

## Journalists Urged To Imbibe Safety Consciousness and Conflict Sensitivity During Election Coverage



**Mr. Rotimi Oyekanmi**  
CPS to INEC Chairman  
(Special Guest)



**Mrs. Funke-Treasure Durodola**  
Board Member, IPC  
(Moderator)

The importance of safety consciousness and conflict sensitivity on the part of the media and journalists during reportage was once again highlighted in a webinar organized by the International Press Center, IPC, in conjunction with the Association of Communication Scholars and Professionals of Nigeria, ACSPN, recently.

The webinar's focus, which was on Edo/Ondo elections with the theme: *"The imperative of Safety Consciousness and Conflict Sensitivity in Media Coverage and Reportage"*, drew participants and facilitators from the media, academia and medical fields.

In his opening remarks, President, ACSPN and Dean, School of Postgraduate Studies, Bayero University, Kano (BUK), Prof. Umaru Pate, expressed the Association's desire for peaceful outcomes of the elections and the belief that journalists would "behave responsibly, professionally and not create conflicts."

On his part, Executive Director, IPC, Mr. Lanre Arogundade, during the welcome address, explained that the webinar was part of the Centre's collaborative effort with stakeholders at building the capacity of journalists, which would continue till the post-election stages.

Arogundade said the training was one in a series for journalists across the country, under Pillar 4b - Support to Media- of the European Union Support to Democratic Governance in Nigeria, EU-SDGN, project.

He said the safety of journalists was paramount in the Edo and Ondo State polls hence tagging the training, *"Imperative of Safety Consciousness and Conflict Sensitivity in Media Coverage and Reportage."*

Arogundade further urged the journalists to adhere to the Electoral Act 2010 as amended, the Nigeria Media Code on Election Coverage, the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) Code and take advantage of the manual titled *"COVID-19 Pandemic Reporting: A Safety and Professional Advisory for Journalists"* available on all the IPC's platforms, because, according to him, "we, (the media and journalists) need to be abreast of new developments such as safety concerns and conflict situations because where there is violence, we are unable to do our work."



**Prof. Umaru Pate**  
President, ACSPN



**Lanre Arogundade**  
Executive Director, IPC



**Dr. Akin Akingbulu**  
Executive Director, IMS

On his part, the Executive Director, Institute for Media and Society (IMS), Dr. Akin Akingbulu, in his goodwill remarks, urged journalists to demonstrate utmost sensitivity to issues and navigate with professional tools throughout the stages of the elections.

He said the webinar "has the potential to contribute to the conduct of a free and fair election in Edo and Ondo States and deepen democracy practice in the country."

While observing that the rights of journalists on duty are often violated during elections, he urged the media to remain consistent in educating the electorate to deepen the electoral contest and strive to be sufficiently kitted to cover the upcoming polls because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In his remarks, Mr Rotimi Oyekanmi, Chief Press Secretary to INEC Chairman, spoke on the proactive measures taken by the commission to address security concerns ahead of the polls.

Oyekanmi said consultations with the Inter Consultative Committee on Election Security (ICCES) in Edo and Ondo were on-going to ensure the safety of everybody during and after the elections.

"About two weeks ago, the INEC Chairman, Prof. Mahmood Yakubu, led a delegation to meet with the revered Oba of Benin, to ask him to intervene and appeal to political actors to allow a peaceful election.

"The respected monarch promised to invite them to his palace for interaction and he has already done so. "Plans have also been concluded for all the 14 political parties participating in the election to sign a peace accord in the coming days," he said.

According to him, with all the efforts, it was hoped that the election would be held peacefully. "We don't expect any problem. We expect fairness and objectivity in the reportage of activities because it will have an effect in the operations of the Commission and on the conduct of elections," Oyekanmi added.

Among the lead speakers at the event was the Programme Officer (Journalists Safety), IPC, Mrs. Melody Akinjiyan-Lawal, who, in her presentation *"Situational Scan on Journalists Safety Issues in Nigeria: What Journalists in Edo/Ondo Should Know"*, advised journalists to shun partisanship, move in groups and alert relevant bodies when in danger when covering the elections.

