

# TODAY'S MEDIA TRENDS

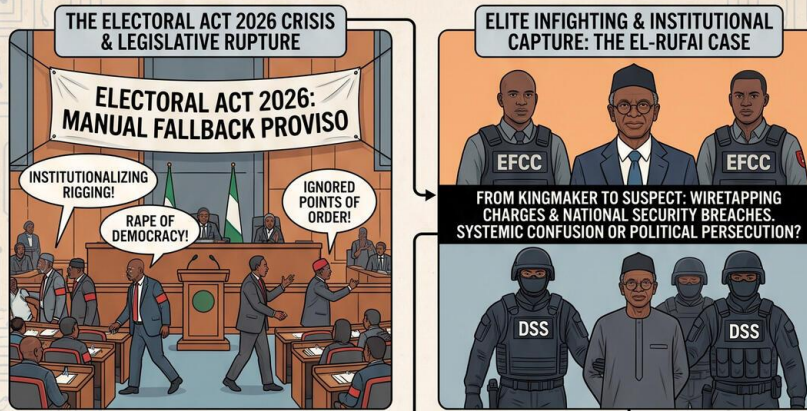
## CHANNELSTV

FEBRUARY 18, 2026

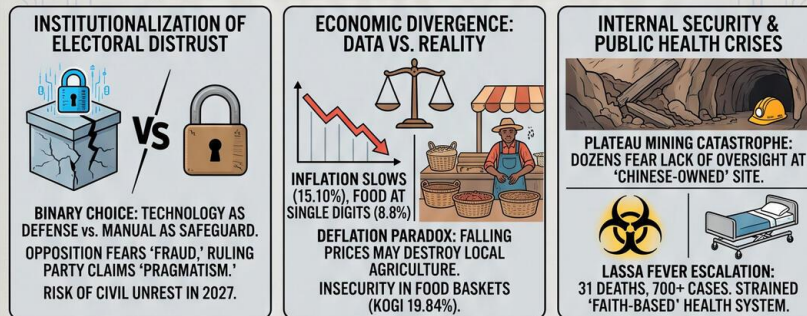
THE GDELT PROJECT

### NIGERIAN DEMOCRACY AT A CROSSROADS: LEGISLATIVE VOLATILITY, INSTITUTIONAL CAPTURE, & THE SPECTER OF 2027

**DAY-AT-A-GLANCE:** A convergence of legislative rupture, internal security crises, and economic divergence dominating the reporting period.



#### DEEP DIVE: TRENDS AND THEMES & KEY GOVERNANCE TOPICS



#### INTERNAL & EXTERNAL DYNAMICS



#### FUTURE OUTLOOK, RISKS, & STRATEGIC FORESIGHT



**RECOMMENDATION & IMPLICATION SUMMARY:** RESTORE TRUST THROUGH EVIDENCE-BASED PLANNING & RULE OF LAW. SECURE COMMS, PIVOT ECONOMIC METRICS, & RE-ENGAGE DIPLOMACY TO MITIGATE SYSTEMIC RISKS.

# TODAY'S MEDIA TRENDS

## CHANNELSTV

FEBRUARY 18, 2026

---

NIGERIAN DEMOCRACY AT A  
CROSSROADS: LEGISLATIVE  
VOLATILITY, INSTITUTIONAL  
CAPTURE, AND THE SPECTER OF  
2027

### DAY-AT-A-GLANCE

---

The reporting period is dominated by a profound legislative and social rupture over the **Electoral Act 2026**, specifically regarding the mandatory electronic transmission of results. The ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) has successfully pushed through an amendment that retains manual transmission as a fallback, a move that triggered a [high-profile walkout](#) by opposition lawmakers. Critics characterize this "proviso" as a deliberate mechanism for **electoral malpractice** and "institutionalizing rigging" ahead of the 2027 general elections. The administration is framing this as a pragmatic solution to infrastructure deficits, while the opposition and civil society see it as a "rape" of democratic progress and a betrayal of the [sovereignty of the people](#).

