

Reporting Impunity:
Report from the Monitoring of Print Media
Coverage of Impunity Issues



August 2013



Stop Impunity Nigeria

Reporting Impunity:

Report from the Monitoring of Print Media Coverage of Impunity Issues

A Publication of



For the

Stop Impunity Nigeria

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Mr. Ayode Longe, MRA's Programme Manager, coordinated and supervised the monitoring project as well as the writing of this report, while Miss Eseoho Ojo, MRA's Communication Officer, edited the report. MRA is grateful to them for their various contributions.

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Preface

On May 16, 2013, the Stop Impunity Nigeria (S.I.N.) Project launched a national campaign against impunity. The Campaign is a collaborative effort by a multi-stakeholder group of civil society organizations, religious bodies and a Federal Government agency, aimed at re-orienting Nigerians and promoting new ethical values to free the country from the debilitating effects of impunity.

Given the critical role of the media in such a campaign, the implementing organizations also decided to monitor print media coverage of impunity issues for several months to see how the media was reporting the issues, beginning from June 2013. The broad purpose of the exercise is to provide independent and objective data on media coverage of issues of impunity.

For each month, the project monitors the amount of coverage given to relevant events as well as debates and discourse on issues of impunity; focusing more particularly on the thematic areas of the Stop Impunity Nigeria campaign, namely “Public Finance Management”, “Electoral Process”, “Rule of Law”, as well as “Patriotism, Ethical and Civic Responsibility”.

But the project also monitors the coverage of impunity issues in general as well as the reporting of the activities being carried out by the Stop Impunity Nigeria implementing organizations in the course of the campaign.

The Campaign therefore sought to monitor media coverage of issues of impunity in 10 selected daily newspapers. Specifically, the exercise consisted of the following:

- ◆ Identifying the types of impunity issues that are covered by the selected newspapers.
- ◆ Tracking, analysing and documenting the amount of space given to issues of impunity in the selected newspapers and how comprehensively these issues are reported and analysed.
- ◆ Tracking, analysing and documenting the frequency of media reportage of the thematic focus of Stop Impunity Nigeria Campaign.

- ◆ Tracking, analysing and documenting the pattern of reporting of issues of impunity, such as the prominence given to such issues, and the order in which they are reported relative to other issues and events in the selected newspapers.
- ◆ Reviewing coverage of issues of impunity in the selected newspapers to determine if the issues are getting adequate coverage.
- ◆ Identifying gaps in the coverage of impunity issues and finding ways of addressing them in order to increase and improve media reporting of the issues.
- ◆ Publishing regular reports, which will draw attention to patterns of reporting, the inadequacy or otherwise of analysis, commentaries and news, and provide a framework for increased reporting of issues of impunity in the media.

Media coverage of impunity issues is critically important in the context of the Stop Impunity Nigeria campaign because despite the advancements in information technology, conventional media remains one of the most important tools for public enlightenment. This is because the media has a great capacity to reach masses of people, providing them thereby with information on any issue, and influencing their thought processes and opinions.

The media is obviously, therefore, a very powerful tool in advocacy. The media can set agendas for the public simply by reporting an issue and they can influence public debate by what they choose to cover and the way they frame the issues. The media can also pressure policy-makers or decision-makers and ordinary citizens to act in a certain way. They can also project certain values which people then imbibe.

In particular, the media can play a critical role in raising public awareness and understanding of the issues of impunity which the Stop Impunity Nigeria Campaign is concerned with. In adopting a strategy of co-opting this media capacity, the Campaign is also seeking to build a body of knowledge about how the media actually covers the issues.

But the overriding expectation of the Campaign is that reports of the findings from the monitoring exercise will provide a barometer for the media as an institution as well as individual media organizations, to measure their performance in reporting on issues of impunity and undertake voluntary adjustments to improve the coverage of such issues, as part of their contributions to the campaign against impunity in Nigeria.

We hope that these monthly reports can help to make this a reality.

Edetaen Ojo

Executive Director, Media Rights Agenda

Introduction

This is the third report in the monitoring of media reportage of issues of impunity in ten Nigerian newspapers.

The exercise tracked news and other types of reports in ten selected newspapers, collated and analyzed the contents.

The broad purpose of the exercise was to provide independent and objective data on media coverage of issues of impunity. The project monitored the amount of coverage given to debates and discourses on issues of impunity; focusing on the four thematic areas namely 'Public Finance Management', 'Electoral Process', 'Rule of Law', and 'Patriotism, Ethical and Civic Responsibility'. It also monitored reportage of the 'Stop Impunity Nigeria (S.I.N.) Campaign and the omnibus 'Others'.

The project framework was designed in the context of the Stop Impunity Nigeria (S.I.N.) Campaign being carried out by four implementing partners: Media Rights Agenda (MRA), Human Development Initiative (HDI), Community Life Project (CLP) and Centre for Social Justice (CSJ). The S.I.N. Campaign also has the National Orientation Agency (NOA), Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) and the National Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (NSCIA) as collaborating organisations.

It monitored these issues daily on the ten selected daily newspapers namely: The Punch, The Guardian, The Nation, Vanguard, Daily Trust and Daily Sun. The other newspapers are ThisDay, Leadership, Daily Independent and National Mirror.

Ten newspapers, all privately-owned, are selected for the monitoring but they cut across different types of ownership including political, ethnic and economic diversity.

The objective of the exercise is to monitor media coverage of issues of impunity in the selected newspapers.

