



A Self-Discourse Narrative on Survival of the Media in Africa

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Abstract

This paper on reflections on the survival of the media in Africa was basically to ascertain how safe the media environment has been in Africa because the Committee to Protect Journalists reported that 49 journalists and media workers were killed in 2022 in Africa alone. The startling statistics beg the question of why journalists were killed and how the media have survived over the years. The authoritarian theory of the media was used to explain the violence the media suffered under different regimes from the colonial government, and military dictatorships to the hybrid democracies of the 21st century when the internet and social media have democratised the media space, with governments feeling more threatened. Through qualitative literature review, the research found that 467 journalists have been killed in Africa while many suffered acts of violence, were jailed, or were detained while on duty in the last 30 years. It was also discovered that despite the Windhoek Declaration in Namibia, in 1991, to protect the media from interference by governments, and political and economic interests, the environment is still unsafe for journalism practice. Hence, this paper calls for vigilance on the part of the international community and non-governmental organisations. They should mount unrelenting pressure on African governments to provide a conducive environment for the media to perform their duty as enshrined in the constitution that mandated them to act as the watchdog of the society. This would encourage investigative and ethical principles of good journalism to thrive in Africa.

Keywords: Journalists, Military Dictatorship, Democracy, Windhoek Declaration, Press Freedom

Introduction

The media in Africa have come a long way. From 1859 when the first newspaper was published in South Africa to the advent of electronic broadcasting, and the digital era in the 21st century, the media have fought for survival. In the last 30 years, the media have survived assaults from various governments, which impacted journalists negatively, especially in the era of military dictatorships which fizzled out in most countries in Africa in the 1990s. Grim statistics in the White Paper on Global Journalism 1990-2020, published by the International Federation of Journalists, showed that of the 2658 journalists killed in the last 30 years, 467 were in Africa. Conroy-Krutz (2020) observed that 30 years after African governments eased control over broadcasting and publishing, the media in the continent faced increasing threats. There were new laws used to imprison journalists and closed down the media. Internet shutdowns and "social-media taxes" were increasingly used as common strategies to limit the mobilization and informational potentials of digital technologies (Conroy-Krutz, 2020). Similarly, the International Federation of Journalists (2020) lists Africa as the second region with the highest number of journalists in detention. Egypt has the highest number followed by Eritrea, Cameroon, and Morocco. Also, Nigeria, which had a history of killing the first editor-in-chief of *Newswatch* magazine with a letter bomb 36 years ago, is still listed as one of the most dangerous countries for journalists to practice after Mexico, Pakistan, Afghanistan, India, and Iraq (IFJ, 2020). Corroborating this, Amnesty International (2019) documented that at least four journalists were arrested in Nigeria in 2018, double the number in 2017. In 2019, security forces raided the Abuja and Maiduguri offices of the *Daily Trust* newspaper, arrested two reporters, and confiscated computers and mobile phones. In August 2022, the Nigerian Broadcasting Commission, NBC, revoked the licences of 53 broadcasting houses over outstanding debts. To checkmate the NBC, the Nigerian Guild of Editors (NGE) and the Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project (SERAP) promptly dragged the commission to court in August 2022. Prior to this, in October 2020, NBC had fined AIT, Channels, and Arise News television stations N3 million each for allegedly violating the the broadcasting code in the coverage of the #EndSARS protests in accordance with Section 5.6.9 of the Nigeria Broadcasting Code.

The threats to the media in Nigeria and Africa can be explained by the authoritarian theory of mass communication which posits that media are influenced and overpowered by power and authority in the nations (Bajracharya, 2018). Any government with an authoritarian mindset does not tolerate printing or broadcasting stories that could undermine its authority. Fred S. Siebert (1984) noted that the theory was almost automatically adopted by most countries when society and technology became sufficiently developed to produce what today we call the "mass media" of communication. The authoritarian theory is the basis for the press systems in many



modern societies and has continued to influence the actions of governments which theoretically adopted libertarian principles (Siebert, 1984). This theory has justified the actions of different government regimes in Africa ranging from the colonialists, leadership of states after independence, military dictatorships of the 1990s; the apartheid regime in South Africa to the emerging hybrid democracies to muzzling the media. This paper with information from a qualitative literature review chronicled the adversities the media have been through over the years. It captured their struggle for survival which made them resilient and defined their true essence. Thus, positioning them to support sustainable national development and democratic ethos in an ever-changing socio-economic milieu. It also canvassed for vigilance by media rights groups to ensure governments in Africa provide a conducive atmosphere for the media to practice without hindrance.