Simultaneously, the Nigerian state faces a convergence of internal security and public health crises. A catastrophic mining collapse

in **Plateau State** has left dozens dead, highlighting the precarious nature of [artisanal mining](#) and a lack of regulatory oversight. The **Lassa fever** outbreak is escalating, with 31 deaths in five weeks and over 700 suspected cases, straining a health system already struggling with "faith-based" rather than [evidence-based planning](#). In the background, the high-profile detention and subsequent transfer of former Kaduna Governor **Nasir El-Rufai** from EFCC to DSS custody on [three-count charges](#) involving alleged wiretapping and national security breaches signals a sharpening of elite infighting within the political class.

Economically, the day features a significant narrative shift as government data claims food inflation has eased to **single digits (8.8%)** for the first time in a decade. However, this is met with intense skepticism by analysts who point to a ["deflation paradox"](#) where falling prices may destroy local agricultural production. On the global stage, the US-Iran nuclear talks in Geneva remain at a [stalemate](#), with potential for regional escalation that could disrupt global energy markets, a scenario Nigeria—despite its oil wealth—is ill-prepared to navigate due to its [crippling debt](#) and lack of fiscal discipline.

### MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS

---

#### The Electoral Act 2026 Crisis

- The Senate modified Clause 28, reducing the notice of election period to 300 days to [avoid Ramadan](#) in 2027.
- Legislative sessions devolved into chaos over **Clause 60**, which allows manual results as a fallback if electronic transmission fails.

- Opposition lawmakers staged a walkout, alleging the [Majority Leader](#) and House Speaker ignored points of order to ram through the amendment.
- Civil society groups and protesters at the National Assembly gate demanded a [reinstatement of real-time](#) electronic transmission.

### Elite Infighting: The Nasir El-Rufai Case

- The former Kaduna Governor was released from EFCC custody only to be [arrested by the DSS](#).
- He faces charges related to **wiretapping** the National Security Advisor and allegedly committing [offenses under the Evidence Act](#).
- Analysts suggest the case reveals [incompetence within the security apparatus](#) if the phone of the NSA was indeed compromised.

### Plateau State Mining Catastrophe

- At least 37 artisanal miners are feared dead in **Zurak, Wase** local government area after a tunnel collapse.
- Miners were reportedly working at a site [believed to be Chinese-owned](#).
- Troops of the Nigerian Army have [sealed off the area](#) to prevent further access.

## KEY GOVERNANCE TOPICS

---

### Legal Warfare & Regulatory Risk

- The National Assembly is being accused of "legislative capture" by the executive, with claims that it has become an [extension of the presidency](#).

- Ongoing controversy over the **Petroleum Industry Act (PIA)** and the failure of the government to [account for crude oil swap](#) barrels used for subsidies.
- Lagos State is attempting to [domesticate and harmonize](#) tax laws to remove "non-state actors" from revenue collection on roads.

### Global Health & Biosecurity

- The NCDC reports [31 deaths from Lassa fever](#) in five weeks, with 754 suspected cases across 14 states.
- The Health Minister calls for a shift from "faith-based assessments" to [evidence-based planning](#) to address health sector scorecard gaps.

### Macroeconomics & Trade

- Nigeria's headline inflation rate slowed to **15.10%** in January, down from 15.15% in December.
- Food inflation claims a drop to [single digits \(8.8%\)](#), though economists warn this may lead to **unemployment** as local farmers cannot compete with cheap imports.
- The World Bank has issued a [warning regarding Nigeria's debt](#) management and servicing.

### Critical Infrastructure Security

- Civil Defense school paraded suspects for [vandalism of telecommunications infrastructure and armored cables](#).
- [Reports from the East-West Road indicate infrastructure failures due to high water tables, requiring reinforced concrete](#) instead of asphalt.

## DEEP DIVE: TRENDS AND THEMES

---

**The Institutionalization of Electoral Distrust** The pervasive theme of the day is the erosion of public trust in democratic institutions. The legislative battle over the [mandatory electronic transmission](#) of results has created a narrative where technology is viewed as the only defense against a "mischievous parliament." The insistence on manual fallbacks is interpreted by the opposition as a "safeguard for fraud," while the ruling party frames it as a [practical necessity](#) for regions without internet. This binary creates a high risk of **civil unrest** in 2027 if the results are contested.

### **Economic Divergence: Data vs. Reality**

There is a sharp disconnect between the "good numbers" presented by the National Bureau of Statistics and the "suffering" described by citizens. While **headline inflation** is marginally slowing, the report of single-digit [food inflation](#) is treated as a "paradox." If prices fall too low, the agricultural sector collapses; if they remain high, the public starves. This fragility is exacerbated by **insecurity** in food basket regions like [Kogi State](#), which recorded the highest food inflation (19.84%) despite being central, due to its status as an "epicenter of insecurity."

