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JORDAN

On one level, this Middle Eastern kingdom appears to score high points when considering media freedom. But on the ground, the authorities maintain their hold over the official and semi-official media. Furthermore, although Jordan's media climate experienced no dramatic change in 2009, the government began to show signs of nerves over the expanding influence of online media and other private media outlets. The mushrooming websites, blogs and private FM radios—which tend to critique the government more boldly than traditional media—have not escaped the authorities' attention.

While many websites lack professionalism and ethical standards, MSI panelists said, the traditional media have turned into monotonous mouthpieces of the authorities. Because the people have little voice in almost all official radio and television stations and papers (except for *Al Arab Al Yawm*, generally considered Jordan's only independent daily), they tend to turn to sometimes unruly and defamatory websites as their major source of information. In 2010, the government responded by introducing a tough law on Internet and electronic news. Instead of giving more freedom to the traditional media, the government seems bent on quieting online media outlets.

The eighth annual survey conducted by the Center for Defending Freedom of Journalists in 2009 explored the developing role of online and new media in Jordan, along with developments surrounding a professional code of ethics and efforts to influence journalists, and the effects of a new code of conduct set by the government. Overall, the survey revealed a dampening of the optimism of recent years that accompanied royal directives in support of media freedoms—such as the king's assurances that the practice of detaining journalists would be banned. Yet journalists still face this risk under the penal code, and they continue to endure other forms of pressure, both overt and subtle, that impede their work.

JORDAN AT A GLANCE

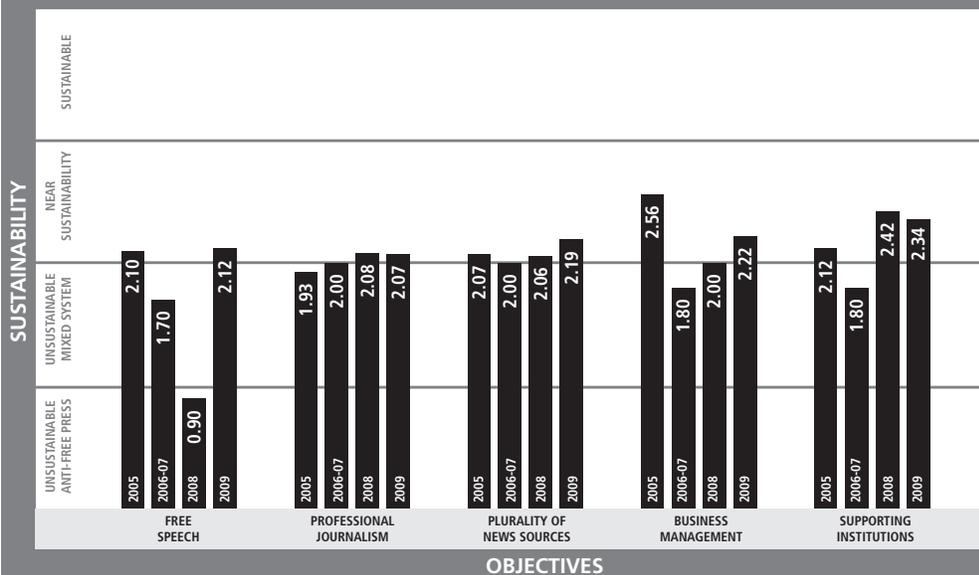
GENERAL

- > **Population:** 6,407,085 (July 2010 est., *CIA World Factbook*)
- > **Capital city:** Amman
- > **Ethnic groups (% of population):** Arab 98%, Circassian 1%, Armenian 1% (*CIA World Factbook*)
- > **Religions (% of population):** Sunni Muslim 92%, Christian 6% (majority Greek Orthodox, but some Greek and Roman Catholics, Syrian Orthodox, Coptic Orthodox, Armenian Orthodox, and Protestant denominations), other 2% (several small Shia Muslim and Druze populations) (2001 est., *CIA World Factbook*)
- > **Languages:** Arabic (official), English widely understood among upper and middle classes (*CIA World Factbook*)
- > **GNI (2009-Atlas):** \$23,66 billion (World Bank Development Indicators, 2010)
- > **GNI per capita (2009-PPP):** \$5,730 (World Bank Development Indicators, 2010)
- > **Literacy rate:** 89.9% (male: 95.1%, female: 84.7% (2003 est., *CIA World Factbook*)
- > **President or top authority:** King Abdallah II (since February 7, 1999)

