

MEDIA MONITORING REPORT:
A Look at the Media Coverage of
Baby Sagini 2022/2023

~content, legislation, and ethics~

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FOREWORD



Children are the most vulnerable beings in any society, even in kingdom animalia. They must be protected and properly nurtured by ensuring they access the most basic of needs like nutrition, shelter, and health care. Shelter comes with parenting and proper parenting breeds appropriate grounding. A conducive family environment is critical in moulding a complete balanced human being. Sociologists have identified young age as the most critical in human development, particularly in cognitive development. As a result, laws and guidelines have been put into place for guidance, protection of the most vulnerable and standardisation. Unfortunately, our societies are full of inequalities that make it impossible to attain these standards. Take the case of Baby Samantha Pendo, 6-month-old, who was killed in the protective hands of her mother by rogue police officers. Four years later, another Baby Sagini would suffer in the hands of relatives, who were supposed to protect him, having his eyes gouged out in the most gruesome manner. These are just but some of the incidences the media has brought to the public gallery. There are many other cases that never see the light of day.

UNICEF describes a child as any person under the age of 18. This definition is embodied in the *Convention on the Rights of the Child: The Children's version* Section four of the convention requires every government to do all they can to make sure that the child in their countries can enjoy all the rights envisaged in the convention.

To achieve this, the Constitution of Kenya has provided for an elaborate section on Children under the Bill of Rights. The article affirms the following rights:

- Right to name and nationality from birth
- Free and compulsory basic education
- Basic nutrition, shelter, and health care
- Protection from among others, inhumane treatment, all forms of violence and hazardous or exploitative labour
- Parental care and protection

The Constitution states that the child's best interests are of paramount importance in every matter concerning the child. Its operational legislation, Children Act 2012, Cap 141 4(1) avers that *every child shall have an inherent right to life, and it shall be the responsibility of the Government and the family to ensure the survival and development of the child*. Whether this has been realised or not is an important question for both governance and economy. For wherefore, during school days there are children doing manual labour or begging in the streets, even when the government has provided for free primary education? The above cases of Baby Pendo and Sagini are clearly indicative of certain gaps in enforcement and the role of the society as whole. The limelight the media gave these two cases shows the critical nature of media in exposing improprieties that breach the very ideals the Kenyan social contract has established.

This report documents the extent to which the media covered the case of Baby Sagini from onset of the incident to closure via the court ruling which found the perpetrators guilty of causing grievous harm to the child.

David Omwoyo, MBS
Chief Executive Officer and Secretary to the Council

AN INTRODUCTION

For a period of 8 months between December 2022 to July 2023, the country was consumed by the devastating news of kidnapping and attempted murder of baby Sagini from Kisii County. The story first hit the headline across media on December 14, 2022 when the media reported that the baby was found lying within the homestead in Ikuruma village, Marani, Kisii County. His eyes were gouged out. Investigations kicked off, arrests were made and sentencing of the culprits followed.

This case joined a list of other child-related court cases that received similar attention across local and international media and demonstrated the high stakes in such a case. This formed the justification for agenda setting envisioned to peak at specific phases of the case, majorly in the investigations and sentencing stages. Subsequently, in a case of such immense public interest, the media is obliged to inform the public across all phases to the end. However, this does not always happen without concern as this report highlights, with some ethical areas of concern flagged across the Code of Conduct for the Practice of Journalism. This was a public interest issue, hitherto requiring professionalism and sensitivity in coverage.

This report, thus, investigates the media coverage of baby Sagini across broadcast and print against the existing children's laws & guidelines and the code of conduct. The report further interrogates how the media covered the story of baby Sagini after the court determination of the case and the conviction of the suspects. It is important for the media to always do follow up stories to keep the public at par. Follow-up stories often help clarify or correct information that was reported in the initial story, and further provide new insights into a story.

As evident in the analysis, most media houses coverage of the story stopped with the sentencing of the main perpetrator to 40 years in prison. The coverage raised very pertinent questions about the safety of children in Kenya, and further highlighted the need for more to be done to protect them from violence and abuse. In the light of the story and despite the excellent work that the media did in its coverage, it failed to provide details of baby Sagini's integration into the society after the limelight of the case.

Importantly, media houses should be encouraged to invest in investigative pieces which is a valuable tool to hold those in power accountable, expose corruption and any form of wrongdoing in any given society, and inform the public about critical issues. They can play a vital role in promoting a healthy democracy and help to make the world a better place.

BACKGROUND LITERATURE

The disputed election in 2017 and the skirmishes that ensued led to the death of Baby Samantha Pendo. Media reports and witness reports indicated that the police killed the young girl during a crackdown in Kisumu. The story was a public interest and drew a lot of attention from all parties involved. The case dragged for a period of 6 years between 2017-2023. Those responsible were charged with an array of crimes before a high court in November 2022 (Nation.Africa, 2022).

In a similar incident that involved a minor, Baby Sagini had his eyes gouged out by persons well known to him. The case took more than eight months to be concluded after the case was first reported in December 2022. Other cases are of two children killed in a bizarre incident in Kikuyu in 2023, and a middle-aged woman who allegedly killed her two-year-old baby in Kajiado county this year form the basis of children reportage. In all these cases media played a critical role in breaking the news and informing the public. In the past, cases involving minors have drawn a lot of attention from the public and enforcement agencies.

Baby Pendo's story gained international attention with coverage from Al-Jazeera, Reuters, BBC, DW News, Voice of America (VOA), Africa News and the Guardian. Such attention puts pressure on the relevant actors (police, prosecution *et al*) to hasten the process as in the case of baby Sagini. On the contrary Baby Pendo's case took longer due to the complexities that it came with – the perpetrators being people charged with the responsibility of protecting life. The incident also took place at a period of heightened political tensions and contestations.

