

## Appraisal of Journalists' Safety and Challenges in the Context of Boko Haram Insurgency in the Northeast

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### Keywords

Appraisal, Boko Haram, Challenges, Journalists and Safety



### Abstract

*The Boko Haram insurgency in Northeast Nigeria has created a perilous environment for journalists, making the region one of the most dangerous places for media practitioners. The conflict, which has lasted for over a decade, has led to thousands of deaths, mass displacement, and widespread insecurity. Journalists covering the insurgency face multiple threats, including direct attacks by Boko Haram militants, harassment by security forces, psychological distress, and professional limitations due to censorship and restricted access to conflict zones. One of the greatest risks journalists encounter is direct violence from Boko Haram. The militant group perceives independent reporting as a threat to its ideological and operational secrecy. As a result, journalists have been kidnapped, tortured, and even killed for their work. Some have been accused of being spies or collaborators with the Nigerian government and international agencies. These threats have forced many journalists to either flee the region or engage in self-censorship, which affects the quality and depth of conflict reporting. Apart from insurgent threats, journalists also face challenges from the Nigerian security apparatus. Law enforcement agencies sometimes view investigative journalism as a security risk rather than an essential service. There have been cases of journalists being arrested, detained, or harassed under anti-terrorism laws for publishing reports that expose military failures or human rights violations. This has led to an atmosphere of fear where journalists struggle to balance truthful reporting with personal safety. The paper established that Boko Haram insurgency has also caused significant psychological trauma for journalists. Constant exposure to violence, death, and human suffering takes a toll on their mental health. Many reporters work under extreme stress, often without access to mental health support. The emotional burden of witnessing destruction and speaking with victims of terrorist attacks can lead to conditions such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety, and depression.*

### I. Introduction

Freedom of expression, press freedom, and safety of journalists are indispensable, if journalists are to freely perform their duties to the society. It is within the context of the fundamental nature of the right to freedom of expression that press freedom and the safety of journalists have exceptional importance (Suleiman, 2014). Journalists in the discharge of their duty face many challenges in providing the required information even while covering conflict and war.

The general statement of this thesis is that, in covering the activities of terror groups journalists are faced with a new set of safety challenges. Specifically, terror groups systematically target and kill journalists. Generally, journalists reporting on conflicts face danger but in the context of Boko Haram terrorism, the nature of danger has changed in the

case of journalists in Maiduguri, Damaturu and Yola to intentional and targeted attacks, where journalists are threatened with death before being killed. The centrality of the media to this change is that specific forms of risks have emerged whereby non-state actors because of the desire to manipulate the messages being disseminated. They target journalists or media groups (Mustapha, 2019). Specifically, this thesis aims to examine the challenges faced by reporters covering Boko Haram activities in the North-East, Nigeria.

This gap has been highlighted in reports by Daily Post (2015) and Premium Times (2012) which succinctly described the death sentences passed on some journalists in the three selected states by the Boko Haram group. The reports highlight the specific cases of the murders of journalists and death sentence to Akinremi in Maiduguri: 'we will get you in shaa Allah...you are now a walking dead and prey to the Lions of Islam from the bullet of a passing car or a nearby rooftop' (Daily Post in Onyejelem et al., 2025).

The problems this study examines are two-fold. One is the changing nature of safety challenges journalists living in Borno, Yobe and Adamawa states experience in the coverage of insurgency and the danger that comes with it. Secondly, the lack of adequate safety measures and policies to alleviate the pains and agonies of journalists covering the Boko Haram insurgency. In the view of Carlson (2016) in a study on the safety of journalists, journalists should be free to report violent conflicts as long as they do not take part in military battles. However, contrary is the reality, where journalists covering the Boko Haram insurgency are intentionally threatened to create fear in them. Pate and Idris (2016) that the freedom suggested by Carlson is severely restricted by issues bordering on the safety of journalists, whereby journalists in the field covering violent conflicts are threatened, attacked, and killed. Unless journalists in war zones can overcome all the challenges, their role of providing information can never be freely achieved.

Media Organisations who send these reporters out in the field have much to do in providing safety measures and improving the economic lots of these reporters. If these are lacking, the dangers of physical and psychological harm will remain challenging. This is why this study seeks to find out safety measures media organisations provide for their reporters in order to determine their preparedness and scale of safety.

