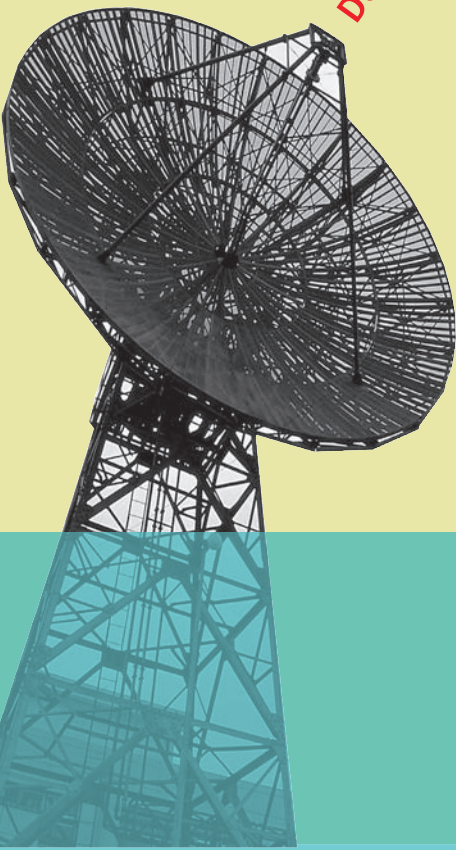


# MEDIA SUSTAINABILITY INDEX

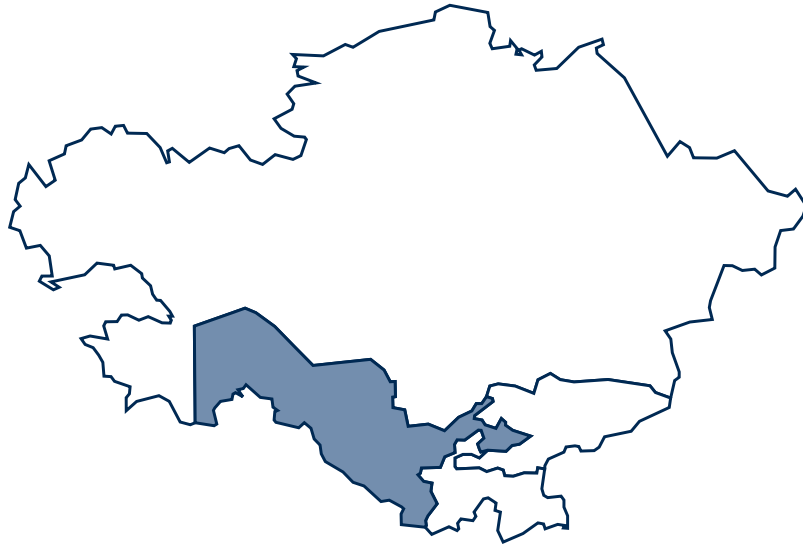
# 2003

*Development of Sustainable Independent Media in Europe and Eurasia*





**“There is no rule of law in society, and certain traditions are entrenched; there is no place to turn to enforce the laws since the judiciary is not independent; and the power of the executive branch is very strong.”**



