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CHAD

Chad recently held three successive elections: presidential, legislative, and local. In the introduction to the meeting of panelists who convened in N'Djamena to measure the sustainability of Chadian media, the moderator explained that the elections are a powerful barometer to scrutinize both the behavior of political leaders against the media and to gauge the media's professionalism.

The panelists noted that one month after the elections, the prime minister and the minister of information and communication issued press releases that seemed "to revert freedom of expression back a decade" by announcing a review of the laws related to the decriminalization of press offenses. This was seen as a thinly veiled desire to abolish the law that put an end to prison terms for journalists accused of defamation or offending authorities. For some observers, the minister's accusations against the media have a specious nature, especially since the minister of information and communication is the actual "editor-in-chief" of the public radio and television networks.

If the panelists denounced the predatory behavior of those in power, they did not fail to notice the flaws identified within the journalistic profession. "It must be said that, at times, Chadian journalists confuse journalism and activism," argued some participants.

It is in this context of "neither war nor peace" that the National Independent Electoral Commission (commonly known by its French acronym, CENI) and the High Media Council (commonly known by its French acronym, HEC) organized training sessions "to bring journalists up to standard." These training sessions have been initiated by both NGO partners and the HEC.

Hence, during the development of the whole process, the Chadian press effectively played its role in informing and educating the public about the electoral process. This, noted the panelists (comprised mostly of journalists), earned the press full points from CENI and HEC.

To conclude, the panelists proclaimed: "In short, unlike previous years, we must recognize that freedom of expression in Chad has become more and more a reality. It is now up to the journalists themselves to play the game so that this achievement is no longer snatched away from them. It does not necessarily mean that this is total freedom. It is relative."

# CHAD AT A GLANCE

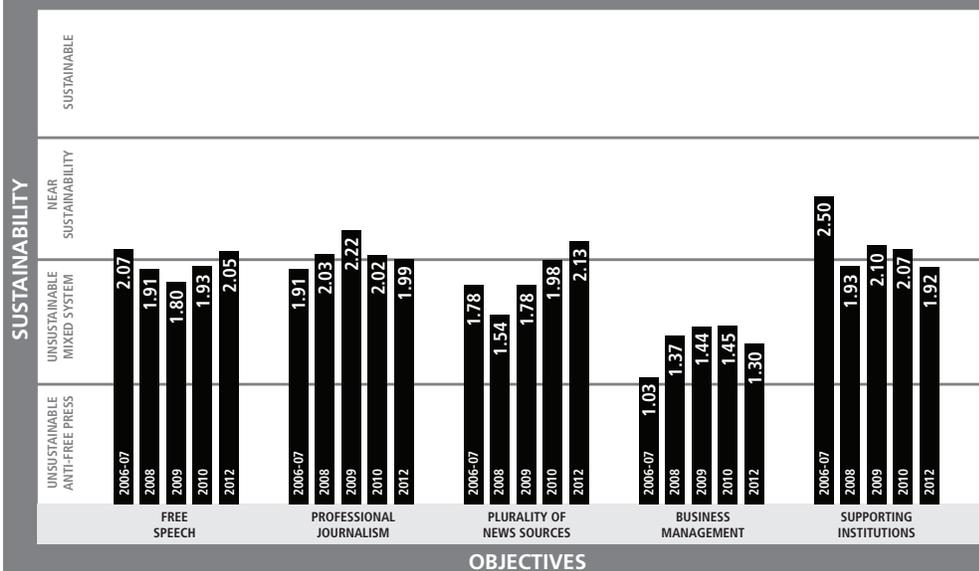
## GENERAL

- > **Population:** 10,975,648 (July 2012 est., *CIA World Factbook*)
- > **Capital city:** N'Djamena
- > **Ethnic groups (% of population):** Sara 27.7%, Arab 12.3%, Mayo-Kebbi 11.5%, Kanem-Bornou 9%, Ouaddai 8.7%, Hadjarai 6.7%, Tandjile 6.5%, Gorane 6.3%, Fitri-Batha 4.7%, other 6.4%, unknown 0.3% (1993 census, *CIA World Factbook*)
- > **Religions (% of population):** Muslim 53.1%, Catholic 20.1%, Protestant 14.2%, other 12.6% (1993 census, *CIA World Factbook*)
- > **Languages:** French (official), Arabic (official), Sara (in south), more than 120 different languages and dialects (*CIA World Factbook*)
- > **GNI (2011-Atlas):** \$ 8.006 billion (World Bank Development Indicators, 2012)
- > **GNI per capita (2011-PPP):** \$1,370 (World Bank Development Indicators, 2012)
- > **Literacy rate:** 25.7 % (male 40.8 %, female 12.8%) (est., *CIA World Factbook*)
- > **President or top authority:** President Lt. Gen. Idriss Deby Itno (since December 4, 1990)

