

The Khartoum government and the rebels have not spared the media from the conflict. The state controls both the public media and most private media in the north, but journalists in both the north and the south continue to labor under difficult conditions—including persistent harassment, torture, censorship, and denial of civil liberties.



SUDAN

Sudan is still essentially one country with two governments, divided between the north and the south under a fragile peace agreement. Although the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) signed between the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) and the Khartoum government in 2005 ushered in a period of relative peace and contributed to reshaping the constitutions of the country, it has not yet translated into greater stability for the Sudanese—or the media.

The Government of South Sudan retains its semi-autonomous status under the leadership of President Salva Kiir and the SPLA's political wing, the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), while General Omar Bashir governs the north. Widespread human-rights abuses persist, especially in the Darfur region, where killings and displacement of innocent people—especially non-Arabs—by pro-government Arab militias continue with impunity. Stemming from this violence, an International Criminal Court arrest warrant stands against General Bashir, restricting his travel outside Sudan. Meanwhile, South Sudan, with support from external donors and Khartoum, continues an economic and infrastructural recovery slowed by widespread corruption. In 2011, under terms set out in the CPA, the people of South Sudan will vote in a referendum on independence.

The Khartoum government and the rebels have not spared the media from the conflict. The state controls both the public media and most private media in the north, but journalists in both the north and the south continue to labor under difficult conditions—including persistent harassment, torture, censorship, and denial of civil liberties. In the north, the government continues to apply a strict form of *Sharia* law to suppress media freedom, and only a few truly independent newspapers have survived. Furthermore, the government continues to draft new laws aimed at controlling the media. Although Sudan has more than 30 newspapers, both in English and Arabic, the approximately eight totally independent newspapers in the country stand to be most affected under this new law. On a positive note, the Khartoum government recently repeated its commitment to strike the law on censorship. However, the panelists attributed this move to external pressure against the state and expressed skepticism that it will be enforced.

South Sudan's 2005 interim constitution mentions freedom of speech, but absent a specific media law, South Sudanese journalists know that the freedoms they currently enjoy are not guaranteed. The SPLM government continues to work on laws to govern the media and journalists. The media deemed a draft bill oppressive, and the government took it back for amendments. Although some media associations believe that once their views are accommodated, the laws will be favorable, others charge that South Sudan will not be any better off. Additionally, while South Sudan's media have far more freedom, the northern media outlets enjoy far better facilities, pay levels, and training. Noted the panel moderator, David Aruai de Dau, "The only solution is to not only pass the media law, but to also train journalists, security forces, and the general public on the importance of the media."