MEDIA SPECIFIC

- > **Number of active print outlets, radio stations, television stations:** Print: 7 Arabic daily newspapers, 1 English daily newspaper, 25 weekly, 10 magazines; Radio Stations: 22; Television Stations: 1 public and 3 private
- > **Newspaper circulation statistics:** Top 3 by circulation: *Al Rai* (50,000); *Al Ghad* (45,000-50,000), *Ad-Dustour* (30,000)
- > **Broadcast ratings:** N/A
- > **News agencies:** Jordan News Agency/PETRA
- > **Annual advertising revenue in media sector:** N/A
- > **Internet usage:** 1.64 million (2008 est., *CIA World Factbook*)

MEDIA SUSTAINABILITY INDEX: JORDAN



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

Jordan Objective Score: 2.12

The Jordanian constitution guarantees freedom of speech and the press. Article 15 of the constitution states: "The state shall guarantee freedom of opinion. Every Jordanian shall be free to express his opinion by speech, in writing, or by means of photographic representation and other forms of expression, provided that such does not violate the law."

But this right has yet to be translated into balanced supporting laws, the MSI panelists said. According to Salameh Daraawi, a leading columnist and head of the economic department at *Al Arab Al Yawm*, laws exist, but they are not enforced—and official entities exercise indirect over control media in the kingdom. Walid Hosni, a veteran editor at *Al Arab Al Yawm*, echoed Daraawi's view.

Twenty-four statutes regulate the media in Jordan, chief among them the Press and Publication Law and the Penal Code. In 2007, amendments to the Press and Publications Law eliminated imprisonment as a punishment for violations. The amendments, however, replaced imprisonment with heavy fines up to \$40,000. Although the king's declaration that "no journalist should be imprisoned" helped improve immunity for journalists, they still face the risk of detention under the Penal Code: provisions in the Penal Code still allow authorities to detain, prosecute, and imprison journalists for publishing material that damages national unity, harms Jordan's

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.

According to Bader Agha, a presenter at Rotana radio, the preferential treatment for public media is obvious regarding radio stations in terms of advertising shares, clean radio frequencies, and tax obligations.

relations with other states, instigates sectarianism or racism, insults religions, or undermines confidence in the national currency. Revealing information classified as a state secret is similarly punishable.

Thus, the panelists agreed that the Penal Code still restricts the freedom of speech, albeit indirectly. They argued that the authorities might cite any of the 24 media laws as a pretext to detain any journalist. Furthermore, additional restrictive measures might be on the way. The Lower House of Parliament, whose relations with the media soured in 2009 to the brink of confrontation, accused the media of damaging the image of the Lower House of Parliament in the public eye and drafted a law designed to control the news websites. The House was dissolved at the end of 2009, but the newly elected body (elected in November, 2010) has joined ranks with the government in plans to introduce further restrictive measures against the media, according to recent remarks by legislators and officials.

The panelists also underlined concerns about the lack of an independent regulator, noting that media cases end up in civil or military courts. They urged instead for the creation of an independent specialized commission to regulate the flow of news from at least 150 websites and newspapers across the country.

According to Freedom House, all publications in Jordan must obtain a license, and the Audiovisual Commission (AVC) is tasked with licensing and regulating private radio and television stations. AVC granted a license to ATV, set to be Jordan's first private television station, in 2007, but it pulled the license. As of the end of 2009, ATV had not yet aired, Freedom House reported. Freedom House also noted that in 2009, AVC rejected license applications from 13 private radio stations, and that journalists perceive favoritism against private outlets in the licensing process.¹

As for physical attacks or brutality against journalists, panelists consider them very rare in Jordan. However, intimidation, harassment, and detentions of journalists

¹ *Freedom of the Press 2010*. Freedom House, p. 147. <http://www.freedomhouse.org/uploads/pfs/371.pdf>

continue, with a growing number of journalists reporting exposure to pressure, according to the Center for Defending Freedom survey.

The most common form of pressure journalists report is the withholding of information, followed by canceling news and articles for unprofessional reasons, threats, and preventing satellite channels from broadcasting. One percent of journalists surveyed reported assaults.² The Committee to Protect Journalists reported one such attack in early January: riot police attacked journalists from Al Jazeera, beating them with their batons, and Yassir Abu Hilala, the bureau chief, required stitches.³ The journalists were covering a demonstration in Amman against Israeli military operations in the Gaza Strip.

