

## Covid-19 – Journalist Be Careful, That Microphone Can Lead You To Isolation Centre.

As one of the frontline professions dealing frontally with the Covid-19 pandemic through daily coverage and reportage of health issues surrounding the viral disease, journalists and media stations in Nigeria have been reminded of the dangers lurking beneath the surface for them during work.

According to senior journalists in the broadcast media, who have experienced and researched on the subject, potential danger lurks for broadcast journalists during coverage and reportage of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The senior journalists, Mallam Zakari Nadabu, with the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria,

FRCN, in Abuja and Dr Yemisi Bangbose, former president of Radio, Television, Theatre and Arts Union of Nigeria, RATAWU, say that considering the growing number of casualties recorded among media practitioners globally and the rising casualty rate among journalists, broadcasters in the country should stop exposing themselves to danger during the coverage of events by

using simple microphones that put them in close contact with interviewees. Many of the interviews have been observed to be without facemask, they say.

Recall, that the Geneva based Press Emblem Campaign, a non-profit organization on May 5, reported the death of 64 broadcast journalists in 24 countries world-wide since the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic. This figure leaves out those who have tested positive for the virus and are currently in isolation centers.

Speaking from experience, Nadabu, of the, FRCN, said “The microphone we use during assignments have to be handled with care because Coronavirus has a gestation period and if by chance any interviewee contracted the virus, that means we have made direct contact with the virus.”

Nadabu made this submission when he spoke on the topic, *How Journalists Can Stay Safe*,

during an e-training for broadcasters in the country organized by the Institute for Media and Society, IMS and the Nigeria Radio Coalition with the theme, *Training of Community Broadcasters on the Coverage of Covid-19*, held on Tuesday, April 23, 2020.

Illustrating with the story of CNN business journalist, Richard Quest who tested positive for the virus, he urged journalists to handle their equipment with care and get their organization to provide them with gadgets that can insulate them from direct contact with their subjects, adding that, “vulnerability to the virus is very high among

writing this piece, I decided to monitor news telecast of some notable television stations in Nigeria. This is because the majority of the media workers that have tested positive for corona virus across the globe are from the broadcast sector of the media,” he wrote in piece published on the interventionist platform of the IMS, titled; *ConversationMedia & Covid-19*.

He made his observation in three days of news report he monitored from five selected TV stations in Nigeria from 11 to 13 May, 2020. The stations are AIT and OGTV news at 8pm, NTA and TVC 9pm news and Channels’10pm news.



All the stations, according to him, broadcast events that clearly showed the danger posed to the health of media workers most especially on the spread of Covid-19.

He said interviewees in different parts of the country failed to cover their mouth with a mask, others spoke unprotected to the microphone. The interviewees, he said, ranged from high

journalists”.

Verifying Nadabu's experience, Dr Bangbose, said that “In the course of

profile persons like governors, the clergy to travellers in motor parks, motorcyclists and mourners at burial ceremonies.

“**The report from Press Emblem Campaign says many of the Journalists that tested positive are asymptomatic. Journalists should also recognize the fact that there are many asymptomatic carriers in town and must therefore insist that anyone to be interviewed must put on his or her facemasks.**”

He said: “Media men should know that the virus can be spread through the microphone, midget and any recording gadgets that is infected by any asymptomatic carrier that is interviewed. All members of the Presidential Taskforce on Covid-19 have been addressing the press and granting interviews with their face masks.

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**Journalists Decry Insufficient Protection to Cover Covid-19**

Journalists covering the Covid-19 pandemic in Nigeria have said they lack sufficient protection and are not adequately catered for. They recently lamented the poor attention given to them in a survey conducted by a group of media and civil society groups between April 27 and May 1 this year, to assess the support available to journalists for their safety in covering the COVID-19 pandemic in Nigeria.

The groups involved in the survey are the Wole Soyinka Centre for Investigative Journalism (WSCIJ), Enough is Enough (EiENigeria), International Press Centre (IPC), the International Centre for Investigative Reporting (ICIR), and Premium Times Centre for Investigative Journalism (PTCIJ).

Of the 463 respondents, 65 per cent said their employers had not provided them with any support during assignment while only 35 per cent said they had been provided with some form of support.

The survey revealed that the topmost needs of journalists covering the Covid-19 pandemic are additional monetary allowance separate from salary and payment of outstanding salaries by employers; special Covid-19 coverage insurance package; specialised training on COVID-19 reporting; provision of facemasks, and specialised equipment to enable social distancing while on the field.

