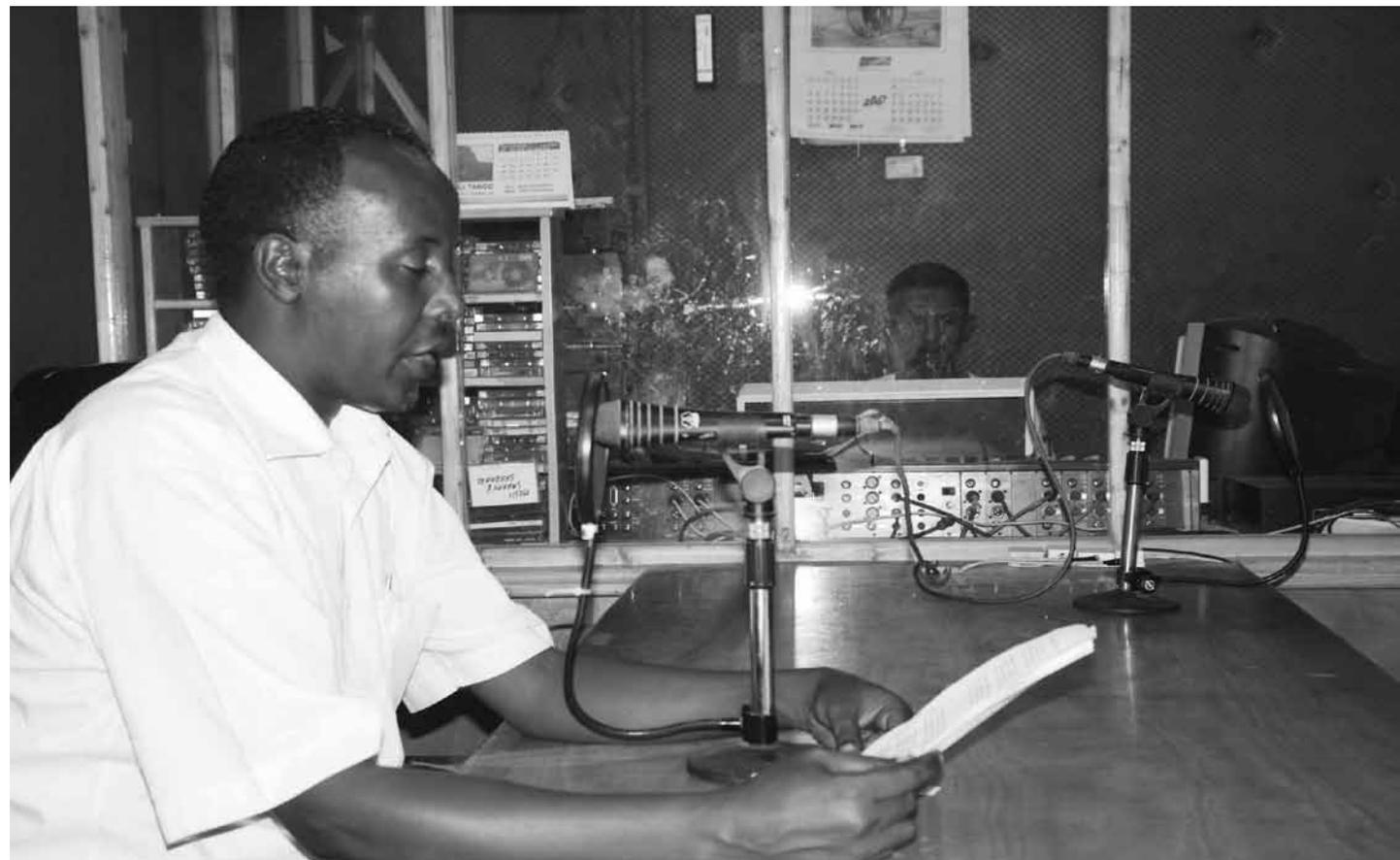

Still, dedicated journalists courageously continue their efforts, despite the extreme risks of working in Somalia. They are working to elevate professional standards, in part to help show the public the value of media in society.



SOMALIA

Amid continuing conflict between the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) and insurgent groups, Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed, considered a modern Islamist, was elected president in January. A new government was formed, blending the TFG officials and the Alliance for the Re-liberation of Somalia, and Ethiopian troops withdrew in January.

