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TOGO

In 2010, the Togolese press gained a little more freedom, although Togo's overall MSI score of 1.62 increased just slightly over last year's average of 1.54. It is the Togolese journalists who deserve the credit for this year's progress, as they have defied fear and threats to provide the public with quality news and have been perhaps too outspoken, particularly with respect to politics, human rights, and the breaches of democracy and the rule of law. Togolese journalists tackled economic and development issues in investigative reports on government spending, particularly the spending of the president of the republic, and the cost of public works. While sometimes these articles may have lacked the consistency required by professional news providers, they must be praised for breaking taboos, raising public awareness, and causing public authorities to start exercising some restraint in making certain decisions.

Feeling threatened as a result, the government tried to toughen up the law of the Haute Autorité de l'Audiovisuel et de la Communication (HAAC) to allow this institution to muzzle the press. Journalists fought against this law that would have given HAAC the tools to ban shows, shut down radio stations and television channels, and withdraw the operating licenses of newspapers. The amendment of this law finally took place at the Assemblée Nationale in December 2009, but it ultimately happened with input from the media associations.

Over the course of 2010, a number of journalists faced brutality and harassment. In January 2010, a protest march was organized by the association Journalistes for Human Rights (JDHO) to denounce the attack of the security forces against the journalist Gilles Gbagba, who at the time was working for Radio Metropolys and who was brutally stopped by a police squad led by the general director of the National Police Force, Yark Damehane. Shortly after the results of the March 4 presidential elections were announced, many journalists became the targets of physical attacks, death threats, and all kinds of intimidation. Most of them were mistaken for demonstrators demanding to know the truth about the election results.

Many media outlets were also directly summoned to appear before the District Court and ended up being fined for higher damage amounts than the press code provides for, showing that the judges overstepped the law and used the criminal code instead. As a result, the tri-weekly newspaper, *Golfe Info*, was sentenced to pay XOF 83 million (\$167,000), and a number of other papers were also subjected to high fines. Fortunately, some of these judgments were withdrawn at the last minute under public pressure.

Despite obvious intimidation, the Togolese press has ignored all threats and has become all the more determined to spread the news. Overall, the MSI results of the panel discussions of November 12, 2010, clearly show that in Togo, freedom of speech and the freedom of the press are alive and protected by legislation. The difficulty consists in getting the institutions of the republic to properly enforce the laws.