Just like other cases, coverage of baby Sagini's case was done on both mainstream and community media indicating the level of interest media had. The case drew emotional-public interest, moral, and legal viewpoints.

Article 53 of the constitution provides for the rights of children, affirming that every child has a right to be protected from abuse, neglect, harmful cultural practices, all forms of violence, inhuman treatment and punishment, and hazardous or exploitative labour, to parental care and protection, which includes equal responsibility of the mother and father to provide for the child, whether they are married to each other or not; and that child's best interests are of paramount importance in every matter (COK 2010). Therefore, this provides a basis to the prosecution of these cases and in this context, baby Sagini, who was deprived of his rights. The media's heightened coverage and agenda setting on the case for 8 months can be attributed to requirement by the constitution to ensure the child's best interests are of paramount importance in every matter concerning it.

Another legislation that forms part of protection of children laws, and further, laws which the media while reporting on such cases ought to be aware of, is the Children Act, 2021 which not only makes provisions for parental responsibility, guardianship, care and protection of children but also gives effect to the National Council for Children's Services whose objective is to regulate, advise and ensure quality in the children's sector (Kenya Gazette, 2021). Under the Act and on matters related to media coverage, a child is entitled to protection from physical and psychological abuse, the right to privacy (Article 25), with Article 27 providing for enforcement of rights.

Beyond the legal obligations under Article 53, the Childrens' Act, and guidelines for reporting on Judiciary, the media while reporting matters related to children ought to adhere to the prescribed code of conduct for the practice of journalism. The code as entrenched in the Second Schedule of the Media Council Act 2013 prescribes the conduct

and practice of all media practitioners in the country (MCK, 2013). The code is implemented through the leading institution in setting media standards and in the conduct and discipline of journalists in Kenya, the Media Council of Kenya.

Through the various clauses, coverage of baby Sagini and other cases of similar nature demand for accurate & fair coverage, analytical reporting, accountability, awareness of the taste & tone, privacy, protection of children, sensitivity & discretion, and caution in identification of innocent relatives and friends. These are just a few of the 25 clauses that the reporting on the case of baby Sagini and other stories related to rights of children ought to adhere to.

The UNICEF guidelines for reporting on children further provide for procedures ensuring accurate context for the child's story or image, in certain cases, using a child's identity (their name and/or recognisable image) is in the child's best interests. The guidelines also recommend confirmation on the accuracy of what the child has to say, either with other children or an adult, preferably with both.

In case of any breaches in reporting of such cases, the Council is obliged to take action against the media or individual journalists. Other concerned institutions can also act against media houses when any rights of children are violated in respect to media reporting.

The availability of all these tools provides myriad avenues through which the media can approach such cases, ensuring that the public is informed in a professional manner. Any minor incidents throughout the coverage can be addressed via the established regulators to improve the quality in reporting in future cases.

Limitations

- The qualitative radio reports herein were generated from a basis of limited data gathered during the period of reporting.
- The quantitative data was majorly generated from the news items component.
- The Star Newspaper did not form part of the data analysed.

COVERAGE OF BABY SAGINI: MEDIA CONTENT ANALYSIS

4.1 TV STATIONS

The qualitative report under this section covers the following TV stations – KBC, Citizen TV, NTV, KTN News, K24, Oyominto TV, TV47 and Getembe TV. The coverage manifested the station's commitment to professionalism with all stations attributing sources where the reports demanded, with such including prosecutors, Kisii Law Courts Senior Resident Magistrate Christine Ogweno, clinician at Kisii Teaching and Referral Hospital, witnesses' statements, and authorities. Additionally, the aspect of follow up on the case from the start to the end was notable across all TV stations monitored with breaches across the code of conduct flagged across K24 TV for misleading and inaccurate reporting.

However, in line with Children's Act 2021 and the code of conduct, there was notable adherence to the law and professionalism in a report by NTV Kenya Journalist Ibrahim Karanja when he involved baby Sagini's caregiver (Josphine Karemi and Sagini's elder sister Shantel Kemunto) as an adult who was responsible for Sagini's welfare, considering the baby's difficult circumstances. (https://youtu.be/UtgghB_Mf9U).

Further, the use of graphics to support the story of baby Sagini adhered to Clause 21 on use of pictures and names and anticipated in such a case, is the possible violation of Clause 15 on intrusion into grief and shock. Lastly, the topics on police investigations, confessions and sentencing dominated the reports evaluated and majority of the relatives mentioned in the case were reported in negative tonality but in good taste as they were the main suspects, this was supported by investigations by the police and the sentencing by the court.

The stations below form part of the case study examples evaluated to produce the above analysis.

a. NTV Kenya

The station's coverage spanned December 2022 to July 2023 from the arrest to the court ruling. On December 19, 2022, the station through Maureen Kimotho reported that the police had arrested the main suspect in a 3-year-old's assault in Kisii. On December 23, 2022, Brian Murimi reported that Baby Sagini's grandmother, aunt and cousins were arraigned and charged with attempted murder in relation to an attack on baby Junior Sagini. The basis for the arrest were equally properly reported. For example, NTV reported that on December 13 and 14, 2022, at Ikuruma location in Marani Subcounty, the suspects attempted to unlawfully cause the death of Sagini by gouging out both of his eyes, in violation of section 220 of the Penal Code.

