

Awareness and Utilisation of the Services of International Press Freedom and Journalists' Safety Organisations among Practitioners in Kano State, Nigeria

Ibrahim Siraj Ph.D

Department of Mass Communication

Faculty of Communication

Bayero University, Kano, Nigeria

isiraj.mac@buk.edu.ng, adhamai@yahoo.com

Abstract

Journalists globally are increasingly becoming an engendered group as they are confronted with a variety of safety challenges. This has made safety and protection a necessity for journalists as well as the establishment of such organisations as Reporters Without Borders (RSF), Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), International Federation for Journalists (IFJ) and International Press Institute (IPI) among others saddled with the task of promoting press freedom and ensuring the safety of journalists all over the world. Considering the increasing safety concerns for journalists in Nigeria, this article examines the awareness of journalists about international safety organisations and the utilisation of their services by Journalists in Kano State. The objectives of the study are to examine whether journalists in Kano are aware of international press freedom and safety organisations and whether they utilise their services. A survey of 109 journalists in Kano reveals a considerable level of awareness among journalists yet with majority of them not utilising the services rendered by these global bodies. The paper concludes that majority of journalists surveyed are aware of the international press freedom and safety organisations. However, there are more of them that do not utilise the services of the international organisations. Therefore, the study recommends that NUJ and the journalists who are aware should, through roundtable discussions and workshops, enlighten their colleagues about the organisations and what they have to offer. Similar effort should be made by NUJ and members who utilise the services of the organisations to guide those who don't utilise those services to do so when they encounter safety challenges.

Keywords: Awareness, utilisation, protection, journalists, international safety organisations

Introduction

The safety of journalists is a crucial issue globally as they continue to become an endangered group due to the numerous risks they face while going about their journalistic duties. This happens mostly while reporting on sensitive topics, conflicts, uncovering corruption or trying to expose powerful corrupt entities (RSF, 2017). Journalists find themselves more at risk when reporting particularly from regions where press freedom is limited or under threat.

According to Reporters Without Borders (RSF) (2017), high-risk assignments for journalists mean working in conditions where the likelihood of physical harm (death, injury or serious illness) is significantly higher than normal. These include hostile environments such as dictatorships, conflict zones, insurgency or high crime and also regions of extreme climate or terrain (jungle, polar regions, desert). There are also dangerous events such as violent demonstrations, riots, terrorist attacks, or chemical, biological or nuclear accidents as well as natural disasters (earthquakes, hurricanes, floods) and pandemics. High-risk activities such as investigations into terrorist groups, mafias or violent extremists and/or working undercover.

Safety is a concern for journalists globally but more worrisome in areas where there are threats to freedom of the press and dangerous places where authorities and individual clamp down on journalist to suppress their activities. It has taken the front burner position in all discourse about press freedom and working conditions of journalists due largely to the fact that safety of journalists has been on the decline across the continent (Yusuf, 2013, CIPESA, 2022). When IPI reported in 2013 that an unprecedented figure of 133 journalists were killed the previous year, the whole world was shocked. The figure was devastating as it was the highest ever recorded (Yusuf, 2013). The situation continued to deteriorate globally with disturbing number of extensive violations of press freedom and attacks on journalists reported on yearly basis. According to figures compiled by the International News Safety Institute (INSI), 111 media workers were killed in 2015 and 115 in 2016. Some of the worst death tolls were recorded earlier in the century. In 2006, 168 journalists lost their lives, many of them killed when working in Iraq while in 2007, a particularly bad year for reporters, 172 media workers died (Cottle, 2017).

In Africa, the situation looks similar if not worse. According to UNESCO (2022) citing World Press Freedom Index 2021, the state of journalists' safety in 23 of 48 African countries assessed is classified as bad or very bad. Prasad's (2021) IPI Report documents deteriorating conditions of journalists' safety and

press freedom from different parts of the African continent within a period of three years from 2019 to 2021. The report documents extensive violations arising from 2021 Uganda's general elections, Mozambique's and Zimbabwe's arrest and expulsion of journalists some of whom went missing, Tanzania's crack down of independent media ahead of 2020 elections, Burundi's jailing of journalists for reporting a violent incident on the border with DR Congo as well as Zambia's enactment of a controversial cyber security law that is likely to have a devastating impact on press freedom.

