

MEDIA

SUSTAINABILITY INDEX—

MIDDLE EAST AND

NORTH AFRICA



MEDIA SUSTAINABILITY INDEX 2005

The Development of Sustainable Independent Media in the Middle East and North Africa

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IREX
2121 K Street, NW, Suite 700
Washington, DC 20037
E-mail: irex@irex.org
Phone: (202) 628-8188
Fax: (202) 628-8189
www.irex.org

Project managers: Theo Dolan and Mark Whitehouse

Editorial support: IREX/DC staff—Theo Dolan, Drusilla Menaker, and Mark Whitehouse

Copyeditor: Kelly Kramer, WORDtoWORD Editorial Services

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USAID

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) is an independent agency that provides economic, development, and humanitarian assistance around the world in support of the foreign-policy goals of the United States. The agency works to support long-term and sustainable economic growth and advances US foreign-policy objectives by supporting economic growth, agriculture, and trade; global health; and democracy, conflict prevention, and humanitarian assistance.

USAID provides assistance in four regions of the world: Sub-Saharan Africa; Asia and the Near East; Latin America and the Caribbean; and Europe and Eurasia.

With headquarters in Washington, DC, USAID's strength is its field offices around the world. They work in close partnership with private voluntary organizations, indigenous organizations, universities, American businesses, international agencies, other governments, and other US government agencies. USAID has working relationships with more than 3,500 American companies and over 300 US-based private voluntary organizations.

MEPI

The United States Department of State's Middle East Partnership Initiative provides tangible support to reformers in the Middle East and North Africa so democracy can spread, education can thrive, economies can grow, and women can be empowered. In four years, this presidential initiative has devoted \$293 million to more than 350 programs in 15 countries and the Palestinian territories to support the aspirations of those working to build a more peaceful and prosperous Middle East. Examples of the initiative's work includes campaign schools, independent media training, civic education, entrepreneurship skill building, youth leadership development, trade transparency promotion, business hubs for women, and judicial and legal reform training.

UNESCO

UNESCO, the United Nations' Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, maintains a Communication and Information (CI) sector that is guided by the principles of freedom of expression and freedom of the press as basic human rights. Since 2003, the CI sector has supported the Iraqi people in their transition to democracy. Among other projects, UNESCO facilitated initiatives to develop a national media policy and provided practical guidance for journalists and civil society prior to the elections. Training and networking opportunities were made available to more than 550 media workers and professionals.

IREX

IREX is an international nonprofit organization providing leadership and innovative programs to improve the quality of education, strengthen independent media, and foster pluralistic civil society development.

Founded in 1968, IREX has an annual portfolio of \$50 million and a staff of over 500 professionals worldwide. IREX and its partner IREX Europe deliver cross-cutting programs and consulting expertise in more than 50 countries.

DESPITE NEW INTERNATIONAL LINKS, WITHIN LIBYA THE MEDIA SECTOR REMAINS COMPLETELY CONTROLLED BY THE STATE. MEDIA OUTLETS ARE OWNED AND RIGIDLY SUPERVISED BY THE GOVERNMENT, AND THERE ARE NO PRIVATE RADIO OR TELEVISION STATIONS. FREEDOM OF SPEECH IS PRACTICALLY NON-EXISTENT, AS AUTHORITIES PRACTICE CENSORSHIP WITH IMPUNITY.