TOGO AT A GLANCE

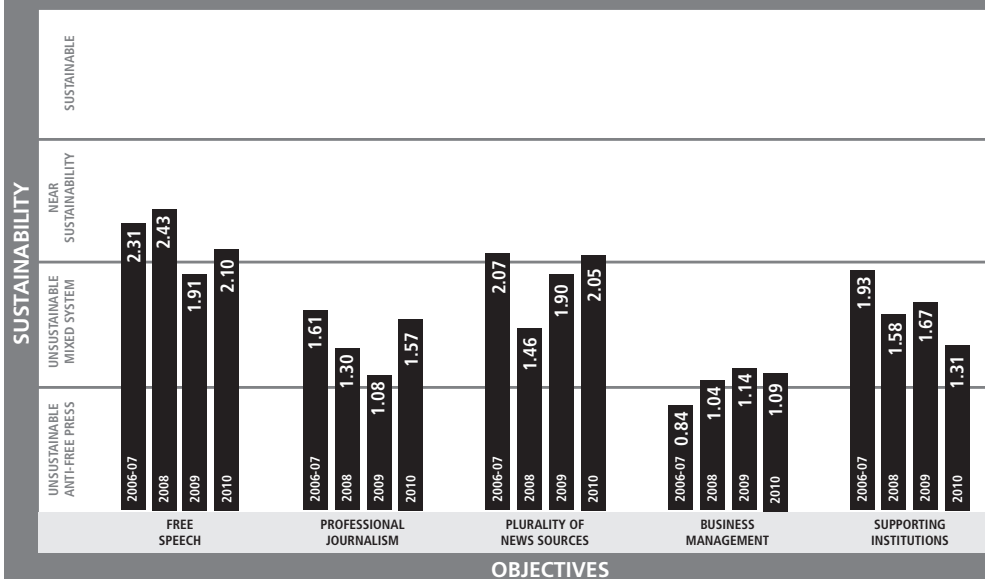
GENERAL

- > **Population:** 6,961,049 (2011 est., *CIA World Factbook*)
- > **Capital city:** Lomé
- > **Ethnic groups (% of population):** African (37 tribes; largest and most important are Ewe, Mina, and Kabre) 99%, European and Syrian-Lebanese less than 1% (*CIA World Factbook*)
- > **Religions (% of population):** Christian 29%, Muslim 20%, indigenous beliefs 51% (*CIA World Factbook*)
- > **Languages:** French (official and the language of commerce), Ewe and Mina (the two major African languages in the south), Kabye (sometimes spelled Kabiye) and Dagomba (the two major African languages in the north) (*CIA World Factbook*)
- > **GNI (2010-Atlas):** \$2.957 billion (World Bank Development Indicators, 2011)
- > **GNI per capita (2010-PPP):** \$790 (World Bank Development Indicators, 2011)
- > **Literacy rate:** 60.9% (male 75.4%, female 46.9%) (2003 est., *CIA World Factbook*)
- > **President or top authority:** President Faure Gnassingbe (since May 4, 2005)

MEDIA-SPECIFIC

- > **Number of active print outlets, radio stations, television stations:** Print: 400 regularly registered publications, out of which 45 are currently operational; Radio Stations: 98 registered radio stations, 96 operational countrywide; Television Stations: 8 registered television stations, 6 fully operational, 2 on test transmission
- > **Newspaper circulation statistics:** N/A
- > **Broadcast ratings:** N/A
- > **News agencies:** The Togo News Agency (state-owned) ACP-Inter and Savoir-news (private)
- > **Annual advertising revenue in media sector:** N/A
- > **Internet usage:** 356,300 (2009 est., *CIA World Factbook*)

MEDIA SUSTAINABILITY INDEX: TOGO



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

Togo Objective Score: 2.10

The score of Objective 1 clearly shows that a proper legal and institutional framework guaranteeing the freedom of the press does exist in Togo, but in reality there are many obstacles hindering the freedom of the press. Legal and social protection measures for the freedom of the press exist, but they are not properly enforced, which explains the score of 2.10.

The Togolese constitution protects the freedom of speech and the freedom of the press. Article 26 provides that the freedom of the press is recognized and guaranteed by the state and protected by the law. According to the same article, the press cannot be subject to prior authorization or censorship or other hindrances. Any decision to stop the distribution of any publication can and must only be enforced based on a court order.

This constitutional provision is repeated in the press and communications code, which asserts that the written press and audiovisual communications are free, subject to their compliance with legal provisions. In addition to these measures, there is an organic law that regulates the creation and operation of the Haute Autorité de l'Audiovisuel et de la Communication (HAAC), the national media regulation agency. Therefore, Togo has an entire legal arsenal to protect the freedom of speech and the freedom of the press. Tragically, however, the legislation is improperly enforced

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.

The Togolese law provides no provisions with respect to cyber-crimes, which is why for the time being no Internet provider or website hosting service has been brought before a court.

and sometimes neglected by the judicial power and the institutions of the Republic.

The panelists said that the process of granting broadcast media licenses is not fair, often politically biased, and definitely not based on free competition. Under the law, HAAC is supposed to be the license granting agency, while the Autorité de Réglementation des Télécommunications et Postes (ARTP) assigns the audiovisual frequencies. In reality, the ARTP is the political agency within the Ministry of Telecommunications that grants frequencies in exchange for royalties. If a media outlet is not in the orbit of the political regime, it is very difficult for it to receive frequencies. For example, while they have been saying for more than two years that no more frequencies were available in the capital of Lomé, Radio City FM (owned by the Minister of Land Administration and Local Collectivities) easily obtained a frequency. Meanwhile, other applicants were instructed to go through a useless application process.

Access to the market and the tax situation of the media are subject to the same rules as any other business; however, the media in Togo are not harassed by the tax authorities. The Togolese audiovisual media effectively pay annual taxes in the form of royalties ranging from XOF 400,000 to XOF 700,000 (\$800–\$1,400), depending on the location of the radio station—in the provinces or the capital. Television stations pay between XOF 700,000 and XOF 1,200,000 (\$1,400–\$2,420). In addition to the royalties, the audiovisual media are subject to income tax; on the other hand, very few newspapers can be considered real businesses that are registered with the Ministry of Commerce and the Chamber of Commerce. It might be said, then, that the written press is advantaged by the fact that it is a developing business.

