

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



October 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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Mr. Ayode Longe, MRA's Programme Manager, coordinated and supervised the monitoring project as well as the writing of this report, while Miss Eseohé Ojo, MRA's Communication Officer, edited the report. MRA is grateful to them for their various contributions.

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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 fifth report on the monitoring of media reportage of 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: '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: 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, 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 of issues of impunity in the 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 addressing 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

Newspaper Reports

In the month of October 2013, a total of 325 reports were identified in all ten newspapers as relevant to the monitoring exercise. None of the newspapers published less than 20 relevant items on the issue of impunity. Majority of the newspapers published relevant reports items within the range of 28 and 36 relevant items. On the average, the newspapers published 32.5 relevant items in issues of impunity in October 2013.

The Punch newspaper titles published 44 relevant reports on issues of impunity, the highest among the ten newspapers being monitored. That number accounted for 13.53% of the total number of published relevant items during the month. Following closely was The Guardian newspaper which published 40 relevant reports that accounted for 12.30% of the total relevant reports published by the ten newspapers.

In third place was National Mirror newspaper titles which published 36 relevant reports on impunity and giving a total of 11% of total relevant items on impunity published in October 2013.

Daily Independent newspaper and Leadership newspaper both published 32 relevant items apiece which amounted to 9.84% each, of the total. They were followed closely by Vanguard newspaper which published 31 relevant editorial items which gives the titles 9.53% of the total number of published reports on issues of impunity.

Daily Trust published 30 relevant items which accounted for 9.23% of the total published.

The Nation newspapers published 29 relevant items which accounted for 8.92% of the total items identified as relevant to the monitoring exercise. ThisDay followed closely with 28 identified relevant items published on issues of corruption and accounting for 8.61% of the total.

Daily Sun newspaper titles published the least numbers with 23 relevant items that account for 7% of the total relevant items identified in October 2013.

The table below shows the numbers of relevant items published by each of the newspapers monitored and of the different thematic areas

S/N	Publication	Electoral Process	Patriotism, E & CR	Pub. Finance Mgt	Rule Of Law	S.I.N Campaign	Total
1.	Independent	1	19	6	6	0	32
2.	Daily Trust	2	23	0	5	0	30
3.	Leadership	1	26	3	1	1	32
4.	Mirror	3	14	7	12	0	36
5.	Punch	1	18	11	14	0	44
6.	Guardian	1	22	7	9	1	40
7.	The Nation	1	25	0	3	0	29
8.	The Sun	3	20	0	0	0	23
9.	Thisday	0	21	3	3	1	28
10.	Vanguard	0	21	2	8	0	31
	Total	13	209	39	61	3	325

