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SOMALIA

In the aftermath of the fall of Somalia's military regime, privately owned media outlets were established in 1991 after 21 years of a state monopoly on the media. Belligerent clan factions founded radio stations to advance their propaganda, mislead the public, and inflame hostilities against other clan sects. Ordinary citizens set up a print media that compared favorably to the radio stations of the warlords, although the new print journalists were unskilled and their reports rarely met professional standards. During this time, rival political groups failed to implement several peace agreements that they reached abroad. The anarchy spread into almost every region—except the northwest, which divided the country by declaring independence from Somalia.

In early 2000 privately owned radio stations grew rapidly and TV stations began broadcasting. Now more than 60 newspapers are produced in major cities. Many online media emerged and hundreds of people joined the journalism profession, albeit without adequate training. The Transitional Federal Charter (TFC) now oversees the parliament and government and guarantees freedom of media and information. The ongoing media law development process is consulted by all concerned parties, including the transitional government, the media community, and civil society members.

In spite of the establishment of numerous private media, the multifaceted crisis of politics, economy, security, and governance in Somalia presents severe challenges. Local journalists have paid a heavy price for reporting on Somalia's long-standing conflict, as fatal attacks orchestrated by powerful elites on members of the press have increased. Financial problems also plague the media, creating a dependence on politically minded sponsors. The number of journalists is increasing but the profession is compromised by their low skill levels. Media owners have little interest in credible journalism, and the panelists noted that while the working environment of journalists and electronic media professionals may have changed, the public's interests are not being served.

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SOMALIA AT A GLANCE

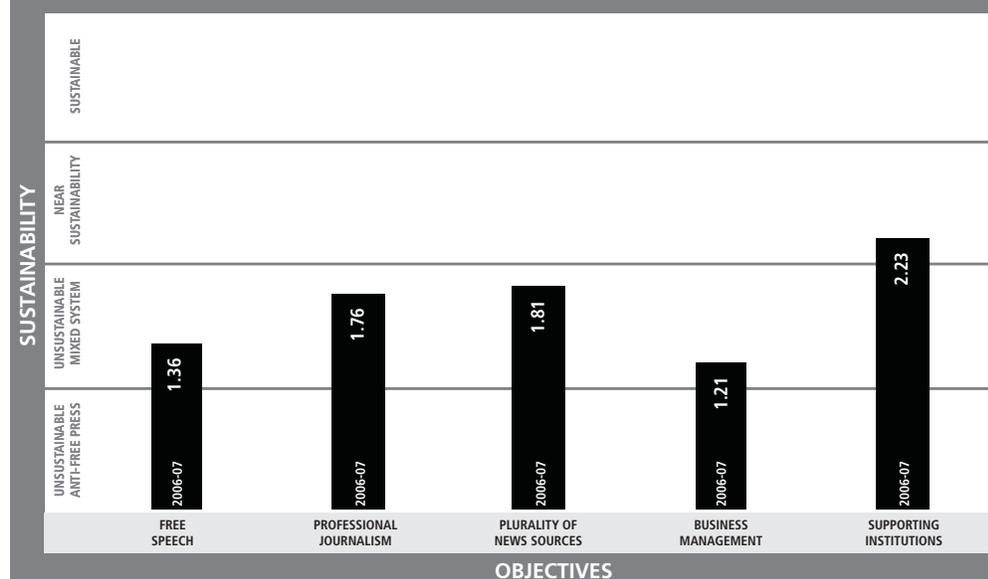
GENERAL

- > **Population:** 9,118,773 (July 2007 est., *CIA World Factbook*)
- > **Capital city:** Mogadishu
- > **Ethnic groups (% of population):** Somali 85%, Bantu and other non-Somali 15% (*CIA World Factbook*)
- > **Religions:** Sunni Muslim (*CIA World Factbook*)
- > **Languages:** Somali (official), Arabic, Italian, English (*CIA World Factbook*)
- > **GNI (2006-Atlas):** N/A
- > **GNI per capita (2006-PPP):** N/A
- > **Literacy rate:** 37.8% (male 49.7%, female 25.8%) (2001 est., *CIA World Factbook*)
- > **President or top authority:** Transitional Federal President Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed (since October 14, 2004)