Criminal acts against journalists or media outlets are insidious, taking the form of either threats or direct summons before courts, although the crime rate has lowered. But in Togo, what the government gives with the right hand, the government takes with the left hand, said one panelist. The freedom of journalists, although recognized by the legislation, is constantly threatened as the people at the top of the government and those acting on its behalf enjoy a long tradition of impunity. In 2010, many journalists were

victims of various attacks. The most striking examples are Gilles Gbagba, beaten by the security forces while doing his job in front of the Centre Culturel Français (CCF) in Lomé; Tony Sodji, reporter, photographer, and cameraman, who was shot with a rubber bullet and had his hand cut with a knife by the security forces; and Didier Ledoux, who was verbally abused and had his camera confiscated by a French officer named Romuald Letondot.

In addition, in the provinces some prefects have put a lot of pressure on radio stations and canceled shows for criticizing the political regime. For example, Radio Dawul was not allowed to air the message of a presidential hopeful whose candidacy was rejected by the Constitutional Court. Legal action taken by the president and his half-brother against the newspapers *Indépendant Express*, *Liberté Quotidien*, *Tribune d'Afrique*, *Le Magnan Libéré*, and *Golfe Info* is another form of threats and aggression against the media.

The public or state-run media enjoy preferential treatment, which makes them ready to fulfill any desire of the political regime. The panelists share with the public the view that the public media are mere mouthpieces for the government and the political regime, in large part due to the fact that the managers of the public media and information agencies are appointed directly by the president. The media subsidized by the government are not independent. Moreover, the journalists and technicians working for such media have civil-servant status, and the public media are also privileged when it comes to the access to public information.

In Togo, libel is a matter of civil law, but judges deploy the criminal code rather than the press code to punish libel. This practice is a contortion of the law, panelists said. As a press offense, libel is subject to the press code of 1998, amended on August 24, 2004, which eliminated prison sentences and introduced fines as a form of punishment. Therefore, the punishment for libel against the president is a fine of XOF 2,500,000 to XOF 5,000,000 (\$5,000–\$10,000)—the highest fine in the press code. A media outlet accused of a press offense is responsible for providing evidence to the contrary; it is not the victim's duty to prove his or her accusations. In turn, civil servants who refuse to provide information to journalists—particularly those working in the private press—hide behind what it is known as “state secrets,” or are simply overzealous for fear of losing their jobs. The Togolese law provides no provisions with respect to cyber-crimes, which is why for the time being no Internet provider or website hosting service has been brought before a court.

In the panelists' opinion, although the access to public information is difficult, it should be pointed out that journalists are not trying very hard to obtain it, and journalists are often ill-organized in their approach, mainly

due to the quality of their training. Often these journalists work without an address book, and when they finally receive certain information they end up revealing their sources.

The Togolese media have multiple foreign news sources at their disposal. The most important known international news agencies are AFP (Agence France-Presse), Panapress (Agence Panafricaine de Presse), Reuters, AP (Associated Press), and Xinhua (New China Agency). In addition to these agencies, RFI, BBC, Africa N°1, Deutsche Welle, and VOA, with worldwide reception, are the main providers of radio news for the Togolese media. As far as television is concerned, the national territory is flooded with cable channels such as CNN, France 24, Africa 24, TV5Monde, Africable, and other continental channels such as TV3Monde, Telesud, or Al-Jazeera. In terms of Internet usage, many Togolese bloggers use services such as YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter. National news, albeit highly controlled, is provided by the Agence Togolaise de Presse (ATOP).

In terms of entry into the profession, anyone is free to become a journalist in Togo, and the government requires no license to do so and sets no restrictions on journalists' special rights. The only legal requirement for anyone who wishes to claim the title of journalist is a press card issued by HAAC and, when applicable, the professional badge provided by the media outlets themselves. Even so, the panelists pointed out that some media professionals refuse to comply with the requirements for the issuance of the press card, and there are journalists who go on location on reporting assignments without carrying any identification.

Hiring policies in the private media are completely free from the influence of the government or other political interests, and journalists are free to organize themselves and defend their rights.

OBJECTIVE 2: PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISM

Togo Objective Score: 1.57

Reporting is often unfair, lacking objectivity, and not very well documented, according to the panelists. Media outlets make mistakes, and programming suffers from repetition. Almost 90 percent of the media outlets do not have qualified editors, the panelists noted. Technical experts are rarely asked for advice on specific issues, and when they are it is the journalists who do not ask the right questions. Bloggers find it even more difficult to ask for specialists' opinions and have to work with the opinions that are already available on the Web. Further impeding the strength of reporting, the authorities systematically maintain a tradition of withholding

information, particularly from journalists working in the private sector.

