

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



*December 2013*



**Stop Impunity Nigeria**

# **Reporting Impunity:**

## **Report from the Monitoring of Print Media Coverage of Impunity Issues**

*A Publication of*



*For the*

**Stop Impunity Nigeria**

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## *Preface*

On May 16, 2013, the Stop Impunity Nigeria (S.I.N.) Project launched a national campaign against impunity. The Campaign is a collaborative effort by a multi-stakeholder group of civil society organizations, religious bodies and a Federal Government agency, aimed at re-orienting Nigerians and promoting new ethical values to free the country from the debilitating effects of impunity.

Given the critical role of the media in such a campaign, the implementing organizations also decided to monitor print media coverage of impunity issues for several months to see how the media was reporting the issues, beginning from June 2013. The broad purpose of the exercise is to provide independent and objective data on media coverage of issues of impunity.

For each month, the project monitors the amount of coverage given to relevant events as well as debates and discourse on issues of impunity; focusing more particularly on the thematic areas of the Stop Impunity Nigeria campaign, namely “Public Finance Management”, “Electoral Process”, “Rule of Law”, as well as “Patriotism, Ethical and Civic Responsibility”.

But the project also monitors the coverage of impunity issues in general as well as the reporting of the activities being carried out by the Stop Impunity Nigeria implementing organizations in the course of the campaign.

The Campaign therefore sought to monitor media coverage of issues of impunity in 10 selected daily newspapers. Specifically, the exercise consisted of the following:

- ◆ Identifying the types of impunity issues that are covered by the selected newspapers.
- ◆ Tracking, analysing and documenting the amount of space given to issues of impunity in the selected newspapers and how comprehensively these issues are reported and analysed.
- ◆ Tracking, analysing and documenting the frequency of media reportage of the thematic focus of Stop Impunity Nigeria Campaign.

- ◆ Tracking, analysing and documenting the pattern of reporting of issues of impunity, such as the prominence given to such issues, and the order in which they are reported relative to other issues and events in the selected newspapers.
- ◆ Reviewing coverage of issues of impunity in the selected newspapers to determine if the issues are getting adequate coverage.
- ◆ Identifying gaps in the coverage of impunity issues and finding ways of addressing them in order to increase and improve media reporting of the issues.
- ◆ Publishing regular reports, which will draw attention to patterns of reporting, the inadequacy or otherwise of analysis, commentaries and news, and provide a framework for increased reporting of issues of impunity in the media.

Media coverage of impunity issues is critically important in the context of the Stop Impunity Nigeria campaign because despite the advancements in information technology, conventional media remains one of the most important tools for public enlightenment. This is because the media has a great capacity to reach masses of people, providing them thereby with information on any issue, and influencing their thought processes and opinions.

The media is obviously, therefore, a very powerful tool in advocacy. The media can set agendas for the public simply by reporting an issue and they can influence public debate by what they choose to cover and the way they frame the issues. The media can also pressure policy-makers or decision-makers and ordinary citizens to act in a certain way. They can also project certain values which people then imbibe.

In particular, the media can play a critical role in raising public awareness and understanding of the issues of impunity which the Stop Impunity Nigeria Campaign is concerned with. In adopting a strategy of co-opting this media capacity, the Campaign is also seeking to build a body of knowledge about how the media actually covers the issues.

But the overriding expectation of the Campaign is that reports of the findings from the monitoring exercise will provide a barometer for the media as an institution as well as individual media organizations, to measure their performance in reporting on issues of impunity and undertake voluntary adjustments to improve the coverage of such issues, as part of their contributions to the campaign against impunity in Nigeria.

We hope that these monthly reports can help to make this a reality.

**Edetaen Ojo**

Executive Director, Media Rights Agenda



# Introduction

This is the seventh and last report in the monitoring of media reportage on issues of impunity by ten selected Nigerian newspapers.

The exercise tracked news and other types of reports in ten selected newspapers, collated and analyzed the contents.

The broad purpose of the exercise was to provide independent and objective data on media coverage of issues of impunity. The project monitored the amount of coverage given to debates and discourses on issues of impunity; focusing on the four thematic areas namely 'Public Finance Management', 'Electoral Process', 'Rule of Law', and 'Patriotism, Ethical and Civic Responsibility'. It also monitored reportage of the 'Stop Impunity Nigeria (S.I.N) Campaign and the omnibus 'Others'.

The project framework was designed in the context of the Stop Impunity Nigeria (S.I.N.) Campaign being carried out by four implementing partners namely, Media Rights Agenda (MRA), Human Development Initiative (HDI), Community Life Project (CLP) and Centre for Social Justice (CSJ). The S.I.N Campaign also has the National orientation Agency (NOA), Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) and the National Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (NSCIA) as collaborating organisations.

It monitored these issues daily on the ten selected daily newspapers namely: The Punch, The Guardian, The Nation, Vanguard, Daily Trust, and Daily Sun. The other newspapers are ThisDay, Leadership, Daily Independent, and National Mirror.

Ten newspapers, all privately-owned, are selected for the monitoring but they cut across different types of ownership including political, ethnic and economic diversity.

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

### **Specifically, the exercise**

- ◆ Identified the types of impunity issues that are covered by the selected newspapers.
- ◆ Tracked, analysed and documented the amount of space given to report issues of impunity in the selected newspapers
- ◆ Tracked, analysed and documented the frequency of media reportage of the thematic focus of Stop Impunity Nigeria (S.I.N.) Campaign.
- ◆ Tracked, computed, analysed and documented the prominence given to reportage of issues of impunity in the selected newspapers.
- ◆ Reviewed media coverage of issues of impunity in the selected newspapers to determine if they are getting adequate coverage.
- ◆ Reviewed media coverage of issues of impunity in the selected newspapers to identify existing gaps and address them; and
- ◆ Reviewed media coverage of issues of impunity in the selected newspapers to identify and proffer ways of increasing media reportage of issues of impunity, among others.

# Findings

## Relevant Editorial Items Published

In December 2013, the 10 newspapers monitored published a sum total of 160 relevant editorial items on issues of impunity. This number is much less than those published by the same newspapers in any of the previous six months monitored.