Yet peace continues to elude Somalia, which consists of the TFG in Mogadishu (covering the south-central region), the self-declared Republic of Somaliland in the northwest, and Puntland, the semiautonomous northeast region. Islamic groups, especially al-Shabaab, have forcefully and violently opposed the new government, murdering and kidnapping TFG officials and civilians.

The media has not been spared; rather, it has emerged as a target and the escalation of violence against the media is pronounced. According to the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), "Somalia was among the world's deadliest countries in 2009, surpassing violent hot spots such as Iraq and Pakistan."¹ The National Union of Somali Journalists (NUSOJ) noted, "In the history of Somalia, the past twelve months stand out as the darkest and deadliest period for journalism in the country. The work and life of journalists have become worthless and dispensable, while attacks against journalists continue unrestrained."² CPJ and NUSOJ documented the death of nine journalists last year, including one of last year's MSI panelists, Mukhtar Mohamed Hirabe, director of Shabelle Radio in Mogadishu. Omar Faruk Osman, secretary general of NUSOJ, said, "The country has been in conflict for nearly 20 years now, but the kind of attacks specifically targeting journalists has never happened before."³

Still, dedicated journalists courageously continue their efforts, despite the extreme risks of working in Somalia. They are working to elevate professional standards, in part to help show the public the value of media in society. There is also access to international news, and there is a fairly wide choice of media given the circumstances. On the new media front, Somali language news websites are adding new voices. According to a U.S. Department of State report, relative to the region, Somalia enjoys some of the least expensive Internet and telecommunications access—and the government does not restrict access. However, opposition actors monitor use and are thought behind anonymous threats delivered to local journalists via email.⁴

Due to the security situation in Somalia, a panel discussion was not held this year. This report reflects research and discussions with those knowledgeable of the situation in Somalia.

¹ *Attacks on the Press 2009: Somalia*. Committee to Protect Journalists: February 16, 2010. <http://cpj.org/2010/02/attacks-on-the-press-2009-somalia.php>

² *War on Journalism in Somalia*, *Ibid*, p. 5.

³ *National Somali Journalists Conference Report: Professional Journalism: Responsibility in a situation of violence and insecurity*. Held in Nairobi, Kenya, July 2009. <http://www.nusoj.org/Docs/NUSOJ%20conference%20Report.pdf>

⁴ *2009 Human Rights Reports: Somalia*. U.S. Department of State: March 11, 2010. <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2009/af/135976.htm>