Also documented were reports of journalists who paid the supreme price. For instance, in August 2021, two journalists were brutally killed in the span of a week in Kivu and Ituri regions of the Democratic Republic of the Congo by armed rebel groups (IPI, 2021). A journalist named Ahmed Hussein-Suale was shot dead in Ghana's capital Accra in 2019. Altogether, IPI's Death Watch suggests that 25 journalists have been killed in targeted attacks in sub-Saharan Africa within five years, with seven journalists losing their lives in the last eight months of 2021 alone.

The attempt to regulate social media and the cyberspace has in many countries introduced a dimension of threat with the criminalization of some areas of journalistic practices through the attempted adoption of cybercrime laws prohibiting the publication of news deemed to threaten national security such as in Kenya, Ethiopia and Tanzania. As a consequence, not less than 75 journalists have been detained or imprisoned in different countries. This is in addition to aggravated attacks on individual journalists including forced disappearance and extra-judicial killing as reported in such countries as Algeria, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, DR Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, Libya, Morocco, Rwanda and Somalia (CIPESA, 2022).

The increase in global threat to journalists' safety has brought to the fore the role of international organisations such as RSF, CPJ and IPI established to protect and promote the safety of journalists worldwide. Nigeria like every other country is not immune from the challenge given recent reports of intimidation of journalist by state actors, political groups, individuals and criminal organisations linked to the various conflicts in the country – banditry, insurgency, kidnapping, crude oil theft, political thuggery, blind loyalty, etc. Journalist in every part of Nigeria have stories to tell about threats experienced in the course of their duties across the country, Kano inclusive (CPJ, 2021).

Nevertheless, in spite of the safety challenges, these global journalist safety and protection bodies offer services to protect journalists even in Nigeria. For instance, the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) documented the murder

of several Nigerian journalists in recent years, highlighting the dangerous environment they work in. The CPJ has also reported on issues such as censorship, online surveillance and impunity or crimes against journalists in Nigeria (CPJ, 2021).

Aside issuing regular reports, RSF's and CPJ's major involvement in Nigeria was noticed in the case of journalist Jones Abiri's arrest and detention. Mr Abiri, the publisher and editor-in-chief of the Weekly Source newspaper in Nigeria's Bayelsa State, was arrested by Nigeria's Department of State Services (DSS) in July 2016 and was held incommunicado for over two years without trial. His arrest was widely condemned by local and international press freedom organisations including RSF and CPJ who supported efforts to secure his freedom. That is to suggest that these organisations are present and active in Nigeria.

Observably, Kano State has its own share of these challenges. In 2018, *Daily Nigerian*, an online newspaper, published some highly scandalous videos of the then State governor pocketing what appeared to be straps of dollars allegedly received as bribe from contactors executing various projects in the State. Consequently, Jaafar Jaafar, the publisher of the online newspaper had to flee the country and seek asylum in the UK as a result of perceived threats to his safety. There could be several of such other cases of journalists losing their jobs or threatened that might have gone unreported. Recently, two prominent broadcast journalists Yakubu Musa Fagge and Ibrahim Ishaq Rano had to resign from their respective radio stations to establish independent shows online reaching their audiences through social media platforms such as YouTube, Facebook, Instagram and TikTok. In addition to underscoring how journalists could leverage technology, the development has raised question about journalistic freedom and independence in some of the prominent radio stations in the State.

However, it remains unclear whether journalists in Kano are aware of the services rendered by global journalist safety organisations and their utilisation. This is significant considering the fact that safety challenges emanating from frequent political tensions and other matters could put journalists in this Northern Nigeria's most populous State at risk. Therefore, this study examines the awareness and utilisation, among journalists in Kano, of the services of international organisations saddled with the responsibility of promoting safety and protection of journalists globally. The study sets to answer the following research questions:

1. Are journalists in Kano State aware of international press freedom and safety organisations?
2. Which international press freedom and safety organisations are Journalists in Kano most aware of?
3. Do Journalists in Kano utilise the services of International press freedom and safety organisations?

Literature Review

The Nigerian journalism landscape is comprised of various media outlets that come together to form a vibrant press tradition. Major national newspapers – mostly privately owned – are complimented by TV channels with nationwide appeal to provide citizens with news and information they need as well as holding government accountable. There is also a handful of online news channels that function to make the news landscape robust and dynamic.