Evolution of Media in Africa

Mass media in Africa started during the colonial era in 1777. The first newspaper in Africa was called *Annonces, Affiches et Avis Divers pour les Colonies des Isles de France et de Bourbon*. It was a weekly established by Nicolas Lambert, a Frenchman (Sawe, 2017) and published in Mauritius. There was also the first Indian Ocean newspaper that contained local announcements, posters, and miscellaneous notices for the colonies of the Isles of France (Sawe, 2017). It was printed at the Royal Printing Office in Port Louis. The first South African bilingual weekly was published in English and Dutch between August 1800 and 1929 by the British South African government. It was called *Cape Town Gazette and African Advertiser*. It was followed by the South African Commercial Advertiser in 1824 and was seen as the first independent newspaper in South Africa. Being a powerful voice for democracy, the newspaper which was printed in both English and Dutch was censored several times by the governor of Cape Town. Another newspaper called the South African Journal and the *Nederduitsche Zuid-Afrikaanse Tydschrift* was established in 1824.

In Nigeria, Reverend Henry Townsend published *Iwe Irohin* in 1859 as the first newspaper in the country. BBCWorldService.com recorded that the first radio broadcasts in Sub-Saharan Africa were made in the early 1920s. The earliest recording of a radio broadcast was made in 1923 in South Africa. Mendelssohn's "Auf Fluegeln des Gesanges." Kenya had its radio station in 1927, followed by Mozambique in 1933, and Senegal in 1939. But these were only broadcasting programmes made for expatriates.

In Nigeria, the first radio and television stations were built by the regional government in the West in 1939 and 1959, respectively in Ibadan (C.C. Umeh, 1989). The stations were used to educate the people about development and the world and also served as a means for the opposition leader to address the people. Another radio

station was built in Kano in 1944. In the 1960s, television stations sprang up in the East and North of Nigeria including the one established in Lagos by the federal government (Umeh, 1989). All four stations were used for the political objectives of the regional and federal governments.

The trend of using broadcast stations to drive political messaging has continued in Nigeria even with the advent of the digital age heralded by the internet. However, Okusaga (2018) argued that the advent of the digital age changed the meaning of the word media as both media professionals and the news consumer became aware of new opportunities that came with digital technologies that changed the way media content is produced, distributed, and consumed around the world. Okusaga (2018) argued that the advent of the internet in the early 1990s gravely altered the media space with a huge consequence for media professionals and consumers of both print and broadcast media. It also affected media consumption habits, a reappraisal of old professional practices, agenda-setting platforms and status-conferral processes, the bursting of old media conventions, and the creation of new traditions (Okusaga, 2018).

The internet brought new innovations such as social media which has disrupted the traditional flow of information that celebrated the advantaged position of gatekeepers of news, information, and popular ideas which the mainstream print and broadcast media are known for but are now finding it hard to sustain (Okusaga, 2018). This changed the way news consumers see the world, especially with the advent of social media which spiked the spread of fake news and falsehood by some citizen journalists. This prompted governments to enact more anti-press laws to curb media abuse, especially online publications, and to muzzle digital rights (Okusaga, 2018). In Nigeria, the Cybercrime Act was enacted in 2015 to check cyberbullying, cyberstalking, and other internet-related crimes (Okusaga, 2018).