# SUDAN AT A GLANCE

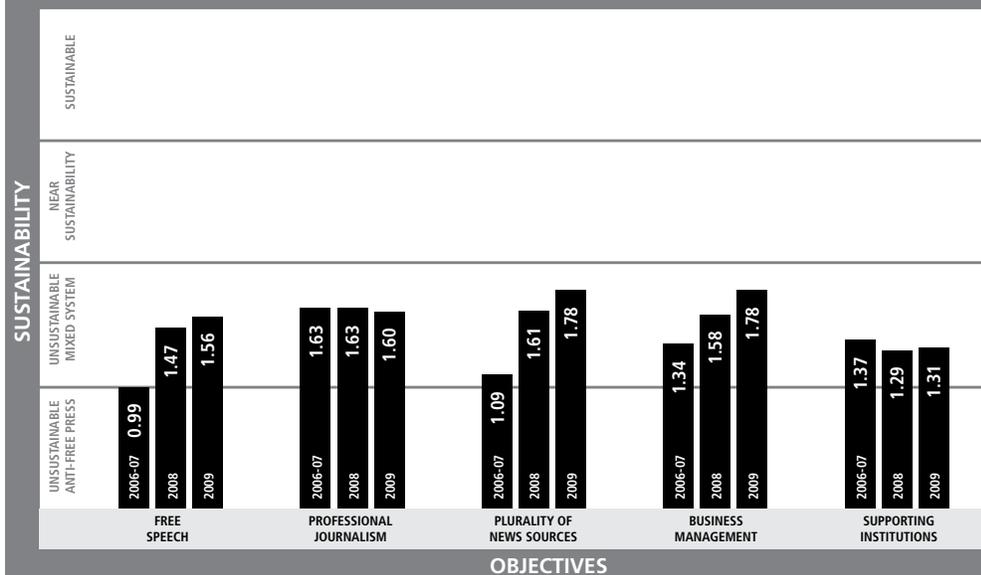
## GENERAL

- > **Population:** 41,087,825 (July 2010 est., *CIA World Factbook*)
- > **Capital city:** Khartoum
- > **Ethnic groups (% of population):** black [scores of ethnic groups of African origin] 52%, Arab 39%, Beja 6%, foreigners 2%, other 1% (*CIA World Factbook*)
- > **Religions (% of population):** Sunni Muslim 70% (in north), Christian 5% (mostly in south and Khartoum), indigenous beliefs 25% (*CIA World Factbook*)
- > **Languages (% of population):** Arabic (official), English (official), Nubian, Ta Bedawie, diverse dialects of Nilotic, Nilo-Hamitic, Sudanic languages (*CIA World Factbook*)
- > **GNI (2009-Atlas):** \$51.63 billion (World Bank Development Indicators, 2010)
- > **GNI per capita (2009-PPP):** \$2,000 (World Bank Development Indicators, 2010)
- > **Literacy rate:** 61.1% (male 71.8%, female 50.5%) (2003 est., *CIA World Factbook*)
- > **President or top authority:** President Umar Hassan Ahmad al-Bashir (since October 16, 1993)

## MEDIA-SPECIFIC

- > **Media-Specific**
- > **Number of active print outlets, radio stations, television stations:**  
Print: 7 daily newspapers; Radio Stations: 5 main stations; Television Stations: 2 main stations
- > **Newspaper circulation statistics:** Top three by circulation: *The Citizen Paper* (private), *The Sudan Tribune* (private), *The Juba Post* (private).
- > **Broadcast ratings:** Top radio stations: Miraya FM (UN-run, south), Bakhita FM (Catholic Church-run, south), Sudan National Radio Corporation (state-run, north), Mango 96 FM (private, north), Radio Juba (state-run, south); Television: Sudan National Broadcasting Corporation (state-run, north), Southern Sudan TV (state-run, south)
- > **News agencies:** Sudan News Agency (state-owned)
- > **Annual advertising revenue in media sector:** N/A
- > **Internet usage:** 4,200,000 (2008 est., *CIA World Factbook*)

## MEDIA SUSTAINABILITY INDEX: SUDAN



### 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

### Sudan Objective Score Score: 1.56

The panelists said that changes have been made to the Sudanese constitution, lending support for freedom of speech and freedom of the press; however, in practice, they are frequently ignored by those in power—especially in the north. Furthermore, the panelists reported that these constitutional changes are contradicted by many other oppressive laws that authorities still invoke to repress freedom of expression, and the government has passed new laws giving the National Press Council even greater power. The council is composed of eight members appointed by the president and the vice-president, and another eight are elected by the state-controlled journalists' union. Just five additional members come from publishers and owners of printing presses, which are not always completely independent. The new law empowers the National Press Council to oversee all licensing of journalists and media houses, and impose stiff fines and suspend news operations at will. The media community fears that the law will be a big blow to what little press freedom exists, potentially contravening the press guarantees contained in the new Sudanese constitution adopted as part of the CPA.

Still, in the south, panelists agreed, there are promising signs that the new constitution and laws under draft will provide for freedom of the press, and that the authorities will not be tempted to violate them, as their counterparts in the north

#### 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.

*There are laws in place governing the licensing process in Sudan, but in practice they are not followed properly. The licensing process is politicized, and ruling-party politicians—or those in their favor—find it easier to acquire licenses than those with ties to the opposition.*

have. For now, absent a proper legal framework in the south, the panelists still see violations of press freedom rights, but they can generally be attributed to individuals in government rather than a widespread pattern. In fact, the authorities sometimes respond to reports of violations.

