

## THE ROLE OF THE MEDIA IN GOVERNANCE

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### **Abstract**

*In the international political system, the media is an essential tool for governance, information dissemination and management. It not only helps in remolding the character and policies of those in authority and power, but also acts as a potential medium through which global and states conflicts could be generated, escalated and prolonged. Consequently, this paper is of the view that the influence and control of the media on the three entities of a state such as the government, the population, and the international community, had over the years generated either positive or negative reactions on an existing government. Conversely, the paper is also of the view, that the influences and controls of governments on the media hitherto, militates against the effectiveness, objectivity and the authenticity of media publications and information dissemination. This is because, the media over the years has helped the decision makers, civil society groups, the masses and the non-state actors, to take decisive steps or actions on critical issues. However, this paper intends to evaluate the influence of governments on the media; how information disseminations are hindered by governments; and how the role of the media, has helped to shape public opinion, while using the Arab Spring as a case note. In carrying out this research, secondary sources such as news papers, journals from the internet, and personal interviews were used, and data analyzed using descriptive methods. The result findings however show that in spite of the various strategic roles played by the media, when biased, its publicities tarnish the image of their targeted entity. On the other hand, most journalists, who never compromised the integrity of their profession with any government, have met severe persecutions on the course of doing moral justice to their profession. Finally, the recommendations are centered on the need for objectivity, credibility and authenticity in media publicities; and the need for absolute independence of the media from governmental controls and interferences.*

**Keywords:** *Governance, Media, journalist, Media publicity*

### INTRODUCTION

The acceptance of information at our disposal depends on the objectivity, the credibility of the sources of information and the authenticity of such information. The media either electronic or

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print helps to generate public sentiments and opinion on non people oriented government policies, appointments, electoral misconducts, domestic and foreign policies. As such, the way and manner such information are gathered, controlled, manipulated and managed, must be very objective and well guided, in order not to mislead the targeted entities, and generate unnecessary tensions both nationally and internationally (Andre, 1967)

However, this paper examines the role of the media in governance; while stressing the drives and motives that propel the press to take a stand in either exposing the ills in governments such as illegal democratic protocols, misappropriation of public funds, the illegalities in governmental political, economic and judicial public policies, and the illegitimacy of the existence of such government; or the window dressing of the inadequacies in the political, economic and social policies of any government through an intensive propaganda. Consequently, the various strategic roles the media plays in remolding and rebranding the menace of the international and domestic politics, biases, and misconceptions between state governments; and between governments and the masses, can never be over emphasized. As such, the drive to promote foreign and domestic policies; spread political and religious ideologies, have been the rationale behind the motivations and the interests of the media both electronic and print (Roseau, 1972).

In addition, the quest to promote a defaced and illegitimate government through propaganda, and manipulate the flow of information through the modern communication network, for the benefit of the position they stand, becomes their personal drive. However, this paper is of the view that the essence of the rights to freedom of expression is to guarantee the efficiency and accuracy of information disseminations. It also argues that through the media, international frictions and the misinterpretation of states foreign policies, have been either reduced or magnified; and the diplomatic ties of sovereign nations strained or strengthened. On the other hand, the media has been the powerful medium through which the spontaneous reactions and the collective responses of the people against an illegitimate government and its policies are instigated. A typical scenario was when the present president of United States Donald Trump during his campaign, and after he won the election; accused the CNN of bias in its reportage. It's unarguably correct that the media houses both electronics and print, are the power houses of information and based on that fact, what the people are fed with, determines the fate of the existing government (Palmer & Perkins, 2007).

To further buttress its arguments, the theoretical analysis for this paper was drawn from the Social Constructivism theory, as postulated by a theorist (Wendt 1992), who attempted to explain the actions taken by states and other major state actors like the media, as well as the identities that guide these states and its actors; he noted that "anarchy is what states make out of it". In order words, if the state system is dominated by states and other state actors, who see anarchy as a life or death situation, then the system will be littered with chaos. In the same vein,

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the functionalist approach as postulated by Immanuel Wallenstein, asserted that the “Society and Organizations function so that each individual and group plays a specific role just like the organs of the body” (Kerlinger, 1973).