Another attempt at stifling the media in Nigeria occurred in 2022 when the National Information and Development Agency (NITDA) introduced the NITDA Code of Practice to combat disinformation and misinformation online. Expectedly, the Guild of Corporate Online Publishers (GOCOP) in Nigeria, the Nigerian Guild of Editors, and the Nigerian Union of Journalists issued different statements condemning the NITDA. The Guild of Corporate Online Publishers (GOCOP) in July 2022 expressed worry and described the NITDA Code as toxic, undemocratic, and a clear affront to free speech and civil liberties, which the media promotes. GOCOP emphasised that the Code will not make its members abdicate their Constitutional responsibility, stressing that this Code is unknown to the Constitution and against the principles of a free press, free speech, and civil liberties as enshrined therein.



GOCOP, in a press statement, published in *Realnews* stated that Nigeria is a democracy, and in a democracy, it is the duty of the National Assembly (Congress or Parliament) to make laws for the promotion of good governance. While it is the duty of the National Assembly to make laws, it is also the responsibility of the Judiciary to interpret the laws while the Executive is saddled with the execution of the laws and allied issues of leadership, GOCOP said. Therefore, the Guild concluded that “NITDA, an Executive agency, by issuing a Practice Code to regulate the media, has clearly over-reached itself and cannot be allowed to surreptitiously usurp the powers of the National Assembly” (GOCOP, 2022).

The Fate of the Media in Colonial and Post-colonial Africa

The media in Africa in the 21st century was largely influenced by its experiences in the colonial era because they were modelled after the liberal Western media but were not controlled by the powers then. Zaghlami (2016) wrote that the colonials used military forces as well as political and media means to convince and influence people's minds and hearts. The press, Zaghlami said, was one of the main arguments for the seduction and dissemination of the colonial culture and information. However, the media was not allowed to operate freely. Omu (1968) wrote that as British subjects, most of whom were trained in Britain, educated Africans assumed that they were entitled to enjoy a free press, which was an essential ingredient in the British political tradition. Their newspapers were almost unavoidably highly critical, and colonial administrators sought to control them in line with the authoritarian philosophy.

During this period, the colonial masters dictated what was published while silencing or jailing their opponents during the struggle for independence from Sub-Saharan Africa to East, North, and South Africa. Zaghlami (2016) wrote that the colonial press was considered an instrument to introduce civilisation, culture, education, and development to the local populations and the colonials tried to forcefully perpetuate the French occupation. To achieve this, in 1881 in Algeria, they adopted a press law that considered the Arabic language of local populations as a foreign language. Zighlami noted that printing in Arabic and importing Arabic papers were banned as serious violations of the law. The law, however, enabled indigenous French citizens to have their publications while local populations strongly rejected it. Consequently, with the rise of the Muslim and nationalist press in the 1930s, which advocated more reforms, democratic rights, and independence, the French occupation fiercely repressed opposition banned journalists, and closed down papers (Zighlami, 2016). This forced many journalists to operate in secrecy until the 1950s when liberation movements for independence and the recovery of national sovereignty began (Zighlimi, 2016).

Zighlami recounted a similar experience in Morocco, where in 1944, two papers – *Al Alam* (The World) and *l'Opinion* (Errai), published anti-colonial articles; and advocated the right to independence which was obtained in 1956. The same experience was obtained with the *Al Raid Al Tunisia*, one of the few Arabic language papers that communicate with local populations and inform them about the hardships of the French presence even under protectorate status. In Algeria, however, 1954 was the date for the beginning of the revolution. In 1956, Free Radio Algeria under Mohamed Salah Soufi's supervision was broadcast secretly from Moroccan territory in Nadhor," (Zaghlami, 2016). A similar experience in British West Africa during colonialism and military dictatorship was captured by Ngara and Esebonu (2012) who stated that the media environment was characterized by arbitrary arrest and detention of journalists, political assassination, extra-judicial killings, abuse of human rights, closure of media houses, seizure of publications among others. The silver lining, as the scholars noted, is that the media was resilient in the anti-colonial and military struggle, especially in Nigeria.

Historically, the press in most African countries was first brought by the colonisers in the early part of the 19th century through which they extended their rule by publishing numerous papers owned and controlled by them. Only a few papers, which belonged to the indigenous people, were also used to convince Africans to explicitly admit the usefulness of the colonials (Zaghlami, 2016). Subsequently, some nationalists set up some outlets they used in the independence struggle and after independence.