Journalists' Safety and Protection Issues in Nigeria

As with most parts of Africa, Nigerian journalists also face various forms of safety challenges and professional threats which generally make the critical issue of safety an immense concern. Safety challenges faced by journalists include physical threats, legal challenges, psychological stress as well as economic pressures, all of which could affect press freedom and impede the journalists' ability to report accurately and professionally. A good number of journalists in Nigeria have been assaulted, arrested or killed while many have had their rights to freedom of expression violated (Okpodu, 2022).

According to Amnesty International (2023), Nigeria has seen numerous cases of attacks, harassment and even killings of journalists over the years as there were sanctions against the media as well as criminal charges against journalists for alleged defamation. Specifically, Amnesty International mentions the names of Agba Jalingo, Gidado Yushau, Alfred Olufemi, Benedict Uwalaka and Omoyole Sowore as journalists who suffered various forms of rights violation from bogus criminal charges, conviction over alleged conspiracy and physical assault. Of particular concern are female journalists who might not have experienced physical assault and intimidation at the level of their male counterparts but have been grappling with various forms of safety threats such as utter disrespect, sexual harassment and online attacks (MFWA, 2022).

International Press Freedom and Safety Organisations Services

International safety organisations are organisations established with the aim of ensuring journalists' safety and their protection globally. With

headquarters mostly in Europe and the US, these organisations have a global mandate of advocating for press freedom, and protection of journalists by undertaking a number of common tasks such as advocacy, monitoring and reporting, provision of legal support, to mention but a few. Prominent among these bodies are Reporters Without Borders, also known as Reporters Sans Frontières (RSF) in French, Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), the International Press Institute (IPI), International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) and International News Safety Institute (INSI).

Founded mostly by groups of journalists, editors, media executives and activists, global press freedom and safety organisations have a common mandate to promote and advocate press freedom and defend the rights of journalists worldwide. To execute this mandate, the organisations have established presence in most continents of the world and are offering various kinds and support for journalists. These include defending imprisoned or persecuted journalists and media personnel, exposing mistreatment and torture of journalists, providing financial aid for struggling media personnel or companies, promotes journalists' safety particularly in war zones, protecting the rights of journalists to report the news safely, freely and without fear of reprisal, fostering international unity and solidarity among journalists as well as enhancing awareness of the risks that comes with journalistic endeavours within conflict zones or under authoritarian regimes and other unstable environments. (OSCE Safety of Journalists Guide book, 2012; Harcup, 2014; IPI Media, 2016; PEN America, 2020 and Freedom House, 2021)

Their mode of operations varies from compilation of research to advocacy, awareness creation on media freedom, fact-finding missions to document violations of press freedom, reporting on violations of press freedom especially in repressive countries, conflict zones, and even the so-called established democracies, advocacy, raising awareness on media freedom. The CPJ, on its part, consists of about forty experts around the world who work anytime press freedom violations occur to mobilize a network of correspondents to report and take action on behalf of those targeted. Upon obtaining evidence of transgression, organisations like RSF pressure governments through publicity campaigns and protest letters. They also publish several yearly reports that include rankings of countries around the world by their degree of press freedom. In 2006 and 2015, RSF in particular played an important role in getting the United Nations Security Council to vote resolutions 1738 and 2222 on the protection of journalists in armed conflicts henceforth it now campaigns for improvements in the implementation of international law among member nations of the UN. The

International News Safety Institute has as its such major media organisations as BBC, ABC News, AFP, Aljazeera, Bloomberg, CNN, Reuters etc. (<https://newssafety.org/what-we-do>).

The major criticism of these international journalism bodies has to do with source of funding and the potential for conflict of interest as well as accusation of disproportionately focusing on certain countries or regions while neglecting others. For instance, critics argue that RSF's annual press freedom index and advocacy efforts may reflect biases or political agenda leading to inconsistencies in its reporting and advocacy priorities (Freedom House, 2021). Its source of funding also presents a potential conflict of interest as a result of its reliance on donations from governments, corporations and wealthy individuals, suggesting influence that could compromise its independence and credibility (PEN America, 2020). RSF's methodology for assessing press freedom has equally been questioned by some researchers and media scholars. Critics argue that the organization's ranking criteria and data collection methods may lack transparency and rigour, potentially undermining the credibility of its press freedom index (Columbia Journalism Review, 2019). These criticisms and controversies, however, reflect broader debates about the role of such organisations in promoting press freedom and the challenges they face in navigating political, financial, and methodological complexities.