The literature reviews were centered mainly on the accounts of renowned authors on Arab Spring which is the major case note the paper has deployed ; and the accounts of cable networks such as Aljazeera/CNN; Chamski, 2011; Bamyeh, 2012; Aouragh, 2011; Beinin, 2012; Joel, 2012; Brook, 2012; Bodaszyski, 2013; Bellochi, 2012 and Barnarth, 2014. They all accounted on the major roles played by the media that triggered and spread the Arab Spring. The objective of this paper is, to review the actions taken by governments to control and interfere in the information dissemination of the media and consequently, hinder the effectiveness and credibility in their reportage. Also, emphasis will be laid on the strategic roles played by the press to strain or strengthen the relations between an existing government and the masses; and how the media publications can create spontaneous reactions by the people, political oppositions and the international community. Consequently, this paper is of the opinion, that the excessive controls and interferences of governments on the media, militate against its transparency and objectivities in its information disseminations; and that the role of the media would be more proactive in its reportage when the media is absolutely independent. Consequently, it intends to access the influence of the media on public opinion; access the general role of the media; and review a brief conceptual analysis on the media as the main tool for the spread of Arab Spring; draws its conclusion, and its recommendations which proposes the need for the freedom of the media from governmental controls and interferences; and the need for an authentic, unbiased, and credible dissemination of information.

#### **A GENERAL ASSESSMENT ON THE ROLE OF THE MEDIA**

The role of the media both print and electronic such as the news paper, television, radio, and the social media such as face book, twitter, telecommunication and the internet; contribute to the shaping of public opinion both nationally and internationally either in favor or disfavor of those in authority. Through these mediums, global and civil wars have been triggered or controlled, escalated and also deescalated. Whichever way, depends on the rationale behind the motives of the medium involved. With the development of telecommunication net-works, international frictions and the misinterpretation of states foreign policies, have been reduced or magnified; and the diplomatic ties between states strained or strengthened; due to the spread of information. However, the management and spread of information depends on the personality of the individual receiving or disseminating the information. That is why misinformation has often generated misperceptions between governments; and between governments and the governed (Andre, 1967).

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On the other hand, the media has been the medium through which the spontaneous and collective responses of the people against constituted authority in any society are instigated. A typical example is the mobilization and the spread of Arab spring. Also, political opponents have often used the press as a tool for propaganda in order to create chaos and anarchy in the society. This situation was recorded in the recently held American Presidential election, where the then presidential candidate Donald Trump, accused CNN of bias and unfounded reportage, even to the extent of banning CNN from reporting any further news from the White House after he won the election for what he tagged, “fake news”. In the same vein, the Turkish president Endogan, has, imprisoned some journalists for allegedly instigating the recent coup plotted against him (CNN, 2017).

There were other scenarios where the Egyptian president had on two occasions, imprisoned journalists for allegedly reporting unauthorized news. Then followed the case of extrajudicial killings of journalists recorded in Mexico by the Mexican drug barons, for publicizing their drug activities. On the other hand, in some places like Yemen, and Congo where human rights situations are endemic, some biased journalists, have been allegedly accused of exaggerating and magnifying the actual humanitarian situations, so as to instigate negative public reactions (Aljazeera, 2017).

These highlighted incidences had created discords and disharmony between the government and the people and had led to rebellions against a legitimate government. Internationally, oppositions had used the media to destroy the image of an existing government especially the governments of the developing countries who do not succumb to the mounting pressures emanating from the powerful and influential countries. A typical example was in the 1960s when the late Congolese Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba was stereo- typed a “dictator and a tyrant that the West and the global system should never have dealings with”. In a nut shell, the government and the media are two separate entities in any civilize society, which ought to work in mutual understanding and harmony, to ensure an enduring peace and political stability and justify the purpose of their existence (Watson.1992).