MEDIA-SPECIFIC

- > **Number of active print outlets, radio stations, television stations:** 64 print media (of which, 17 in Somaliland), 21 radio stations (of which, 1 in Somaliland), 4 television stations (of which, 1 in Somaliland)
- > **Newspaper circulation statistics:** Top newspapers and estimated circulation: *Xog-Ogaal* (800), *Qaran* (500) and *Ayaamaha* (400) in Mogadishu; *Jamhuuriya* (1000) in Hargeisa.
- > **Broadcast ratings:** Top three radio stations: Shabelle Radio, Somali Broadcasting Corporation, and Horn Afrik. Universal TV covers the whole country, Somaliland TV covers an area with an estimated 1500 television-watching households, and Somali Broadcasting Corporation TV covers an area with an estimated 1000 television-watching households
- > **News agencies:** No local news agencies operate in Somalia.
- > **Annual advertising revenue in media sector:** Not available
- > **Internet usage:** 94,000 (2006, *CIA World Factbook*)

MEDIA SUSTAINABILITY INDEX: SOMALIA



Unsustainable, Anti-Free Press (0-1):

Country does not meet or only minimally meets objectives. Government and laws actively hinder free media development, professionalism is low, and media-industry activity is minimal.

Unsustainable Mixed System (1-2):

Country minimally meets objectives, with segments of the legal system and government opposed to a free media system. Evident progress in free-press advocacy, increased professionalism, and new media businesses may be too recent to judge sustainability.

Near Sustainability (2-3):

Country has progressed in meeting multiple objectives, with legal norms, professionalism, and the business environment supportive of independent media. Advances have survived changes in government and have been codified in law and practice. However, more time may be needed to ensure that change is enduring and that increased professionalism and the media business environment are sustainable.

Sustainable (3-4):

Country has media that are considered generally professional, free, and sustainable, or to be approaching these objectives. Systems supporting independent media have survived multiple governments, economic fluctuations, and changes in public opinion or social conventions.

OBJECTIVE 1: FREE SPEECH

Somalia Objective Score: 1.36

In general, the legal underpinnings of freedom of the press in Somalia are fragile. A few of the indicators somewhat brought up the average for Objective 1, but the higher scores are limited because insufficient time has passed in order to indicate sustainability. The weakness of the government allows for a certain amount of media freedom, but that freedom might not withstand a stronger government that intends to consolidate power in the near future.

The MSI panel recognized that freedom of speech, freedom of the press, and freedom of thought in the country are harshly curtailed and are becoming even more threatened. Abdiqani Sheik Mohamud, news editor of Radio Jowhar, said, "Freedoms of press and of speech are important foundations for a democratic nation, but virtually, our country [both the government and public] has slight respect for these freedoms, and we as media people must devise ways to prevent such practices of oppression. I strongly believe that media can protect freedom of speech and freedom of press."

Article 20 of the TFC guarantees freedom of the press and independent media in accordance with the law. The process of developing a media law started in Baidoa, when three Ministry of Information lawyers wrote the first draft. The draft fell short of international free expression standards, containing ambiguities that would permit the government

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to clamp down on media freedom. Following discussions with the National Union of Somali Journalists (NUSOJ) and other media representatives, the Ministry of Information allowed full consultations with media and civil society groups regarding the process of developing a media law that adheres to international norms of freedom of expression. A task force composed of representatives of the government, media, and civil society was appointed to carry out necessary consultations and align the current draft to international standards. Generally, the government has been receptive to the suggestions of the task force.

The panel noted that although all of these concerted efforts are continuing, clauses in article 20 of the TFC have not been applied and protections for media independence are ignored or not enforced. Further, the Somali government does not have the strength to widely enforce laws promoting free speech and protecting the media, even if it were willing to do so fully.