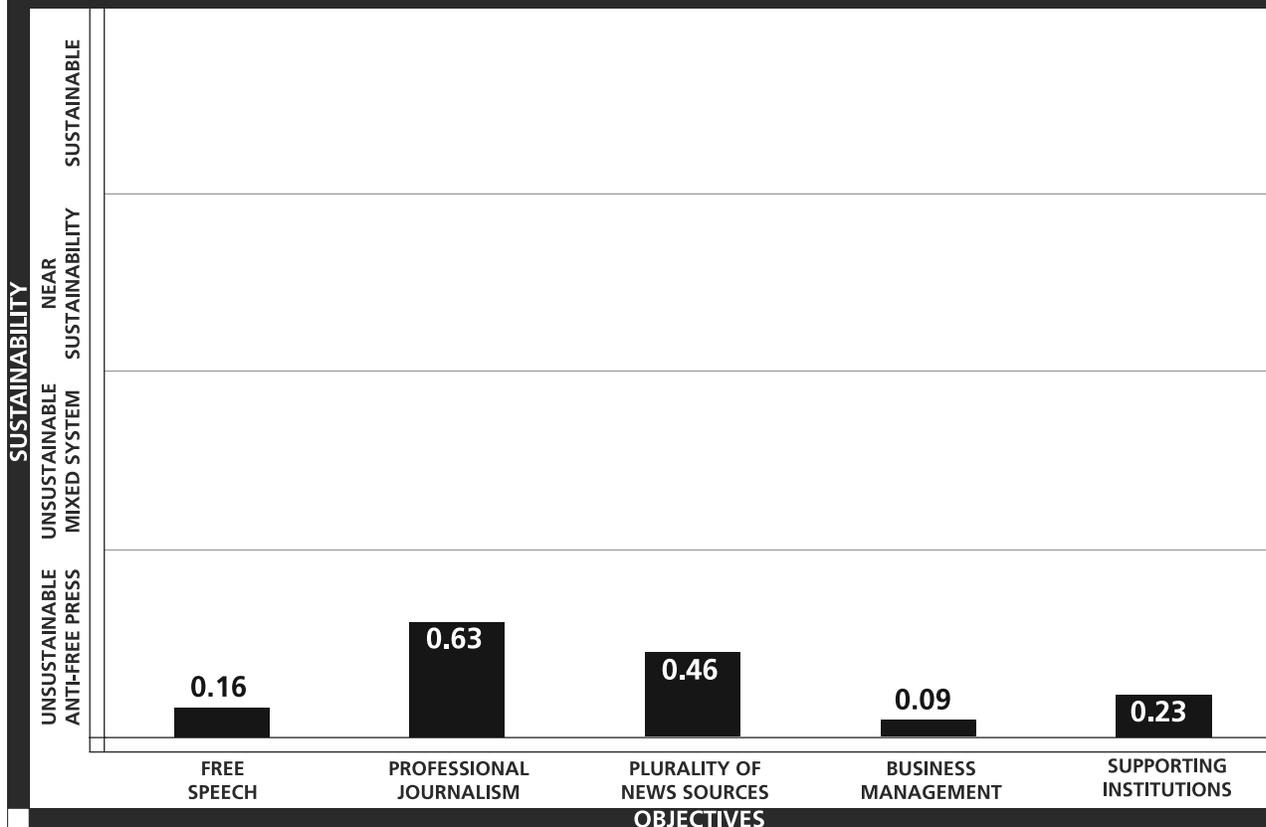
Although long viewed as a pariah state by Western countries, Libya now shows signs of reintegrating itself into the international arena. In 2003, the North African country accepted responsibility for the 1989 bombing of a Pan Am flight over Lockerbie, Scotland. Colonel Moammar Qadhafi's regime announced it was abandoning its secret program of developing weapons of mass destruction. Since then, diplomatic relations with the United States have been re-established and the ban on US citizens traveling to Libya lifted. American oil companies now are clamoring to tap Libya's oil reserves, estimated to be as large as Nigeria's.

Despite these new international links, within Libya the media sector remains completely controlled by the state. Media outlets are owned and rigidly supervised by the government, and there are no private radio or television stations. Freedom of speech is practically non-existent, as authorities practice censorship with impunity. The only access Libyans have to international news and information is via satellite and the Internet—and despite attempts at government screening of these media, they are used by an increasing number of Libyans who have the means for such technology.

Libyan legislation that deals with media issues, such as the Constitution and the Green Charter for Human Rights, all allow for freedom of speech within certain vaguely defined limits. These limits are enforced by the government to support the Jamahiriya—Qadhafi's proclaimed "third-way" of government that allows citizens to express themselves in People's Congresses, even though all decision-making authority ultimately rests with Qadhafi himself. In this context, Libyan media are portrayed as not truly state-run outlets; rather, they are voices of the people of the Jamahiriya.

In addition to censorship, journalists whose reporting touches on taboo topics are subject to harassment and attacks. The 2005 death of Dhaif Al Ghazal, a former journalist at *Al-Zahf Al-Akhdhar* newspaper, was reported by Human Rights Watch as due to anti-government articles he wrote for a website based in the United Kingdom. Another journalist, 'Abd Al Raziq

MEDIA SUSTAINABILITY INDEX: LIBYA



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.

Al Mansuri, was imprisoned for writing online articles critical of the government. The penal code includes imprisonment and the death penalty as punishment for spreading information that damages Libya's "fundamental social structures."