Leadership newspaper titles published the highest number of relevant items with 24 reports on issues of impunity. These represent 15% of the total published by the ten newspapers on issues of impunity.

Daily Sun newspaper titles published the second highest number of relevant items: it published 23 relevant reports which represented 14.37% of total items published by the ten newspapers on issues of impunity.

Coming third place was The Guardian newspaper which published 20 relevant items that accounted for 12.5% of the total published by the ten newspapers on issues of impunity.

The Nation newspaper published 19 relevant items which placed it in the fourth position. Relevant reports published by The Nation newspaper accounted for 11.87% of the total published by the ten newspapers on issues of impunity.

The Punch newspaper published the fifth highest number of relevant items on issues of impunity with 16 items which represented 10% of the total items published by the ten newspapers on issues of impunity.

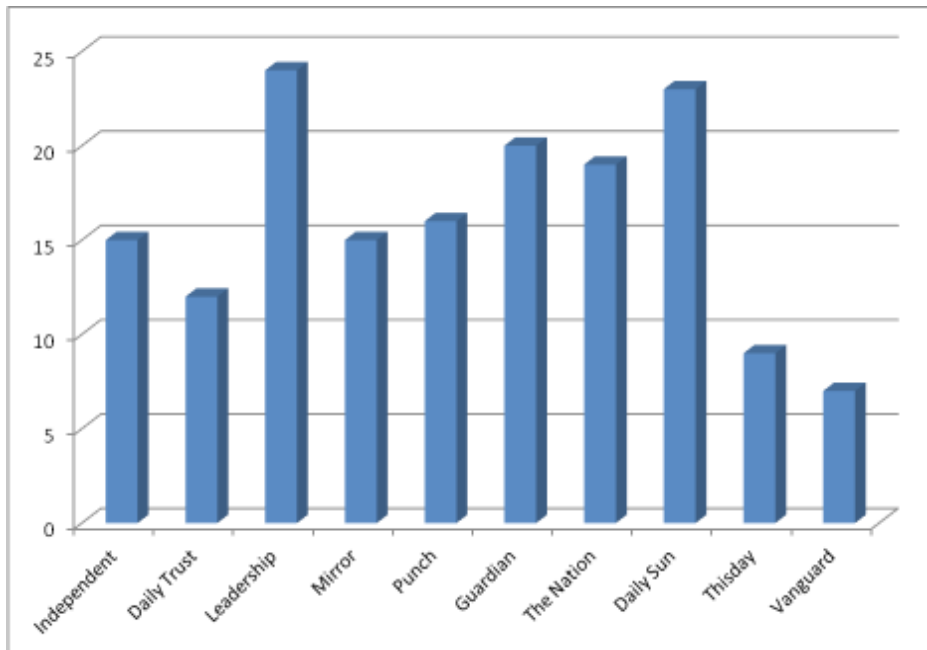
Daily Independent newspaper and National Mirror newspaper published the sixth highest numbers with each of these titles publishing 15 relevant reports apiece. These represented 9.37% apiece, of total items published by the ten newspapers on issues of impunity.

Daily Trust newspaper published 12 relevant reports which accounted for 7.5% of the total relevant items published; ThisDay newspaper published nine (9) relevant items which represented 5.62% of the total relevant items while Vanguard newspaper which published the least number had seven (7) which accounted for 4.37% of the total items published by the ten newspapers on issues of impunity.

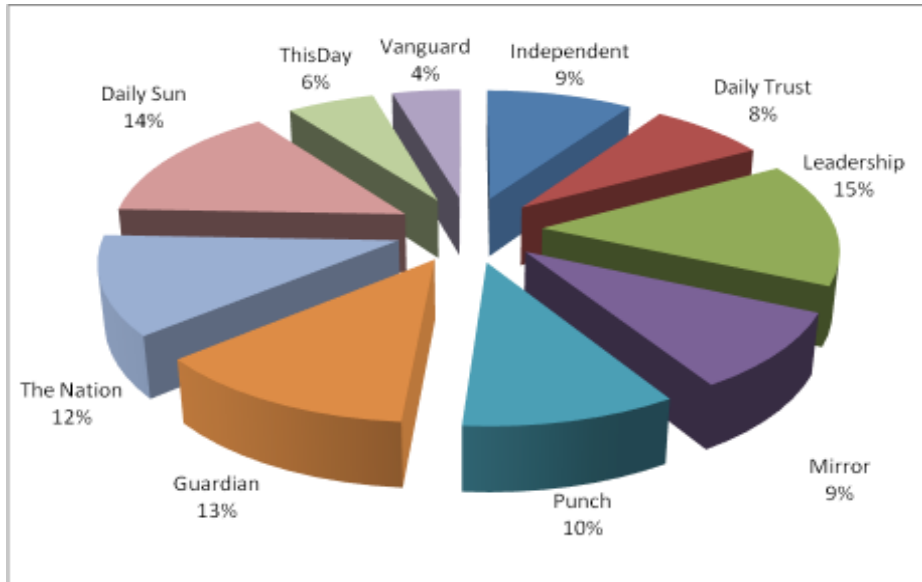
*The table below shows the numbers of relevant reports published by each newspaper and of each thematic focus*

S.N.	Publications	Electoral Process	Others	Patriotism, E&CR	PFM	Rule Of Law	S.I.N Campaign	Total
1.	Independent	1	1	3	3	6	1	15
2.	Daily Trust	0	0	10	0	2	0	12
3.	Leadership	0	0	16	5	3	0	24
4.	Mirror	0	0	11	2	2	0	15
5.	Punch	0	0	9	1	6	0	16
6.	Guardian	0	0	9	3	8	0	20
7.	The Nation	0	0	6	0	13	0	19
8.	Daily Sun	0	0	19	1	3	0	23
9.	ThisDay	0	0	7	0	2	0	9
10.	Vanguard	0	0	6	0	1	0	7
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>160</b>

*The chart below shows the numbers of relevant reports published by each of the ten newspapers*



*The chart below shows the percentages of relevant reports published by each of the ten newspapers*



