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MADAGASCAR

After three consecutive years of political crisis, Madagascar continues to languish in a precarious socioeconomic situation. The majority of its population is deeply impoverished and the country is feeling widespread insecurity over physical safety and the availability of food.

The signing of the so-called “political road map” in September 2011 brought glimmers of hope, as did the establishment of a new government in November 2011 and a new parliament in December 2011. But the transitional regime is not yet fully recognized by the international community. The parliamentary system has seen some noteworthy progress in certain aspects, such as the setting up of the Independent National Election Commission and the acceptance of an electoral calendar, but some resolutions have not been implemented, and the crisis is by no means over.

On the economic front, although the 5.6 percent rate of inflation for the first half of 2012 appears to be down relative to the previous two years, the uncertainty is pushing more and more households into poverty. Fuel costs—and in turn, the prices of staple foods such as rice, oil, and sugar—continue to rise. Investments, and consequently employment, are not yet experiencing recovery, and only the tourism sector of the economy is stable. According to a report by the World Bank, the percentage of the population living below the poverty line increased by 10 points from 2009 to 2012, and is now at 53.4 percent.

Amid the ongoing tensions between Madagascar’s myriad political factions, media attention was monopolized in 2012 by three topics: 1) Free FM radio’s demonstrations, its closing, and the criminal convictions of two of its journalists; 2) The exploitation of Madagascar’s various resources, including trafficking in rosewood and gold, large-scale mining and oil extraction, and the grabbing up of vast tracts of agricultural land; and 3) The growing insecurity in southern Madagascar due to banditry and the military’s attempts to stop it.

The MSI survey was conducted in this context. The overall score confirms the precarious situation of the media sector in Madagascar and reflects the difficulties that journalists face in fulfilling their mission to transparently provide reliable and diversified information to the public. Only objectives 3 and 5 received scores greater than 2.00; the other three received scores that placed them in the “unsustainable, mixed system” category.

# MADAGASCAR AT A GLANCE

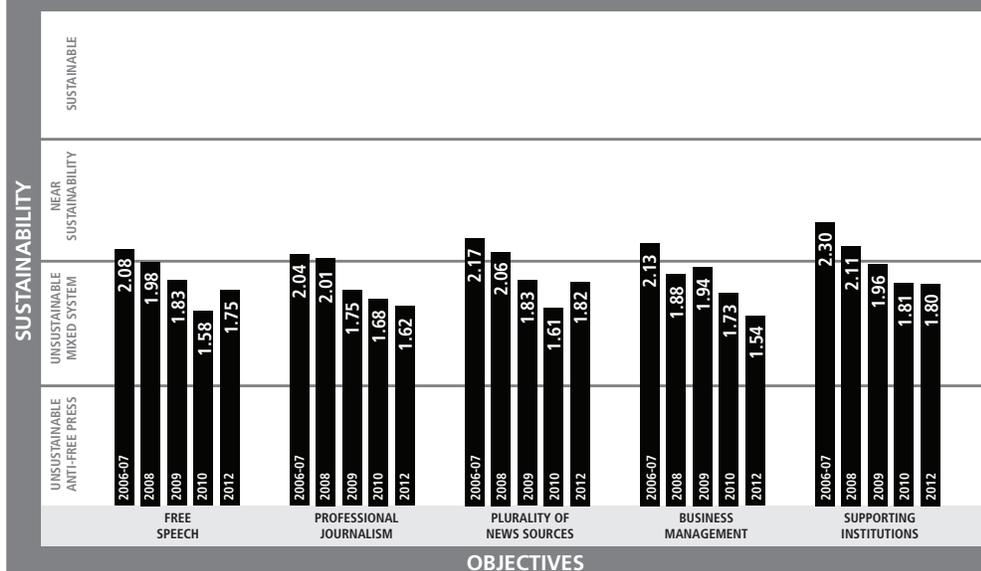
## GENERAL

- > **Population:** 22,005,222 (July 2012 est., *CIA World Factbook*)
- > **Capital city:** Antananarivo
- > **Ethnic groups (% of population):** Malayo-Indonesian (Merina and related Betsileo), Cotiers (mixed African, Malayo-Indonesian, and Arab ancestry—Betsimisaraka, Tsimihety, Antaisaka, Sakalava), French, Indian, Creole, Comoran (*CIA World Factbook*)
- > **Religions (% of population):** indigenous beliefs 52%, Christian 41%, Muslim 7% (*CIA World Factbook*)
- > **Languages (% of population):** English (official), French (official), Malagasy (official) (*CIA World Factbook*)
- > **GNI (2011-Atlas):** \$9.07 billion (World Bank Development Indicators, 2012)
- > **GNI per capita (2011-PPP):** \$950 (World Bank Development Indicators, 2012)
- > **Literacy rate:** 68.9% (male 75.5%, female 62.5%) (2003 est., *CIA World Factbook*)
- > **President or top authority:** President Andry Rajoelina (since March 18, 2009)