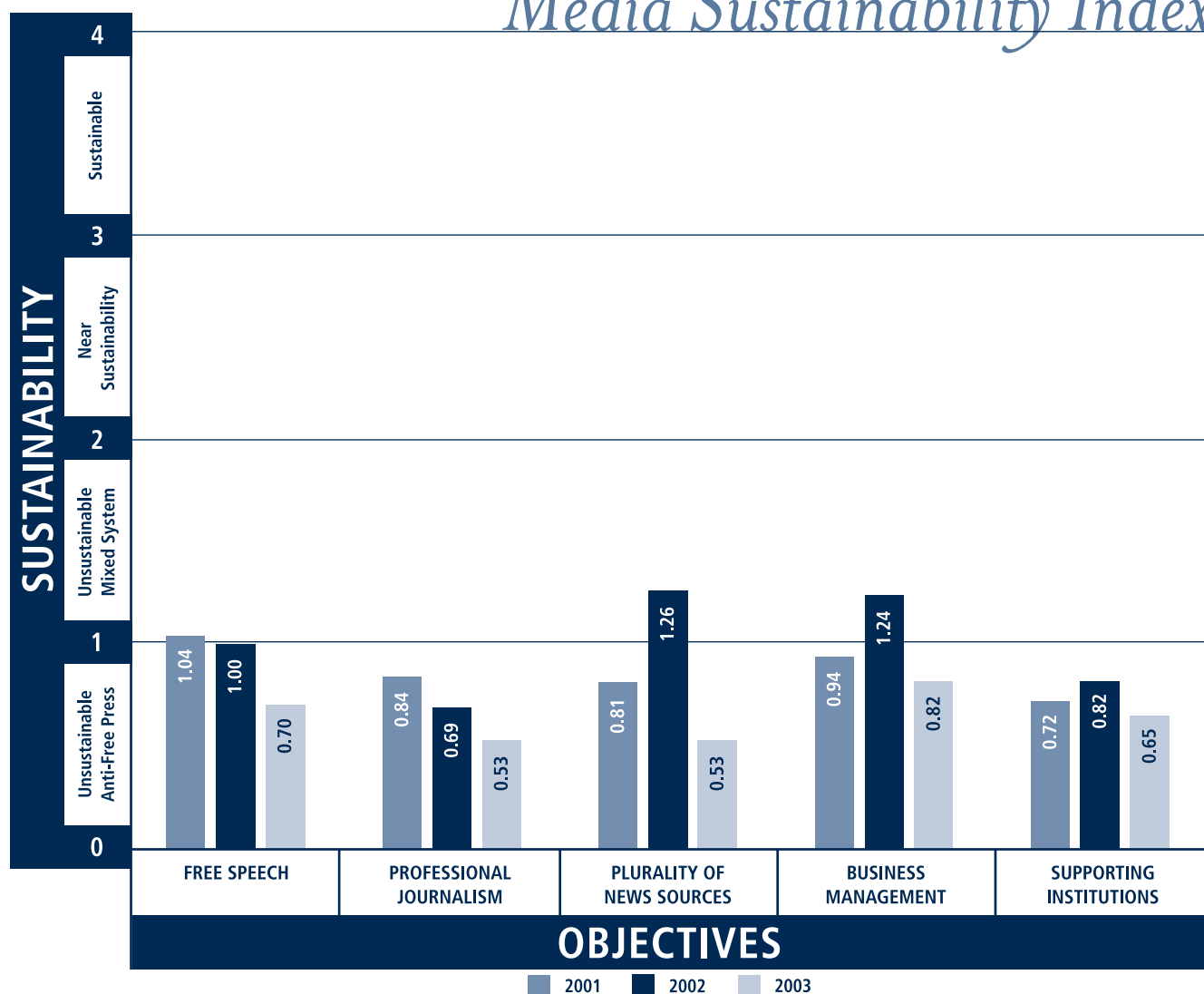
## Introduction

In 2003, the Uzbekistani media remained one of the most underdeveloped and centrally controlled in the former Soviet Union. The Karimov regime has continued a campaign against the independent media that is virtually unparalleled among countries reviewed in the Media Sustainability Index (MSI). While 2002 saw the official abolition of mandatory prepublication review and censorship by the State Press Agency, it became clear in 2003 that the repeal only shifted the emphasis to self-censorship among journalists and postsubmission censorship by nervous editors. The 2003 arrest, imprisonment, and suspected torture of writer Ruslan Sharipov, former head of the Union of Independent Journalists of Uzbekistan, served as a poignant reminder of the fate journalists may suffer for generating pieces critical of the government. As a result, not only has Soviet-style self-censorship become the norm, which in itself all but precludes meaningful social or political reporting, but it has also produced a “brain drain” of Uzbekistani media practitioners who opt to practice in exile.