## Reports Published on Thematic Areas

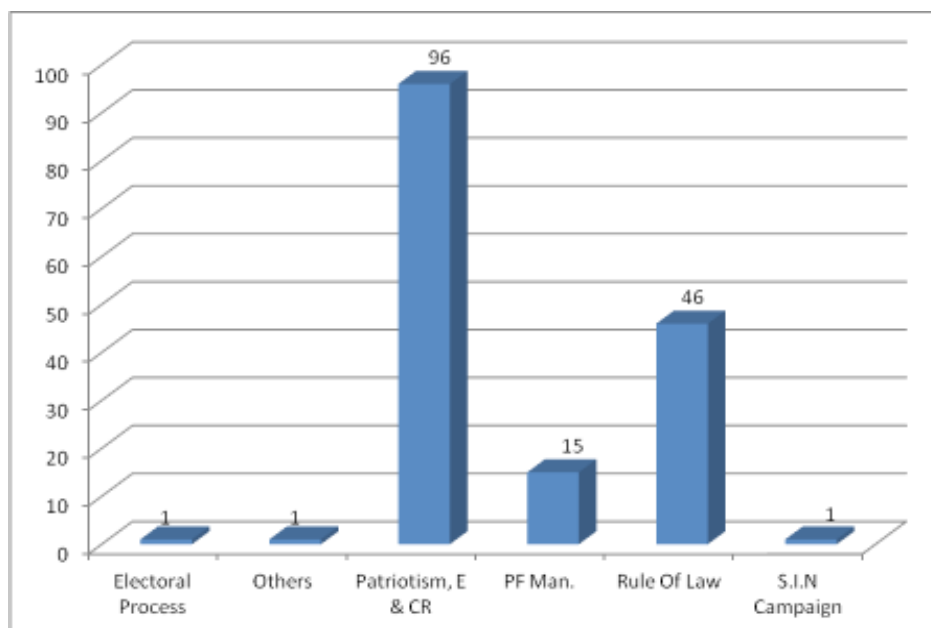
As in the previous months, the newspapers monitored published the highest number of reports on the thematic focus 'Patriotism, Ethical and Civic Responsibility' with 96 items which represented 60% of the total published.

Another 46 reports were identified as published on the thematic focus 'Rule of Law' and they accounted for 28.75% of total items published this month.

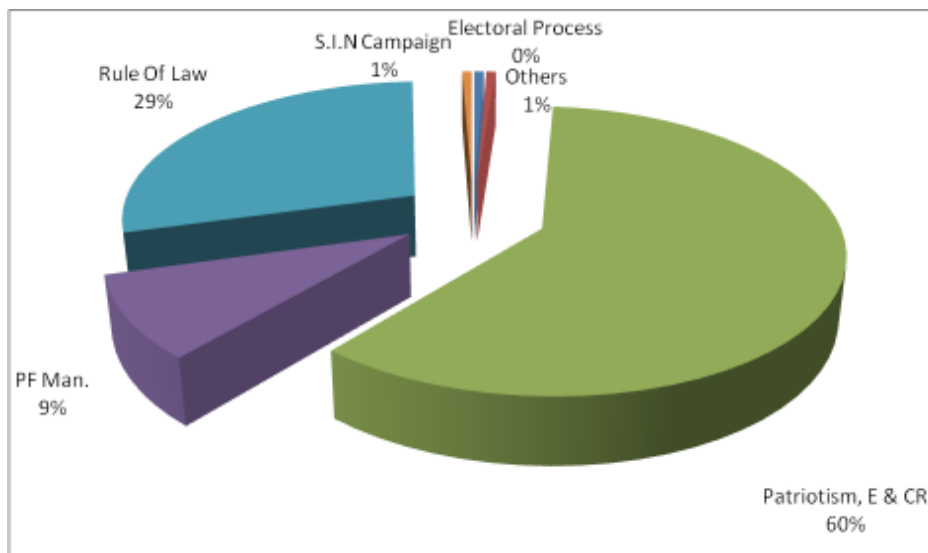
A total of 15 relevant reports were identified as published on the thematic focus 'Public Finance Management' which represented 9.37% of the total.

The other thematic focuses: 'Electoral Process', 'S.I.N Campaign', and the omnibus 'Others' each had one (1) relevant report published on them. These represented 0.62% each of the total relevant reports identified as published on issues of impunity.

*The chart below shows the numbers of relevant reports published by the newspapers on each thematic focus areas*



*The chart below shows the percentages of relevant reports published by the newspapers on each thematic focus areas*



**Keys**

**Patriotism, E & CR** - Patriotism, Ethical and Civic Responsibility

**PF Man.** - Public Finance Management

**S.I.N Campaign** - Stop Impunity Nigeria Campaign

## Space Allotted by Newspapers

In December 2013, a combined total of 7,620.12 square inches (in<sup>2</sup>) space was used to publish the 160 identified relevant items on impunity. This figure is also the least when compared to the space allotted in the previous six months of the monitoring exercise.

Leadership newspaper allotted the biggest space to publish identified relevant items with its 1,352.94 square inches (in<sup>2</sup>) space which accounted for 17.57% of the total space used to publish all the identified items.

Following on its heels was Daily Sun newspaper which expended 1,026.26 square inches (in<sup>2</sup>) space to publish relevant items. The space expended by Daily Sun represented 13.46% of the total space used by all ten newspapers to publish identified items.

National Mirror newspaper allotted the third biggest space to publish identified reports with 987.88 square inches (in<sup>2</sup>) space which represented 12.95% or approximately 13% of the total space allotted by the newspapers in December 2013.

Daily Independent newspaper gave 895.87 square inches (in<sup>2</sup>) space to publish identified relevant items which accounted for 11.75% of the total space.

The Nation newspaper allocated 893.58 square inches (in<sup>2</sup>) space which represented 11.72% of the total space to publish relevant items.

The Guardian apportioned 887.9 square inches (in<sup>2</sup>) space which represented 11.65% of the total space to publish relevant items.

The Punch newspaper assigned 691.84 square inches (in<sup>2</sup>) space to publish identified items which accounted for 9.07% of the total space allotted to published relevant items.

ThisDay newspaper tiles used 382.92 square inches (in<sup>2</sup>) space to report identified relevant items published. The space represented 5.02% of the total space used to publish relevant items.