The killing of Dele Giwa, journalist and founder of NewsWatch magazine in 1986 by a parcel bomb sent to his home, was a clear case of murder. It was the first time a journalist had been killed in that manner. The 27th April 2012 same-day bombing of two newspaper Houses in Abuja and Kaduna in which nine people lost their lives count as a notable attack on journalists (Aliyu et al., 2023). The bombing was linked to a This Day newspaper report on the activities of Boko Haram. Pate and Oso (2017) in their analysis of the activities of the Boko Haram insurgency concluded that 'the Boko Haram terrorism and violent extremism that ravaged North-East Nigeria from 2009 to 2015 had exposed a weakness in the safety policy and protocols for local journalists in times and zones of tension in Nigeria.' However, throughout this period journalists that covered the zone demonstrated great resilience to major risks, threats, and death with severe consequences on their freedom and professional integrity. For the five years period of the heat of insurgency, five journalists were killed and many injured in the zone (Mu'azu 2015; Aondover et al., 2022). Between 2019 and 2020, two journalists; Onifade Emmanuel of Gboah TV and Precious Owolabi of Channels TV were murdered in the course of their duties.

Boko Haram which is loosely translated as 'Western education is a sin' has threatened and carried out attacks on journalists and media outlets over reports deemed unfavourable to their cause. Several journalists have relocated from Boko Haram

strongholds in Nigeria's northern regions while others routinely exercise self-censorship. Results of interviews with journalists, by the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) reveal that many journalists have resigned their appointments because of fear of being killed (Nkanga, 2014). Eight (8) Nigerian journalists have been murdered for their work since 1998. This new dimension of the safety of journalists particularly in Maiduguri, where journalists are threatened and intentionally targeted by the terrorists gives an insight to how deteriorating the situation is. Among the most recent victims was Zakariya Isa of the state-run broadcast station Nigeria Television Authority (NTA) in a killing for which Boko Haram claimed responsibility in October 2011. About a month before the killing, Boko Haram had issued a statement saying it would attack media organisations for what it described as misrepresentation of its activities (Mojaye & Aondover, 2022).

Boko Haram spokesman Abu Qaqa said the militants killed Isa 'because he was spying on us for Nigerian security authorities'. Following Isa's killing in January 2012, Eneche Akogwu of Channels TV was slain by unidentified gunmen as he interviewed witnesses after bombings blamed on Boko Haram (Msughter et al., 2023). According to CPJ's 2012 report, Akogwu had just returned from a police news conference following coordinated bombings by Boko Haram that left at least 178 people dead. Shortly after the killing of Akogwu, for the first time since Boko Haram began a series of deadly bomb attacks, it turned its attention to the media in April 2012. It unleashed a string of coordinated attacks on three media houses in Abuja and Kaduna killing nine (9) people in the process. The three media houses attacked by the bombers were the Abuja office of This Day Newspaper, The Sun, and The Moment offices in Kaduna which were hit simultaneously by the blasts. The Boko Haram group identified deliberate misinformation being peddled about it in Nigerian and foreign media as a major reason for its onslaught on the media (Premium Times, 2012).

### **1.1 Objectives of the Paper**

1. To examine the legal framework for the safety of journalists.
2. To find out the mechanisms for the promotion of journalists' safety.
3. To ascertain the current safety practices and guidelines for journalists' safety.
4. To investigate the challenges and barriers to implementation of safety best practices.
5. To examine security policies and protocols for news media organizations.

### **1.2 Legal Framework for the Safety of Journalists**

Considering the importance of journalistic safety, it is pertinent to review existing international, regional as well as national legal frameworks put in place to safeguard journalists. At the International Human Rights Law so many rights are abused when it comes to the protection or safety of journalists. They include the right to personal liberty and integrity, freedom from torture, freedom of expression, and the right to an effective remedy (Yar'Adua & Msughter, 2023). The report argued that there are countless numbers of legal instruments aimed at securing journalists' safety, particularly from harassment, hindrance from undertaking their professional role, physical and verbal assaults to deprivation of their right to life. It is worth noting that there is no specific international legal instrument that deals exclusively with the personal security of journalists. However, if individuals' rights are guaranteed such as right to life, personal liberty, freedom from torture, and freedom of expression including the right to an effective remedy- are fully enforced, then the journalist's safety is guaranteed, as opined by the report. However, according to RSF in Yar'Adua et al., (2023) in war zones as in times of peace, figures suggest that international law is not sufficient to guarantee the safety of journalists.