SOMALIA AT A GLANCE

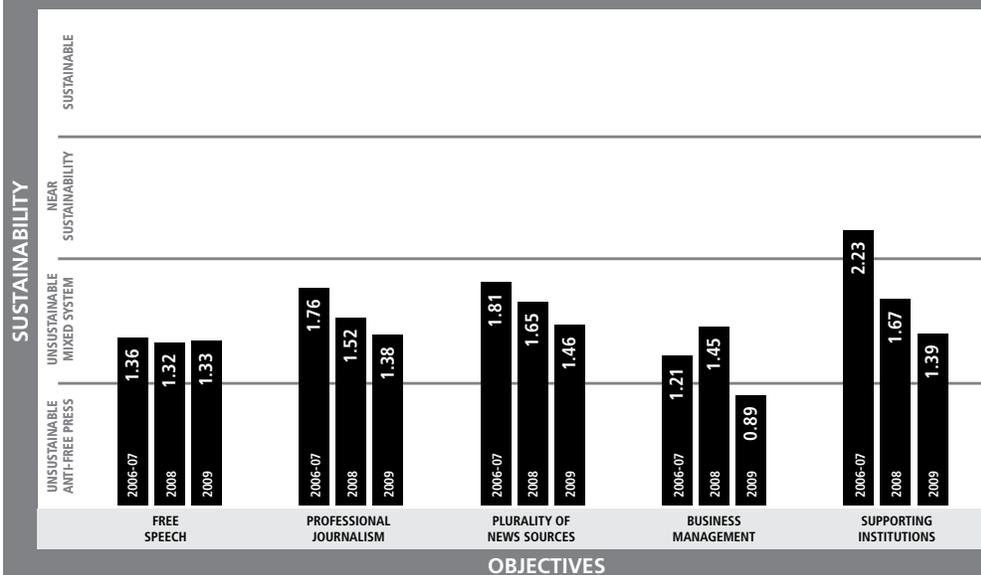
GENERAL

- > **Population:** 10,112,453 (July 2010 est., *CIA World Factbook*)
- > **Capital city:** Mogadishu
- > **Ethnic groups (% of population):** Somali 85%, Bantu and other non-Somali 15% (*CIA World Factbook*)
- > **Religions (% of population):** Sunni Muslim (*CIA World Factbook*)
- > **Languages (% of population):** Somali (official), Arabic, Italian, English (*CIA World Factbook*)
- > **GNI (2009-Atlas):** N/A (World Bank Development Indicators, 2010)
- > **GNI per capita (2009-PPP):** N/A (World Bank Development Indicators, 2010)
- > **Literacy rate:** 37.8% (male 49.7%, female 25.8%) (2001 est., *CIA World Factbook*)
- > **President or top authority:** Transitional Federal President Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed (since 31 January 2009)

MEDIA-SPECIFIC

- > **Number of active print outlets, radio stations, television stations:** 20 print media, 20 radio stations, 3 television stations
- > **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 1,500 television-watching households, and Somali Broadcasting Corporation TV covers an area with an estimated 1000 television-watching households
- > **News agencies:** Somali Independent News Agency
- > **Annual advertising revenue in media sector:** Not available
- > **Internet usage:** 102,000 (2008, *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: FREEDOM OF SPEECH

Somalia Objective Score: 1.33

Again this year, Somalia's freedom of speech MSI scores did not change significantly. Somalia's political situation does not allow for an independent media. On paper, the Transitional Federal Charter guarantees freedom of the media and freedom of information. However, a December 2007 media law imposes restrictive measures on the media, despite several efforts to bring the law up to international standards of freedom of expression. The TFG has not enforced the law, due to power struggles among the top leadership of the government and several attacks by Islamic insurgents.

Licenses are not issued regularly to any print or electronic media. Puntland has its own constitution, though it recognizes the TFG. It has regulations that require media to seek licensing, but they are not enforced on a regular basis. Somalia imposes no taxes or other impediments on the establishment or running of a media outlet.

NUSOJ noted, "The year 2009 opened on an ominous note for journalism in Somalia, with the daylight murder of Hassan Mayow Hassan, a radio Shabelle journalist, who sadly was the first journalist murdered in the world in the year."⁵

⁵ *War on Journalism in Somalia: Death, Displacement and Desolation: NUSOJ Annual Report of Press Freedom in Somalia*. National Union of Somali Journalists: December 31, 2009. http://www.nusoj.org/index.cfm?zone=/unionactive/view_article.cfm&HomeID=148376 p. 5.

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.

According to NUSOJ, in 2009, Somalia was the deadliest country for journalists in Africa.

According to NUSOJ, in 2009, Somalia was the deadliest country for journalists in Africa. In addition to the nine Somali journalists who lost their lives in 2009, NUSOJ noted, "During the year, 12 journalists were wounded, 15 journalists arrested, 4 media houses closed down, 7 radio stations directly censored, and nearly 100 journalists received death threats, some of them receiving threats on a daily basis." One of the 2008 MSI panelists, Shabelle radio director Mukhtar Mohamed Hirabe, was among those killed; he was shot in Bakaro Market on June 7, 2009.

The media in the central and southern regions continue to face the greatest hardship, with routine intimidations, arrests, attacks, and killings. Crimes committed against journalists and news media organizations are not investigated or punished. Most crimes are politically motivated, and covered up by powerful politicians or armed groups. The judicial system is not independent.

The TFG radio stations, Radio Mogadishu and Radio Bay, do not deviate from reporting the government's perspective. There is no expectation, legal or otherwise, of editorial independence.

