

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



June 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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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

The broad purpose of the exercise is to provide independent and objective data on media coverage of issues of impunity. The project, among others monitored the amount of coverage given to debates and discourse on issues of impunity; focusing on the thematic areas: ‘Public Finance Management’, ‘Electoral Process’, ‘Rule of Law’, ‘Patriotism, Ethical and Civic Responsibility’, and the generic ‘Others’ in 10 selected daily newspapers. It also monitored media reportage of the on-going ‘Stop Impunity Nigeria’ (S.I.N.) Campaign.

The S.I.N. campaign is being implemented by four non-governmental organisations: Human Development Initiative (HDI), Media Rights Agenda (MRA), Community Life Project (CLP), and Centre for Social Justice (CSJ). The four implementing organisations are also partnering Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), National Orientation Agency (NOA) and the Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (NSCIA) in the Campaign. The S.I.N. Campaign was officially launched in Abuja, the Nigerian Federal Capital Territory on May 16, 2013

Impunity has been defined variously as follows: disregard for law, rule of law or socio-legal order; sense of immunity from operation of law or justice institutions; exemption or protection from punishment; absence of remedy; immunity from unpleasant consequences; and lack of access to effective justice etc. There is impunity in Nigeria and there is also a corresponding need to curb it hence the four implementing partners are collaborating on the campaign to eradicate impunity.

The objective of the exercise is to monitor media coverage of issues of impunity in 10 selected daily newspapers.

Specifically, the monitoring 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; and reviewed media coverage of issues of impunity in the selected newspapers to determine if they are getting adequate coverage, among others.

The newspapers selected and which are being monitored are: The Punch, The Guardian, The Nation, and Vanguard. The others are Daily Trust, Daily Sun, ThisDay, Leadership, Daily Independent, and National Mirror.

All the copies of the newspaper for the month were purchased and monitored. Findings were imputed into a specially designed data-base programme which was queried at the end of the month for results that were analysed and presented in narratives, tables and charts.

This is a pilot report of the exercise to monitor media reportage of issues of impunity. MRA will carry out the exercise for two years.

Findings

Reportage by the Newspapers

A total of 384 relevant reports were identified as published by the 10 newspapers combined from June 1 to June 30, 2013.

Daily Trust published the highest number of relevant items with a total of 77 reports on the issue of impunity that constitute approximately 20% of the total identified published relevant items for the month. It was followed by The Guardian newspaper which published 51 relevant reports: these constituted 13.2% of the total identified relevant reports for June.

In third place was Leadership newspaper which published 36 relevant reports that constituted 9.38%. It was closely followed by The Nation newspaper which published 35 relevant items that amount to 9.11%; Vanguard newspaper which published 34 relevant items that constituted approximately 9% of the total relevant items; ThisDay and The Punch newspapers both published 33 relevant materials on impunity each constituting 8.59% each of the total. Daily Sun newspaper followed closely with 31 published relevant editorial materials on impunity which amount to approximately 8% of the total of relevant reports published and identified in June.

The last two were Daily Independent which published 28 materials on impunity amounting to 7.29% and National Mirror which published 26 relevant items that constituted 6.77% of the total.

The table below shows the numbers of times issues of impunity were identified as reported by the 10 newspapers monitored in June 2013 and how many of each of the thematic areas of the ‘Stop Impunity Nigeria’ Campaign

SN	Newspapers	Electoral Process	Patriotism, E & CR	PFM	Rule of Law	S.I.N. Campaign	Others	Total
1.	Independent	1	8	0	15	0	4	28
2.	Trust	1	14	14	38	0	10	77
3.	Leadership	1	19	0	12	3	1	36
4.	Mirror	0	13	0	11	0	2	26
5.	Punch	1	19	4	9	0	0	33
6.	Guardian	4	19	0	20	2	6	51
7.	Nation	1	28	3	2	1	0	35
8.	Sun	1	20	2	7	0	1	31
9.	ThisDay	1	14	2	16	0	0	33
10.	Vanguard	1	20	0	12	0	1	34
	Total	12	174	25	142	6	25	384

