

Reactions Trail Launched Revised NBC Code

Reactions have continued to trail the revised Nigeria Broadcasting Code unveiled by the Minister of Information and Culture, Alhaji Lai Mohammed, on Tuesday in Lagos.

Speaking at the occasion, Mohammed said, among other things, that, “as it currently stands, the 6th edition and the amendments, which we are unveiling today, remain the regulations for broadcasting in Nigeria. Our intention remains the good of the country. We need to catalyze the growth of the local industry. We need to create jobs for our teeming creative youths. The opportunities must be created and we believe that effective regulatory interventions are a sure way of attaining this. That's why we will not waver.”

He said the reviewed code which contains the Anti-trust provision aimed at boosting local content and encouraging the growth of the local industry also includes the provision raising the fine for hate speech from 500,000 Naira to 5 million Naira and directed “those who still have misgivings about the amendment to the 6th Edition of the Code, we expect you to meet with the regulator and present your views. As I said, there are opportunities for constant review of the Code, but please note that this latest amendment is signed, sealed and delivered, and we are committed to making it work for the good of the country.”



Dr. Tunde Akanni
Journalism Lecturer at Lagos State University, LASU

In his reaction, a journalism lecturer and development expert, Dr Tunde Akanni of the Lagos State University, who had been very critical about the contents of the code since the Acting Director-General of the Commission, Prof. Armstrong Idachaba briefed journalists last month, said his opinion on the NBC Code 6 has not changed.

On the Hate Speech fine raised to N5m from N500,000, he told *The Media and COVID-19*: “What point is the government trying to make? There are laws on slander and defamation. All these laws deal with the issue of hate speech. They keep hammering on hate speech as if it's something new. You are now bringing it to make money, it's ridiculous.”

“If the government is going to punish violators will



Lai Mohammed
Minister of Information and Culture

the government also reward those complying? When you make such laws, you're demystifying the government. Government is not a money making venture, if not then Ministers and heads of agencies would be given targets.”

The university don in an article, titled NBC Sixth Code of Expired Values, said what looks like another review opportunity of the NBC Code is here in 2020 in the form of major amendments, but the 'closet culture' of the NBC seems to have persisted. And now the price is doubling in line with the prophesy of Historian Santayana that when history repeats itself, the price doubles.

According to him, “With utter disregard for multi-stakeholderism, the NBC has concluded another review. Sadly enough, rather than signal advancement for the country, it's steeping us into a reverse gear with multiple unpleasant manifestations at a time everyone is seeking healing balm for the sudden, but protracted affliction of COVID-19 and even Nigeria's peculiar socio-economic challenges. Most conspicuous in the Code, he argued, is perhaps the manifest obvious lack of understanding of the workings of digital media, even with the orchestrated intent of the Federal Government regime to emphasise digital technology in conducting its operations.

He said; “The commission has publicly announced that it would, as with other broadcasting genres, regulate online broadcasting. Questions now arise: Do web/online services now fall within the jurisdictional domain of the NBC not the National Communications Commission?

“How will the NBC rationalise that an online entity is “broadcasting, or streaming? Especially if such contents received by devices are connected/known to the

service providers, which is clearly distinguishable to the notion of traditional broadcasting? What no one requires any expertise to know however is that the AIT or NTA has no known competence to ascertain or establish specific devices (TV-sets) tuned in and watching. It therefore cannot disconnect individual devices from receiving any of its output.

Another academic, Professor Ifeoma Dunu, of the Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Anambra State, wants the government to first define what make-up hate speech.

“Let the federal government give a definition of what hate speech is. Make it unambiguous. Increasing the fine from N500,000 to N5m is suppressing freedom of expression. It's not fair at this moment when we're talking of COVID-19. The pandemic has not been seen before and is causing untold hardship, especially to media organisations, he said.

According to him, “It is not the time and it's not fair. The stakeholders should be involved. When I look at the Revised NBC Code, I couldn't understand it. There is no way NBC could remove exclusive rights.... they are regulators and should put the code as a manual to guide the industry.”

Meanwhile, the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) has insisted on going ahead with the implementation of the new Broadcast Code.