Members of the media suffered several severe attacks in 2006, and four journalists have been killed in 2007, making this the most fatal year for journalists in a decade. Political groups, the Union of Islamic Courts (UIC), regional administrations, clan militias, and independent outlaws knowingly target journalists. No perpetrator has ever been brought to justice for offenses against journalists, which encourages repeat attacks. The lack of protection also causes fear and self-censorship in the media community, according to the participants of the panel. In Somaliland, for example, the media law states that libel cases shall be addressed in civil courts, but this year four journalists of the Haatuf daily newspaper were charged with slandering the family of the president and tried under the penal code. In 2005, Abdi Farah Nur, editor-in-chief of *Shacab* newspaper in Puntland, was charged with defaming the Puntland president, found guilty under the penal code of Somalia, and jailed.

LEGAL AND SOCIAL NORMS PROTECT AND PROMOTE FREE SPEECH AND ACCESS TO PUBLIC INFORMATION.

FREE-SPEECH INDICATORS:

- > Legal and social protections of free speech exist and are enforced.
- > Licensing of broadcast media is fair, competitive, and apolitical.
- > Market entry and tax structure for media are fair and comparable to other industries.
- > Crimes against journalists or media outlets are prosecuted vigorously, but occurrences of such crimes are rare.
- > State or public media do not receive preferential legal treatment, and law guarantees editorial independence.
- > Libel is a civil law issue; public officials are held to higher standards, and offended parties must prove falsity and malice.
- > Public information is easily accessible; right of access to information is equally enforced for all media and journalists.
- > Media outlets have unrestricted access to information; this is equally enforced for all media and journalists.
- > Entry into the journalism profession is free, and government imposes no licensing, restrictions, or special rights for journalists.

Journalists are struggling to include in the current draft of the media law clauses guaranteeing editorial independence. Panel participants stated that leading Mogadishu broadcast media outlets (such as Shabelle Media Network, Simba Radio, and Radio Banadir) have adopted policies enabling editors to make independent decisions on news reports without any other interference.

Somalia's private media outlets, especially the print media, have increased rapidly after the ousting of the military regime in 1991. Throughout the 1990s, broadcast media outlets were owned or dominated by clan warlords. However, privately run electronic media mushroomed in early 2000. In Mogadishu and much of the southern and central regions of Somalia, either no license is required or no official body issues licenses. To date, this has not resulted in overlapping frequencies. Given the relatively small number of stations operating, broadcast frequencies have not yet become a scarce resource. In Puntland, the Puntland Ministry of Information provides broadcast media with licenses, and does so apolitically. In Somaliland, the authorities restrict issuing licenses for private broadcast media. As a result, it has no private radio stations; however, two private television stations were awarded licenses to operate. Somaliland's 2004 media law enables the establishment of private media, including broadcast outlets, but this provision remains unimplemented.

In south-central regions, market entry is free and media pay no taxes. In Puntland, the marketplace is open and media owners pay reasonable taxes in line with other commercial enterprises. Newspapers in Somaliland pay fair taxes, and formation of newspaper publishing companies is not limited by any regulatory scheme. Entry into the journalism profession is not regulated by any of the governments.

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Throughout Somalia, local and national authorities do not seek to provide information to the media. No particular laws guarantee access to information. However, when asked for information, officials will typically provide comment, and they do not show significant favoritism for particular outlets. The media establishments also have access to news and information from international news media organizations and other media organizations based outside Somalia.

OBJECTIVE 2: PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISM

Somalia Objective Score: 1.76

During MSI discussions, participants observed that professional media have a vital role to play in peace-building efforts, establishing effective governance, and developing a democratic system in Somalia. But in most cases, the news delivered to the public lacks credibility.