According to the panelists, the judiciary lacks independence, especially in cases involving human-rights violations and media freedom. The government influences many judicial decisions in the north. However, in the south, the authorities continue to work on a legal framework to help establish proper judicial structures.

Regarding Internet use, officially, there are no restrictions in the north. However, the government, through its security organs, monitors Internet service consumers and providers. In the south, in contrast, the government has not shown an interest in monitoring Internet use.

The panelists agreed that in general, there is nothing fair about the broadcast licensing process in Sudan. In the north, it remains fully in the hands of the Ministry of Information, while in South Sudan, it is the responsibility of the Ministry of Information with assistance from the Ministry of Telecommunications and Postal Services. There are laws in place governing the licensing process in Sudan, but in practice they are not followed properly. The licensing process is politicized, and ruling-party politicians—or those in their favor—find it easier to acquire licenses than those with ties to the opposition. In the south, tribal sentiments sometimes come into play in licensing decisions. However, Emmanuel Alfred Levai, a producer for the Juba bureau of the Sudan Radio Service, said that he considers the licensing of broadcast media in Southern Sudan fair and noted that some outlets believed to be community-based, like the Radio of the Catholic Church/Bakhita FM Radio, are licensed free of charge.

A number of media houses that have criticized the government, both in the north and the south, have been threatened with closure, the panelists said. The Central Region governor once threatened the *Juba Post* with closure

---

---

*Surprisingly, said the panelists, mostly local and foreign black journalists are mistreated, while white journalists are always spared.*

for publishing a story considered to be “negative.” In the south, government officials warned, and later shut down temporarily, Bakhita FM (a radio station founded by the Catholic Church) for discussing political issues. In southern Sudan, the government also classifies the types of licenses it distributes to the electronic media, restricting certain media houses on particular issues. One panelist noted, “There is a lot of political interference and lack of understanding for those in power about the importance and role of the media in good governance and development.”

Media taxes remain high in Sudan, starting with the license. Different states are also devising new taxes, which the panelists deemed unfair. On top of taxes for media houses, individual journalists also pay indirect taxes deducted from their salaries.

Recently, the government of Sudan, through its security agencies, has been cracking down on human-rights activists. Many are arrested or detained, while others are harassed and intimidated. Rampant crimes against journalists take place out in the open while authorities are watching and without taking any action against the perpetrators, according to the panelists. Paul Jimbo, editor-in-chief of *Southern Eye*, commented, “Journalists are treated with lots of suspicion, as authorities still do not understand the role of the media. In parts of Sudan, especially in Khartoum, journalists face a lot of harassment. In South Sudan, there are also cases where authorities have rubbed shoulders with the media for publishing information they feel undermines official operations. Such cases are never well publicized in the media, for fear of consequences from the authorities.” Another panelist noted, “Three times, I have been nabbed at official functions by security personnel trying to stop me from doing my work,” and added that security operatives frequently confiscate—and sometimes destroy—equipment like cameras, recorders, and mobile phones. Female journalists are attacked and beaten in the same way as male journalists; one female journalist, Marvis Byeza (also a MSI panelist) was beaten by military police while on an assignment during the celebration of the 26th anniversary of the SPLA/M in May 2009; she was rushed to Kampala, Uganda, for treatment.

Surprisingly, said the panelists, mostly local and foreign black journalists are mistreated, while white journalists are always spared. The situation is worse outside of Juba and

other town centers. The perpetrators of these violations are never prosecuted, leading journalists to suspect government involvement. Recent cases include Isaac Vuny, who was arrested from parliament for publishing an accident story involving the president’s motorcade, as well as a piece on the *Sudan Tribune* website about the Nile Bank running out of cash.