## MEDIA-SPECIFIC

- > **Number of active print outlets, radio stations, television stations:**  
Print: 1 daily newspapers, 4 other weeklies; Radio Stations: 6; Television Stations: 1
- > **Newspaper circulation statistics:** Top three by circulation: *Le Progres* (daily), *N'Djamena Hebdo* (private weekly), *L'Observateur* (private weekly)
- > **Broadcast ratings:** Top three radio stations: Radiodiffusion Nationale Tchadienne (state-owned), FM Liberte (private), La Voix du Paysan (Catholic station)
- > **News agencies:** Chadian Press Agency (state-run)
- > **Annual advertising revenue in media sector:** N/A
- > **Internet usage:** 168,100 (2009 est., *CIA World Factbook*)

## MEDIA SUSTAINABILITY INDEX: CHAD



### 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

### Chad Objective Score: 2.05

Two significant events occurred in 2012 that contradicted seeming improvements in freedom of speech in Chad.

The first concerned the defamation case against Jean-Claude Nekim, editor of the biweekly newspaper *N'Djamena*. The charges arose after the Union of Trade Unions of Chad (commonly known by its French acronym, UST) circulated a petition denouncing the "arbitrary power of [President of Chad] Deby." Under the title "The UST Launches a Petition Against Poor Governance," *N'Djamena* devoted a short brief to the petition. UST's president Michel Barka, vice president, Younous Mahadjir, and secretary-general, François Djondang, were found guilty of "incitement to hatred" and given suspended prison sentences and fines. Nekim was found guilty of defamation and given a suspended sentence of one year in prison and a fine of XAF 1 million (\$1,900). In addition, his newspaper was suspended for three months.

The second event concerned the ban on the circulation of the *Journal des Journaux* article entitled "Enough" in support of the journalist Jean-Claude Nekim. After viewing the contents of the article, the state prosecutor banned its distribution and ordered the police to seize five thousand copies on September 27, 2012.

#### 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 illegal nature of this publication led us to prohibit the release of this special edition. A newspaper must first have a receipt issued by the prosecutor and approval from the HEC, which is not the case here," said prosecutor Mahamat Saleh Idriss, quoted by AFP. Reporters Without Borders, however, the organization that condemned the ban, noted: "This decision seems to indicate that some press titles are not allowed to freely cover the social crisis plaguing Chad. Jean-Claude Nekim and the *N'Djamena* biweekly are penalized for raising a topic of general interest. The offending petition denounces problems—mismanagement, impunity, cost of living, etc.—felt by a large part of the population."

Regarding indicator 1, the participants on the panel have differing views. For the participants, who are members of the private media, the legal and social protections of free speech exist but are not enforced. As an example that the protections are purely legal "theory," they note recent cases regarding media outlets controlled by the prime minister and the minister of information and communication that called for journalists to be more responsible and professional in their denunciations of several instances of government abuse. Some attest that confiscation of publications covering these issues almost affirms that the information is true.

Regarding the granting of licenses or registration of media outlets (indicator 2), the panel felt that such practices were done in a fair and non-political manner. Thus, Chad today does see a degree of free speech in the creation of independent media.

Regarding indicator 4, the participants noted with satisfaction that criminal acts against media professionals and reporters have been increasingly rare in recent years (since 2009 to present). Furthermore, no Chadian journalist had been thrown in prison during this period.

The law protects the editorial independence of public media, but in practice, other issues arise. For example, to be covered on national radio and television, daily newspapers must be assessed and amended by the Ministry of Information and Communication. If any content denounces public mismanagement, these topics will be automatically censored by the minister and therefore will not be distributed.

Likewise, there are activities of certain political parties and trade unions that public radio and television refuse to cover because these entities criticize and denounce bad government practices. Therefore, it is unusual for the media outlets that support the government's efforts to also criticize the government's actions at the same time. This has led some to say that national television and radio are at the service of the governing regime rather than the average citizen.

This theory was flatly rejected by some representatives of these public bodies, who speak rather in terms of respect for the independence of the editorial line of each public media outlet. Still other journalists noted that some sources of information are available only through the public media sources.

## OBJECTIVE 2: PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISM

### Chad Objective Score: 1.99

Addressing the professionalism of Chadian journalists, the main point to remember is that all votes were unanimous in recognizing that, unlike previous years, there is a clear improvement in the work and professional quality of Chadian journalists. Even though at times there have been omissions, these are not likely to completely tarnish the overall professionalism of journalists. For some, journalists meet professional quality standards even if the reports are often not well documented. They are largely seen as fair and objective. To illustrate this point, one panelist said: "If today there is not a single journalist languishing in prison, it is not because the government decriminalized press offenses but because the journalists themselves comply with ethical standards."