The NBC also warned broadcast media to avoid hateful and inciting broadcasts ahead of the Edo State governorship election.

The NBC urged broadcasters to perform the role of peace agents by adhering to the principle of responsibility, accuracy and neutrality. It stated: “The National Broadcasting Commission has monitored and noted with concern, the inflammatory, inciting, and divisive comments, especially, by politicians in Edo State, who, in recent times, have threatened violence and counter violence.”

“It is, therefore, expedient to remind all broadcasters covering the Election Campaign in Edo state to take note of the provisions of the extant Electoral Law(s), the Nigeria Broadcasting Code, and other relevant regulations guiding the broadcast of political content in Nigeria.

On Tuesday, while unveiling the new amendment to the 6th edition of the broadcasting code in Lagos, NBC stated that it has raised the fine for hate speech from N500,000 to N5 million.

Gunmen Kill Journalist in Nasarawa ...Govt vows to find Killers

Gunmen have killed a former treasurer of the Nasarawa State Council of the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ), Mr Benjamin Ekom.

The killing of Ekom, who was also a former Information Officer with the Akun Local Government Council of the state, comes barely seven days after the killing of five persons in the state.

On July 27, five people were reported killed with 14 others still missing at Dausu community in the Toto Local Government Area of the state.

The traditional ruler of Aren-Akun community, Alhaji Usman Galadima-Umbugadu, described the killing as unfortunate and barbaric.

Ekom, who was also a former Secretary-General of Eggon Cultural and Development Association (ECDA) was killed late on Aug. 3 at his house in Washo, Akun.

Galadima-Umbugadu described Ekom as a committed subject whose contributions would be missed by the chieftdom.

He said; "Yes, it is true that my subject, who served as the ECDA secretary, was attacked and killed in his house in Washo community by gunmen. This is unfortunate, barbaric and uncalled."

The monarch said that Ekom contributed a lot to the development of the chieftdom, advising the family and the community to take solace in God.

Meanwhile, the Nasarawa State Government has vowed that it will fish out killers of Mr. Ekom.

Mr Diogo Shammah, the state Commissioner of information, Culture and Tourism, made the statement on Thursday during his condolence visit to the family of the late Veteran Journalist in Washo, Akun Development Area of the state.

The commissioner said that fishing out and punishing the perpetrators would serve as deterrent to others and would ensure peace in the state. He prayed God to expose the perpetrators of the devilish act.

Shammah, who expressed concern over the security challenges in the state, assured that the State Government had taken step to bring the perpetrators to book.

Reacting to the killing, the Nasarawa State Council of the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ), in a statement jointly signed by its Chairman and Secretary, Salihu Mohammed Alkali and Sunday John, on Tuesday in Lafia, condemned the attack and brutal killing of its former treasurer.

The Union described the attack on innocent residents of the state by criminal elements as one too many, and called for drastic and proactive measures to be taken to protect lives and properties of residents in all parts of Nasarawa State.

The leadership of the union further urged security agencies to fish out killers of the former treasurer, to face the law; and also called for the support of members of the public in helping to unravel the mystery behind the incident, to expose criminal elements in their midst.

It, however, commended the efforts of the federal and state governments towards tackling insecurity, but urged that more be done to ensure that the people were safe to go about their lawful activities without fear, and also to avoid an escalation of the situation.

"The entire journalists in the state also condole with the family and friends of the deceased, and pray God to forgive his shortcomings and grand him eternal rest," the union said in the statement.

Akwa Ibom Bars Journalists From Covering Government Activities Over Coronavirus

To prevent further spread of COVID-19, the Akwa Ibom government has barred journalists from covering events at the government house.

16 Government House Press Corps members were said to have contracted the virus in June, which might have prompted the decision.

The development must have informed the cancellation of an earlier invitation to members of the correspondents' chapel to cover the inauguration of the state's new Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) executive members, commissioners and special advisers.

Reacting to the resolution, the chapel described the move as stigmatisation. The reporters said it was surprising that the Governor Udom Emmanuel administration could allow party loyalists, well-wishers and members of interest groups to attend the two inaugurations while barring journalists from performing their constitutional duties.