Daily Trust newspaper allocated 335.58 square inches (in<sup>2</sup>) space which represented 4.40% of the total space to report issues of impunity while Vanguard newspaper which gave the least space allocated 165.35 square inches (in<sup>2</sup>)

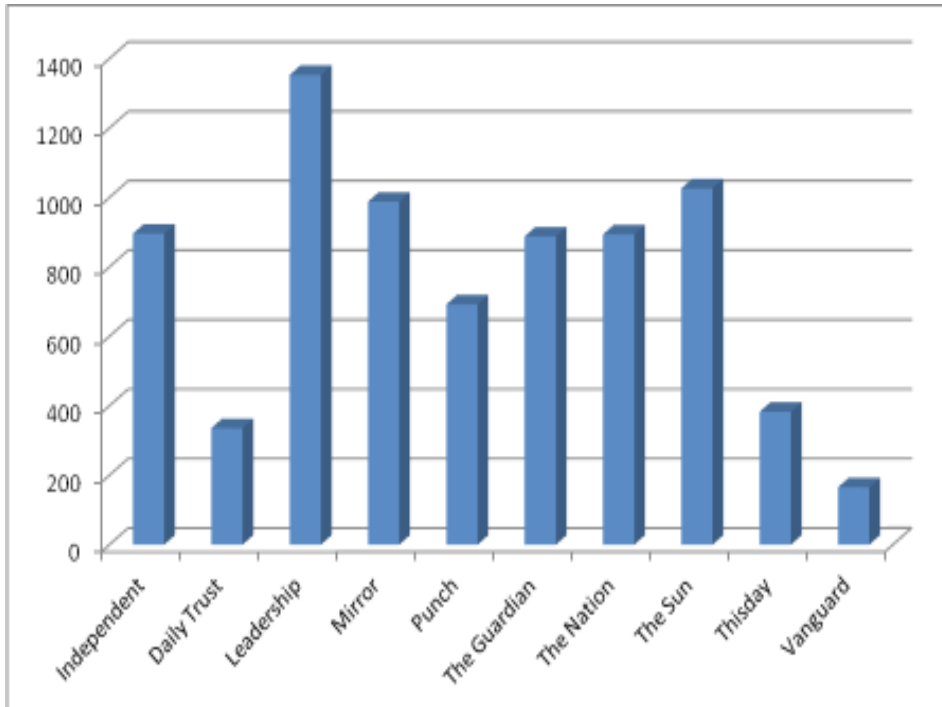


space or 2.16% of the total space used by all ten newspapers to publish identified relevant items on impunity.

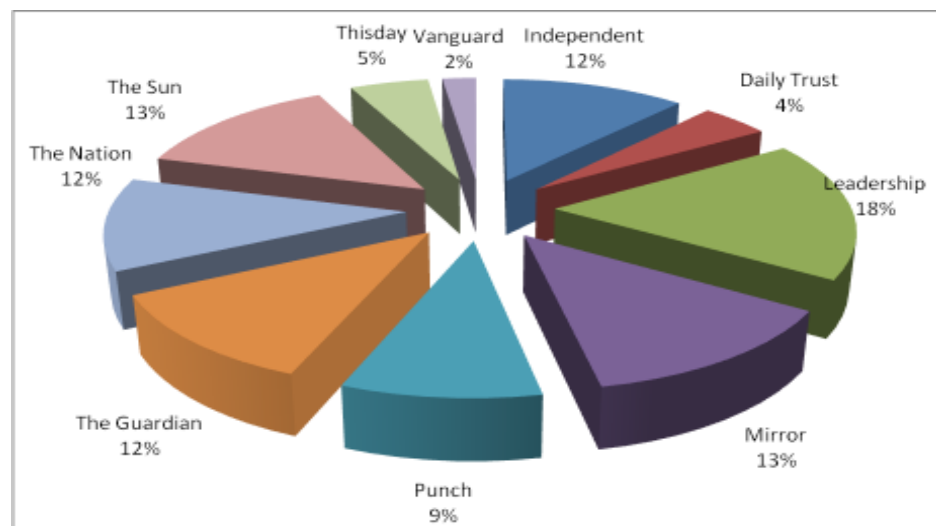
*The table below shows the amount of space (in square inches (in<sup>2</sup>)) allocated by each of the ten newspapers to publish the thematic focus areas being analysed*

S.N.	Publications	Electoral Process	Others	Patriotism, E&CR	P.Fin Mgt	Rule Of Law	S.I.N Campaign	Total Space
1.	Independent	109.5	32.5	210.32	166.83	354.06	22.66	895.87
2.	Daily Trust	0	0	267.24	0	68.34	0	335.58
3.	Leadership	0	0	651.85	388.19	312.9	0	1,352.94
4.	Mirror	0	0	685.48	156	146.4	0	987.88
5.	Punch	0	0	253.29	223.9	214.65	0	691.84
6.	The Guardian	0	0	413.07	142.76	332.07	0	887.9
7.	The Nation	0	0	189.49	0	704.09	0	893.58
8.	Daily Sun	0	0	920.34	33.13	72.79	0	1,026.26
9.	Thisday	0	0	133.12	0	249.8	0	382.92
10.	Vanguard	0	0	88.45	0	76.9	0	165.35
	<b>Total</b>	<b>109.5</b>	<b>32.5</b>	<b>3,812.65</b>	<b>1,110.81</b>	<b>2,532</b>	<b>22.66</b>	<b>7,620.12</b>

*The chart below shows the amount of space (in square inches (in<sup>2</sup>)) allocated by each of the ten newspapers to publish relevant items*



*The chart below shows the percentages of space allocated by each of the ten newspapers to publish relevant items*



## **Space Allotted to Thematic Focus**

As in previous months, the newspapers devoted more space to publish relevant reports on the thematic area 'Patriotism, Ethical and Civic Responsibility' than any other thematic focus. Reports published on this thematic focus occupied 3,812.65 square inches (in<sup>2</sup>) space and accounted for 50.03% of the total space used by the ten newspapers to publish relevant items.

Following this, relevant items published on the thematic focus 'Rule of Law' were allotted the second largest space by the newspapers; they were published in 2,532 square inches (in<sup>2</sup>) space and represented 33.22% of the total space used by the newspapers monitored to publish relevant items on issues of impunity.