According to the panel, the quality of news reports and programs is low because no code of ethics is established and no editorial policies or laws that guarantee editorial freedom are in place. Many reporters barely differentiate facts, biased comments, and speculation, the panel agreed. Thus, the media are not fully aware of their own responsibility even as they seek protection of freedom of the press and freedom of expression.

In Somalia, including Somaliland, a growing number of young journalists are joining the profession despite the unparalleled risks they face. High turnover, cheap labor, nepotism, and unscrupulous owners taking advantage of inexperienced journalists all contribute to the tainted reputation of the

JOURNALISM MEETS PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS OF QUALITY.

PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISM INDICATORS:

- > Reporting is fair, objective, and well sourced.
- > Journalists follow recognized and accepted ethical standards.
- > Journalists and editors do not practice self-censorship.
- > Journalists cover key events and issues.
- > Pay levels for journalists and other media professionals are sufficiently high to discourage corruption.
- > Entertainment programming does not eclipse news and information programming.
- > Technical facilities and equipment for gathering, producing, and distributing news are modern and efficient.
- > Quality niche reporting and programming exists (investigative, economics/business, local, political).

media in certain cases. Some news reports are not well sourced and are not based on sound evidence. Several media outlets compel their reporters to file at least two to three news reports each day, and if they do not, their daily salaries are lowered. This policy forces reporters to compromise honesty in their news reporting and to make groundless assumptions, the panel noted.

With regard to reporting, discussants cited the longstanding problem of always depending on a single source of information. Some media outlets fail to reveal sources due to a wish of not promoting that source. Organizations and individuals rarely get a right to respond to allegations in the media, as the allegations are often deliberate and malicious and based on the personal or political interests of the media owners. Finally, there is no specialty reporting (such as economic or health), and investigative reporting is not undertaken, out of either fear of retribution or lack of training. Participants stated that the quality of journalism in Somalia could benefit most from training in covering stories and better production techniques.

Mohammed Abdi Farah of Somalinet.com said, "Somali media must remain independent of enthroned interests or outside influences, with the result that media will freely discharge news, information, debates, and critical comments on society and will allow different viewpoints to be expressed."

Mohammed Ibrahim of the Somali Forum for Freedom of Expression said, "We need media that can impart news and information without partiality, and such media must also show fairness in dealing with news and sources of information."

The people of Somalia have dissimilar standpoints on how members of the media adhere to journalistic values of fairness, balance, diversity, and reliability. The majority of the public puts more trust in the news and information from international broadcasters than from local media on the basis of accuracy and soundness, the MSI panel agreed.

Since the conflict between UIC and the defeated Alliance of Restoration of Peace and Counter-Terrorism ignited in early 2006, bitter hostilities have grown between TFG and UIC. Subsequently, journalists and editors began to exercise self-censorship as a way to protect themselves. For example, journalists operating in UIC-controlled areas censored their reports so as not to be critical of UIC, while those stationed in Baidoa avoided criticism of the TFG. Journalist Abdullahi Yasin Jama of Radio Warsan, who reported the presence of Ethiopian troops on Somalia soil, was jailed in Baidoa by the TFG because of that report.

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At its general assembly in 2004, the NUSOJ adopted a professional code of conduct but some media managers and owners refused to provide their media outlets with this code, fearing it was the first step toward unionization. The panel said that most journalists cover key events, but the news reports of some journalists working with particular media outlets cover events unfairly to satisfy the political dispositions of the managers and owners of these outlets. Sometimes the entire event will not be covered, but typically another media outlet with an opposing viewpoint will cover it.

"Journalists try to do what they think is best, but they are rarely acquainted with what is right and what is wrong," said Mohammed Shiil Hassan of Radio Simba.

Somali journalists are poorly paid professionals. Monthly salaries range from \$18 to \$300, with a tiny fraction of media workers paid in the top range. Poor salaries encourage corruption in the news media; bribes paid to journalists, called *sharuur* or *duub* in Somali, are considered vital to making a living.