The panelists feel that the greatest deficiency of the Togolese press is its noncompliance with ethical and professional standards. Togolese journalists have a long way to go in this respect.

The situation is most alarming in the print media, which have been known to spread false news, to put at risk fraternity and the presumption of innocence, and to publish defamatory news and endanger the private lives of citizens. On the radio, such smear campaigns occur in interactive shows in which guests mainly hurl insults. Sometimes the hosts of such shows are incapable of controlling and guiding the discussion, which the panelists take as a sign that Togolese journalists do not seek to improve their skills.

The political context in Togo forces journalists to resort to self-censorship most of the time. On the other hand, after the opposition accused the ruling party of having hijacked the results of the presidential elections of March 4, 2010, exasperated by such unorthodox practices, some Togolese journalists have started to fight their fears and shed some light on the darkest secrets of the regime.

The other form of self-censorship that Togolese journalists practice is the exchange of information for cash. Due to threats made against them, the press journalists rarely tackle issues related to national security, the armed forces, and ethnic groups. Many media outlet managers pressure journalists to write in a certain way because, most of the time, managers are either members of a political party or paid to withhold those pieces of news that may harm their sponsors.

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).

On the other hand, after the opposition accused the ruling party of having hijacked the results of the presidential elections of March 4, 2010, exasperated by such unorthodox practices, some Togolese journalists have started to fight their fears and shed some light on the darkest secrets of the regime.

Sometimes journalists are unable to cover key newsworthy events for fear of reprisals, or due to a lack of resources or professional talent. Journalists find it very hard to cover issues related to national security, the army, drug dealing—which has reached the top echelons of the political power and army—and high-level corruption, for reasons of safety. For having dared to tackle these topics, the newspapers *Tribune d’Afrique*, *Indépendant Express*, *La Lanterne*, *The Daily Liberté*, and *Le Magnost Libéré* were brought before the court and asked to pay damages from XOF 63 to XOF 250 million (\$125,000–\$500,000).

Togolese journalists have ridiculously low salaries—and many receive no salaries at all. In the state-run media, paychecks are highly unpredictable. In the private media, many managers take all the company’s funds and use them for personal purposes. Very few pay salaries of XOF 40,000 to XOF 80,000 (\$80–\$160). The rest earn somewhere between XOF 20,000 and XOF 30,000 (\$40–\$60), which is why journalists are constantly in search of per diems and seek to cover events that promise to reimburse their transportation expenses, a practice commonly known as “the final statement.” The panelists feel that the low salaries in the Togolese media explain the high corruption level. In Togo, cash dictates what articles are written and the editorial line of the media. Regrettably, according to the panelists, those radio stations that criticize the government have considerably toned down their critique.

On most Togolese radio stations and television channels, entertainment programs cover most of the airtime. Music, radio games, and films take at least 70 percent of the media programming, the panelists estimate, and they suggested including the religious shows in this category. Real news occupies only 20–25 percent of the programs. Documentaries and large stories appear only sporadically. Fortunately, the news-starved public can turn to the cable channels to satisfy such needs.

The panelists lamented the poor state of equipment for the media. Most of the audiovisual outlets on the Togolese territory are still analog. Even worse, the equipment is run-down and obsolete and altogether inadequate for modern journalistic work. The national station, Radio Lomé, continues to work with equipment from the 1900s. Created in 1973, the national television channel still depends on old, outdated equipment. These two national media cannot even cover the entire national territory, which is only 56,000 square kilometers. Things are no shinier in the private broadcast media, but some stations have started to modernize their equipment, such as La Chaîne du Futur (LCF) and Radio Télévision Delta Santé (RTDS). Few newspapers have prepress equipment, since very few even have offices and, therefore, any equipment to speak of, not even microphones or recorders. Newspapers are still offset printed and not adapted to modern printing techniques. The only rotary press operator belongs to the state-run company Togo Presse and has been unusable for over 15 years.