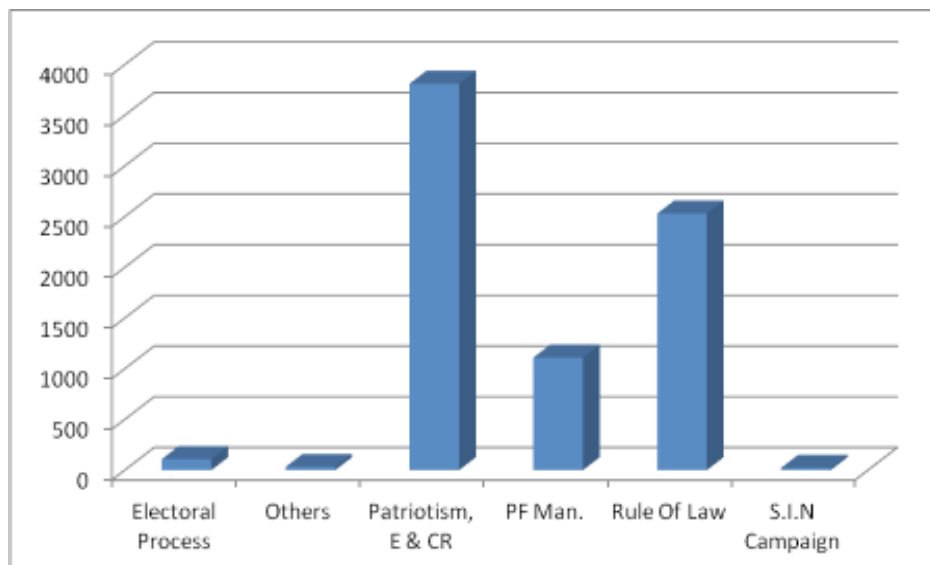
Relevant reports on the thematic focus 'Public Finance Management' were published in 1,110.81 square inches (in<sup>2</sup>) space which accounted for 14.57% of the total space used this month.

The newspapers used 109.5 square inches (in<sup>2</sup>) space to publish relevant items on the thematic focus 'Electoral Process'. This space gives it 1.43% of total space used by the newspapers monitored to publish relevant items on issues of impunity.

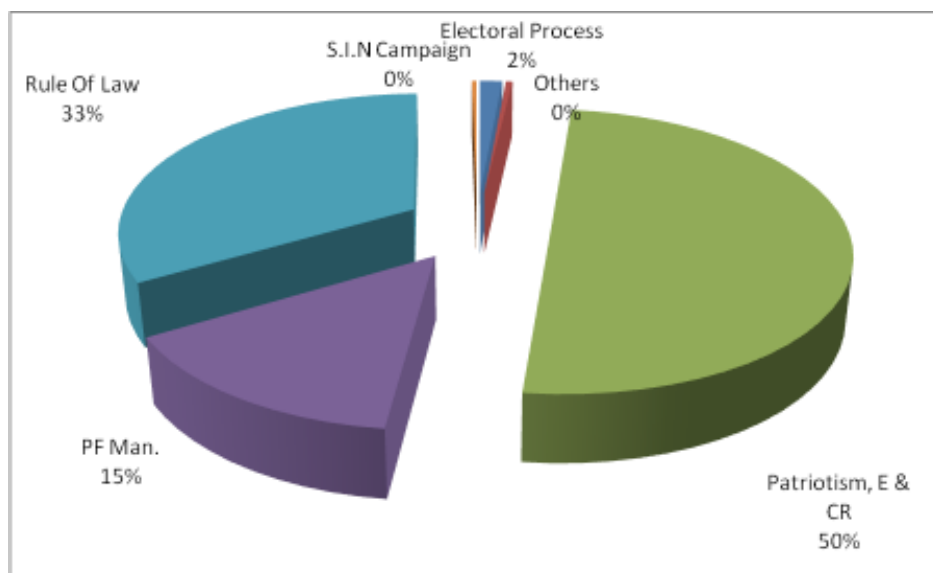
Relevant items on the omnibus 'Others' were allocated 32.5 square inches (in<sup>2</sup>) space that represented 0.42% of the total space used by the newspapers in December 2013.

Relevant items on the 'Stop Impunity Nigeria (S.I.N) Campaign, were published in 22.66 square inches (in<sup>2</sup>) space which accounted for 0.29% of the total space used by the newspapers monitored to publish relevant items on issues of impunity.

*The chart below shows the amount of space (in square inches (in<sup>2</sup>)) allocated by the ten newspapers to publish relevant items on the different thematic areas*



*The chart below shows the percentages of space allocated by the ten newspapers to publish relevant items on the different thematic areas*



## Page Prominence

Understandably, again as in previous months, relevant items published as inside page reports took the lion share of the total: there were a total of 134 relevant items (83.75%) published as inside page reports: 79 items or 49.37% as ‘Major inside page’ reports and 55 items or 34.37% that make up as ‘Minor Inside Page’ reports.

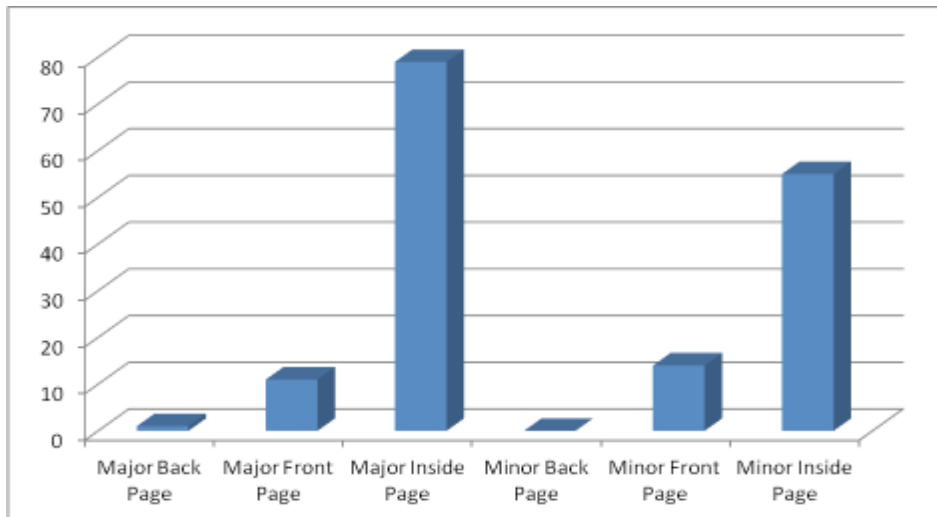
Reports published as ‘Minor Front Page’ reports were 14 in all and these represented 8.75% or approximately 9% of the total 160 relevant items published in December 2013. Another 11 relevant items were published as ‘Major Front Page’ and they accounted for 6.87% or approximately 7% of the total 160 relevant items published.