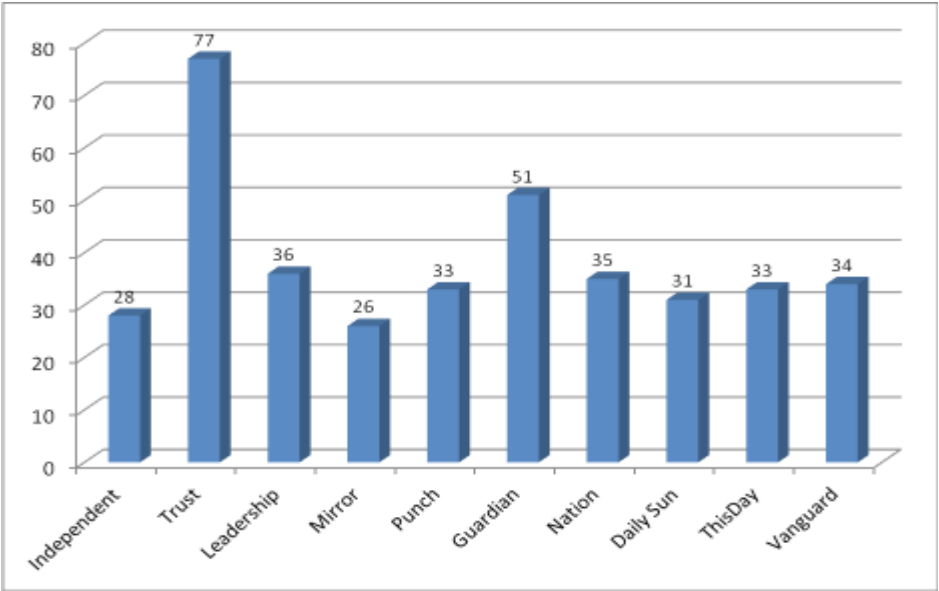
Key

Patriotism, E & CR – Patriotism, Ethical and Civic Responsibility

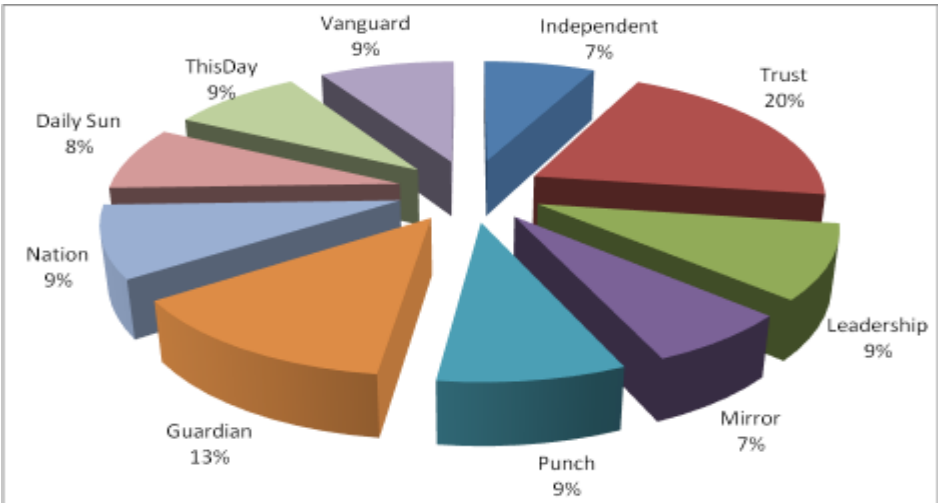
PFM - Public Finance Management

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

The graph below shows the numbers of times issues of impunity were identified as reported in June 2013 by the 10 newspapers monitored



The chart below shows the percentages of reportage of issues of impunity that were identified as reported in June 2013 by the 10 newspapers monitored

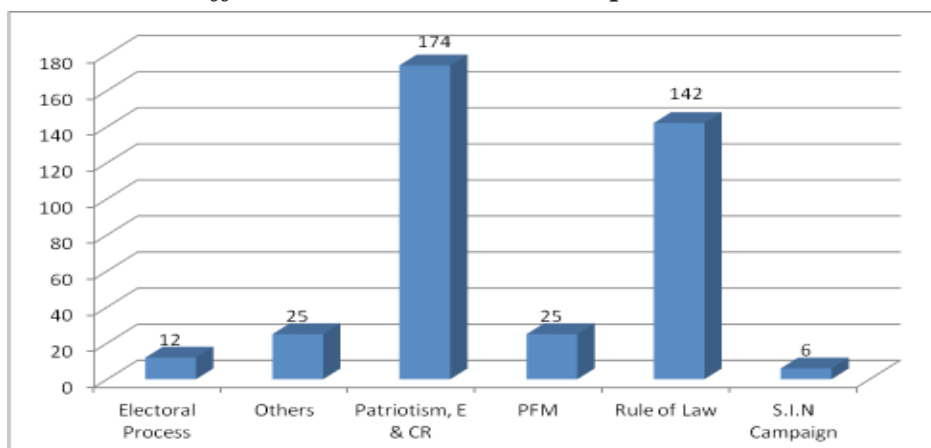


Reportage of Thematic Areas

The numbers and percentages of media reports of the thematic areas in June 2013 are as follows: There were a total of 174 reports on ‘Patriotism, Ethical and Civic Responsibility’ which accounted for 45.312% of the total relevant items identified and analysed. Another 142 reports were on ‘Rule of Law’ and it accounted for approximately 37% of the total reports on issues of impunity reported by the monitored newspapers in June. The thematic area ‘Electoral Process’ had a total of 12 reports which constituted 3.125% of the total media reportage monitored and analysed. For ‘Public Finance Management’, a total of 25 media reports were published and this amounted to 6.51% of the total relevant media reports.

There were 25 reports for the generic ‘Others’ which are media reports on issues of impunity which did not fall into any of the other five thematic areas. Reports on the generic ‘Others’ thematic area constituted 6.51% of the total reports for the month. There were six identified reports on the ‘Stop Impunity Nigeria’ (S.I.N.) Campaign in June which accounted for 1.56% of the total relevant items identified and analysed.

The graph below shows the numbers of times issues of impunity broken down into the different thematic areas were reported in June 2013



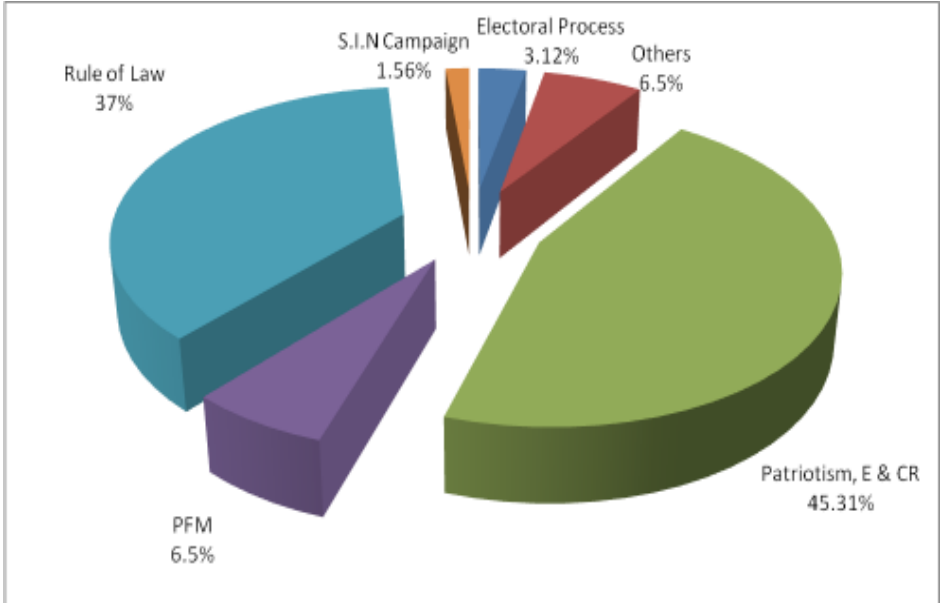
Key

Patriotism, E & CR – Patriotism, Ethical and Civic responsibility

PFM - Public Finance Management

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

The chart below shows the percentages of reportage of the different thematic areas of the Stop Impunity Campaign that were published in June 2013



Space Devoted to Reporting Relevant Issues

In June, the 10 newspapers combined devoted a total of 19,689.7 in² space to reporting issues of impunity.