Libel is a criminally punishable offense, as demonstrated in March 2009, when the International Freedom of Expression eXchange (IFEX) reported that journalist Jama Ayanle Feyte was sentenced to two years in prison for libel and dissemination of false information. According to IFEX's report, "Bari regional court in Boassasso convicted Jama Ayanle Feyte for libel and insult of Puntland leaders and dissemination of false information on the Somali news websites <http://www.dayniile.com> and <http://www.lassqoray.net>."⁶ The IFEX report added that NUSOJ received information linking the interior minister, Abullahi Jama Ilkajir, to the arrest, claiming that he complained to the police about Ayanle's journalism.⁷

Access to information is an ongoing hardship for journalists. For example, last year's MSI noted that Somalia's new prime minister was accused of ignoring questions from local journalists, only answering inquiries from foreign media.

⁶ "Journalist Jama Ayanle Feyte sentenced to two years in prison for libel and dissemination of false information." IFEX: March 30, 2009. http://www.ifex.org/somalia/2009/03/30/journalist_jama_ayanle_feyte_sentenced/

⁷ IFEX, Ibid.

The media in the central and southern regions continue to face the greatest hardship, with routine intimidations, arrests, attacks, and killings. Crimes committed against journalists and news media organizations are not investigated or punished.

In last year's MSI study, indicator 9 (entry into the profession) improved slightly, as the MSI reported optimism over the enthusiasm of many journalists to join the profession, an important development as so many experienced journalists have fled Somalia. However, some members of the media community have cautioned that there are too many young, inexperienced journalists, and have called for inclusion of entry standards for beginners entering the profession.⁸

OBJECTIVE 2: PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISM

Somalia Objective Score: 1.38

Although there are Somali journalists who strive to follow internationally accepted ethical and professional standards, the vast majority struggle to uphold professional standards. Many journalists lack basic reporting and news writing skills, and accuracy and objectivity are frequently compromised, especially with Internet media outlets. Without decent working conditions for all media workers, and greater

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).

awareness of professional standards, Somalia lacks the foundation to build independent and ethical journalism.⁹

Somali journalists must contend with great physical danger, poor working conditions, and severe forms of censorship. Reporting from a conflict zone also leads to pressure not to report information that could further destabilize the country, and raises a number of questions over the role of journalists in reporting from a conflict zone. Given the difficulties of reporting in Somalia's insecure environment, NUSOJ made professional standards the theme of its July 2009 conference (held in Nairobi, Kenya).

At the NUSOJ conference, Somali journalists discussed the need for a code of conduct—and International Federation of Journalist's secretary-general, Aidan White, mentioned that journalists in Somalia could use the IFJ code of conduct to inform their efforts to develop their own code. NUSOJ noted that it had worked on conduct guidelines for journalists in 2005, but for the most part, media outlets refused them.¹⁰

Censorship is common, including brazen attempts by armed groups to control media coverage. For example, one journalist noted that an armed group demanded to be referred to using a special name; the media complied.¹¹ Less overt self-censorship is pervasive, as well, and numerous instances were discussed at the NUSOJ conference. A Radio Galkayo journalist described his arrest after the station reported weapons transfers involving the Puntland government, and commented that journalists sometimes are silenced into not discussing important issues that affect citizens.¹²

In this context, many topics simply cannot be covered. However, journalists also tend to focus their energies primarily in covering the war, neglecting social topics, for the most part.

Salaries—or the lack thereof—continue to be a sore spot for journalists. At the NUSOJ conference, journalists complained that sometimes journalists are promised payments that never materialize after several months of work, and said that salaries need to be increased if journalists are expected not to take bribes when they are hungry.¹³ A Radio Shabelle journalist added, "We pay journalists as we can, but the international media is a major problem for us. When we pay highest salary of \$300, the international media pays \$1500, which results in our trained and experienced journalist leaving the local media houses for international media."¹⁴

⁹ NUSOJ Annual Report of Press Freedom in Somalia., Ibid.

¹⁰ National Somali Journalists Conference Report, Ibid, p. 15 and p. 20.

¹¹ National Somali Journalists Conference Report, Ibid, p. 19.

¹² National Somali Journalists Conference Report, Ibid, p. 14.

¹³ National Somali Journalists Conference Report, Ibid, p. 30.

¹⁴ National Somali Journalists Conference Report, Ibid, p. 31.