However, some panelists said some of these problems would have been avoided if journalists followed professional ethics. Although most of these crimes are publicized well by the media, they do not cause public outcry. Jeremiah Otieno Siera, assistant finance officer for the Sudanese Agency for Independent Media (AIM), commented, “Our legal instruments are trying to harmonize with international standards, but society is not well educated on their rights and freedoms.”

There is no editorial independence in the state media, according to the panelists, as the government appoints the top editors and managers. As part of the government structure, state media receive preferential treatment all around, said the panelists. They added that state media enjoy easy access to official information, as the government in the north uses state media as a channel for propaganda.

The panelists said, however, that in the south, state media behave in the same way; the only difference is that security operatives harass journalists from private and state media outlets equally. The panelists noted that powerful businesses interfere with editorial content as well; stories that criticize businesses are sometimes dropped upon request.

Libel is a criminal offense in the north, while in the south, it is supposed to be both criminal and civil—but the government generally treats it as a criminal issue. Several journalists have been arrested, charged, and handed prison sentences as a result of libel-related offenses in the north. However, in the south at the moment, there are no clear laws. Journalists who annoy government or security operatives are sometimes arrested, detained in secret locations, and intimidated—then released without being charged. The burden of proof in such cases lies with the state. Levai said, “Libel is a civil and criminal issue in South Sudan, but so far there have been no reports of any journalists put behind bars for libel—except for the case of *Juba Post* and an SPLA major general who sued the paper for publishing a press statement by the Madi community that claimed the SPLA had grabbed their land in Nimule.” According to the panelists, Internet service providers are not legally responsible for the content of individual website owners.

Access to information is not easy in Sudan, especially from government circles. Sources tend to treat the media as an

enemy. There is no proper system in government to release information in the south, but in the north, the Sudan News Agency coordinates the dissemination of information. However, it is mainly propaganda.

The panelists added that in South Sudan, journalists, through an organization called the Association of Media Development in Southern Sudan, are trying to coordinate with the SPLA to develop a communications policy for the media. It will require journalists to come together, discuss, and agree on the new policy, and they will need some funding to organize meetings.

Public information is not readily available to journalists, and in the absence of an access to public information law, journalists must navigate many hurdles. Even if they know where to turn for a given piece of information, journalists are likely to be treated as enemies. The panelists reported cases of journalists who manage to obtain official information. But if they use it in a way the government considers critical, journalists are pressured to explain how they obtained the information and apologize.

The government does not officially restrict access to foreign news, but the panelists reported that the government blocks some websites, especially in the north. In Khartoum, some Internet blogs are restricted. At times, foreign news is also screened. In the south, the situation is different; Southern Sudan Television holds agreements with foreign television stations. In general, panelist Melania Celestino Suleiman Itto, presenter for Bakhita FM Radio, said that the government does not interfere with foreign news because it fears the international community.

The National Press Council still controls and determines who enters the journalism profession in Sudan; it also sets tests for all prospective journalists to earn a professional license. Journalists face this step after graduating from a media training institution—which are numerous in the north but nonexistent in the south, the panelists noted. In addition, the government does sometimes require accreditation of journalists, but typically only for large, Sudan-wide state functions. However, the panelists said that the National Press Council's mandate now stops in the northern part of the country. In absence of the qualifications and standards in South Sudan, entry into the profession remains relatively free. Levai noted, in fact, that it is the easiest field in which to find employment, barring any language barriers.

*Another panelist noted that in South Sudan, some journalists are slightly biased toward the southern cause, and thus patriotism also leads to censorship.*

## OBJECTIVE 2: PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISM

### Sudan Objective Score: 1.60

Although the panelists debated the media's adherence to professional standards, many panelists said that journalists who are trained well conduct their work professionally, report objectively and cross-check their sources. This is mainly true in the northern part of the country, where all the training institutions are concentrated. In South Sudan, according to the panelists, very few journalists and editors follow all the procedures while doing their work. The panelists admitted that they have run into problems because of their unfamiliarity with professional standards, and they believe that proper training, even in the basics of journalism, would be a great help. Levai added that another problem stems from the lack of sources; he said, "What is lacking is the presence of independent relevant sources to comment on a variety of topics. The few health experts, economists, and even civil-society members have been pulled into the government." Jimbo also commented that some media houses tend to sensationalize certain issues, due to partisan interests, and that most journalists report the news at face value rather than digging deeper.