Daily Trust newspapers again gave the biggest space to report issues of impunity in June: it used 3,520.82 in² space to report the relevant issues. This space constitutes 18% of the total space devoted by the ten newspapers to report issues of impunity in June. The Guardian newspaper allotted the second biggest amount of space to reporting issues of impunity with approximately 1,700 in² space which amounted to 14% of the total space devoted to publishing relevant items on impunity. In third place was Punch newspaper which devoted 2,325.18 in² space constituting 12% of the total space.

Following after Punch, in fourth place was Vanguard newspaper which used 2,229.89 in² space or 11% of the total space to publish pieces on issues of impunity.

The newspaper with the fifth biggest space reporting issues of impunity was ThisDay newspaper which allocated 1,931.42 in² space. This space was 10% of the total space used by all the newspapers to report impunity. In sixth position was Leadership newspaper which allotted 1,635 in² space to relevant items and this constituted 8% of the total space by the newspapers.

Daily Sun newspaper's 1,597 in² space gave approximately 8% of the total space, putting it in the seventh position and the National Mirror newspaper's space of 1,398.9 in² gave it 7% of the total space. Daily Independent allotted 1,254.32 in² while The Nation newspaper assigned 1,097 in² space both amounting to 6% of the total space apiece.

The table below shows the total space (in²) devoted by each newspaper to each of the thematic areas in June

S/N	Newspapers	Electoral Process	Patriotism, E & CR	PFM	Rule of Law	S.I.N. Campaign	Others	Total Space
1.	Independent	14.3	419.199	0	743.1019	0	077.72	1,254.32
2.	Trust	10.7	766.91	543.05	1926.91	0	273.25	3,520.82
3.	Leadership	18.96	870.64	0	659.6	54	31.9	1,635.1
4.	Mirror	0	770.3707	0	549.4838	0	79.1	1,398.95
5.	Punch	14.45	1298.14	250.36	762.23	0	0	2,325.18
6.	Guardian	273.4	641.03	0	1290.22	201.65	293.59	2,699.89
7.	Nation	10.21	955.69	96.86	23.62	10.71	0	1,097.09
8.	Sun	56.6	1024.4	100.9	376.2	0	39	1,597.1
9.	ThisDay	22.77	675.24	388.38	845.037	0	0	1,931.42
10.	Vanguard	11.6	1380.1573	0	765.87	0	72.252	2,229.87
	Total	432.99	8,801.77	1,379.55	7,942.27	266.36	866.81	19,689.76