Regarding the balance of entertainment and news, NUSOJ commented that as a result of the increase in violence against journalists "...several media houses have taken refuge in entertainment, steering clear of airing news and current affairs programming."¹⁵

Another professional hardship is the lack of equipment—including safety equipment to cover stories in a war zone. To help address the safety issues, IFJ Africa and the UN political Office of Somalia Human Rights Unit have focused on efforts to provide safety equipment, such as bullet proof vests, along with more training for journalists working in dangerous environments.¹⁶

Little attention is paid to niche issues or investigative reporting.

OBJECTIVE 3: PLURALITY OF NEWS

Somalia Objective Score: 1.46

There is plurality of news sources in Somalia, including about 20 newspapers, a handful of television stations, and about 20 radio stations. However, as underlined by last year's MSI panel, partisanship continues to damage the credibility of media outlets, particularly in Puntland and south-central Somalia.

According to the State Department, the print media consists "...largely of short, photocopied dailies published in the larger cities and often affiliated with one or another of the factions. Several of these dailies were nominally independent

¹⁵ NUSOJ Annual Report of Press Freedom in Somalia, Ibid.

¹⁶ National Somali Journalists Conference Report, Ibid, p. 24.

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.

According to the State Department, in 2009 there were eight FM radio stations and one short-wave station operating in Mogadishu, as well as several small FM stations scattered across the south-central region, at least six independent radio stations in Puntland—and al-Shabaab opened an FM station in Kismayo.

and published criticism of political leaders and other prominent persons."¹⁷ However, last year's MSI panelists said that all newspapers in Mogadishu have stopped operating, mainly due to lack of income to pay staff salaries, utility expenses, and the cost of vendors—and the fact very few people want to, or can afford to, read newspapers. Most Somalis rely on radio for news. According to the State Department, in 2009 there were eight FM radio stations and one short-wave station operating in Mogadishu, as well as several small FM stations scattered across the south-central region, at least six independent radio stations in Puntland—and al-Shabaab opened an FM station in Kismayo.¹⁸ A participant at the NUSOJ conference in July noted that al-Shabaab recruited local journalists to staff the station.

Mareeg Online puts the number of independent radio stations at about a dozen, but noted that they are barred from reporting killings and abuses by al-Shabaab militias, and are largely reduced to reporting al-Shabaab propaganda. Noted Mareeg Online, "A spokesman for the Hizbul Islam rebel group threatened...the remaining journalists in Mogadishu and accused them of siding with the government."¹⁹

The State Department cited 2008 International Telecommunication Union statistics that only about one percent of Somalis use the Internet—but also noted that that this figure may be higher because of Internet café patronage, and because Somalia's country domain was not in use.²⁰

At the NUSOJ conference in July in Nairobi, UN Deputy Special Representative for Somalia Charles Petrie confirmed the abundance of news sources—but also pointed out the hazards, in terms of professional standards. He said, "No one dealing with Somalia can fail to be impressed by the

¹⁷ U.S. Department of State, Ibid.

¹⁸ U.S. Department of State, Ibid.

¹⁹ Mareeg Online, Ibid.

²⁰ U.S. Department of State, Ibid.

Currently, Radio Mogadishu's signal is only strong enough to cover the capital and immediate outskirts, but Mareeg Online noted that the government plans to make Radio Mogadishu strong enough to blanket all of Somalia.

extraordinary number and range of Somali media outlets. This is unusual in a country that has been at war for 20 years. While the BBC and VOA Somali services continue to draw huge audiences, it seems every week a new radio station or website springs up. This thirst for news bodes well for the future—diversity is always healthy. However, this means there are a huge number of new, often young untrained reporters who are on air and on the web. They may not understand the way journalism works or the need to be objective. The time may have come to concentrate more on the quality rather than the quantity.”²¹

Somalis do enjoy access to international and domestic news sources. As reported in last year's MSI, local radio stations rebroadcast programs from BBC, VOA, and RFI, and channels in Arabic and English—including CNN and Al-Jazeera English—are available uncensored via Arab Satellite. The State Department noted, “Most citizens obtained news from foreign radio broadcasts, primarily the BBC's Somali Service and the Voice of America's Somali Service that transmitted daily Somali-language programs.”²²