The panel pointed out that entertainment programs do not eclipse news and information put out by the media. The broadcast media in Mogadishu are technologically advanced in comparison to those in other regions, but print media in Hargeisa in Somaliland have more technical facilities than those in Mogadishu or regions in Puntland. The panel noted that SBC in Bossasso has high quality technical facilities.

OBJECTIVE 3: PLURALITY OF NEWS SOURCES

Somalia Objective Score: 1.81

Some Somalis have access to a large number of news sources, the panel agreed, but scores were negatively affected because the choice for news is severely limited outside of Mogadishu, Hargeisa, Bossasso, and some other large cities. Furthermore,

Discussants noted that because the majority of media outlets are based in Mogadishu, its residents have more varied sources of news and information than residents of other regions. "A significant number of media outlets in Mogadishu enable[s] people in Mogadishu to participate in the political process more than people in other regions," said Qamar Salad Omar, chairperson of the Somali Women Journalists Association.

throughout the country, poor economic conditions impact the average consumer's ability to access many types of news and the local media's ability to deliver news.

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Most of the radio stations are FM and cannot reach rural areas, the discussants said. Residents in rural villages and districts rarely receive information from newspapers because

MULTIPLE NEWS SOURCES PROVIDE CITIZENS WITH RELIABLE AND OBJECTIVE NEWS.

PLURALITY OF NEWS SOURCES INDICATORS:

- > A plurality of affordable public and private news sources (e.g., print, broadcast, Internet) exists.
- > Citizens' access to domestic or international media is not restricted.
- > State or public media reflect the views of the entire political spectrum, are nonpartisan, and serve the public interest.
- > Independent news agencies gather and distribute news for print and broadcast media.
- > Independent broadcast media produce their own news programs.
- > Transparency of media ownership allows consumers to judge objectivity of news; media ownership is not concentrated in a few conglomerates.
- > A broad spectrum of social interests are reflected and represented in the media, including minority-language information sources.

they rely on oral traditions and buying print media is cost prohibitive, according to the panel. The panel observed that residents of rural villages admired how Shabelle Media Network addressed the droughts affecting southern regions in early 2006 by sending a team of reporters to highlight malnutrition and starvation in these regions. Although information was hard to come by, their story was being told in the capital.

People in densely populated areas have access to both domestic and international media. Across the country, including Puntland and Somaliland, more than 20 radio stations consisting of private and public broadcasters provide news and information. More than 60 daily, weekly, and monthly newspapers are published in major cities. Five television stations currently operate. People also receive news and current affairs from international broadcasters such as VOA, Al-Jazeera, BBC, and RFI. Where they exist, state-run media outlets are little more than mouthpieces for the government. There is no community radio as such. No radio stations operate in rural areas, and in urban areas, radio stations are commercially oriented.

Foreign news agencies gather news, and the local media distribute this information at times. However, there is no local news agency. Private radio and television stations produce their programs in-house and gather their own local news. Somali nationals own all the local media outlets, the panel said; there is no foreign investment. Generally, media ownership is transparent, if politically driven, and the public judges the information disseminated by the media accordingly. Most media outlets strive to present a broad spectrum of different interest groups. But often, because of their political ties or viewpoints, media owners prevent the dissemination of information regarding certain politicians or civil society groups by their outlets.

OBJECTIVE 4: BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

Somalia Objective Score: 1.21

This objective scored the lowest of the five for Somalia and reflects difficult economic conditions; a lack of business experience by the top journalists who run the individual media outlets; and in some cases, the intent to use media outlets for political advocacy rather than as profit-generating businesses.

Although media outlets are mushrooming in Somalia, the business side of media is not effective or resourceful, the panel said. Most media outlets have sole proprietors. They operate in small markets in which they strongly compete to

gain customers and offer discounts in order to attract and keep new advertisers. For the electronic media, employees are designated as marketers to sell advertisements. But many print media outlets have small staff, so owners, managers, editors, and/or senior journalists will sell advertisements. Most news media outlets, particularly the print media, face threats of financial insolvency; print media do not attract advertisers as readily as the electronic media. Media outlets in the country are not directly sponsored by political groups; however, the TFG owns two radio stations that are financially weaker than the private radio stations. Newspaper profits are also undercut by vendors making and selling hundreds of copies of publications for the price of one copy of the publication. "The vendors are forced to do this so that they can earn their daily bread," said Mohamed Abdi Farah of somalinet.com.