**Covid-19: NUJ Seeks Hazard Allowance for Journalists**



NUJ President, Chris Isiguzo

The Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ) has called on the Federal Government to immediately recognise its members as front liners in the fight against the COVID-19 scourge by paying them hazard allowance and other benefits given to their counterparts in the health and security sectors without further delay.

Mr Chris Isiguzo, Its National President, made the appeal during the week in Abuja during the week.

Isiguzo said that journalists had remained worst hit by the pandemic, as they neither get properly remunerated nor receive special packages from government such as the special hazard allowance and the new insurance policy, which over 5000 health workers and security agents get.

He stated that the Union had communicated its demand to President Buhari, adding, "asking for assistance from the government by way of bailout was not an indication that the media had sold its conscience."



Inspector General of Police, Mohammed Adamu

**Covid-19: IGP Forced To U-turn on Journalists Safety**

The Inspector-General of Police, Mohammed Adamu has been forced by public outcry and intervention by media organisations to revise his directive to his officers that all essential duty personnel, including media practitioners, must comply with the curfew banning movement from 8pm to 6am.

Journalists had faced harassment and intimidation by the Nigeria Police enforcing the nationwide lockdown and curfew on Covid-19 in spite of the exempt status from restricted movements President Muhammadu Buhari granted journalists during his last nationwide broadcast on coronavirus and the subsequent clarification by the presidential Task Force on Covid-19.

But on Tuesday, the police went contrary to the President's directives and declared that journalists and other essential workers should be arrested if they breached the curfew restricting movement between 9pm and 6am.

In the event over 50 persons, including journalists and doctors, were arrested and detained. It took public outcry to force Adamu make a U-turn. In a statement, the Force Public Relations Officer, FPRO, DCP Frank Mba, conveyed the IGP Adamu's order classifying journalists as essential workers during Covid-19.

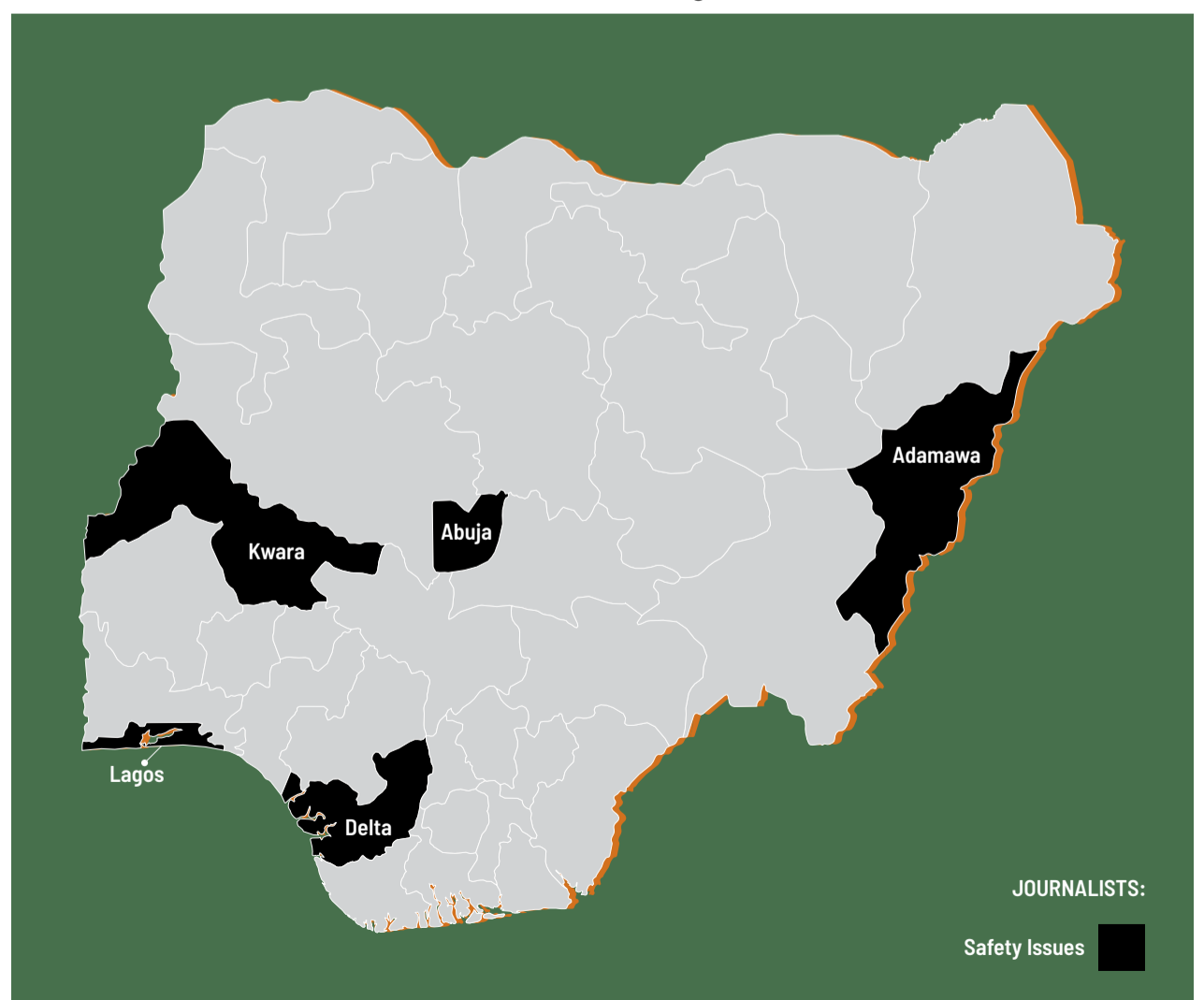
**Journalist Charged for 'Criticising Lai Mohammed' In WhatsApp Audio**

