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UGANDA

Freedom of the press and of speech in Uganda suffered a setback in 2010, in the lead-up to the 2011 general presidential, parliamentary, and local governmental elections. Most seriously, two journalists died under mysterious circumstances. Paul Kiggundu, a correspondent with TOP radio and television, was killed on September 11, 2010; and Dickson Ssentongo, a correspondent with Prime Radio, was killed on September 13, 2010. Many other media members have been beaten and arrested and some tortured by security personnel, including the police.

Furthermore, the government closed five radio stations, allegedly for inciting violence in which people lost lives and property. These radio stations, namely Akaboozi ku bbiri (Radio II), Radio Sapiencia for the Catholic Church, Suubi FM, and two CBS radio stations restarted eventually, but the last took more than a year to reopen. On government orders, some radio presenters and shows were suspended indefinitely as a condition of re-opening.

Political activists, including some opposition members of parliament, were prevented from organizing public rallies. Activists with constituencies in the capital and urban areas especially were targeted. The government continued using riot police and other security operatives to disperse peaceful opposition political rallies, on grounds that the rallies were illegal and not authorized by the police Inspector General.

The government also continued threats to pass new, tougher media laws and amend the existing laws; however, media trade associations managed to counter the threats by mobilizing all stakeholders to resist moves likely to result in new laws. "Because of the united pressure we have applied, government is shying away from plans for new media laws to restrict press freedom. The process has stalled at the cabinet level," noted Muwanga Kakooza, a parliamentary reporter with New Vision Group, the leading media house in Uganda.

On a positive note, the Law on Sedition was abolished through a constitutional ruling. The victory was the result of a petition that media organizations filed in the Uganda Constitutional Court, challenging the legality of the law. Along with this achievement, a number of government cases filed against journalists and politicians have been thrown out. However, some laws remain that prohibit the freedom of speech and press, and the media community continues its struggle to have them abolished. All the above contradicts the nation's constitution, which clearly has provisions that guarantee both press freedom and freedom of speech.

Despite this environment, Uganda's media show signs of growth and strength, with some media houses expanding into new platforms, while others make new investments in the industry. Insults, accusations, and attacks on the media from politicians and others are the order of the day, but the hostility has not stopped the media from playing their roles as watchdogs exposing wrongdoing.