**The Weaponization of Accountability** The legal proceedings against **Nasir El-Rufai** are increasingly viewed not as judicial oversight, but as [political persecution](#) or a "masterstroke" by factions within the ruling party. The overlap between the EFCC and DSS roles suggests a **systemic confusion** or a deliberate strategy to keep political rivals in indefinite detention using "national security" as a catch-all justification. This trend signals a

shift from democratic consensus-building to **legal warfare** within the elite.

## INTERNAL DYNAMICS & DOMESTIC INSTABILITY

---

The internal stability of Nigeria is under severe pressure from **partisan polarization**. The walkout in the House of Representatives reflects a total breakdown in communication between the APC and minority groups. The opposition claims they are being ["ignored and shouted down"](#) by the House leadership, which has bypassed standard parliamentary procedures to approve the Electoral Act amendments. This **legislative exclusion** is driving political energy into the streets, as seen with the "Occupy National Assembly" protests.

Societal stability is further threatened by **structural vulnerabilities** in the North. The mining disaster in Plateau State and the ongoing [killing of 50 persons](#) in Burgu, Niger State, show that the state has lost its **monopoly on violence** in rural areas. Protests in **Kaduna** against the former governor's management of state resources indicate that even once-powerful leaders are no longer immune to public anger, yet the state's response remains **reactive rather than proactive**.

## EXTERNAL DYNAMICS & GLOBAL POSTURE

---

Nigeria's global posture is currently **defensive and extractive**. The state is actively seeking external investment while simultaneously failing to secure its own resource sectors, as evidenced by the [unauthorized mining](#) activity. The government's appeal to [multilateral agencies](#)

for humanitarian aid for Sudan (a \$1.6B appeal) reflects a regional environment where Nigeria is no longer the sole "big brother" but a participant in a broader **crisis zone**.

Relations with the US remain **transactional and security-focused**. The arrival of [100 US troops](#) for training and surveillance is a double-edged sword: it provides necessary intelligence capabilities but underscores the **failure of Nigerian internal security** to manage threats without foreign intervention. Meanwhile, Nigeria is carefully watching the [US-Iran standoff](#), knowing that any military escalation in the Gulf would cause oil prices to spike, potentially providing a short-term fiscal windfall but long-term **global economic instability**.

## THE ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

---

The economic climate is characterized by **cautious optimism** in the markets tempered by **fiscal alarm** regarding debt and production. The equities market showed a [rebound](#), driven by Seplat Energy, yet the broader manufacturing sector is struggling with high interest rates and [mismatched currency valuation](#).

### Key Economic Vectors

- **Inflation:** Headline at 15.10%; [Food inflation](#) at 8.8%.
- **Currency:** Naira trading near [1395-1400](#) per Dollar, a significant appreciation from previous psychological resistance levels.
- **Debt:** Concerns over **domestic borrowing** to pay salaries and the World Bank warning on [debt servicing obligations](#).
- **Agriculture:** Risks of agricultural business [failure due to disinflation](#) dropping prices below production costs.

- **Commodities:** Seplat Energy star trading at [\\$500 per share](#), up 59%.

## LEADERSHIP CHANGES

---

The political landscape is shifting as once-dominant figures face exclusion or criminal charges, indicating a consolidation of power by the current presidency.

- **Nasir El-Rufai (Former Governor):** Shifted from a kingmaker role to [criminal suspect](#) under DSS detention. This signals a major fallout with the current administration's security inner circle.
- **Yahya Abdullahi (Senator):** Emerging as a key voice in [national security budget oversight](#), calling for supplementary funding to prevent "symbolic" security declarations.
- **Muda Shuru Obasa (Speaker, Lagos House):** Consolidating APC support for [Tinubu's second term](#) bid through symbolic gestures and trade union endorsements.
- **Nasir El Rufai's Accusers:** Factions like the "Kaduna Victims Coalition" are gaining prominence as [legal instruments](#) for state-led accountability measures.