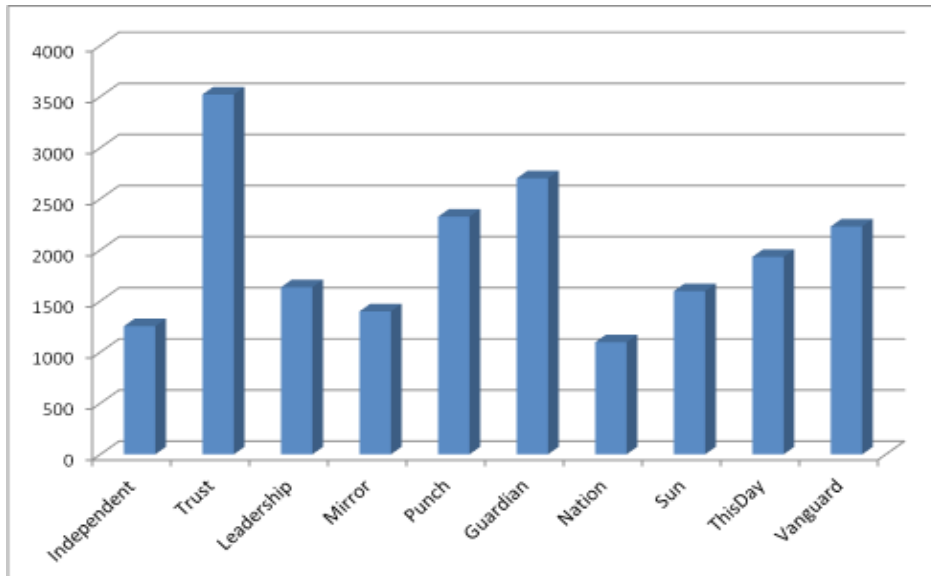
Key

Patriotism, E & CR – Patriotism, Ethical and Civic responsibility

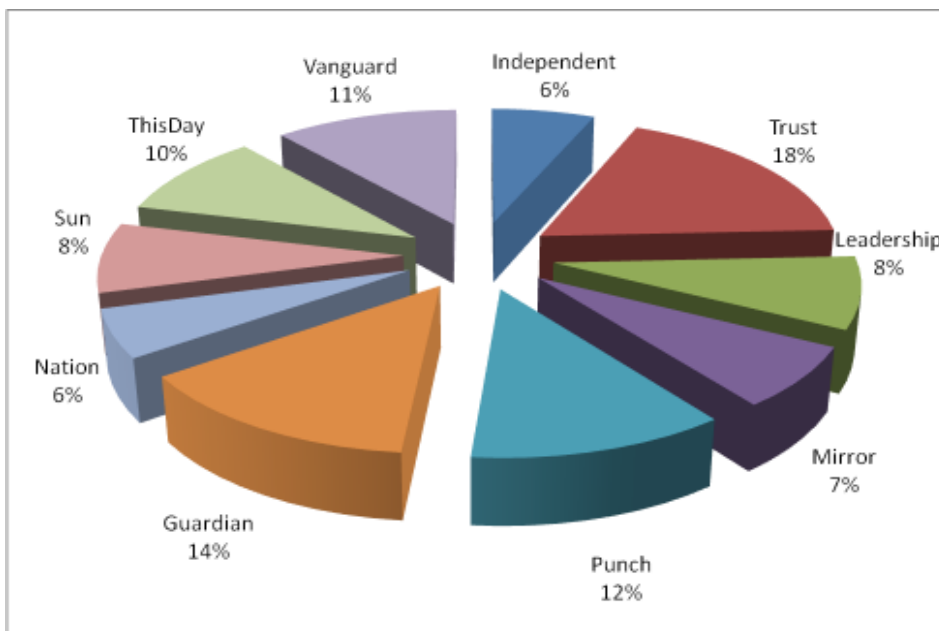
PFM - Public Finance Management

S.I.N. Camp. - ‘Stop Impunity Nigeria’ Campaign

The chart below shows the space (in²) devoted by each newspaper to publish identified relevant items in June



The chart below shows the percentages of the space devoted by each newspaper to publish identified relevant items in June

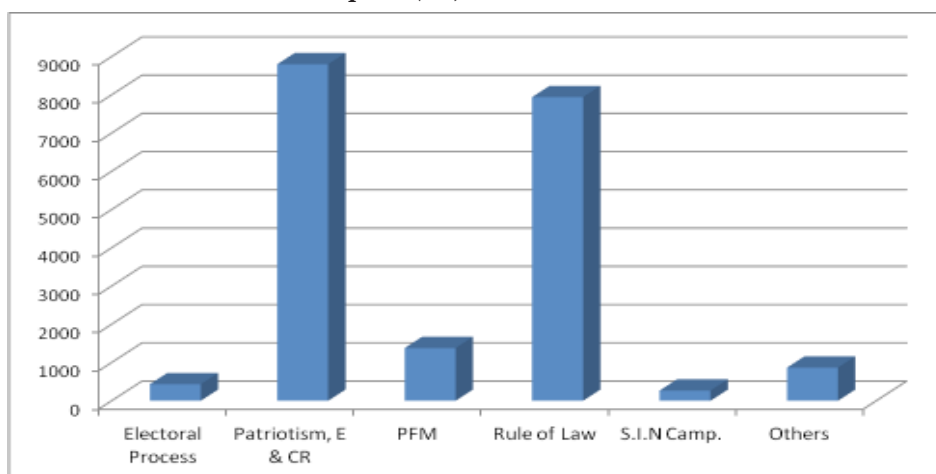


Space Allocated to Thematic Areas

The thematic area with the most space allotted was ‘Patriotism, Ethical and Civic Responsibility’ with a total of 8,801.9 in² which gave it approximately 45% of the total space allotted by the ten newspapers put together. Following closely were issues on impunity on the ‘Rule of Law’ thematic area which were allocated 7,942.27 in² space and constituted approximately 40% of the total space used to report issues of impunity during the period.

Coming a distant third was the thematic area ‘Public Finance Management’ which was given 1,379.55 in² space and constitutes a mere 7% of the total space used to publish relevant reports by the newspapers. It was followed by the generic thematic area ‘Others’ to which the newspapers allotted 866.81 in² space constituting 5% of the total space. Relevant reports on the thematic area ‘Rule of Law’ got approximately 433 in² space and amounted to 2% of the total space while media reports on the ‘Stop Impunity Nigeria Campaign’ were given 266.36 in² space constituting just 1% of the total space allocated to all the identified relevant items.

The chart below shows the space (in²) allocated to the thematic areas in June



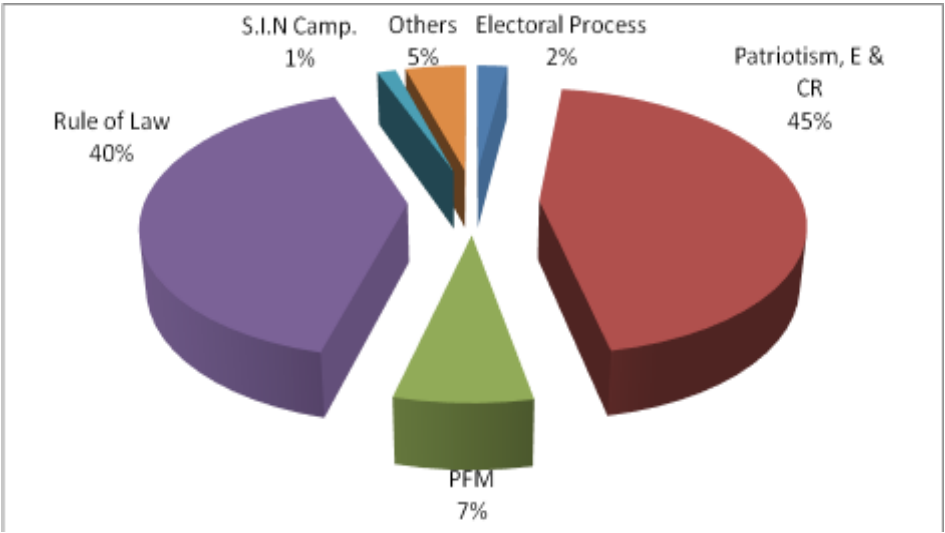
Key

Patriotism, E & CR – Patriotism, Ethical and Civic responsibility

PFM - Public Finance Management

S.I.N. Camp. - ‘Stop Impunity Nigeria’ Campaign

The chart below shows the percentages of the space allocated to the thematic areas in June



Prominence of Relevant Reports

This refers to the page of the newspaper in which relevant reports being analysed were published. In this case we have six categories namely Major Front page, Minor Front page, Major Inside page, Minor Inside page, Major Back page, and Minor Back page.