She disclosed that 41 journalists have been attacked at different locations in the country in the course of their duties between January and August 2020, according to the International Press Centre, IPC.

Akinjiyan-Lawal said of the 41 attacks, 35 were on males, while five were on females and one was on a media house.

She noted that the nature of the attacks were in the form of

harassment, threats to life, physical and verbal assault as well as damage to work equipment, among others.

The programme officer further reiterated the need for journalists to take cognisance of the fact that nothing had changed in the way and manner politicians viewed election to be a do-or-die affair.

"So journalists must report effectively while staying safe in the dangerous electoral terrain we still operate.

"In this regard, it is important for journalists to situate their role and interest in the context of the interest of the two

major stakeholders which are the politicians and the people. "The candidates and their supporters in these elections will not care whose ox is gored for them to actualise their ambition.

"Journalists need to keep abreast of this fact so as not to be victims of any crossfire," she said.

A medical officer at Caleb University, Dr. Clinton Okonye who spoke on *"Elections Coverage under COVID-19 Rules: Addressing Issues of Personal Safety"*, urged journalists while covering the elections to follow health protocols strictly maintaining that "we are the change, we are the cure."

He said journalists need to be aware that election periods pose some danger to health because of crowded locations where people with different health status gather and thus increase the chances of infections.

Dr. Ruqayyah Aliyu of the Faculty of Communication, Bayero University, Kano, BUK, in her contribution on *"Electoral Conflict and Media Coverage: The Need for Conflict Sensitive Reporting in Edo/Ondo Elections"*, noted that the media is a key actor in curtailing violent election conflicts at any stage of the electioneering period.

She said: "The mass media must live up to its statutory and social responsibilities by upholding to ethics and professionalism."

Senior Programme Manager, IPC, Mr. Sanmi Falobi in the closing remarks, sought for more collaborations with stakeholders on capacity building and cooperation across the board.

Mrs. Funke-Treasure Durodola, a Board Member, IPC and former Assistant Director (Programme), Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria FRCN, moderated the webinar.



**Mrs. Melody Akinjiyan-Lawal**  
Prog. Officer (Journalists Safety), IPC



**Dr. Clinton Okonye**  
Caleb University, Lagos



**Dr. Ruqayyah Aliyu**  
Bayero University, Kano

**Akwa Ibom Based Journalist Detained By Police Since August 17**

**A** journalist, Ime Sunday Silas, has been reportedly under detention by the Nigeria Police since 17 August, 2020.

According to reports, the police in Uyo, Akwa-Ibom State, arrested Silas, an editor with the privately owned Global Concord newspaper on charges of cybercrime.

Silas was arrested after he arrived in the Ikot Akpan Abia district of Uyo to meet a source, and officers detained him at a nearby police headquarters, according to Solomon Johnny, editor-in-chief of the newspaper.

On August 18, a magistrate court charged Silas under Section 24 of Nigeria's 2015 cybercrime act, according to Johnny and a copy of the charge sheet.

