Responding to Threats to Press Freedom and the Media in a Time of Crisis

AN ASSESSMENT OF TYPES AND SOURCES OF THREATS TO PRESS FREEDOM AND MITIGATION MEASURES DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN KENYA
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The onset of the impact of the COVID-19 containment measures by the Government of Kenya upon the declaration of the virus as a pandemic in March 2019 included increased violation of press freedom and access to information.

Among the measures announced by the Government included a national lockdown of the country, mandatory putting on of masks, social distancing, centralisation of information sharing on the pandemic through the Ministry of Health among others under the public health Act. Media practitioners were under the public notice exempted from the curfew restrictions but had to acquire a special COVID-19 Movement Press Card from the Media Council of Kenya.

In addition, the media industry through individual media houses introduced measures aimed at both cutting down costs for doing business and in line with public health measures, to ensure protection of staff, which influenced press freedom. Several media houses sacked journalists, reduced staff numbers, asked staff to work from home, reduced staff salaries and related allowances while in some cases, several journalists became infected or affected by the pandemic including journalist being sent into isolation centres, getting ill and reported deaths, and or family members being infected.

More critically is that following the declaration of COVID-19 as a pandemic, the number of cases of harassment of journalists and hostilities towards the media in Kenya reported to the Media Council of Kenya significantly increased. These especially emerged from the security agencies, online trolling of journalists, exposure to risks associated with Coronavirus because due to pressure by editors to cover such incidences. There was increase in denial of information in some instances from the authorities. One media house in Kericho closed from the COVID-19 impact.

Journalists and media workers across the country reported attacks from the police and their equipment confiscated, intimidated, and made to flee by goons and well-known personalities while a few media houses were taken to courts to gag them against publishing on certain topics, organisations, or personalities.

Attacks and harassment of journalists violates several Constitutional provisions in Kenya including, Articles25 (freedom from torture and degrading treatment), 28 (freedom to be treated with dignity) 29 (freedom to security) 33 (freedom of expression), 34 (media freedoms), 35 (Access to information and 41 (on labour rights).
INTRODUCTION

By the time Kenya made public the first case of COVID-19 in March 2019, and with subsequent impact of the outbreak on many spheres of life, the working conditions and safety situation of journalists in Kenya was noted by industry players. The industry had already seen mass sackings of staff in the editorial sections, non-payment of and delayed pay to staff, reduced revenues from circulation and increasing cases of press freedom violations.

By the end of the month, the government had imposed a curfew to stem infections. Soon afterwards, images of police officers using excessive force to enforce the curfew surfaced in the media. Three deaths were reported and believed to have been caused by police brutality. The police then began harassing journalists who reported on their brutality. By October 2020, there had been at least 48 reports of violations against journalists reporting on the pandemic. Twenty two of those cases occurred within six weeks of the first case of COVID-19. The violations included physical assault, arrests, verbal threats and online harassment. Although journalists were listed as essential service workers and exempted from curfew restrictions, reports indicate that on-duty journalists were harassed.

Since the declaration of the COVID-19 as a global pandemic, Kenya issued measures aimed at containing the pandemic including a partial lockdown of the country. Since the declaration, Kenyan media witnessed increased harassment of journalists and intensification of hostilities towards the media in Kenya especially from the security agencies. Other threats included online trolling of journalists, exposure to risks associated with Coronavirus for being forced by editors to cover such incidences and denial of information in some instances from the authorities.

Just like in the rest of the world, the exact impact the COVID-19 is yet to be known even as several sectors count losses, the media in Kenya was impacted by the adverse effects of the pandemic. In addition to harassment and intimidation from within and outside the industry, several journalists and media practitioners faced a bleak future because of reduced income, increased operational costs and changing work environment that has forced media outlets to implement cost-cutting measures to cushion themselves from the negative economic effects of the pandemic.

1 Editors say media in double danger due to COVID-19 - The Standard (standardmedia.co.ke)
2 How COVID-19 has worsened attacks against journalists in Kenya (theconversation.com)
3 FIRST CASE OF CORONAVIRUS DISEASE CONFIRMED IN KENYA – MINISTRY OF HEALTH
4
Journalists in Kenya, who facilitate the realisation of the right to freedom of expression and access to information as enshrined in the constitution, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) under Article 19 and in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), both of which Kenya is a signatory could not be spared.