In Nigeria, early nationalists who owned newspapers such as Nnamdi Azikiwe and Obafemi Awolowo were hounded by the colonial masters and, in some instances, were jailed. However, they turned such persecutions into a badge of honour, which strengthened their political struggle, earning them more support from their compatriots. There was the case of Azikwe, the editor of *African Morning Post*, a daily newspaper in Accra, Ghana, who was jailed for publishing "Has the African a Hand" written by I.T.A. Wallace-Johnson, on May 15, 1936, and other anti-colonial articles that restricted the Africans' right to express their opinions and racial discrimination, according to *New World Encyclopedia*.

Azikwe returned to Nigeria to establish the *West African Pilot* in 1937, while Awolowo in 1949, established *The Tribune*, which is now the oldest surviving newspaper in Nigeria. The nationalists used their media platform as an instrument of the anti-colonial struggle. However, the attainment of independence in the 1960s by many African countries, including Nigeria, coincided with the whittling down of media activism/nationalism, with most of the media organizations now working for sectional interests and the benefits of their owners or publishers.



In South Africa, the independent media suffered a similar fate under Apartheid rule. In most cases, while the state-owned media supported the government, the private media often sided with the opposition. Apart from the jailing of journalists and the banning/closure of their outlets, there are also instances of some journalists disappearing without a trace (Alhadeff, 2018).

This ugly trend has continued. Recently, Augias Ray Malonga, acting director of the privately-owned newspaper *Sel-Piment*, was arrested at his home in Brazzaville, Congo, and tried for defamation (CPJ 2022). Also, the Committee for Protection of Journalists (CPJ) recently called on Cameroonian authorities to drop the prosecution of journalist Malcolm Bernabé Paho and decriminalize journalism in the country. On February 22, 2022, the national gendarmerie arrested Paho, director of the newspaper *Midi Libre Hebdo*; opened a criminal defamation case against him; and detained him for two days in the capital Yaoundé, after Boba Denis, Pastor of the Africa Life World Mission Church, an international religious organization filed a complaint.

Amnesty International (Premium Times, 2019) recently chronicled a litany of cases of abuse of the media in Nigeria. In June 2014, the military attempted to scuttle the circulation of *Leadership*, *Daily Trust*, *The Nation*, and *Punch* by seizing copies of the daily newspapers and harassing their distributors to stop them from making purchases. Also, the Department of State Services (DSS) on July 23, 2016, arrested and detained Abiri Jones, publisher of *Weekly Source* for two years without giving him access to his family or lawyers. He regained freedom after some human rights activists raised a hue over his case on August 15, 2018. Also, Ahmed Salkida received death threats after he reported on the Boko Haram conflict in August 2016, eliciting an arrest warrant on the accusation that he has links with the insurgency sect but he was not charged.

On January 17, 2017, security men invaded the office of *Premium Times*, an online newspaper, and arrested Dapo Olorunyomi, its publisher, and Evelyn Okakwu, a correspondent because they published a story about the Nigerian Chief of Army Staff, who allegedly breached Army Code of Ethics because he did not declare a property he owned in Dubai. They were later released. Also, in January 2017, security forces raided the Abuja office of the *Premium Times* and held journalists under siege for several hours (Premium Times, 2019).

Similarly, in 2018, Tony Ezimakor of the *Daily Independent*, Musa Abdullahi Kirishi of the *Daily Trust*, Samuel Ogundipe of the *Premium Times* and Olanrewaju Lawal of the *Daily Sun* were detained at various times, just for carrying out their jobs. Ja'afar Ja'afar, publisher of *Daily Nigerian* in October 2018 also received several

death threats against himself and his family after publishing videos of a serving governor allegedly receiving a bribe (*Premium Times*, 2019).