Specifically, the exercise

- Identified the types of impunity issues that are covered by the selected newspapers.
- Tracked, analysed and documented the amount of space given to report issues of impunity in the selected newspapers
- Tracked, analysed and documented the frequency of media reportage of the thematic focus of Stop Impunity Nigeria (S.I.N.) Campaign.
- Tracked, computed, analysed and documented the prominence given to reportage of issues of impunity in the selected newspapers.
- Reviewed media coverage of issues of impunity in the selected newspapers to determine if they are getting adequate coverage.
- Reviewed media coverage of issues of impunity in the selected newspapers to identify existing gaps and addressing them and
- Reviewed media coverage of issues of impunity in the selected newspapers to identify and proffer ways of increasing media reportage of issues of impunity, among others.

Findings

Reports Published by Newspapers

In the monitoring of newspapers' reportage of issues of impunity in August 2013, a total of 424 relevant items were identified as published dealing with the issue by the ten newspapers.

Vanguard newspapers published the highest number of relevant materials on issues of impunity; it published a total of 56 items which accounted for 13% of total items identified as relevant to the issue of impunity. Following on its heels in second place was the National Mirror which published 52 relevant items and which account for 12% of the total for the month.

In third place was Daily Sun newspapers which published 51 relevant items and which also accounted for approximately 12% of total relevant items on impunity in August 2013. Daily Trust newspapers published the fourth highest number of relevant articles with 43 items which account for 10% of the total.

Both The Nation and ThisDay newspapers occupy fifth position. They each published 41 relevant articles on the issue of impunity and both contributed approximately 10% apiece of the total identified as published on issues of impunity.

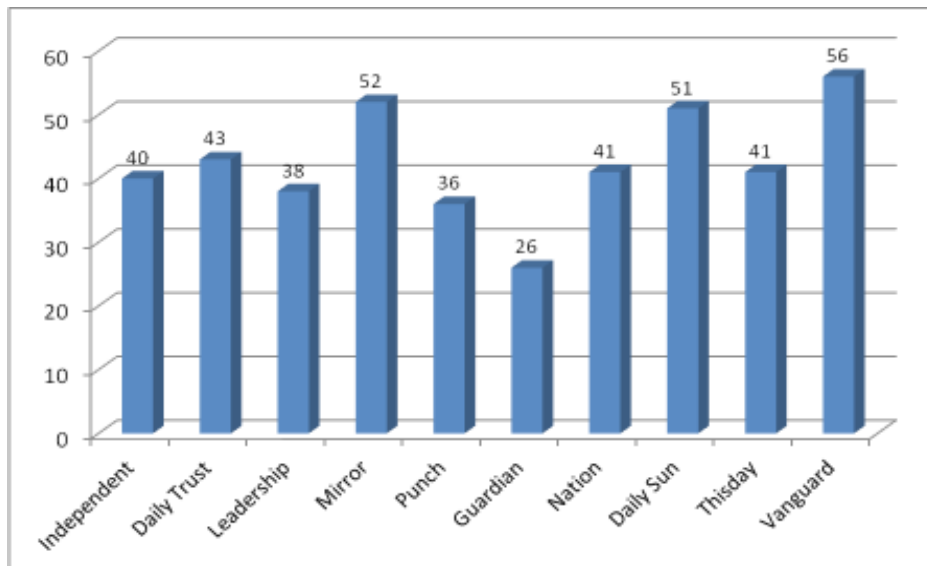
Following on their heels, Daily Independent published 40 relevant items which account for 9% of the total. Leadership newspapers came after with 38 articles accounting for approximately 9% of the total relevant items on impunity.

The Punch newspapers published 36 relevant items which again account for approximately 9% of the total relevant items. The Guardian newspapers published the least number with 26 relevant items which make up 6% of the total relevant items identified as published by the ten newspapers in August 2013.

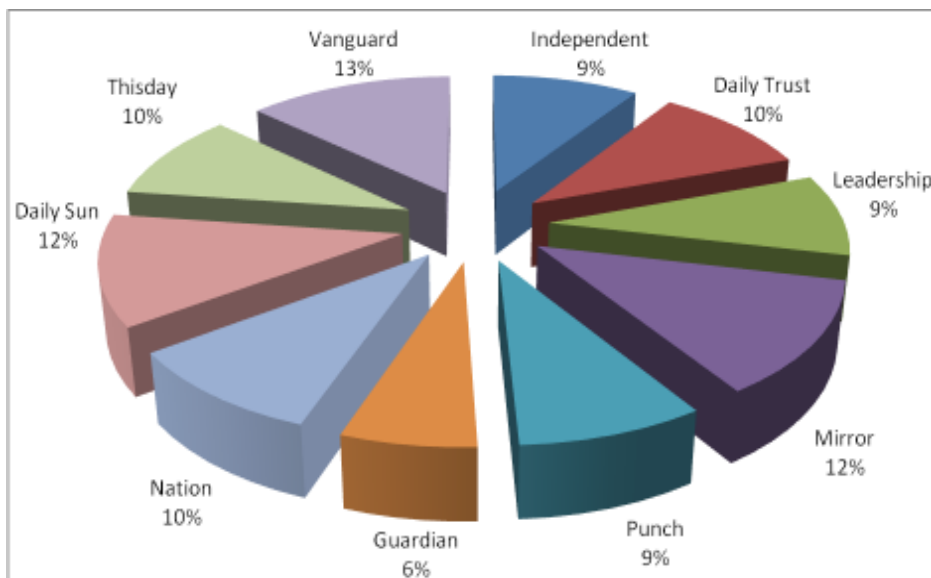
The table below shows the numbers of relevant items published by each of the newspapers monitored and how many of each of the thematic areas in August 2013