Further coverage across the station was *inter alia*; Brian Murimi and Kevin Mutai reported on Sonko's claim that former Nairobi Governor Mike Sonko had claimed that "*bad politics*" and "*dirty-minded politicians*" had hindered his efforts to assist Baby Sagini and his 7-year-old sister Shantel. Mwana wa Njuguna reported that the Office Director of Public Prosecutions (ODPP) made a significant move in the charges against three relatives implicated in the case. Sharon Maombo reported on Senior Resident Magistrate Christine Ogweno, who sentenced Alex Maina, the main suspect in the grievous assault of Baby Junior Sagini, to 40 years behind bars. Baby Sagini's aunt Pacifica Nyakerario and Grandmother Rael Mayaka were handed ten and five-year jail terms, respectively.

b. Citizen TV/Citizen Digital

December 17, 2022, the station through Mary Muoki reported that police had intensified the hunt for attackers who had gouged out a 3-year-old boy's eyes in Kisii. The report detailed baby Sagini's journey to recovery after he was kidnapped, and his eyes gouged out. It heavily relied on Doctor's, DCI, crime unit officers, villagers' & police reports, specifically from Kisii sub-county police commander Benjoulife Munuve.

On December 19, 2022, Seth Olale reported: [...] *mother of boy whose eyes were gouged out to be charged with neglect*. The report referred to police records (OB numbers), doctors and locals. Also, the images/graphics used were considerate and did not raise any professional question and did not intrude into grief. The same day, the station through Chrispine Otieno reported that Alex Maina Ochoki, 26, main suspect, was arrested by detectives from the Directorate of Criminal Investigations (DCI) on Sunday evening and was held at Marani police station on the same day as DCI officers planned to seek custodial orders to pave way for further investigations. The report further detailed apprehension of the mother and three other suspects.

Additional reporting was: *Baby Sagini placed under protective custody together with the 7-year-old sister*; Hyline Charo reported that Alex Ochogo (cousin to Sagini), Pacifica Nyakerario (aunt) and Rael Nyakerario (grandmother) appeared before Senior Resident Magistrate Christine Ogweno following the conclusion of investigations by police officers. The report source was attributed to the Prosecutor Hilary Kaino.

The station also reported on Sonko's claims about 'dirty-minded politicians' blocking him from helping baby Sagini referring to the former governor's tweet; it reported on when, where and under what circumstances the pre-trial case of the three persons linked to the gouging out of baby Sagini's eyes would commence. The report was considerate of an interested party (Mr George Morara, who represented Kisii County Government) and his argument on protection of minors as per Section 16 of the Childrens Act.

The station reported on the same case with further reports under the following headlines: *3 suspects in removal of baby Sagini's eyes plead not guilty to charges; Baby Sagini testifies in court, says grandmother gouged his eyes out; Kisii court to visit scene where baby Sagini's eyes were gouged out; Baby Sagini's case: 2 detectives testify as 3 other suspects expected to appear next week; Court finds baby Sagini's grandmother, aunt, and cousin guilty of gouging his eyes out and Baby Sagini's cousin handed 40 years in jail*.



c. K24 TV

The station's coverage can be traced from December 18, 2022, with reports as follows; *Sonko offers Ksh400k to cop who will kill gang that kidnapped, gouged out 3-year-old's eyes*. This report, however, contained controversial statements by the former governor and reinforced an outright call for elimination of a life – an eye for an eye, thereby promoting violence. The right to life is inherent and protected under the 2010 constitution, which also

recognises the court process as the legal means through which parties are proven guilty or innocent.

Other headlines by K24 included: *Sonko offers to fly Baby Sagini to China for eye implants; 'Bedbugs, lice feast on me at night' – suspect who allegedly gouged out Baby Sagini's eyes tells court, charges changed from attempted murder to causing grievous harm; Police arrest man suspected of gouging out Baby Sagini's eyes; Magistrate appeals for security as accused persons in Baby Sagini's case and judicial officers set to visit crime scene, Court rules 3 suspects linked to Baby Sagini: Family members jailed for 55 years for gouging toddlers eye. Unlike other outlets, K24 chose the sum of the total number of years the perpetrators of the heinous act were to be jailed: 40 years for the cousin, 10 years for the auntie and five years for the grandmother.*



Baby Sagini receiving treatment after relatives gouged out his eye. PHOTO/Courtesy

Baby Sagini: Sonko offers Ksh400k to cop who will kill gang that kidnapped, gouged out 3-year-old's eyes

By Achang Mary 12:11 PM
On Sun, 28 Oct, 2022 07:52 | 2 min read



Steps of former Nairobi governor Alex Simba at a past event and Baby Sagini undergoing treatment at a hospital. PHOTO/Courtesy

d. KBC Channel 1

The state broadcaster's coverage manifested accuracy, professional use of images, sensitivity and follow up from the beginning of the case to its determination. Like NTV, its final ruling headline also focused on Baby Sagini's cousin who was sentenced to 40 years in prison.

e. TV47

Equally, the coverage by the station demonstrated accuracy with no incidences flagged in the reporting. There was a clear aspect of follow-up with extended reporting conducted in the latter stage of the case that involved the sentencing. This was clear in the following reports: *Baby Sagini grandmother, aunt and cousin charged with attempted murder; Haki kwa mtoto Sagini: Mshukiwa mkuu afungwa miaka 40 gerezani, nyanyake miaka 5; and Governor Simba Arati condemned attack on baby Sagini who was kidnapped, and his eyes gouged out. The final ruling's headline revealed the varying prison sentences for each suspect, staggering the number of years they were to be jailed for.*

f. KTN News

The coverage was notable through the following reports: *Udhalimu Dhidi ya Sagini: Polisi wamtia mbaroni mshukiwa aliyemng'oa macho mtoto Sagini; Mshukiwa mkuu wa kesi ya mtoto Sagini ahukumiwa miaka 40 gerezani; Court finds baby Sagini suspects guilty; and Kin who gouged out the eyes of the three-year-old baby Sagini sentenced to 40 years in jail.* The coverage was accurate, manifested professional use of pictures and clear evidence follow up as they covered the story for the period.