The vast majority of media in Uzbekistan fully serve the ideological goals of the government. Current developments are presented from the government’s point of view, and such coverage consists only of official events. Analysis and commentary regarding events and their effect on the public are almost absent. Other information supplied by the media is largely downloaded from the Internet or taken from Russian outlets, and generally does not contain news concerning Uzbekistan. Overall, the quality of print and broadcast media in Uzbekistan differs significantly even from that of the neighboring Central Asian countries. Uzbekistani outlets exhibit less professionalism and a weaker influence on the public. The vast majority of state and non-state media outlets provide almost exclusively entertainment material, with very little coverage of social and economic issues. The panel concluded that the entertainment media provided little intellectual stimulation for the population, especially Uzbek speakers, although the relative commercial success of these outlets may one day provide a

# Uzbekistan

## Media Sustainability Index



### Objective Scoring

The averages of all the indicators are averaged to obtain a single, overall score for each objective. Objective scores are averaged to provide an overall score for the country. IREX interprets the overall scores as follows:

- 3 and above:** Sustainable and free independent media
- 2–3:** Independent media approaching sustainability
- 1–2:** Significant progress remains to be made; society or government is not fully supportive
- 0–1:** Country meets few indicators; government and society actively oppose change

### Indicator Scoring

Each indicator is scored using the following system:

- 0 =** Country does not meet indicator; government or social forces may actively oppose its implementation
- 1 =** Country minimally meets aspects of the indicator; forces may not actively oppose its implementation, but business environment may not support it and government or profession do not fully and actively support change
- 2 =** Country has begun to meet many aspects of the indicator, but progress may be too recent to judge or still dependent on current government or political forces
- 3 =** Country meets most aspects of the indicator; implementation of the indicator has occurred over several years and/or through changes in government, indicating likely sustainability
- 4 =** Country meets the aspects of the indicator; implementation has remained intact over multiple changes in government, economic fluctuations, changes in public opinion, and/or changing social conventions



basis for development of a more informative independent and financially viable press.

The Constitution of Uzbekistan guarantees open access to information, but in practice admission to any official entity’s activities is highly restricted for non-state journalists. The authorities use many methods to control significant information, including direct and indirect refusals, unfounded rejections of accreditation, and preferential access for the state-run media. Meanwhile, journalists have become accustomed to the widespread practice of government and other sources providing the media with useless or even fabricated information. Simultaneously, the government controls almost all forms of production and distribution, including printing presses and broadcast transmissions. Licensing procedures are highly bureaucratic and often unsuccessful for independent media.

Uzbekistan’s media work mainly in Uzbek and Russian, the later technically a minority language. Many cities have state-owned newspapers in Uzbek and Russian, though both face dwindling interest among readers largely because of their “official” content. Although it still has a role among the intellectual elites, the Russian-language media has been in decline since the breakup of the Soviet Union and subsequent exodus of ethnic Russians. Uzbek officials have worked actively to decrease the role of Russian-language print and broadcast media. For example, one Uzbek television channel was transformed to a sport channel, and broadcasting in Russian was cut dramatically.

## Objective 1: Free Speech

**Uzbekistan Objective Score: 0.70/4.00**

The Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan guarantees the freedom of speech. There also are numerous media-related laws, including the broad law on mass media adopted in June 1991 and amended in December 1997. Other legislation deals with protection of state secrets (1993), copyright (1996), journalist protections (1997), access to information (1997), and advertising. In addition, President Karimov has given some general official support to press freedom, perhaps in part because of increased international attention during the “war on terror.” “A sufficient legislative base regulating the activities of the media has been developed,” a panelist concluded. “However,” he said, “many provisions need to be adjusted. [There are] contradictions between the various provisions which then result in the restriction of the

freedom of speech.”

Another panelist listed three reasons for violations of the freedom of speech protections: “There is no rule of law in society, and certain traditions are entrenched; there is no place to turn to enforce the laws since the judiciary is not independent; and the power of the executive branch is very strong.”

No law covers electronic media, which are instead regulated by one-off acts adopted by government officials without any input from the public. Licensing is controlled by the Agency for Communications and Telecommunications. Its interdepartmental council

**“Licenses are given to those who bribe the officials or those who have good personal connections,” a panel member charged. “One can say that licensing in this country is corrupt.”**

### Legal and social norms protect and promote free speech and access to public information

<b>FREE SPEECH INDICATORS</b>	■ Legal/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 the offended party 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 so-called independent press is independent of the state only economically,” one participant said. “In other words, it has to support itself on its own, despite high taxes. For example, the advertising tax amounts to 15 percent.”**

to be like any other business. Taxes are generally high, but no value-added tax (VAT) is levied. “The so-called independent press is independent of the state only economically,” one participant said. “In other words, it has to support itself on its own, despite high taxes. For example, the advertising tax amounts to 15 percent.” The state-run media receive subsidies, including office space and supplies, from the government.