S.N.	Publications	Electoral Process	Others	Patriotism, E&CR	PFM	Rule Of Law	S.I.N Campaign	Total
1.	Independent	3	0	21	0	14	2	40
2.	Daily Trust	0	0	25	1	17	0	43
3.	Leadership	1	0	28	1	8	0	38
4.	Mirror	0	0	26	2	24	0	52
5.	Punch	0	0	19	1	16	0	36
6.	Guardian	0	0	18	1	5	2	26
7.	Nation	0	0	22	1	18	0	41
8.	Daily Sun	0	0	29	1	21	0	51
9.	Thisday	2	1	22	2	12	2	41
10.	Vanguard	1	4	28	2	16	5	56
	Total	7	5	238	12	151	11	424

The chart below shows the numbers of relevant items published by each of the newspapers monitored in August 2013



The chart below shows the percentages of relevant items published by each of the newspapers monitored in August 2013



Reports Published on Thematic Areas

Reportage of issues of impunity in the thematic area 'Patriotism, Civic and Ethical Responsibilities' got the highest media coverage as it recorded the highest number of reports. A total of 238 of the 424 reports were on this thematic area. This number accounted for 56% of the total of articles relevant to impunity that were published in August 2013.

There were 151 items published on the thematic area 'Rule of Law' which constituted 35.6% of the total published this month. It came second, following the thematic area 'Patriotism, Civic and Ethical Responsibilities'.

Coming a far third were reports on the thematic area 'Public Finance Management' which were 12 and account for 2.83% of the total relevant items identified and monitored. Following closely on its heels were reports on the 'Stop Impunity Nigeria (S.I.N.) Campaign' which were 11 and which account for 2.59% of the total.

Identified relevant items published on the thematic area 'Electoral Process' were seven and these account for 1.65% of the total relevant items published on issues of impunity.

Identified relevant items published on the omnibus ‘Others’ were five and these account for 1.17% of total items identified as published on the issue of impunity in August 2013.

The chart below shows the numbers of reports published on each of the thematic areas in August 2013



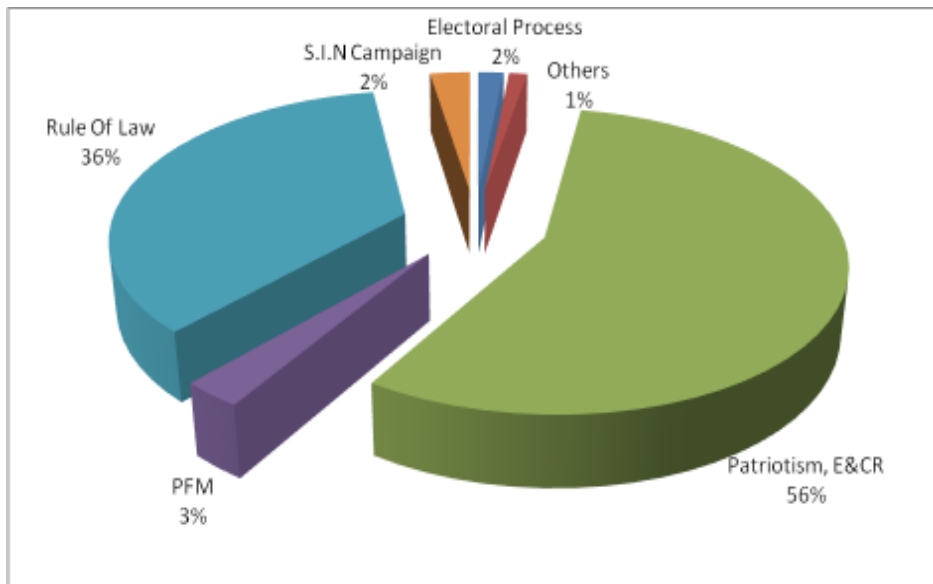
Keys

Patriotism E & CR - Patriotism, Civic and Ethical Responsibilities

PFM - Public Finance Management

S.I.N. Campaign - Stop Impunity Nigeria Campaign

The chart below shows the percentages of reports published on each of the thematic areas in August 2013



Space Allocated by Newspapers

The ten newspapers allocated a combined 22,974.59 in² space to publishing identified relevant reports on issues of impunity in August 2013. At an average of 145 in² space constituting a newspaper page, this means the papers devoted 158.44 pages to publishing relevant reports. This is less than the space and pages devoted by the papers in July.

National Mirror newspapers allotted the biggest space to publish identified relevant reports on issues of impunity. National Mirror titles used 4,214.29 in² space to report issues of impunity in August. That space accounted for 18.34% of the total space used by all the newspapers to report issues of impunity in August. This also amounts to a total of 29.06 pages of items on the issues during the month.

Second in line is ThisDay which used 2,775.56 in² space to report the issues and accounting for 12.08% of the total space used to publish issues of impunity. This comes to a total of 19.14 pages used to publish relevant reports in August.

The Sun titles allotted 2,604.79 in² space to publishing reports on issues of impunity. This figure translates to 11.34% of the total space and approximates to 18 pages of these reports.

The Punch newspapers allotted the 4th biggest space to publishing reports on issues of impunity with 2,570.98 in² space giving them 11.19% of the total space allotted and accounting for 17.73 pages of publication.

Vanguard newspapers used 2,367.35 in² space to publish identified relevant items and this accounted for 10.3% of the total space used by all ten newspapers to publish identified relevant on issues of impunity. Thus it published its relevant items in 16.32 pages.

The Nation newspaper titles came 6th in terms of the amount of space used by the newspapers: The Nation used 2,335.22 in² space to publish identified on issues of impunity. For this it took 10.16% of the total space and amounted to 16.10 newspaper pages.

The Guardian newspapers allotted 2,093.82 in² space or 14.44 pages which accounts for 9.11% of the total space used by the ten newspapers.

Daily Trust newspapers allocated 1,684.17 in² space which accounts for 7.33% of the total space used and amounting to 11.61 newspaper pages.

Leadership and Daily Independent newspapers come at the bottom of the table in terms of space used to publish relevant items on issues of impunity.