## MEDIA-SPECIFIC

- > **Number of active print outlets, radio stations, television stations:** 197 radio stations (1 public, 196 private); 24 television channels (1 public, 23 private); 144 daily newspapers, 21 bi-weekly, 33 weekly, 12 bi-monthly (Ministry of Communication, Department of Information and Communication, July 2010)
- > **Newspaper circulation statistics:** top three by circulation: *Taratra* (48,700), *Ny Gazetiko* (40,000), *Midi-Madagascar* (30,000), around 200,000 daily copies for the entire country (Directory of Information and Communication, July 2010)
- > **Broadcast ratings:** highest-rated television outlets: Télévision Nationale Malagasy (state-owned), Radio Nationale Malagasy (state-owned), TV Plus Madagascar (private)
- > **News agencies:** ANTA (public), MADA (private)
- > **Annual advertising revenue in media sector:** N/A
- > **Internet usage:** 383,92 (2012 est., *CIA World Factbook*)

## MEDIA SUSTAINABILITY INDEX MADAGASCAR



**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

### Madagascar Objective Score: 1.75

In short, freedom of speech and the press remain fragile. The panelists were all aware of the existence of laws guaranteeing the freedom of the press in Madagascar, particularly derived from the constitution, according to Lucile Ravaosolonirina, director of the Malagasy Press Center. However, the panelists also claimed that these laws are outdated and in need of significant overhaul.

Certain provisions are no longer in harmony with the evolution of the media business, especially regarding the role of new technology. Arindranto Andriamialisoa, a journalist with *Tia Tanindrazana/Vidy Varotra*, maintained that the major problem remains the uncertainty over whether laws will be applied. He noted cases such as the prosecution of *Tia Tanindrazana* newspaper staff members, who have been summoned to appear in court for having published an article on rosewood trafficking, which supposedly is illegal. No one has been locked up yet, but summonses from the judiciary or police come regularly, as in the case of the editor of *Midi Madagascar*. The outlet published coverage of a November 2012 press conference that activist Patrick Zakariasy held in order to accuse companies of rosewood trafficking.

According to Alain Rakotondravony, a journalist at *l'Express de Madagascar*, the authorities abuse some statutes, including "damage to state security," to muzzle journalists, especially

#### 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.

*Most rural residents, including journalists themselves, are largely ignorant of media law. This creates and reinforces the threats and pressures that journalists face, according to Alain Tefimbola Razafindrakoto of Radio LAFA in Fort Dauphin.*

as the legal arsenal does not include protections from state violations of the freedom of expression. In addition, Jean Eric Rakotoarisoa, a lawyer and research professor at the University of Antananarivo, noted the difference between citizens living in the capital and those in the regions. Most rural residents, including journalists themselves, are largely ignorant of media law. This creates and reinforces the threats and pressures that journalists face, according to Alain Tefimbola Razafindrakoto of Radio LAFA in Fort Dauphin.

Although the media advocacy group Order of Journalists exists, it is essentially a nonfunctioning organization. Its inaction has an impact on the freedom of expression, according to Domoina Prisca Rasamoelson, a journalist with *Sobika* and the president of the Malagasy Press Board Cooperative. According to Andriamialisoa, media members recall the order only in the event of a problem, and the order responds after the fact. Neither the order nor Madagascar's newly formed Union of Journalists has played proper roles in terms of social and legal protection for journalists.

As for the granting of licenses, Rakotondravony said that the process for radio and television media is neither fair nor competitive, and some applicants enjoy preferential treatment. If the station is owned by someone close to the government, the procedure will be expedited. On the other hand, there are cases such as Radio Fototra 101.8 FM, which was ordered to stop its technical trial in Mahajanga, said Jemima Rakotoasimbola, a freelance journalist in Majunga.