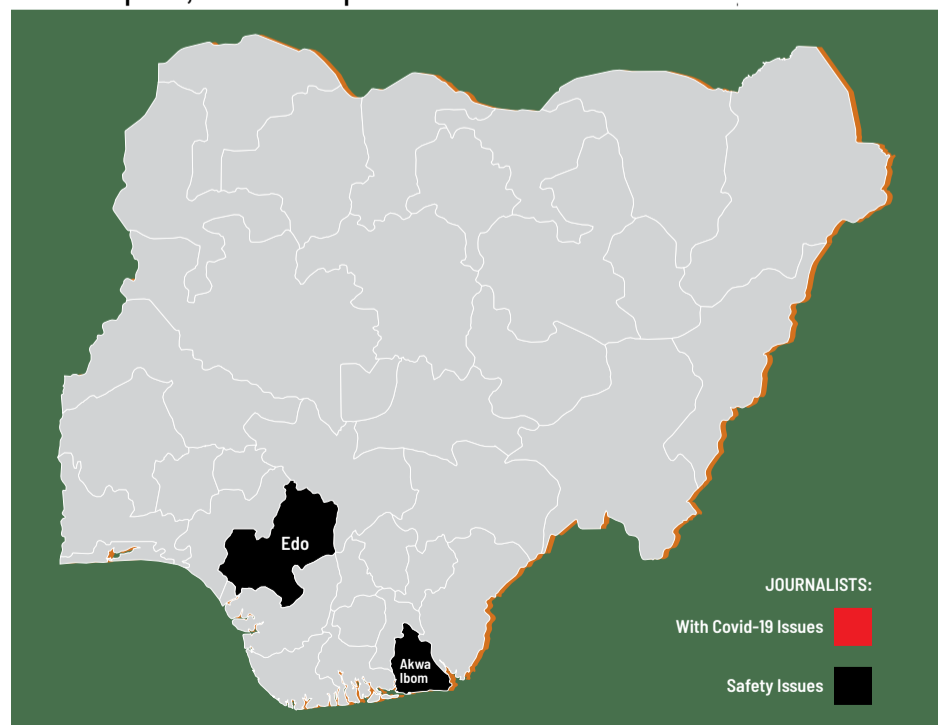
The court has denied Silas bail on August 18, but his lawyers filed a new bail application on August 24, which was granted on September 10, Emmanuel Isangidoho, one of Silas' lawyers said.

Despite being granted bail, Silas remains in the police headquarters as of today, according to Johnny.

If convicted, Silas could face up to three years in prison, a fine of up to 7 million naira or both, according to the cybercrime act.

Silas' charge sheet alleges that he violated Section 24 of the act related to "cyberstalking" by sending a message that included the title of an August 9 report published by The Profile about Martha Udom Emmanuel, the wife of Akwa-Ibom Governor Udom Emmanuel.

That report, titled "Exposed: Okobo PDP



Chapter Chair links Gov Udom's Wife with plot to blackmail Deputy Speaker," alleged a blackmail scheme related to upcoming local council elections.

According to the charge sheet, Silas sent a "message" containing the report's title, which constituted a crime of spreading information, "through a computer, knowing the same to be false, for the purpose of causing annoyance, insult, hatred and ill will" against Martha Udom Emmanuel.

**AIT Crew Heading to Edo Election in Ghastly Accident**

**A**frican Independent Television, AIT, crew heading to Edo state for election coverage was involved in a ghastly accident around Auchu with many said to be in critical condition. The accident, which took place on Thursday evening, involved three of the organisation's operatives, including reporter, who is reported to be seriously injured.

The injured operatives are now receiving treatments in an undisclosed hospital African Independent Television (AIT) and Raypower are owned by DAAR Communications.

**EDO Poll: IPC Opens Help Lines For Journalists**

**T**he International Press Centre (IPC), Lagos- Nigeria has urged journalists and other media professionals that will be on the field for the coverage and reportage of this Saturday's Governorship election in Edo State not to forget about ensuring their personal safety.

IPC Executive Director, Mr. Lanre Arogundade sounded this note of caution in the light of the emerging accusations and counter accusations by political actors and other players in the electoral process about possible violence. He noted that though the signing of the peace

accord has allayed fears, violence in elections is often unpredictable, so staying safe should be a priority.

As part of initiatives to keep tab on the safety consciousness of journalists, IPC said that there are safety alert officers who journalists under threat/attack can report to. Arogundade said that in cases of attacks or insecurity issues, concerned journalists on the field can contact any of the following persons.

Melody Lawal (Safety Alert Officer, IPC) – 08132776441  
Rosemary Nwaebuni, Safety of Journalists' Monitor, (South South) – 08035146978

Mr. Arogundade also enjoined journalists to report any threats to the NUJ State Chapter.