While Leadership newspapers allotted 1,299.19 in² space or 5.65% of the total space, Daily Independent newspapers gave 1,029.19 in² space or 4.48% of the total space. In pages, Leadership used approximately 9 pages while Daily Independent used approximately 7 pages.

Table showing total space, in square inches (in²) allocated the different thematic areas by the ten newspapers monitored

S.N.	Publications	Electoral Process	Others	Patriotism, E&CR	PFM	Rule Of Law	S.I.N Campaign	Total
1.	Independent	54.05	0	438.04	0	438.03	99.07	1029.19
2.	Daily Trust	0	0	730.981	29.44	923.75	0	1684.17
3.	Leadership	21	0	781.001	33.84	463.355	0	1299.19
4.	Mirror	0	0	2186.32	62.9	1965.07	0	4214.29
5.	Punch	0	0	1478.229	70	1022.76	0	2570.98
6.	Guardian	0	0	1652.334	15.81	221.275	204.4	2093.81
7.	The Nation	0	0	1151.82	49.84	1133.56	0	2335.22
8.	Daily Sun	0	0	1362.282	24.79	1217.72	0	2604.79
9.	Thisday	171.39	54.54	1333.965	167.95	816.745	230.979	2775.56
10.	Vanguard	22.69	132.118	1033.693	57.54	916.961	204.352	2367.35
	Total	269.13	186.65	12,148.66	512.11	9119.22	738.80	22,974.59

Chart showing total space allocated the different thematic areas by the ten newspapers monitored

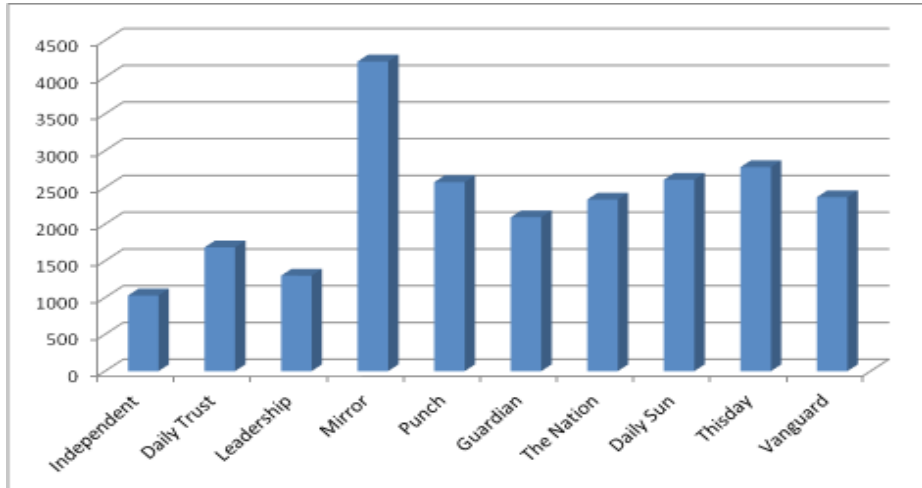
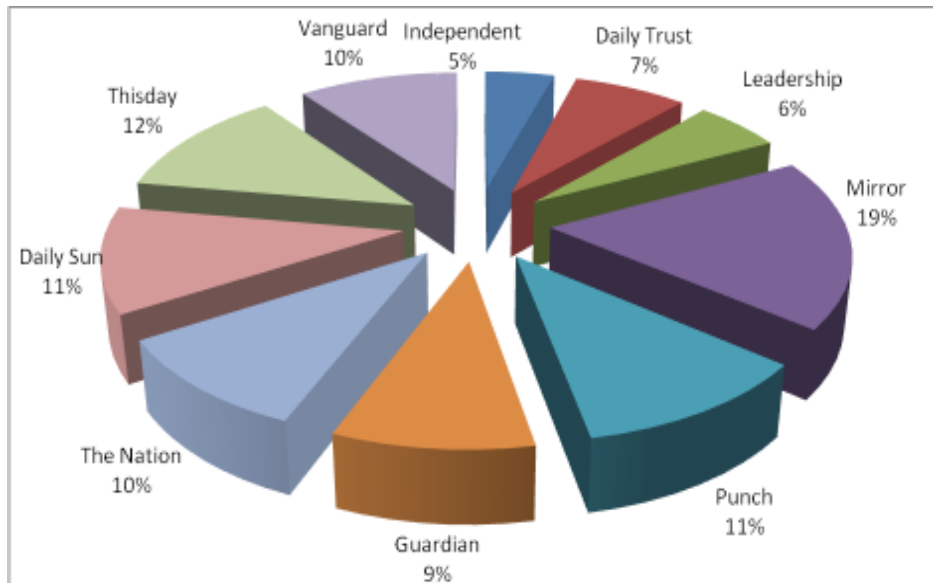


Chart showing percentages of the space used by the ten newspapers to report issues of impunity



Space Allocated to Thematic Areas

Media reports of issues of impunity on the thematic area 'Patriotism, Civic and Ethical Responsibilities' were given the biggest space by the newspapers in August. They were given 12,148.66 in² space which accounted for approximately 53% of the total space allotted to reporting issues of impunity. The space also translates to 83.78 newspaper pages for that thematic area.

Identified relevant items on the thematic area 'Rule of Law' got the second biggest publication space by the newspapers. Relevant items on this thematic area were published in 9,119.22 in² space and the space accounted for approximately 40% of the total space used to publish relevant reports on issues of impunity. This means the papers gave it approximately 63 newspaper pages.