The freedom of information law adopted in December 2002 can be interpreted in many ways. Article 14 allows for banning any information critical of societal values or advocating social change, and protects many phenomena under the umbrella of the “national consciousness” or the Uzbekistani “mentality.” In one case, a journalist from *Pravda Vostoka* was fired “at her own request” for criticism of national customs and traditions that she believed contributed to discrimination against women. By contrast, in the spirit of the Soviet era, largely unknown journalists get decorated with orders and medals to ensure their loyalty to the national ideal. The number of recipients of such awards exceeded 300 during 2003.

In practice, the state does not guarantee equal access to information for the independent press. The founding of an institute for press secretaries has proven to be a barrier to obtaining information from government offices. The institute serves only to increase bureaucratic red tape and to disseminate press releases that contain few facts. Indeed, authorities are able to issue information at their discretion due to the lack of a clear-cut legal explanation of what constitutes state secrets. These authorities also are able to use the pro-

issues licenses only if it is convinced of a media outlet’s total loyalty to the government. “Licenses are given to those who bribe the officials or those who have good personal connections,” a panel member charged. “One can say that licensing in this country is corrupt.”

According to the taxation policies of Uzbekistan, the media is considered

tracted process of reviewing requests for information to their advantage. The federal government’s preference for giving state media outlets what information is released is clear. At a multilateral forum in Tashkent, for example, President Karimov gave a press conference exclusively for journalists from state-run media.

Persecution of controversial journalists is a widespread phenomenon in Uzbekistan, particularly for those who are critical or try to maintain a semblance of independence. “Courageous journalists and chief editors often get fired,” a panelist said. “In some cases pressure is exerted on the ownership. In other cases, newspapers are closed down, and the entire staff, headed by its editor-in-chief, is forced to resign. In some cases a person is simply offered a different job, or journalists leave ‘on their own accord.’” One state television editor was barred from producing programs after participating in protests against censorship. During the first six months of 2003, six journalists, including correspondents for foreign agencies, were arrested. At year’s end, according to international observers, five were serving multiyear prison sentences, one of them in connection with writing on the Islamic opposition movement. There is little public outcry when crimes against journalists are committed, and journalists lack any legal protection in Uzbekistan, panelists agreed.

It is impossible to cover corruption, since a legal provision bars journalists from “interfering” in the private lives of politicians and government officials. With corruption widespread in the judicial system, government authorities have free reign to prosecute each other and media professionals for libel, which remains a criminal offense.

On a more encouraging note, there have been some examples of journalists successfully defending themselves against prosecutions. In late 2003, the editor of *Mokhiyat* won a case in which he had been charged with libel. In December, a journalist from TV Yoshlar won her case against the management of the state broadcaster, which she said had unlawfully fired her in April 2002, purportedly for accepting a bribe. Several days before her dismissal, the journalist had broadcast critical coverage about the poor educational standards at a high school. However, the end of prepublication review by the State Press Agency in 2002 has placed an additional burden of responsibility on editors, who now generally decide against publishing or broadcasting any story that could potentially be construed as libel.

Access to international news is limited. News broadcasts originating outside of Uzbekistan from sources such as the BBC or RFE/RL are blocked at

times, though entertainment programming is generally allowed. Uzbekistani correspondents for foreign media are among those who find themselves intimidated by the government, according to free-speech advocates. Some Internet sites are blocked, and overall the Internet is largely under government control. Internet access also remains relatively expensive in Uzbekistan, resulting in limited means for many media organizations to connect to the Internet, particularly in the regions.

## Objective 2: Professional Journalism

**Uzbekistan Objective Score: 0.53/4.00**

With the national state media under such strict control, there is little opportunity to develop journalists' professionalism. "The ethos of serving the interests of society has not yet taken hold with editors, publishers, and other employees of various publications," a panel member said. "They direct their attention to the instructions of the local authorities."

Subjective coverage of most issues is the norm, and few articles and news reports contain multiple viewpoints. "The state press and television are known for the absence of critical analyses and the lack of balance," said a panelist. "The threat of censorship is very apparent."

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).

Regional media, operating farther from the gaze of federal authorities, may have somewhat more room for maneuvering but still stick close to the official line presented by the local apparatus.