Keys

Patriotism, E & CR

- Patriotism, Ethical and Civic Responsibility

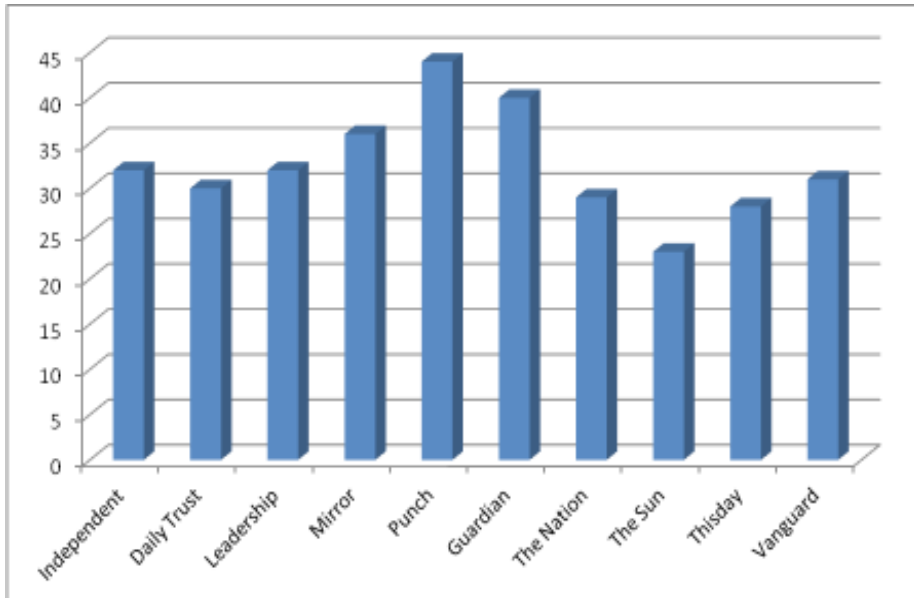
Pub. Fin. Management

- Public Finance Management

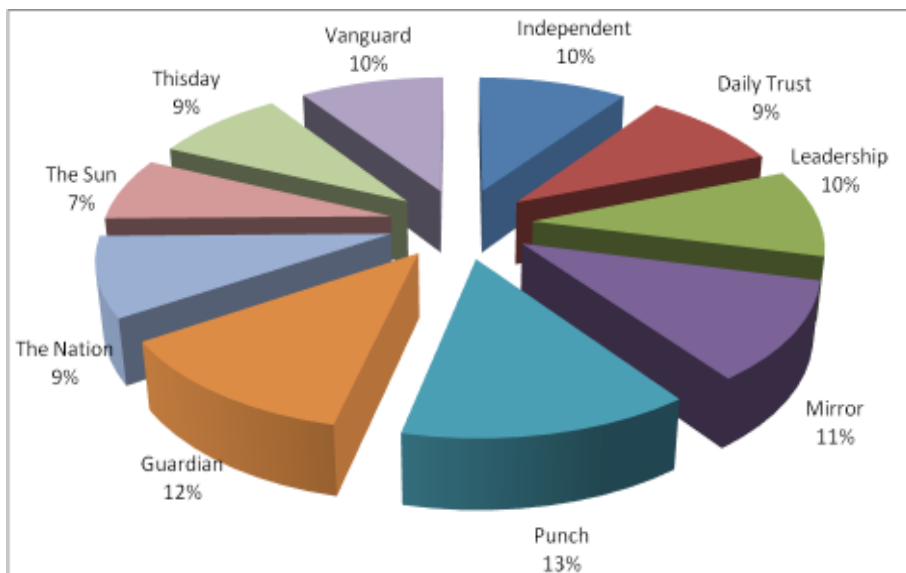
S.I.N. Campaign

- Stop Impunity Nigeria Campaign

The chart below shows the numbers of relevant items published by each of the newspapers monitored in October 2013



The chart below shows the percentages of relevant items published by each of the newspapers monitored in October 2013



Reports on Thematic Areas

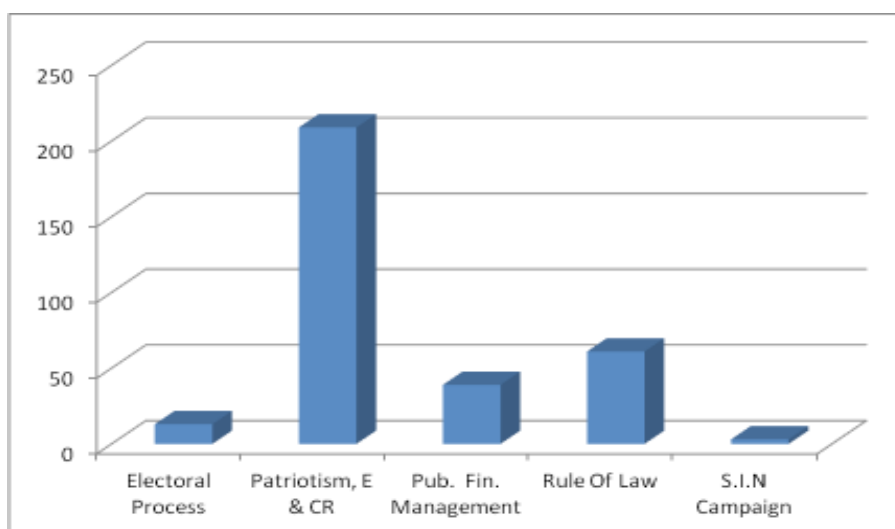
Editorial items on issues of impunity dealing with the thematic area ‘Patriotism, Ethical and Civic Responsibility’ took the lion share of total editorial items identified as relevant to the monitoring exercise. There were 209 relevant items on this thematic area in October which accounted for 64.30% of the total number.

Coming a far second was the thematic area ‘Rule of Law’ with 61 relevant items which accounted for 18.76% of the total.

In third place was the thematic area ‘Public Finance Management’ with 39 relevant items and accounting for 12% of the total relevant items. It was followed in fourth position by reports on the thematic area ‘Electoral Process’ with 13 reports which account for 4% of the total relevant items.

Relevant reports published on the ‘Stop Impunity Nigeria (S.I.N.) Campaign’ were three (3) in all and they account for 0.92% or approximately 1% of the total relevant items published on issues of impunity by the ten newspapers in October 2013.