He said; "It is very important for journalists covering the Edo state election to be safety conscious in the discharge of their duties, and to avoid situations that will put them in harms way. Journalists should proactively balance eagerness for news with safety consciousness. If there is an outbreak of violence, journalists should ensure to stay safe and not be caught in the violence.

"Journalists are also expected to be non-partisan. Being partisan is not only about being a member of a political party, but also includes the use of expressions and/or impressions with statements, tags, symbols and colours that portray or identify with a particular political party or personality", Arogundade added.

He also admonished other stakeholders, especially the security agencies to undertake their tasks in a very professional manner, and especially to recognize that the media is a critical factor for credible and peaceful elections.

According to him; "The security forces should note that the media is a critical part of the electoral process and so the media should be accorded due rights and privileges to enable them carry out their social obligations as partners in enshrining the credibility of the electoral process.

"Other stakeholders, including elections observers should also proactively provide journalists covering the elections with information to ensure that all work together for the credibility of the electoral process".



## Chances Brightens On FG Palliative For the Media



**Lai Mohammed**  
Minister of Information

The chances for the expected palliatives from the government to the media amid the devastating COVID-19 pandemic on media business has brightened as the Newspapers Proprietors Association of Nigeria, NPAN is responding to the Federal Government directive to send in a submission.

Media business had taken a hit, particularly during the lockdown to curb the spread of the virus, as the media, unlike many organization remained on the frontlines, alongside medical personnel, covering and reporting the contagion. By the time the government eased the lockdown the damage had been done, forcing many media outfits to adopt cost cutting measures such as half pay for staff, downsizing, forced leave and lay-off.

To halt the ugly trend, the NPAN, the Nigeria Guild of Editors, NGE and the Nigeria Union of Journalists, NUJ, appealed to the government for some form of support.

The Federal Government first responded by offering the broadcast media some form of financial rebate and promised to assist the print media later.

Speaking during the week on the readiness of the Federal Government to offer that assistance, the Minister of Information and Culture, Alhaji Lai Mohammed urged the NPAN to come forward with a submission on how government could help the industry deal with the effect of COVID-19 pandemic.

The Minister made the disclosure when he addressed State House Correspondents after a meeting with

President Muhammadu Buhari in Abuja.

He said: "Government has done a lot in the media, especially the broadcast industry, during this pandemic. The first thing we did was to give a waiver of two months payment of license fees to all broadcast houses between May and July, after which we gave an amnesty as 60 percent discount or debt forgiveness, for all broadcast houses, except the Pay TVs, and also slashed by 30 percent the licensing fees because of the COVID-19.

"I also met with the Newspapers Proprietors Association of Nigeria, we met virtually and I'm still waiting for them to come and make their submissions.

"Definitely, the government is willing to look into the hardships and the challenges the media is facing and within our means to see how best we can intervene. I'm still waiting for the NPAN to come back to us to see what we can do to ameliorate the situation," he said.

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## MultiChoice Showcase Sport channels More Contents

MultiChoice Nigeria, says it has opened new sport channels and other fresh contents for the rest of the year 2020.

At the virtual Nigeria Showcase 2020 on Wednesday, September 9, MultiChoice unveiled local and international entertainment, documentaries, reality and kiddies' programming to be aired in 2020.

Chief Customer Officer of MultiChoice Nigeria, Martin Mabutho, said the Pay-TV company was delighted to broadcast to Nigerians the best football from international football leagues, such as the Premier League, La Liga, Serie A, UEFA Champions League, Emirates FA Cup and others for the upcoming 2020/2021 season to both DStv and GOtv customers.

Mabutho added that American sport channel, ESPN, has returned to DStv after some years' hiatus, adding that the channel will also be on GOtv Max and will showcase the best of the NBA (National Basketball Association), NFL (National Football League), Major League Baseball (MLB), MLS (Major League Soccer) and other sports to subscribers.