Nationally, the harassment of journalists violates several Constitutional provisions including, Articles 25 (freedom from torture and degrading treatment), 28 (freedom to be treated with dignity) 29 (freedom to security) 33 (freedom of expression), 34 (media freedoms), 35 (Access to information and 41 (on labour rights).5

Granted that some of the measures both by the Government under the Public Health Act and industry were unavoidable, some situations and measures were mishandled in terms of implementation6. It was expected that the measures would be implemented in a fair, transparent and humane manner, within all the laws protecting employees. Journalism is facing the test of fake news and misinformation, which poses serious threats to the profession.

In addition to the effects in the economic realm, and other work related effects, such as access to information and movement past curfew hours, journalists, and media practitioners were exposed to the daily risks of infection in the line of duty as they sought to cover the pandemic. Most of the media houses implemented the work from home policy and other interventions7.

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5 Constitution of Kenya, 2010
6 Measures included
   1. Regularly and thoroughly wash your hands with soap and water or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
   (ii) Maintain a distance of at least 1 meter (5 feet) between yourself and anyone who is coughing or sneezing.
   (iii) Persons with a cough or sneezing should stay home or keep a social distance but avoid mixing with others in a crowd.
   (iv) Maintain good respiratory hygiene by covering your mouth and nose while coughing and sneezing with a handkerchief, tissue, or into flexed elbow.
   (v) Stay at home if you feel unwell with symptoms like fever, cough, and difficulty in breathing.
   (vi) Suspend all public gatherings, meetings, religious crusades games events etc. Normal church services can go on provided they provide sanitizing/and hand washing.
   (vii) Suspend all inter – school events but keep schools open.
      • Public transport providers are directed to provide hand sanitizers for their clients and regular cleaning of the vehicles.
   (viii) Temporary suspension of prison visits for the next 30 days.
   (ix) Kenyans must not abuse social media platforms or indulge in spreading misinformation that can cause fear and panic.
   (x) Travel restrictions outside the country unless necessary and no travel to disease Epicentre countries.
      • Dissemination of information on daily basis
7 Statement by the Kenya Media Sector Working Group during the 2020 World Press Freedom Day made in Nairobi
The media industry responded through the establishment of the Media Sector Response Team (MESERT) on 13th March 2019 to coordinate safety responses for journalists during the COVID-19 period which initiated among others extended support to journalist affected by COVID-19 by providing trauma/psychological support through virtual counseling sessions, supporting independent content production, operational support, and journalism grants.

The UN Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Opinion and Expression David Kaye released a report highlighting that access to information, independent media and other free expression rights are critical to meeting the challenges of the pandemic. These are key for providing individuals and communities with life-saving information and helping to combat disinformation. The report, alongside guidance on COVID-19 by the Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights (OHCHR), advises that relevant information about COVID-19 should reach all people. The report further noted that internet access is essential, and that journalists and the media should be able to report on the pandemic without fear or censorship.

The UN Secretary-General developed a policy brief noting that the COVID-19 public health crisis has led to a “human rights crisis with impacts a range of human rights, including the rights to free expression, access to information, and privacy.

UNESCO chief Audrey Azoulay pointed out that just as in war, truth could be considered the “first casualty” of the Coronavirus pandemic. She called for people everywhere to defend and respect an independent and free press. Equally important is that media outlets must be responsible for the accuracy of their reports, which also should apply to “digital players” and social media.

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9 Ibid
10 Press freedom critical to countering COVID-19 ‘pandemic of misinformation’: UN chief | UN News
COVID-19 AND ITS ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES

Just as in the rest of the world, the COVID-19 pandemic had tremendous impact on the media including, reduced revenues, increased operational costs, mass sackings, among others. In Kenya, most media houses were forced to effect up to 50 per cent pay cuts. Leading media outlets in Kenya including the Nation Media Group and Standard group sacked several journalists including senior editors in the wake of the COVID-19, reduced staff salaries by between 10 % to 50 % among other cost cutting measures.

The Kenya Editors Guild noted that with the COVID-19 pandemic and related adverse effects on the media, industry players should focus on economic viability of news media, the transparency of Internet companies, and enhanced media and information literacy that enable people to value, defend and demand journalism as a vital part of information as a public good.