The media is a power house of information, and to a very large extent, what the public is fed with by the media; determine how stable or turbulent such society is. For instance, because of the intensive publicity of the evil activities of Boko-Haram, the international community, has stereo-typed Nigeria as a “terrorist state”, due to the extent the media both local and international, have published and emphasized the evil activities of the sect. In order words, the activities of the media help to reshape or destroy a system or society as the case maybe. The emphases the media lay on the gross misconduct of any government on its non people oriented policies and all other political, economic and social issues, are required by the law of morality, to be more objective, just, authentic, unbiased, and credible in their reportage (Palmer & Perkins, 2007).

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The increase in global and civil tensions, is generated by the quest to retaliate all the injustices meted on the weak and vulnerable in any system by the state governments, and the extent of rage demonstrated, depend solely on the amount of publicity and emphases laid on such situations by the media. Consequently, the targeted entities such as the masses, non-state actors, humanitarians, interest groups, and the international community, should be very conscious in accepting or absorbing information that are basically unfounded and lack credibility. The handling, controlling, directing, manipulating and management of all information at the disposal of decision makers, should be done with all consciousness and resilience. On the other hand, the international politics can never be sustained without the influence and the freedom of the press. This is because, information dissemination has helped over the years, to shape public opinion both locally and internationally; enhance the image and prestige of state governments and the state itself; control the evil policies and consequences of dictatorships; and sustain global influence (Calvocoressi, 1945).

The media has also, helped any society that promotes the freedom of expression and the rule of law, to promote foreign policies and domestic interests in the eyes of the international community; and possibly resolve both civil and international conflicts. The intensive publicities given to war ravaged countries; the humanitarian crisis it generates; and human rights violations, had often generated humanitarian responses from the public and world leaders. For instance, in Syria, the indiscriminate bombing and the use of chemical weapons by President Assad's government, has prompted the recent unilateral military action taken by the United States under president Trump, against Assad's prolonged acts of impunity, by authorizing the bombing of Syrian military air base. Also, the spread of Arab Spring started with the simultaneous gathering of thousands of Arabs in all Arab nations in different venues to protest against their governments. They were directly and indirectly mobilized through the social media such as face book, twitter, whatsapp, newspapers, radio and television. Consequently, furious reactions swept all over the regions and beyond, while attracting angry sentiments from the international community (Basork, 2014).

It is however, generally believed that the reports of the media in political, economic, ideological and religious matters; especially on such issues that involves human rights violations and humanitarian crisis, had contributed to the growing trend of civil and international conflicts. This is orchestrated by the lack of objectivity and authenticity of the reportage of the media, as most of the information they disseminate, are sometimes, biased and exaggerated. Consequently, it is generally believed that about 95% of the 21<sup>st</sup> century global unrest and turmoil such as terrorism, political instability, and mistrust in international relations, are instigated by the media. In an attempt to create political and social awareness, targeted entities are often times misled in their opinion and decisions (Bodaszyski, 2013).

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On the contrary, journalists have been persecuted by the governments of countries where the true beauty of democracy and the freedom of the press and expression, is alien. This situation is very pandemic in the Middle East and Africa, where practical democracy, has been alternated with a white collar dictatorship. For instance, in Nigeria during the time of general Babangida; a seasoned journalist (the late Dele Giwa), was assassinated by unknown forces with a letter bomb. Likewise journalists have met their unexpected end by unknown forces sponsored by the ruling government or opposition, for blowing loud whistles against the government. In addition to that, with the help of media, the human rights watch, was able to espouse the extent of human rights violations and humanitarian situation in Syria and Libya after the death of Colonel Gaddafi. As at then, General Abacha and Colonel Gaddafi's regimes were the most brutal in the whole of Africa and Middle East, to the extent that the freedom of expression was suppressed, and some media houses closed. In the same situation, the Islamist state, have barbarically murdered journalists who either reported the evil consequences of the terrorist groups, or publically published their mode of operations (Chamsky, 2011).