As there are no private media in Libya, the sector is supported by government sponsorship and advertising. Organized civil society is virtually non-existent, although there are government entities such as the Qadhafi Foundation that operate to support Jamahiriya initiatives.

The Libyan media professionals who participated in the Media Sustainability Index (MSI) assessment rated Libya very poorly with an overall score of 0.31. The worst rankings related to the limits on freedom of speech and the lack of private media businesses. The highest-rated objective was professionalism with a score of 0.63, although this was not a substantial improvement over other categories.

OBJECTIVE 1: FREE SPEECH

Libya Objective Score: 0.16 / 4.00

Freedom of speech in Libya is defined according to the Libyan Constitutional Declaration of December 11, 1969. Article 13 states that "freedom of opinion is guaranteed within the limits of public interest and the principles of the Revolution." Meanwhile, the Declaration of the People's Authority (adopted on March 2, 1977), the Green Charter for Human Rights of the Jamahiriya Era (adopted in June 1988), and Law 20 On Enhancing Freedom (adopted in 1991) all have constitutional status in relation to freedom of expression. Article 8 of Law 20 On Enhancing Freedom stipulates that "every citizen has the right to openly express his thoughts and opinions in the People's Congresses and in the Jamahiriya media," unless "he uses [that right] in violation of the people's authority or for personal motives."

However, the Constitution and the Great Green Charter effectively limit the freedom of expression in Libya. The Charter guarantees freedom of expression only within the system of the People's Congresses and "within the limits of public interest and the principles of the revolution." This provision allows wide latitude for the courts and the government to rule against media and citizens seeking to voice their opinions.

Similarly, Article 8 of Law 20 also qualifies the right to free expression. According to this article, "Every citizen has the right to express and publicly proclaim his opinions and ideas to the people's congresses and the information media of the Jamahiriya. No citizen shall be answerable for his exercise of this right unless

he exploits it with a view to detracting from the people's authority or for personal ends."

This law also fails to meet international legal standards for freedom of expression. Furthermore, according to a Human Rights Watch report from January 2006, Libya

contradicts a number of international conventions regarding free speech, including the African Charter on Human and People's Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Libya had previously signed on to both accords.

According to Mohamed Eljahmi, "There are no judicial checks and balances. The judiciary is ill-defined, allowing regime elites to use multiple security forces to harass ordinary Libyan citizens." Journalists, and citizens in general, live in fear that anything they say or write could be construed as treason.

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

FREE-SPEECH INDICATORS:

- > 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.

Regardless of vaguely defined legal provisions dealing with freedom of expression, the Libyan regime does not tolerate dissenting views. MSI participants noted that many journalists have disappeared over the years for reporting that criticized the government. Two incidents in 2005 underscored the lack of opportunity for media freedom. In one case, 'Abd Al Raziq Al Mansuri was imprisoned by the Libyan authorities, reportedly for contributing articles to a website based in the United Kingdom (www.akhbar-libya.com). According to the Human Rights Watch report, 'Abd Al Raziq Al Mansuri maintains he was arrested for the content of these articles, although the government denies his detention was due to his journalism. Instead, he was sentenced to an 18-month term for possession of an illegal firearm that was found during a search of his home.

In a separate incident, Dhaif Al Ghazal, a journalist for the *al-Zahf al-Akhdar* newspaper, was found dead on June 2 near the city of Benghazi. His body showed signs of torture, according to Reporters Without Borders. Outside of his work for the Revolutionary Committee newspaper, Dhaif Al Ghazal began writing articles that focused on corruption within the Jamahiriya for another UK Web publication—Libya al-Youm (www.libya-alyoum.com). While the authorities have denied any involvement in Dhaif Al Ghazal's death, an investigation has not resulted in any arrests or prosecutions. In June 2006, the Libyan League for Human Rights issued a statement calling for the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to provide assistance in moving the investigation forward, saying there is "no indication that the Government plans to investigate, properly, the case or to bring its perpetrators to justice."

MSI participants also pointed to the case of dissident Fathi Eljahmi, who was released from jail in 2004 after serving an 18-month sentence for promoting free speech. Shortly after his initial release, he was jailed again after advocating reform during an interview with the US government-funded Al-Hurra television network. Fathi Eljahmi remains imprisoned at an undisclosed location. MSI participants cited this case in pointing out that the level of government control over free speech in Libya extends beyond simply preventing journalists and intellectuals from advocating for reform but also encompasses shaping and solidifying the image of Qadhafi and his regime. Mohamed Eljahmi, the brother of the jailed Fathi Eljahmi, said, "Criticizing the Leader or his family is forbidden and can result in imprisonment or death. There are indications that the regime is allowing criticism against some vulnerable government officials. It is a clever tactic which aims to

strengthen the elite's rule and reflects their monopoly over the all levers of power in the country. The Libyan government is using the media to propagate the message that the flaw is not in the Leader but in those who implement his thought."