Also on ESPN, sport fans will also have access to the English Football League (EFL), Major League Soccer (MLS), Scottish Premier Football League (SPFL) and Dutch Eredivisie, which are available to DStv and GOtv Max customers, while DStv customers have access to NBA games on ESPN 2.

"Nobody has more sport content than us," Mabutho said.





## NBC Issues Another Warning to Broadcasters Ahead of Edo Gov Poll



**Prof Idachaba**  
NBC Ag D-G

The National Broadcasting Commission, NBC, has urged broadcast stations to abide by the provisions of the Nigeria Broadcasting Code, regulations and other extant laws, during the Edo State governorship election.

NBC had earlier warned broadcast stations to reject being used as a platform for contents that might lead to the breakdown of law and order in Edo State.

NBC's Deputy Director, Public Affairs, Ekanem Antia, said in a statement, that the Commission would wield the big stick on any broadcast station who disregards its regulations.

She stated: "In view of the upcoming governorship election in Edo State on Saturday, September 19, 2020, the National Broadcasting Commission wishes to again bring to the awareness of broadcasters, the essential provisions of the Nigeria Broadcasting Code and the Electoral Act regarding the coverage of elections and announcement of election results."

The NBC specifically mentioned Section 5.3.3 of the code, which stipulates that the broadcaster shall ensure that the broadcast of a partisan political campaign, jingle, announcement, and any other form of partisan party identification or symbol ends not later than 24 hours before polling day.

The section also warned broadcast stations from the use of any vote obtained at a polling station or from an exit poll to project or speculate on the chances of a candidate, but to relay election results or declaration of the winner only as announced by the authorised electoral officer for the election.

Antia further said: "This is also as

**“The commission uses this opportunity to warn all broadcasters to adhere to the provisions of the Nigeria Broadcasting Code, regulation and other extant Laws, as it will not hesitate to sanction any broadcaster that contravenes the above requirements.”**

contained in the Electoral Act of the Independent Electoral Commission of Nigeria. The Commission, along with stakeholders, have been working towards a free and fair governorship election in Edo State and enjoins broadcasters to continue to perform their duties professionally in order to bring about a successful democratic process.

“Nevertheless, the commission uses this opportunity to warn all broadcasters to adhere to the provisions of the Nigeria Broadcasting Code, regulation and other extant Laws, as it will not hesitate to sanction any broadcaster that contravenes the above requirements.”

### Users of Social Media Networks Alerted on Antics of Fraudsters

Users of social media networks and other media platforms have been alerted to the increasing incidents of fraud being perpetuated by cybercrime fraudsters.

According to the Nigeria Communications Commission, NCC, fraudsters have started targeting individuals and organisations for scam.

The commission in a statement signed by its Director, Public Affairs, Dr Ikechukwu Adinde, advised telecom consumers using any social media platform to be alert and wary of the wiles of fraudsters and other unscrupulous persons.

“In the wake of increased Internet

usage and other electronic communications, the commission also wishes to warn telecom consumers and the general public of the possibility of an upsurge in cybercrimes, including but not limited to vishing (Voice Phishing) and smishing (SMS Phishing),” NCC said.

He said that the latest scams sometimes took the form of vishing, which it described as fraudulent phone calls from persons claiming to be calling on behalf of a credible organisation, with the intention to gain access to the target's personal or group social media account or other identity resources.

According to Adinde, the increasingly popular incidents typically started with a phone call from fraudsters requesting the call receiver to perform a certain task, which would enable the caller swiftly takeover the social media account of an individual or group.

Consequently, the commission informed the public that such calls and antics, were initiated and carried out by unscrupulous persons, usually with the intent to defraud unsuspecting citizens and or commit other heinous crimes.

NCC assured telecom consumers that all the numbers reportedly used to perpetuate these crimes were being investigated and would be dealt with.

Accordingly, it urged telecom consumers to ensure they put in place the necessary security measures to protect their online activities as well as remain alert to the prowling fraudsters on various Internet platforms.