Awareness of International Press Freedom and Safety Organisations

There exists a large quantum of literature on journalists' safety and press freedom though largely in the form of reports, handbooks, guides or guidelines as well as assessment of state of press freedom in different corners of the world. Most of these are released by the global safety organisations themselves as part of their routine reporting and advocacy activities (OSCE, 2012; IPI Media, 2016; IMS, 2017; Posetti, 2017, RSF, 2017; Horsley, 2020; CIPESA, 2022; MFWA, 2022; etc.).

Carlsson and Poyhtari's *The Assault on Journalism* represents a major attempt to compile a compendium of articles and contributions by scholars and professionals on a wide range of issues having to do with safety and press freedom. Articles start with the sad development of journalists killing and their responsibility to report and go ahead to detail the roles of some key actors – UNESCO and the UN in particular – who contributed towards bringing the issue of journalists' safety to the fore and setting its research agenda. The edited work contains several research articles examining the state of journalistic safety in many countries and continents of the world. This includes Afghanistan, India

Pakistan, Iran, Turkey and Philippines in Asia; Colombia and Mexico in Latin and North America respectively; Nigeria in Africa; as well as the more developed Australia and Council of Europe Member States.

Aspects of safety covered include gender, sports journalism, photography, citizen journalism, news gathering, digital journalism, self-censorship, psychological safety, armed conflicts such as Boko Haram and the war in Afghanistan, etc.

In a recent study on safety of journalists in Ghana, Adjin-Tettey and Braimah found that verbal abuse was the predominant violation suffered by journalists in Ghana followed by intimidation, physical abuse, threats and online trolling among others. According to the study more than 53% of the perpetrators of violations against journalists are state actors followed by non-state actors who constituted the remaining. The study recommends the utilisation of appropriate state institutions, such as the security services and the judiciary, to safeguard the security and safety of journalists and media organisations by investigating documented incidences of journalist abuse.

This study is preceded by Diedong's (2016) study which presents a case of another journalist Donkor who suffered brutality in the hands of Ghanaian police thereby underscoring the degrading experience of physical and other forms of attacks against journalists in Ghana most of which go unpunished and its implications for safeguarding press freedom and the fundamental human rights of people especially given that freedom of the media is guaranteed in the 1992 fourth republican Constitution of Ghana. Several studies have also been conducted on safety of journalists in Nigeria with one of the recent being Okpodu's (2022) work. Through In-depth interview and Focus Group Discussion, the researcher was able to establish that a good number of journalists have been assaulted, arrested or killed while many have had their rights to freedom of expression violated. The study concluded that the issue of safety and protection of journalists in Nigeria must be given adequate concern in view of the rate at which journalists lose their lives in the line of duty.

Other aspects of journalists' safety that attracted researchers' attention include technology and digital age vulnerabilities. For instance, Posetti (2017) has through qualitative interview and panel discussions came with key findings vis-à-vis dangers faced by journalistic sources in the digital age. Some of the findings underscore the importance of preserving legal and regulatory protections for journalists' sources that are increasingly at risk of erosion, restriction and compromise and that source protection laws need to cover journalistic processes and communications with confidential sources – including telephone calls, social

media, messaging apps, and emails – along with published journalism that depends on confidential sources (Posetti, 2017: 18).

Journalists Utilisation of International Press Freedom and Safety Organisations

One observable gap in the safety of journalists' literature is the paucity of studies on journalists' awareness and utilisation of protection by global safety bodies. This is significant in view of the fact in most of the studies conducted in Africa and in Nigeria, there is hardly a mention of any of those organisations being called to action or sought for protection. Even in those cases where these organisations were involved, it is not clear how their involvement started. This raises the question about whether or not journalists are adequately utilising the services of these bodies due to awareness, hence the need for this study.