The Chart below shows the numbers of reports published on each of the thematic areas



Keys

Patriotism, E & CR

- Patriotism, Ethical and Civic Responsibility

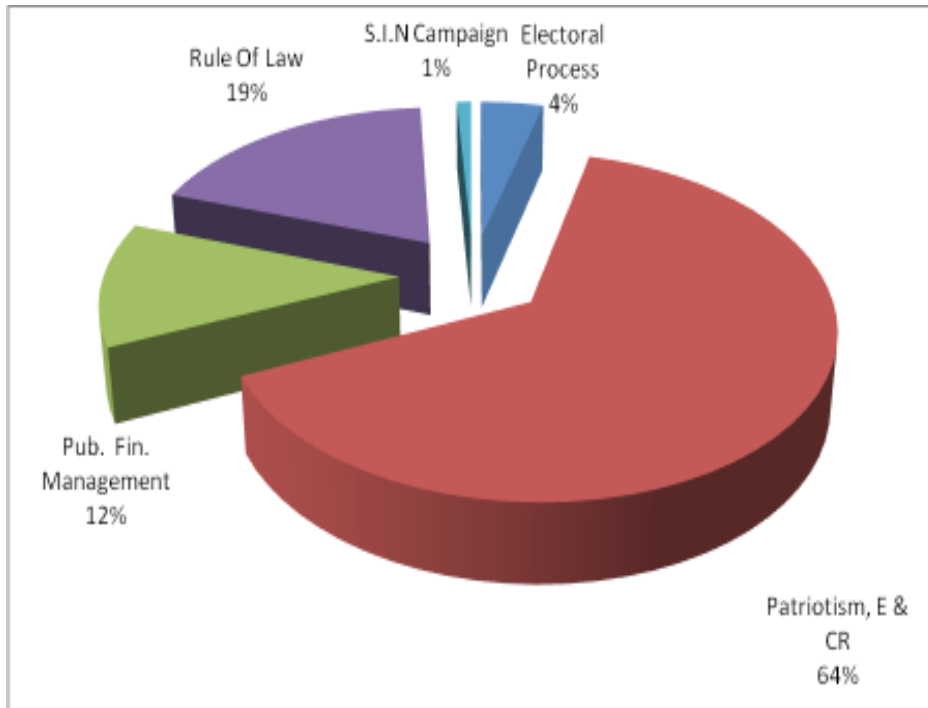
Pub. Fin. Management

- Public Finance Management

S.I.N. Campaign

- Stop Impunity Nigeria Campaign

The Chart below shows the percentages of reports published on each of the thematic areas



Space Allotted by Newspapers

The ten newspapers allocated a combined space of 15,658.12 in² to publish all the identified relevant reports on impunity in October 2013.

National Mirror newspapers which expended a total of 2,384.87 in² space to publish relevant items on issues of impunity allocated the biggest space to publish identified relevant items. The space accounted for 15.23% of the total space allocated by all the newspapers to publish the identified relevant reports on issues of impunity.

The Punch newspaper allocated the second biggest space to publishing identified relevant reports on issues of impunity. The titles allotted a total of 2,372.89 in² space to publishing its relevant stories and took up 15.15% of the total space allotted by the ten newspapers combined.

It was followed in third place by The Guardian titles which used 1,896.27 in² space to publish identified relevant reports and accounted for 12.11% of the total space.

The Nation newspapers expended the fourth biggest space with 1,851.11 in² space which represented 11.82% of the total space used to publish identified relevant items.

Thisday newspapers gave the fifth biggest space with its 1,481.33 in² space and which accounts for 9.46% of the total space expended for publishing relevant reports.

Vanguard newspaper titles allocated 1,260.58 in² space to publish its identified relevant items. This accounted for 8% of the total space used by all the ten newspapers to publish identified relevant materials.

Daily Independent allocated 1,221.54 in² space which is 7.80% of the total space.

Leadership newspaper titles expended a total of 1158.78 in² space which is 7.40% of the total space used.

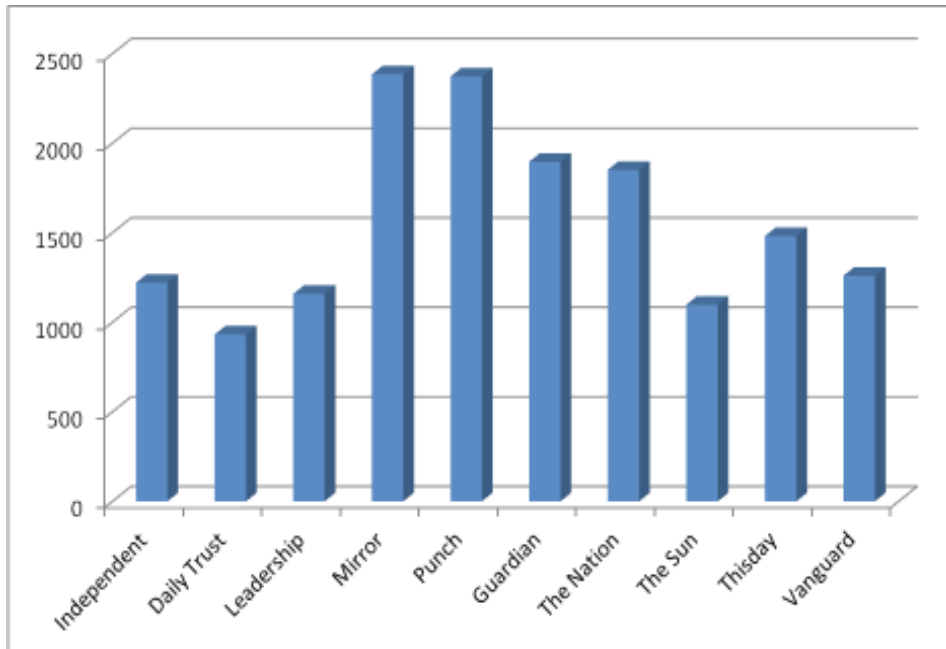
Daily Sun newspapers expended a total of 1,098.47 in² space which accounted for approximately 7%