The government runs and strictly controls all media in Libya, including the licensing process. The Law on Publications No. 76, promulgated in 1972 and modified by Law 120 in 1972 and Law 75 in 1973, governs the press and restricts publishing rights to two state-run entities: Al-Dar Al-Jamahiriya and the General Corporation of Press, Professional Unions, and Syndicates. The Libyan Jamahiriya Broadcasting Corporation is the only national broadcaster, and no private radio or television stations are allowed.

MSI participants agreed that the legal system does little other than support the will of the Jamahiriya. According to Mohamed Eljahmi, "There are no judicial checks and balances. The judiciary is ill-defined, allowing regime elites to use multiple security forces to harass ordinary Libyan citizens." Journalists, and citizens in general, live in fear that anything they say or write could be construed as treason. Peaceful assembly and the formation of a political party or association are crimes punishable by death. Furthermore, a law on collective punishment allows entire families, towns, or districts to be punished for the transgressions of an individual.

Libel is not a civil-law issue in Libya. Instead, a body called the General Committee of Journalists Responsibility, composed of lawyers and journalists and led by the deputy director of the state-run Libyan Journalists Union, processes the libel charges. The committee adjudicates the complaints that are infrequently filed by private citizens and businesses. According to the Human Rights Watch report, editors indicated that libel charges did not affect their daily operations or their editorial decision-making.

Although Libyan citizens and media professionals generally have more access to information via satellite and the Internet than before, access to information is not guaranteed by law. In fact, MSI participants agreed, information obtained from international sources is restricted. Also, obtaining information from government offices is difficult, if not impossible. In addition to that, explained journalist Noman Benotman, "Journalists have to go to certain offices to ask for information, but this was not part of our culture until today. Journalists usually wait until someone gives them the information." Media outlets and journalists get the majority of their information from the official news agency, the Jamahiriya News Agency (JANA).

MSI participants agreed that journalists are not allowed to enter the profession or practice their craft unless they are willing to work entirely within the framework established by the government. This means completely avoiding criticism of the regime, government branches, and individuals in the regime. Employees of media outlets are viewed as government employees and are expected to conduct themselves accordingly. "Of course, journalists are not allowed to practice journalism in the country unless they are hand-chosen and appointed to work in the government's media outlets," said Fadeel Al Ameen. "Some Libyan journalists started their careers working for non-Libyan media outlets, and were being harassed, threatened, and sometimes killed."

Foreign media have a very limited presence in Libya. Only Al Jazeera, The Associated Press, BBC, Agence France-Presse, and a handful of other major news companies have offices in Tripoli. These are required to register with the Foreign Press Office, and their coverage is closely scrutinized. Foreign journalists have difficulty obtaining visas to travel to Libya.

OBJECTIVE 2: PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISM

Libya Objective Score: 0.63 / 4.00

The media professionals contributing to the MSI assessment considered journalism professionalism essentially non-existent because the media are completely controlled by the government and exist primarily as a propaganda mechanism to promote the viewpoints of the Qadhafi regime. "There is no professional journalism," said Noman Benotman. "For people to produce professional news and information about our day-to-day lives they need at least a margin of freedom to do this—but this margin does not exist."

In the same way, the only professional standards practiced by Libyan journalists are those that demonstrate their loyalty to the government. One MSI participant noted that this is one of the main causes of self-censorship in the Libyan media sector. Another stated that even though censorship is a common practice at media outlets, self-censorship is a far more powerful force. Salem Al Hasi explained that "journalists not only fear losing their jobs but losing their lives, as in the case of Dhaif Al Ghazal."

Media cover key events and issues only to the extent that they reflect the government's viewpoint. These events primarily are speeches, ceremonies, and some social events. Salem Al Hasi noted, "Even international events are covered within the views of the regime as sometimes anti-West, pan-Arab, pan-Islamist, pan-African, or as of late, anti-terrorism—whatever the

regime's current whim is. In other words, whatever the regime's current national or international agenda is, international events are broadcast within that view."