### 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).

*The panelists said that some journalists remain in the profession despite the poor pay because they love the work. However, the situation is getting worse, and the panelists link the low pay at least partially to corruption within the media.*

As previous MSI studies reported, two separate ethical codes exist: one for the whole of Sudan and another for South Sudan's journalists. However, panelists reported that although the older code of ethics was intended for the whole country, journalists from the south no longer recognize it. Instead, they have endorsed their own code of ethics, developed in consultation with AIM. The panel added that beyond these two codes, some media houses have their own code of ethics and editorial policies, which their managers enforce. Despite these guidelines, though, some journalists have been seen accepting bribes and payments from their sources in exchange for stories and coverage, which affects the professionalism of the trade.

Self-censorship exists at all levels and for different reasons, including the fear of losing jobs or offending society, safety concerns, the threat of prison, and political influence. Media owners and their business friends also drive journalists and editors to censor their work. Another panelist noted that in South Sudan, some journalists are slightly biased toward the southern cause, and thus patriotism also leads to censorship.

Many key events, especially those organized by the government, are not covered because reporters are blocked from accessing them. Itto noted that insecurity throughout much of South Sudan, lack of movement in some places, and the difficulty of finding proper equipment and transportation also inhibit coverage. For the most part, only events in open or public places, such as memorial celebrations, are covered. The panel noted that there are also cases where editors stop reporters from covering certain key events because of editorial policies of their media houses. Throughout the country, issues related to security are especially difficult to cover, and reporters who dare to may encounter resistance.

For government media, pay levels have gradually improved, but they remain low for freelancers and those working for private media outlets. State media journalists are paid according to their grade, which also depends on their level of education. State media journalists earn between SDG 450 and 2,400 (\$200 and \$1,000) per month, editors and reporters respectively. On average, reporters pull in about SDG 930 per month (\$400). Panelists also commented that there is a large

pay disparity between reporters and editors. Most freelancers scrape by with about SDG 100 to 250 (\$50 to \$100) per month, too little compared with the cost of living. According to the panelists, only the United Nations radio station, Mirror FM, pays its journalists fair salaries (between \$500 and \$3,000 per month).

The panelists said that some journalists remain in the profession despite the poor pay because they love the work. However, the situation is getting worse, and the panelists link the low pay at least partially to corruption within the media. One panelist said that some journalists sell stories to politicians and other sources to supplement their incomes. However, panelists noted, even some well-paid journalists, including editors, have been cited in cases of corruption. Furthermore, the panel agreed that although journalists are poorly paid, among civil servants teachers suffer from the lowest pay.

The panel noted that training carried out in some media houses has led to improvements in broadcast programming, compared with previous years. Media houses have tried to balance entertainment with news; however, research has shown that youth prefer music to news. Levai said that news and entertainment are better balanced in the print media than in broadcast.

News-gathering equipment and production and printing facilities are fairly modern in the northern part of the country but still lacking in the south. One panelist commented, "Apart from lack of training, we also do not have basic facilities, which also affects the quality of our work." In South Sudan, journalists working for the electronic media lack equipment, including recorders, video cameras, computers, and editing facilities, while their counterparts in print have no printing press. Printing operates very efficiently in the northern part of the country, where facilities are readily available. Private media outlets in the south face more challenges; media owners travel either to Khartoum or Kampala, Uganda, to print their newspapers—which affects their bottom line as well as their delivery schedules. In contrast, the state-owned media in the south have acquired modern equipment, but they lack professionals to operate it.

Along with equipment, Sudanese journalists are most in need of assistance in capacity building and training—especially for journalists working in the south. The panelists recommend that donors channel any assistance through AIM, which has shown interest in developing the media in South Sudan. AIM can also identify media houses with critical needs for potential donors. One panelist added that aid might be channeled to provide scholarship opportunities to help practicing journalists complete their studies.