g. Oyominto TV

Its coverage was notable via prime-time news framing its headlines as follows: *A woman believed to be the main suspect in the Junior Sagini attack that left the 3-year-old baby blind after his eyes were gouged out under unclear circumstances; and Kisii Court Senior Resident Magistrate Christine Ogweno found Baby Sagini's grandmother Rael Nyakerario, his aunt Pacifica Nyakerario and Cousin Alex Ochogo guilty of causing actual bodily harm.* Key aspects of the reporting included thorough follow-ups and a notable absence of reported breaches, showcasing a strong commitment to the code of conduct. However, it's worth noting that the frequency of their reporting was lower compared to other mainstream media outlets.

h. Getembe TV.

Similar to Oyominto, the coverage was limited to the prime-time news segment. While the frequency of reporting on the case remained minimal in comparison to mainstream stations. It was notable for its accuracy and its inclusion of follow-up elements.

4.2 RADIO STATIONS

Radio was not left behind in covering this disheartening story and ensuring their listeners were well updated and abreast of the investigations and court proceedings. The topic formed great part of the morning discussions and news items across several radio stations that were within MCK radar.

a) On January 20, 2022, INGO FM engaged listeners on the story of baby Sagini amongst other topics prior to the arrival of the guests for a different session.

b) On December 18-23 weekly radio monitoring report indicated Alpha radio news item touching on investigations on culprits who gouged out baby Sagini's eyes as baby Sagini's mother was arrested and detained.

During the same period, North Rift Radio reported on the arrest of suspects in baby Sagini's attack. This was done in the news segment.

c) January 9, 2023, Hot 96 FM held a morning show on the politics of the week with guests: Chemutai Goin, Senior Reporter RMS and Edwin Obuya Sub-Editor RMS. The team discussed the rise of murder cases in Kisii, baby Sagini and other death reports related to land.

d) Coro FM on December 19, 2022, during their news highlights mentioned Baby Sagini's incident and the investigation of the case and elaborated further during their morning show. The station mentioned the arrest of Alex, the son of Pacifica Nyakerario who was reportedly the main suspect. Taach FM on the same date, highlighted the arrest of three people, baby Sagini's grandmother, aunt, and cousin who were to be charged concerning the case. Egesa FM also highlighted the act and later informed the audience of the arrest of the suspects.

e) On December 20, Classic 105 reported the arrest of a man suspected of gouging out baby Sagini's eyes and former Nairobi governor Mike Sonko's promise to arrange for an eye implantation for baby Sagini.

The qualitative reports showed that the radio stations were actively setting the agenda and providing follow-up coverage on the topic as it developed. However, some stations, like Hot 96 FM, lacked in-depth coverage due to limited time constraints. Additionally,

stations such as Alpha Radio, Anguo FM and Sauti ya Pwani FM heavily relied on TV stations and newspapers as their primary sources for information on the baby Sagini case. This reliance exposed the media to the potential risk of amplifying any violations.

4.3 PRINT

This section covers The Standard, Daily Nation, People Daily and Taifa Leo newspapers. The dominant topics across the monitoring were: Investigations, arrest of suspects, grandmothers' confession and the sentencing of the accused.

On pictorial analysis, the newspapers refrained from publishing the images of the minor and only focused on the suspects, thereby adhering to clause 19 of the code of conduct on protection of children. On accuracy and Fairness (Clause 2) it was observed, for example in The Standard, that while the reports shared a story of public interest, they were inaccurate. Several headlines were incongruent with the subsequent story, and the information regarding the relationship within the victim's family was inaccurately captured.



December 20, 2022, article by The Standard. However, the article did not clarify the specific charges that would be levied against the suspect, as stated in the headline.

Consequently, throughout this coverage, the newspapers coped with the evolving nature of the investigation. From the early speculations of a family conflict to the subsequent identification of suspects, the newspaper provided a pathway into Standard's headlines and actual content, there were instances where the accuracy of information raised concerns about the need for fact-checking and editorial oversight.



Regarding intrusion into Grief and Shock (Clause 15), there was no violation noted as the relatives who were mentioned were suspects in the case. Additionally, on matters court reporting, media guidelines by the Judiciary provide for the procedures for reporting on judicial matters. The guidelines provide for a structured approach to inform and educate the public to promote confidence and build the institution's image with the goal of promoting administration of justice, and mechanism for engaging with bonafide media players. Subsequently, there were no reports emanating from constraints associated with access to information or reporting in baby Sagini case; the media was able to report on court proceedings to include the prosecution and the judge's statements/decisions. For example, on July 25, 2023, The Standard reported on the ruling by Kisii magistrate while issuing the sentence for the 3 accused and Senior Resident Magistrate Christine Ogweno's ruling on December 20, 2022.