Rotimi Jolayemi, a freelance broadcaster, who was detained for 17 days allegedly on the order of Lai Mohammed, Minister of Information and Culture, was on Saturday charged by the police for acting in a manner that could cause 'annoyance' and 'hatred' for the Minister.

Jolayemi, the vice-chairman Freelance and Independent Radio Broadcasters Association of Nigeria (FIBAN), Osun state chapter had recorded an eight-minute audio critical of the minister and released via WhatsApp.

The audio started going viral, and days after, his wife and brothers were traced in Kwara where they lived and were detained by the police. In the charge sheet marked, FHC/ABJ/CB/104/2020, the police alleged that Jolayemi on April 14, 2020, shared an audio file in a WhatsApp group, which subsequently went viral.

In the charge sheet signed by the Prosecuting Counsel, Prosecution Section, Joseph Offor, the police said the act was in contravention of Section 24(1)(b) of the Cybercrimes Act 2015.



## Satellite TV Providers Face Brighter Future



Satellite television providers have a brighter future ahead of them as they seek new revenue generating avenues to reposition their business in the harsh post Covid-19 climate.

The Nigerian Communications Satellite Limited said it is ready to partner with digital satellite television providers who wish to transmit with its facilities.

The General Manager, Corporate Affairs

Directorate of the organisation, Adamu Idris, who disclosed this during the week at an event held to mark the inauguration of OurTV, a Nigerian digital satellite TV service, said satellite providers can take advantage of the resources in NigComSat-1R satellite to achieve their ICT related goals and objectives.

OurTV, a division of Trefoil Networks Limited, will transmit via NigComSat-

1R, a satellite of NIGCOMSAT Nigeria Limited.

He explained that NIGCOMSAT had available capacity on C-band, Ku-band and Ka-band for transponder lease, capacity on demand, satellite broadband, Direct to Home services and others.

Expanding on the advantage of the organisation's facilities over available ones the Managing Director of Trefoil, Onochie Amasiani, stated that OurTV would not require monthly subscriptions, as customers would only make a one-time payment for decoders.

According to him, the digital satellite TV service will offer home-grown content.

**“  
Trefoil started this journey in 2015 when they looked inward and saw the huge potential within Nigeria and decided NigComSat would be their preferred satellite operator to distribute their content within its footprint,” Idris said**  
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## TV Station Sues UK Counterpart £1m for Copyright Infringement



Sate TV Counsel, Remedium Law Partners, a Nigerian legal firm, has demanded the sum of £1m from a United Kingdom-based cable television station, Sky TV UK, as compensation for copyright infringement of a TV programme titled "Urban Kitchen".

The law firm also accused Solution Media and InfoTech Limited/Hi-Impact TV of fraudulently broadcasting "Urban Kitchen" without due authorisation and permission from producer of the content and demanded the sum N100m as compensation for copyright infringement.

According to an official letter addressed to Prince Adeyanju Lipede, CEO of Solution Media and InfoTech Limited/Hi-Impact TV, and Mr Jeremy Darroch, CEO of Sky UK Limited,

signed by Rockson Igelige, a Principal Partner of Remedium Law Partners, Solution Media and InfoTech Limited/Hi-Impact TV started airing the programme while it had not concluded agreement with Sate Television for the authorised broadcast.