## EDITORIAL POSTURE & STORY HIERARCHY

---

The network's editorial hierarchy emphasizes **institutional conflict** as the lead narrative, particularly the Electoral Act and the El-Rufai case. These are treated with high urgency and skepticism. Conversely, the Plateau mining tragedy—despite its high death toll—is **buried** mid-broadcast, suggesting a normalization of mass-casualty events in the country. The tone is **analytically bleak**, focusing on the failure of government promises versus the reality of insecurity and health crises. A conspicuous

omission is a detailed investigation into the **Chinese companies** mentioned in the mining disaster; the network notes their existence but stops short of naming them or interviewing their management, indicating a possible editorial boundary regarding foreign direct investment actors.

## GEOPOLITICAL FRAMING

---

### COUNTRIES

- **Nigeria:** Portrayed as a "hybrid" system struggling to modernize but held back by [corrupt manual legacies](#) and internal "predetermined" legislative outcomes.
- **Iran:** Framed as a **hostile expansionist** using proxy armies (Hezbollah, Hamas) to threaten regional stability while [menacing global oil flow](#) through the Strait of Hormuz.
- **United States:** Portrayed as a "deterrent force" in the Middle East and a [security partner](#) in Nigeria, though its domestic policy (Trump's Greenland rhetoric) is viewed with [anxious uncertainty](#).
- **Sudan:** A humanitarian "catastrophe" facing the [world's largest crisis](#), with Nigeria watching warily from a distance.

### LEADERS

- **President Tinubu:** Framed as a **landmark achiever** by his supporters but a **higher authority** directing the National Assembly's "selfish" decisions by his critics.
- **Donald Trump:** Portrayed as a "legacy-defining" leader whose "doctrine of decisiveness" is [forcing a binary choice](#) on the world between US and Iran trade.

- **Nasir El-Rufai:** Characterized by critics as a man of [extraordinary impunity and recklessness](#), now trapped in the same legal system he once wielded.
- **Benjamin Netanyahu:** Seen as a **weakened leader** obsessed with the "next day of leaving office" and avoiding [trial](#).

## INFORMATION WARFARE ENVIRONMENT

---

The broadcast reveals a sophisticated information environment where **legislative maneuvers** are the primary weapon. The ruling party is seeding a narrative of "practicality" and "broadband limitations" to justify the [manual transmission fallback](#). This is countered by an opposition information operation focused on the **93% internet coverage** document from 2021, used to argue that the infrastructure exists and the "manual proviso" is a [deliberate disinformation](#) tool for rigging. The "wiretapping" charge against El-Rufai is another front, where the state is using a [confession on national television](#) to bypass traditional evidentiary standards, creating a "meta-narrative" of incompetence within the security services to justify political purges.

## HYPOTHESES AND FUTURE OUTLOOK

---

- **Electoral Violence in 2027:** If the manual transmission proviso is not repealed, the 2027 elections will likely be the [least credible in history](#), leading to widespread rejection of results and possible post-election violence.

- **Health System Collapse:** The continued reliance on reactive "emergency" declarations for Lassa fever and other diseases will lead to a [brain drain of healthcare workers](#) who fear infection while on duty.
- **Regional Hegemony Shift:** Turkey's expanding footprint in Ethiopia and its mediating role in the [Somaliland dispute](#) signals a decline in Nigerian and South African influence in pan-African diplomacy.

## STRATEGIC FORESIGHT

---

**Short Term (1-4 Weeks):** Continued "Occupy National Assembly" protests; legal challenges to the El-Rufai detention; escalation of Lassa fever fatalities as the dry season [peaks through March](#).

**Medium Term (1-6 Months):** Finalization of the **2026 Budget**, with likely major gaps in security funding; diplomatic fallout from [Somaliland recognition](#) impacting African Union solidarity.

**Long Term (1-5 Years):** Structural decay of the **National Assembly** as an independent body; the potential for a "1 trillion dollar economy" [unrealized](#) due to unsustainable debt servicing and security-induced agricultural failure.

## RISK ASSESSMENT

---

The current risk matrix for Nigeria is dominated by institutional failure and unaddressed health crises.