Rakotondravony noted that the government is planning to create a high authority for radio/television. For now, licensing is under the jurisdiction of the Special Committee for Audio-Visual Communications, composed of the minister of communications and the head officer of the postal service and telecommunications. The licensing procedure is used for political purposes and to limit media diversity, rather than to prevent saturation.

According to Rakotoasimbola, often reporters are prosecuted for "defamation," spreading false news, and undermining the security of the state. One such case was the public

*According to Rakotondravony, reporters struggle to access sources and do not know how to use legal means to do so, so they are happy with vaguely relating the facts instead of going into any details that might annoy political players, military authorities, or other influential figures.*

prosecutor's investigation of the publication directors of the biweeklies *Telonohorefy* and *le Courier* in June 2012. The civil and military authorities, both national and regional, constantly use intimidation as a tool.

All of these tactics create a climate of insecurity for journalists trying to do their jobs. Especially in times of crisis, according to Rakotondravony, journalists fall victim to physical violence or persecution at the hands of political activists that accuse them of bias. Pasteur Tiburce Soavinarivo, a *Gazety Magazine* journalist, added that journalists have been put in danger during events such as the mutiny at the Naval Air Base Ivato in June 2012.

Access to official sources is very difficult, even though the law authorizes access. The public media and some private media outlets close to the regime often enjoy privileged access to governmental sources. Officials will always wait for the green light from their numerous supervisors in the hierarchy—sometimes all the way up to the ministerial level. If the release of information does not “suit” supervisors, they will call for a total blackout. For this reason, research becomes an obstacle course and discouraged journalists often give up, according to Ravaosolonirina. To this is added the practice of designating something a “state secret,” which has become common even for information of little importance, according to Rakotoasimbola. Njaka Andriamahery, editor in chief of TV Plus Madagascar, noted that journalists in the capital are especially hard-pressed to access official public documents.

Rakotoarisoa observed that the public media do not have editorial freedom nor do they allow ordinary citizens to access all the facts; information bothersome to the government will be hidden. On the other hand, when it suits the government, the media are obliged to report on all executive activities as well as parliamentary sessions, Rakotondravony said.

As for access to international sources of information, Madagascar has a legal vacuum concerning Internet regulation, so access via websites is limited only by its cost.

The state does not in any way influence the recruitment of journalists. The press chief assembles a list of journalists that

will receive a press card or official accreditation, which the Ministry of Communications' commission issues, according to Rahaga Ramaholimiaso, director of publication for Tribune.com. Media owners at the national level require only a baccalaureate (high school diploma), and in the regions, a CEPE (primary school) level of education suffices, according to Razafindrakoto.

Some outlets are aware of their responsibilities and offer their employees continuing education, as is the case with Radio Don Bosco, MaTV, and *l'Express de Madagascar*. But Rakotoarisoa said that in many cases, becoming a journalist requires no effort. This reinforces the dumbing down of the profession, according to Ravaosolonirina, and poses a real problem for journalists in terms of their ability to conduct research and analysis.

Rakotondravony said that the issuance of press cards is based on the definition of “journalist” as it appears in the country's law on communications. Consequently, online journalists and bloggers, if they are not affiliated with a recognized print or broadcast media organ, cannot receive official accreditation. However, access to information for those without accreditation is not generally restricted, as long as those individuals have identification provided by their employer.

## OBJECTIVE 2: PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISM

### Madagascar Objective Score: 1.62

According to Rakotoarisoa, journalism quality has been on the decline since the political crisis of 2009, and since then the profession has been characterized by taking of partisan

#### 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).

positions and by a lack of rigor in dealing with news and information. Both Rakotoarisoa and Rakotondravony noted that outlets that still practice quality, ethical journalism, such as *L'Express* and *Les Nouvelles*, are rare. In the view of Rasamoelson, this is mainly because the majority of media outlets depend on their owners or donors who, in most cases, have political or other economic interests to defend.

Madagascar's Order of Journalists and Union of Journalists have written a code of ethics and professional conduct consistent with the terms of the Munich Charter and the Florence Convention. Rakotondravony said that organizations such as *L'Express de Madagascar* have developed their own codes of conduct. But he said that the application of such codes leaves much to be desired, and that Malagasy journalism is rife with corruption.