There was just one (1) relevant report published at the back page in all of the month: the one ‘Major Back Page’ story accounted for 0.62% of the total relevant items published.

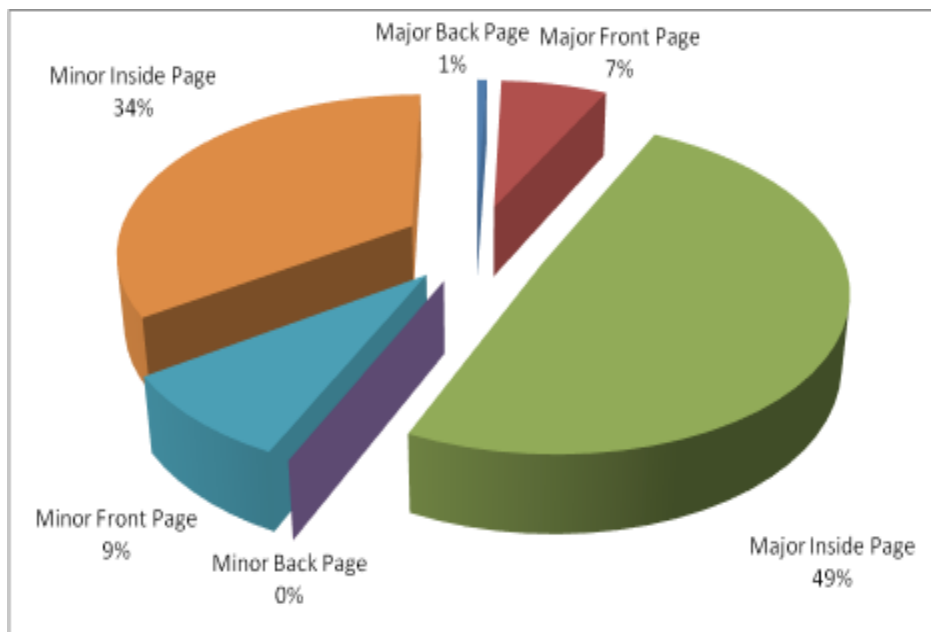
*The table below shows the position of publication of relevant items in the newspapers monitored*

S/N	Publication	Major Back Page	Major Front Page	Major Inside Page	Minor Front Page	Minor Inside Page	Total
1.	Independent	0	2	6	4	3	15
2.	Daily Trust	0	0	4	2	6	12
3.	Leadership	1	2	13	1	7	24
4.	Mirror	0	1	12	0	2	15
5.	Punch	0	0	4	6	6	16
6.	The Guardian	0	3	13	0	4	20
7.	The Nation	0	2	9	1	7	19
8.	Daily Sun	0	0	13	0	10	23
9.	Thisday	0	0	3	0	6	9
10.	Vanguard	0	1	2	0	4	7
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>160</b>

*The chart below shows the number of relevant items and the positions of publication in the newspapers monitored*



*The chart below shows the percentages of the positions of publication of relevant items in the newspapers monitored*



## Publication Formats

The publication format here refers to the different newspaper formats in which identified relevant items were published including either as news stories, editorials, opinion articles, interviews, or letters to the editor etc. a newspaper article is published in one of these or other formats.

Like in preceding months, relevant reports published as ‘news stories’ took the lion share of the total relevant items. There were a total of 124 relevant reports published as ‘news stories’. They accounted for 77.5% of the total relevant items identified as published in December 2013.

This is important as ‘news stories’ have their peculiar characteristic and elements which make them important. News stories have the elements of timeliness and immediacy; they also include the elements of proximity, prominence, significance, human interest, relevance, currency, impact etc. these elements make them the ‘hot cakes’ of newspaper and indeed the media generally. More people are interested in news stories than other media formats because of the elements listed above.

‘Editorials’ which encapsulate the opinion of media houses on different issues had 21 relevant items that were on impunity published in December 2014. This is 13.12% of total items identified.

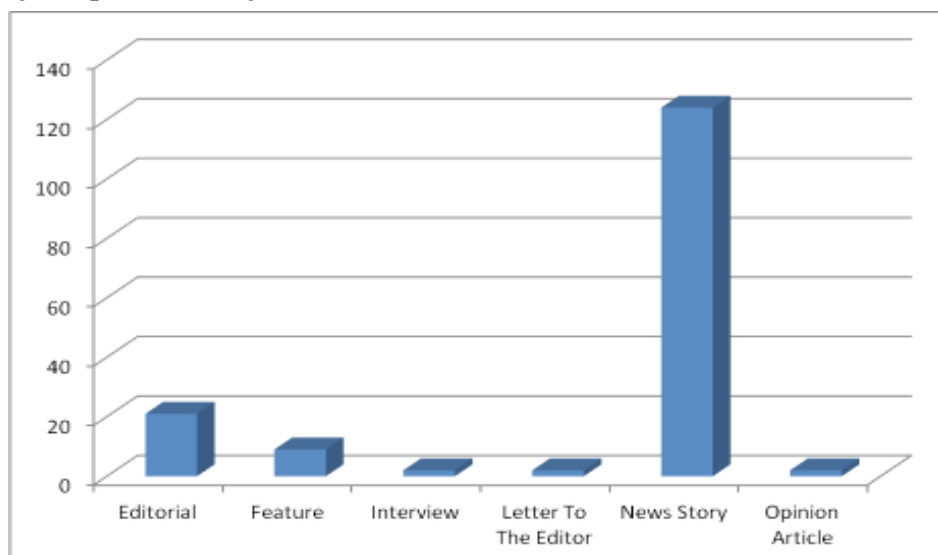
There were nine (9) relevant ‘Feature’ articles published during the month and they represent 5.62% of the total relevant items published.