In conclusion, "the role of the media is indispensable; power is addictive, and power is coercive, and so, every system needs the media, to hold you and I accountable for our actions any time anywhere" (Bush, 2017).

### **CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS: THE EFFECT OF MEDIA PUBLICITY ON THE ARAB SPRING**

The outbreak of the Arab Spring, was traced to the various activities of dissident activists, the media as well as the members of various social groups and union organizations; who have been very active over the years in places like Tunisia, Egypt, Algeria, Syria, and other Arab nations and Western Sahara. Right from the 1800s, there have been series of revolutions in the Arab world before the recent outbreak sparked off by the role of the socio-media, and for the first time, it has ceased to be referred to as the "liberation from colonial rule", but the liberation from internal autocratic regime (Aouragh, 2011).

The publicity given to the Arab Spring by the media through the social media, resulted in angry reactions by the Arab Youths, states decision makers, and the responses of top internal and external public political holders. These categories of people in responding to the information they derived from the social media, may have felt some individual or collective displeasures over the level of infrastructural decay and economic underdevelopment. They however, needed a push to react against what could be tagged as a "prolonged bottled anger" (Beinin, 2012).

The media has been a universal medium which individuals, groups and state governments, use as an alternative to verbal or physical confrontational war, against political and social displeasures, acts of impunity, and moral indiscipline. Nevertheless, the quest for social, political and

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economic liberation in the Middle East provided the atmosphere that motivated the media to play the dominant role they played towards a state worthy objectives, and a significant force in promoting a representative government and co-operative relations within the Middle East and beyond. It is generally believed that when regime of any state becomes autocratic and tyrannical, but receives a weak and docile responses from the people, the state becomes retrogressive, politically unstable, unpopular and an object of ridicule outside its shores. Little wonder some people have resorted to arms struggle, to correct injustices meted on them through political and economic marginalization and deprivation. To a very large extent, it takes a courage and unity irrespective of the major role the media most have played, to be able as a group of people, to demonstrate to any tyrannical and autocratic government, that its tyranny can no longer be tolerated (Joel, 2012).

In most African nations, the media have been very active in sensitizing the people on most of the ills in the policies of African leaderships, but none of the states apart from very few, have been able to successfully mobilize the people the way the Arabs did. This is because of the political and economic interests pursued either as individual or as a group. Based on this fact, most of the civil rallies organized to pressurize the governments of African States, are either licked by some of the organizers, or suppressed by the government in question and its loyalties before its executions; or sabotaged by those who believe that a general problem is not a problem in the earnest, and thus, not worth dying for. For instance, most of the problems that compelled the Arab nations to revolt against their governments, such as mass unemployment, lack of civil liberties, corruption, misappropriation of public funds, political and economic marginalization, general insecurity, human rights violations in form of brutalities, torture, unlawful detentions and murder; are regular trends in African societies, but the difference between the Arabs and Africans; is rather than Africans to react in one voice against corrupt leaders, they celebrate them and esteem them higher than those who legitimately labored for their wealth (Andre, 1967).

The political system in African societies, have become so criminalized to the extent that the political office holders, who are guilty of these crimes, are acquitted by the judicial system that was meant to dispense justice of the masses. The Arabs however chose to resist and oppose autocracy and unanimously say no to oppressions irrespective of the grave consequences of their actions. Most western and European nations sometimes in their existence, had experienced revolutions and resisted oppressions. They emancipated from colonialism and imperialism, and strongly resisted external aggressions. That is why today they stand as role models to all other nations of the world. For instance, the American revolution of 1776 ended a regime that was tagged “the denial of a natural right of man”. Likewise, the French revolution of 1789 under Napoleon Bonapart, ended a monarchy that impoverished the low class such as the artisans and the low income earners in France. It equally helped France to redefine her destiny in the European Society. In the same vein, the American Civil War, ended and unshared in a national

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unity and the abolition of Negro slaves. The Spanish American war, equally gave the Cubans some relief from the tyrannical rule of Spain, and the American relief from the constant bloodshed and conspiracy. Furthermore, the Balkan war brought a total relief from the Turkish misrule of the Balkans (Holsti, 1995)