*Felaka*, local journalist jargon for bribes or gifts offered in exchange for media coverage, has become common, and news reports are not always distinct from infomercials. Some journalists even deliberately conceal information if a bribe is not offered. This is especially noticeable at the regional level, where some journalists will not provide any coverage without *felaka*, according to Rakotoarisoa. Panelists gave the example of reporters that were assigned to workshops organized by the International Francophone Organization in Mahajanga and by public affairs organization Observatory of Public Life, in Toamasina and Toliara. The reporters refused to provide coverage without compensation payments. Some other panelists, like Ravaosolonirina, qualified this somewhat by stating that some journalists perform their jobs well nonetheless when accepting *felaka*. Pasteur Tiburce Soavinarivo even went so far as to suggest that *felaka* is within accepted standards.

According to the panelists, the practice of self-censorship weighs heavily on journalists and media outlets. The main cause is fear of persecution or imprisonment, but others practice self-censorship because they have not received *felaka*, because they are reluctant to prompt civil disturbances, or because they cannot verify information. MaTV journalist Sidonie Rahaingomalala noted a case in which a broadcaster aired a press conference conducted by the minister of the environment on the rosewood matter, and subsequently, the police issued a summons for the station's publication director. As a result, any reports that might upset the government are now scrutinized carefully prior to broadcast.

In general, journalists do strive to address key issues and events, but the lack of depth of their reports still poses problems. According to Rakotondravony, reporters struggle to access sources and do not know how to use legal means to do so, so they are happy with vaguely relating the facts instead

of going into any details that might annoy political players, military authorities, or other influential figures.

The panelists agreed that the salaries of journalists are pathetic. Media members work mainly out of their passion for the job. As a consequence, journalists hunt for the kind of news that gets them some compensation or benefits, such as a per diem or free cocktails, according to Andriamialisoa. Worse, sometimes it is media organization owners that goad their employees into demanding tips or compensation.

In general, the radio and television media give precedence to entertainment broadcasts. Documentaries and news programs are rare, according to Rakotondravony. Entertainment programs make up more than 70 percent of the program schedule at the majority of television stations. News reports make up only about 5 percent, including commercial interruptions, according to Njaka Andriamahery. In addition, audience ratings suggest little demand for educational programs, according to Nanou Fiankinana, partner in UNDP Communications. This disinterest has a negative and frustrating impact on journalists' work, he said.

Facilities and equipment used for the collection and dissemination of news and information vary from one outlet to another. Some private outlets have good quality facilities and equipment. But even there, entertainment programs prevail at the expense of news and information, according to Ravaosolonirina. Razafindrakoto said that at the regional level, such as in Anosy, only a minority of journalists have equipment of average quality; most have only the simplest equipment, which often is obsolete.

The assignment of journalists to different beats depends on the newspaper, according to Rakotoasimbola. Some journalists want to specialize, and a few training programs encourage them to cover certain niches. But the treatment of these subjects is often superficial. Andriamahery said that economic difficulties prompt journalists to concentrate on reporting that requires less effort.

### OBJECTIVE 3: PLURALITY OF NEWS

#### Madagascar Objective Score: 1.82

News sources are quite diverse in Madagascar, and this diversity provides citizens with multiple sources of information and exposure to various political viewpoints. Access to international sources through satellite television, and especially the Internet, is common and unrestricted. However, their costs are high, and there is a digital divide between the big cities and rural areas.

*Despite the good intentions of some staffers, who aspire to professionalism, the public media continue to be strongly influenced by the powers that be, Ravaosolonirina said.*

The panelists all agreed with Rakotoarisoa, who said that the Malagasy benefit from media pluralism as much in the print media as in radio and television. Those who want access to the Internet or have a satellite dish are not subjected to any special conditions. However, access to information is limited by the population's low purchasing power and is most prevalent in Antananarivo, the capital, and other cities. According to Rakotondravony, despite the development of community radio stations, the rural milieu are subject to disruptions of electricity and are the victims of the digital divide. Radio Nationale Malagasy (RNM) is one of the few national organizations providing coverage to rural areas.

Despite the good intentions of some staffers, who aspire to professionalism, the public media continue to be strongly influenced by the powers that be, Ravaosolonirina said. Rakotondravony and Andriamialisoa said that public media personnel are not independent and work only to serve the government that pays them. While in rare cases they strive to be open to other political currents, pressure from the authorities is too strong and forces them to revert to their usual bias. And even though they offer some longer programs on public affairs, they are far from being objective. The RNM

#### 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.

and TVM news broadcasts thus reflect only the opinions of those in power and of the political parties close to the transitional government, and their programming lineups are saturated with government business, Soavinarivo said. This situation has caused a loss of confidence in the public media, according to Nanou Fiankinana, and has promoted the rise of citizen journalism in its place.

