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MEDIA ETHICS AND NATIONAL SECURITY

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CHAPTER
SIX

**MEDIA ETHICS AND
NATIONAL SECURITY**

Hajara Umar Sanda

Introduction

The issue of national security is a fundamental issue in national and international discourses. This has necessitated the need to streamline the ethical issues involved with a view to averting the disclosure of information that may create bedlam, cause damage and endanger national security. The role of media in national security in Nigeria cannot be overemphasized. The primary functions of the media in any society are to inform, educate and entertain. Beyond these, they serve as watchdogs of the society, agenda setters and force multipliers. Through these functions, the mass media sensitize, enlighten and persuade members of the public to participate actively in developmental activities. To a large extent, the ability of the media to effectively carry out these functions depends on the amount of freedom they enjoy in societies where they exist and operate.

However, press freedom is very crucial to the effectiveness of media in any society. The information disseminated by the mass media could be either harmful or useful to the society. Sambe (2008) affirms that “as a reporter, you have a lot of power. What you write can influence decisions, help form public opinions of people and contribute to the general attitude of your readers and life in general” (p. 27).

The mass media have the power and ability to contribute enormously to national security, and this can be achieved through the observance of professional ethics and in accordance with the provisions of the constitution. In other words, for the media to contribute

meaningfully to national security there is the need for strict adherence to professional ethics of journalism profession.

The issue of media ethics in journalism is a moral philosophy and very paramount. Truth, accuracy, objectivity, fairness, honesty, independence, balance, relevance and a watchdog role are among the most important values that define journalism. By its nature and function, mass media ethics is regarded as a moderator of human actions and protects the less privileged against the vagaries of the mass media. But have the Mass media contributed towards promoting peace and national security by following agreed code of ethics and professional conduct?

This paper examines the role of media ethics in national security and peace building in the society. The paper therefore looks at the mass media as functional entities, ethics as a moderator of behaviour and the issue of national security and peace as societal instruments for better understanding, growth and development.

The paper argues that the media has an ethical, moral and professional obligation to provide the public with honest, accurate and reliable reporting that does not deliberately distort or suppress information for national security in the society.

Theoretical Framework

This paper is anchored on social responsibility theory treated by Siebert, Peterson and Schramm in 1963. The major premise of the Social responsibility theory is that freedom carries concomitant obligations, and the press, which enjoys a privileged position under the government, is obliged to be responsible to society for carrying out certain essential functions of mass communication (Anaeto, Onabajo and Osifeso, 2009). The social responsibly theory postulates five specific functions for the press. They are:

1. To serve the political system by making information, discussion and consideration of public affairs generally accessible;
2. To inform the public to enable it take self-determined action;
3. To protect the rights of the individuals by acting as watchdog over the government;
4. To serve the economic system, for instance by bringing together buyers and sellers through the medium of advertising; and
5. To preserve financial autonomy in order not to become dependent on special interest and influences (Anaeto, Onabajo and Osifeso, 2009: 58).

McQuail (2005) sums up the main principles of the social responsibility theory, thus: “the media should accept and fulfill certain obligations to be met by setting high and professional standards of information, truth, accuracy, objectivity and balance. Media should be self-regulating within the framework of law and established institutions and should avoid

whatever might lead to crime, violence, civil disorder or give offence to minority groups” (p. 172).

Therefore, social responsibility theory challenges media professionals' ingenuity to develop new ways of serving their communities. The theory encourages media operators to see themselves as front line participants in preserving democracy. Hence, journalists' responsibility to society also involves an impeccable level of professionalism, which this theory encourages to a great extent. Thus, high standard of performance must be matched with some good virtues of balance and impartiality.

Conceptualizing Mass Media, Ethics, National Security and Peace

The mass media are by definition, the whole gamut of information dissemination institutions and agencies in a political system (Auwal, 2015). They operate by dispensing information to the populace on all aspects and actions of state and governance.

According to Asemah (2011) mass media could be described as “the channels or technological devices through which messages are conveyed to a large and heterogeneous audience. They are the vehicles that are used for conveying messages from a source to a large destination. In addition, mass media are the devices for moving messages across distance or time to accomplish mass communication” (p.18). In essence, mass media constitute all the means through which messages are relayed from different aspects of the society such as education, entertainment, health, politics, economy, to mention but a few, to a large, heterogeneous and anonymous audience at the same time.