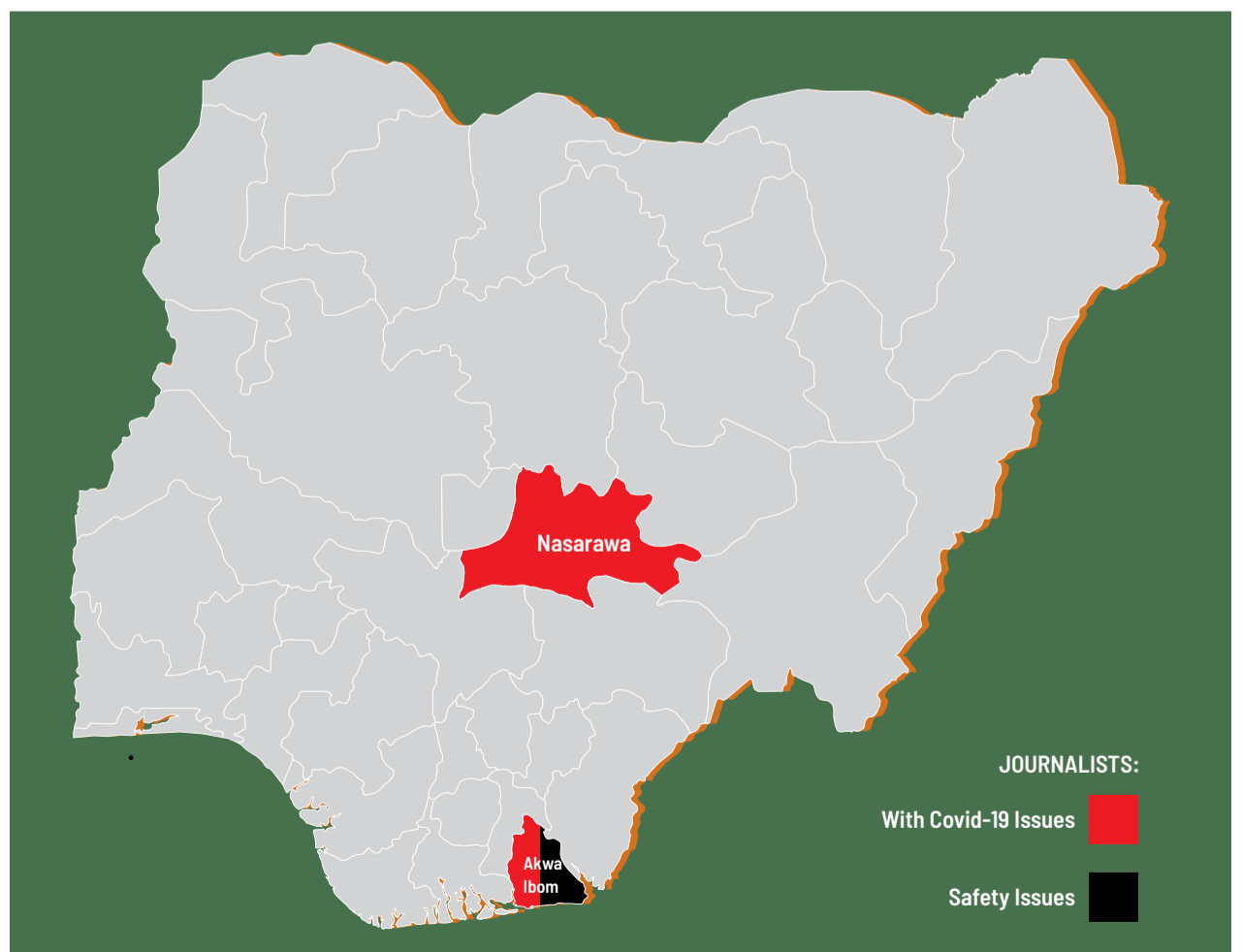
They stated that stopping correspondents of national newspapers from covering activities at the Government House amounted to stigmatisation and a slight on their watchdog role.