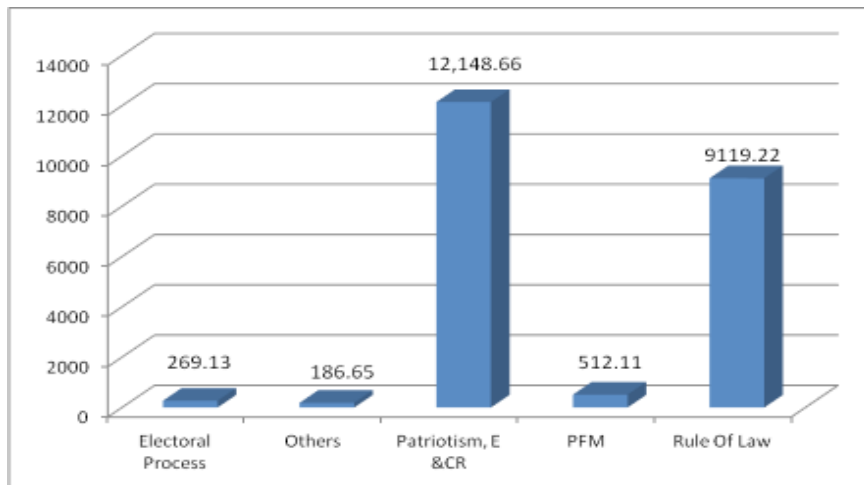
None of the rest four thematic areas was allotted even as much as 10% of the space given to any of the preceding two thematic areas.

Publications on the Stop Impunity Nigeria (S.I.N) Campaign, which came third in the amount of space it got was reported in 738.80 in² space accounting for 3.21% of the total space allotted to publishing identified reports. It also translates to approximately five newspaper pages.

Identified items published on the thematic area 'Electoral Process' were given 269.13 in² space. This accounts for just 1.17% of the total space and comes to approximately two newspaper pages.

The omnibus 'Others' got the least space with 186.65 in² space which accounts for less than 1% of the total space allocated and, in terms of newspaper pages, amount to 1.28 pages.

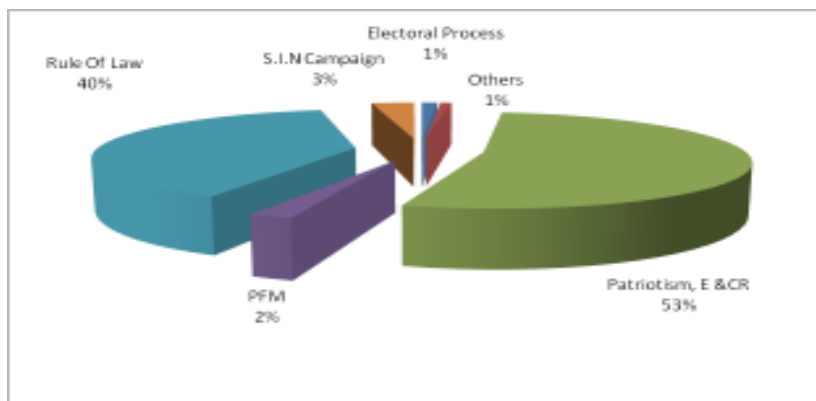
Chart showing total space (in square inches) allocated the different thematic areas



Keys

- Patriotism E & CR** - Patriotism, Civic and Ethical Responsibilities
- PFM** - Public Finance Management
- S.I.N. Campaign** - Stop Impunity Nigeria Campaign

Chart showing percentages of the space allocated the different thematic areas



Keys

- Patriotism E & CR** - Patriotism, Civic and Ethical Responsibilities
- PFM** - Public Finance Management
- S.I.N. Campaign** - Stop Impunity Nigeria Campaign

Page Prominence

The vast majority of the identified reports on the issues of impunity published by the newspapers were tucked inside the pages of the papers. A total of 382 which is 90% of the total identified items were published inside the pages of the newspapers. Two hundred and thirty one (231) of these or 54.48% of the total were published as 'Major Inside Page' stories while 151 which account for 35.61% were published as 'Minor Inside Page' stories.

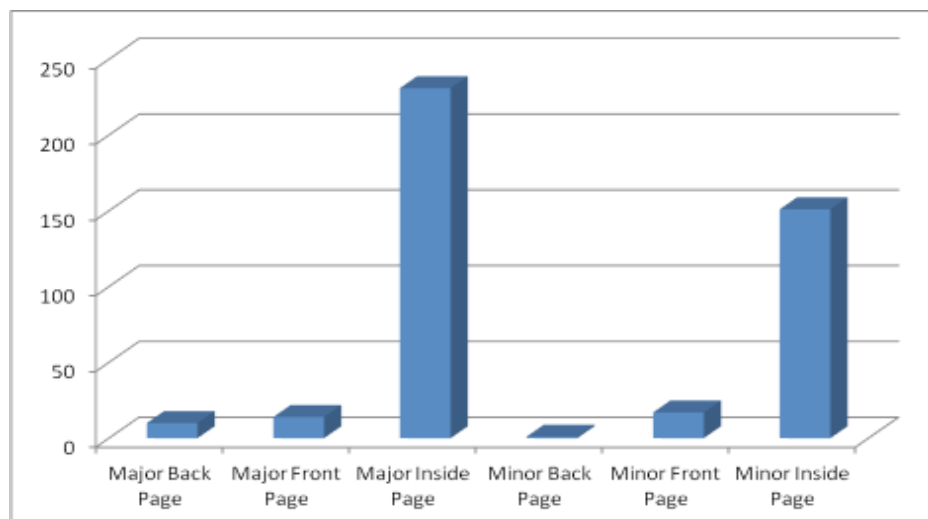
Front page stories totalled 31 and constituted just 7.31% of the reports identified. Of these, 14 or 3.30% of the total were 'Major Front Page' stories while 17 or 4% of the total stories were 'Minor Front Page' stories.