They observed that RSF immensely contributed to the resolutions on the safety of journalists approved by the UN Security Council in 2006 and 2015. Like the Geneva Conventions, these resolutions cannot be the solution. At the international level, Article 3 of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights (UNDHR) guarantees the ‘right to life, liberty and security of person. Article 5 frowns at “torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment’, while Article 19 guarantees freedom of expression. At the regional level, regional human rights instruments as reported by CGHR Report (2012) are The European Convention on Human Rights guards against infringement on the rights of journalists: right to life (Article 2), freedom from torture (Article 3), freedom of expression (Article 10) and the right to an effective remedy (Article 13). The American Convention of Human Rights guarantees the right to life (Article 4), the right not to be subjected to inhuman treatment (Article 5), the right to personal liberty (Article 7), and freedom of thought and expression (Article 13).

The African Charter on Human and People’s Rights guarantees the right to life (Article 4), protects persons against torture and inhuman treatment (Article 5) secures individual right to liberty and security (Article 6), and freedom of expression (Article 9). The Arab Charter on Human Rights makes provision for the right to life and guards against arbitrary deprivation of life (Article 5), prohibits ‘physical or psychological torture or cruel, degrading, humiliating or inhuman treatment’ (Article 8) as well as gives states the mandate against ill-treatment. At the national level, chapter 4 of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria guarantees an individual right to life, dignity of the person, personal liberty, arbitrary arrest and detention as well as freedom of expression.

It can be seen that enormous legal instruments exist for the protection and safety of journalists abound, but the problem, according to CGHR Report (2012) the major obstacle facing the right to life of journalists derives not from the insufficiency of the scope of existing rights, rather from the implementation or enforcement gaps. Concurring, Fournier in Yar’Adua et al., (2023) concludes that the legal instrument provided by international law is sufficient, but the implementation by national, regional, and international measures is not satisfying. A look into the Nigerian case will give a clearer picture of the state of journalism safety. Recent studies have shown that journalists worldwide feel the eight past years have been a new direction regarding their security, safety, and their working condition on the field, with high levels of risk and deaths.

## **II. Review of Literature**

### **2.1 Theoretical Underpinning**

The paper adopted Risk Compensation theory that was propounded by Gerald J.S Wild in the early 1970s (Wild in Onyejelem et al., 2024). He later changed the name to the theory of Homeostasis to account for the recursive relation between the level of perceived risk which steers the action taken to the accident rate and vice versa. The terms frequently appear in research documents and debates about the questionable beneficial effects of health and safety interventions of the technical and legislative kind. This theory is related to the broader term behavioural adaptation which includes all behavioural changes in response to safety measures, whether compensatory or negative adaptive behaviour (Vrolix, 2006). The more recent version emerged from the safety research after it was posited that many interventions failed to achieve the expected level of benefits but has since been investigated in many other fields.

The Risk Compensation Theory assumes that firstly, people have a constant level of risk that they are ready to accept. If the risk level decreases due to safety measures, people

tend to adjust their goals so that the risk level returns to the same level as before. The effects of safety measures are thus eliminated in the long run. Secondly, the theory suggests that people typically adjust their behaviour in response to the perceived level of risk, becoming careful when they sense greater risk and less careful if they feel more protected. Thompson in Oreoluwa et al., (2024) suggests that Risk Compensation Theory assumes that individuals provided with a protection device such as bicycle helmet or an automobile seat belt will act in a riskier manner because of the sense of increased protection from the helmet or seat belt. Furthermore, the theory denotes offsetting behavioural responses to safety improvements. Theoretical arguments suggest that when drivers are required to drive safer cars or drive in safer manners, they will tend to increase their driving speed. The theory posits that people will be more careful with their health and safety, the more reason they have to look forward to their future and thus wish to be alive when that future comes. Opponents of this theory like David Levym, and Ted Miller have criticized the application of the theory on some types of regulations and that the empirical support for significant offsetting behaviour is weak (Garba & Msaughter, 2023).

Hence, the theory is relevant and applicable to this study due to its stance on behavioural changes in response to safety measures. The study focuses on the challenges of journalists' safety in covering the Boko Haram insurgency and how these challenges affect the physical and professional well-being of journalists (Msughter, 2017). The study hopes to examine safety measures put in place and how journalists respond to the available safety measures in relation to their work of covering the activities of the Boko Haram insurgents, whether compensatory or negative adaptive behaviour.