The panelists pointed out more specialized reporting and efforts to tackle certain themes in 2010, as demonstrated by television shows such as "Economic News" and "Health for All" airing on primetime on the national television channel TVT. According to the panelists, the four-page weekly thematic section published by the newspaper *Crocodile News* is often well documented and presents expert opinions in various areas such as the environment, health, culture, education, grassroots development, fishing, and even politics. The panelists conceded that there are an increasing number of specialty shows from the Togolese broadcast media as well, but the panelists criticized their quality in general and the professional skills of the journalists who host them in particular.

OBJECTIVE 3: PLURALITY OF NEWS

Togo Objective Score: 2.05

The media landscape in Togo has been booming since the 1990s. There are now 98 radio stations, 12 television channels, and some 40 publications, including three daily newspapers (one is government-run; the other two are privately owned) throughout the country. Despite their number, these Togolese media continue to be largely unprofessional.

Also, while a large number of private and public news sources exist, access is sometimes difficult, which held back scores for this objective. Furthermore, few media present a diversity of viewpoints. In the public media, according to the panelists, the perspective of the political regime is relayed unilaterally. Real debates are too few and far between. The private

media are polarized and act as mouthpieces for either the government or the opposition.

The private print and broadcast media outlets are generally local media that do not cover the entire national territory. There are many more community radio stations providing news and information targeted at the specific problems of their communities. Many often turn to the Internet to find news but have to deal with excessive Internet connection costs and power cuts. There is no real distribution company; instead the Togolese depend on cellular operators (such as Togotelecom and Moov) to spread news and factual events via text messages and other methods. The population also relies on social networking services such as Twitter, YouTube, and Facebook to receive news. For example, the attack on the journalist Didier Ledoux by the French officer went viral on the social networks.

As a general rule, the government does not restrict the access to national or international media, but its hostility toward some of them is interpreted as an indirect restriction. And, while listening to foreign shows or reading foreign news is possible and legal, listeners and readers often have to deal with reception failures and channel encryptions.

Additionally, the residents of the capital city are privileged with respect to the other cities. Foreign written press is available only in the capital of Lomé, and many areas in the rest of the country have trouble getting private newspapers, as they come in short supply.

Cost is perhaps the most significant obstacle. The prices of international newspapers, magazines, and cable television

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.

are quite high. People working in public institutions or associations and a very few educated persons in the capital can afford to buy newspapers in general, let alone the international publications. The workers' low salaries significantly influence their access to the Internet, satellite, or other services as well; the cost makes such access a luxury that is out of reach for even the middle class. The panelists confirmed, though, that the government sets no limits on Internet accessories such as the VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol) module or social networks such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube.

The independence of the state-run media is relative, panelists said, noting that these journalists are on the regime's payroll. The state-run or public media do not reflect the entire spectrum of political opinions; they are biased and cover the government's activities more extensively than those of the opposition. The state-run media partially fill the void left by the commercial television channels, sometimes offering longer programs on public affairs and encouraging cultural and educational programs. However, the panelists emphasized that most of the journalists are driven by their own interests—not just in the public media, but also in the private media. They do not believe that their function is to serve the public interest apolitically, and therefore they work to satisfy their ambitions.

Independent news agencies gather and distribute news for the written and audiovisual press. Other than the international news agencies, there are three national agencies: the official one, Agence Togolaise de Presse (ATOP), and two new private news agencies, Agence de Communication et de Presse (ACP-Inter) and Agence Savoir News. These news agencies select the news to distribute and provide the media with enough news, but journalists do not use them. It should be pointed out, at the same time, that Agence Savoir News produces dispatches that are used by the national media, while ACP-Inter had to stop such activities due to a lack of resources. On the other hand, the panelists are glad to point out that news agencies such as Reuters, AP, AFP, and Panapress are present in Togo as well.

The independent broadcast outlets do produce their own newscasts, but some of them prefer to run programs taken from the big international networks for hours on end, lowering the score for the related indicator. Content produced by the private media is visibly different from that produced by the state-run or public media in terms of editorial orientation, and it often does not meet the needs of the local populations. Most radio stations produce original programs, often presented in local languages, which the populations appreciate. In terms of quality, however, there is still a lot of work to do. As far as bloggers are concerned,

Content produced by the private media is visibly different from that produced by the state-run or public media in terms of editorial orientation, and it often does not meet the needs of the local populations.

they generally gather news from other sources, and the content of their blogs is often not original.