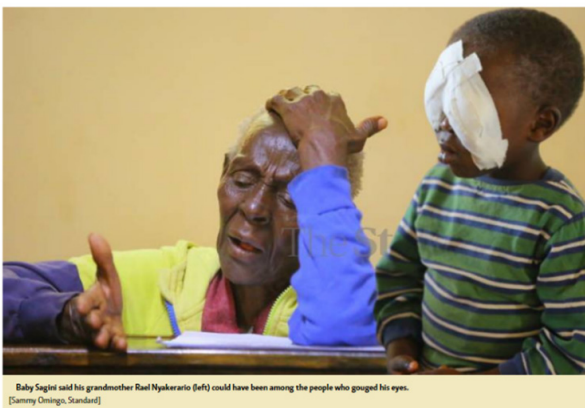


December 20, 2022 & July 25, 2023, The Standard reports referring to Senior Resident Magistrate Christine Ogweno and Kisii Magistrate in their reporting.

Additionally, in respect to Clause 19 of the code of conduct on protection of children, Baby Sagini's name and face could not be withheld following the immense public interest on the case. The clause permits for the identification of children in cases related to matters of public interest, such as child abuse or abandonment, while still respecting privacy and parental consent.

Baby Sagini accuses grandmother of gouging out his eyes

By Erick Abaga | 5 mos ago



Baby Sagini said his grandmother Rael Nyakerario (left) could have been among the people who gouged his eyes. [Sammy Omingo, Standard]

The Standard reporting with the image identifying the victim March 2023.

Daily Nation gave a detailed coverage as well from the time the incident occurred, the police arrest, court proceedings and the sentencing of suspects. Additionally, the station similarly provided the image of the child mentioned in line with Clause 19 of the code of conduct on protection of children that permits the identification of children in cases related to matters of public interest. Moreover, the newspaper prepared an opinion article following the court ruling where columnist and writer Caroline Njung'e expressed dissatisfaction with the court's ruling.

Horror: Boy, 3, has his eyes gouged out in bizarre attack in Kisii

Sunday, December 18, 2022



Doctors have informed that young Junior Sagini, the victim of the horrendous attack, will remain blind for the rest of his life.

N By Wycliffe Nyaberi

Daily Nation article revealing the young Junior Sagini after the horrendous attack.

Unfortunately To think that the 27-year-old cousin who gouged out the boy's eyes will eventually be free is unerving

I am not satisfied with the ruling on Baby Sagini case

I wondered whether that sentence was deterrent enough for anyone that would think of harming a child

The 27-year-old cousin who gouged out the eyes of a three-year-old boy in Kisii, Kenya, has been sentenced to 10 years in prison. The ruling was handed down by the Kisii District Court on Monday.

The boy, Junior Sagini, was attacked by his cousin, Alex Maina, who gouged out his eyes with a sharp object. The attack occurred on July 30, 2022, in the village of Mbita, Kisii County.

The court found Maina guilty of the crime and sentenced him to 10 years in prison. The judge expressed dissatisfaction with the sentence, stating that it was not deterrent enough for anyone who might think of harming a child.

Caroline Njung'e, a columnist and writer, expressed her dissatisfaction with the court's ruling. She argued that the sentence was too lenient and that the court should have imposed a harsher penalty to deter others from committing such a heinous crime.

The case has sparked a national debate on child protection and the effectiveness of the legal system in handling such cases. Many people are calling for a review of the laws governing child abuse and for the implementation of stricter measures to protect children.

CAROLINE NJUNG'E

Nation's July 30, 2023, report on baby Sagini after court ruling.

Baby Sagini grandmother arrested in relation to gouging out of his eyes

Thursday, December 22, 2022



Baby Sagini grandmother, Paul Njumbani (center), is escorted by police officers to the Kisii District Court. She is accused of being involved in the attack on her grandchild.

N By Ruth Mulu

Judgment day set in Baby Sagini case

Thursday, June 01, 2023



Young Junior Sagini, whose eyes were gouged out in the most gruesome manner, doctors have informed that he will remain blind for the rest of his life.

N By Ruth Mulu

Baby Sagini's cousin Alex Maina to serve 40 years in jail for gouging out his eyes

Monday, July 24, 2023



Alex Maina, the cousin of Baby Sagini, is seen in court for his sentencing. He is accused of gouging out the eyes of his cousin.

N By Ruth Mulu

Nation.Africa reporting indicating progression of the case from the grandmother's arrest to the sentencing.

The print reporting displayed several notable attributes, including consistent follow-ups as the cases progressed and an evident agenda setting approach, with the story appearing in a minimum of twenty-seven articles across the four newspapers monitored. The total number of articles reviewed amounted to twenty-seven in total. Specifically, we monitored 5 articles from The Standard, 17 from Daily Nation, 4 from Taifa Leo and 5 from People Daily. Its worth noting that these numbers slightly differ from the quantitative data presented below. This discrepancy is due to an oversight of weekend copies for the Daily Nation and a combination of online and newspaper articles for The Standard, resulting in omissions and commissions, respectively. This is indicative of print reliability in the coverage of a public interest story. In this regard, below are some of the case studies by the various newspapers, notable trends, and breaches in the reporting.

a) The Standard/online:

The Standard's coverage included a series of reports, as listed below, which demonstrated the newspaper's agenda-setting approach to the story. However, its noteworthy that the story never appeared as a headline on the front page of the paper. Additionally, the coverage featured follow-ups and adherence to the code of conduct in areas such as the use of pictures, accuracy, fairness, intrusion into grief and shock and tonality.