### **III. Research Methods**

#### **3.1 Mechanisms for the Promotion of Journalists' Safety**

Despite the argument that journalists should not be entitled to any rights and protection different from those already guaranteed as universal Human Rights, there is incontrovertible evidence to support the clamour for special protection and safety for journalists and media workers as they perform their professional duties, in both conflict and non-conflict situations. Such evidence has been documented by UNESCO and similar Organizations. There has been progress in institutional developments related to safety and impunity. Several countries in the Latin American region have continued to develop official frameworks and institutions to deal with safety and protection, many drawing on positive experience of Colombia. These mechanisms range from interdepartmental co-ordination systems, multi-stakeholder for an involving media and civil society (UNESCO, 2015). In Pakistan, a broad coalition has worked to involve many stakeholders, including government and parliamentarians in regular discussions on safety and impunity. In Serbia, a commission of representatives of independent media, a ministry, and the security services secured the prosecution of four people for the killing of a journalist sixteen years earlier.

On the 2nd of April 2015, the Council of Europe launched an internet platform aimed at protecting journalism and promoting the safety of journalists. The platform was designed to facilitate the compilation, processing and dissemination of factual information, verified by the partners, concerning serious physical threats to journalists, and other media personnel, threats to the confidentiality of media sources and forms of political and judicial intimidation. The platform involves a partnership by the Council of Europe with Article 19, the Association of European Journalists, the European Federation of Journalists, the International Federation of Journalists, and Reporters Without Borders. The global trend where more and more journalism take place through digital means is also reflected in the



increased number of journalists' training and tools that focus on digital, especially mobile security. This includes the development of mobile applications that aim at empowering individual journalists to effectively protect themselves. The International Media Women's Foundation has developed an application 'Reporta', which is designed with 'check in' and 'SOS' functions. Similarly, the International Centre for Journalists (ICFJ) is developing 'Salama' which is a risk assessment application (Idris & Msughter, 2022).

Foremost among the mechanisms is UNESCO, which is the specialised agency of the United Nations with a mandate to defend freedom of expression and press freedom across member states (UNESCO Constitution, 1945, Article 1). In its 29th session in 1997, the General Conference adopted Resolution 29 'Condemnation of Violence against Journalists.' The Director-General condemned violence against journalists and referred to it as a crime against society. The argument was that the safety of journalists should not only be addressed under the protection of civilians in armed conflict but also as a societal challenge directly linked to freedom of expression and international Human Rights. Accordingly, UNESCO has recently integrated journalists' safety prominently into its efforts to promote freedom of expression. In April 2012, UNESCO adopted the UN Plan of Action on the safety of journalists and the issue of Impunity. On 25th September 2014, the Human Rights Commission of the United Nations adopted Resolution 27/L.7 on journalists' safety and the issue of impunity, reiterating and reinforcing the 2012 Resolution. Resolution 27/L.7 specifically responds to 'recent attacks and violence against journalists particularly in situations of armed conflict', emphasizing that those journalists are to be 'considered as civilians and shall be protected as such.'

The Council of Europe is the continent's leading Human Rights organization. All its member states agreed on a treaty designed to protect Human Rights along with democracy and the Rule of law through the European Convention on Human Rights. It has a central role in setting standards and acting as a watchdog to uphold Article 10 of the Convention. Article 10 states that 'everyone has the right to freedom of expression and information. The importance of the Council of Europe is critical, given that the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the European Union use its standards and regularly refer to its work. The focus of the council on the safety of journalists and journalism is mainly based on addressing impunity and the professional and Human Rights of different types of actors within journalism. Many perceived that the work of journalists in conflict zones has become even more dangerous over the years (Hile et al., 2023).

Another major player, the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), created the impunity index in 2003, a yearly updated index to calculate the number of unresolved murders and unprosecuted violence against journalists in foreign countries. It has become possible for their work to observe trends in what countries continue to be dangerous for journalists, what countries have improved, and so on. In addition, CPJ actively works to open cold cases of anti-press murder with central governments, strives to formalise anti-press crime, and assists journalists in fleeing from countries with historically stringent policies against journalists, particularly Syria, Iraq, and Somalia.

At the regional level, the African Union, the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, the Council of Europe, the Organisation for the Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Organisation of the American States, and the Federation of African Journalists have all contributed to standard-setting and awareness raising, and have established specific mechanisms tasked with the promotion of the Right to freedom of expression, with the safety of journalists as the main concern (Okunna & Popoola 2015).