Transparency of ownership is mixed. The identity of certain media owners is known, but other media prefer to keep the public in the dark in this respect, and information on the owners of the media is not available to the public unless there are conflicts or disputes related to such ownership. There are laws limiting the disclosure of media ownership, but the sponsors of these media get around them by using front people. For example, the managers of radio stations and television channels such as Chaîne du Futur (LCF), TV2, or Radio Zephyr, which are believed to be on the regime's payroll, are little more than puppets. And, the public has absolutely no knowledge of the actual people behind blogs and other online media.

Officially, there is no governmental or oligarchic monopoly on media ownership, but people close to the regime more and more frequently tend to monopolize certain media and use them to support the party's aspirations, particularly outside of the capital. Media owners do not disclose their financial sources, their management rules, or the operating facilities they mastermind.

For the time being in Togo, there are no business consortiums that own media outlets, because the media are not considered economically or financially viable businesses, except for politicians. Foreign investments in the media are insignificant or downright nonexistent, but they are quite beneficial in the rare situations in which they do exist.

Social interests are represented in the more popular media. For example, local radio stations produce shows that reflect the characteristics of minority groups—for example, issues related to gender, ethnicities, and children. However, in Togo, no media are printed or broadcast in the minority languages, and there is still resistance to including issues related to ethnicity in the media, as the authorities and many others believe that mentioning them only incites ethnic and racial hatred. The problems of the minorities are almost nonexistent in the Togolese media, either because they are not considered important or because they are politicized. There are some rare shows or stories intended for the minorities in the

In terms of airtime and space covered by advertisements and news, the government-run daily newspaper and the national television channel seem to achieve the soundest balance. In other media, the amount of advertising is quite meager.

state-run media and nowhere to be found in the written press. As a result, journalists who write about the problems of minorities, particularly ethnic discrimination, are often harassed. Other reasons why not even the private channels air such television reports are numerous, among them the lack of interest, inadequate training of journalists, and especially inadequate professional qualifications. For the time being, bloggers won't touch minority issues and limit themselves to field reports.

OBJECTIVE 4: BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

Togo Objective Score: 1.09

Media outlets and the accessory institutions (distribution companies, printing houses) are neither viable nor professional and lucrative businesses, leading to low scores for the related indicator.

Independent media painfully lack business management policies; management is highly informal. Some newspapers do

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.

not even have offices or newsrooms and limit themselves to having a mobile publication manager, since there is no office. Accounting and financial practices are not in compliance with international standards.

The panelists believe this is partly because media outlets do not have sufficient financial resources to hire hardworking professionals to perform duties related to accounting, marketing, and human resources.

The problems are not limited to the private media. Community media are also not viable and sustainable business organizations, and the state-run or public media do not make viable use of the taxpayers' money. Confusion and a total lack of transparency characterize their management.

The Togolese media manage to live off a bit of everything: a bit of advertising, a lot more sales, and a few fleeting and hidden subsidies. The media are subsidized by multiple, although non-legal and non-transparent, sources. Unfortunately, the editorial line of several media is largely influenced by people who can afford to buy articles—so much so that newspaper sales, sponsors, advertisers, and the citizens ultimately influence the content of certain media.

The sources of income continue to influence the editorial policies, management, and content of the media outlets. In fact, this explains why certain media categories—among the state-run media and some private media—are so influential. State-run media do not have an adequate and guaranteed source of income that can shield them from political interference. Community media, meanwhile, do not have adequate and coherent financing sources and are often left to rely on their own resourcefulness.

The advertising sector is not yet developed in Togo. There are several advertisers that are government-affiliated to some degree and deal with the media of their choice. The panelists feel, however, that professionals working in the private media are not qualified to use advertising to generate profit. In fact, as meager as it may be, the profit generated by advertising is considered as a bonus granted to the media managers. Outside the capital, in cities in the provinces, where the sector is in an embryonic state, advertising is non-existent.

The advertising sector is dominated by the competition, represented by international and local agencies; the panelists said that the quality of advertisements prepared abroad is sometimes higher quality. Media outlets sporadically use the services of advertising agents and very rarely sell advertising space directly to advertisers.

The balance of revenue derived from advertising does not comply with the standards accepted by business-oriented media outlets. Advertisements do not generate enough

revenue, which is why it is currently necessary to increase the number of advertisements to reach income goals; otherwise media outlets will go bankrupt. In terms of airtime and space covered by advertisements and news, the government-run daily newspaper and the national television channel seem to achieve the soundest balance. In other media, the amount of advertising is quite meager.