UGANDA AT A GLANCE

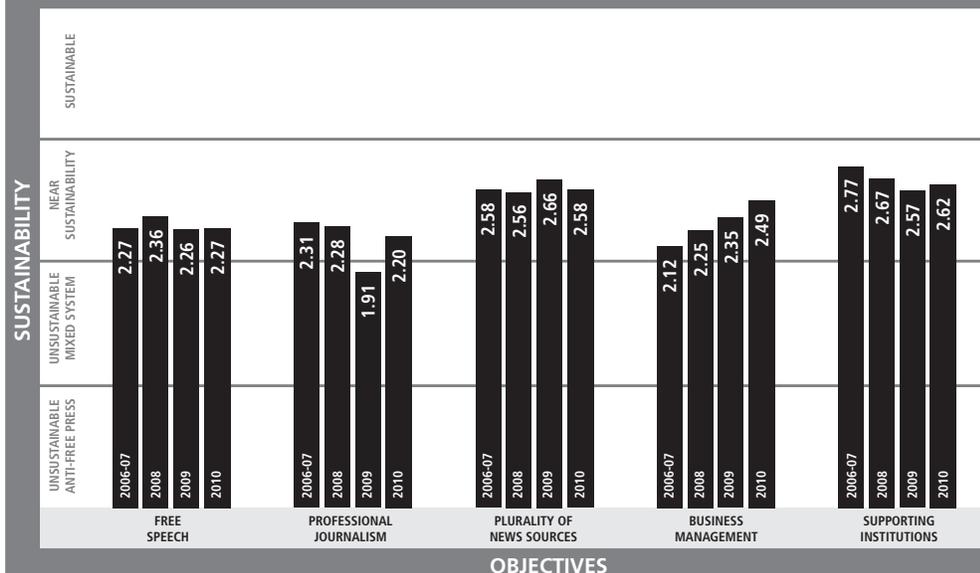
GENERAL

- > **Population:** 35,873,253 (2011 est., *CIA World Factbook*)
- > **Capital city:** Kampala
- > **Ethnic groups (% of population):** Baganda 16.9%, Banyakole 9.5%, Basoga 8.4%, Bakiga 6.9%, Iteso 6.4%, Langi 6.1%, Acholi 4.7%, Bagisu 4.6%, Lugbara 4.2%, Bunyoro 2.7%, other 29.6% (2002 census, *CIA World Factbook*)
- > **Religions (% of population):** Roman Catholic 41.9%, Protestant 42%, Muslim 12.1%, other 3.1%, none 0.9% (2002 census, *CIA World Factbook*)
- > **Languages (% of population):** English (official national language), Ganda or Luganda (most widely used of the Niger-Congo languages), other Niger-Congo languages, Nilo-Saharan languages, Swahili, Arabic (*CIA World Factbook*)
- > **GNI (2010-Atlas):** \$16.55 billion (World Bank Development Indicators, 2011)
- > **GNI per capita (2010-PPP):** \$1,230 (World Bank Development Indicators, 2011)
- > **Literacy rate:** 66.8% (male 76.8%, female 57.7%) (2002 census, *CIA World Factbook*)
- > **President or top authority:** President Lt. Gen. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni (since January 26, 1986)

MEDIA-SPECIFIC

- > **Number of active print outlets, radio stations, television stations:**
Print: 4 daily newspapers, 5 weekly newspapers, several magazines;
Radio Stations: 165; Television Stations: 45
- > **Newspaper circulation statistics:** Top three by circulation: *The New Vision* (60% state-owned, 40% public share holders; 35,000 circulation); *The Monitor* (privately owned, 27,000 circulation); *Bukedde* (60% state-owned, 40% public share holders)
- > **Broadcast ratings:** Top three radio stations: Central Broadcasting Service FM (private), Simba FM (private) and Bukedde FM (60% state-owned, 40% share holders)
- > **News agencies:** Uganda Radio Network (private), Ultimate Media (private)
- > **Annual advertising revenue in media sector:** \$10 million (2007)
- > **Internet usage:** 3.2 million (2009 est., *CIA World Factbook*)

MEDIA SUSTAINABILITY INDEX: UGANDA



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

Uganda Objective Score: 2.27

Uganda has constitutional provisions that guarantee freedom of speech and of the press, and they are aligned with international standards for human rights and freedom of expression. However, these solid provisions stand in contradiction to other laws that Uganda's security organs rely upon to deny citizens their rights to free speech. The panelists mentioned several such laws, including the Law on Sedition, the Anti-terrorism Act, and the Police Act, which prohibits any Ugandan from holding a rally or public meeting without permission from the Inspector General of police.

However, in August 2010, Uganda's media praised the constitutional court's declaration that the Law on Sedition, part of the penal code, is unconstitutional. Under this law, journalists could be accused of inciting hatred against the country's president, government, or the judiciary.¹

Freedom of speech violations are very common. As Ugandans value that freedom, arrests and police summonses have raised public outcries and attracted the condemnation of local and international human rights groups. Those violated can seek

¹ Clotey, Peter. "Uganda's Media Hail Court Ruling Sedition Law Unconstitutional." Voice of America: August 25, 2010. Available at: <http://www.voanews.com/english/news/africa/Ugandan-Media-Hail-Court-Ruling-Sedition-Law-Unconstitutional-101523789.html> (Accessed October 25, 2010.)

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.

redress in the courts, and most are vindicated, as the judiciary acts independently when handling such cases.

The panelists were split on the impartiality of the broadcast licensing process. Applications are handled by two bodies, the Uganda Broadcasting Council (UBC) and the Uganda Communications Commission (UCC). Some panelists claimed that the licensing process is considered fair and clear, but UBC and UCC members are appointed by the minister for information; thus, their independence is questionable. Some panelists said that they have heard of the two bodies delaying application approval. This stands in contrast to applications from politicians, according to other panelists. Members of the ruling National Resistance Movement (NRM) party especially often are approved quickly. Almost every member of parliament has an FM radio station in his or her constituency.

"All the five radio stations that were closed this year were closed by the broadcasting council on government orders—clear proof that it's not independent," contended Jane Nakyondwa, a senior journalist with Mama FM community radio station in Kisasi Town.

Media entry into the market is easy and there are no restrictions, provided that the applicant pays the required registration taxes. The panelists noted that the government has abolished the tax holiday that it gave to new big investors. Interestingly, however, at the beginning of the 2010-2011 fiscal year, the minister of finance abolished taxes on digital video and still cameras, and removed taxes on new computers—seen as a boost to the media industry.