Kenya Union of Journalists (KUJ) Secretary-General Eric Odour noted the need for an emergency stimulus package supported by the government including a media sustainability fund to help the media conduct training, mentorship, and research to salvage the media industry.

The economic downturn resulting from the COVID-19 crisis has brought investments in advertising to a halt. The disruption has hit private broadcasters hard since they depend entirely on advertisement revenues. While there is scant information about the exact figures for financial losses occasioned by the pandemic, industry estimates suggest that advertising revenues may have dipped by up to two thirds of previous earnings in some media houses.

References:
11 How COVID-19 has worsened attacks against journalists in Kenya (theconversation.com)
12 NMG Sacks Senior Editors and Managers in Latest Layoff (businessstoday.co.ke)
13 In speech made by Churchill Otieno, President of the Kenya Editors Guild during the 2020 World Press Freedom Day in Nairobi
14 In a speech made by Eric Odour, the Secretary General of the Kenya Union of Journalists during the 2020 World Press Freedom Day in Nairobi
15 Joe Ageyo in an article published in East African journalism Review magazine entitled "Remote Options: experimenting with television journalism in Kenya"
In Kenya, all major broadcasters announced salary reductions ranging from 5 to 50 percent in the first quarter of 2020. Nation Media Group, the Standard Group plc, Radio Africa Group, Royal Media Services and Mediamax Ltd, all imposed pay cuts attributing it to the COVID-19 disruptions. In addition, all the above media houses declared redundancies to remain afloat in the face of falling revenues and rising operation costs.\(^\text{16}\)

The Kenya Editors’ Guild (KEG) has expressed concern over difficulties facing the Kenyan media since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. KEG Executive Council noted that journalists are facing double danger of infection as frontline workers while being victims of the economic travails facing media houses. “Since the COVID-19 pandemic hit Kenya, media houses have been laying off journalists and support staff and enforcing pay cuts. The pandemic exacerbated an already dire situation, with more than 300 journalists having lost their jobs in the past nine months. Some media houses may have to shut down altogether if they do not find ways to survive until the pandemic ends,” he said.\(^\text{17}\)

**Economic challenges facing the Media Pre COVID-19 period**

The adverse effects faced by the media occasioned by the COVID-19 pandemic made a tough situation worse. The Media industry in Kenya was already facing sustainability and viability challenges pre COVID-19 because of an outdated business model, changes in technology and harsh taxing regime on business equipment. Among challenges that were already facing the industry included political manipulation and editorial influencing, threats against journalists, overbearing regulation, exposure to content theft by digital platforms and debts by public agencies.

The Copyright Act provides for three Collective Management Organisations (CMOs) within the music industry, which are individually licensed by the Kenya Copyright Board (KECOBO) under Section 46 (2) to represent different classes of rights, namely: Composers, authors and music publishers of musical works – represented by Music Copyright Society of Kenya (MCSK); Producers of sound recordings – represented by Kenya Association of Music Producers (Kamp); and Performers (singers, actors) – represented by Performers Rights Society of Kenya (Prisk). Stations are expected to pay between Sh20,000 and Sh300,000 yearly to Kamp and Prisk for sound recordings, and a similar amount for audio-visual works, from public broadcasters and community broadcasters, respectively. Thus, public broadcasters were required to cough out Sh600,000 yearly, private Sh240,000 while community stations were expected to pay Sh40,000.\(^\text{18}\)

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\(^{16}\) Ibd
\(^{17}\) Editors say media in double danger due to COVID-19 - The Standard (standardmedia.co.ke)
\(^{18}\) Blunt over-regulation will run media out of town - The Standard (standardmedia.co.ke)
Averagely one requires, in addition to the costs of forming a community group and registering it, Sh700,000 to start a community radio station, Sh3million for a small commercial station including costs of registering a company, acquiring broadcasting equipment and hiring staff, while an average television station requires Sh10 million to start and operate.\textsuperscript{19}

The cost of content distribution for a national TV station with one channel is Sh300,000 per month, the cost of acquiring a license is Sh180,000. For newspapers, the Books and Newspaper Act requires that they deposit a bond. In addition, the media enterprises must pay the other relevant national and county government loans and levies which has made the business expensive.\textsuperscript{20}

Like media companies around the world, Kenyan media are still struggling to monetise online audiences and make up for lost ad revenue. Commercial advertisers have started to move their money to online ad services such as Google AdWords. At the same time, media have had to contend with a drastic decline in government ad revenue. In 2016, profits across the industry shrank by almost USD 15 million. Without staff journalists, newsrooms increasingly depend on freelance journalists and correspondents to produce content at a lower cost.