Basically there are two basic diplomatic strategies that states use to sustain its influence domestically and internationally, these are “power and deception”. But, when any state government unlawfully exercises these two on its citizens, it derives some aggressive responses. In making a general analysis, some of the root causes of the Arab Spring, are the unequal distribution of their natural resources and their dissatisfactions over the concentration of power in one hand. The violation of civil and human rights is a crime against humanity. Therefore, state governments who engage in the violation of human rights should be visited with a Sevier punishment befitting their heinous crimes to serve as a deterrent to other governments. Nevertheless, the strong resistance from the Arab Nations, some African Nation, human rights activists like the Amnesty International, and the media; had helped to dethrone and brought to justice most African and Arab detectors such as the Liberian former president Charles Taylor of Liberia, Meladic of sabien in the Balkan States, the Late Sani Abacha of Nigeria, colonel Gaddafi of Libya, Mubarrak of Egypt, the late Saddam Usen of Iraq, Blaize Kampori of Bukina Faso, Iyadima of Togo, Yaya Germin of Zambia, a host of others (Bellochi, 2012).

Though, the Syrian government under Bashir al-Asaad, appeared somehow difficult to address in spite of the intensive publication by the media, on the heinous crime against humanity, and the humanitarian crisis the Syrian Civil war has generated since the outbreak of the war. This is due to the extent of strong military support his ally Russia and China has given his government. (Aouragh, & Aleocander, 2011). In Tunisia, the reoccurrence conflicts that lasted for three years between the miners in Gatsa in 2008, and the self immolation of Mohamed Bouassizi in 2010, and all other political, economic and social issues, sparked off anger in Tunisia. It started in form of sit-ins, rallies, and industrial actions. In the end, two casualties were recorded, and dozens wounded and arrested. It attracted the sympathies of human rights activist, student’s labour and trade unions. As a result of the incident, many Arab governments were overthrown and the Tunisian president, Zine El-Abidine-Ben-Ali, fled to Saudi Arabia on the 14<sup>th</sup> January, 2011. (Brooks, 2013). Algeria: the uprising in Algeria was triggered in 2008, because of their displeasures over poor governance, which led to political, economic and social setback; about 9,700 riots and unrest were recorded in Algeria for over centuries (Bamyeh, 2012).

Western Sahara; the Sahrawis protested in El-Aaium on 9<sup>th</sup> of October, 2010 , and their grievances were on labor discrimination, unemployment, looting and a general human rights abuses, and about 20,000 inhabitants turned up for the protest and multiple injuries and fatalities recorded (Arjomand, 2013). Egypt; president Hosni-Mubarack resigned on the 11<sup>th</sup> of February



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2011, after a massive protest against his government of about three decades (Beinin, 2012). In Libya, President Muhammed Gaddafi, was dethroned and murdered on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of August, 2011 after which the transitional Council was constituted. (Chamsky, 2011). In Yemen; president Ah-Abdullah Saleh, signed the Gcc power transfer deal in which a president election was held, resulting in his successor Hbd-al-rab-Mansur-al-Had's enthronement on the 27<sup>th</sup> February 2012. This was in exchange for immunity for prosecution (Benchemsi, 2012).

In Sudan; president Omar-al-Bashir, announced his unwillingness to seek for re-election 2015. In Jordan; about four successive governments were displaced by king Abdllah, while in Kuwait, the current events, led to the resignation of the Prime Minister Nasser Muhamed-A10Ame-ALsabad in Sabah's cabinet. (Lynch, 2011). In Syria; the government has remained recalcitrant with his backbones yet uncracked in spite of the high rate of human right violations, genocides and crime against humanity, under president Bashar-al-Assad. The reason being that he has strong military supports from Russia his strongest ally and some Arab nations who were indirectly against the West (Barnartt, 2014).