A total of 11 identified relevant reports which constituted 2.59% of the total 424 identified items were published in the back pages. Ten of these or 2.35% were 'Major Back Page' stories while only one, which constitutes less than 1% was a 'Minor Back Page' story.

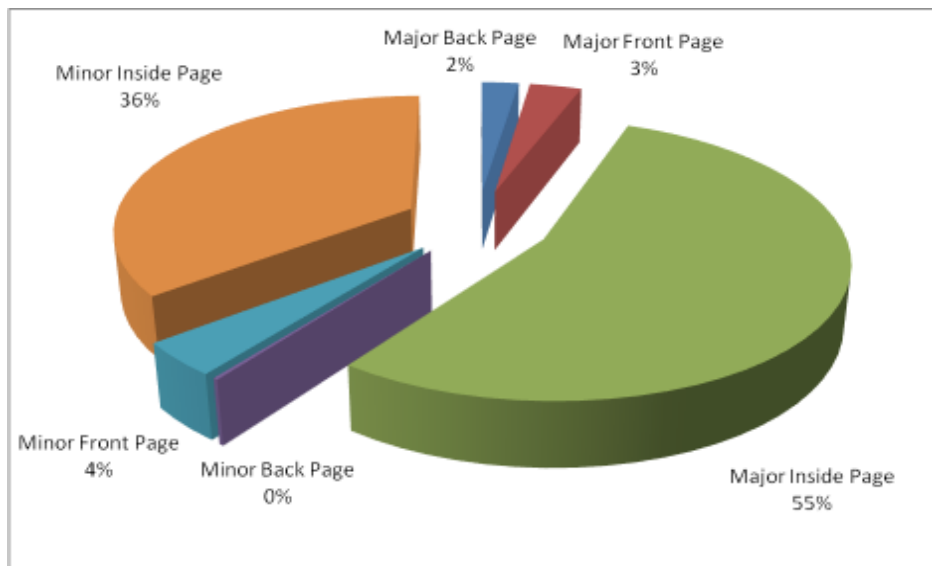
The table below shows the degree of prominence given to identified published items on issues of impunity in August 2013

Ser. No.	Publication	Major Back Page	Major Front Page	Major Inside Page	Minor Back Page	Minor Front Page	Minor Inside Page	Total
1.	Independent	1	1	16	0	2	20	40
2.	Daily Trust	0	0	26	0	3	14	43
3.	Leadership	0	1	15	0	0	22	38
4.	Natl Mirror	1	1	24	0	5	21	52
5.	Punch	0	0	22	0	0	14	36
6.	The Guardian	0	4	13	0	0	9	26
7.	The Nation	0	0	22	0	2	17	41
8.	The Sun	2	3	29	1	3	13	51
9.	Thisday	6	2	24	0	1	8	41
10.	Vanguard	0	2	40	0	1	13	56
	Total	10	14	231	1	17	151	424

The chart below shows the degree of prominence given to identified published items on issues of impunity in August 2013



The chart below shows the percentages of the degree of prominence given to identified published items on issues of impunity in August 2013



Type/Format of Reports

Apart from the page of publication of newspapers' reports, the type or format of reports were also considered to contribute to their prominence.

The majority of identified reports published were news stories. There were a total of 323 news stories published on issues of impunity and these accounted for 76.17% of the total number of reports identified in August.

Reports published as features came second: there were 35 relevant items published as features and they accounted for 8.25% of the total relevant items.

Opinion articles on issues of impunity published by the ten newspapers were 31 in number and these constituted 7.31% of all identified items published in August.

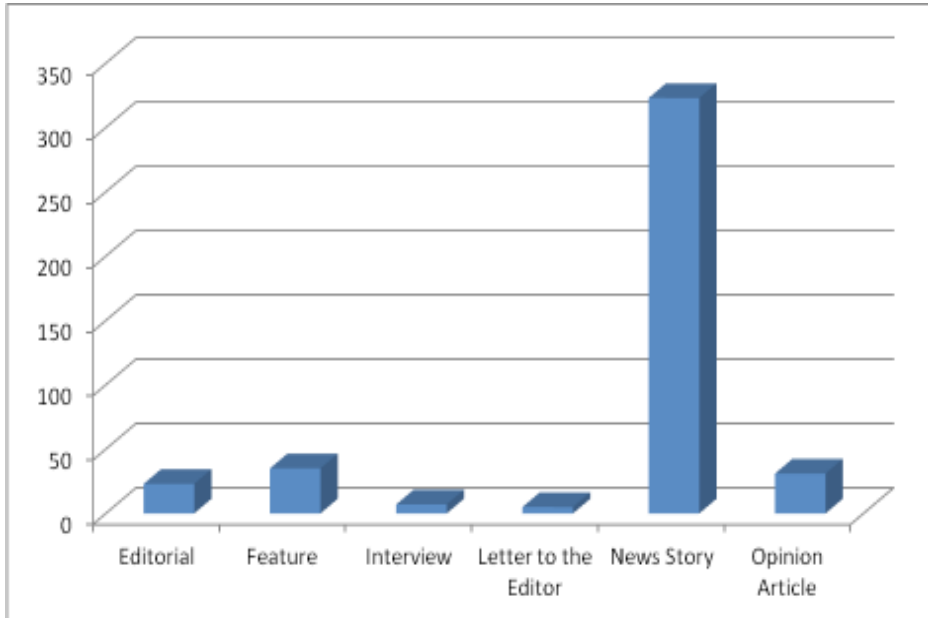
Editorials in the newspapers monitored were a total of 23 reports on issues of impunity published in August by. These represent 5.42% of all the identified relevant items published during the month.