- **Risk: Electoral Legitimacy Collapse.** Triggers: Signing of the 2026 Electoral Act with the manual transmission proviso. Likelihood: High. Impact: Catastrophic civil unrest and investment flight. Mitigations: [Reinstatement of real-time](#) electronic transmission as the sole legal standard.
- **Risk: Public Health Crisis (Lassa Fever).** Triggers: Continued lack of [infection control protocols](#) and PPE for health workers. Likelihood: High. Impact: High mortality rates and disruption of hospital services. Mitigations: Immediate deployment of **Rapid Response Teams** and improved waste disposal.
- **Risk: Elite Conflict Escalation.** Triggers: Prosecution of El-Rufai and potential "retaliatory" leaks of [wiretapped security conversations](#). Likelihood: Moderate. Impact: Destabilization of the presidency and security agencies. Mitigations: Transparent judicial processes and adherence to the **Rule of Law**.
- **Risk: Resource Nationalization Backlash.** Triggers: Crackdown on artisanal mining following the [Plateau tragedy](#) without alternative economic support. Likelihood: Moderate. Impact: Increased local insurgency and banditry in mining zones. Mitigations: Formalization of artisanal mining and local community development trusts.

- **Risk: Global Energy Shock.** Triggers: Breakdown of [US-Iran talks](#) leading to Hormuz blockade. Likelihood: Low-Moderate. Impact: Massive price volatility for Nigerian fuel imports. Mitigations: Strengthening domestic refining capacity and **strategic reserves**.

## GAPS & BLIND SPOTS

---

- The exact **identity and culpability** of the foreign (Chinese) company involved in the Plateau mining tragedy is conspicuously absent.
- The transcript fails to verify the National Security Advisor's actual [phone status](#); if he was wiretapped, the source of the technology used remains unknown.
- There is no discussion on how "single digit" food inflation is calculated when [Kogi State](#) is experiencing nearly 20% inflation.
- The missing perspective of **non-state revenue collectors** in Lagos; their "legitimacy" claims are noted but not explored, leaving a gap in understanding road-level security.

## CONTRARIAN NARRATIVE SCENARIOS

---

**The "Manual Proviso" as an Inclusionary Tool** A contrarian view suggests the manual fallback is not for rigging, but a **sophisticated anti-disenfranchisement** tool. If the IRF portal is hacked (a major cyber risk noted in [subsection three of Section 60](#)), the lack of a manual fallback would leave the entire nation without a verifiable result. In this lens, the opposition's demand for "electronic only" is a **cybersecurity vulnerability**.

**The El-Rufai Case as an Anti-Coup Measure** The "wiretapping" and "national security" focus might indicate that the state discovered a **nascent conspiracy** rather than a personal rivalry. The "reckless comments" on national television may have been the public indicator of a much deeper [security bridge](#) that the state is now frantically trying to contain.

**Black Swan Event:** A total **internet blackout** on election day 2027 (either state-led or due to catastrophic infrastructure failure) occurring precisely because the law **did not** have a manual fallback, leading to a **constitutional vacuum** and military intervention.

## RECOMMENDATIONS & IMPLICATIONS

---

### For Statecraft/Public Sector:

- **Security:** Review all communication encryption for the [National Security Advisor](#) and senior cabinet to prevent further wiretapping breaches.
- **Economic:** Pivot from "headline inflation" metrics to **local production viability** metrics to prevent the agricultural sector slump.
- **Diplomatic:** Re-engage with the [African Union](#) on the "colonial crimes" resolution to reposition Nigeria as a moral leader in global justice debates.

### For Private Sector/Investors:

- **Supply Chain:** Investors in **Seplat Energy** and the oil sector should hedge against [Strait of Hormuz](#) risks that could spike operational costs despite high share prices.

- **Regulatory:** Companies operating in **Lagos** must prepare for a [new tax enforcement](#) regime that aggressively targets "informal" middle-men.
- **Safety:** Any foreign firm in the **extractive sector** must immediately audit "artisanal" sub-contractors to avoid liability from [tunnel collapses](#).

## LEGISLATIVE ROUNDUP

---

The legislature is currently focused on the **Electoral Act 2026** and the **2025/2026 Budget Proposals**. Tensions are high regarding the removal of [indirect primaries](#) and the reduction of the election notice period.

### BILLS DISCUSSED/DEBATED:

- **Electoral Act Amendment Bill 2026:** Passed with a controversial proviso for [manual result transmission](#) fallback.
- **Clause 28 (Electoral Act):** Modified to reduce election notice from [360 to 300 days](#).
- **2026 Budget Proposal:** A 229.9 billion proposal for the [Ministry of Works](#) and FERMA under scrutiny.
- **Lagos State Wealth Fund Bill:** Proposed to create a [subnational saving base](#) for infrastructure.