The majority of the identified relevant items were published as major inside page reports: there were a total of 174 relevant items published in this category and they constituted 45.3% of the total reports. Another 152 identified relevant items were published as minor inside page reports and these constituted 39.58% of the total report for the month.

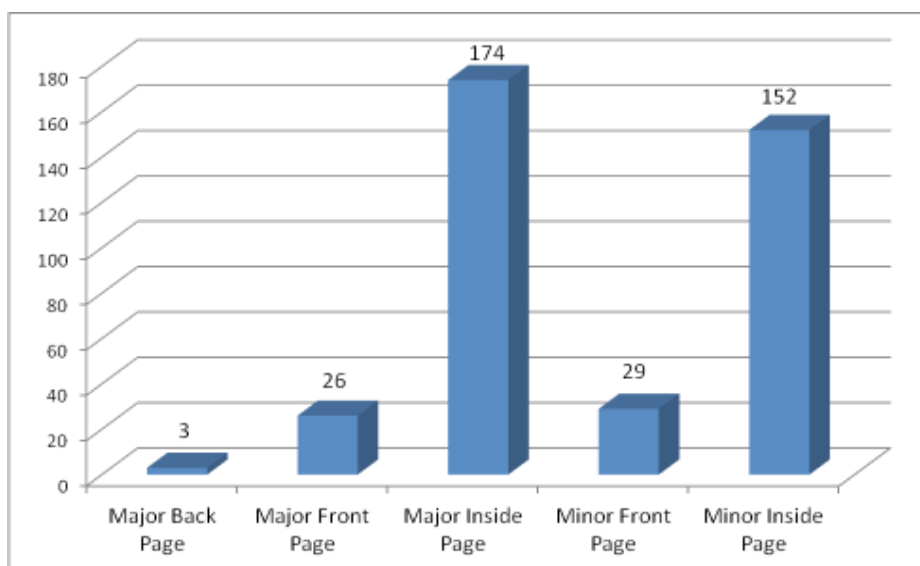
There were a total of 29 relevant items published as minor front page reports, these account for 7.55% of the whole. Twenty six (26) of the reports were published as major front page reports making it 6.77% of the total reports.

Only three relevant items were identified as published as major back page reports or 0.78% while no report was identified as a minor back page report.

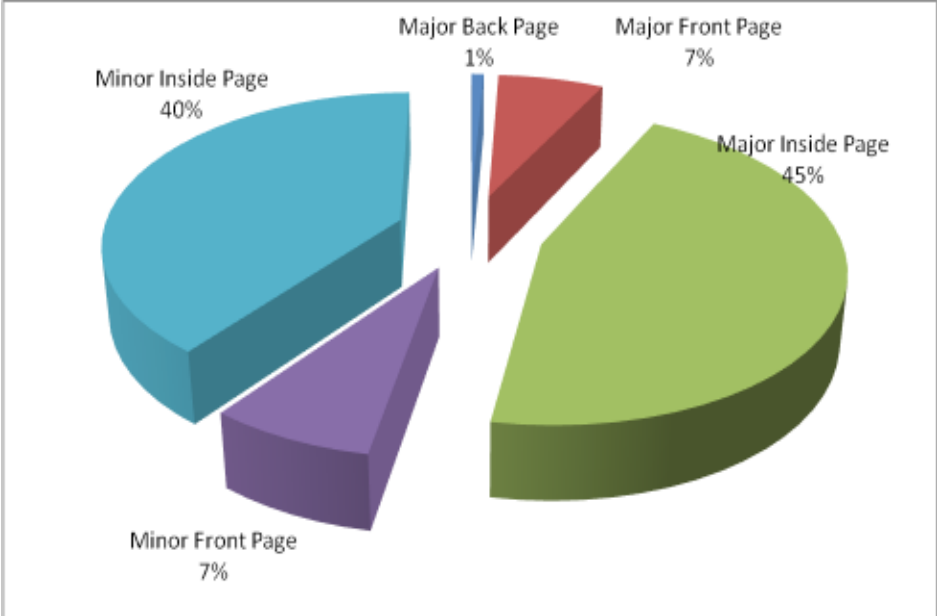
The table below shows the prominence of placement of published relevant items in the different newspapers in June

S.N	Publications	Major Back Page	Major Front Page	Major Inside Page	Minor Back Page	Minor Front Page	Minor Inside Page	Total
1.	Independent	1	4	7	0	6	10	28
2.	Trust	0	5	43	0	4	25	77
3.	Leadership	0	0	17	0	2	17	36
4.	Mirror	0	4	8	0	3	11	26
5.	Punch	1	4	16	0	1	11	33
6.	Guardian	0	1	24	0	4	22	51
7.	Nation	0	1	5	0	5	24	35
8.	Sun	0	5	15	0	2	9	31
9.	ThisDay	1	0	23	0	0	9	33
10.	Vanguard	0	2	16	0	2	14	34
	Total	3	26	174	0	29	152	384

The chart below shows the prominence of placement of published relevant items in June



The chart below shows the percentages of the prominence of placement of published relevant items in June



