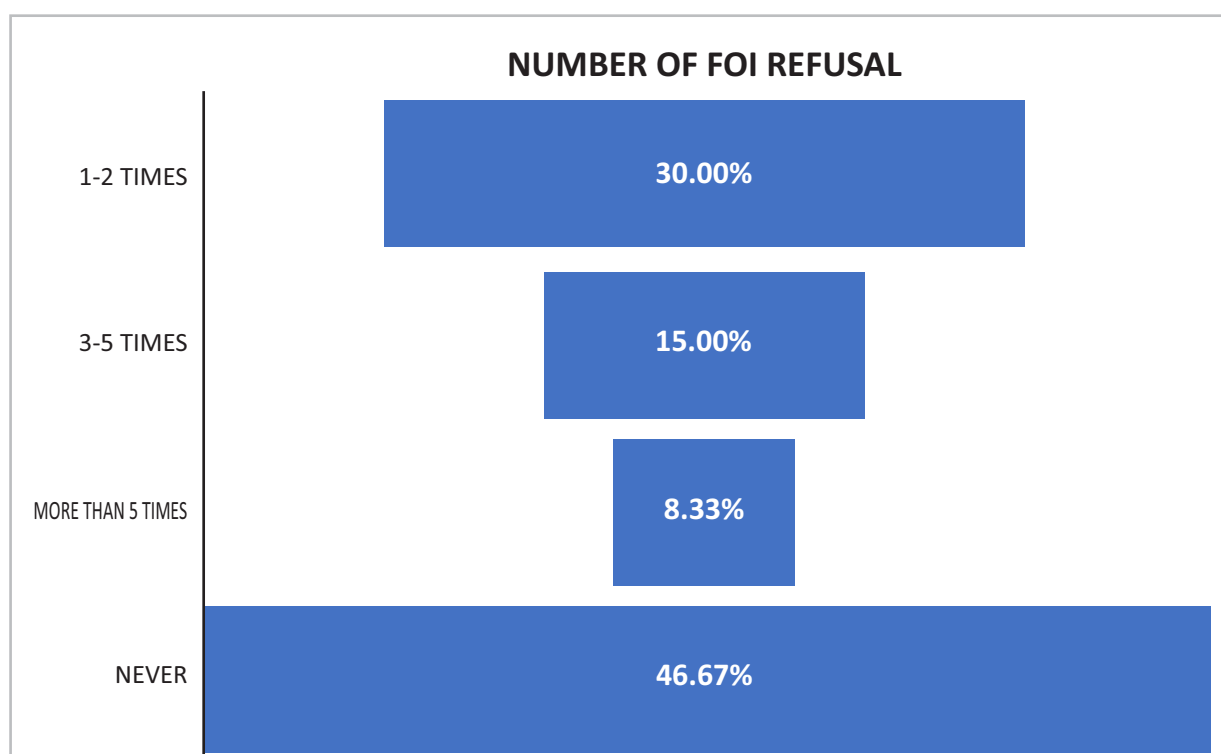


Figure 15: Number of times the request for public information using the FOI was refused?

CONCLUSIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

This survey report has shown how the state of media independence in Nigeria has worsened. The current ranking of Nigeria in the 2022 Press Freedom Index has further compound the country's image in the global community. The need to reshape such a disturbing narrative is important as it's urgent. Every stakeholder must be committed to the building and sustaining of free press, because it's the key pillar upon which democracy stands.

We insist that the rights of journalists must be respected at all times. While it's a fact that the security agencies have a responsibility to investigate criminality through a systematic and methodological process of information gathering, it's also important to note that journalists cannot be taken as criminal suspects for doing their legitimate work of news gathering and reporting.

In doing their professional duty, they are guided by ethics, but where anyone feels offended by their reports and thinks their rights are violated; the court is the resort.

Safer-Media Initiative recommends the survey report as a reference tool to relevant stakeholders responsible for initiatives to upscale and/or operationalise actions that enhance journalists' protection and their access to justice. The National Assembly especially, to urgently begin a process of strengthening the laws that do not only promote media freedom but also provide protection for journalists. The judiciary needs to do more by providing and sustaining a definite measure of defense for journalists doing their professional and constitutional duty. This will ensure that the media industry performs better and is considered as an independent monitor of power and a credible source of information for public good.

ANNEX

QUESTIONNAIRE

INFORMED CONSENT

Dear Respondent,

We are a non-profit organisation based here in Abuja. Our organisation believes in the high value and importance of the independent media as a foundation block for a democratic society and a catalyst for development.

In order to increase advocacy for the independent media, we are conducting a survey on the state of media independence in Nigeria with the Federal Capital Territory- Abuja as the study sample. Kindly take a few minutes to answer the questions below. Your honest answers are important for this data collection.

Please note that participation is completely voluntary and the information you provide will be used for this research purpose only, and remain confidential.

Thank you.

PART A

(Please tick the appropriate answer)

1. Sex: A. Male[☐] B. Female[☐]
2. Age: A. 18-27 B. 28-50 C. Above 50
3. Media type: (The type of media outlet you work with) A. Print[☐]
B. TV/Radio[☐] C. Online[☐]
4. How long have you been practicing journalism? A. One year and below B. 2-5years[☐] C. Above 5years[☐]

PART B

5. In your day-to-day work as a journalist, have you experienced any or all of the following? A. Harassment ☐ B. Attack ☐ C. Unlawful detention ☐ D. Not applicable ☐
6. How often did it occur in the last five years? A. At least once ☐ B. Occurred more than once ☐ C. Frequently ☐ D. Not sure ☐ E. Not Applicable ☐
7. Who was responsible for the harassment\Attack? A. Politicians and or their supporters(s) ☐ B. Security Agents ☐ C. Mob ☐ D. Not applicable ☐
8. The unlawful detention was carried out by: A. The Police ☐ B. DSS ☐ C. others (Specify) D. Not applicable ☐
9. Have you ever been pressured to reveal news source(s) resulting in any punishment as a consequence for refusal? A. Yes ☐ B. No ☐
10. Have you ever been prosecuted for defamation in an attempt to silence a news report? A. Yes ☐ B. No ☐
11. Have you been pressured by Government, corporate agencies or political interest(s) to shape report shared with the public to be in line with certain interest(s)? A. Yes ☐ B. No ☐
12. Have you ever secured public records through the Freedom of Information act? A. Yes ☐ B. No ☐
13. Was the response to the request timely? A. Yes ☐ B. No ☐ C. Not applicable ☐
14. Are there times your request for information from any public institution using the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act and was refused? A. Yes ☐ B. No ☐ C. Not applicable ☐
15. How many times was the request for public information refused? A. 1-2 times ☐ B. 3-5 times ☐ C. More than 5 times ☐ D. Never ☐ E. Not applicable ☐

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