Methods

The population for this study is 450 journalists registered with the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ), Kano State Chapter. A sample of 109 practicing journalists conveniently responded from the population. A 17-item questionnaire eliciting responses on a wide range of issues having to do with journalistic safety and awareness about global safety bodies was distributed in the form of online Google Form via the NUJ WhatsApp group. All NUJ members in Kano are as well members of that group. This means that although the study targeted practicing members of the NUJ, the questionnaire was distributed through convenience sampling since only volunteering journalists participated. The responses were recorded and automatically computed and presented in charts by the online application. These were later converted into table of simple percentages for analysis and interpretation.

Findings

A total of 109 practicing journalists responded to questionnaires that were administered, retrieved and found usable. It should be noted that some respondents have skipped a few questions thereby resulting in some missing values especially at the initial stage of the data analysis. However, of the 109 respondents, only 73 who reported being aware about international press freedom and safety organisations were factored in the later part of the analysis while the remaining who reported not being aware were isolated. Furthermore, only findings that are relevant to the topic of this study are presented in tabular form, analysed and discussed.

Table. 1. Age of Respondents

Age of respondents	Responses	Percentage
20 - 25	13	12.1
26 - 30	19	17.8
31 - 35	32	29.9
36 - 40	14	13.1
41 and above	29	27.1
Total	107	100

From the table above, 107 respondents out of the 109 retrieved questionnaires responded to the question about their age. Of this number, 32 respondents i.e. 29.9 percent are of the age 31-35. This is followed by 29 respondents representing 27.1 percent who are above 41 years old. Only 12.1 percent (13 respondents) are from the age of 20 to 25 while 17.8 percent (19 respondents) and 13.1 percent (14 respondents) are of the 26 to 30 and 36 to 40 age brackets respectively. The result shows that most of the journalists that took part in the survey are of relatively advanced age and perhaps more experienced. Being of advanced age could perhaps lend credence to responses obtained awareness and utilisation.

Table. 2. Gender of Respondents

Gender	Responses	Percentage
Male	71	65.7
Female	37	34.3
Total	108	100

108 respondents of the 109 respondents mentioned their gender. A vast majority of the respondents i.e. 65.7 percent (71 respondents) are male while 37 respondents representing 34.3 percent are female. This perhaps is a reflection of how the male practitioners have continued to dominate journalism profession in Nigeria. The fact that female journalists also contributed 34.3 percent of the respondents underscores the growing female presence in the profession. Issues of journalistic freedom and awareness about safety organisations are of particular interest to female journalists given their vulnerability to various forms of threats.

Tabl. 3. Years of Journalism Experience of Respondents

Years of journalism practice experience	Responses	Percentage
1 – 5	37	34.3
6 – 10	34	31.5
11 – 15	17	15.7
16 – 20	4	3.7
21 years and above	16	14.8
Total	108	100

On the question about how long the respondents have been in journalism practice, of the 109 respondents, 108 responded to the question. 37 journalists representing 34.3 percent are new entrants into the profession with five years or below while 31.5 percent or 34 journalists have been in journalism practice for 6 to 10 years. 17 journalists representing 15.7 percent have 11 to 15 years whereas 14.8 percent or 16 journalists are the most experienced having practiced journalism for over 21 years. The fact that majority of the respondents have at least six years in journalism practice means they are experienced enough to know about safety organisations.

Table 4. Media Type Affiliation

Media type affiliation	Responses	Percentage
Print	15	14
Broadcast	72	67.3
Online	17	15.9
Freelance	2	1.9
Others	1	0.9
Total	107	100

On the type of media affiliation of the respondents, 107 of them out of the 109. responded among which 72 (representing 67.3 percent) are into broadcasting which is followed by print media with 14 percent or 15 respondents. 17 journalists representing 15.9 percent are working in the online media while only 2 journalists (1.9 percent) are working as freelance. This finding may be as a result of the proliferation, in recent years, of broadcast media especially private

FM radio stations. In Kano, for instance, there are about 30 private FM stations operating and recruiting journalists and media workers. It also points to the growing popularity of online media at the expense of the print media.