The government strictly controls the state media. Radio Mogadishu and Radio Bay serve as government mouthpieces, and cannot be considered public-service broadcasting media. Currently, Radio Mogadishu's signal is only strong enough to cover the capital and immediate outskirts, but Mareeg Online noted that the government plans to make Radio Mogadishu strong enough to blanket all of Somalia.²³

Given the risks facing foreign journalists in the country, international news agencies—such as AP, AFP, Reuters, and Xinhua—depend upon local stringers for news. To address the absence of an independent news agency in Somalia, NUSOJ and Reporters without Borders launched the Somali Independent News Agency (SOMINA) in neighboring Djibouti in April 2009. SOMINA, designed to provide independent news about Somalia at no cost to journalists on its website or via email, was expected to employ several journalists in

²¹ NUSOJ, National Somali Journalists Conference, p. 9.

²² U.S. Department of State, *Ibid.*

²³ Mareeg Online, *Ibid.*

Djibouti along with a correspondent based in Mogadishu, and seven stringers in major cities.²⁴

As reported in last year's MSI, local radio stations produce their own news programs. In addition, some radio stations broadcast a half-hour program established by the UN humanitarian news agency, IRIN, produced from Nairobi, which is also broadcast over the Internet.

According to NUSOJ, most of the media are privately owned—but private interests exert a strong influence on the content.²⁵ In last year's study, the MSI panel noted that media in Somalia are owned solely by Somalis, and frequently represent the diaspora, politicians, or business interests. In some cases, media outlets are run by the owner's relatives or close tribal associates.

Although a misconception that Somalia is ethnically and religiously homogenous persists, there are ethnic and religious minorities, including the Bantu, Gaboye, Christians, and occupational groups. Minority Rights Group International noted that little is known about these people, who are excluded from political, economic and social life by majority clans (Darod, Dir, Hawiye, and Rahanweyn). Minorities have especially suffered the consequences of the conflict, with tens of thousands displaced, and many suffering attacks, in particular by al-Shabaab in the south-central party of the country.²⁶ However, awareness may be growing, as several Somali news websites, such as Hiiraan online, post articles about the plight of minorities.

OBJECTIVE 4: BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

Somalia Objective Score: 0.89

After last year's modest increase in business management scores, the scores for this objective fell significantly this year. Private media attempt to operate as profit-making companies, but it is widely known that media managers have little understanding of how to run a successful, profitable business. This lessens their power to remain independent from private, political, and commercial influences. There is also widespread nepotism; at the NUSOJ conference, Mustafe Haji Abdnur, of AFP, noted, “Media owners prefer

²⁴ “Independent news agency launched in Djibouti aims to be reliable source of news about Somali.” Reporters sans Frontières, April 29, 2009. <http://en.rsf.org/somalia-independent-news-agency-launched-29-04-2009,32692.html>

²⁵ NUSOJ, *Ibid.*

²⁶ Hill, Martin. *No redress: Somalia's forgotten minorities*. Minority Rights Group International, November 2010.

to employ people who are their relatives and not based on professional competence.”²⁷

Media are funded by various sources, all of which continue to decline. The financial strain has negatively impacted programming, prompt coverage of important news, and the overall quality of media. Donor-funded projects, such as public-awareness campaigns and training programs for media members, have dried up as well as it has become even more difficult to operate in Somalia.

Somalia has no advertising agencies. Last year’s panelists reported that advertising does not make up the majority of media revenue, and agreed that what little advertising existed has decreased drastically with the ongoing violence in the south-central region. Most commercial companies closed down and fled for the safety of their employees and property. A Radio Shabelle journalist noted that what little income Radio Shabelle pulls from advertising, they use on gas, rent, and maintenance of equipment.²⁸ In the past, media ran advertisements by small-scale industries, retail and wholesale companies, telecommunications enterprises, money-transfer companies, airlines, schools, and UN agencies, among others.

A media outlet’s chance of securing advertisements depends mainly on the relationship between the media owner or manager and the advertiser. Some media houses were previously accused of broadcasting advertisements that were in breach of religious values as well as ethical standards of Somali society. Media managers and owners had been focused on the potential income rather than public consequences. Abdi, editor with the SBC, though, was able

²⁷ *National Somali Journalists Conference Report* Ibid, p. 30.

²⁸ *National Somali Journalists Conference Report* Ibid, p. 31

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.