The editors-in-chief, especially those of the public media, practice self-censorship on a daily basis. This is encouraging to some, especially to some who admit that certain subjects are not likely to create national cohesion, particularly because peace in Chad is so precarious. Hence, there is a perceived need to avoid addressing certain issues that may offend the

sensibilities of citizens. Many journalists feel that some events should be covered with more caution than others.

With regard to salaries of Chadian journalists, everyone lamented the fact that private and independent media pay the lowest wages. Some panelists said that if today we see journalists from the private media who are unreliable in the newsroom, it is only because they are constantly searching for a better livelihood. In private media outlets, some observe that the best-paid journalists earn only between XAF 60,000 and XAF 90,000 (\$120 and \$180) per month, which does not allow journalists to enjoy financial or professional independence.

Over the past five years, radio stations have switched from analog to digital, but this upgrade has complicated journalists' ability to gather and distribute information due to incompatibilities and lack of familiarity with new equipment.

## OBJECTIVE 3: PLURALITY OF NEWS

### Chad Objective Score: 2.13

The panelists unanimously recognized the existence of a plurality of public and private news sources that offer diverse points of view. The panelists said there is no law or condition that limits citizens' access to national and international media. However, they lamented the absence of an independent news agency that collects, processes, and distributes news for media outlets. With regard to private media, all panelists recognized that they produce their own programs.

### 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.

### 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).

Addressing this issue, Hamit Koumy, from Radio Arc-en-Ciel, said: “There are several news sources in all forms of modern media—namely, print, broadcast, and online media. All these media have worked to inform the public of everything that is happening in the country, above all by seeking to gather people’s reactions particularly regarding information relative to the government’s actions and decisions.” No law restricts people’s access to national and international media. However, to the detriment of those of the opposition and civil society, the state-owned media provide the biggest share of relevant information to state institutions. Despite this multiplicity of media companies, the country has only one news agency, the Chadian Press Agency. To fill this gap, the media have resorted to using foreign agencies. The private media do not only use information available to them by the public media, but they actively participate in the events of the country.

All the panelists believed that the multiplicity of headlines offer the public the opportunity to form an opinion on the information provided. There is a clear choice at this level for readers according to their interests.

Eleyakim Dokpané Vanambyl, a member of the Union of Chadian Journalists (known by its French acronym, UJT), provided the perspective that while there is a plurality of private and public news sources, there is not enough. For example, Internet speed is very slow in the country, and there are very few cyber-café. The obscurity that hovers over media ownership does not often allow the public to assess the objectivity of news dissemination.

But media pluralism does not necessarily go hand in hand with plurality of media content. It is here that Daniel Deuzoumbe Passalet, president of Human Rights Without Borders, noted that multiple news sources that involve Chad unfortunately do not offer real and credible information to the population. The ruling classes have their eyes fixed on the media. This prevents the latter from delivering objective and reliable information to citizens, especially related to armed conflict, corruption, and human rights. The state-controlled radio and television media outlets are at the service of those in power.

Concerning the public media, the panelists agreed and questioned their independence and credibility. Monodji Mbaindiguim, of Radio FM Liberté, stated: “The Chadian state media do not give real information. They are instruments of the existing government.” He was supported in his opinion by Dikbo Hubert, of UST, who estimated that the Chadian population is cultivated through the news sources in Chad, some of the most important of which are promoting the government.

Public media do not cover information relating to the insecurity in the country, corruption, etc. The private media, lacking financial and material resources, are also unable to cover certain information with professionalism.

There are many media that disseminate information or programs in national languages. With the exception of the national news agency, there is no independent agency capable of providing objective information to the public.

## OBJECTIVE 4: BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

### Chad Objective Score: 1.30

The opinions differ on the issue of whether the media are well-managed companies that allow editorial independence. According to some panelists in charge of private media, the media are well-managed companies that allow for editorial independence and the independence of journalists. However, these panelists felt that young people newly entering the profession wanted to succeed very quickly and, as a result, got caught up in bribery attempts.

Summing up panelist opinion, Koumy wrote: “The Chadian media have operated at a loss, permanently, due to the narrowness of the advertising market despite the press aid allocated by the state, which has been unequally distributed between public and private sectors. Advertising revenues have been almost entirely covered by telecommunications companies. Studies of the media market are nonexistent. This explains the absence of sector strategic plans. No audience

### 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.

surveys are conducted to identify potential opportunities in the media sector.”