The Uzbek-language media use the so-called national consciousness and patriarchal stereotypes as propaganda to justify authoritarianism as a national policy. Most of the articles on social and political topics are didactic, lacking facts and statistics. The views of such opposition movements as exist in Uzbekistan are largely absent from coverage. Internet journalism is even more directly controlled. If unacceptable content is published by websites, it is often blocked by the government.

The criteria of objectivity, accuracy, and impartiality are not applied in any meaningful way to coverage because of pressure from government authorities, editors, and owners. Self-censorship is becoming an everyday practice for most journalists, who are afraid to analyze significant political and economic events lest they be prosecuted. The same is true for editors, who fear being replaced. Journalists report that the official "line" about what can and cannot be covered is sometimes conveyed by government officials at meetings with editors, or can come in the form of a pointed telephone call. Among the off-limits topics are corruption, problems with economic reforms, domestic violence, and the effects of poverty.

Poor wages are the norm for journalists, with salaries and honoraria only slightly higher at private outlets compared with state media. Journalists may sell their coverage to politicians and businesses, produce made-to-order articles, or work for several publications at the same time to earn a living.

There is no generally accepted ethical code to guide journalists and editors. In addition, the editors and staffs of official media generally are considerably older than the populations they serve and are still inclined to follow the Soviet principles of "journalism"

**"The ethos of serving the interests of society has not yet taken hold with editors, publishers, and other employees of various publications," a panel member said. "They direct their attention to the instructions of the local authorities."**

that they were taught. There are few sources of new techniques, and they certainly are not provided through those university journalism faculties that continue to exist. Younger journalists, with little or no professional training, are more attracted by the private media outlets, even if they operate within strict boundaries or focus on “light” content.

Entertainment programming is a lot less risky and as a result now dominates many broadcast and print outlets. The bulk of the content for most non-state publications is dedicated to reiterating “national values” and providing show-business gossip, astrological forecasts, and foreign crime news. People receive little reliable information about domestic issues or social concerns, although there are some exceptions among commercial radio stations such as Grand and Ekho Doleeny—where controls on radio are somewhat less strict—and television stations such as Angren and Orbita, which have several programs on social issues. In the case of Orbita TV, the station works in a primarily Russian-speaking area and finds it possible to respond to the many petitions it receives from community activists in its audience. The technical means for the collection, production, and dissemination of information in the capital city are good, but regional outlets use outdated equipment left from the Soviet era. Private broadcasters generally rent air time from state television, making them highly susceptible to government editorial control.

So far, niche reporting is in its nascent stages. There are newspapers specializing in topics such as business, economy, and advertising, though journalists have no professional training in these areas. There is a severe shortage of modern textbooks or new teaching methodologies. Educational materials published in Uzbekistan are of poor quality, while better materials published in Russia are too expensive. Most journalists lack the foreign-language skills to read documents from other countries, even those in Russian.

### Objective 3: Plurality of News Sources

**Uzbekistan Objective Score: 0.53/4.00**

In Uzbekistan, there is little or no diversity of state and independent sources of information due to government controls. Most media sources offer only official government information. Outlets in the capital city cover national topics, and local media cover local subjects; but both present the official points of view. The same is true whether the medium uses the Uzbek or Russian language.

“The media lacks the resources to reflect the public interest in their coverage,” a panel member said. “Presentation of the news is dictated by the interests of a small circle of people who determine the entire internal policy of the government. The content of the news is determined ‘from above’ or, to be more exact, by official policy.”

In recent years, more than 200 privately owned newspapers have been registered. Their circulation numbers are rather high—much, much higher than the official Russian- and Uzbek-language newspapers. But most of the publications provide little if any news coverage, sticking instead to less-risky information about popular culture, personalities, and advice. These publications do, however, reflect a nascent understanding of marketing and catering to audience demands, as their growing distribution indicates.

Outside of urban centers, however, Uzbekistanis have limited access to newspapers and to printed material in general. By the estimates of the panelists, only a scant percentage of the non-urban population can afford to buy private newspapers. There have been some reports of Uzbek-language newspapers smuggled in to the Fergana Valley regions of Uzbekistan from Kyrgyzstan, but in very small quantities. In villages, the main sources of information are the state-run radio and television, while the rural population relies mainly on the radio for news. According

#### 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.



to one panelist, “There are not enough sources of information so that people could compare them. Western publications are inaccessible. The state-run and public media do not reflect the whole political spectrum.”