With the murders of Kiggundu and Ssentongo underscoring the seriousness of the dangers that journalists face, the panelists said that crimes against journalists and media are still quite common—and those that security personnel commit are rarely punished. More than 30 journalists were battered and harassed during the year. Most cases were well publicized in local and international media, the panelists noted. They added that the major worry is the growing portion of public that is elated when journalists are in trouble. However, of late, the government has taken measures to arrest and prosecute those who attack journalists.

The public media are supposed to be editorially independent, but in practice, that is not the case. Although the media laws are consistent, state/public media are favored in various respects, including the right to information. Government influence is omnipresent, ensuring positive coverage and an outlet for propaganda. The panelists noted that this situation always holds true for electronic media but is slightly different in print, where stories critical of the government get published sometimes. All top editors and managers of

the state/public media are appointed by the minister of information—who, in turn, is a political appointee.

Although the constitutional court struck down as unconstitutional the libel laws related to the media's government coverage, criminal libel laws remain on the books. Libel is punishable with both civil and criminal penalties. A journalist found guilty will go to prison, and the aggrieved party can seek civil damages. However, as noted in past MSI studies, journalists rarely are imprisoned for libel, in part because of the relative independence of the judiciary. The panelists said that there have been no cases of corruption by judges or prosecutors in cases of libel. In addition, the courts have seen no cases holding Internet service providers or web hosting companies responsible for the content posted by independent individuals.

Access to public information changed little from 2009. Despite Uganda's access to information law—a rarity in Africa—those charged with the responsibility are reluctant to talk to the media. The panelists noted that the constitution has a full article (Article 41) that guarantees easy access to public information. Parliament also passed a law along the same lines; however, it remains a law on paper, not in practice.

Most journalists have methods to obtain public information, but it is difficult and time-consuming, so they tend to give up. Journalist associations have engaged lawyers to address the problem, panelists noted.

The government imposes no restrictions or registration requirements on access to the Internet, satellite, or other media platforms. Access to international news and news sources is free, and many journalists use the Internet to find information, noted the panelists. Many foreign publications are imported without restriction, for those who can afford them. Some media lift stories directly from foreign publications and the Internet, while some radio stations are linked to foreign outlets. They air their programs live without government interference.

The situation for entry into the profession and schools of journalism has changed little. There remains no official restriction on entering the profession. However, the existing media law (the Press and Journalists Statute of 1995) mandates academic standards for those wishing to join the profession. To qualify, one must have a diploma and be enrolled with the National Institute of Journalists of Uganda (NIJU), a body established by government to control the media via an annual license process. Though on the books, this law is not enforced. The panel noted that expected amendments to the press law have stalled, and the hopes that a professional journalists' association would replace NIJU have not materialized.

Ugandan journalists are free to organize. The country has more than 20 professional associations, but few operate at a national level.

OBJECTIVE 2: PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISM

Uganda Objective Score: 2.20

The panelists agreed they have seen some improvement in the way that journalists source and report their stories, and they traced the changes directly to training efforts by professional associations and certain media houses. Despite this improvement, the panelists said, a few journalists still work outside professional standards, writing one-sided stories without proper concern for factual accuracy. The panelists attributed this to factors ranging from financial constraints to poor training and outright laziness.

"Those who do their work in an ethical manner talk to all the parties, consult experts, and also carry out some background research," noted one panelist. "Many others don't."

A code of ethics is still in place, and it is in line with international standards and recognized widely by the Ugandan media. However, the panelists noted that the number of journalists violating this code has risen. As one panelist reported, "Many journalists have been caught red-handed taking bribes from news sources to kill stories. Some journalists blackmail government officials and powerful business personalities and demand exorbitant sums of money, promising to block bad stories in exchange."

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).

While this concern cuts across all media, some media houses and associations have come out strongly against bribery habits, exposing those involved.

Self-censorship is apparent at different levels of the media. The panelists said that some journalists engage in self-censorship to protect their jobs, while others seek financial gain. Others are simply adhering to the policies of their media house, some fear for their lives, and others simply want to get ahead in the profession.

The media cover most of the key events in the country without incident, but there are certain events that the media must have clearance to cover. They include presidential functions, all major conferences at which foreign visitors are expected, matters of the first family, and certain issues related to security. Some of these issues could result in court or jail time for a journalist that does not report carefully.