The letter also specified that while the agreement for the authorised broadcast of "Urban Kitchen" ought to be within Nigeria only, Solution Media and InfoTech Limited/Hi-Impact, which is also registered in the UK, fraudulently extended broadcast of the content to the United Kingdom where Sky TV UK with millions of viewers globally has been airing the TV programme without the consent of the producer, Sate Television. Remedium Law Partners also demanded the sum of £250,000 from Solution Media and InfoTech UK Limited as compensation for copyright violation of the said TV programme.

A 21-day deadline was given to both Solution Media and InfoTech Limited/Hi-Impact TV, Sky TV UK as well as Solution Media and InfoTech UK Limited to comply with the demands or be

prepared to face legal action.

Remedium Law Partners also demanded an immediate stop of any further airing of "Urban Kitchen" until the formalisation of an agreement with Sate TV, producer of the TV programme and payment of an agreed Nigerian and UK prices for all twenty-six (26) episodes of the programme have been duly made.

Meanwhile, Nas Ogunsakin of Abdullahi Ibrahim and Company has on behalf of Hi-Impact TV warned Mr. Dauda Omoluku, CEO of Sate Media Limited to desist from annoying their client because it has done no wrong. It described the allegations against Hi-Impact TV as baseless.

While responding, however, Igelige told Ogunsakin that his client misinformed him.

He added that there was neither formal agreement signed nor did his client Dauda Omoluku gave permission to grant license to Hi-Impact TV to broadcast 'Urban Kitchen' in Nigeria or anywhere else.

## Minister Inaugurates Post-Covid-19 Committee For Creative Industry

The Minister of Information and Culture, Alhaji Lai Mohammed, on Tuesday performed the virtual inauguration of the Post-Covid-19 Initiatives Committee for the Creative Industry, with a call on all members of the industry to support the committee in the interest of the industry.

In an apparent reference to industry stakeholders who protested against the announcement of the committee membership last week, the minister, who inaugurated the committee in his Abuja office, said, "The Committee's membership, as announced two weeks ago, has now been expanded to include as many sectors as possible. This is to ensure a fair representation."

"However, while the committee cannot accommodate all members of the industry, it is certain that all members will benefit from its work. I therefore want to implore the entire industry to support this committee. This is no time for division. All hands must be on deck so the industry can rebound."

Alhaji Mohammed described the Creative Industry as a very critical sector of the nation's economy and a major plank of the economic diversification policy of this administration.

He said that in view of the devastating impact of Covid-19 on the Creative Industry, it has become imperative to have a collective and government-supported approach in dealing with the immediate, short and long term economic stimulus and initiatives for the industry, in order to mitigate the effect of the pandemic on the sector. While commending members of the Committee for their sacrifice and love of country, he urged them to do justice to the assignment, which will culminate in suitable recommendations that will help the industry to thrive and expand.

In his response, the Chairman of the Committee, Mr. Ali Baba, expressed the appreciation that the Creative Industry has been given a pride of place under this administration because of its huge contribution to the diversification of the nation's



The Minister of Information and Culture, Alhaji Lai Mohammed, while inaugurating the Post-Covid-19 Initiatives Committee for the Creative Industry virtually from his office in Abuja on Tuesday

economy. He assured that members of the committee will work in unison to represent the entire creative industry and not just their respective sectors.

The Committee's Terms of Reference are: Assess the expected impact of the pandemic on the industry in general; advise the Government on how to mitigate job and revenue losses in the sector as well as to create succour for the industry small businesses; suggest the type of taxation and financing that is best for the industry at this time to encourage growth and advise the Government on any other measure or measures that can be undertaken to support the industry.

Members of the Committee are: Ali Baba - Comedy, Film and TV Chairman, Hajia Sa'a Ibrahim - Broadcasting

Organizations of Nigeria, BON – Vice Chairman, Anita Eboigbe – Secretary. Others are Bolanle Austen Peters – Film and Performing Arts, Charles Novia – Television and Independent Producer, Segun Arinze-Actor and Producer, Ali Jita – Actor and Musician, Baba Agba – Film Director Kene Okwuosa – Cinema and Distribution, Efe Omoregbe – Record label and Collective rights management, Prince Daniel Aboki – Radio and Film, Chioma Ude – Streaming, Olumade Adesemowo – Television and Platform. FreeTV, Dare Art Alade – Livespot Entertainment, Oliver Enwonwu - President, Society of Nigerian Artists, SNA, Alhaji Saleh Rabo - President, Federation of Tourism Associations of Nigeria, Bala Hassan - Booksellers Association, Ali Nuhu – Kannywood, Tajudeen Owoyemi – Hotels, B.M. Dzukogi - Association of Nigerian Authors, TY Bello – Photography, Lanre Da Silva Ajayi – Fashion.