There was also the case of the demolition of facilities of Breeze FM in Lafiya, Nasarawa State, and Fresh FM in Ibadan, which were stopped from broadcasting for being critical of the government. In Oyo State, the government destroyed facilities belonging to Fresh FM, alleging that the station did not comply with the law after initial harassment to silence it (*Premium Times*, 2019).

The scenario above underlines the need for both the federal and state authorities to provide a safe environment for journalists to practice freely as provided for in international human rights law and the Nigerian constitution. This is in line with the call by Ojigbo that the government must ensure that state officials do not harass and intimidate anyone who expresses opinions that those in power dislike.

Windhoek Declaration: Result of Resilience

The standard for a free press in Africa was raised in 1991 at a UNESCO-organised seminar in Namibia. Attended by 63 journalists from 38 countries, the seminar which was held in partnership with other UN agencies like UNDP, drafted the Windhoek Declaration on promoting an independent and pluralistic African press. The seminar was also supported by 12 international agencies, ranging from Nordic funders, the International Federation of Journalists, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, and the World Association of Newspapers (Modoux, 2021). Hage Geingob, the then-prime minister of newly independent Namibia, highlighted the importance of independence and a watchdog role for the press (Modoux, 2021).

Annan, Robinson, and Matsuura (2021) described the Windhoek Declaration as the first in a series of commitments adopted by regions to uphold the freedom of speech and the ability of people everywhere to have access to a variety of independent sources of information. The declaration established the principles for preventing governments, and political and economic interest groups from infringing on the rights of the media and also designated May 3 annually as Press Freedom Day globally (Ngutjinazo, 2021).

Backed by Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the 19-point declaration was establishing, maintaining, and fostering an independent, pluralistic, and free press that will sustain and maintain democracy and economic development in a nation. The Windhoek document requested constitutional guarantees of freedom of the press and association as well as promoting positive changes taking place in Africa and repudiating the negative ones. The declaration urged international development and donor organisations to prioritise funding for independent



newspapers, magazines, and periodicals that reflect the composition of the society as well as calling for funding of publicly owned media where authorities guarantee constitutional and effective freedom of information and expression and the independence of the press. The declaration urged African countries to prioritise the establishment of truly independent, representative associations, syndicates or trade unions of journalists, and associations of editors and publishers where such bodies do not now exist to assist in the preservation of the freedoms of the press. It also canvassed national media and labour relations laws to ensure that such representative associations can exist and fulfil their important tasks in defence of press freedom. The Windhoek declaration urged African governments to immediately free journalists jailed for their professional activities while those who fled their countries should be allowed to return to resume their professional activities. It recommended that publishers within Africa and those of the North and South cooperate and support one another. It also urged the United Nations, UNESCO, and the International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC) to cooperate with governmental (especially UNDP) and nongovernmental donor agencies, relevant nongovernmental organizations, and professional associations to initiate detailed research into identifying economic barriers to the establishment of news media outlets, including restrictive import duties, tariffs and quotas for such things as newsprint, printing equipment, and typesetting and word processing machinery, and taxes on the sale of newspapers, as a prelude to their removal. Other areas for research included training of journalists and managers; legal barriers to the recognition and effective operation of trade unions or associations of journalists, editors, and publishers; registration of available funding for the development of the media, and the criteria for assessing such funds, and country by a country report on the state of press freedom in Africa.

An appraisal of the document showed that the most significant outcome of the Windhoek Declaration was the World Press Freedom Day on May 3, adopted by the United Nations. Also, 22 of the 24 African governments have enshrined in their national Constitutions the freedom and obligations of the press (Moyo, 2021). For instance, the Nigerian Constitution gives the mass media the freedom to hold government accountable, and the freedom of expression is enshrined in Sections 22 and 39 (1) of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria as amended in 2011, respectively (1999 Constitution, 2011). Also, the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) which was passed in 2011 (FOIA, 2011) gives citizens including journalists right to seek information from any government institution or agency.