The mass media function in various ways. However, the mass media's basic function has to do with what Harold Lasswell defines as communication. That is, to tell people, who says what in the society, to Whom, When and How. In carrying out this basic function, the mass media perform various tasks that have been classified into four functions by Wright (as cited in Akindele and Lamidi, 2001). These are:

- (1) surveillance ,
- (2) correlation of facts of the environment,
- (3) transmission of heritage, and
- (4) entertainment.

The surveillance function involves mass media operators having to nose into the nooks and crannies of the society to fish out information that is of interest to the people. In correlation, the media act to mediate even the taste of the people because they interpret the information so gathered by sifting and discarding what may not be in the interest of the people before purveying such information to them. By such interpretation, they help to create values (for culture), which are then transmitted from generation to generation. The three functions of the mass media, explained above, if closely examined, would reveal the role of the media in

fostering national security. First, by effective surveillance of the environment, the mass media would unveil those areas, individuals or entities that may likely constitute a breach of national security. Secondly, by correlation, the mass media assist other agencies to interpret the information so gathered about the environment and contribute in the utilization of such information to take steps to remedy any breach of national security or foster the perpetuation of practices that enhance national security. Thirdly, by transmission of culture, the media enhance the entrenchment of those norms, the defence of which constitutes national security.

Media Ethics

The word 'ethics' is derived from the Greek word *ethika* and it represents a set of moral principles, attitude and norms that usually characterize a people or system. Deductively therefore, ethics refers to the characteristic attitude of a professional body towards what constitutes the morality of work. This goes beyond the question of how one feels about his profession but also how one carries out his responsibilities and borders on such characteristics as honesty and accountability.

Since ethics help govern the dynamics of a profession, their inherent benefits can indeed not be overemphasized. These benefits have been streamlined according to the context of this paper as under listed:-

- i) They provide a profession with a framework for understanding the concepts of right and wrong,
- ii) They help stimulate a ready understanding of how to react to certain situations long before they occur,
- iii) They serve as legacies through which members of a professional body are able to show others the correct way to act and behave under given conditions,
- iv) They engender a knowing- doing disposition among members of a professional body.

According to Hassan (2013) Media ethics or Journalism ethics is a branch of philosophy concerned with actions that are morally permissible and those that are not. This means that Media ethics assist media workers in determining what is right and how to choose the best from several alternatives. In the same vein, Merrill (1982) also defines journalistic ethics as the branch of philosophy that helps journalists to determine what is right to do and by giving the journalist standards by which he can judge actions to be right or wrong, good or bad, responsible or irresponsible.

But the fundamental problem in determining whether an action is Ethical or not lies in the fact that different practitioners have various perceptions and standards of what is right and wrong. Yet the situation is not often just black or white, there are many cases in between, in the grey area, which is the boundary demarcating right from wrong, ethical from immoral

acts or correct professional behavior from misconduct.

Nosike (2001) succinctly summarized media ethics into three basic categories:

- 1) That the public is entitled to the truth and that only correct information can form the basis for sound journalism and ensure the confidence of the people,
- 2) That the moral duty of every journalist is to have respect for the truth and to publish or prepare for publication only the truth to the best of his knowledge,
- 3) That the duty of the journalist is to publish only facts, never to suppress such facts as he knows, never to falsify either to suit his own purposes or any other purposes (p. 5)

Therefore media ethics must be based on the following principles:

- i. *Truth*: a media practitioner should never lie under any circumstances. The integrity of public channels of communication must be preserved because they are the primary means through which the public is reached. Thus, honesty is the best policy in media practice. Unfortunately, while some press agents try to hide the truth others sometimes exaggerate the truth through sensational reporting.
- ii. *Fact*: although a news-story is a report deeply rooted in facts, publicists sometimes deliberately submarine a few facts in a sea of words. The more facts a news-story has, the better it is for the public.
- iii. *Accuracy*: a good news-story must also give an accurate account of an event. An accurate account requires detailed facts untainted by personal idiosyncrasies. These could be obtained from a constructive, dispassionate and comprehensive reportage or disclosure.
- iv. *Fairness*: although most journalists are compassionate “reporters” of news about their clients and employers, the company will never be completely clean. A good news-story must also be an objective and fair account of events.
- v. *Integrity*: the confidence of a journalist is the most valuable professional asset at his disposal. Good media practice can only be established and sustained with mutual interest.

Ethical codes and other means of self-restraint within the media industry constitute tools that ensure responsible journalistic conduct (Morant, 2015). Therefore, in media ethics the primary duty of the journalists is to tell and adore the truth. Olayiwola (2013) posits that the mass media of communication ought to be socially, politically and economically, responsible in carrying news stories that will ensure national security.