The chapel observed that journalists were not the real carriers of COVID-19, noting that they are rather the victims of the pandemic on account of their exposure to politicians and government officials.

It noted: "As those who midwife the democracy we are all enjoying today, we know that the media as the fourth estate of the realm has been at the forefront of projecting government activities. When COVID-19 started in Nigeria, the media was at the forefront of the battle.

"And incidentally, we noticed that COVID-19 first started attacking the high and mighty in the world, especially prominent government officials and Nigerians. Because the media practitioners work closely with these prominent Nigerians, we were not spared the hazard.

"At the end of the day, a lot of us were exposed to risk. In Akwa Ibom State Government House, about 16 members of the Press Corps attached to big men were affected by COVID-19. And after the incident, we heard about stigmatisation against the media by the state government. But we never knew that journalists in the state will sustain a permanent scar over something some of them contracted while working with the primary victims."



Experts Offer Survival Strategies Amid COVID-19 Impact On Media Business



Media workers, including journalists, have been affected by the economic downturn brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic.

It is no news that some media workers have been made redundant while several others have been sacked or made to take severe pay-cut or worse still, not being paid at all.

The economic reality of COVID-19 among other factors has left media organizations with no other option than to downsize. Even in the best of times, the media in Nigeria have been faced with labour-related and capacity challenges.

As professionals who have devoted their lives to long hours of work demanded by the nature of their profession, emergencies like COVID-19 poses challenges to media workers. But in the seeming darkness facing the media men and women lies the light as answers for overcoming their challenges.

And these trying times, there can be no better teachers than experience, especially from colleagues and related media technicians.

They maintain that in spite of the reality, there are ways out for affected media professionals willing to adjust with the times and get back on track while fitting into the requirements for today's journalism.

Mr John Ndukauba, retired Editor-In Chief of the News Agency of Nigeria, NAN, Mr Lekan Otufodunrin, publisher of Media Career and Mr Ayo Obe, a communication consultant and media trainer, state with equal zeal about the many survival strategies waiting to be exploited by media professionals in and out of work.

The experience of yesteryears, they maintain, is no longer sufficient for today, which necessitates the need to study trends, take up courses, which ultimately leads to becoming suitable for current media-related jobs.

According to Otufodunrin, who was a one-time editor with The Nation newspaper, "gone are the days when the ability to gather and write news was enough to kick-off a media career. We are in the era of backpack journalism in which a media professional must be able to combine all forms of reportorial skills to give a wholesome reportage. It is expected that a present-day journalist, with knowledge of digital tools, is able to gather news supported by audios and visuals to lay credence to the story.

“ Following relevant individuals and bodies related to the media industry on social media is another way to be kept abreast of opportunities and trends. Even while waiting for another job opportunity, endeavour to continue doing something related to the media like volunteering or contributing contents. Running your own blog is also a great idea. ”

According to him, “ we have to present and market ourselves to potential recruiters, to where we find vacancies, even the way we approach employers.

“Acquiring digital skills like the one provided by Google Digital Skills for Africa will give you an edge over others and go a long way to boost your curriculum vitae (CV). There is also the Google News Initiative Training Center where over 40 lessons on Google products and tools have been specifically designed for journalists in order to assist with thriving in the digital age. Through the initiative, journalists are imparted with skills and knowledge on fundamentals of digital journalism, podcasting, going live, basics of machine learning, (multimedia) storytelling, environmental journalism, verification, safety and security, data journalism, investigative reporting and publishing and monetization.

He said that Journalists who are inactive on online platforms like Muck Rack, LinkedIn and Twitter miss out on a lot of opportunities.

“Presence on those platforms is a way to showcase your contents and connect with colleagues and organizations around the globe. Ensure that your online activities reflect your profession.

“Following relevant individuals and bodies related to the media industry on social media is another way to be kept abreast of opportunities and trends. Even while waiting for another job opportunity, endeavour to continue doing something related to the media like volunteering or contributing contents. Running your own blog is also a great idea.”