Types of Report

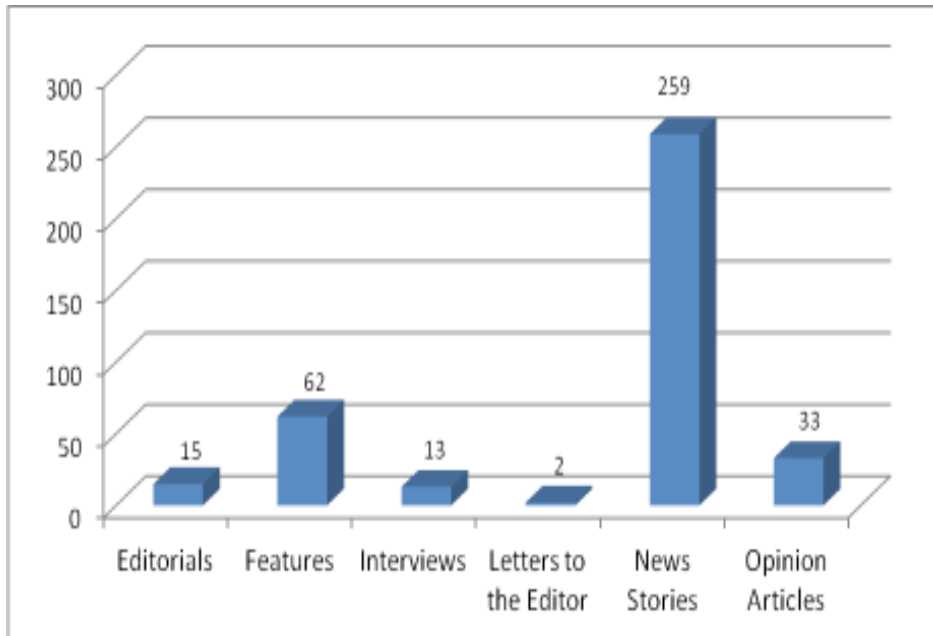
Identified relevant reports were published in different editorial formats: monitored editorials were identified as published in six formats including news stories, editorials, features, interviews, opinion articles and letters to the editor. The monitored relevant editorial items were categorized and analysed in the six editorial different formats listed above.

News stories constituted the bulk of the identified relevant reports there were a total of 259 news report and they constituted 67% of all the analysed editorial reports. Features stories were 62 and these constitute 16%; there were 33 opinion articles which amounted to 9%; there were 15 editorials and they made up 4%; interviews identified were 13 and they constitute 3% while there were two (2) letters to the editors which were on issues of impunity and they constitute just 1%.

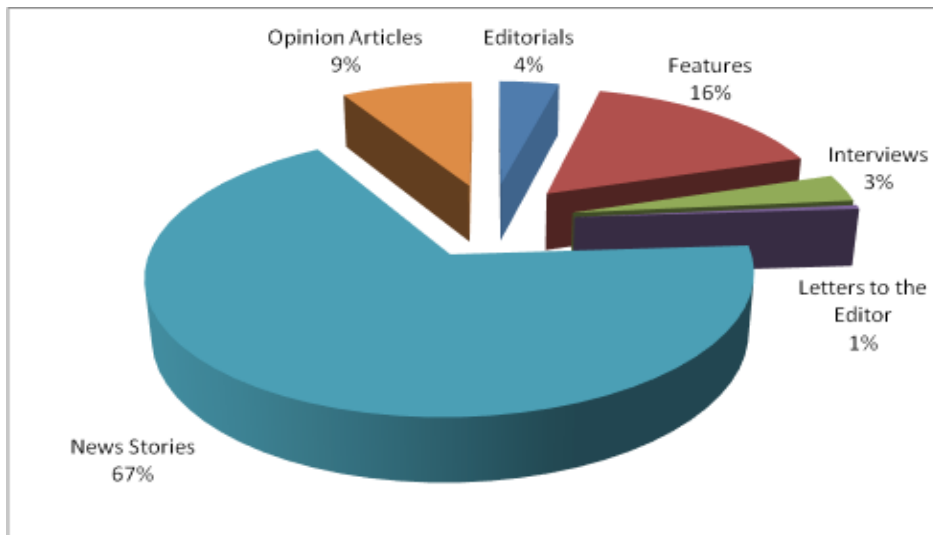
The table below shows the numbers of the various types of media reports that the newspapers used to publish identified relevant items in June

S.N	Publications	Editorials	Features	Interviews	Letters to the Editor	News Stories	Opinion Articles	Total
1.	Independent	1	2	0	0	23	2	28
2.	Trust	4	13	3	2	45	10	77
3.	Leadership	0	8	2	0	23	3	36
4.	Mirror	1	1	1	0	18	5	26
5.	Punch	1	2	2	0	27	1	33
6.	Guardian	3	16	2	0	23	7	51
7.	Nation	0	1	0	0	34	0	35
8.	Sun	1	2	0	0	28	0	31
9.	ThisDay	4	9	2	0	16	2	33
10.	Vanguard	0	8	1	0	22	3	34
	Total	15	62	13	2	259	33	384

The chart below shows the numbers of the various types of media reports that the newspapers used to publish identified relevant items in June



The chart below shows the percentages of the various types of media reports that the newspapers used to publish identified relevant items in June



Diversity of Relevant Reports

The exercise also monitored the diversity of sources used for the identified relevant items and analysed them to identify whether the relevant items had diverse sources; whether the rule of diversity did not apply to them; whether they are not diverse or whether their diversity is undeterminable.

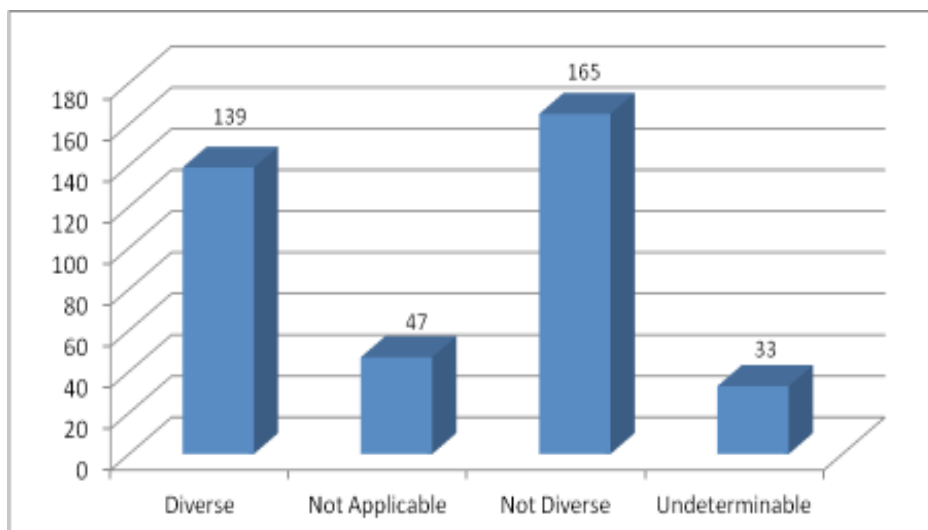
Majority of the identified published items, 165 in all were discovered to lack diversity: they were not diverse i.e. they did not employ the use of various sources in their pieces and the items found to lack diversity constituted approximately 43% of the total relevant items. Those that were found to be diverse came to 139 or 36.19% of the total identified relevant items.