Daily Trust newspapers which gave the least amount of space allocated 932.28 in² space which is 5.95% or approximately 6% of the total space used by all ten newspapers to publish identified relevant reports on the issue of impunity in October 2013.

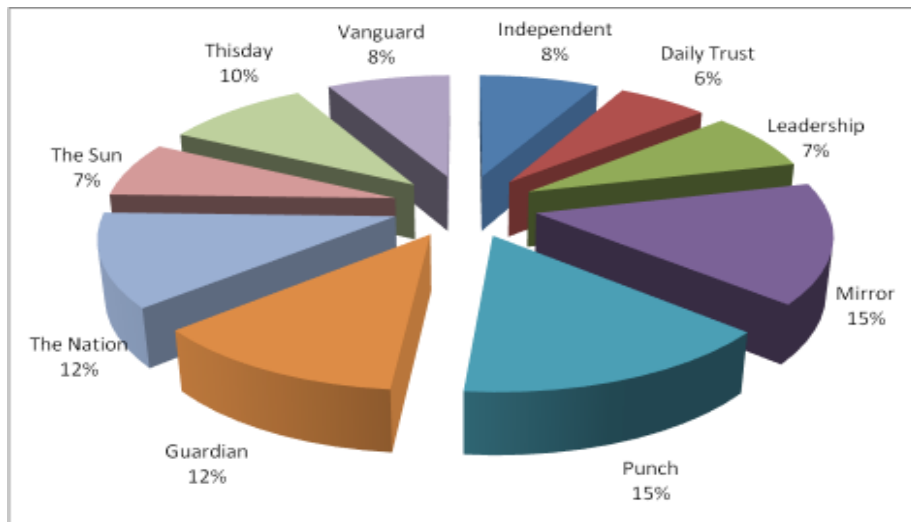
The table below shows the space (in Square inches in²) allocated by each of the ten newspapers to publish relevant items on the thematic areas in October 2013

S/N	Publication	Electoral Process	Patriotism, E & CR	Pub. Fin. Mgt	Rule Of Law	S.I.N Campaign	Total
1.	Independent	33.5	643.677	382.93	161.44	0	1,221.54
2.	Daily Trust	98.23	517.55	0	316.5	0	932.28
3.	Leadership	145	689.2	165.64	105.92	53.02	1,158.78
4.	Mirror	73.05	756.25	904.19	651.38	0	2,384.87
5.	Punch	41.35	759.95	729.45	842.14	0	2,372.89
6.	Guardian	172.14	867.42	490.62	297.39	68.7	1,896.27
7.	The Nation	63.9	1096.23	0	690.98	0	1,851.11
8.	The Sun	140.92	957.55	0	0	0	1,098.47
9.	Thisday	0	1090.55	174.18	186.44	30.16	1,481.33
10.	Vanguard	0	501.62	96.95	662.01	0	1,260.58
	Total	768.09	7,879.99	2,943.96	3,914.2	151.88	15,658.12

The chart below shows the space allocated by each of the ten newspapers to publish relevant items on the thematic areas in October 2013



The chart below shows the percentages of space allocated by each of the ten newspapers to publish relevant items on the thematic areas in October 2013



Space Allotted to Thematic Areas

The thematic area, 'Patriotism, Ethical and Civic Responsibility' got reported with the biggest newspaper space. Identified relevant items on this thematic area took up 7,879.99 in² space or 50.32% of the total space used by the newspapers monitored.