Niche reporting exists in the northern part of the country in some media houses, but most journalists in the south are not trained adequately to conduct specialized reporting. The panel underlined the need to persuade and encourage journalists to take up specialized reporting. However, investigative journalism is a particularly risky endeavor in the current postwar environment.

### OBJECTIVE 3: PLURALITY OF NEWS

#### Sudan Objective Score: 1.78

The panel noted that Sudanese citizens have access to multiple sources of electronic and print news, both local and international. In South Sudan, there are 12 newspapers, 18 radio stations, eight regularly printed magazines, and two television stations. Internet access is mainly affordable and accessible only in cities and towns. Mobile-phone news alerts exist, but not many can afford to subscribe. Similarly, satellite news services exist, but few can afford the expense. Siera added, "We are trying to maintain the plurality of our news sources, and we have several newspapers, broadcast, and Internet providers. Citizens' access to these products is not restricted, though they are not cheap, and there are also places where they are not available due to poor infrastructure."

Northern Sudanese, especially Khartoum residents, have access to more news sources, as the media are concentrated there. In contrast, in the south, it is harder to find newspapers outside of big cities like Juba, said the panelists. Most rural

#### 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.

*State media are fully controlled by government in both the north and south, and they primarily serve official interests, said the panelists. They added that the government spends a lot of time promoting its own programs.*

residents depend on radio stations as their major source of news and information—not just because of access and cost, but because most rural residents cannot read or write. However, the panelists reported that a community media presence is slowly growing in the north, but it mainly dispenses government propaganda. Community media outlets also are difficult to sustain in Sudan. To date, the following community radio stations have been established in the southern part of Sudan: Internews radio, Nhomlaau FM (Freedom), and Spirit FM. There is also *Juba Post*, a community newspaper.

The panelists concluded that those who live in cities have more access to the media than those who live in villages, and thus they have more opportunities to compare different news sources.

Panelists agreed that access to both domestic and international media is free throughout the country, but the government in Khartoum indirectly regulates its citizens' accessibility to media from Western countries. Still, the major obstacle may be the cost.

State media are fully controlled by government in both the north and south, and they primarily serve official interests, said the panelists. They added that the government spends a lot of time promoting its own programs. The only advantage of state media is that they also promote a number of programs that benefit society in education, health, cultural, and peace-building in conflict-affected areas.

The oldest local news agency, the Sudanese News Agency (SUNA), is state-owned and continues to distribute government-sanctioned news to all media houses that want it at no cost, noted the panelists. However, this news agency is not independent, and most of its news is government propaganda. A replica has been established in the southern part of the country called the Southern Sudan News agency, established by the government there, but it operates in the same way as SUNA. The panel noted that, both in the north and the south, media houses selectively use news from foreign news agencies like AFP, AP, and Reuters as well.

*Media owners hide to avoid compliance with tax codes and also to avoid attacks from those who may not be happy with things published or aired out.*

Media houses continue to produce their own news programs, and the quality is improving gradually. According to the panelists, about three quarters of the programs are produced locally.

Most media house owners are unknown, and it is not easy to obtain this information. That is partly because no laws facilitate the release of information about owners, but the panelists also said that citizens are simply not interested in this information. Media owners hide to avoid compliance with tax codes and also to avoid attacks from those who may not be happy with things published or aired out. Still, some media proprietors have come out openly to acknowledge ownership, which the panelists considered healthy.

Several panelists reported no resistance to the inclusion of social issues in the media and noted that the government has also delivered radio programs to improve coverage of local issues in all the regions. They said that minority-language media are not an issue in Sudan; however, the electronic media tend to cover social issues more than their counterparts in print. However, Levai commented, "Private media do cover issues of public interest, but when it comes to cultural and linguistic issues, only those concerning the media owner's tribe are reported, especially in print media. Journalists writing about issues affecting minorities are sometimes harassed indirectly."