A total of 47 items were considered as not needing diversity and they account for 12.5 of the total relevant items. For the rest 33 identified relevant items, their diversity was considered undeterminable and they account for 8.5% of the total identified relevant items.

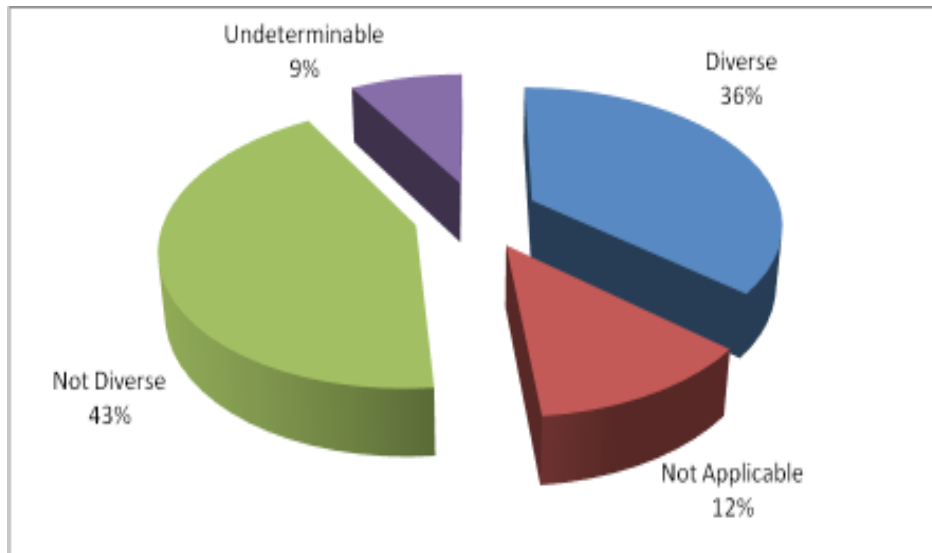
The table below shows the variety of diversity of the identified relevant items in June

ser. No.	Publications	Diverse	Not Applicable	Not Diverse	Undeter-minable	Total
1	Independent	9	7	9	3	28
2	Trust	28	1	32	16	77
3	Leadership	15	9	11	1	36
4	Mirror	6	10	5	5	26
5	Punch	13	1	18	1	33
6	Guardian	21	6	20	4	51
7	Nation	17	0	18	0	35
8	Sun	9	2	20	0	31
9	ThisDay	12	7	14	0	33
10	Vanguard	9	4	18	3	34
	Total	139	47	165	33	384

The chart below shows the variety of diversity of the identified relevant items published in June



The chart below shows the percentages of the levels of diversity of the identified relevant items items published in June



Photographs

A total of 185 photographs were published accompanying a number of the identified relevant items.

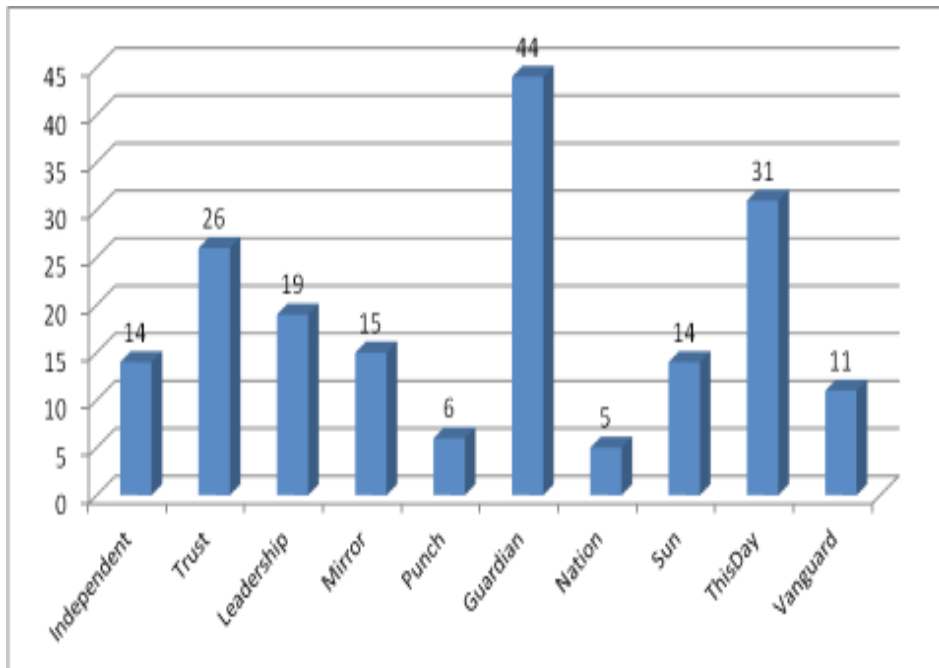
A breakdown of the number of photographs by the newspapers and what percentages they constituted follows thus: The Guardian published 44 photographs which constitutes 24%; ThisDay newspapers published 31 photographs which amounts to 17% of all photographs published; Daily Trust published 26 which accounts for 14%; while leadership published 19 which constituted 10%.