Table 5. Awareness of International Press Freedom and Safety Organisations

Awareness about International safety organisations	Responses	Percentage
Aware of international press freedom and safety organisations	73	67.6
Not aware of international press freedom and safety organisations	35	32.4
Total	108	100

On the key question about the respondents' awareness about the activities of international safety organisations, 73 respondents or 67.6 percent are aware while 35 respondents representing 32.4 percent are unaware. This suggests an appreciable level of awareness. Henceforth, only journalists who are aware are treated as valid and competent to participate in the study. This excludes the 35 respondents that are unaware who, by virtue of their lack of awareness, are disqualified.

Table 6. International Press Freedom and Safety Organisations Respondents are Most Aware of

International safety organisations journalists are most aware of	Responses	Percentage
Reporters Without Borders (RSF)	48	65.8
Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ)	13	17.9
International Press Institute (IPI)	5	6.8
International Federation for Journalists (IFJ)	4	5.4
Others	3	4.1
Total	73	100

On the most popular safety organization among the 73 journalists who reported being aware, 48 respondents representing 65.8 percent reported being mostly aware about Reporters Without Borders (RSF) while 13 respondents representing 17.9 percent know most about Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ). The International Press Institute mostly known by 5 respondents or 6.8 percent while International Federation for Journalists (IFJ) is mentioned by 4 respondents or 5.4 percent. 3 respondents are mostly aware of other safety organization. The finding shows that RSF is the most widely known safety

organization among the respondents. This may perhaps not be unconnected with how RSF is frequently mentioned in the news when issues of protecting journalistic rights are reported.

Table 7. Duration of Awareness of International Press Freedom and Safety Organisations

Duration of awareness	Responses	Percentage
1 -5 years	49	66
6 – 10 years	12	17
11 – 15 years	9	12.3
15 – 20 years	1	1.9
21 years and above	2	2.8
Total	73	100

Asked about the length of time the respondents have been aware about international safety organisations, a vast majority of respondents – 49 – representing 66 percent admit being aware for just 1 to 5 years. 12 respondents representing 17 percent know about safety organisations for 6 to 10 years while 12.3 percent or 9 respondents know about them for 11 to 15 years. A respondents (1.9 percent) is aware for as long as 16 to 20 years whereas 2 respondents (2.8 percent) are aware for above 21 years. The result shows that the majority of the respondents do not know about safety organisations for quite a long time. This is perhaps due to the fact that a certain number of the respondents are just starting a career in journalism.

Table 8. Journalists Awareness of the Status of International Press Freedom and Safety Organisations in Kano

How active the organisations are	Responses	Percentage
Actively present	31	42.5
Not actively present	42	57.5
Total	73	100

On the question about the status of the organisations in Kano based on the respondents' awareness, 42 respondents representing 57.5 percent think that international organisations are not actively presence in Kano. Only 31 respondents or 42.5 percent feel that the organisations are actively present. It could be that some of the journalists surveyed only know about the organisations passively through news mention or other channels.

Table 9. Utilisation of the Services of International Press Freedom and Safety Organisations

Utilisation of services by respondents or their colleagues	Responses	Percentage
Utilised	27	37
Not utilised	46	63
Total	73	100

The respondents were further asked if they or their colleagues have ever utilised the services or protection by any international safety organization. 63 percent or 46 respondents answered in the negative whereas 37 percent representing 27 respondents answered in the affirmative. The question was asked in such a manner that a respondent could equally respond based on his knowledge about utilisation by themselves or their colleague. The respondents may likely have included journalists they read about in the news and not necessarily those they might have worked with together. The finding shows low level of utilisation compared to awareness. This may be as a result of lack of willingness, inadequate sensitization and so on.

Discussion of Findings

This study is about journalists' awareness about, and utilisation of, the services of global safety bodies. Three research questions have been raised, thus:

1. Are journalists in Kano State aware of international press freedom and safety organisations?
2. Which international press freedom and safety organisations are Journalists in Kano most aware of?
3. Do Journalists in Kano utilise the services of International press freedom and safety organisations?