It is debatable whether journalists are making use of the FOIA to hold the government accountable. Suffice it to state that after 30 years of the Windhoek declaration, Gwen Lister, one of the signatories, affirmed that the principles were

being followed at their best. Lister, who was interviewed alongside Tabani Moyo by Okeri Ngutjinazo of DW Akdeme (2021), said journalists involved in investigative journalism as well as community-based journalism observe the ethical principles needed for good journalism. But she said that not all journalists are good journalists and not everyone observes these ethics as there is still a yellow press and tabloid journalism that go for sensationalism while some traditional media have carved into "clickbait" on the internet and come up with stories that are basically "infotainment" (Ngutjinazo, 2021).

Lister is of the view that global funding for the media, especially those in public service is still a work in progress and that there is a need to work out how funding can be made available to the numerous media organisations that are either publicly or privately owned (Ngutjinazo, 2021).

Nevertheless, the threat against the media is yet to abate despite the Windhoek declaration. According to the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) 1990-2020 report, Algeria and Somalia are two African countries that are on the list of the 10 most dangerous spots where journalists are killed as a result of war, violence, crime, corruption and catastrophic breakdown of law and order. The IFJ said the untold story, however, is the risk to local journalists who are murdered while covering local beat reporters whose names do not resonate in the media (IFJ, 2020). They are different from by-lined war correspondents, who knowingly risk their lives, and sometimes are mistaken for combatants. IFJ stated that nearly 75 percent of journalists killed around the world did not step on a landmine, get shot in the crossfire, or even die in a suicide bombing attack. They were instead murdered outright, such as killed by a gunman escaping on the back of a motorcycle, shot or stabbed to death near their home or office, or found dead after having been abducted and tortured, (IFJ, 2020).

The silver lining is that the battle for the survival of the media in Africa has benefited from the efforts of media groups who exert pressure on governments to respect press freedom. They include the IFJ, the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), and the International Press Institute (IPI). There are local pressure and media rights groups such as the Media Rights Agenda (MRA), International Press Centre, Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ), Nigerian Guild of Editors (NGE), and Guild of Corporate Online Publishers (GOCOP). For instance, in 2006, the IFJ campaign led to the United Nations Security Council adopting resolution 1738 which asked governments to protect journalists (Boumelha, 2020). Although Boumelha noted that the resolutions are non-binding on governments who also lack political will for implementation, the numerous instruments adopted, both at the United Nations and regional level, helped



to reinforce the scope of treaty obligations, some of which address explicitly the issue of impunity against the media.

In Nigeria, the effort of the International Press Institute Nigeria Chapter led to the removal of the name of Lanre Arogundade, a veteran journalist, from the watch list of the Department of State Services (DSS) after 38 years, according to Yusuf Bichi, Director-General, Department of State Service (DSS).

Other journalists, who have survived the strong-arm tactics of the state authorities, with the help of activism include Agba Jalingo, an online journalist. Jalingo was charged with treason in Cross River State, in southern Nigeria, for criticizing the State governor Ben Ayade. There were also cases involving Jonathan Ugbal and Jeremiah Archibong, News Editor and Managing Editor, respectively of the Cross-River Watch, a private online newspaper. They were prosecuted by the police and charged with unlawful assembly for covering a protest. Ugbal and Archibong were arrested by the police in Calabar on August 5, 2019, alongside Nicholas Kalu, the Calabar Correspondent of the Nation newspaper, while covering the #RevolutionNow protest called by Nigerian activist Omoyele Sowore (*PremiumTimes*, 2019).

Recently, the resilience of journalists in Nigeria was captured by Ugbal on his Facebook page on August 26, when he posted a few hours before his trial began that his arrest cannot arrest his ideas, adding don't bother with scare tactics, fear has and will never be a part of my DNA (*Premium Times*, 2019).