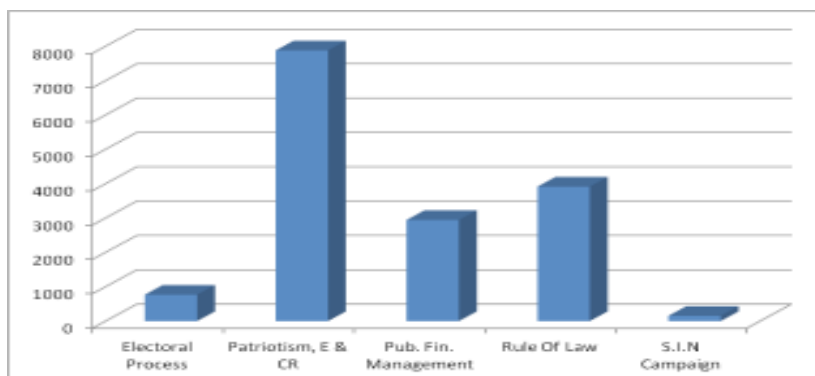
Coming a far second behind was the thematic area 'Rule of Law' which got 3,914.2 in² space and accounted for 24.99% or approximately 25% of the total space expended.

Relevant editorial items published on the thematic area 'Public Finance Management' were published in 2,943.96 in² space and this accounted for 18.80% of the total space used in October 2013.

The newspapers gave a combined 768.09 in² space to publish materials on the thematic area 'Electoral Process' which represented 4.90% or approximately 5% of the total space.

Relevant items on the Stop Impunity Nigeria (S.I.N.) Campaign were allocated 151.88 in² space or 0.96%, approximately 1% of the total space used to publish items on issues of impunity.

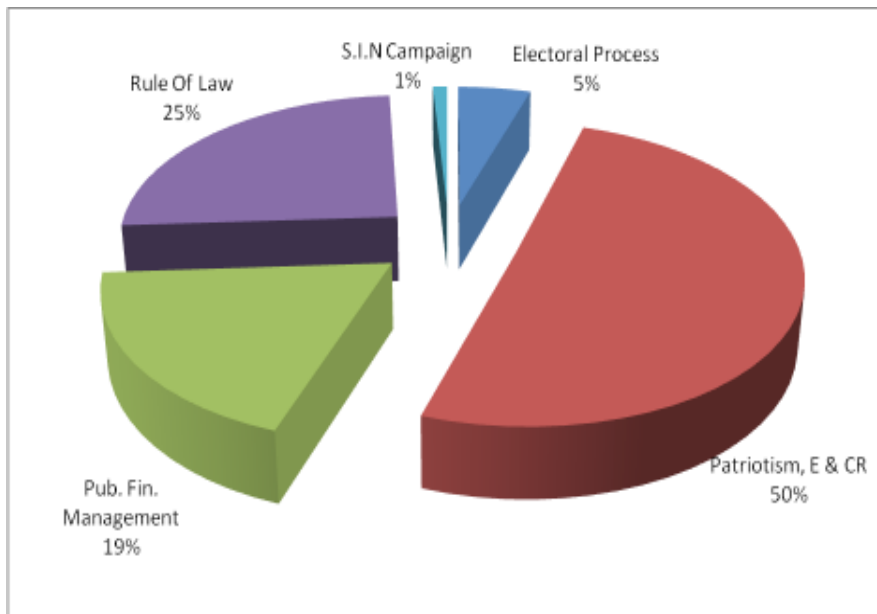
The chart below shows graphically the space allocated to the different thematic areas by the newspapers in October 2013



Keys

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Patriotism, E & CR | - Patriotism, Ethical and Civic Responsibility |
| Pub. Fin. Management | - Public Finance Management |
| S.I.N. Campaign | - Stop Impunity Nigeria Campaign |

The chart below shows graphically the percentages of space allocated to the different thematic areas by the newspapers in October 2013



Page Prominence

The majority of reports on issues of impunity were published as inside page reports, understandably so considering that there can be only one front page and one back page whereas the inside pages can run into 100 or more in a day's edition.

There were 261 items published as inside page (both major and minor) reports. This number represents 80.30% of the total reports; of these, 165 or 50.76% were published as major inside page items while 96 of them or 29.53% were published as minor inside page items.