Journalists remain among the most poorly paid professionals in the country, and the panelists expressed the belief that this promotes corruption within the media sector. The panelists underlined the trend described previously, in which some journalists and their editors accept payment to cover or kill specific stories.

In another negative effect of poor pay, some senior journalists are being driven to join other sectors with better pay and to abandon the journalism profession, to its detriment.

In some big media houses, editors earn as much as \$5,000 per month, while reporters are paid as little as \$200 per month. Freelancers are particularly vulnerable—a problem noted in last year's MSI. At some media houses, especially FM radio stations, freelancers go unpaid for months, noted one of the trade union leaders. The Uganda Journalists Union (UJU) formed specifically to address this problem, but it has yet to sign a single collective bargaining agreement for its members. Last year's MSI panelists suggested conducting a survey on working conditions for journalists, and especially freelancers, to begin searching for a solution to this problem.

The panel noted that entertainment claims the lion's share of programming hours in electronic media, while news and information is more prominent in print. As for radio, the panelists said that the more music a station plays, the more listeners it draws (especially among young people), and the higher listenership means more business for the station. The panelists agreed that at most FM radio stations, entertainment takes about 85 percent of airtime, while information and news take the remaining 15 percent. In print, entertainment and advertisements fill about 40 percent of the space, and the remaining 60 percent is news and information.

The panelists underscored marked improvement this year in the facilities and equipment used for gathering, producing, and distributing news in Uganda, positively impacting the quality of content. Some of the big media houses have invested heavily in equipment. Others have made loans to journalists, including freelancers, to buy modern gear. Panelists noted, however, that there is a great need to help freelance journalists who cannot afford the equipment vital to their jobs. The greatest needs are for news gathering equipment (audio digital recorders and digital video cameras), photography equipment (digital still cameras), and computers. Most assistance is best channeled through the Uganda Journalists Association (UJA), the panelists concurred.

Specialized reporting is growing in Uganda, and some media houses are investing in training reporters. Even some professional associations, such as UJA, UJU, and other small associations, have encouraged members to seek specialized training. "What is lacking are the funds," said one of the leaders of these associations. "If we get funding, we are willing and ready to continue with specialized training of our members."

The panelists said that unlike the electronic media, print media have tried offering training in investigative reporting, and they would welcome any assistance through UJA or other associations to further such efforts.

OBJECTIVE 3: PLURALITY OF NEWS

Uganda Objective Score: 2.58

Multiple news sources in Uganda provide citizens with news and information, allowing consumers to compare among the different sources. The sources include traditional platforms such as radio, television, newspapers, and magazines and have expanded into the Internet, blogs, and SMS messaging.

The media are concentrated mainly in cities and urban centers, but politicians have opened a reasonable number of FM stations in their rural constituency areas. Today, Uganda boasts more than 150 registered FM stations in operation and more 30 publications, among them six daily government and private newspapers. The media sector has seen an increase in television stations and television pay channels.

In urban areas, people have access to the Internet and its blogs, SMS alerts, Twitter, and Facebook. In contrast, rural residents still depend heavily on radio and, for those who can afford them, newspapers. A few community radio stations in rural areas provide news and information, but according to some on the panel, their sustainability is a major challenge.

In some villages, people erect loudspeakers to share announcements and information useful to the community.

The panelists agreed that citizens are not restricted from accessing domestic or international media, and Uganda imports many foreign publications. Citizens are free to listen to foreign radio stations as well. However, the panelists pointed out that people living in cities and urban centers have more access to media sources than their counterparts in rural areas and smaller towns. Although sources like the Internet and print media are expensive for people living in villages, costs for foreign publications and Internet access are going down, thanks to government efforts, concluded the panelists.

Although public media are not fully independent of the state or the ruling party, the programming they air reflects a relative independence, according to the panelists. "Of late, we have seen and heard many opposition politicians on public television and radio, discussing their personal opinions on different issues without any interference from government. At times, they are hosted in the studios with officials from the ruling party, and we think this is a positive development," panelists noted.

Despite all the positive developments, state/public electronic media are still dominated by government programs and propaganda. To an extent, they make up the gap with commercial broadcasters through educational and cultural programming. As for state print media, all publications cover every side—opposition and ruling party views—fairly.

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.