Yet most complaints have to do with the publication of outright falsehood and half-truths. Hacisabanoglu (2014) submits that in reality media owners and journalists do not apply ethical codes. Okon (2013) *reveals that most journalistic reports tend to blur the line of distinction between the right to know and the need to know. This was borne out of a marketing concern by newspaper proprietors to have headlines that will sell their papers.*

There are also provisions, which declare as misconduct the demand and acceptance of monetary rewards in consideration of publishing or suppressing news, or views but still journalists violate this code underground (White, 2008). There is a demand that journalists be well dressed at all occasions, but journalists like artists seem to want to be free as air by dressing shabbily at public functions. They still use offensive, abusive and vulgar language.

In relation to accuracy and fairness, journalists do report one side of the information and claim that the other side was not available for comment and further effort seems abortive. This kind of story cannot be said to be factual and fair. Similarly, journalists have created an environment of mutual distrust. For instance the Civil War of 1967-1970 had its root in distrust, which journalists helped to nourish. So also the Kaduna riot which, was provoked by a reporter of *This Day* Newspaper resulting to the destruction of lives and properties.

Other unethical practices by Nigerian journalists border on over exaggeration and outright sensationalism, suppression or outright distortion of facts, political partisanship and bias, ethnicism and religious insensitivity. Such actions not only make the media lose credibility, but also serve as avenue for increasing conflicts.

For instance the Sharia riot in Kaduna state in 2002 where many Muslims and Christians were killed as a result of the introduction of sharia, which the media reported. The media erroneously exaggerated that sharia will be applicable to both Muslims and Christians and this led to many casualties. The media ought to have made thorough investigation to ascertain to whom sharia is applicable (i.e. Muslims only) before reporting the news to the general public.

Another example is the first attack of allied forces in Iraq against Saddam Hussein's administration during Bush senior's regime. The allied forces made a statement to the world that "you are either with them or us". That made Nigeria's foreign minister Alhaji Sule Lamido during Obasanjo's administration to categorically state that Nigeria was in support of the allied forces. This was reported by the media, which led to serious riot in Kano where the Yoruba people particularly were attacked and killed. This was followed by a reprisal attack in Lagos where Hausa people were also killed.

The media shouldn't have reported the statement by the foreign minister due to security implications. Ethically, issues that affect the people of the country but which can cause disaffection and disunity should be de-emphasized or played down by the mass media (Morant, 2015; Olayiwola, 2013).

Therefore, journalists' lack of deep understanding of the reality of differences, and skills to cover other people of different ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation or ability is the bane of Nigerian society. This is why pressmen too should mind their language, as

provocative language can cause disaffection in the society.

The primary responsibility of the media as we all know is to educate, inform and entertain. When they fail in this, they have definitely failed in their constitutional responsibilities. An American Herbert Bayard Swope once wrote to the New York Herald and reminded them that their “first responsibility as newspaper is to be accurate” (Agbese, 1991). This gives no allowance for the media to misinform or mis-educate the public. Also in response to President Jefferson's comment on newspapers and government, an American John Norwell wrote that “the man who never looks into a newspaper is better informed than he who read them; in as much as he who knows nothing is nearer to truth than he whose mind is filled with falsehood and errors” (Agbese, 1991).

Babran and Ahadzadeh (2010) submit that if the machinery of the media fails to observe ethical principles and standards this vehicle of communication will become a destructive tool against humanity. Thus, observing media ethics will promote peace and national security. Therefore, the press has the right to ensure that only professional journalists make decisions concerning what is published in papers.

Similarly, since the public has the right to know, accurate, balanced and fair reporting should be the hallmark of the press. The press owes society the responsibility of promoting unity and decency. Media practitioners should refrain from using offensive or vulgar language as well as avoiding statements or reference to people's tribe, sex, religion and other mental or physical handicaps. Thus, applying the principles of media ethics will assist journalists to do the best job possible thereby providing a mandate to act independently and courageously when seeking and pursuing the truth (United States Department of State, 2010).

National Security

Ekoko (2004) has classified the definitions of national security into two broad groups. “The first is the military/strategic concept of security and the second is, non-strategic socio-economic.” Quoting the Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, he eventually defines security as “the ability of a nation to protect its internal values from external threat” (p.13). It is in the light of this definition that Al-Mashat (as cited in Ekoko, 2000) submits that national security transcends territorial defence and should focus on the physical, social and psychological quality of life of a society and its members, both in the domestic setting and within the larger regional and global setting.