### HEARINGS & PRESS EVENTS:

- **National Security Budget Defense:** Senator Yahya Abdullahi warned against [symbolic emergency](#) declarations without funding.
- **MSME Stakeholder Meeting:** Vice President Shettima received the [2025-2026 report](#), targeting 300,000 new jobs.

- **Ecowas Court Bilateral Meeting:** Discussion on the [non-enforcement of judgments](#) by member states.

## KEY STORIES

---

- **The "Manual Proviso" Rebellion:** Chaos in the House of Reps as the opposition [walks out](#) over the Electoral Act's failure to mandate 100% electronic results.
- **El-Rufai Transferred to DSS:** Nasir El-Rufai moves from EFCC to DSS custody, facing charges of [wiretapping the NSA](#) and national security violations.
- **Plateau Mining Tragedy:** 37 miners feared dead in [Zurak, Wase](#) after a tunnel collapse at a site with alleged foreign ownership.
- **Food Inflation Narrative:** Government data claims food inflation at [8.8%](#), but analysts warn of a "deflation paradox" harming farmers.
- **Lassa Fever Outbreak:** 31 fatalities and 754 suspected cases [confirmed by NCDC](#) over the last five weeks.
- **US-Iran Geneva Standoff:** Second round of talks ends [without breakthrough](#), as Iran threatens to close the Strait of Hormuz.
- **Nigeria-US Security Cooperation:** 100 US troops [arrive in Nigeria](#) for surveillance and counter-terrorism training.
- **Lagos Tax Harmonization:** Move to [remove non-state actors](#) from road revenue collection to ease consumer costs.
- **Jesse Jackson Legacy:** Professor Bolaji Akinyemi discusses [Reverend Jesse Jackson's](#) deep historical ties to Nigeria and the June 12th struggle.

- **Gabon Social Media Ban:** Media regulator [suspends platforms](#) like TikTok and WhatsApp citing "spread of false information."
- **Senegal University Protests:** Death of a medical student who [jumped from a fourth floor](#) during security intervention sparks riots.
- **Portaka Dual Carriageway:** Minister of Works announces the road is [ready for commissioning](#) on May 12th.
- **Somaliland Recognition Row:** Turkey mediates as [Ethiopia's lease of coastline angers Somalia and Israel recognizes the breakaway region](#).
- **Police Games 2026:** [6,000 police officers competing in Asaba](#) across 37 sporting events.
- **Bayer/Monsanto Payout:** Chemical giant to pay [another \\$7 billion](#) over 20 years to settle Roundup cancer lawsuits.

## ABOUT THIS REPORT

---

**Today's Media Trends** is a public interest experiment in applying deep thematic trend analysis to television news coverage from around the world to explore how responsibly applied advanced AI can help journalists and scholars better understand the overarching trends, themes and patterns of our global world.

**No data is used to train or tune any AI model.**

Each morning, in collaboration with the Internet Archive's TV News Archive, we apply Google's Gemini 3 to deeply examine yesterday's coverage from each television news channel to tease out the overarching themes and trends of its news coverage into a richly annotated thematic analysis. Each high-level insight is connected back to the original broadcast, allowing journalists and scholars to understand the dominate themes and trends and instantly click out to the underlying sources for details.

By helping journalists and scholars see the broader trends and patterns of global news coverage, this analysis helps them identify relevant stories and coverage they might not otherwise have encountered and uncover connections, emphases and narrative shifts that enable more comprehensive reporting and deeper, evidence-based research.

This report is entirely machine generated using Gemini 3 and may include errors and omissions. Please verify all findings. No data is used to train or tune any AI model.

For questions or suggestions, please contact [kalev.leetaru5@gmail.com](mailto:kalev.leetaru5@gmail.com). To learn more or subscribe to our free daily newsletters, visit <https://blog.gdeltproject.org/announcing-our-new-daily-todays-trends-on-capitol-hill-todays-media-trends-newsletter-briefings/>. You can also learn more about the GDELT Project at <https://blog.gdeltproject.org/> and the Internet Archive's TV News Archive at <https://archive.org/details/tv>.