At the National level, there are several mechanisms that should guarantee the safety of journalists in Nigeria. This includes the 1999 constitution which states in Chapter II,

sub-section 22 that, ‘the press, Radio, Television and other agencies of the mass media shall at all times be free to uphold the fundamental objectives contained in this chapter and uphold the responsibility and accountability of the government to the people’ (1999 Constitution). Also, there are the Nigerian Human Rights Commission, Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ), and the National Committee to Monitor the safety of journalists, established by NUJ in collaboration with various stakeholders (Okunna & Popoola 2015).

However, Pate and Oso (2017) have argued that the above constitutional provisions and other professional codes do not accord journalists any specified safety and protection framework. In all, apart from the national mechanisms outlined above, Nigerian journalists have not benefitted from the safety and protection initiatives of international and regional bodies and Agencies. In line with Pate and Oso’s assertion, Suleman in Vitalis et al., (2025) justifies that the multifaceted nature of the mechanism that needs to be in place to ensure the promotion and protection of journalists’ safety require the commitment and contributions of major stakeholder in a country.

### **3.2 Current Safety Practices and Guidelines for Journalists’ Safety**

There have been efforts to improve safety for journalists by media professionals across the world. Several media development organizations are dedicated solely to the issue of journalists’ safety. Leading media professionals have collaborated to create guidelines and initiatives. This study does not seek to replicate those guidelines, but to briefly review them to illustrate what has been and is being done on the issue of journalists’ safety and to recommend areas where improvement is needed.

Notable of such media development organisations, like UNESCO who is at the lead in the effort on Media Safety, in collaboration with some media professionals who are dedicated to journalists’ safety created and disseminated two complementary safety guidelines in 2015; The culture of Safety, Global safety principles and the International Declaration on the Protection of Journalists for Nations and News Organisations. These guidelines follow the Organization for Safety and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Vilnius Recommendation on the Safety of Journalists and the Resolution of the African Commission on Human Rights (ACHPR) on the Safety of Journalists and Media Practitioners in Africa, both published in 2011.

In addition, some media organizations have come together within national borders to develop safety measures. For example, Pakistani media leaders met in November 2015 to discuss journalists’ safety nationally and produced a list of guidelines, which include having designated emergency contacts inside the newsroom, mandating first aid training for journalists, and holding security briefings before embarking on risky assignments. What follows is a summary of these guidelines and the challenges that remain in implementing them. Media professionals are encouraged to review these guidelines at length and incorporate them into their organizational strategies (Garba & Msughter, 2023).

1. Culture of Safety, Global Safety Principles and Practice: The Culture of Safety’s Global Safety Principles and Practices were introduced in February 2015, specifically with freelance journalists in mind; however, aspects of the guidelines are incorporated by some media organizations for all employees. Seventy-seven organizations signed on and committed to practicing these guidelines. The guidelines provide recommendations for both freelance journalists and media organizations. Suggestions for journalists include safety measures such as completing hostile environment and first aid training and conducting thorough and regular risk assessments. It also includes limited guidelines for collaborating with news organizations. Recommendations for news organizations included guidelines for contracting in-country and freelance journalists,

which included providing safety training and equipment, factoring into budgets additional costs freelancers may bear, giving freelance and local journalists fair recognition for their work, and taking equal responsibility for a freelance or local journalist's well-being when publishing their work. Most media organizations worldwide do not have an explicit set of policies for security. The Culture of Safety group expanded its guidelines in October 2015 to propose additional initiatives related to journalists' safety. These initiatives included researching the possibility of a freelance insurance pool, sharing security information across media organizations, proposing safety training standards, increasing access to and awareness of security training for freelance journalists, and adopting anti-discrimination policies.

2. International Declaration on the Protection of Journalists: The International Declaration on the Protection of Journalists was released in December 2015 as a complement to the Global Safety Principles and Practices. The Declaration focused on the responsibilities of governments and relevant institutions to protect journalists and offered best practices for media organizations that highlight steps they and their staff can take to create safer conditions for media workers. The Declaration reiterated that the responsibilities of governments and relevant institutions should include treating crimes and threats against media professionals as human rights violations. The document emphasized the government's responsibility to ensure the safety of journalists. In addition, the Declaration detailed the rights of journalists and decried violations of those rights and interference with reporting. The Declaration stressed that nations should take appropriate measures to prevent violence against journalists and hold perpetrators of violence accountable for their crimes.