Media are funded by various sources, all of which continue to decline. The financial strain has negatively impacted programming, prompt coverage of important news, and the overall quality of media.

to offer a positive example of professionalism in advertising. “We were offered money for campaigning by presidential candidates, but the owners were hesitant to allow their media directors to have income generated by campaign advertisements,” he said.

The decrease in advertising coupled with the loss of donor funding has increased the number of media houses that receive financial support from politicians from the owner’s clan or in alliance with their clan politicians. Some media owners manage to finance their companies using their own money.

As the TFG itself is dependent on foreign aid, private media outlets are not believed to have received public subsidies. However, some regional administrations, such as Puntland Regional State, provide indirect funding to private media outlets—as do politicians in the south-central regions.

No market research is used to formulate strategic plans, enhance advertising revenue, or tailor products to the needs and interests of audiences.

OBJECTIVE 5: SUPPORTING INSTITUTIONS

Somalia Objective Score: 1.39

There are several organizations supporting media development in Somalia, including NUSOJ, Somali Women Journalists’ Association, and East Africa Media Institute – Somalia Chapter. As noted in last year’s MSI, an organization established by newspaper owners, the Somali Independent Newspaper Association, has fallen dormant, given the operational difficulties in Mogadishu. There is still no association for broadcast media owners, despite several failed attempts.

NUSOJ efforts to support journalists, described in its 2009 annual report, focused on addressing the poor working conditions for journalists. Journalists suffer from poor safety standards on the job, a lack of opportunities to upgrade their skills or advance in their profession, and the frequent failure

NUSOJ efforts to support journalists, described in its 2009 annual report, focused on addressing the poor working conditions for journalists. Journalists suffer from poor safety standards on the job, a lack of opportunities to upgrade their skills or advance in their profession, and the frequent failure of media outlets to provide annual or maternity leaves.

of media outlets to provide annual or maternity leaves.²⁹ Although conditions have deteriorated in many respects for journalists in Somalia, NUSOJ believes that efforts to negotiate improved labor rights for journalists with media owners have increased over the past two years,

²⁹ NUSOJ, Ibid.

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.

NUSOJ also documents arrests and acts of violence against journalists, and publishes the information. The 2008 MSI panel confirmed that NUSOJ has developed systematic monitoring of the media freedom situation, reporting attacks on journalists locally, nationally, regionally, and internationally through postings on the union's website, distribution to local media, and through its membership in the International Federation of Journalists and International Freedom of Expression Exchange.

There are some other media NGOs in Somalia, defending freedom of expression and the right to a free press with foreign support. These organizations provide training courses, workshops, and seminars for all media professionals. However, last year's MSI highlighted concerns that aid to the media is not distributed equitably across the country—Puntland, in particular, was underrepresented in capacity building support for media, with most aid going to Mogadishu and Somaliland.

Somalia has no schools of journalism, and lacks a tradition of formal education for journalists. While some Somali journalists were trained outside the country, others managed with on-the-job training, supplemented by occasional seminars and workshops to improve their skills. Such trainings, however, are not universally appreciated: some news organizations view on-the-job training as a drain on time and resources.

Internet service providers, including Global Internet in the southern regions and Golis Telecom Somalia in Puntland, are privately owned. As independent companies, they are neither influenced by politics nor subject to censorship, reported last year's MSI panel. For the print media, printing is considered apolitical, and newspapers either own their own printing facilities or share costs with other newspapers.

List of Panel Participants

Due to the security situation in Somalia, a panel discussion was not held this year. This report reflects research and discussions with those knowledgeable of the situation in Somalia.

In Memoriam: Mukhtar Mohamed Hirabe

Mukhtar Mohamed Hirabe was shot several times and killed on June 7, 2009 in a Mogadishu market. He was Radio Shabelle's station director. Originally Hirabe worked as a teacher in a town south of Mogadishu, but fled to Djibouti at the outset of the Somali Civil War. He began working with Radio-Television Djibouti and Radio Shabelle while in Djibouti, and in 2003 returned to his hometown of Mogadishu to continue working with Shabelle. In 2007 Hirabe was appointed director of the station and is remembered for persevering to keep it operating under intense pressure. Hirabe was 48, and leaves behind two wives and five children.