Uganda has only one local independent news agency: Uganda Radio Network (URN). However, the panelists said that most information on URN is similar to that offered by media houses. URN sells most of its print, audio, and video stories to small media houses that cannot afford to post their own correspondents in every part of the country. Media houses of all sizes depend on international news agencies such as AP, AFP, and Reuters for news and information. Many also use news websites at no cost, but do credit the sites as sources.

The panelists noted that today, most private broadcast media produce many of their news and information programs locally—and the content is far superior to state/public media productions. State/public media concentrate heavily on government news, while private media target audience interests and include information and news provided by government sources. The same applies to community media and bloggers, despite the fact that many lift stories already carried by big media houses. As for television, most stations are now relying on locally produced programs to a greater extent than before. Their viewers prefer them to the foreign shows, the panelists noted.

Media ownership transparency is not a problem in Uganda; interested citizens are able to learn who owns a given outlet. However, there is no regulation guaranteeing disclosure of ownership. Panelists noted that many FM radio stations are owned by politicians, who openly use them to solicit votes or promote programs of personal interest.

Panelists noted that Vision Media Group has made a major investment in the media. The group is owned partly by government and partly by individual private shareholders, at a ratio of 55 percent to 45 percent, respectively. This company has expanded into television, adding two stations this year, and now has five FM stations based in Kampala and all the regions. These seven outlets are in addition to the group's five newspapers, several magazines, and an SMS platform. Vision Media Group's investment has proven beneficial to the media industry, panelists said, especially in terms of helping many journalists secure employment.

The panelists noted that the media cover social issues to a reasonable extent without restriction from the government, but some issues (such as homosexuality) are still neglected or covered with a negative bias.

The panelists said that during 2010, they saw a lot of expansion of the media into multiple parts of the country. The growth has enabled outlets to cover smaller cross-sections of people, including minority languages.

OBJECTIVE 4: BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

Uganda Objective Score: 2.49

The panelists noted that public and private media alike operate as profit-generating businesses and generally are run in an efficient manner. Business plans are in place and followed. Even the state broadcast media have improved their management, generating revenue to supplement what they receive from government and to respond to the stiff competition from private media.

Smaller media houses, though, are not run professionally, as the owners cannot afford to hire skilled staff in management, accounting, or human resources. These companies end up employing unskilled people or family members, who run the businesses into bankruptcy.

As for community media, the panelists noted that they are run efficiently, but sustainability is a serious issue. Many of them are dependent on donor funding.

Generally, media outlets receive revenue from multiple clients and sources, but often these sources—especially advertisers—have influence over the editorial policy, commented the panelists. The major sources of revenue are copy sales, advertising, sponsored programs, donations, and commercial printing services. However, the global credit crunch has continued to affect income negatively in the media industry, even as expenses are rising.

State/public media, the panelists noted, receive a fair amount of funding from the government, but it is not adequate to

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.

cover all expenses. As a result, they are allowed to make money through other sources common to the private media.

Advertising is well developed in the country, with several local and international firms based in the capital and big towns, noted the panelists. Several companies, especially mobile phone networks and those in the brewing business, use print and electronic media regularly to advertise their products and services. The advertising firms enjoy considerable business in billboards and signposts, too.

The panelists noted that, while some media houses work with advertising firms, others have established fully-fledged departments on their own to solicit and produce advertising. The private media, big and small, employ professionals and skilled salespeople that look for advertisers, design ads, and produce jingles for commercials on electronic media. These have become a major source of revenue.

Regarding the percentage of advertising and content, revenue shortages have forced media house managers to press for more advertisements in their programs and pages, and this can crowd out news and information. Ads take up an estimated 50 percent of broadcast programming time, and 40 percent or more of pages in print media.

Panelists confirmed that the government does not subsidize private media. It does advertise in some private media, but conditionally: only in outlets that give the government positive coverage. There have been cases in which the government withdrew ads from media houses that it considers critical. Discussing the benefits and disadvantages of government subsidies for private media, the panelists concluded that it might be good for private media, because some houses need external help. However, they added that they would not expect the government to be fair about the process.

Market research is available from a few media houses to evaluate sales, listenership, quality of programs, coverage, and audience interest. Two companies (Audit Bureau of Circulation, based in South Africa; and Synovate) produce circulation figures and broadcast ratings. Their findings are accessible easily for a fee. And yet, the panelists agreed that some media houses have started challenging the survey findings of the research companies. Clarity in these ratings is important, as some media houses claim to be the leading newspapers or radio stations in the country, with obvious implications for advertising revenue.