Noman Benotman said every article published on the multi-billion-dollar government project to build a man-made river in Libya has praised the efforts of the regime in the construction process. "How come Libyan journalists have not generated a single article judging the project? This project affects the whole nation. There are no articles after more than 10 years of debate. Journalists are itching to do an analysis of the project—especially regarding how it affects the environment of the area. But no one can write about it. For 15 years, Libyans have been taxed for it. No one can ask where their tax money is going and how it is being spent."

Pay levels for journalists are fairly low, and many struggle to make ends meet. However, corruption is not a threat in the traditional sense since media are all completely under government control.

"There is no professional journalism," said Noman Benotman. "For people to produce professional news and information about our day-to-day lives they need at least a margin of freedom to do this—but this margin does not exist."

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).

However, one MSI participant explained that the Internet is not free: “Although Internet cafés are everywhere, security agencies do keep close surveillance on them. Therefore, surfing the Internet is not free of fear of repercussions for visiting sites the regime does not approve of.”

MSI participants described entertainment programming as limited, of poor quality, and used to bolster government propaganda. Most Libyan media outlets do not have adequate or up-to-date technical facilities for producing and distributing news. Fadeel Al

Ameen explained, “Even though we are talking about government-owned and -operated media, and even though Libyan government is not poor, the quality of the finished product tends to be bad, be it broadcast programs or print media. The layout and design of newspapers are all substandard. Lack of equipment and training has impacted everything from the gathering and production to the distribution of information.”

Specialized reporting in Libya is extremely limited in scope and again focused on the perceived successes of the regime. Each region of Libya has a newspaper for that district, but that does not mean that local news is any different in theme from national news coverage. While some MSI participants indicated that investigative journalism does not exist in Libya, another mentioned one program called “For Your Information” that is broadcast via a government-run satellite station. The show tackles corruption and discusses news but is hosted by a member of the Revolutionary Committee, said the MSI participant. Otherwise, the *Kol Al-Fonun* newspaper focuses on sports and arts, *Al-Biyt* covers family issues, and *Al-Amal* is a monthly magazine for children. All three publications are issued by the state-run Libyan Press Corporation.

OBJECTIVE 3: PLURALITY OF NEWS SOURCES

Libya Objective Score: 0.46 / 4.00

Libya features four main daily newspapers—*Al-Shames*, *Al-Jamahiriya*, *Al-Fajr Al-Jadid*, and *Al-Zahf Al-Akhdar*. The first three publications are produced by the Libyan Press Corporation (LPC), and the fourth is generated by the Revolutionary Committees Movement, the ideological group in charge of promoting and maintaining the tenets of the Qadhafi regime. *Al-Jamihiriya Al-Yom* is

an exclusively Web-based paper, while all 26 districts (sha’biyyat) produce a newspaper or magazine. *The Tripoli Post* is an English-language weekly publication. There are assorted other newspapers and magazines, including some generated by professional associations, research facilities, and larger companies.

MSI participants noted that because the LPC and the Revolutionary Committees produce virtually all print publications in Libya and no private media are allowed, people have access to only one type of news and information, and therefore there is no plurality of news media. This is similar for the broadcast market, totally dominated by the Libyan Jamahiriya Broadcasting Corporation, which tightly controls content by limiting programming to praise of the government.

All participants agreed that Libyans are increasingly accessing news and information via satellite broadcasts and the Internet. Pan-Arab satellite stations, such as Al Jazeera and Al Arabiya, are very popular. Internet cafés have proliferated in major cities, and despite government efforts to block certain websites, citizens do have access to an increasingly broad array of information sources.

However, one MSI participant explained that the Internet is not free: “Although Internet cafés are everywhere, security agencies do keep close surveillance

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.

on them. Therefore, surfing the Internet is not free of fear of repercussions for visiting sites the regime does not approve of." Arab Press Freedom Watch issued a statement in 2005 condemning the Libyan government for blocking a London-based website called Libya Al-Youm (Libya Today). According to the international organization, the website was also hacked and forced to shut down for several days. It is this combination of internal and external controls that creates serious difficulties for Libyan citizens to inform themselves.

MSI members did mention that Saif Al Islam Qadhafi, the son of Colonel Qadhafi, has expressed a desire to create new independent, private media and allow more foreign media access to the Libyan market. However, participants also expressed skepticism, saying promises have been made before with no progress to date. Nevertheless, Qadhafi's son has pushed for the formation of a new media company called September 1 that would launch a new satellite channel in 2007. The company would also reportedly build a printing house that would allow uncensored Western publications to be produced.