The Declaration also offered several recommendations for news organizations and journalists, including the recommendations that media organizations should adopt effective safety protocols for journalists; increase access to high-quality safety training, which includes digital safety, trauma, and environmental hazards; develop tools and procedures aimed at ensuring the physical, psychological, and digital safety of journalists; maintain credibility and independence of media and practice ethical journalistic standards; and put the Global Safety Principles and Practices into effect. In turn, journalists should understand international and national laws, as well as international human rights standards and principles. The Declaration also recommended dedicating attention and implementing appropriate measures to gender-specific safety concerns that affect women journalists.

### **3.3 Challenges and Barriers to Implementation of Safety Best Practices**

Despite strong and well-considered recommendations to improve journalists' safety, challenges remain. Because all of these guidelines are voluntary, news organizations, media professionals, and other stakeholders must work to encourage and adopt these practices. Media organizations need to do a better job of addressing physical trauma on journalists working in dangerous environments. As described above, media outlets often fail to apply the above practices in their work with freelance journalists. Media organizations may not know what security training freelancers have completed, so they cannot guarantee the use of standard safety procedures and precautions. Organizations may not be willing or able to cover the additional costs of working with freelance journalists according to the practices listed above. In addition, some media organizations fear legal risks and obligations in taking responsibility for freelancer safety. To address these challenges, media organizations may want to consider more formal policies or guidelines when contracting freelancers (Aondover et al., 2024).



### 3.4 Security Policies and Protocols for News Media Organizations

Most media organizations worldwide do not have an explicit set of policies for security. In many cases where policies exist, journalists are not aware of or have not been involved in either formulating or evaluating them. However, many news organizations are working to improve their security policies to address a greater range of risks, including digital security threats. Some policies include the following protocols:

- a. Risk assessments are conducted before assignments by regional managers, dedicated security advisors, and directors. These often include emergency communication protocols for when staff are in the field.
- b. A dedicated editorial safety team. This would be made up of a manager and a security advisor who devise security protocols for journalists who work in high-risk environments.
- c. High-level editorial approval for risky assignments. Some organizations do not allow staff to pursue assignments deemed too dangerous.
- d. Provision of security equipment. Ensuring that journalists have appropriate tools to conduct their work and respond to emergencies, including satellite phones, medical kits, and body armour.
- e. Mandatory insurance. This may apply to staff journalists only. Many media development organizations and international task forces on journalists' safety have pressed for media organizations to not commission work from uninsured freelancers.
- f. Social media and digital policy. Some organizations may be unwittingly putting their reporters in danger by insisting on an active Twitter or Facebook presence despite the increased vulnerability to harassment online.
- g. Treatment of stress and trauma. Some of the bigger and better-funded organizations have set up confidential hotlines or provide therapist referrals for staff experiencing emotional stress from their work. These outlets are moving towards creating a newsroom culture that removes the stigma sometimes associated with seeking psychological help. Managers or counsellors might debrief staff after difficult assignments and create a system where colleagues look after each other, know how to spot signs of emotional turmoil and know when to encourage treatment and lend support. NGOs and journalist unions provide these services in some countries, but media owners and leaders must work to ensure the well-being of their staff.

Some news organizations engage in constant monitoring and revision of their safety policies, updating them regularly to address new needs. But many policies fall out of date, or are put on paper but not into practice. Many media organizations do not have policies in place on journalists' safety at all, or their policies are vague and do not make real commitments. In addition, while some media organizations have security policies that include specific best practices for women journalists, many fail to include risks with unique gendered components. Organizational policy varies in its treatment of emergencies and high risks encountered by its staff. Some organizations may temporarily or permanently relocate a journalist, reach out to appropriate groups or authorities to address the threats or take action to promote public awareness of the problem. Digital harassment is an increasingly frequent occurrence that has forced journalists to abandon stories or even the profession (Maiwada et al., 2025).

## IV. Conclusion

The economic conditions of many journalists covering the insurgency further exacerbate these challenges. Many media organizations lack the resources to provide adequate safety training, protective gear, or insurance for their reporters. Freelance journalists, in particular, are often left without institutional support, making them even more vulnerable to risks. Low wages also mean that some journalists are susceptible to bribery and external influence, which can compromise the integrity of their reporting. Despite these challenges, journalists continue to play a critical role in documenting the realities of the Boko Haram insurgency. Their work informs national and international audiences, influences policy decisions, and helps to hold both insurgents and government forces accountable. However, improving journalists' safety requires a multi-faceted approach, including stronger institutional protections, better security training, improved mental health support, and greater government respect for press freedom. The international community, media organizations, and advocacy groups must collaborate to ensure that journalists covering the conflict can do so without fear for their lives.

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