OBJECTIVE 5: SUPPORTING INSTITUTIONS

Uganda Objective Score: 2.62

Uganda has four media owners' associations, but only one is active: the National Association of Broadcasters (NAB). The Uganda Newspaper Editors and Proprietors Association (UNEPA), the Uganda Publishers' Association, and the Editor's Forum fell dormant over the year, and membership is far from universal among media owners.

The panelists said that the major role of NAB is to lobby government for fair taxes for its members and a good environment for its businesses. Panelists said that NAB is not involved in efforts to improve the working conditions of journalists, nor with the reform of media laws.

The status of professional associations representing individual media practitioners has not changed much from last year, according to the panel members. However, a few new associations have emerged, including UJA, which specializes in professional issues; UJU, a trade union; the Uganda Media Women Association; the Parliamentary Press Association; the Uganda Journalists Safety Committee, which handles press freedom and media-rights issues; and national and other small associations for specific sectors such as sports, oil and mining, environment, education, and health.

The panel noted that many of these organizations have actively defended journalists' rights whenever threatened. Membership is determined by application and payment of membership dues, but these associations have seen a decline in membership, and non-payment of fees has been a major challenge. Some have closed down.

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.

The panel noted that UJA's effort to unite the small associations into a coalition is showing signs of success. To date, the associations have a loose network, called Article 29, through which they share information and collaborate on media development programs.

Panelists pointed out that several NGOs operate in the country, with some working with the media and some using the media to tap money from donors. NGOs active in Uganda include Foundation for Human Rights Initiative (FHRI), Foundation for African Development, Friedrich Ebert Foundation, Konrad Adenauer Foundation, Humana Rights Network Uganda, and Action for Development. Most of these organizations concentrate on advocating for press freedom, funding legal representation, supporting the media in legal reform efforts, and offering research and training in human rights issues.

The panelists reported that about 25 of the 35 universities in the country offer quality degree programs in journalism and mass communication. However, some universities are more theoretical than practical in their training. The graduates of these programs find it difficult to get employment at the media houses. In addition, media training institutions offer diploma courses in journalism. The quality of their courses depends on the teachers and facilities available.

Opportunities for training abroad are available, but limited. Mainly they benefit journalists working with big media houses, which can afford such training. Many of those who train overseas return to work for the media houses that sent them, but some return and run quickly to other sectors for better pay.

The panelists praised the short-term training programs that some media companies offer in house. Even people working in non-journalism administrative, management, and sales jobs at media companies can obtain supplemental training in their fields, and the companies meet the cost. The most popular courses for journalists are ethics and human rights, but panelists noted the clear need for training in investigative reporting, specialization, and safety.

Most newsprint and printing facilities remain in private hands and operate as profit-making businesses. The panelists agreed, however, that even when printing facilities are in the hands of the government, they offer services to private media without restrictions. The panelists said that high taxes on newsprint and the VAT on advertising are big burdens on the media.

Media distribution channels, too, are in private hands and are managed efficiently, said the panelists. But transmitters are controlled by the government, and authorities can switch the transmitters off any time—and do, if disagreements arise between the government and a given media house.

List of Panel Participants

Saulo Wokulira Ssebaggala, Jr., program coordinator, Human Rights Network for Journalists-Kampala City

Robert Mugagga, journalist, *Observer*, Kampala City

Jane Nakyondwa, senior journalist, Mama FM community radio station, Kisasi Town

Rose Kigongo, freelance journalist, Masaka Municipality

David Malinga Doya, senior writer, *The East African*, Entebbe Municipality

Diana Nalunkuma, lecturer, Kampala University, Kansanga Town

Isaac Ssenabulya, parliamentary correspondent, Top TV, Kampala City

Julian Amutuhairwe, reporter, KFM Radio station, Mbale Municipality

Mercy Nalugo, journalist, *The Daily Monitor*; treasurer, Uganda Journalists Union, Kampala City

Moses Kajangu, parliamentary reporter, Impact FM, Kampala City

The following panelist attended the panel discussion, but did not complete a questionnaire:

Dick Mvule, parliamentary reporter, Radio Simba; organizing secretary, Uganda Journalists Union, Kampala City

Moderator and Author

Muwanga Kakooza, senior political reporter, Vision Media Group, Kampala

Coordinator

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