The private media receive government subsidies, but so far they are not institutionalized. The amount and frequency of the state subsidy in 2010 is determined based on the interests and motivations of the regime. In 2009, the government granted a subsidy of XOF 375 million (\$750,000), which was withdrawn in 2010. But recently, the budget for the financial year 2010 includes an XOF 75 million subsidy intended for the private press, although it has not yet been released. In media circles, the decrease of the amount and non-release of this subsidy until November 2010 have been blamed on the critical attitude of the independent press, which refuses to be obedient.

The panelists believe that subsidies serve to either subdue or alienate the private media. Many see this subsidy as a means for the government to interfere in the newsrooms. Through state-run companies, the government is also an important advertising source for the media, but advertisements are not distributed equally. Sometimes advertising from these sources is denied to certain media that are seen as too critical of the regime.

No market research is available that may allow the media to set forth strategic plans, improve advertising revenue, and personalize the product, based on the needs and interests of the public. No credible market research has ever been conducted in Togo; the same is true for surveys and polls. There are no ratings measurements, no circulation figures, and no Internet use statistics.

OBJECTIVE 5: SUPPORTING INSTITUTIONS

Togo Objective Score: 1.31

The existing press owners' associations in Togo are mere interest groups, with a hidden agenda to serve the regime from which they squeeze bribes and other monetary benefits. There are no true business associations acting as trade associations, such as those representing publishers or broadcasting stations' owners, that truly uphold the interests of their members or at least lobby the government on behalf of their members.

Some 10 associations share the same media and journalists. Their missions are generous, but very few actually work in

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the interests of the profession. Unfortunately, the year 2010 showed that the media professionals' associations have somewhat strayed away from their missions, which led to internal disagreements. In theory, these associations are independent with respect to the government; in reality, on certain points, independence is merely an illusion.

In Togo there is no association that provides legal advice. The existing associations provide professional advice only through seminars, congresses, discussions, or workshops. Membership is limited to journalists affiliated with a media outlet or a publication manager. Membership is sometimes stagnant due to various disagreements, leadership concerns, dysfunctions, or ineffectiveness issues.

Not many NGOs in the media sector actively support the independence of the press. In regular times, NGO activity is limited, but in times of crisis, when journalists are arrested or the freedom of speech is violated, their interventions are massive and often effective. Such groups exist only in the capital, however, and they do not get involved in the assessment of the proposed amendments to the media laws. They offer no legal support to journalists and do not work with the international organizations that deal with freedom

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.

of speech. However, as noted, a new NGO was formed in September 2010, SOS Journaliste en Danger, to help defend press freedom.

There is no real school of journalism, only some centers offering training in communications that anyone with the financial means can attend. Degrees in high-quality journalism are extremely limited and do not offer any significant practical experience. Those who have been practicing this profession for years without any qualifications either see no motivation in obtaining some training, or they lack the means to pay for specialized studies abroad. The Togolese state does send active journalists abroad to attend internships in retraining, advanced studies, or capacity building in places such as Senegal, Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, or France. Once the training is finished, they generally return to Togo.

The existing job training and retraining opportunities are insufficient to allow journalists to strengthen their skills. There are very few opportunities for media professionals, including programs initiated by international organizations, because no local organization offers such opportunities. The most needed programs concern, first of all, writing, reporting, investigation techniques, and information and communication technologies.

Most of the sources of the newspapers and printing houses belong to the informal private sector, and their owners do not have enough economic power, which explains why newspapers accumulate many unpaid bills toward the printing houses. The printing houses are rare and often do not do high-quality work. If a printing house belongs to the private sector, the government burdens it with taxes under the form of VAT (value-added tax) and income taxes. State-run printing houses are treated by the state as their own private property.

Most media distribution networks belong to the private sector, but not even their business and financial management complies with the regular standards. Distribution networks are not managed well enough to ensure their self-sustainability. Sometimes distribution is slow, and other times it is subject to political and administrative pressure to the point that it becomes a hindrance to the activity of the media. Other times, the distribution networks delay payments to the media for the sold copies. Only the capital of Lomé has a small number of rudimentary distribution networks, and they supply only a few other cities.

Officially, there are no governmental or business consortiums that control Internet access. In reality, through its public telecommunications services, the government manages and controls Internet access throughout the country. Many subscribers complain about slow connections, high prices, and cyber-criminality.

List of Panel Participants

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