The articles included:

- *No arrests have been made in connection with the Baby Sagini case, December 18, 2022.*
- *Suspect in Baby Sagini's Case to Face Attempted Murder Charges, December 20, 2022.*
- *Second suspect in Baby Sagini's incident arrested, December 21, 2022.* This piece by Eric Abuga revealed that Pacifica Nyakerario, the primary suspect, was apprehended and linked to the incident. Her son, Alex Ochogo, was also presented in court and subsequently held at Rioma Police station pending further investigations. *It's important to note an error in the article's content: Pacifica is, in fact, the aunt of Baby Sagini and the sister of Alex Maina. This discrepancy highlights an inaccuracy in the newspaper's portrayal of the victim's family relationships.*
- *Baby Sagini tells court grandmother gouged out his eyes, March 11, 2023.*
- *Baby Sagini suspect handed 40 years in jail, July 25, 2023.*

b) Daily Nation/online

Articles on Baby Sagini, spanning April, May and June, were sourced from both the Daily Nation's hard print and online editions. They are as follows:

- *Boy, 3 has his eyes gouged out in bizarre attack in Kisii, December 18, 2022.*
- *Why did they gouge out my son's eyes, December 19, 2022.*
- *Baby Sagini attack: Police arrest main suspect, Pacificah Nyakirario, 60, December 20, 2022.*
- *Baby Sagini's grandmother arrested in relation to gouging out of his eyes, December 22, 2022.*
- *This is why we didn't want baby Sagini alive, December 23, 2022.*
- *Sonko, I've been blocked from flying baby Sagini to China, December 27, 2022*
- *Baby Sagini placed under state protection as case proceeds, December 29, 2022.*
- *Suspects in baby Sagini case presented in court for pre-trial, January 18, 2023.*
- *Baby Sagini: State swaps attempted murder charge with grievous bodily harm, February 2, 2023.*
- *Grandma gouged my eyes out, Baby Sagini tells court, March 11, 2023.*
- *Baby Sagini's grandmother, aunt and cousin gouged out his eyes, court told, March 28, 2023.*

- *Baby Sagini's cousin Alex Maina to serve 40 years in jail for gouging out his eyes, July 24, 2023*
- *I am not satisfied with the ruling on Baby Sagini's case by Caroline Njunge, July 31, 2023.*

c) People Daily

People Daily comprehensively covered the story by providing follow-ups that included additional information. Amongst the PD articles, January 19, 2023, article by Robert Ochoho on Baby Sagini's pre-trial case set for March, reported that Senior Resident Magistrate Christine Ogweno instructed media bloggers to stop pursuing the case, since it violated the privacy of Baby Sagini and his sister Shantel Kemunto. *"Stop violating children's rights. You must maintain their privacy."* she said. She directed media bloggers to refrain from publishing any content that would endanger the child, their siblings, or their family.



Article on baby Sagini pre-trial and Senior Resident Magistrate Christine Ogweno's directive to media bloggers.

This coincided with reporting guidelines for freelancers, bloggers, interns and students on judiciary matters, that emphasise that, regardless of a story's newsworthiness if there is any doubt it might endanger or risk the life or welfare of a child, it is crucial to either provide only the essential details of the case or refrain from reporting it altogether.

Further, in regard to Clause 15 of the code of conduct on privacy, the follow-up reports refrained from investigating private matters without the correct context or consent. The emphasis was on the court proceedings surrounding the case. In this regard, the tragic story of Baby Sagini made it clear that children must be protected against abuse, neglect, assault and exploitation.

Other articles monitored included:

- *Ritual cleansing? Relatives held over gouging out boy's eyes, December 20, 2022.*
- *Three people charged with attempting to kill Brighton Sagini, will be heard on March 3, January 19, 2023.*
- *Court hands Baby Sagini trio 55 years prison term, July 25, 2023.* Only PD combined the total number of years for the combined jail-term of the perpetrators, to conjure up this headline.

d) Taifa Leo

The reports as shared by the newspaper were as below:

- *Alimng'oa mtoto macho?* December 20, 2023.
- *Mtoto mvulana aliyeng'olewa macho alindwa na serikali, afichua wakili,* December 30, 2022.
- *Ungekuwa Jaji, Ungewafanyia nini Waliomng'oa Macho Mtoto Sagini?* July 9, 2023. On this article by Mwangi Muiruri, Taifa Leo prepared an argument in the run to the anticipated judge's ruling after finding the three suspects guilty and set the sentencing for another day.
- *Mtoto Sagini: Washtakiwa waliomng'oa macho wasukumwa jela miaka 40, 10 na 5,* July 24, 2023.



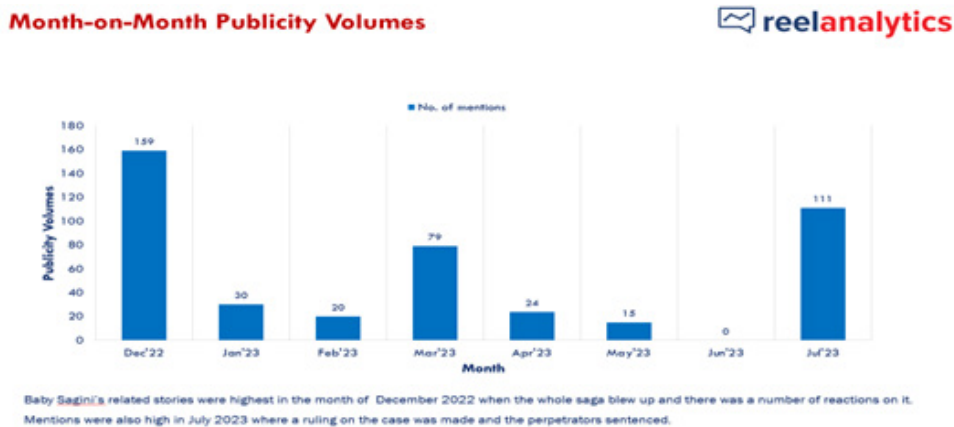
Taifa Leo article in anticipation of the judge's ruling.