The good thing, however, is that these pressures are also driving media entrepreneurs to think creatively and experiment with new business models. Paywalls, online advertising, interactive web features, and social media were all cited as ways established by media in trying to attract and strengthen audience engagement through online content.

\textsuperscript{19} Blunt over-regulation will run media out of town - The Standard (standardmedia.co.ke)
\textsuperscript{20} Ibid
METHODOLOGY

Primary data

The findings of this study are based on a survey and document analysis. The survey was conducted through a self-administered questionnaire from twenty journalists and media practitioners and eight station managers. The questionnaire was uploaded on Google form and filled by representatives of various media houses in Kenya as indicated. Out of the twenty journalists and media practitioners, fourteen were male and six females drawn from radio (12), Print (6 and Television (2) ranging from editors, reporters to correspondents. The survey also sought to interview eight selected managers, five were male while three were female.

Secondary data

- Daily updates from the MCK hotline and online alert system
- Media (online and offline) intelligence and monitoring
- Getting referrals from county based and grassroots-based media and human rights networks
- Personal testimonies from journalists during trainings.
FINDINGS

The findings from the study were derived from the data collection tools employed and presented thematically including threats to journalists as seen through salary cuts, layoffs, denial of access to information, mental distress, arrests, destruction of equipment, closure of media houses and infections by COVID-19.

Threats to journalists

Majority of the respondents participating in the study at 95% reported having faced threats of one type or the other in their course of duty during the COVID-19 pandemic period. From the survey the perpetrators included the police, county government officials, ministry officials and members of the public.

Attacks and violence against journalists violate the Kenya Constitution that provides for the protection of all Kenyans and freedom of expression. Part Two of Chapter Four of the Kenya Constitution, commonly referred to as the Bill of Rights of the Kenyan Constitution, states *inter alia* in Article 26 (1): “Every person has the right to life”. Sub-section (3) of the same Article further elaborates that “a person shall not be deprived of life intentionally, except to the extent authorised by the Constitution or other written law” while Article 28 guarantees the inherent
right to human dignity and to have that dignity respected and protected. Article 29 on freedom and security and persons cannot be deprived of freedom arbitrarily or without just cause. This Article is categorical about detention without trial, subjection to any form of violence from either public or private sources; subjected to torture in any manner, whether physical or psychological and treated or punished in a cruel, inhuman, or degrading manner.

**Physical attacks**

Journalists and media practitioners were on several occasions physically attacked, intimidated, harassed and their rights violated in the course of duty because of the implementation of COVID-19 containment measures. The attacks on journalists were by police, other government agencies/officers and instances by members of the public. Fifteen percent of the respondents reported to have experienced physical attacks, harassment, and intimidation while in the course of duty during the period under study.
Cases of harassment of journalists included being:

- Roughed up by officers from the Kenya Forestry Services for covering a funeral where government guidelines on COVID-19 were flouted.
- Attacked by unknown people while on his way to work after hosting an evening show on radio
- Attacked by police in Turkana in Lodwar while at the Lodwar police station
- Attacked by unknown people and equipment stolen while returning home after an assignment
- Harassed, threatened, and robbed of valuables by General Service Unit officers imposing a curfew of Covid 19 in Nairobi
- Harassed by police while covering curfew enforcement in Nkubu Meru.

**Arrests/detention**

Ten percent of the respondents reported being arrested while in the course of duty during the period under review by either the regular police or the General Service Unit security personnel especially when moving past curfew hours even though journalists were listed as essential service providers and issued with Special movement passes by the Media Council of Kenya. None of the journalists arrested during the period was charged in a court of law, but during arrest, they were harassed, thrown in cells and their equipment damaged or confiscated.