According to Ali (2013) national security means the protection of the lives, rights, dignity and property of citizens. It also means the protection of resources, cultural integrity, territory, sovereignty and lawful institutions of a country. The aim of national security is to secure the just and equitable living conditions for all the citizens of the country.

Thus, the primary objectives of national security are: to strengthen the Federal Republic of Nigeria, to advance her interest and objectives, to contain instability, control crime, eliminate corruption, enhance genuine development progress and growth, improve the welfare and wellbeing and quality of life of every citizen (Obasanjo as cited in Ali 2013). From the foregoing, it is clear that the main index of national security is the maintenance of values within territorial boundaries i.e. safeguarding the internal working systems of a nation.

Peace

There are multiple definitions and perspectives in the understanding and definition of peace. The word peace conjures images of harmony and bliss in psychological, social and political sense (Pate and Dauda, 2015). These images seem to conflict with the reality of a chaotic and non-harmonious world. Hence, Peace is seen as the absence of war, violence or conflict.

According to Francis (2008) peace is the absence of war, fear, violence, conflict, suffering, and relates to peaceful coexistence, justice, development, tolerance and respect in the society. In the same vein, Rowell (2016) define peace as a process involving increasing development in societies and thereby minimizing conflict nationally and internationally. This means that for societies to exist peace is importantly a requisite and the absence of it is not desired at any level.

Galtung (as cited in Tilahun, 2015)) have categorized peace into positive and negative peace. Negative peace is the absence of violence, war, fear and conflict at the individual, national and international levels while positive peace is the integration of human society via the absence of unjust structures, unequal relationships and inner peace.

The Nigerian mass media disseminate messages on aspects of violence and 'peacelessness' that pervades the society at different levels. These messages have negative effect and hence journalists should emphasize messages that promote peace and national security. As Popoola (2015), Pate and Dauda (2015) posit that a peace media system is one that successfully minimizes violence and promotes peace for societal development.

Mass Media and Security in Nigeria

Nigeria has witnessed a series of ethno-religious and politically motivated crises from independence to the present democratic dispensation. This has been one of the major causes of the country's political instability and economic challenges. Nwabueze and Ebeze (2013) point out that once the word "insecurity" is mentioned while referring to Nigeria, the first words to come to mind are Boko Haram insurgency, Niger Delta militia, kidnapping, armed robbery, cattle rustling, farmers/herders conflict, political violence and ethno-religious crises among others.

Before the public manifestation of Boko Haram terrorist activities in 2009, Nigeria had been witnessing series of kidnapping of mostly foreign expatriates by militants in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. This constituted palpable insecurity in the south southern region of Nigeria. Nwabueze and Ebeze explain further that, the state of insecurity in Nigeria is made obvious by the alarming trend of anti-social acts prevalent in the nation. These acts particularly those that involve threat to life contributed in creating an alarming state of insecurity in some parts of the country.

Various reasons have been adduced as the root cause of violence across the nation. Among these are the multidimensional, multicultural personality of Nigeria, corruption, poor governance, unemployment, mismanagement of diversity and conflict issues in the country.

In the past, relationship between the military and the media had been marked by periods of distrust particularly during the Buhari Indigbon and the Babaginda Abacha era. But since the return of civil rule in 1999, there has been cordial relationship with the media without harassment and intimidation. With the recent clamp down and seizures of copies of newspapers, the relationship has again suffered major setback, indeed reminding us of the “dark past” of the military and obnoxious decree 4 of 1984. The media have increasingly become important parties in the fight against insurgents because of the growing importance of information management in warfare.

The mass media, particularly the press has undergone some transformation in recent years. These developments cannot be under estimated, from 24 hours rolling news stations, on-line media platforms and websites the Nigerian discerning public and indeed the world has greater sources of information more than ever before. Therefore the military and the media must build an enduring partnership and consensus to address the new realities of war reporting in the interest of national security (Orvwuje, 2015).

The need for emphasis on conflict and terrorism reporting in the interest of the public is essential to any discussion on the role of media in combating insecurity in Nigeria. The media have been accused of contributing to worsening the state of insecurity and conflicts in Nigeria due to reportage primarily aimed at maximizing profit and increasing audience base.