A total of seven (7) interviews were published with subject matters reflecting issues of impunity, they represented 1.65% of the total relevant items. Letters to the Editor which dealt with issues of impunity were 5 and they accounted for 1.17% of total reports identified on the issue of impunity.

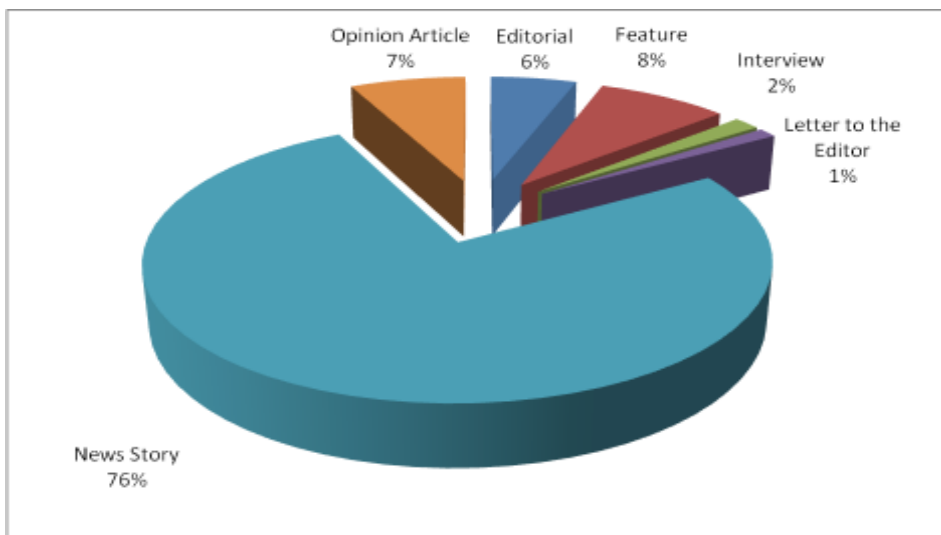
The table below shows the number of times identified items were published in each of the different publication types/formats

S.N	Publication	Editorial	Features	Interview	Letter to the Editor	News Story	Opinion Article	Total
1.	Independent	3	6	2	0	29	0	40
2.	Trust	0	7	2	0	32	2	43
3.	Leadership	1	2	0	0	34	1	38
4.	Mirror	0	9	0	0	43	0	52
5.	Punch	4	2	2	1	24	3	36
6.	Guardian	0	1	0	1	24	0	26
7.	Nation	7	0	0	1	30	3	41
8.	Daily Sun	5	0	0	1	40	5	51
9.	Thisday	3	7	0	0	22	9	41
10.	Vanguard	0	1	1	1	45	8	56
	Total	23	35	7	5	323	31	424

The chart below shows the number of times identified relevant reports were published in each of the different publication types/formats



The chart below shows the percentages relevant items were published in each of the different publication types/formats



Diversity of Reports

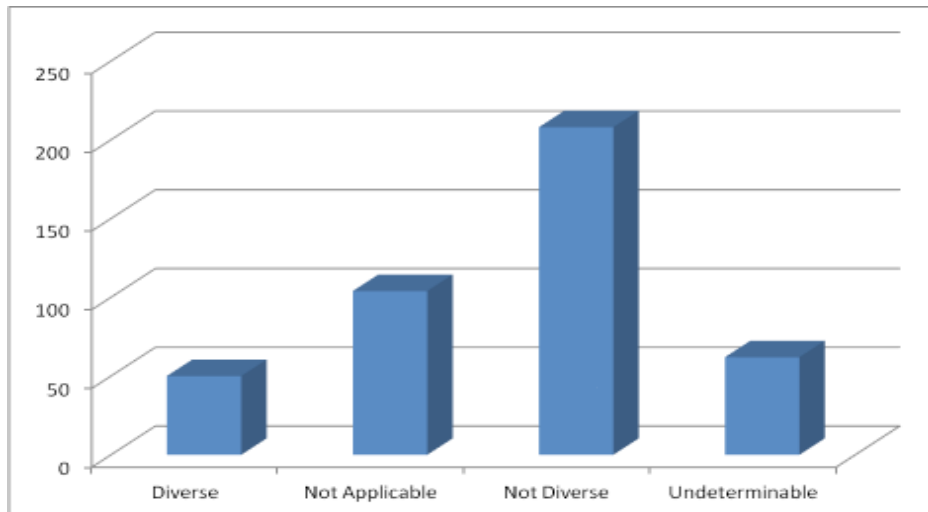
A vast majority of identified relevant items published were not diverse: in fact, of the 258 relevant items in which there should be diversity of sources, only 50 items or 19.37% of them were diverse. On the other hand, 208 reports (80.62%) of relevant reports ought to have diverse sources did not have them.

In 104 of the reports which were 24.52% of all the relevant items, the principle of diversity did not apply while for 62 items or 14.62% of them, their diversities were undeterminable.