For three other newspaper formats: Interview, Opinion Article, and Letter to the Editor, there were two (2) relevant items each published on them. These each represent 1.25% of the total relevant items identified.

*The table below shows the numbers of relevant items published on each of the publication formats*

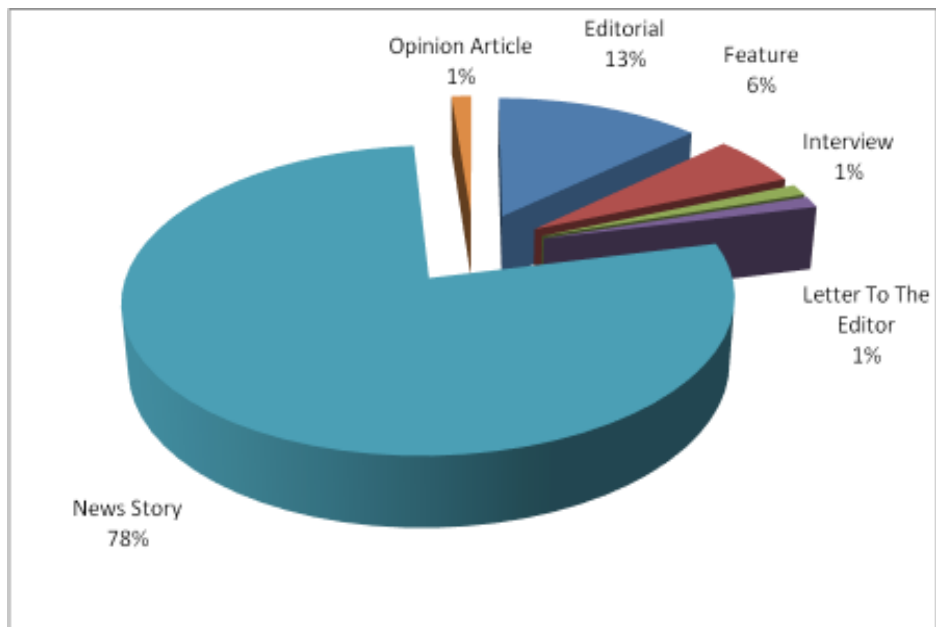
S/N.	Publication	Editorial	Features	Interview	Letter to the Editor	News Story	Opinion Article	Total
1.	Independent	2	0	1	0	12	0	15
2.	Daily Trust	0	1	0	0	11	0	12
3.	Leadership	2	0	0	1	20	1	24
4.	Mirror	6	0	1	0	8	0	15
5.	Punch	0	5	0	0	11	0	16
6.	Guardian	5	0	0	0	15	0	20
7.	Daily Nation	2	0	0	1	15	1	19
8.	The Sun	4	0	0	0	19	0	23
9.	Thisday	0	3	0	0	6	0	9
10.	Vanguard	0	0	0	0	7	0	7
	<b>Total</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>160</b>

*The table chart shows the numbers of relevant items published on each of the publication formats*





*The chart below shows the percentages of relevant items published on each of the publication formats*



## Diversity

A majority of identified relevant items published were not diverse. Out of a total of 105 relevant items that ought to be diverse, only about a quarter, that is, 23 of them or approximately 22% were diverse while the other 82 items or 78% of relevant items that ought to be diverse were not diverse.

The 82 items which were not diverse constituted 51.25% of the total items identified while the 23 items which were diverse constituted 14.37% of the total items identified in the month

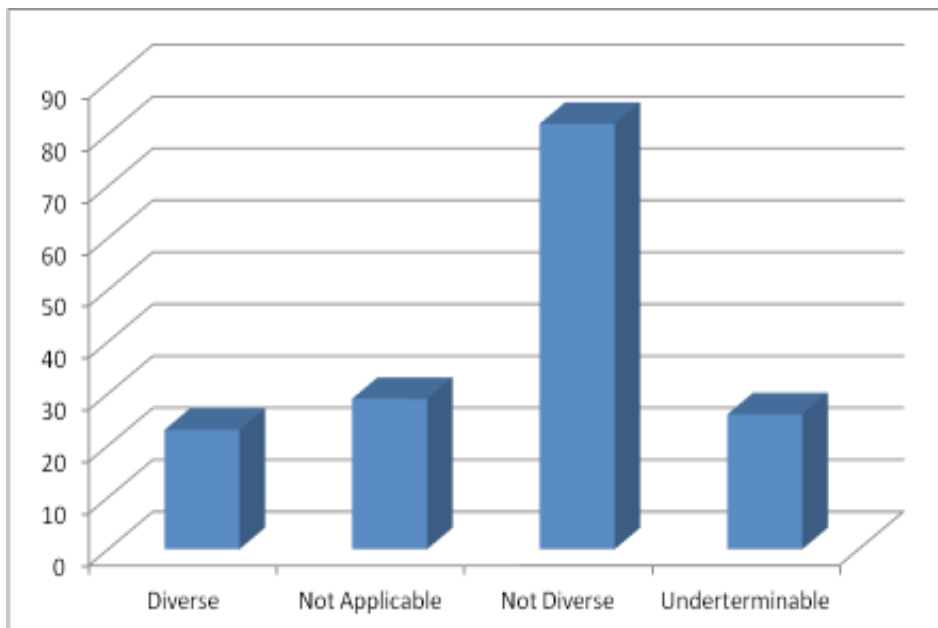
For another 29 items or 18.12% of all the identified relevant items, the rule of diversity was not applicable.

While for 26 or 16.25% of the total relevant items identified, their diversity were undeterminable.