Cable television and Internet service are available in the big cities. Lately, access to the Internet has become considerably easier for those who can afford it, with Internet “cafés” opening in many urban areas. According to a World Bank–funded study, Uzbekistan had 50,000 Internet users in 2001, a figure that is expected to grow to 1 million by 2005. Of those already online, about 90 percent are believed to be from the Tashkent area and using the Internet on average once a week. Internet access is limited in rural areas by poor telecommunications infrastructure and high costs.

A Russian monitoring service logged 125 registered Uzbekistan-based websites in 2002. However, various Internet sites are often blocked. This is accomplished through generally verbal orders given to service providers, which are afraid of losing the required license from Uztelcom, the government telecommunications agency. The Law on Information Security allows the national security service to work with Uztelcom to block sites.

In 2002, limitations were placed on licenses for traders who import and sell Russian publications. Various government television channels broadcast suggestions that Russian media were amoral and contradicted “national values,” even mentioning that parents should not let their children read such publications. MSI panelists suggested that some of the banned newspapers, such as *Kommersant* and *Isvestia*, had analyzed the economic situation in Uzbekistan or commented on the country’s foreign policy. Two Russian newspapers, *Trud* and *AiF*, were viewed as neutral enough to remain on sale. Many television stations, both state and private, rebroadcast several hours of Russian entertainment programming every week. Other foreign publications are not allowed into Uzbekistan if it is decided that they violate what is loosely described as the “national consciousness.” There also are cases of European entertainment programs being re-broadcast, although they are often pirated.

There are three news agencies in Uzbekistan, the state agencies Jahon and UZA and the commercial Turkistan agency. The information does not differ much whether they are government or independent. Regional media outlets generally do not amplify their news coverage much with reports from these agencies.

The law permits minority media outlets, but they direct their efforts mainly toward the diasporas. There are newspapers and television programs in Tajik

and Kazakh languages, but media attention to issues of critical importance to Uzbekistan’s nearly 100 distinct ethnic communities is discouraged under the guise of the law against fomenting ethnic conflicts. For example, the Samarkand newspaper *Oyna* was shut down after publishing an article about Tajik-language secondary schools in 2002—although the official reason given for the closure was the limited number of subscribers.

Information regarding media ownership is not available to the general public.

## Objective 4: Business Management

**Uzbekistan Objective Score: 0.82/4.00**

The media in Uzbekistan have little opportunity or reason to develop as effective businesses. Operating in accordance with the decrees, the resolutions, and the will of the Karimov regime, the state media have but one audience to serve. For the privately owned media, there is the constant need to protect the business, either by toeing the official line or withdrawing from coverage of news and social issues. Foreign investment in the media is not permitted.

Almost all the facilities that provide technical support for media—such as printing presses and transmis-

Independent media are well-managed businesses, allowing editorial independence	
<b>BUSINESS MANAGEMENT INDICATORS</b>	■ 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.

**“Private broadcast media operate under harsh financial conditions,” one panelist said. “Most of these outlets work with rented transmitters and pay fees established by the government.”**

sion towers—are either owned or controlled by the state. There are a few private printing plants, but it is very difficult for them to operate at a profit since government interference impedes their competitiveness and growth—and therefore their ability to provide better-

quality, more modern services. Furthermore, there are restrictions on the distribution of newspapers, as the government limits the delivery of “undesirable” papers. For example, the main distribution network, Matbuot, limits circulation of non-state publications, often claiming they are “not profitable” to carry. The independent newspaper *Mokhiyat* has had its distribution restricted and at times is almost impossible to buy at newsstands, especially in the provinces.

Media receive very little revenue from advertising. Due to the extremely poor economic situation in Uzbekistan, the small advertising market that existed continued to shrink in 2003. It remains difficult for any publication to draw in enough advertising to comprise a major revenue stream. Advertising agencies are open, but they work mainly with the print media. Television stations usually have their own advertising services, but they do not operate with any efficacy.

Newspapers earn their money mostly from sales and subscriptions. Individual sponsors provide financial support to some media, as well as tending to influence the editorial policies of the outlet. “Private broadcast media operate under harsh financial conditions,” one panelist said. “Most of these outlets work with rented transmitters and pay fees established by the government.”