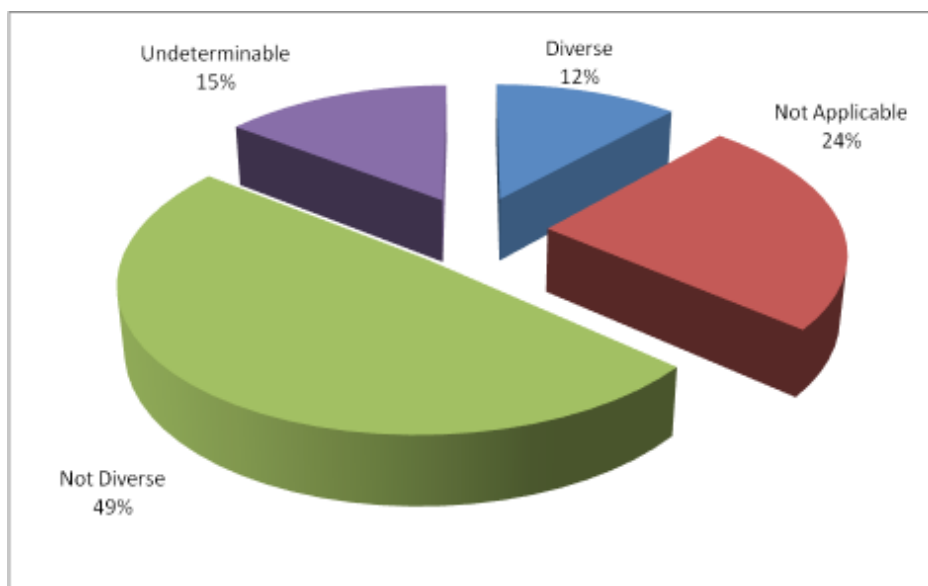
The table below shows the diversity or otherwise of published relevant items

Ser. No	Publication	Diverse	Not Applicable	Not Diverse	Undeterminable	Total
1.	Daily Independent	5	17	15	3	40
2.	Daily Trust	13	1	16	13	43
3.	Leadership	1	14	23	0	38
4.	National Mirror	10	15	26	1	52
5.	Punch	5	3	23	5	36
6.	The Guardian	1	11	13	1	26
7.	The Nation	1	11	22	7	41
8.	The Sun	2	11	31	7	51
9.	Thisday	11	6	15	9	41
10.	Vanguard	1	15	24	16	56
	Total	50	104	208	62	424

The chart below shows the diversity or otherwise of published relevant items



The chart below shows the percentages of diversity or otherwise of published relevant items



Photographs

A total of 216 photographs were published to accompany, elaborate or identify the issue or persons involved or talked about in identified reports published in August 2013.

National Mirror published the highest number of photographs with its 34 photographs followed by Daily Sun with 33 photographs; The Nation and ThisDay with 28 photographs each; Vanguard newspapers published 26 photographs while The Punch published 21 and Daily Trust published 20.

The Guardian newspapers published 11 photographs; Leadership published eight (8) while Daily Independent published seven (7).

Table showing the numbers of photographs published

Ser. No.	Publication	Total Photographs
1.	Daily Independent	7
2.	Daily Trust	20
3.	Leadership	8
4.	National Mirror	34
5.	The Punch	21
6.	The Guardian	11
7.	The Nation	28
8.	Daily Sun	33
9.	Thisday	28
10.	Vanguard	26
	Total	216

Observations and Recommendations

From the reportage on issues of impunity from the different newspapers monitored, we observe that ‘impunity’ has become a common currency in the vocabulary of media reports appearing in headlines and the bodies of reports.

This month, Vanguard newspapers published the highest number of relevant materials on issues of impunity; its 56 items accounted for 13% of the total items identified. The Guardian newspapers on the other hand published the least number with 26 relevant reports which make up 6% of the.

Reportage of issues of impunity in the thematic area ‘Patriotism, Civic and Ethical Responsibilities’ continue to receive the highest media coverage with a total of 238 of the 424 reports which constitute a whopping 56% of the total relevant reports published in August 2013.

The ‘Stop Impunity Nigeria (S.I.N.) Campaign’ also continued to generate media reportage and discourse. In August 2013, there were 11 media reports identified as published on it and they account for 2.59% of the total reports on impunity.

Implementing partners in the S.I.N Campaign need to leverage on the seemingly existing media concern about impunity in the land to increase media reportage of both its activities and discourse on the issue.

Although Vanguard newspapers published the highest number of relevant reports, National Mirror newspapers which published the second highest number of relevant items used the biggest space to report relevant materials. National Mirror titles used 4,214.29 in² space to report issues of impunity in August.

Relevant items published on the thematic area ‘Patriotism, Civic and Ethical Responsibilities’ were given the biggest space by the newspapers just as they accounted for most of the materials in terms of individual reports on the thematic area. They were given 12,148.66 in² space which accounted for approximately 53% of the total space allotted to reporting issues of impunity.

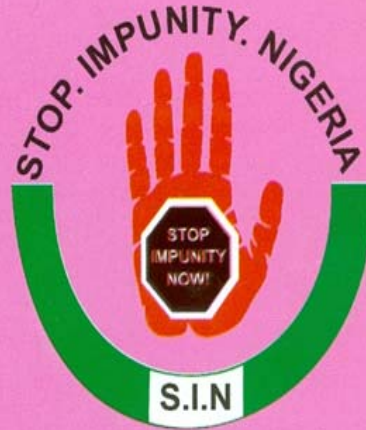
There is need to get the media to also focus more on reporting issues of impunity in other thematic areas aside 'Patriotism, Civic and Ethical Responsibilities' as they are equally important.

A total of 382 which is 90% of the total identified reports were published inside the pages of the newspapers, meaning majority of the relevant items were tucked inside the pages of the newspapers while 31 items which constituted just 7.31% of the entire identified reports were published as front page news.

However, what relevant reports lack in publicity based on the pages in which they were published, it gained in the format in which they were published. The majority of identified reports were published as news stories. There were a total of 323 news stories published on the issues of impunity and these accounted for 76.17% of the total items identified in August. News stories carry with them currency, relevance, impact, and timeliness and so assign priority to such items published by newspapers above other formats and they are usually the articles most readers focus on first and the most.

Of the 258 relevant reports in which there ought to be diversity of sources, only 50 - 19.37% of them were diverse. On the other hand, 208 items (80.62%) which ought to have diverse sources did not have them.

There is therefore a vital necessity for reporters to ensure diversity of their reports if not they would have ended up publishing reports which are not balanced in their sources and the views reflected.



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