Cases included journalists who were arrested while seeking information at Moi’s bridge police station in Eldoret and they would later be quarantined without their consent. During the process, a journalist was harassed, and his press card and phone confiscated for reporting on a COVID-19.
Two journalists summoned by Nakuru Criminal Investigation Officer over stories on the isolation of military officers at Lanet barracks the journalists were told to name sources.

**Denial of access to information**

This is the major press freedom violence recorded at 80%, and majority of the respondents indicated to have encountered during their course of work. Journalists reported instances where they were denied access to information on COVID-19 by especially County Government officers and leaders without valid reasons. This was evident by journalists outside Nairobi seeking information on ICU bed, hospital capacity, Personal Protective Equipment for among other reasons.

Access to quality information through media and other channels is essential for individuals and groups, as well as human rights monitors to be able to scrutinise the state’s implementation of its obligations on the right to health. Transparency is an essential characteristic of any effective health care system. It was also important for the state to provide information about the specific content of such policies, to analyse how budgetary commitments were to be delivered. Provided such health-related information was available, individuals and groups could participate more effectively in democratic health-related decision-making at the community, national and international levels. The denial of information involved journalists denied access to Ministry of Health Officials in Nairobi while seeking interviews of COVID-19 stories and five journalists denied access to cover a press briefing issued by the COVID-19 disease in the county by the leadership.
Destruction of property/confiscation

Journalists reported cases of destruction of equipment by either security agencies or members of the public, who did not like the journalists exposing or covering aspects related to the COVID-19. One attacked journalist was injured, and lost his camera, microphone, and Tripod as well as valuables, reported at Kondele police station on 4/5/20.

![Destruction of Equipment Chart]

Online trolling

Cyberbullying, a commonly emerging form of threat to journalists were reported during the period under review. It took the form of body shaming to a female journalist who had done a story on how people were flouting COVID-19 containment measures with the help of the security agencies.

There was online trolling for a journalist who conducted an investigative piece which aired on 21 June 2020 relating to people flouting COVID-19 measures. The Media Observer in one of the articles highlighted the plight of Citizen TV journalist Purity Mwambia. The article called on media houses that they need to learn how to better support their journalists, who routinely face harassment and threats online and in real life, acknowledging that such attacks take a toll on journalists’ mental health and personal lives.
Layoffs

As a strategy to deal with COVID-19 related constraints, several media houses reported incidences of having to lay off staff and declare some redundant. Media houses such as Standard Media, Nation Media Group, Media Max, Radio Africa Group, and Royal Media Group sacked their employees and at the same time effected pay cuts to its employees. The media houses cited global uncertainty and unparalleled challenges impacting most businesses adversely with many companies either shut down or scaled down operations due to the drastic decline of revenues.
Salary reduction

Salary deductions was a major intervention reported by the respondents as a way of dealing with the business costs during the COVID-19 crisis. Majority 80% of the respondents reported having reduced the salary of their staff. As already mentioned in the ranging, 5-50% of journalists affected across the media houses while in extreme cases, many journalists went for several months without pay.

Further, a study by the Media Council of Kenya found out that almost half of the companies, (47.8%), effected salary cuts for employees. In total, at least 1,423 journalists and non-journalist staff suffered pay cuts ranging between 20–9%. The study established the average percentage salary cut was 36.5% across the companies. Between one and 10 journalists were on pay cut in a varied proportion for male and female: 35 (75.5%) and 30 (78.9%) of the companies respectively.

Sources of threats to journalists in Kenya

Police

The leading sources of threats, and for this matter the most notorious to journalists and media practitioners is the police. In addition to threats, the police are reported to have arrested journalists, destroyed their equipment especially through the implementation of the curfew directive.

10% of the respondents reported being arrested while in the course of duty during the period under review by either the regular police or the General Service Unit security personnel. In some
cases, officers from the Directorate of the Criminal Investigation unit are also reported to have summoned journalists for questioning in the same period.

**County Government**

County Government officials were the leading perpetrators of denial of access to information during the period under review. Across many counties, journalists reported being denied access to information that, which in most cases was of public nature and that would be important for members of the public to know.

Lack of access to information was a major press freedom violation recorded at 80%, and majority of the respondents indicated to have encountered during their course of work. Journalists reported instances where they were denied access to information on COVID-19 by especially County Government officers and leaders without valid reasons.