“An updated CV showing your most recent experience, achievements and certifications will assist you to present yourself for the next opportunity. Come up with good contents in line with global best practices and never doubt the power of networking online and offline.” He suggests other ways in which journalists can diversify their stream of income. Such include: freelance for media organization locally and abroad; copy editing; book publishing; transcription; social media management; seminar and

workshop facilitation; training mentoring and advertising commission.

Writing from experience Otufodunrin, has this to say about freelancing; “In some cases, like the one I wrote for a Kenyan based African News Service, I offered to write for them when I noticed the platform did not have West African reports. The payment was as little as \$10 per story, but others came after like two international Christian publications and a major general interest publication that paid 50 – 100 per cent more per story. My bylines in the continental organisations also enhanced my profile for other opportunities I got in later years.”

For Mr Ndukauba, who spoke at a recent editors conference, opportunities have always presented themselves while the journalists are at work: contacts. These contacts also have avenues that can further leverage the professional media manager or worker provided that integrity, and commitment have always been their watchword.

“Many schools of media studies in tertiary institutions need the practical experience of the journalists to make up for the theory contents of their curricular. That is where you come in. Search for and you will find many colleges are there for your grabs,” he said, adding that, agencies and corporate organisations, and media units of security and governments also would do with the practical knowledge of the journalists in training their staff

Otufodunrin agreed. “If you have the qualifications,” he said, “you can lecture in Institutions of Higher learning having Media related courses. You will not only be paid, you will be happy imparting practical knowledge to the students. Many institutions in Nigeria teach only theory.”

“After years of experience, you can become a media trainer, mentor or coach and it would fetch you money. You can initiate training that is paid for or sponsored,” he added.

For Obe, even the media professional can begin to retrain while still in employment, particularly in the area of new trends and potentials in information technology so that they are better equipped to handle on the job and off the job challenges.

To explore this opportunity, he started a training programme called, Journalism Clinic, where for affordable tuition, media professionals are updated in global best practices in the profession by scholars and practitioners drawn from all over the world.

Doubtless, the picture may look gloomy for media professionals in the face of the ravaging viral pandemic, but there are many ways out of the challenges that open avenues for great renewal.

FG: Broadcast Stations To Pay 5m for Hate Speech



The Minister of Information and Culture, Alhaji Lai Mohammed (right), and the Acting Director General of the National Broadcasting Commission, Prof. Armstrong Idachaba (left), at the unveiling of the reviewed Nigeria Broadcasting Code in Lagos on Tuesday

The Federal Government has raised the fine for hate speech from N500,000 to 5 million naira.

The Minister of Information and Culture, Lai Mohammed, disclosed this in Lagos on Tuesday while unveiling the reviewed Nigeria Broadcasting Code.

Mohammed, who said the reviewed code contains the Anti-trust provision aimed at boosting local content and encouraging the growth of the local industry, among other provisions, also declared that the government has mandated broadcast stations to devote airtime for public education on emergencies such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

In his remarks at the unveiling ceremony organized by the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) in Lagos on Tuesday, the Minister said the Anti-trust provision will boost local content and local industry due to laws prohibiting exclusive use of rights by broadcasters who intend to create monopolies and hold the entire market to themselves.

He said the Anti-trust provision would also encourage open access to premium content. "I must explain that this provision is not new to Nigeria Broadcasting. Exclusivity was disallowed at a certain time in the history of our broadcasting. I recall Multi-Choice sub-licensing EPL matches to other local operators in Nigeria. I recall HITV engaging several local operators on sub-licensing the EPL when they got the rights," Alhaji Mohammed said.

He said the revised Code contains the law prohibiting backlog of advertising debts in order to promote sustainability for the station owners and producers of content, as well as the law on registration of Web Broadcasting, which will grant the country the opportunity to regulate negative foreign broadcasts that can harm the nation.

"The provisions on responsibility of broadcast stations to devote airtime to national emergencies...obviously mandates terrestrial and Pay TV channels to make their services available to Nigerians at time of national emergencies – like the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic – for their education and enlightenment," the Minister said. He said the amended Code also includes the provision raising the fine for hate speech from 500,000 Naira to 5 million Naira.