#### **PUBLIC OPINION AND THE MEDIA**

Public opinion has been one of the forces used in shaping the foreign policies of any state. Without the public view, no democratic system can be legitimate, transparent and accountable in their policies. The media has been the major instrument used to influence public opinion either for or against any existing government group or states. To a large extent, the greatest force used to transform a society is how vibrant its public opinion is (Holsti, 1995).

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, public opinion was one of the basic tools used in the European system, to reverse an unpopular policy. This was established through the growth of the news paper press. Before then, all diplomatic proceedings were essentially aristocratic which was superseded by public opinion, which has a massive influence on an existing government, where the freedom of expression is not suppressed. For instance most political negotiations, elections, economic and diplomatic co-operations and appointments, are influen.ced by public opinion. However, the growth in population; political and ideological civilization and literacy; the emergence of mass media and political participation; the growth of civil and interest groups who pressurize any democratically elected government to be credible and transparent in its policies, had helped governments to be more accountable and responsive. The media controls and influences the decisions of the people and their mind set, in times of elections, their impression about such government, and their level of understanding and co-operations, depend wholesomely, on what information concerning such government (Palmer & Perkins, 2007)

Government's policies are only successful, when they are in mutual understanding with the press. Little wonder why the use of intensive propaganda, has been a major weapon any

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incumbent government uses to regain its legitimacy, confidence, and support from the people, even when the government is not actually doing enough to earn the support and confidence of the people. In the same vein' political opponents have often used the media to rubbish the government. Public opinion shapes decision making and it serves as one of the beauties of democracy. Without public opinion, pressing national issues would have remained unresolved or perhaps addressed without dully consulting the masses. For instance, the signing of Nigerian Anglo Defense Pact with Britain in the 60s, the media was used to sensitize Nigerians about the evil consequences by the founding fathers who stood against the deal. Therefore, as a result of the public opinion who voted against the military ties, it was not signed. Also, in the 19 20s, American public opinion, voted against American membership of the League of Nations. In the same vein, through the intensive sensitization of the media, American military force withdrew from the Vietnam War (Waxman, 2009).

Recently, in the early stages of the Syrian War, it was alleged that president Asaad used chemical and biological weapons on his civilians. America under president Obama, unilaterally, opted invading Syria, but latter backed out for lack of supports from the Congress and public opinion. In the same vein, Britain under David Cameron, never got involved with the Syria civil war, for lack of support of public opinion and the British parliament, in spite of the effort made by the Prime Minister, for Britain to act in defense of Syrian civilians. The British exit from the European Union, was also, influenced by public opinion and the intensive publication of the press through jingles over the radios and television broadcasts (Aljazeera, 2016).

However, the roles of the media in governance, public opinion, propaganda, and espionage, have been the strategic weapons of cold warfare between political and ideological opponents. The media and the world powers, have found those strategic weapons as potential instruments to afflict their perceived political, economic and ideological enemies; they have also used these weapons, to promote the interest of their political and economic allies and their foreign policies. That is why, in a bid to actualize our personal goals or interest, mortals especially those in authority, should make the interest of the people they represent their utmost priority (Roseau, 1972).

In conclusion, some objective scholars, non-state actors, humanitarians, civil and interest groups; have for the sake of humanity, emphasized the need for those in the media houses, to be uniquely guarded with a high sense of morality and responsibility, while bringing to the public notice the activities and conducts of those in authority. This would not only reduce political tensions being generated by misinformation, but would go a long way to foster economic growth, political stability and enduring peace and security. No nation prospers in the atmosphere of chaos, anarchy and insecurity.