The only news agency in Libya is the government-run Jamahiriya News Agency (JANA). According to its own website, the agency was founded in 1964, has a staff of 300, and features 10 overseas offices. It is also linked to local offices in the various sha'biyyat. Furthermore, as part of Qadhafi's plan to become a major actor on the African continent, JANA indicates it is tied to a number of pan-African news organizations, such as the Pan-African News Agency. There are no independent news agencies in Libya.

No independent media within Libya exist to produce their own news programs. However, MSI participants indicated that non-Libyan media are accessed whenever possible for news and information. According to Fadeel Al Ameen, "The Libyan people depend on non-Libyan news sources, such as Arabic newspapers and satellite channels, as well as non-Arabic media like BBC, Radio Monaco, and German radio. Of course, the Libyan government censors all incoming media as much as it can. Some Arabic newspapers have been banned altogether. Others are dealt with on an issue-by-issue basis depending on their content." Despite attempts at blocking foreign media from broadcasting into Libya, interested citizens do try to find the means to listen to the BBC Arabic Service or watch the US-funded Al-Hurra channel, interviewees said. During the Benghazi riots in early 2006, when a number of demonstrators were killed, Al-Hurra was an important source of information, noted Mohamed Eljahmi.

Media are all owned by the Libyan state, and Libyans are well aware of this fact. Comparing various Libyan news sources will not result in a comprehensive or objective view of events. Salem Al Hasi noted, "If transparency means that people can judge the objectivity of the news, there is no transparency in Libya. The media presents the views of the regime and even covers social events within the ideology of the regime, specifically Qadhafi's green book."

The Libyan regime does not recognize minority or religious groups, so minority-language information sources do not exist. In fact, Libyans are referred to in most media as simply "citizens," thereby allowing any social diversity to be completely avoided.

OBJECTIVE 4: BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

Libya Objective Score: 0.09 / 4.00

Since media outlets are government-run, they are not operated as professional or profit-generating businesses, according to the MSI participants. In other words, as long as they are reliable mouthpieces of the Qadhafi regime, they do not need to generate revenue since they are owned and operated by the state. The Libyan Press Corporation (LPC) is the state-run company that publishes most of the periodicals in Libya. The LPC is managed by a board of directors and is directly answerable to the Public Institute for Jamahiriya Media.

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.

Salem Al Hasi noted, "In Libya, it is known that there is no such thing as fair reporting or free speech if it does not support the revolution. Individuals entering the field of journalism understand that if they are not willing to support the regime in their journalistic endeavors, they will not have employment opportunities."

All newspaper managers within the LPC group of publications are hand-picked, and editorial content is strictly controlled, the participants agreed.

According to the Human Rights Watch report for Libya, LPC managers and editors stated that a large portion of their company's income comes

from advertising—with only a small portion coming from government support. However, MSI interviewees disputed these claims. Noman Benotman said, "Media get subsidized by the government. They are controlled by the ministry of culture and media. All of them are part of the ministry. Advertising began three years ago through television ads. From time to time there are some ads, but it is insignificant—peanuts."

The report also indicated that due to a shortage of paper supply, the print runs of the major state-funded newspapers, such as *Al-Shames* and *Al-Jamahiriya*, were down to 4,000 and 5,000 copies per day, respectively. But this was contradicted by an MSI participant, "Here's the problem. *Al-Fajr al-Jadid* had a 70,000–80,000 circulation in 1975, but now it is 2,000. Journalists have said the circulation dropped due to the low quality of the articles. Nobody cares, reads, or gives a damn. These papers do not have the professional workforce needed. There is no training. People do you a favor to get you a job at a paper."

With the advertising market still nascent and circulation levels low, government financing keeps media outlets in operation. At the same time, market research is nonexistent in Libya, as the interests of the audiences are completely secondary to the interests of the regime. Broadcast ratings and circulation figures are not produced by any independent organization. Such data is not made regularly available by the LPC periodicals or by the Libyan Jamahiriya Broadcasting Corporation.