**OBJECTIVE 4: BUSINESS MANAGEMENT**

**Sudan Objective Score: 1.78**

According to the panelists, most media houses operate as profit-making businesses, hiring professionals to manage different positions within these companies, and some prepare and adhere to business plans and follow international accounting and finance practices. Other outlets are more mission-focused. Across the board, hiring professional human-resources, marketing, and accounting staff is not a common practice. The panelists said that there are also a few media houses run as family businesses, with the owners juggling more than one role and the remaining positions managed by relatives. Such businesses tend to close within a few months of opening.

Media houses in Sudan receive revenue from several sources, including the sale of copies, advertising, commercial printing, and sponsorship from donors and the state, as well as bank loans. Some of these funding sources attempt to leverage their support to gain editorial influence, affecting the independence of their beneficiaries. In addition, the panelists commented that although some media houses bring in a fair amount of revenue, they need to train their employees how to manage these funds. However, both the independent private media outlets and community media continue to suffer from a crippling lack of funding.

The advertising sector is flourishing in big towns and cities in northern Sudan, with several advertising firms active, both local and international. These firms work well with all types of media, some on a commission basis, reported the panel. However, the panelists expressed concern about the situation in the south, where there are no advertising firms. To compete in the tighter market, some media owners there employ professional marketers to solicit advertisements.

There are no specific formulas on the proportion of advertisements compared with programming time; rather, this varies according to the number of advertisements received on a given day. Whenever a media house gets more advertisements, it is accommodated, and even the percentage of revenue from advertisements compared with the total revenue is in flux depending on the volume of business.

Independent media do not receive direct subsidies from the government; however, the panelists said that the government secretly funds select private media houses considered friendly to government interests. With such funding, the government

**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.

manages to influence some of these media houses, hence affecting their editorial independence.

Big media houses carry out market research through hired companies, groups, and at times in house by using the call-in method and distributing questionnaires. In most cases, such information is used to promote their products and uncover and address their weaknesses. The panel said, however, that in the south, there are few—if any—media houses carrying out such research. Siera noted, “We need a professional polling company to come and give us a boost in this sector.”

In northern Sudan, professional companies generate broadcast ratings and circulation figures, but for the most part media houses reject these figures. Furthermore, the south completely lacks such a process; some media houses just issue claims that they are leading in the market or, in the case of electronic media, that they draw the widest listenership.

## OBJECTIVE 5: SUPPORTING INSTITUTIONS

### Sudan Objective Score: 1.31

There are associations for media owners and publishers in the northern part of Sudan that represent their members, but there are no trade associations in the south.

The oldest professional association is the Sudan Journalists Association, which is open to all journalists. It helps train journalists, supports development projects for its members, and works with the government. According to the panelists, although members help to run this association, it is mainly funded by the state. There are also other small media associations handling specific sectors of the profession, like the Women Journalists Association. The panelists added that

#### 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.

*All the journalists from the south who used to belong to the Sudan Journalists Association have deserted it and formed their own associations, as the media's freedom to organize has improved there.*

in the north, most of the existing media associations are either melded to the government or sympathetic to the ruling party, and therefore not independent.

All the journalists from the south who used to belong to the Sudan Journalists Association have deserted it and formed their own associations, as the media's freedom to organize has improved there. There are more than 10 journalists' associations formed independently of the state—but they still suffer from low membership interest. These include the Association for Media Development in Southern Sudan, the Union of Journalists of Southern Sudan, the Association for Media Women in Southern Sudan, and some smaller associations. These associations lobby the government to halt threatening media laws, advocate for journalists' rights, support capacity training, and boost media development efforts.

Panelists said that becoming a member in all these associations is easy; the only requirements are filling out an application form and paying membership fees. All these associations are independent of government, but few members are in a position to pay dues, because of widespread low pay across the media industry.

There are several NGOs in Sudan involved in press freedom defense and media development. Most, including the German Development Organization, Norwegian Church Aid, and Norwegian People's Aid, are concentrated in the south. These organizations contributed toward development of the media bill. In addition to defending media freedom, many of these NGOs assist in media training and provide facilities to some media houses (especially in the south, where few other options exist).