**Members of the Public**

Journalists and media practitioners were on several occasions physically attacked, intimidated, harassed and their rights violated in the course of duty by members of the public. In many of the attacks, the journalists were assaulted, their equipment destroyed among other forms of harassment by unknown people.
HEALTH THREATS OF COVID-19 TO JOURNALISTS

There were cases of reported threats to journalists related to exposure to COVID-19 in varied manner included journalists getting infected or affected by family members were infected, isolation to trauma related threats. All the respondents indicated having health related experiences.

A study conducted by the Media Council of Kenya on the impact of COVID-19 on media practice in Kenya established similar findings. In the study, 31 (26%) of the media houses reported cases of COVID-19 infections among their journalists. Seventeen companies (15%) reported more than five cases of COVID-19 infections, with males comprising 11 (9%) and females 6 (5%). At the same time, twenty companies or 17% reported infections ranging between 1-5 cases among males and nine or (8%) among females. A total of eleven journalists in five media houses died due to the virus. A further, 36 journalists from 12 companies were hospitalised after contracting COVID-19. At least 90% of the media houses suffered revenue loss within the ranges of 10% to 90%, with a median of 57%.

The threat of Socio-Psychological wellness

According to International Federation of Journalists survey released in 2020, stress, anxiety, depression, sleep and eating disorders or burnout are just some of the mental health problems that many journalists covering the COVID-19 pandemic suffer every day. The study shared the interventions that media employers and journalists’ unions can offer mental health support to help alleviate burnout among journalists covering the pandemic or suffering the socio-economic consequences of it.

During the pandemic Media Council of Kenya in partnership with stakeholders developed guidelines on safety measures and part of the guidelines indicated that the Council was on standby to provide the psycho-social support for all the journalists.
TABLE: Psychological effects suffered by journalists because of the COVID-19

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mental Health</th>
<th>Yes (%)</th>
<th>No (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feeling Hopeless</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative Thoughts</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loss of Sleep</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burnout</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxiety</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depression</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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Change of work routines

All of the respondents surveyed reported that because of the COVID-19, they had to change the way of working to mitigate the impact of the pandemic. The managers gave varied reasons and ways they responded to the challenge starting from working from home, halting in studio guest programmes to using recorded content.

TABLE 3: Has COVID-19 affected the way you work as a journalist

Change of Work Routines

Not affected | Affected
-------------|---------
0             | 100

No | Yes
The economic toll of COVID-19 on media houses

All managers interviewed answered in the affirmative that COVID-19 had economically affected their media houses. According to a Media Viability in Kenya report by DW, most media in 2020 reported that their revenue streams had reduced. Local and regional news media in Kenya are particularly financially vulnerable. Media that broadcast to specific regions in the country primarily rebroadcast content from national media, and there is little difference between national and regional television or national and community radio stations with respect to content.

Journalists’ response to threats posed by COVID-19

Amidst the COVID-19 adverse effects, journalists innovated survival interventions including applying for grants, selling content to multiple channels and a number started independent content production. Media professional groups were quickly revived while in some cases social welfare interventions and resource mobilisation schemes were started where resources generated assisted with personal needs such as food items, rent, PPES and data bundles.

Media response to COVID-19

All the media outlets introduced different mitigation measures to cushion their businesses from the adverse effects of the pandemic. In addition to salary cuts and layoffs, other mitigation measures include working from home programmes, use of recorded broadcast programmes, enhanced medical insurance programmes, in house clinics, vaccination programmes, to reduction of staff at the workspace.

Media houses reacted to the pandemic in diverse ways as the table below suggests.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RESPONSE TO COVID</th>
<th>NO</th>
<th>YES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LAY OFF</td>
<td>62.5%</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salary Cut</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All the 114 (97%) companies introduced mitigation measures to reduce COVID-19 transmission among journalists. Several interventions implemented were working from home, working in shifts, public health sensitisation programmes, provision of personal protective equipment’s, provision of hygiene facilities, limitation of guests, redesigning of workstations, enforcement of hygiene practices and periodic fumigation of workstations. Most companies reported to have received support from the Media Council of Kenya. The support received were personal protective equipment, foodstuff, money (MCK grant), and hygiene materials. Support was also received from other organisations such as Association of Kenya Community Media Operators and Kenya Community Media Network.
CONCLUSION

As indicated in the report, COVID-19 dealt a big blow to journalism in Kenya that led to an array of challenges. Amongst many challenges was the ability of the media in managing pandemic coverage, while simultaneously transitioning newsroom processes to adhere to public health regulations. The resilience of Kenya’s media during the pandemic, however, cannot be underestimated.