“It is important that telecom consumers do not give out any information about their accounts or other online transaction details to unknown persons who pose as representatives of known organisations,” Adinde added in the statement.



## Editor's Note

**E**lection periods for Nigerian media and journalists are usually fraught with danger. Assault, maltreatment and threats to life are commonplace experiences for journalists during election coverage. That is why, for example, the Independent National Electoral Commission, INEC, initiated an Inter-Agency Security Consultative Forum as a clearing-house for security and conflict related matters during elections.

Even so, journalists themselves need to be informed and trained and updated on the importance of safety consciousness and conflict sensitivity during reportage. That was the focus of a webinar recently. We captured it in detail in our opening story.

With electioneering over for the Edo governorship election and all eyes are now focused on the media, expecting it to give adequate and ethical coverage on the poll. On this, the National Broadcasting Commission, NBC, renewed calls for professional handling of the voting, collation and announcement of the result.

The long sought after government palliative by media owners and manager to cushion the devastating impact of COVID-19 pandemic on their businesses may be around the corner as the Minister of Information and Culture, Alhaji Lai Mohammed disclosed during the week that the government was only expecting a submission from the Newspapers Proprietors Association, NPAN to fulfill its pledge.

As we were about to put this week's production to bed, the sad news broke of a ghastly accident involving the crew of African Independent Television, AIT, heading to Edo state to cover the election there. We wish the reporters speedy recovering from injuries sustained in the crash and join our voices to that of other media organisations that have urged journalists to be safety conscious and professional during and after the election.

### The Editor

Institute for Media and Society, Nigeria

## NCDC Confirmed COVID-19 Cases by State, September 18, 2020

States Affected	No. of Cases (Lab Confirmed)	No. of Cases (on admission)	No. Discharged	No. of Deaths
Lagos	18,768	3,318	15,245	205
FCT	5,504	526	4,902	76
Oyo	3,226	1,085	2,102	39
Plateau	3,175	922	2,222	31
Edo	2,610	78	2,427	105
Kaduna	2,322	98	2,191	33
Rivers	2,209	30	2,120	59
Delta	1,799	112	1,638	49
Ogun	1,755	9	1,718	28
Kano	1,733	26	1,653	54
Ondo	1,590	65	1,490	35
Enugu	1,234	47	1,166	21
Ebonyi	1,035	1	1,004	30
Kwara	1,009	82	902	25
Katsina	845	364	457	24
Abia	835	35	792	8
Osun	807	19	771	17
Gombe	779	75	679	25
Borno	741	2	703	36
Bauchi	682	10	658	14
Imo	551	323	216	12
Benue	467	57	401	9
Nasarawa	447	137	298	12
Bayelsa	393	2	370	21
Jigawa	322	3	308	11
Ekiti	307	27	275	5
Akwa Ibom	288	16	264	8
Niger	250	6	232	12
Anambra	232	29	184	19
Adamawa	230	19	196	15
Sokoto	161	2	142	17
Taraba	95	16	73	6
Kebbi	93	1	84	8
Cross River	85	2	74	9
Zamfara	78	0	73	5
Yobe	73	6	59	8
Kogi	5	0	3	2

### Highlights

- On the 17th of September 2020, 131 new confirmed cases and 2 deaths were recorded in Nigeria.
- Till date, 56,735 cases have been confirmed, 48,092 cases have been discharged and 1,093 deaths have been recorded in 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory.
- The 197 new cases are reported from 18 states - Lagos (45), Kaduna (17), Plateau (17), FCT (16), Delta (6), Niger (6), Kwara (5), Oyo (3), Akwa Ibom (2), Cross River (2), Ekiti (2), Enugu (2), Osun (2), Sokoto (2), Bauchi (1), Ebonyi (1), Katsina (1), Rivers (1)
- A multi-sectoral national emergency operations centre (EOC), activated at Level 3, continues to coordinate the national response activities

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