State newspapers exist mainly due to compulsory subscriptions. Local authorities make their constituencies subscribe to certain state-owned editions. A list of these has been drawn up by the government and sent to organizations, enterprises, and educational institutions with instructions to subscribe to the mandated papers. Even so, circulation of the official Russian and Uzbek newspaper in cities tends to be quite low, with state outlets in Fergana Valley cities reporting weekly distributions under 10,000 copies, often in the 2,000 to 3,000 range.

Market research on media is very sporadic, which means that outlets have few tools to gauge consumer interest or to use that information in advertising and promotion. Media generally do not conduct marketing research, unless it has been ordered by the government, although some newspapers have tried placing questionnaires for readers to return. Circulation rates of print publications are not always available, and there are no rating agencies. Media research is conducted mainly at the request of foreign foundations and organizations, but such information is usually not made public.

## Objective 5: Supporting Institutions

**Uzbekistan Objective Score: 0.65/4.00**

There are almost no professional media associations, except for the state-run Foundation for the Democratization and Support of the Mass Media. Professional unions or associations to protect journalists’ rights are nonexistent, and attempts to create one were unsuccessful. There are no associations of publishers or radio broadcasters in Uzbekistan. Another attempt was made to create a National Association of Electronic Media, but this organization has not started its activities and has not been registered. A proposed committee to defend press freedom did not receive approval for registration. In

### 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 private, apolitical, and unrestricted.
- Channels of media distribution (kiosks, transmitters, Internet) are private, apolitical, and unrestricted.

sum, hardly anyone is engaged in defending the interests of the media.

Such non-governmental organizations (NGOs) as exist cannot properly support the media. These NGOs experience almost constant pressure from the authorities. In Tashkent, the state founded the National Press Center as a quasi-NGO. The club “Reporter” operates in Bukhara, and a branch of the National Press Center of Uzbekistan is based in Samarkand. But in general, NGOs are not involved in affecting legislative change.

Educational opportunities for journalists are insufficient. The level of basic education provided in the provinces is low, especially because many secondary-school students are required to work in agriculture for two months instead of attending school. Universities still practice outdated Soviet-style instruction methods. The teachers have not received additional professional development or new methodologies, and the instruction is still rooted in ideology. Some journalism faculties have closed, and at those that continue to function, students do not choose their subjects or professors, and do not have access to new materials on modern journalism. There is a general lack of textbooks, especially in the Uzbek language.

The University of World Languages and the National University offer journalism training. This training is relatively professional, but graduates do not have many venues to apply their skills in practice because job placement for these journalists is problematic. The main obstacle to improving media professionalism is the lack of prospects in a media sector where freedom of expression is so limited.

Journalism students can study abroad, but few have sufficient foreign-language skills. At the journalism department of the National University, there is only one journalist who has received an education abroad. Most of those who have studied abroad do not come back; and if they do return, they do not return to work in the media industry.

International organizations such as IREX, Internews, the Open Society Institute, UNESCO, and the Konrad Adenauer Foundation conduct media trainings. However, the approach to journalism that underpins the training at times reflects a degree of media freedom that does not exist in Uzbekistan.

Media distribution channels are controlled by the government, and cannot determine policies independently. Newspapers depend on the post office system for a substantial part of their circulation. Television and radio frequencies are also controlled by the state, and almost all the transmitters are operated by the state.

Private television stations usually do not have their own transmitters and therefore rent air time from state television. All local Internet providers are obliged to operate through the security node of the Agency for Information, allowing government control of Internet content.

## Panel Participants

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*Alo Khodjaeva*, Cgand Radio

*Aysulu Kurbanova*, Zamon Info

*Bakhodir Musaev*, Independent Veseavchev

*Norali Ochilov*, National Uzbek Information Agency

*Tamara Prokopyeva*, Orbita TV

*Tashpulat Rahmatullayev*, Press Center, Samarkand

*Irena Safargaliyeva*

## Moderator

*Marfua Tokhtakhodjaeva*, chairperson, Women’s Resource Center

## Observers

*Mumtoz Abdurazzakova*, country director, IREX/Uzbekistan

*Zarina Izmaylova*, IREX/Uzbekistan

*Jean MacKenzie*, IREX/Central Asia