The coverage of radio stations is between 30 and 90 km, while the circulation of newspapers is tiny: between 500 and 2000 copies each. Television stations cover a maximum 30 km, except Universal TV, which covers the whole country. Despite its low penetration, radio is still the number one source of information and has the best prospects for advertising revenue.

Large numbers of media outlets are unable to pay salaries of their employees on a regular basis. "Our revenues largely come from advertisements, but are not adequate to cover producing [the] newspaper [or] pay administrative costs and payments for the staff," said Abdi Adan Guled, editor-in-chief of *Xog-Ogaal* daily newspaper.

Private media outlets were established to generate income, but ultimately, most serve political purposes and profit does

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not determine longer-term viability. The primary source of income for the private media is advertising, and some media outlets also are supported by foreign donor organizations. But the pool of possible income is severely limited. For example, radio stations charge around \$10 per minute, and approximately 50 merchandisers place advertisements in the media. Circulation is woefully low, and design and layout of print media is substandard. Media staff design advertisements or receive them from the merchandisers; there are no advertising agencies that independently produce ads on behalf of clients. Many electronic media do not deliver high-quality products.

Media managers have few of the leadership skills necessary to run their outlets efficiently, such as developing clear missions, policies, and procedures; and they have difficulty establishing strong ties with advertising clients. Neither do they have business skills such as knowledge of accounting methods or use of business plans and annual budgets. Most media managers do not have the ability to work cooperatively with other media outlets in order to share best practices or attain joint goals that would create a more favorable media climate.

Broadcast ratings and circulation figures of newspapers are not produced. While there is no market research or audience surveying, some advertisements are tailored to specific programs that draw a high level of interest. For example, advertisers with Radio Shabelle in Mogadishu want their advertisements to be aired during the widely listened-to drama *Qoomamo* (Ruefulness).

INDEPENDENT MEDIA ARE WELL-MANAGED BUSINESSES, ALLOWING EDITORIAL INDEPENDENCE.

BUSINESS MANAGEMENT INDICATORS:

- > Media outlets and supporting firms operate as efficient, professional, and profit-generating businesses.
- > Media receive revenue from a multitude of sources.
- > Advertising agencies and related industries support an advertising market.
- > Advertising revenue as a percentage of total revenue is in line with accepted standards at commercial outlets.
- > Independent media do not receive government subsidies.
- > Market research is used to formulate strategic plans, enhance advertising revenue, and tailor products to the needs and interests of audiences.
- > Broadcast ratings and circulation figures are reliably and independently produced.

OBJECTIVE 5: SUPPORTING INSTITUTIONS

Somalia Objective Score: 2.23

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NUSOJ is a journalists’ trade union that endeavors to defend and promote journalists’ rights, freedom of the press, and editorial independence. In addition to issuing alerts on violations of press freedom and representing the labor interests of journalists, NUSOJ also actively protects media professionals. For example, in April 2007 the head of Universal TV and an accompanying journalist and camera operator were arrested for asking a critical question of the Somali president. NUSOJ lobbied the government and rallied the international community behind the cause, and the three were released.

The Somali Independent Newspapers Association brings together owners of newspapers in Mogadishu but typically does not engage in lobbying activities. The Somali Women Journalists Association promotes and protects interest of women journalists. The East Africa Media Institute’s Somalia chapter promotes media freedom and builds professional capacity of media professionals. The Somaliland Journalists

Association unites media executives and journalists in Somaliland. In Puntland, however, authorities outlawed the creation of new media associations and now require authorization for conferences or other public events regarding the media, although these restrictions are applied irregularly.