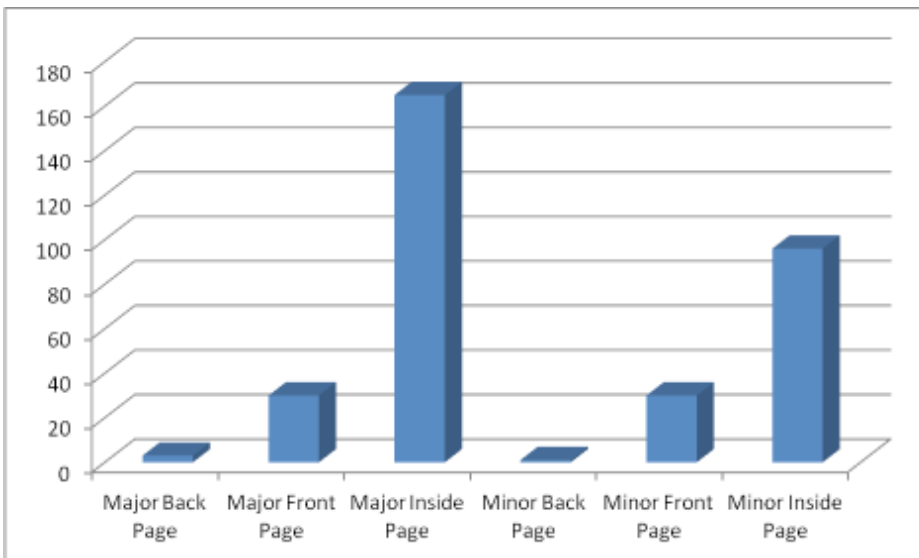
There were a total of 60 relevant front page reports with 30 of them or 9.23% of the total published as major front page items and another 30 items or 9.23% as minor front page items.

There was only one relevant back page report published which constitutes 0.30%.

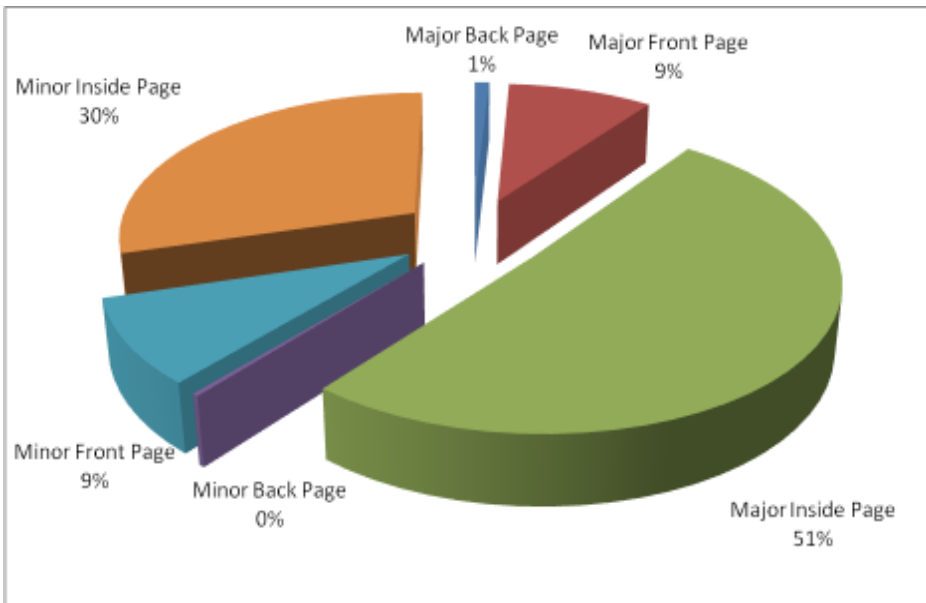
The table below shows the prominence given to identified relevant items

S/N	Publication	Major Back Page	Major Front Page	Major Inside Page	Minor Back Page	Minor Front Page	Minor Inside Page	Total
1.	Independent	1	7	10	0	3	11	32
2.	Daily Trust	0	1	12	0	2	15	30
3.	Leadership	0	0	19	0	0	13	32
4.	Mirror	0	5	13	0	12	6	36
5.	Punch	1	6	24	1	5	7	44
6.	Guardian	1	4	17	0	2	16	40
7.	The Nation	0	2	18	0	2	7	29
8.	The Sun	0	1	17	0	0	5	23
9.	Thisday	0	0	18	0	1	9	28
10.	Vanguard	0	4	17	0	3	7	31
	Total	3	30	165	1	30	96	325

The chart below shows the prominence given to identified relevant items



The chart below shows the percentages of the prominence given to identified relevant item



Types of Reports

Identified relevant items published as ‘News Stories’ by the newspapers were 236 in number and these accounted for 72.61% of all items.

Coming a far second were relevant items published as ‘Features’ which totaled 35 and accounted for 10.76% of the total. Published ‘Opinion Articles’ found to be relevant were 23 and they accounted for 7.07% of all the relevant items.