Despite the challenges Journalists maintained a high degree of professionalism, earning accolades from members of the public and government officials, who recognised the importance of a vibrant media. Most media houses sacked their employee while most journalists took paycuts.

Access to information continues to be a challenge for most journalists and the media as evidenced in the report. The pandemic revealed the weaknesses of both national and county government on information ecosystems capacities. The situation was made dire by the economically unbalanced media outlets, a massive spread of Misinformation and disinformation, a lack of resources and skills among journalists. Article 35 of CoK (2010) gives citizens the right to access information held by the state and information held by any other entity or person and required for the exercise or protection of any right or fundamental freedom.

The Economic threat to media houses and journalism was greatly highlighted in the report and this pointed to the need for media houses to be innovative and change their business models to remain afloat. And this brings to question the work of regulators and other players in ensuring that the media continue to operate. To mitigate the impact of COVID-19 to media houses the Media Council of Kenya rolled out grants and media support to 150 media houses, and associations.

Journalists attacks and loss or damage of equipment in the line of duty continues to be a challenge in the industry and from the survey and secondary data most journalists were victims during the pandemic period.
ATTACHMENTS

THREATS TO JOURNALISTS AND THE MEDIA DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC (MARCH 2020-FEBRUARY 2021)

Data collection protocol
This protocol has been designed as a guide for national researchers investigating threats to journalists and the media in eastern Africa during the COVID-19 pandemic. Researchers are at liberty to include other aspects of the media situation in their countries that they deem relevant.

The research will combine both quantitative and qualitative research methods.

A. THE NATURE AND SCOPE OF THREATS TO JOURNALISTS AND THE MEDIA DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

This section contains questions that will guide the researchers when analyzing/assessing the state of media freedom in their countries during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In answering each of the questions, researchers should clearly cite their sources e.g., media reports, interviews, reports by NGOs, police, the courts, and other authorities.

1. Describe the types of threats against journalists during the COVID-19 pandemic in your country.
2. Describe the types of threats against the media during the COVID-19 pandemic in your country.
3. Provide the number and details (e.g., name of journalist, media house, location of incident, perpetrators, etc) on EACH of the following types of threats to or attacks on JOURNALISTS in your country during the COVID-19 pandemic.
   (i) Physical assaults
   (ii) Arrests/detention
   (iii) Court charges
   (iv) Charges by regulatory authorities
   (v) Imprisonment
   (vi) Denial of access to information/sources
   (vii) Restriction of movement
4. Provide the number and details (e.g., name of media house, location of incident, perpetrators, etc) on EACH of the following type of threats to or attacks on the MEDIA in your country during the COVID-19 pandemic.
   (i) Court charges
   (ii) Charges by regulatory authorities
   (iii) Suspension or revocation of licence
   (iv) Closure of media house
   (v) Denial of government advertising
   (vi) Drop in advertising revenue
   (vii) Drop in circulation
   (viii) Public and private threats by government officials

5. Who were the biggest perpetrators of threats to or attacks on journalists/the media in your country during the pandemic?

6. Write brief notes on the role of each of the following potential perpetrators:
   (i) Police
   (ii) Army
   (iii) Government ministers
   (iv) Local government officials
   (v) Elected politicians
   (vi) Media regulators
   (vii) Advertisers
   (viii) Media owners
   (ix) Businesspeople
   (x) Ordinary people
   (xi) Others
7. Was any disciplinary action taken against the perpetrators of threats to or attacks on journalists? If yes, describe the actions e.g., arrests and charges before the courts; charges before disciplinary bodies; suspension from duty; official reprimand, etc.

8. Did your country or national or local authorities introduce any new media-related laws/regulations in response to the COVID-19 pandemic?