OBJECTIVE 5: SUPPORTING INSTITUTIONS

Libya Objective Score: 0.23 / 4.00

There are no Libyan trade associations that operate outside of the framework of the Jamahiriya. The Libyan Journalists Union is a government-supported group, as is the Writers Union. The heads of both organizations serve as directors on the board of the LPC. MSI participants indicate that neither union provides services to journalists and media professionals. In fact, Noman Benotman explained, "The problem is that the Revolutionary Committees run the unions. Most journalists are not members because if you are a member 'they have you.' The unions are more than just useless; they cause you harm."

There are no local nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) that support free speech or media, interviewees said. However, Arab Press Freedom Watch did note that the Libyan Forum for Culture and Arts was active in conducting events, such as a 2005 conference on freedom of expression. But APFW also described government attempts to shut down this organization. MSI interviewees did not hesitate to point out that forming or belonging to an independent union or political party is a crime punishable by death. Ostensibly, this sentence could be extended to those who founded local grassroots organizations. The only

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.

NGO-style groups are run by the government. For example, the Qadhafi Foundation is an organization run by Saif Al Islam Qadhafi that has previously advocated for changes to the media laws.

Journalism degree programs are offered at Libyan universities. Traditional curricula are available, and classes can feature the basics of ethical reporting. However, journalism graduates are faced with a difficult reality. Salem Al Hasi noted, "In Libya, it is known that there is no such thing as fair reporting or free speech if it does not support the revolution. Individuals entering the field of journalism understand that if they are not willing to support the regime in their journalistic endeavors, they will not have employment opportunities." Students seeking graduate degrees in journalism may study abroad in countries such as Egypt. But many of these students have no desire to return to Libya to practice journalism, and the only other option is an academic position.

Short-term training options are extremely limited in Libya. One MSI participant said that the first such training program took place only in 2005 in Benghazi. The session covered news and information-gathering, technology, and other key issues.

Currently, all printing houses in Libya are run by the government. However, Qadhafi's son has been expressing interest in privatizing part of the media sector, including the printing facilities. This privatization process has yet to begin, however.

Some progress has been made in terms of establishing private distribution channels. In May 2005, the state-run Ad-dar Al-Jamahiriya for Publishing, Distribution and Advertising company closed down. It had previously handled all the distribution for Libyan newspapers and magazines. In its place, newspapers have been trying to build out their own distribution networks.

MSI Participants

Due to the closed media environment in Libya, information for this chapter was collected from media professionals outside of Libya through an e-mail survey, interviews, and extensive research. This chapter therefore provides a summary of the state of media in Libya.

Mohamed Eljahmi, Libyan-American democracy activist, USA

Salem A. Salem Al Hasi, writer and human-rights activist, USA

Fadeel Al Ameen, editor-in-chief, *Hi Magazine*, USA

Noman Benotman, writer, UK

Mohamed Buisier, journalist, USA

LIBYA AT A GLANCE

GENERAL

- **Population:** 5.7 million (2004 est., World Bank)
- **Capital city:** Tripoli
- **Ethnic groups (% of population):** Berber and Arab 97%; Greek, Maltese, Italian, Egyptian, Pakistani, Turk, Indian, Tunisian 3% (www.nationsencyclopedia.com, 2006)
- **Religions (% of population):** Sunni Muslim 97% (www.nationsencyclopedia.com, 2006)
- **Languages (% of population):** Arabic (official), Italian, English; all are widely understood in the major cities (www.nationsencyclopedia.com, 2006)
- **GDP (purchasing power parity):** \$29.1 billion (2004 est., World Bank)
- **GNI per capita (purchasing power parity):** \$4,450 (2004 est., World Bank)
- **Literacy rate (% of population):** male 91.8%, female 70.7% (2004 est., UNICEF)
- **President or top authority:** Revolutionary Leader Col. Muammar Abu Minyar Al Qadhafi (since September 1, 1969)
- **Next scheduled elections:** N/A

MEDIA-SPECIFIC

- **Newspaper circulation statistics:** Total: Approx. 68,128 (pressreference.com) Largest paper: *Al-Fajr Al-Jadid* (The New Dawn): 40,000 circulation
- **Number of print outlets, radio stations, television stations:** six dailies, handful of other print media (Human Rights Watch, No. 18)
- **Radio stations:** 24; television stations: 12 (pressreference.com)
- **Broadcast ratings:** Al-Jamahiriyah TV (highest-rated)
- **Internet users:** 7,500 (2004 est., Internet Arab World)
- **News agency:** Jamahiriya News Agency (JANA)
- **Advertising revenue:** N/A

MEDIA SUSTAINABILITY INDEX: LIBYA