The numbers and percentages of photographs published by the other newspapers are: National Mirror's 15 photographs amount to 8%; Daily Sun's 14 photographs constitutes approximately 8%; Daily Independent's 14 photographs came to 7%; Vanguard's 11 gave it approximately 6%; Punch's 6 photographs and The Nation's 5 gave both approximately 3% each

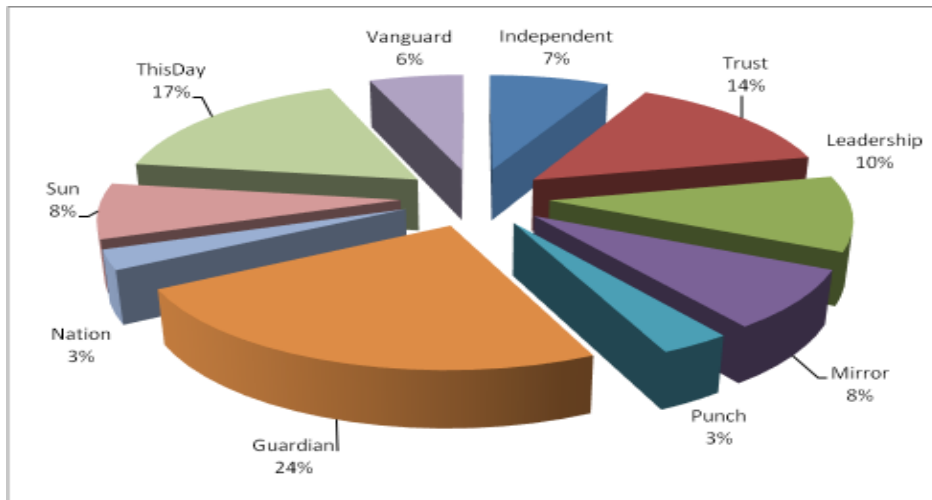
The table below shows the number of photographs published by the newspapers and what percentage they constituted of the whole

Ser. No.	Publications	Numbers of Photographs Published	Percentages of Photographs Published
1	Independent	14	7
2	Trust	26	14
3	Leadership	19	10
4	Mirror	15	8
5	Punch	6	3
6	Guardian	44	24
7	Nation	5	3
8	Sun	14	8
9	ThisDay	31	17
10	Vanguard	11	6
	Total	185	100%

The chart below shows the numbers of photographs published by the newspapers



The chart below shows the percentages of photographs published by the newspapers



Conclusion and Recommendations

On the average, 12.8 or approximately 13 editorial items were published daily on issues of impunity in Nigeria. In other words, issues of impunity were matters of discourse and debates in Nigerian media and were always on the agenda of the media. Daily Trust newspapers published the highest number of relevant items: it published 77 relevant items while National Mirror which published the least published 26 items.

All the newspapers reported on issues of impunity and on all the thematic areas.

In addition to publishing the highest number of relevant items on impunity, Daily Trust newspapers also allotted the biggest space to publishing these items. Intentionally or unintentionally, the Daily Trust gave the greatest prominence to issues of impunity.

The thematic area ‘Patriotism, Ethical and Civic Responsibility’, was allocated the widest amount of newspaper space as well as being published the highest number of times by the newspapers.

Reports on impunity did not receive enough major front-page headlines as only 26 of the reports or a mere 6.77% of the total reports were published as major front page reports. On the other hand, majority of the identified relevant items, 174 in all or 45.3% were published as major inside page reports. Again, a large number of the relevant items, 152 or 40% were minor inside page. On the whole, 85% of the identified relevant items were hidden inside the pages of the newspapers while only 14% were devoted to both major and minor front page reports and one percent as to major back page.

Most of the identified relevant items were considered as lacking in diversity of sources: 165 of the total reports which constitute 43% were not diverse while 139 of the reports or 36% were considered as diverse.

Clearly, the report has shown that more attention is paid to issues related to “Patriotism, Ethical and Civic responsibilities” than any of the other four categories.

This reflects that impunity in the month of June as captured on print media in this category covers the general public as impunity perpetrators. This report was majorly covered under news stories and it represents the decay in society whereby citizens that ought to uphold the law are the major perpetrators of impunity.

There was minimal reporting of impunity in the “Electoral Process” and a higher reporting of impunity in ‘Public Finance Management’. The low reporting of issues of ‘Electoral Process’ can be attributed to the fact that the 2015 elections are two years away. This does not mean that pre-election activities have not resumed in the country but it is not as intense as it will be in 2014 and ultimately 2015. In all the newspapers monitored, The Guardian had the highest percentage of reported impunity cases with pictures. The Guardian and Daily Trust are ahead of the other newspapers in their reportage of issues of impunity. It is recommended that newspapers like Daily Independent and National Mirror improves on covering issues of impunity.

Going by the high level of impunity in Nigeria, the media should set an agenda to constantly put it constantly on its table to persistently report on it and point the way to addressing it. Every segment of the Nigerian society has its duty to see to the eradication of impunity in Nigeria and the media has a role to set the agenda for debate on the issue of impunity and to provide the platform for a robust debate on eventually eradicating impunity.

Reports on issues of impunity deserve more major front page headline, considering the weight and amount of damage impunity does to the social, economic and political sectors of the nation. The newspapers will do well to give issues of impunity more front page prominence so as to attract, mobilise and move the critical mass.

More of the published reports on impunity should have diversity of sources as they fall into issues which can rightly be considered as having controversy. Journalists should therefore seek various views in order to get a balanced report that will enable the reading public to make informed judgments.

The campaign itself was launched in June 2013 and the media coverage of the campaign thus far can be increased even if it is not doing badly. Impunity is the fuel that inflames other societal ills and so coverage of issues of impunity needs to be stepped up. This will help throw more light on the S.I.N. Campaign and impunity issues: by putting impunity in the front burner for media houses, it is expected that there will be a significant decrease on impunity reported issues.



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