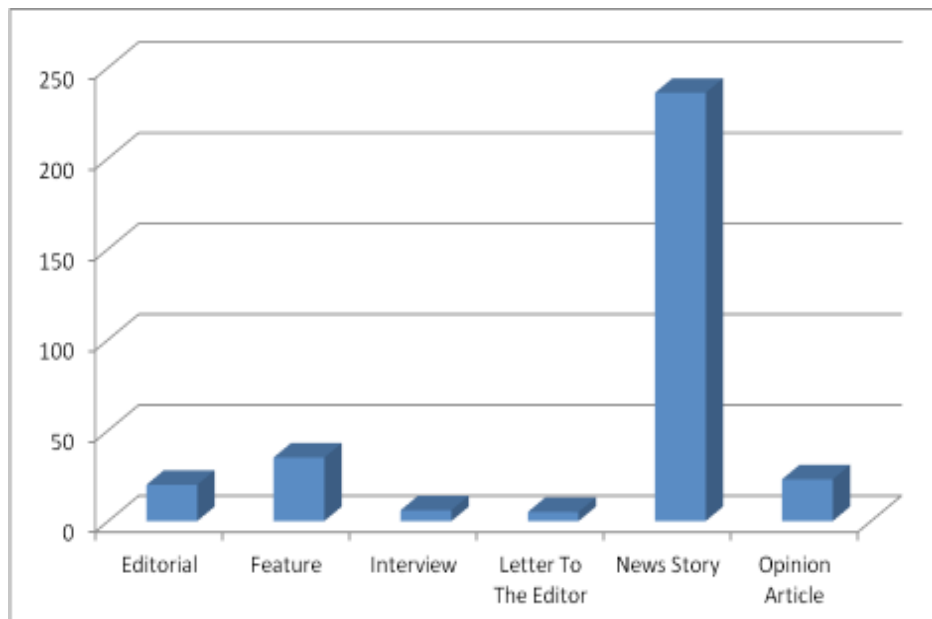
There were 20 relevant items published as newspaper editorials and these account for 6.15% the total relevant items.

Six (6) relevant items published on issues of impunity were published as interviews: they constituted 1.84% or approximately 2% of the total. Another five relevant items were published as ‘Letter to the Editor’. These accounted for 1.53% of total relevant items published on issues of impunity in October.

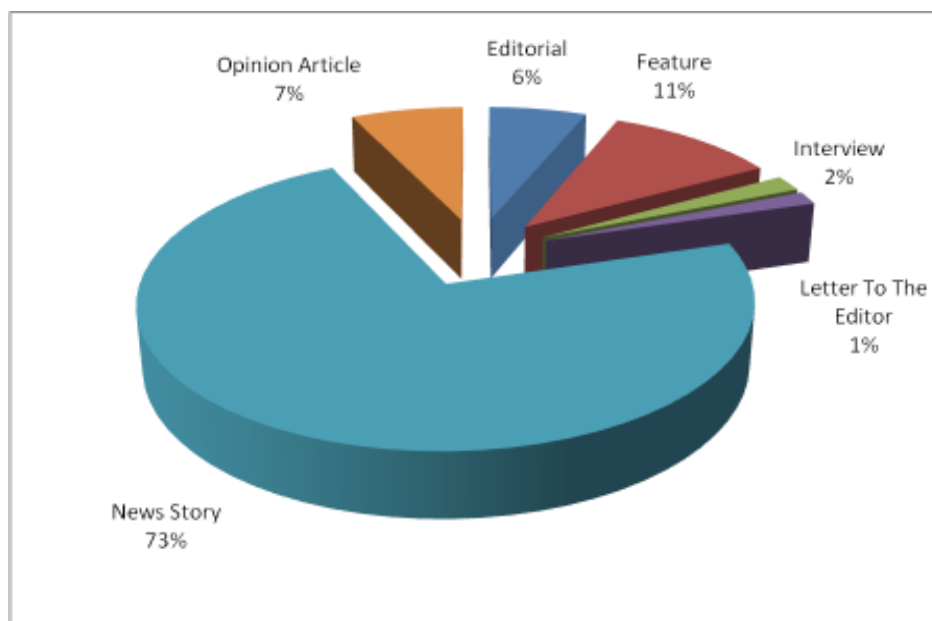
The table below shows the formats in which identified items were published

S.N	Publication	Editorial	Features	Interview	Letter to the Editor	News Story	Opinion Article	Total
1.	Independent	1	3	1	1	26	0	32
2.	Daily Trust	0	4	1	0	24	1	30
3.	Leadership	4	3	2	0	21	2	32
4.	Mirror	1	13	0	0	22	0	36
5.	Punch	1	0	1	0	38	4	44
6.	Guardian	6	6	0	1	21	6	40
7.	The Nation	2	0	1	2	21	3	29
8.	The Sun	1	4	0	0	15	3	23
9.	Thisday	4	0	0	1	20	3	28
10.	Vanguard	0	2	0	0	28	1	31
	Total	20	35	6	5	236	23	325

The chart below shows the number of times items were published in the different formats



The chart below shows the percentages of formats in which identified items were published