Madagascar has no independent press agencies. According to Rakotoarisoa, newspapers such as *Midi Madagasikara* and *l'Express de Madagascar* use Agence France-Presse for international news, while *Les Nouvelles* uses the Associated Press.

The private media produce their own news broadcasts and are, by contrast, open to all political currents, even if they are not always objective or fair, according to Rakotondravony. Often private media cover events, such as demonstrations or opposition press conferences, which are not mentioned in the state media. Ramaholimiaso said that private broadcasts focus mostly on Malagasy news and only occasionally on international stories. At the local level, the Ministry of Information provides most of the news.

Media organizations are usually owned by businesspeople or politicians; but, as is often the case in Madagascar, anything that pertains to administrative or financial management is confidential. Foreign investors are involved in *La Sentinelle* and *l'Express de Madagascar*, but such ownership is rare. These partnerships have the advantage of permitting greater editorial independence compared to solely Malagasy-owned organizations, Rakotondravony said.

The issue of minority languages does not apply very much in Madagascar, given that all citizens can understand Malagasy, the national language. Radio and television stations at the regional level broadcast in local languages to better serve their listeners.

Citizens have little access to local information beyond the few community radio stations, the public media, and a few private media outlets such as Radio Don Bosco and *l'Express de Madagascar*. According to Rakotoarisoa, those stations strive to report regularly on events in the regions. Much of the media deal only with news from Antananarivo, and most radio stations do not cover international news at all.

#### OBJECTIVE 4: BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

**Madagascar Objective Score: 1.54**

Panelists agreed that, in general, very few media companies are well managed. Rasamoelson estimated that only about 5 percent can be described as such. Rahaga Ramaholimiaso

noted that with a few exceptions, most Malagasy media are owned by politicians, who use their outlets as a means to serve personal goals. Private outlets' editorial lines are influenced strongly by these affiliations, while the Ministry of Communications exerts influence over the public media.

The major press organs are profitable businesses, according to Rakotondravony. Their resources come mainly from advertising (for radio and television stations) and subscriptions and sales of single copies (for newspapers). Sensitivity and communications campaigns sponsored by international NGOs are other sources of funding. Often media focus on big advertisers at the expense of editorial independence. Rakotoarisoa, however, noted that a lack of transparency makes it difficult to assess the profitability of the private media.

The advertising industry is limited outside the capital and major cities, according to Rakotoasimbola. Classified advertisements, announcements, and obituaries are the only sources of income for the media in rural areas or mid-size cities. The biggest advertisers go through communication agencies, which place advertisements primarily in outlets believed to have the largest audiences.

Generally, the state does not subsidize the independent media. But it does use advertisements and other bonuses/subsidies to put pressure on the large-scale media or to reward journalists' loyalty. These practices have gone on consistently for several years now, according to Rakotoasimbola. Rakotoarisoa said that the private media could suffer reprisals via the pulling of advertising if coverage is too critical of the government.

#### INDEPENDENT MEDIA ARE WELL-MANAGED BUSINESSES, ALLOWING EDITORIAL INDEPENDENCE.

##### BUSINESS MANAGEMENT INDICATORS:

- > Media outlets and supporting firms operate as efficient, professional, and profit-generating businesses.
- > Media receive revenue from a multitude of sources.
- > Advertising agencies and related industries support an advertising market.
- > Advertising revenue as a percentage of total revenue is in line with accepted standards at commercial outlets.
- > Independent media do not receive government subsidies.
- > Market research is used to formulate strategic plans, enhance advertising revenue, and tailor products to the needs and interests of audiences.
- > Broadcast ratings and circulation figures are reliably and independently produced.

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Market studies are not common practice, so media outlets do not show evidence of good development strategies. Madagascar has some survey agencies that evaluate listener ratings and the size of press runs, but they tend to be influenced by certain media outlets, the government, or other special interests. Rakotoarisoa said that in the absence of an independent regulatory body, the results of these agencies' studies are not reliable. The advertisers that do take account of the results do not always perceive them as credible, nor do the newspapers themselves.

