

Nigeria: Joining Forces for Human Rights

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Event hears that collaboration between different sectors is a key route to justice.

Nigeria media outlets and civil society organisations (CSOs) need to join forces in order to defend human rights and social justice, according to a recent IWPR roundtable in Abuja.

The event was hosted by the International Centre for Investigative Reporting (ICIR) as part of a Human Rights Accountability Reporting initiative, part of IWPR's 24-month Voices for Change: Africa project. This seeks to build the capacity of journalists and CSOs to create awareness and effective advocacy campaigns around accountability for human rights violations in Nigeria.

As part of this, the project brings together prominent Nigerian media houses and CSOs to collaborate on investigative reporting and advocacy. So far, three journalists and three CSOs have been awarded project funds to develop their own initiatives on themes including gender violence and social justice.

Tochukwu Ohazuruike is a legal and documentation director at the Independent Service Delivery Monitoring Group (ISDMG).

Speaking at the event's first roundtable, he warned that domestic news organisations and NGOs alike were failing to properly document human rights issue in Nigeria.

"Virtually all we hear today concerning expositions of human rights violations by state actors in Nigeria is from Amnesty International, a foreign organisation, and citizen journalists," he said. "Media and civil society must wake up before citizen journalism takes them out of the equation."

These sectors needed to work together, Ohazuruike continued, adding, "There can be successful partnerships between civil society and media for the exposition, advocacy and reporting of human rights violations.

"Access to justice projects can be carried out by civil society and reports aired free or subsidised by the media. That partnership can work."

Lekan Otufodunrin, executive director of the Media Career Development Network, also advised participating organisations to share insights, experiences and resources.

"That kind of relationship will help on both sides," he said, emphasising that NGOs could help journalists with expertise and data while also benefiting from the media's investigative skills and platforms.

The January 24, 2019 event included representatives from the Premium Times, TheCable, Daily Trust, The Guardian, Nigeria Info FM, Punch Newspaper and the ICIR.

The CSO group included Committee for the Defence of Human Rights (CDHR), Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA Nigeria), Sexual Offences Awareness & Victims Rehabilitation Initiative (SOAR), Cleen Foundation, Connected Development and the Centre for Social Justice.

As well as two previous round tables held last year, journalists and civil society participants have also attended trainings on how to conduct investigations and advocacy campaigns.

Location: [Nigeria](#)

Topic: [Accountability](#)

[Rights](#)

[Reporting](#)

[Civil society](#)

Focus: [Project Highlight](#)

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