Diversity of Reports

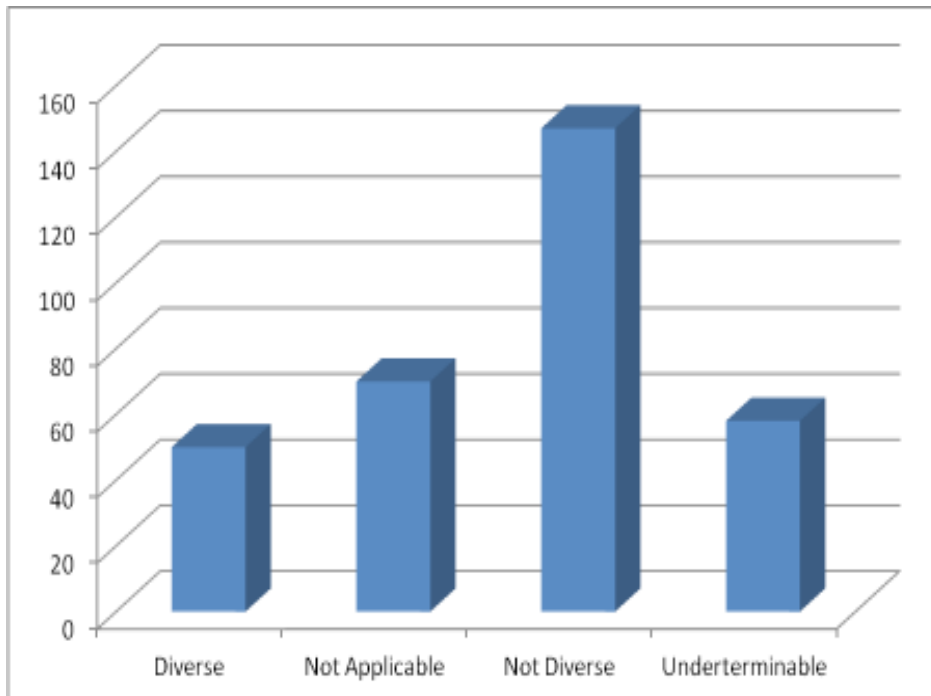
Again, the majority of reports which ought to be diverse in their sources and outlook were not. Out of 197 of the relevant items which ought to be diverse, only 50 were diverse while 147 were not diverse. What it means is that only 25.38% of the total items that ought to be diverse were diverse while 74.61% were not diverse.

For 70 of the reports, the rule of diversity does not apply while for 58, their diversities were undeterminable

The table below shows the levels of diversity of relevant reports

Ser. No	Publication	Diverse	Not Applicable	Not Diverse	Undeter-minable	Total
1.	Independent	9	5	10	8	32
2.	Daily Trust	8	4	9	9	30
3.	Leadership	3	8	19	2	32
4.	Mirror	16	6	13	1	36
5.	Punch	3	6	32	3	44
6.	Guardian	5	11	13	11	40
7.	The Nation	1	13	6	9	29
8.	The Sun	3	6	9	5	23
9.	Thisday	1	7	12	8	28
10.	Vanguard	1	4	24	2	31
	Total	50	70	147	58	325

The chart below shows the levels of diversity of relevant reports



Photographs

The table below shows the number of photographs used by each of the newspapers along with their reports and the total space (in square inches) used in publishing them.

Ser./No.	Publication	Picture Count	Picture Space
1.	Daily Independent	9	68.34
2.	Daily Trust	2	55.3
3.	Leadership	4	105.14
4.	National Mirror	38	685.72
5.	Punch	10	158.32
6.	The Guardian	14	233.78
7.	The Nation	22	304.48
8.	The Sun	14	254.32
9.	Thisday	11	310.7
10.	Vanguard	7	234.4
	Total	131	2,410.5

Observations and Recommendations

Issues of impunity continue to be on the media's agenda and remain a recurrent public discourse. With 325 reports found to be on issues of impunity in the newspapers monitored, it will be safe to say that the media has continued to put it on the daily menu of its readers nationwide and by extension, worldwide as all these newspapers have their websites and virtually all the stories can be found on the sites.

A whole lot of reports, 73.61%, which ought to have diverse source were not diverse in their sources. Issues of impunity are largely controversial and so newspaper reports on them need to reflect a variety of views and sources to make them balanced.

Editorial reports on the thematic area 'Patriotism, Ethical and Civic Responsibility' continue to generate the biggest media debate as it continues to dominate both in terms of number of reports published on it and the space allotted to publishing them. As the 2015 general elections draw near, more work may need to be done to highlight impunity in the electoral process. Even now when the nation's 2014 budget has not been passed into law, the issues of impunity in Public Finance Management also need to be highlighted and escalated.

The media also continued to report on the activities of the Stop Impunity Nigeria (S.I.N) Campaign and consequently, more Nigerians are getting to know about it.



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FOR ISLAMIC AFFAIRS (NSCIA)

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