Alhaji Mohammed clarified that the amendments were necessitated by a Presidential directive, in

the wake of the 2019 general elections, for an inquiry into the regulatory role of the NBC with a view to repositioning the regulator for optimum performance.

He said despite the attacks by some vested interests, who believe that their singular business interest is superior to national interest, over the provisions of the amended Code, the Federal Government remains unperturbed.

"But, as it currently stands, the 6th edition and the amendments, which we are unveiling today, remain the regulations for broadcasting in Nigeria. Our intention remains the good of the country. We need to catalyze the growth of the local industry. We need to create jobs for our teeming creative youths. The opportunities must be created and we believe that effective regulatory interventions are a sure way of attaining this. That's why we will not waver," the Minister said.

"For those who still have misgivings about the amendment to the 6th Edition of the Code, we expect you to meet with the regulator and present your views. As I said, there are opportunities for constant review of the Code, but please note that this latest amendment is signed, sealed and delivered, and we are committed to making it work for the good of the country."

For his part, the Acting Director General of the NBC, Prof. Armstrong Idachaba, commended the present administration for showing keen interest in the development of the Broadcasting Industry through the implementation of reforms and several other interventions. Officials of NBC and other stakeholders in the Broadcasting Industry attended the event.

NBC Code: Lai Mohammed Must Leave Regulators To Do Their Job, Says Iredia, Ex- NTA DG

Former Director-General of the Nigerian Television Authority, Professor Tonnie Iredia has called on the Minister of Information, Alhaji Lai Mohammed, must leave the National Broadcasting Commission, NBC, to do its job of regulation of the broadcast industry. Iredia who was reacting to unveiling of the revised Nigeria Broadcast Code on Tuesday by the information Minister said the NBC, not the Minister, which is the regulator of the industry.

Iredia spoke on Wednesday while speaking on Sunrise Daily, a flagship programme on Channels Television.

Iredia, who was also former Director General of the National Orientation Agency (NOA), stated that the minister has taken over the role of the broadcast regulator and thereby creates suspicion because he belongs to a political divide.

He said; "Everybody expects a broadcasting

commission to be an autonomous body that has no place in politics. If you listened to the news that has been putting on since, who is speaking? , the Minister of Information. Is he the Director General of the NBC?

"When a minister is speaking, there is no way broadcasters can see that the regulator is speaking. He is not a regulator, he should leave the broadcasters in the NBC to do their professional duty and then the law gives him right to supervise them but not to take over the job.

"The moment the minister is speaking, no matter how well informed he may be, the people become suspicious because he belongs to a political divide and whatever he is saying is likely to be used against the opposition and I think this is not a natural thing.," he said.

Iredia also said the NBC Code announced by the minister on Tuesday did not pass through stakeholders before its adoption. He described the new code as full of sanctions, which would not to create excellence in the industry.

"Now the problem really is that for the first time in the history of broadcasting in this country, the code was not done the way it used to be done.

He said; "This time around, NBC just rolled out a number of things that it felt should be in the code and did not hold consultation with the stakeholders as the previous managers of the system did, where you first of all hold consultations and everybody would look at it, there will be a dummy, you bring it out at the tail end, there will still be another kind of review and all of that. Just as I said in the beginning, the code was supposed to be a professional guide."

"It was supposed to be a masterpiece that creates professional excellence in broadcasting but now it is filled with sanctions and what you would do and what you would not do and the bodies that should have been consulted were not consulted in the same way. Rather they were being told that it is subject to review and that all their objections now will be taken into consideration in the next review. In which case this particular edition was not exactly a broadcasting code for broadcasters made by broadcasters for professionals so that has been the problem and I am not surprised by the kind of headlines that are on today."

Industry stakeholders have branded the code as agenda-driven, noting that they were excluded from making input before the code was finalised and described its unveiling as an ambush.

The NBC, in the new regulation, states that every broadcaster must license its broadcast and/or signal rights in any genre of programming to another broadcaster in Nigeria if "the genre of programme(s) enjoy(s) compelling viewership by Nigerians; it relates to a product or service that is objectively necessary to be able to compete effectively on a downstream market; or if it is likely to lead to the elimination of effective competition on the downstream markets".