#### OBJECTIVE 5: SUPPORTING INSTITUTIONS

##### Madagascar Objective Score: 1.80

The Group of Newspaper and Information Publishers in Madagascar is the country's publishing association, but it only functions when members make requests. An association of private press owners also exists but has been dormant for a few years. It is the same story with the radio stations, according to Rakotoarisoa. Ramaholimiaso said that in effect,

#### 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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*Some groups that say that they support press freedom offer no legal support to the media. Rakotoasimbola said these organizations simply use the media as transmission channels for their messages. Support is given to bolster their respective programs, but it does not necessarily correspond to journalists' needs, she said.*

each owner manages his/her interests without thinking about the benefits of working as a group. He also said that while there is much talk of the Order of Journalists, it is still dormant and a consensus cannot be reached on whether to revive it or let it die out. Rahaingomalala said the order is the only organization capable of promoting journalists' interests, including in the area of training.

Panelists stated that several journalist associations (often sector-specific) are legally registered at the national level, but according to Rasamoelson, only the oldest of these organizations remains active. These associations are supposed to improve professional quality in particular, but no such improvement has been seen, panelists said. The associations often remain dependent on the organizations that helped set them up, according to Rakotondravony. Existing associations are actually more operational at the regional level, in areas such as Androy and Anosy, according to Razafindrakoto.

Regarding the position of NGOs and donors, their interests differ from one organization to another, and their collaborations with the media depend on those interests, according to Fiankinana. Some groups that say that they support press freedom offer no legal support to the media. Rakotoasimbola said these organizations simply use the media as transmission channels for their messages. Support is given to bolster their respective programs, but it does not necessarily correspond to journalists' needs, she said.

Several institutions offer training programs in journalism, but they are not always of good quality and have not produced the desired results. Many journalists get their training on the job and pursue continuing education, especially classes that link to key themes such as elections, the rights of children, and the basic techniques of journalism. Several organizations, such as the Malagasy Press Center, are also working in this direction and often offer short-term training. For example, the journalist associations of the Anosy and Androy regions recently benefited from a five-day training program organized by the National Information Agency, UNDP, and UNICEF.

In addition, journalists are invited to attend training sessions, Ravaosolonirina said. But they only participate for financial benefit, according to Rakotondravony, and they rarely apply the training on the job. Since programs do not have adequate monitoring and evaluation, it is difficult to determine their impact on the professionalization of the trade, or on the provision of quality information to readers/listeners, panelists said.

Several newspapers have their own printing facilities, but others do not and instead use the services of other private printers. These printers are profitable, and the government has no power to restrict their production. The state does not have dedicated printing facility for the press.

In terms of distribution, particularly of the print media, a monopoly situation still applies, Ravaosolonirina said. With regard to private radio and television stations, some distributors controlled by political parties disseminate partisan information while others try to be neutral and independent. While access to the Internet is unrestricted, new media technology has not yet been fully exploited to better disseminate news and information, according to Rakotoarisoa. The rather high cost of access and still-low transmission speeds limit its further expansion.

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## List of Panel Participants

**Rahaga Ramaholimiaso**, chief executive officer and owner, Société Malgache d'Édition-Tribune, Antananarivo

**Nanou Fiankinana**, communications assistant, UNDP, Antananarivo

**Sidonie Rahaingomalala**, journalist, MATV, Antananarivo

**Pasteur Tiburce Soavinarivo**, journalist, *Gazety*, Antananarivo

**Njaka Andriamahery**, journalist, TV Plus Madagascar, Antananarivo

**Domoina Prisca Rasamoelison**, journalist, Sobika.com, Antananarivo

**Tefimbola Alain Razafindrakoto**, journalist, Radio Lafa, Fort Dauphin

**Jean Eric Rakotoarisoa**, lawyer; professor, University of Antananarivo, Antananarivo

**Lucile Andrée Ravaosolonirina**, director, Malagasy Press Center, Antananarivo

**Arindranto Andriamialisoa**, journalist, Tia Tanindrazana and Vidy Varotra, Antananarivo

*The following panelists submitted a questionnaire but were unable to attend the panel discussion:*

**Alain Iloniaina Rakotondravony**, journalist, *L'Express de Madagascar*, Antananarivo

**Jemima Rakotoasimbola**, journalist, freelance consultant, Majunga

## Moderator

**Harijaona Andriamoraniaina**, executive director, Multi-Service Information Systems, Antananarivo

*The Madagascar study was coordinated by, and conducted in partnership with, Multi-Service Information Systems, Antananarivo. The panel discussion was convened October 30, 2012.*