PUBLICITY VOLUMES

The data generated under this section was analysed through Reel Analytics software. From the data available, it is evident that the period of coverage was from December to July, peaking in the month of March with a confession from the grandmother. This is in tandem with the immediate previous section. Radio coverage manifested higher number of stories attributed to the medium’s coverage being aired on a wide range of stations thus more publicity. TV stations on the othe hand generated the highest media values due to high-rate cards associated with the medium, as well as the lengthy discussions held about the case. Egesa FM had the highest number of mentions and share of voice, Radio Maisha accrued the largest media value and Citizen TV dominated publicity in the TV category, with topics on the sentencing and the grandmother’s confession being the major highlights.

Additionally, analysis was done on coverage across print Media; Standard, Taifa Leo, Daily Nation, Saturday Nation, The People Daily, Standard on Saturday, Sunday standard, Sunday Nation, and Taifa Jumapili with the Standard topping the list with 10 stories..

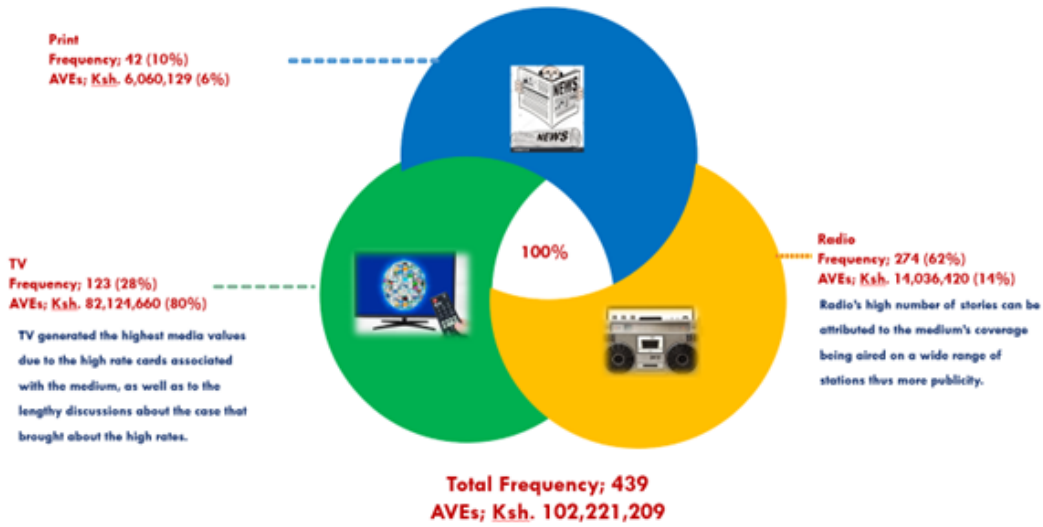
i. Month on month publicity volumes



The reporting on Baby Sagini spanned 8 months, from December 2022 to July 2023 encompassing the period when investigations began and culminating with the court’s judgement. Reporting was most prominent during the months of December, March and July, coinciding with key developments such as investigations, the grandmother’s confession and sentencing. In the period from January to May, the media focused on follow-ups particularly regarding the court proceedings.

ii. **Publicity volumes and AVEs by medium.**

Publicity volumes and AVEs by medium



The analysis revealed that radio covered a high number of stories, which can be attributed to its wide-ranging coverage across the country. TV stations generated the highest media values due to the high-rate cards associated with this medium and the extensive discussions about the case. Print media ranked third, with only 10% coverage share.

iii. **Publicity on print**

The report received notable coverage in several publications, including The Standard, Taifa Leo, Daily Nation, Saturday Nation, The People Daily, Standard on Saturday, Sunday Standard, Sunday Nation, and Taifa Jumapili. The majority of the coverage was in The Standard with ten mentions, followed by Taifa Leo with eight mentions and Daily Nation third with seven. Sunday Nation and Taifa *jumapili* had the fewest mentions at with only two and one story, respectively. It's important to note that analytics on print media focused solely on the hard copy versions, excluding online content.

Publicity on Print



Publication	No. of Mentions	Share of Ink	AVE Value (KSH)
The Standard	10	362	1,644,249
Taifa Leo	8	385	658,694
Daily Nation	7	420	1,391,501
Saturday Nation	4	170	405,704
The People Daily	4	284	859,963
Standard on Saturday	3	142	551,352
Sunday Standard	3	69	227,100
Sunday Nation	2	124	258,530
Taifa Jumapili	1	32	63,036
Grand Total	42	1,988	6,060,129

The Standard

The publication advanced the highest number of stories related to Baby Sagini and accrued the highest media values as well.

iv. Publicity on radio

Several regional and national stations covered the stories about Baby Sagini, with Egesa FM having the highest number of mentions and share of voice, while radio Maisha accrued the largest media value.

Publicity on Radio

Station	No. of Mentions	Share of voice	AVE Value (KSH)
Egesa FM	26	2,569	2,102,180
Capital FM	22	1,432	1,346,840
Radio Maisha	25	1,744	3,371,740
Milele FM	20	517	625,240
Citizen Radio	18	1,129	1,425,730
East FM	17	422	153,700
Classic 105	15	343	347,870
Homeboys Radio	14	319	350,840
Hope FM	13	735	716,190
Hut 96	12	430	350,310
Radio Jamba	11	291	322,980
Muny FM	7	320	253,650
Ghetto Radio	7	390	279,610
Kisumu FM	7	145	171,700
Mutemba FM	6	317	217,730
Changal FM	6	383	304,680
Makulu FM	4	193	71,000
Wimwatu	4	427	276,770
Ramogi FM	4	430	490,220
Radio Njoro Lofwe	3	252	58,470
Coco FM	3	143	63,450
Kameme FM	3	262	285,710
Mara FM	2	92	80,040
Kisumu FM	2	198	191,400
Radio Taita	1	63	90,440
Inooro FM	1	64	66,820
Muny FM	1	28	21,110
Grand Total	274	13,638	14,036,420



A number of both regional and national stations advanced the stories on Baby Sagini with **Egesa FM** having the highest number of mentions and share of voice while **Radio Maisha** accrued the largest media values.

v. Publicity on TV

Citizen TV dominated publicity in the TV category, followed by TV47, Ramogi TV, NTV and KBC channel 1. Highlights of their coverage included the sentencing and the grandmother’s confession.