9. If yes, describe the laws/regulations.

10. What effect did the said laws/regulations have on journalism?

11. Were journalists/the media in your country recognised by the authorities as “essential workers” during the pandemic? If yes, describe what this recognition entailed in practical terms.

12. How have different stakeholders in your country, including journalists’ associations, media support groups, academia, media owners, regulators, the government, and the public responded to these threats or attacks on journalists/the media?
B. QUICK SURVEY OF JOURNALISTS

This section is for a quick survey that will be administered to at least twenty journalists from print, broadcasting, and electronic media in your country. The researcher should strive to ensure that it represents a wide spectrum of journalists across media platforms, media houses, gender, age, and location.

It should be an anonymous survey unless the journalist elects to be named.

The responses to this quick survey should be submitted to ACME for a quick analysis that will then be shared with the national researcher.

Q.1 Designation

Q2. Employment status

Q3. Gender
1. Male 2. Female

Q4. Type of Media House

Q5. Have you faced any threats in your work as a journalist because of the COVID-19 pandemic?
1. Yes 2. No

Q6. If yes, what are the three biggest threats you have faced?

Q7. Has COVID-19 affected the way you work as a journalist?
1. Yes 2. No

Q8. If yes, how has COVID-19 affected the way you work?

Q9. Have you suffered any of the following threats in the last year in the course of your work as a journalist?

   a) Physical Assault 1. Yes 2. No
   b) Arrest/detention 1. Yes 2. No
   c) Court charges 1. Yes 2. No
   d) Charges by media regulators 1. Yes 2. No
   e) Imprisonment 1. Yes 2. No
   f) Denial of access to information/sources 1. Yes 2. No
   g) Restriction of movement 1. Yes 2. No
h) Suspension 1. Yes……. 2. No.....
i) Death threats 1. Yes……. 2. No.....
k) Kidnap 1. Yes……. 2. No.....
l) Cyber harassment 1. Yes……. 2. No.....
m) Malicious damage or confiscation of tools 1. Yes……. 2. No.....
n) Lay off 1. Yes……. 2. No.....
o) Reduction of salary 1. Yes……. 2. No.....

Q10. Have you experienced any of the following psychological effects because of COVID-19?

a) Depression 1. Yes……. 2. No.....
b) Anxiety 1. Yes……. 2. No.....
c) Exhaustion or burnout 1. Yes……. 2. No.....
d) Loss of sleep 1. Yes……. 2. No.....
e) Getting negative thoughts 1. Yes……. 2. No.....
f) Feeling helpless 1. Yes……. 2. No.....

Q11. How have you responded to what you consider the key threats you have faced during your work as a journalist during the pandemic?
C. QUICK SURVEY OF MEDIA MANAGERS

This section is for a quick survey that will be administered to at least eight media managers from print, broadcasting, and electronic media in your country. The researcher should strive to ensure that it represents a wide spectrum of media managers across media platforms, media houses, gender, age, and location.

It should be an anonymous survey unless the manager elects to be named.

The responses to this quick survey should be submitted to ACME for a quick analysis that will then be shared with the national researcher.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q1. Designation</th>
<th>1. Editor….</th>
<th>2. Circulation/Sales Manager……</th>
<th>3. Head of Programming…….</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. General Manager….</td>
<td>5. Advertising Manager….</td>
<td>6. Other (specify).......</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q2. Gender</th>
<th>1. Male….</th>
<th>2. Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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|--------------------------|----------------------|-------------|----------------|--------------|

|---------------------------------------------------------|---------|---------|

| Q5. If yes, how? [Probe] |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q6. Has your media house suffered any of the following as result of COVID-19?</th>
<th>1. Yes……</th>
<th>2. No……</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) Drop in circulation/audiences</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>b) Drop in advertising revenue</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>c) Loss of staff</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) Failure to collect money from debtors</td>
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</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q7. Has your media house responded in any of the following ways?</th>
<th>1. Yes……</th>
<th>2. No……</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) Layoff of staff</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Reduction of staff salaries</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>c) Changing of frequency</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>d) Changing formats e.g., print to online</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>e) In-house production of previously outsourced programmes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f) Closing some outlets</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</table>

| Q8. What more is your media house doing to respond to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on your journalism and business? |