In the same way, Jean-Pierre Kila Roskem noted that the Chadian media complain about the narrowness of their sources of income. He said, “Advertisers are numbered. The companies that provide advertising to certain media have influenced their editorial independence. There have indeed been state subsidies, but the access criteria have not been fair. Under these conditions, we cannot talk about the editorial independence of the media.” Passalet added: “There are media companies that work with very limited resources. They function thanks to the courage and determination of their leadership. The media that survive have often been well managed because they have managing, accounting, and marketing departments. The advertising market has not yet developed in Chad. It is this situation that has adversely affected the editorial independence of several Chadian media, with the exception of online media, who are trying to be independent.”

Regarding sources of funding, the panelists note that many media receive remuneration from multiple partners (government and some individuals) for their operation. And in receiving funding from various parties, many media have lost their editorial independence. “The editorial independence of many media has followed political trends and financial powers. There have been media [outlets] who receive remuneration from several partners. The state subsidies have often been a source of conflict in the media because sharing still poses a problem,” laments Edward Takadji. In addition to the state subsidy through the press aid fund, there are also organizations, such as UNESCO and other international NGOs, which fund certain media.

## OBJECTIVE 5: SUPPORTING INSTITUTIONS

**Chad Objective Score: 1.92**

There are several supporting institutions that act in the interests of media professionals. All the panelists acknowledged the role played by professional associations and organizations to defend the rights of journalists in Chad. For example, the Observatory of Media Professional Practice and Ethics in Chad fills a self-regulatory role and makes observations and recommendations for those responsible for media professionalism and ethics. There are also various other supporting institutions, such as the UJT, the Chadian Printed Press Publishers’ Association, and the Association of Women Communicators in Chad.

Vatankhah Tchanguiz made a distinction between the trade associations that are still rare in Chad and the professional associations that exist and work to protect the rights of their members.

Passalet cited unions and professional associations who fight for journalists. All defend the moral and material interests of journalists. Such is the case for the UJT, the Union of Chadian Private Radio Stations, etc. Additionally, the UJT awards prizes each year to Chadian journalists.

Vanambyl believes that professional associations work to protect journalists’ rights and improve the quality of their work, but their actions are diluted in the ocean of needs felt in the sector. Referring to these supporting institutions, Roskem said the associations face several challenges, not the least of which is financial.

According to Maryse Ngarlaldjim, there are several NGOs and institutions that act in the professional interests of independent media. These NGOs work with the media sector to support freedom of speech and media independence. Mbaidiguim Elou shared this view, stating: “Civil society, namely the Association of Human Rights and development NGOs, act and favor media development, having taken into account the socioeconomic environment of the country.” Hubert said that freedom of the press has experienced unwavering support from associations and other supporting organizations. Ramadji believes, however, that these institutions are weak and ineffective.

Quality journalism schools in Chad do not exist. There is a Department of Communication at the University of N’Djamena that trains, albeit poorly, journalists who are practicing the profession. But there are competent Chadian graduates who bring their expertise to benefit young people

## 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.

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who enter the profession or who simply are interested in journalism. This is the case, for instance, of MédiaExcel, a group of senior media professionals who offer journalism training sessions. Ongoing training takes place in newsrooms, as well as through workshops and short seminars. There are also international NGOs, such as the Technology Research and Exchange Group, which train and supervise journalists.

Elou discussed the importance of training, noting, “In my opinion, much of the support in recent years goes to the training policy, which occupies a prominent place in government policy.” As proof of this, he noted that the government has sent many journalists to such supporting institutions for training.

The panel participants agreed that the media channels are apolitical and that technology infrastructure meets the needs of the media.

## List of Panel Participants

**Jean-Pierre Kila Roskem**, assistant teacher, University of N'Djamena, N'Djamena

**Daniel Passalet Deuzoumbe**, president, Human Rights Without Borders, N'Djamena

**Andre Abba**, journalist, Radio FM Liberty, N'Djamena

**Monodji Mbaindiguim**, journalist, Radio FM Liberty, N'Djamena

**Edouard Takadji**, journalist, Printing Press, N'Djamena

**Tchanguiz Vatnkhah**, editor-in-chief, Radio Brakoss, Moissala

**Hamit Koumy**, editor-in-chief, Radio Arc-en-Ciel, N'Djamena

**Maryse Ngaroldjim**, activist, Chadian Association for the Promotion and Defense of Human Rights, Sarh

**Elou Mbaidiguim**, editor-in-chief, Chad National Radio, N'Djamena

**Eleyakim Dokpané Vanambyl**, vice president, Union of Chadian Journalists, N'Djamena

**Hubert Dikbo**, journalist, Union of Chadian Journalists, N'Djamena

**Ramadji Florent Indita**, deputy editor, Chad Press Agency, N'Djamena

## Moderator and Author

**Odjitan Maji Maji**, journalist, FM Liberte, N'Djamena

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