Nigerian Newspaper Coverage of Terror Tactics of Militants in the wake of the Niger Delta Crisis

NWANKPA, Nduka N., PhD
Department of Mass Communication
Obong University, Obong Ntak, AkwaIbom State, Nigeria

Abstract

Militants fighting in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria unleashed terror in the country between 2006 and 2009 in a fierce battle for resource control. Consequently, content analysis was employed to investigate how four Nigerian newspapers (the *THISDAY*, *The Guardian*, the *Vanguard* and *The Sun*) covered the terror tactics adopted by these militants in pursuit of their cause. The systematic sampling technique was adopted. The pattern of coverage indicated that kidnapping was the most reported form of terror tactics, followed by vandalism of oil facilities and oil bunkering. Killings ranked third. Coverage spiked in 2006, suggesting it could have been the worst year for Nigeria in the period studied. Findings suggested that a group not formally designated as "terrorist" can commit acts of terror in such a horrific scale for which terrorist organisations are known for. Summed up, results indicated that terror had far-reaching consequences for Nigeria. Consequently, the researcher recommended that in times of terror, journalists chose carefully the angle to mirror and the scale to project, while giving prominence to the widespread public condemnation that always trails such acts and efforts by the authorities to restore normal life again after terror merchants have done their evil.

Keywords: Militancy, Terrorism, Newspaper Coverage, Niger Delta, Nigeria