The new subsidiary legislation adds that refusal to comply will lead to consumer deprivation and stipulates the imposition of a N10 million for operators who fail to comply.

Editor's Note

Brushing aside a month-long consistent criticism and appeal for review by stakeholders, the Minister of Information and Culture on Tuesday launched the revised Nigeria Broadcasting Code with fanfare in Lagos. "Please note that this latest amendment is signed, sealed and delivered, and we are committed to making it work for the good of the country," he said with finality.

While the dust raised by the initial reaction to contents in the code when the National Broadcasting Commission, NBC, Acting Director General brief the media a month ago, is yet to settle, the minister threw another bombshell: Hate speech would now attract N5m fine instead of the former fine of N500,000.

Interest groups are reacting robustly to the revised code they consider an affront to the broadcast media, which the same federal government, citing the devastating impact of COVID-19 pandemic on the media, granted debt penultimate week. It is a developing story and we have brought you some reactions in our opening story.

In addition, we have added as a stand-alone reaction, the insightful comments and suggestions by the former Director-General of the Nigeria Television Authority, NTA, Professor Toni Iredia. It is on our inside story.

Our story on Journalists and their safety while working on the COVID-19 frontline is full of the usual maltreatment and then killing of an official of the Nigeria Union of Journalists, NUJ, chapel.

That COVID-19 pandemic has impacted media business negatively is there for the discerning mind to see. Lay-off and pay cut, forced leave and downsizing, closure and migration to online platforms have been some of the survival strategies adopted by many media organisations.

But what about the professional, the men and women on the beat every hour of the day; thinking, reporting, writing and producing copies and programmes for the readers and listeners? We answer these questions in a practical way that would not only inform but engage the attention of our readers. It is on our page on Media Business. Enjoy.

The Editor
Institute for Media and Society, Nigeria

NCDC Confirmed COVID-19 Cases by State, August 7, 2020

States Affected	No. of Cases (Lab Confirmed)	No. of Cases (on admission)	No. Discharged	No. of Deaths
Lagos	15,627	2,316	13,119	192
FCT	4,241	2,965	1,231	45
Oyo	2,825	1,392	1,402	31
Edo	2,340	174	2,073	93
Rivers	1,911	267	1,591	53
Kano	1,608	264	1,291	53
Delta	1,557	110	1,404	43
Kaduna	1,530	183	1,335	12
Ogun	1,428	200	1,204	24
Plateau	1,294	676	598	20
Ondo	1,243	565	651	27
Enugu	880	377	485	18
Ebonyi	838	19	793	26
Kwara	815	452	342	21
Katsina	746	265	457	24
Borno	634	30	569	35
Abia	625	103	517	5
Gombe	620	68	529	23
Osun	586	273	300	13
Bauchi	574	40	521	13
Imo	472	315	147	10
Nasarawa	360	129	223	8
Benue	356	285	64	7
Bayelsa	342	31	290	21
Jigawa	322	3	308	11
Akwa Ibom	234	55	171	8
Niger	226	81	133	12
Adamawa	176	80	85	11
Ekiti	159	81	76	2
Sokoto	154	1	137	16
Anambra	142	41	83	18
Kebbi	90	0	82	8
Zamfara	77	1	71	5
Taraba	72	13	55	4
Cross River	68	27	33	8
Yobe	67	2	57	8
Kogi	5	0	3	2

Highlights

- On the 6th of August 2020, **354** new confirmed cases and **3** deaths were recorded in Nigeria.
- Till date, **45,244** cases have been confirmed, **32,430** cases have been discharged and **930** deaths have been recorded in 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory.
- The **481** new cases are reported from 17 states - FCT (78), Lagos (76), Kaduna (23), Ebonyi (19), Oyo (18), Nasarawa (17), Rivers (17), Delta (16), Kwara (15), Akwa Ibom (13), Edo (12), Ogun (12), Plateau (11), Kano (9), Bauchi (6), Borno (6), Ekiti (6)
- A multi-sectoral national emergency operations centre (EOC), activated at Level 3, continues to coordinate the national response activities

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