After an analysis of media coverage of diversity and conflict issues by various scholars, Pate and Dauda (2015, p. 219-220) listed the following as common practices adopted by the media which tend to contribute negatively to crises situations as follows: “selective reporting of prejudicial stereotypes about groups and individuals;” “reporting inter group conflicts out of their fundamental sociological, economic, political and other contexts;” “shallow and episodic coverage;” “total blackout on some groups, individuals or communities;” “use of inflammatory, misleading and sensational headlines to attract sales;” “publishing inflammatory statements against some people or groups as letters to the editor;” “attributing

statements by individuals to groups making generalized statements not supported facts,” etc. These are activities that the media need to desist from to make meaningful impact in combating insecurity in Nigeria; otherwise the mass media will continue to be seen as fueling insecurity.

Challenges of the Mass Media in National Security

The mass media are tools of societal development. Governments can hardly survive without effective use of the mass media. The role of media in Nigeria's national security is very critical. In fact, they are vital components in the arena of national security. Ali (2013) explains that the media function as watchdogs of the society capable of blowing the whistle to call attention to serious national issues. This implies a clear recognition of the fact that the mass media play a crucial role on issues of national security.

The power of the media to decide what the people should read, see or hear has never been in doubt. What has been in the centre of controversy is the capacity of those in whose hands reside such enormous powers to use that power ethically and judiciously in the public interest. Media professionals have the options to use the power of media instruments in their hands either to serve the nation or indulge in promoting self-interest. The media ought to be objective as it carries out its social responsibility functions. But the failure of many journalists to abide by the professional code of ethics which emphasizes accuracy, trustworthiness, balance, thoroughness, and significance have led to the perception that many media organizations tend to raise sensitive issues leading to insecurity in the nation instead of concentrating towards a culture of peace and national security (Pate and Dauda, 2015).

Issues that affect the general well being of the people of the country but which can cause disaffection and disunity should be de-emphasized or played down by the mass media. The reverse has been the case in many Nigerian publications wishing to make quick sales on the platform of sensationalism and scoops (Okon, 2013).

Udejah (2004) illuminates that the existence of a state organ capable of persuasive power under the monopoly of the political elites led to the use and misuse of such powers for partisan ends. Ibagere (2010) also observes that those who hold and operate the apparatus of power manipulate the law to serve their interests so that the mass media become seen as acting to negate national security, which is equated with their personal safety.

Political elites sought the establishment and operation of the regional and state broadcast stations primarily for self-aggrandizement rather than for common interest, and often to partisan objectives masquerading for national interest.

Akinwale (2010) lends credence to Udejah's assertion when he explains that “press organizations which are expected to promote democracy and be promoted by democracy, may also be deployed to protect elite interests to the detriment of the larger society” (p.50). Olayiwola (1991) also observes that this situation (of partisan and regional press) helped in the intensification of old ethnic antagonisms and the atmosphere of political communication seethed with bitter rivalry and enmity.

The press openly supported one political party against another (during the second and even the fourth republic), and fuelled the embers of tribalism, sensationalism, and ethnic chauvinism, all of which culminated in fragmentation and disintegration that again threatened the unity and stability of the Nigerian state. In situations where the mass media are used as tools for the promotion of sectional interests, rather than for the promotion of national unity, peace, development and integration, the rate of crimes and insecurity will increase tremendously on a daily basis.

The use of mass media for the solidification of ethnic and religious sentiments result to the political and economic instability of the country, thereby stunting national development. Ali (2013) supports this assertion when he notes that in recent times the Nigerian media tended to pose inherent dangers to national security in connection with politics, religion, ethnicity, power and revenue sharing which are crucial to a stable and enduring democracy.

On the political sphere, newsmen are expected to report about the activities of the politicians and are expected to feed the public with objective information. The newsmen are expected to nose around for information beyond the ovation at political rallies. Mass media are expected to reflect balanced views of the opposing party. But most media houses do focus attention mostly on the ruling and bigger parties to the detriment of the smaller ones.

Although politicians employ pressmen to give them publicity, the pressmen are expected by the members of the public to do what is right. The mass media could constitute threats to security where they collaborate with the political and bourgeoisie class to further marginalize and exploit the citizenry. This causes serious problems of poverty, illiteracy, ignorance, diseases, which have brought about the incidence of armed robbery and other violent crimes, youth militarism, ethnic, chauvinism, religious bigotry. In a democratic society, the media have a responsibility to subject political leaders and security agencies to public scrutiny and to question their policies and competences. It is important, therefore, that the media and the security agencies work together to educate the public, question government about security policies, and hold leaders to account. Independent and socially responsible media facilitate democratic governance. The media can help expose wrongdoings, identify policy alternatives and enable a society to make informed choices about contending issues.