Publicity on TV

Channel	No. of Mentions	Share of voice	AVE Value (KSH)
Citizen TV	33	5,663	29,507,750
TV 47	17	3,352	12,462,780
Ramogi TV	15	2,080	5,785,930
NTV	15	1,691	6,753,430
KBC Channel 1	14	1,166	3,760,260
KTN NEWS	11	2,030	6,738,940
KTN Home	8	1,294	6,734,100
K24	5	859	2,391,000
Kameme TV	3	2,478	7,488,960
Lolwe TV	1	19	24,980
Inooro TV	1	100	476,530
Grand Total	123	20,732	82,124,660



Citizen TV dominated publicity on TV
 Highlight coverage on the medium include:

- 3 people sentenced for causing grievous harm to baby Sagini
- Baby Sagini confessed his grandmother participated in gouging out his eyes

CONCLUSION

The media coverage of the Baby Sagini's story was both encouraging and demonstrated the critical role media plays in disseminating information on matters of public concern. Professionalism was evident from the beginning, as the case developed and continued through to the sentencing of the suspects. Data collected revealed adherence to the guidelines on children reporting and the code of conduct clauses namely 2, 4, 5, 10, 14, 15, 19 & 21. This was notable in the attribution of sources, analytical coverage, use of pictures and names, emotional pieces meant to portray Kenyans mood (anger) and perspectives of the tragedy and protection of children. Subsequently, the sustained coverage also demonstrated media's role in informing the public at all stages of a case that was of immense public interest and, directly/indirectly contributed to the need for expedition by actors, investigators, and the court.

The coverage of all the proceedings and follow-ups of Baby Sagini's story across broadcast and print, might have propelled the judiciary to accord the story priority that ensured the victim and the public witnessed justice served. The story took a different trajectory compared to Baby Pendo's whose commencement date goes back to 2017. However, there was some parallelism as baby Sagini's incident happened at a period of heightened political tensions as the opposition campaigned against what it called an "illegitimate regime" preparing for protests across the country. Politics honked most of the limelight at the time. Similarly, baby Pendo's incident happened at a time when police violently quelled demonstrations in parts of the country.

Further, the media consistently framed the relatives of the victim in a negative light, which was justified in this case since they were the suspects in the heinous act. They remained treated as suspects throughout the reporting until their guilty was pronounced.

In terms of value, TV had the highest media value while radio featured the most stories about Baby Sagini. The Standard published the most stories, with Egesa FM & Radio Maisha leading in the number of mentions and media value considering their extensive reach. Citizen TV dominated the coverage among TV stations. In the print media category the grandmother's confession and the sentencing were the two headlines that stood out. This generated anticipation across the media and among Kenyans as they awaited the naming of the perpetrators and the much-needed conclusion of the case.

Daily Nation offered a unique perspective not found in other monitored stations and print media, after the court ruled on the matter. A columnist expressed dissatisfaction with the court's decision. In cases like this, the media is encouraged to provide a powerful closing and gauge the opinions of Kenyans on the ruling. Compared to the extensive coverage during the case, it is clear that the media agenda & framing were centered on the intensified investigations and court ruling. However, attention to the case gradually declined after the ruling, leading to a justified reduction in airtime allocation across media outlets. The intense and sustained media focus directly, or indirectly, exerted pressure on the actors involved. Notably, the media initially fell short in their journalism standards in their coverage of Baby Sagini, but they improved in their adherence to ethics, court reporting guidelines and their continued coverage of the case.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The media is commended for setting the agenda on the topic and sustaining it to the end. This serves as a demonstration of the media's vital role in reporting matters on matters of public and human interest. It also directly or indirectly, placed the investigative agencies and the judiciary under pressure to expedite the case, sending a clear message that there is zero tolerance for such inhumane acts against children.
2. The media is also commendable for largely adhering to the code of conduct, particularly in reporting with sensitivity, use of pictures and analytical skills engaged.
3. An Advisory to be issued for sustained adherence to the code of conduct, particularly for media houses which went overboard and violated Clauses 2 & 5 on accuracy & fairness and accountability in the coverage of the case.
4. Support community & local media that rely on secondary sources for reporting on issues of public interest. This may expose them to risks related to violations by the secondary sources and copyright issues. Alternatively, community media can build their capacities to leverage on digitisation and redesigning their business models to boost revenues.
5. Support community and local media by providing training on allocating more airtime to matters of public/human interest. Mainstream media dominated in the number of stories, frequency and airtime dedicated to Baby Sagini's case.
6. Encourage media stations to follow up on other pending children's cases in court and inform the public on the progress or any delays.
7. There is a need to support media houses in sustaining coverage of issues related to children's rights.
8. Editorial training on prioritising and thoroughly following up on stories involving violations against children can initiate conversations, inform policy changes, raise awareness about children's rights and encourage action.

ANNEXURE 1

The media monitoring team involved in this report are acknowledged as follows.

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