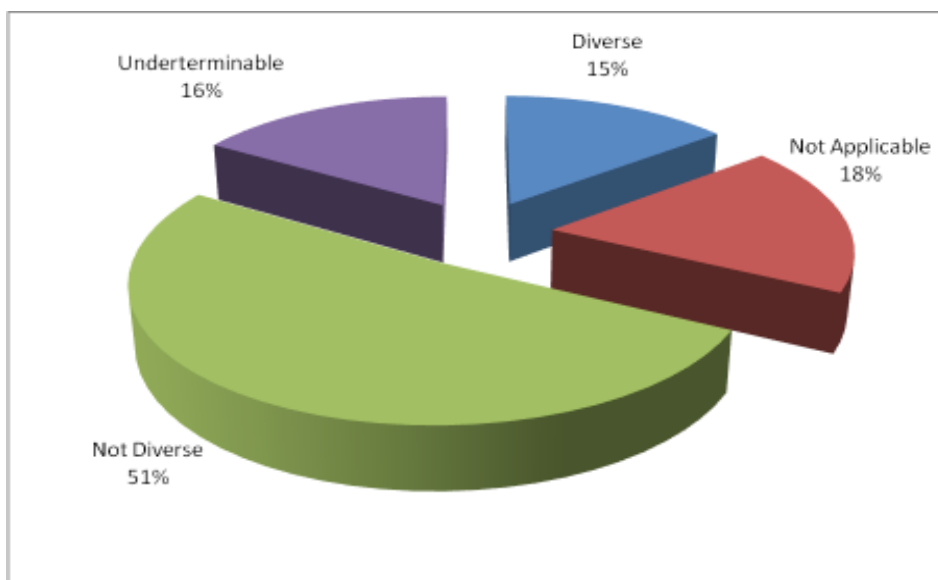
The table below shows the numbers and patterns of diversity of identified relevant items published

Ser No	Publication	Diverse	Not Applicable	Not Diverse	Underterminable	Total
1.	Independent	0	2	12	1	15
2.	Daily Trust	6	0	6	0	12
3.	Leadership	0	6	9	9	24
4.	Mirror	0	7	2	6	15
5.	Punch	9	0	7	0	16
6.	The Guardian	0	4	10	6	20
7.	The Nation	0	4	15	0	19
8.	Daily Sun	1	6	12	4	23
9.	Thisday	4	0	5	0	9
10.	Vanguard	3	0	4	0	7
	<b>Total</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>160</b>

*The chart below shows the numbers and patterns of diversity of identified relevant items published*



*The chart below shows the percentages and patterns of diversity of identified relevant items published*



## Use of Photographs

This month, a total of 79 photographs were published occupying 1,244.43 square inches (in<sup>2</sup>) space by all ten newspapers combined.

The Punch newspaper published the highest number of accompanying photographs. It used 21 photographs which used 188.56 square inches (in<sup>2</sup>) space. The Nation newspaper which published 12 accompanying photographs allotted 272.33 square inches (in<sup>2</sup>) space to them while National Mirror which also used 12 accompanying photographs published them with 97.71 square inches (in<sup>2</sup>) space.

Daily Sun published nine (9) accompanying photographs using 121.42 square inches (in<sup>2</sup>) space; ThisDay newspaper published six (6) accompanying photographs in 159.69 square inches (in<sup>2</sup>) space; Leadership published seven (7) accompanying photographs with 104 square inches (in<sup>2</sup>) space and The Guardian published four (4) photographs using 124.51 square inches (in<sup>2</sup>) space.

Independent published four (4) photographs using 50.91 square inches (in<sup>2</sup>) space while Daily Trust published three (3) using 98.3 square inches (in<sup>2</sup>) space and Vanguard newspapers published just one (1) accompanying photograph using 27 square inches (in<sup>2</sup>) space.

*The table below shows the number of accompanying photographs published by the newspapers and the space they used in publishing them*

<b>Ser. No.</b>	<b>Publication</b>	<b>Total Picture</b>	<b>Picture Space</b>
1.	Independent	4	50.91
2.	Daily Trust	3	98.3
3.	Leadership	7	104
4.	Mirror	12	97.71
5.	Punch	21	188.56
6.	The Guardian	4	124.51
7.	The Nation	12	272.33
8.	Daily Sun	9	121.42
9.	Thisday	6	159.69
10.	Vanguard	1	27
	<b>Total</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>1,244.43</b>

## Observations and Recommendations

Reportage on issues of impunity by the newspapers was lowest in December 2013 than in the six months that preceded it.

The thematic focus ‘Patriotism, Ethical and Civic Responsibility’ as in preceding months received the highest number of reportage and also got the biggest space allocation from the newspapers.

The issue of diversity in reporting runs through all the seven months monitored. A large chunk of relevant items published which ought to have diverse voices lacked diversity of voices and views, only one or limited views and voices were projected. It will be better the media ensure diversity in reports for which diversity is important as it ensures objectivity, fairness and unbiased reporting. News stories which ought to reflect diversity of voices and views but which do not will be considered biased.

Issues of impunity continue to feature in the agenda of the media and remains in their front burners and the Stop Impunity Nigeria (S.I.N) Campaign continues to be reported albeit very little. There is a need for a coordinated strategy to ensure the activities of the S.I.N Campaign are constantly and increasingly being reported; this though will also be tied to continued implementation of activities by the partners.

Media reportage of issues of impunity also continued to attract the right media publication format, as news stories. News stories as earlier stated, attract readers’ attention more than the other publication formats due to some features associated with news stories which may not be found in other newspaper publication formats including currency, impact, timeliness, prominence, significance, human interest etc.

Relevant items published as ‘Major Inside Page’ reports dominated others while there were 79 of such, those reported as ‘Major Front Page’ items were 11 while there was just one (1) back page report. Understandably, there is only one front page and one back page for any newspaper while the inside pages of one newspaper sometimes reaches from 50 to over 100. Expectedly therefore, inside page reports should naturally dominate.

The S.I.N Campaign thematic focus can be used to set agenda for media discourse on reporting issues of impunity but there has to be a strategy to achieve that. The media will most likely buy-in to the agenda if provided with enough resources on the thematic areas and the Campaign generates reports for publication in the different thematic areas.



# Stop Impunity Nigeria

## IMPLEMENTING NGOS



Community Life Project



Centre for Social Justice

## PARTNERS



CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION OF NIGERIA (CAN)



NATIONAL ORIENTATION AGENCY




NIGERIAN SUPREME COUNCIL FOR ISLAMIC AFFAIRS (NSCIA)

Website: <http://www.stopimpunitynigeria.org>

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 <https://www.youtube.com/user/StopImpunityNigeria>