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### **THE INFLUENCE OF GOVERNMENT ON THE MEDIA**

The independence of a state makes it a sovereign state recognized by the international community. A state is a legitimate entity whose domestic or internal affairs, are not expected to be interfered with. The state is the dominant actor in the international system whose characteristics are shaped and determined by the level and structure of its interactions, strong government, and mutual co-operation. Its ability to exercise internal and external authority on its population, command some respects in the eyes of other sovereign states, makes it stand out amongst other states. However, a states foreign policy, domestic interests and its ability to actualize its goals; determine its position and its bargaining power with other states. In other words, how it goes about in actualizing its foreign and domestic policies determines its success or failure. The state system has mapped out some of the major ways a sovereign state could be regarded as a strong and powerful state. These are first, a strong military force, a strong economy, a large population; and the practice of a transparent democratic system which embraces the rule of law as its fundamental principles, freedom of the press and expression, and guarantees the fundamental human rights. It is on record that before the state system, the international political system was beclouded with a conservative and hegemonic nature of leadership; and was highly placed on a hierarchical and monarchical order (Omu & Otoide, 2002)

Consequently, the system harbored a lot of ruthless and despotic political leaders, who saw power as their natural inheritance and personal property, and asserted authority on their subjects with iron fist. Laws were made then, without due consultations much less seeking public opinion, and without following the rule of law. Thus, the violation of both civil and human rights, the denial of social justice and the oppressive use of military force, were their style of leadership. (Palmer & Perkins, 2007).

The new state system is however constituted on diplomacy, equal rights, justice and collective security; which guarantees the freedom of expression and legal justice. The question therefore is, are state system or governments truly allow the fundamental principles which guarantees a free press to operate without the fear of intimidation, suppression, persecution, an unlawful arrest ,detention and the eventual murder of activists, for informing the masses of the various policies of government , which do not reflect the modern day democratic principles ..The masses of any nation or society are represented by the media and as such, the media is a “go between”, the masses and the existing government. Although, the law of morality, requires that those in position of influence and power, create awareness and effect a positive change in the society , should be objective, principled and morally guarded. In spite of the extent of suppressions, intimidations and pressures mounted on the media by the government, most of the journalists or media houses are not deterred; while others are just too naïve to withstand the pressures of government. Hence, they limit their reportage based on what the government consents to.

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Consequently, the masses are deprived of information and the freedom of expression. For instance in Africa, there are some media houses or national broadcasting stations, who only report what promotes the image and the policies of governments, while the inadequacies of the governments, are patched up with propaganda in order to mislead the masses and silent public opinion. Most countries in the Middle East and Africa practice democracy but still practice dictatorship, while the rule of law and freedom of the press are suppressed. This was one of the reasons that triggered the Arab Spring of 2010, and spread across the Middle East to the extent that Syria and Libya are living in their past glories (Benchensi, 2012).

Most private media houses, who are unbiased and objective in their information dissemination, have either been forced out of their professions, or their licenses withdrawn unceremoniously for not succumbing to the mounting pressures emanating from the government. Consequently, for those who compromised the integrity of their profession, the governments and political opponents, have used them to destabilize and mislead the public (Watson, 1992).

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The media in its capacities determines the fate of three separate entities in any society; such as the government, political oppositions and the governed. Therefore, for the sake of humanity, it is expected that moral values, integrity, and high sense of responsibilities be deplored while bringing to public notice, the activities and policies of those in authority. On that note, this paper recommends a total non interference and control of the government on the media. This would not only guaranty its authenticity in its publications, but also ensures a proactive professionalism in its reportage. Secondly, the position of the media is dispensable. Therefore, the constitution of every society, should stipulate stiffer penalties for government, individuals and groups, who are found guilty of unjustly persecuting journalists in the course of caring out their responsibilities.

### **CONCLUSION**

The government and the media are two separate entities, which must exist in a state and the society they represent. Therefore, to facilitate a rapport between them and the masses; the media and the government, must be complimentary in their activities to blend with the trend of the period. In addition to that, the suppression of the media by the government, and the absolute manipulation, intimidations and harassments of the media houses, must be avoided, for it does not only violate the rights of the masses in the areas of information dissemination and derivations, but also, espouses the society to an old order of conservative tyrannical order, that has no foundation in modern day democratic practices. Finally, “the media is indispensable, power is addictive, power is coercive, and so, every system needs the media to hold the people accountable for their actions” (Bush, 2017).

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