Contemporary Challenges Facing the Media

The media in Africa is not immune to the challenges facing the industry like its counterparts globally. A major part of the global challenges pertains to the technology that drives the industry. Nielsen, Cornia, and Kalogeropoulos (2016) captured this when they observed that the world is moving towards an increasingly digital, mobile, and social media environment with more intense competition for attention. They observed that more people now get news through digital media and increasingly access news via mobile devices (especially smartphones). They noted that more people rely on social media and other intermediaries to access and find news (Nielsen et al, 2016). Nielsen et al pointed out there is a limited number of large technology companies to drive the new media environment to enable billions of users across the world to navigate and use digital media in easy and attractive ways through services like search, social networking, video sharing, and messaging. Tech companies play a key role in the distribution of news and digital advertising as traditional media become relatively less important as distributors of news even as they remain very important producers of news. Although the traditional media are

under growing pressure to develop new digital business models as their existing sources of revenue decline or stagnate, their general response, according to Neilsen et al (2016, p.4), has been "a combination of (a) investment in pursuing digital opportunities, (b) cost-cutting and (c) attempts at market consolidation in pursuit of market power and economies of scale."

Notwithstanding the technological challenges, Governor Bala Mohammed of Bauchi State, Northern Nigeria, graphically encapsulated the challenges the media face in contemporary times when he observed that journalists and other media practitioners were the most dehumanised people in Nigeria (Mohammed, 2022). To him, media practitioners are not just always suffering from the rigour, and challenges of news gathering, sometimes they don't even have salaries and wages and suffer in silence even though they put up a mirror for society to see itself.

Muhammed (2022) opined that the media must be respected and encouraged to work by creating a conducive environment for them. He has advised media owners to please look at the problems and challenges of media practitioners to make the profession to be noble so that journalists could have salaries, wages, allowances, transportation, and, another welfare package. His words succinctly summarized an action plan for the way forward: "I'm also calling on our colleagues, the governors, the presidency, and the rest to respect these people who are always there in the rain, in the sun, asking questions and trying to make the society better by exposing bad governance, and some of our limitations and inadequacies." The question though is whether governments in Africa will heed this clarion call to ensure a safe environment for the media to thrive.

Survival of the Media in Africa

From the foregoing, the media in Africa must be dynamic in adapting and adjusting to the changing times – innovate and survive by mastering the new technology that drives the business in all its ramifications. This could be achieved by training and retraining personnel to cope with the technological innovation that is driving the industry and devising cost-effective measures for news gathering, production and distribution. There is a need for the media to accept the challenge posed by social media and citizen journalists in the dissemination of fake news and disinformation. A mastery of social media and the strive to be first to publish matched with timely provision of factual information will give media professionals the upper hand to stay afloat. This means that media organization must diversify their products to attract the necessary funding needed to do investigative journalism and remunerate staff to be at their best at all times. A time has come when journalists must no longer shy away from considerations of how much any story that is worth publishing will bring not necessarily in monetary terms but in the goodwill that can open doors for the advert



in flow or special projects that will drive revenue to the organization subsequently. This means that the media must be very ideological as well as pragmatic and strategic in corporate governance to be able to manage and not fritter the resources at its disposal to thrive.

Conclusion

The media in Africa has suffered severe hardship to protect its freedom. So far, this paper has been able to establish that many journalists have died, been imprisoned, and endured acts of violence in the course of working to build a just and equitable society. While advocating that the media should stick to the principles established in the Windhoek Declaration and sustain the ideas of development journalism in conformity with ethical investigative journalism, it concluded that there is no justification for journalists to be killed, maimed, detained, or jailed for publishing factual reports. To ensure that these do not continue to recur, the paper enjoined that all governments, the United Nations and the international community, and non-governmental organisations, as well as media rights groups, should fervently work to canvass for press freedom and to ensure that journalists are protected to do their job in a safe environment effectively to ensure even and sustainable development in the continent.

Recommendations

This study recommends:

- The media in Africa should continue to be proactive in the fight for press freedom and freedom of expression, which are indicators of true democracy, and protect themselves by sticking to factual and investigative journalism.
- The media should consider all acts of violence against them as part of the hazards of the profession so as not to be intimidated since rights are usually not given freely.
- International and national media rights groups should remain vigilant; call out governments and organisations who abuse the rights of journalists; document and expose them publicly.
- This study is based on a qualitative literature review; further empirical fieldwork is recommended to ascertain how media in Africa have truly weathered the storm in their chosen profession.

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