Another major obstacle to effective oversight of the security sector is lack of transparency and restrictions placed on the reporting of the activities, budgets and expenditures of the security apparatus. *Okon (2013) found that some government officials, in the guise of national security, overtly classify information bits that ought not to be classified.* The media, along with independent civil society actors can play vital roles in monitoring security institutions and therefore, helping to ensure that they are effective and accountable. Mass media are vital elements in shaping public debate on security policy and decision-making. They have the capability of educating the general public to follow politics and policies.

Other challenges the Nigerian journalists face in performing their functions vis-à-vis the security sector include beating tight deadlines, weak resource base, poor infrastructural facilities and inadequate security cover among a host of others (Pate and Dauda, 2015). These problems compel the journalists to rely on incomplete sources which are not subjected to thorough indept and investigative reporting.

Conclusion

When media expose wrongdoing or misconduct, they function as watchdogs and mechanisms of promoting accountability in governance. Beyond the watchdog function, the media has an ethical, moral and professional obligation to provide the public with honest, accurate, objective, neutral and reliable reporting that does not deliberately distort or suppress information. Such information *must also be backed by a compelling need to reveal it in an ethical manner in contradistinction to wanton disregard.* This will foster peace and unity for national security in the society thereby upholding the media's social responsibility role.

By presenting accurate, balanced and timely information on issues of interest to the society, journalists help citizens in making informed decisions concerning who governs them and how they are governed. Journalism provides channels of communication in the society, helping to educate, inform, and exchange information between the public and its leaders.

Recommendations

As noted earlier, journalists encounter several challenges in reporting security-related issues and performing their watchdog function. Journalists need some measures of protection so that they are not unjustly accused of libel, sued or imprisoned for “insulting top government officials and high-profiled politicians” when they investigate and bring to limelight, the corrupt practices of these individuals.

Watchdog journalism also requires that the media should enjoy economic independence and freedom; heavy reliance by a media outlet on state-funded advertising is a source of leverage that can be used to stifle critical reporting. While the obstacles and challenges to producing accurate, balanced and timely reports are greater in the security field than in

others, so too are the potential costs of failure. Factors such as ownership control, commercialization, ethnicity, religion, legal constraints, lack of press freedom, politicization and monetization of the activities of the media, among others, impede the Nigerian media's expected role in national security.

To enhance media's role in national security, security operatives should work in collaboration with media practitioners as watchdogs. The media should rise to their expectation and use their powers judiciously or else national security will continue to be threatened. Journalists ought to feed the audience with information that can persuade and influence their attitudes towards promoting peace and development in the society.

Mass media and the general public must rise to the challenge of combating the rising security challenges in Nigeria. Both parties should embark on communication based approaches that would effectively stigmatize such acts in the society. Mass media should always engage in investigative journalism for public good and peace. While the journalists and other media workers are urged to engage in responsible journalism committed towards discouraging the acts of terrorism in the nation, the public should step-up the use of citizens or civic journalism through the mass media as a way of complementing media workers' role in exposing and combating insecurity in the country. *Journalists should also develop checklists that will ensure that national security reports must predominantly be devoid of technical and location details that are capable of putting lives and programmes in jeopardy.*

In addition, the welfare of journalists should be given serious attention, especially the provision of insurance package, which would encourage them to engage in dare-devil conflict reporting in the interest of the public. Regular workshops on conflict reporting, journalism ethics, investigative journalism, mass media in a multi-cultural society, reporting terrorism, professionalism in journalism, among other topics are essential to continually keep media workers abreast with trends in mass media use in combating insecurity in Nigeria.

This would ensure that the mass media are not used to worsen the problem of insecurity due to lack of knowledge on how to handle this specialized journalism area (Nwabueze and Ebeze, 2013). As Olayiwola (2013) observes, the media should take cognizance of the fact that security is not just about the Army, the Navy, the Air force, the Police, the Customs, the Immigration, and so on, but also take into account the whole country's socio-political and economic systems, researches and all activities that go into normal civilian life.

The mass media should also cover the totality of the security sector and security community, non-statutory security institutions and civil societies, as well as the internal and international processes that are germane to security and insecurity issues including the major aspects of regionalization and globalization of insecurity.

Since the major aim of information dissemination is to inform and improve the people better therefore, gatekeepers must abide by the rule of law and the established ethics guiding the profession, as media ethics are paramount in the process of national security and peace building.

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