AIM, formerly known as the Association of Inter-Media, has developed into an NGO. It now focuses primarily on training journalists, building a media database, supporting media development initiatives, and protecting human rights.

The panel noted that there are many media training facilities in the north, ranging from universities that offer degree courses to tertiary institutions offering high-quality language diploma and certificate courses in Arabic. However, in the south, the situation is quite different, with only one university

---

---

*The panel noted that there are many media training facilities in the north, ranging from universities that offer degree courses to tertiary institutions offering high-quality language diploma and certificate courses in Arabic. However, in the south, the situation is quite different, with only one university offering a related degree course (in mass communication).*

offering a related degree course (in mass communication). Many working journalists in the south have not benefited from this university, because they lack the required entry qualifications. Opportunities for practicing journalists to get degree programs abroad are very rare.

About 90 percent of the journalists working in the south received only on-the-job training. “We were affected by the long civil war in our country, and many of us never had a chance at a formal education. Instead, we have been receiving training on the job—but we need a (formal) program that can accommodate us while continuing with our work,” said one of the panelists. Earlier plans by UNDP to establish a media training school at the *Juba Post* were thwarted by the people involved who embezzled funds, forcing donors to pull out and abandon the project. This has left journalists in the south without any training facility; prospective journalists must travel to Khartoum or neighboring countries. The panelists expressed their hope that a donor might step forward to help them mobilize funding through AIM to create an institute.

Some of Sudan’s larger media houses conduct in-house trainings. Some humanitarian agencies conduct trainings, mostly on covering children, women, and human-rights

abuses. However, there is little training in basic journalism skills or how to cover events in a war zone. Additionally, according to the panel, although some journalists have taken advantage of opportunities to train abroad, typically when they return they do not apply their skills to boost media development. The lack of training institutions and skilled journalists to facilitate training sessions constitute the major constraints to improving training opportunities, noted the panelists. They concluded that the need for serious investment in South Sudan’s media sector is great, both in infrastructure and human resources by putting up training facilities.

The government maintains its grip over some printing facilities, while others are privately owned—but all of them are monitored by the state, which deploys security personnel at every printing press. The panel said that no newspaper can be printed inside Sudan without close scrutiny from the security forces, but there is more freedom in the south. However, the panelists said that in the south, the media are waiting for a new government printing press to see whether the existing freedom is maintained. For now, only papers printed from neighboring countries get away with running stories critical of the government. The panelists also reported that newspaper printing and distribution is not subsidized by the state throughout Sudan.

The panel said that media distribution channels are in private hands, and about 75 percent of the media produced are consumed within cities and towns like Khartoum and Juba. Media houses employ vendors on a commission basis and also have outlets and agents in small towns who sell their products.

The panel noted that, in the past, broadcast transmitters were controlled and owned by the government, but the situation is changing slowly. Today, some transmitters are in private hands (but monitored by the state). The panel added that the government still limits areas of coverage for all transmitters.

---

---

## List of Panel Participants

**Esther Muwombi**, journalist, *Juba Post*, Juba

**Melania Celestino Suleiman Itto**, radio presenter, Bakhita FM Radio, New Site

**Puot Kang Chol**, civil-society representative, Juba

**Jeremiah Otieno Siera**, finance assistant officer, Agency for Independent Media, Juba

**Veronica Lucy Gordon**, executive member, Association for Media Women in Southern Sudan, Juba

**Emmaneul Levai**, sub-editor with SRS Media, Juba

**Marvis Byezza**, journalist, Bakhita Radio, Kaya

**Paul Jimbo**, editor-in-chief, *Southern Eye*, Juba

## Moderator and Author

**David Aruai de Dau**, chairman, Agency for Independent Media, Juba

## Coordinator

**Herbert Mukasa Lumansi**, vice president, Uganda Journalists Association, Kampala, Uganda