International and local NGOs are actively engaged in supporting the media in Somalia. Several universities announced the launch of faculties of journalism or their intention to establish an academy of mass media and communications, but to date they have made little movement and the pool of potential professors is limited. In-house and short-term journalism training programs have helped some new and mid-career journalists to gain professional skills, but many of the programs are fragmented, and given the turnover rate as journalists seek more lucrative and safer opportunities, the training programs do not achieve significant impact overall. In general, the panel felt that journalism training programs in the country are lacking coherence and are not tailored to the basic needs of journalists, and the duration (three to five days) is viewed by journalists as insufficient.

The businesses that support the media are in private hands and do not exercise political favoritism. Sources of newsprint and other printing materials are freely accessible by newspapers and magazines. The printed press is generally sold by street vendors, and no established distribution company controls the sale of publications.

SUPPORTING INSTITUTIONS FUNCTION IN THE PROFESSIONAL INTERESTS OF INDEPENDENT MEDIA.

SUPPORTING INSTITUTIONS INDICATORS:

- > Trade associations represent the interests of private media owners and provide member services.
- > Professional associations work to protect journalists’ rights.
- > NGOs support free speech and independent media.
- > Quality journalism degree programs that provide substantial practical experience exist.
- > Short-term training and in-service training programs allow journalists to upgrade skills or acquire new skills.
- > Sources of newsprint and printing facilities are in private hands, apolitical, and unrestricted.
- > Channels of media distribution (kiosks, transmitters, Internet) are private, apolitical, and unrestricted.

Panelists

Mohammed Amin Sheik Adow, deputy director, Shabelle Media Network, Mogadishu

Mohammed Abdi Farah, reporter, Somalinet, Mogadishu

Qamar Salad Omar, chairperson, Somali Women Journalists Association, Mogadishu

Mohammed Shiil Hassan, deputy director, Simba Radio, Mogadishu

Abdi Adan Guled, editor-in-chief, Xog-Ogaal Newspaper, Mogadishu

Abdiqani Sheik Mohamud, news editor, Radio Jowhar, Jowhar

Sahro Mohammed Ali, assistant editor, National Post Newspaper, Mogadishu

Mohammed Ibrahim isak, secretary, Somali Forum for Freedom of Expression, Mogadishu

Fahad Mohammed Abukar, newscaster, Warsan Radio, Baidoa

Idle Moallim, director, Puntland Journalists Club, Bossaso

Sahro Abdi Ahmed, executive member, Jubba Independent Journalists Association, Kismayu

Abdulkadir Mohammed, producer, Radio Darban, Beledweyne, Hiran Region

Moderator

Ali Moallim Isak, organizing secretary, National Union of Somali Journalists

Observer

Omar Faruk Osman, secretary general, National Union of Somali Journalists

The Somalia study was coordinated by, and conducted in partnership with, the National Union of Somali Journalists, Mogadishu.

IN MEMORIAM: Abshir Ali Gabre



Radio Jowhar journalist Abshir Ali Gabre, 35, was killed on May 15, 2007 in the Middle Shabelle Region of central Somalia. He was riding in the convoy of the regional governor, on his way to cover the governor's mediation in a land dispute, when the group came under fire from clan militias. His colleague, Ahmed Hassan Mahad, was also killed in the attack.

Abshir was a talented journalist who was determined to tell Somalia's untold stories. He covered Somali political news and strove to report on the many conflicts within the country. He had previously been subjected to the dangers of being a journalist in Somalia, having endured a number of arrests and threats. Earlier in 2007, in the company of five other journalists, militiamen stopped the journalists' vehicle on their way to Beledweyne and stole their digital cameras, mobile phones, and pocket money. He had worked with Radio Jowhar since its establishment in 1997. He was twice elected to be member of the Supreme Council of the National Union of Somali Journalists and led the union's branch in the Shabelle Region. He had also volunteered to be on the Somalia MSI panel. Abshir is survived by his wife and one child.