Majority of the respondents are within the age bracket of 31 and above. They are mostly male and most of them have practiced journalism for a period of about one to years. These demographic characteristics points to the common perspective that Nigeria has a male-dominated media industry as cited in the works of Christopher (2016). Their years of experience represent another important factor that is likely to determine their awareness and leveraging on these platforms but in this case most of the respondents have only practiced between 1 to 5 years. Based on the findings, it is obvious that journalists in Kano State are generally aware about international safety organisations with a combined 73 out of 109 respondents. Notwithstanding the problem associated

with self-reported responses and the imperative to subject them to a veracity test, it is safe to assume that there is a considerable level of awareness among the surveyed journalists about international free press and safety organisations. This is particularly noteworthy in view of the fact that Kano State has, over the years, shown the potential for violation of the rights of journalist. From the killing of Channels TV correspondents in 2012 to Jaafar Jaafar's saga in 2018, the hitting of journalist by a stray bullet at the Government House in May 2024 and the recent face-off between the State government and the Correspondents Chapel leading the latter to announce a boycott of the former's activities in June 2024, the need for awareness about sources of safety for journalists in Kano cannot be overstressed. Although the study did not seek to understand the circumstances of the respondents' awareness, it could yet be attributable to their interaction with news. Prominent among these organisations are often mentioned in news when reporting about issues relating to journalists' rights or abuses. Their roles are also discussed on such special occasions as the World Press Freedom Day celebrated every year. This is in addition to annual reports released by a good number of the organisations that get widely shared among journalist cycles. All these could serve to increase journalists' awareness.

The organization journalists are most aware of is the RSF, followed by CPJ, IPI and IFJ. This lends credence to the fact that news mention may have largely influenced awareness about the organisations because RSF is arguably the most frequently mentioned. In 2018, for instance, RSF issued statements calling for the release of Jones Abiri's release while condemning his arbitrary detention. It highlighted his case as an example of press freedom violations in Nigeria and urged Nigerian authorities to respect journalists' rights (RSF, 2018). Similarly, CPJ closely monitored Abiri's case and advocated for his release too. The organization documented the circumstances of his arrest and detention, raising concerns about violations of due process and freedom of expression in Nigeria (CPJ, 2018). The involvement of RSF and CPJ in Abiri's case among others could serve to have raised the awareness of journalists about their activities.

Contrary to the assumption that awareness will lead to utilisation of the services of global safety organisations, findings reveal that 63 percent of the respondents have no story to tell about utilisation involving them or their colleagues. This is also in spite of the fact that more than 70 percent have reported experiencing difficult situations in the course of duty. This may also possibly explain why almost 58 percent of the respondents think that the organisations are not actively present in Nigeria. Given the high level of awareness of the

respondents (73), question must then be asked about the factors responsible for the low utilisation of the services of global safety organisations by journalists in Kano. Could it be due to poor sensitization, lack of willingness or inaccessibility? Whatever the case may be, effort must be made to remove all obstacles against utilisation. The global safety organisations are known for their role in advocating for press freedom and defending the rights of journalists in Nigeria and around the world. Their doors must be open and their services should reach every journalist. The gap between awareness and utilisation must be bridged as journalists feel increasingly in need of safety and protection.

Conclusion

Kano State has a large concentration of media organisations especially broadcast media. With well over thirty radio stations and active presence of national and international media organisations, Kano is indeed the hub of journalism in Northern Nigeria. Given the historic and contemporary safety challenges faced by journalists in the State, journalists and media workers are becoming increasingly in need of protection. They need all forms of safety guarantees including against physical, legal, political and economic threats. International safety organisations exist to provide journalists with the needed support and protection to carry out their professional duties, uphold people's the right to freely express themselves and hold government accountable. Based on the findings, the study concludes that majority of journalists surveyed are aware of international press freedom and safety organizations. However, there are more of them who do not utilise the services of the international organisations.

Therefore, the study recommends that NUJ should collaborate with journalists who are aware to enlighten their colleagues about the organizations and what they have to offer through such platforms as roundtable discussions, workshops, seminars, etc. Similar effort should be made by the NUJ and members who utilise the services of the organisations to guide those who don't utilize those services to do so should they encounter safety challenges.

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Author

Ibrahim Siraj Ph.D is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Mass Communication, Bayero University, Kano, Nigeria, where he had his PhD. He specializes in print journalism and its digital transformation and his research interest includes print and new media as well as the historic and contemporary relationship between Islam and the media. On these topics, he has presented lectures and seminars as well as contributed articles to relevant publications. He has attended several local and international conferences and has published a number of scholarly articles.