## Broadband Connectivity: Ekiti Slashes Telecoms Right of Way Charges



Governor Kayode Fayemi of Ekiti State

In his bid to ensure full broadband connectivity in the state and beyond, the Governor of Ekiti State, Dr Kayode Fayemi, recently signed an Executive Order reducing the Right of Way charges for telecommunication infrastructure from N4,500 to N145 per linear metre.

This represents 97 per cent decrease.

In the executive order No. 007 of 2020, the state government said it was its desire to provide all residents in Ekiti State, especially rural communities, with access to reliable and affordable broadband connectivity.

Fayemi noted that broadband connectivity across the state would enhance the ability of the government to increase economic prosperity, attract new businesses, enhance job growth, extend the reach of affordable high quality healthcare, enrich student's learning with digital tools and facilitate access to digital marketplace.

## NBC Denies Sanctioning Stations Airing Conspiracy Theories

The National Broadcasting Commission, NBC on Wednesday denied considering sanctioning any television or radio station airing the coronavirus conspiracy theories in the country.

The United Kingdom had sanctioned the TV station of a popular Nigerian pastor, Chris Oyakhilome.

Speaking to Daily Trust, NBC Assistant Director Public Affairs, Ekanem Antia, said Nigerian broadcasters should know they should not.

## Editor's Note

The major agency to deal with the Covid-19 pandemic in the absence of a cure is information, well processed and delivered in readable and transmitted format. That is the forte of Journalists. Yet there seems to be a deliberate policy by security personnel in the country to stop them through constant harassment and intimidation.

Since the pandemic broke, journalists in Nigeria have been at the receiving end of police brutality, despite having been granted exempt status on movements during lockdown by President Buhari during his last nationwide broadcast and further clarification of the presidential directive by the presidential Task Force on Covid-19 when the crass harassment was becoming an epidemic.

Moreover, journalists as frontline workers during coverage of the pandemic, lack safety working kits and other forms of support. Our major stories highlight these handicaps faced by journalists on the frontline. The opening story on page one paints a global picture that situates these challenges facing journalists locally. The stories featured on Journalists on the frontlines speak more on the challenges.

Also featured in this edition is an update on the Committee on Creative Industry whose composition last week by Minister of Communication and Culture, Lai Mohammed caused uproar in the industry.

When he announced the membership of a committee to advise the Federal Government of the best way to mitigate the impact of the pandemic on the creative industry, stakeholders in the industry literally took up arms. The protested that it was dead on arrival for an industry that employs over 2.5m Nigerians and adds US\$2billion to the country's GDP. Mohammed listened to their complaint. The result is an expanded committee that was inaugurated on Tuesday, virtually.

As usual, the stories on media business are topical and interesting. Enjoy.

**The Editor**  
Institute for Media and Society, Nigeria

## NCDC Confirmed COVID -19 Cases by State, May 15, 2020

States Affected	No. of Cases (Lab Confirmed)	No. of Cases (on admission)	No. Discharged	No. of Deaths
Lagos	3,093	2,471	582	40
Kano	875	716	123	36
FCT	446	290	142	14
Katsina	303	239	51	13
Borno	235	122	89	24
Bauchi	228	90	133	5
Jigawa	225	143	78	4
Oyo	190	137	49	4
Ogun	183	104	73	6
Kaduna	170	82	84	4
Edo	144	99	39	6
Gombe	144	49	92	3
Sokoto	113	25	75	13
Rivers	80	52	21	7
Zamfara	76	8	63	5
Plateau	70	55	14	1
Kwara	66	40	25	1
Yobe	45	39	5	1
Osun	42	5	33	4
Nasarawa	38	18	18	2
Kebbi	32	11	17	4
Delta	31	13	12	6
Adamawa	27	12	13	2
Ondo	22	6	15	1
Niger	22	16	5	1
Ekiti	20	5	13	2
Akwa Ibom	18	4	12	2
Taraba	18	8	10	0
Enugu	16	10	6	0
Ebonyi	13	12	1	0
Imo	7	0	7	0
Bayelsa	7	2	5	0
Abia	7	6	1	0
Benue	5	5	0	0
Anambra	5	4	1	0

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