In terms of detentions, the Center for Defending Freedom of Journalists survey reported that eight journalists were detained briefly in 2009. While just a slight increase from 2008, this contradicted the directives of King Abdullah II against the detention of journalists.⁴

The panelists agreed that the law does not grant preferential treatment to public media, radio and television stations, as well as the Jordan National News Agency (Petra). But in practice, they believe that state-owned media do receive preferential treatment, and editorial independence at these media outlets is compromised.

According to Bader Agha, a presenter at Rotana radio, the preferential treatment for public media is obvious regarding radio stations in terms of advertising shares, clean radio frequencies, and tax obligations. Haitham Shibli, manager of Farah Ennas (another private FM radio station) said that although his radio is exempt from paying taxes, as it is owned by an NGO (The Jordanian Hashemite Fund for Development), other commercial radios pay taxes.

In 2009, the government adopted a code of conduct streamlining the government-media relationship to secure more independence for the latter. The government endorsed the code in December 2010, and pledged not to interfere with the job of the press and to end practices that seek to win over the loyalty of journalists and media outlets. Under the charter, "the government is not supposed to appoint any journalist or media employee to any public position," including as a spokesperson or media consultant, or pay temporary or permanent allowances for journalistic services.

A few "blessed" journalists, however, continued to have such privileges by virtue of their proximity to the authorities. Saleh Gallab, for example, was appointed chairman of the Television and Radio Board of Directors, without giving away his op-ed corner in *Al-Rai*, the widest circulation daily.

In terms of libel laws, as noted above, the Press and Publications Law still does not bar imprisonment of a journalist found guilty of certain violations, including any form of defamation, vilification, or abuse of any religion protected under the constitution. (Islam is the state religion, and around four percent of Jordanians are Christians with full religious rights.) The second article includes any "defamation of prophets, whether in writings, illustrations, pictures, symbolism, or any other means." Any action that represents an insult to people's religious sentiment or beliefs, or instigates sectarianism or racism is the third violation, and the fourth covers slander or libel against individuals or their personal freedoms, as well as spreading false information or rumors about them. Needless to say, these articles are ambiguous and magistrates might interpret the content as they want.

In one libel case in 2009, prominent writer and columnist Khalid Mahadin was sued for contempt of the Lower House of Parliament after publishing an article on a local electronic newspaper. In his article, "For God's Sake, Abdullah," published on Khaberni.com in February 2009, the 63-year-old writer urged King Abdullah to dissolve the parliament, criticizing the performance of the Lower House and what he called "unlawful privileges given to deputies." Mahadin was detained during the court proceedings, but cleared of charges of slandering the Lower House of Parliament, which was dissolved in November 2009.

Panelists feel that not all journalists or media outlets have the same access to public information. Despite the introduction of an access-to-information law, the authorities still cite a 1971 martial law on state secrets, which bans the dissemination of any news deemed "classified and/or harmful to the state." Furthermore, panelists noted, media close to or owned by the government receive preferential access to breaking stories and information. In Hosni's view, the Access to Information Law restricts, rather than enhances, access to information. In a bid to improve their ability to access information, reporters launched a campaign under the title "*Faze'tko*" ("Support Us"), which received the backing of civil society institutions across the country. The barriers, however, were not eliminated.

² Center for Defending the Freedom of Journalists, "Media Freedom Status in Jordan, 2009," p.22 <http://www.cdfj.org/look/PDFs/Media%20Freedom%20Status%20in%20Jordan%202009%20EN.pdf>

³ "Riot Police Assault Al-Jazeera Crew in Jordan." Committee to Protect Journalists, February 2, 2009. Available at: <http://cpj.org/2009/02/riot-police-assault-al-jazeera-crew-in-jordan.php>

⁴ Center for Defending the Freedom of Journalists, *IBID*, p.14-15

Freedom House noted that although all citizens have the right to access information, and complain to the Information Council if a request is denied, there were no registered complaints in 2009.⁵

The local papers are not specifically restricted from reprinting and/or using foreign news sources in preparing their news reports. According to Hosni, however, journalists reprinting an article from foreign media might court trouble depending on its content. Still, Jordan's media outlets enjoy relatively open access to various regional and international news sources, including tickers of almost all international news agencies as well as websites, Facebook, YouTube, and other electronic sources.

Entry into the journalism profession is unhindered in most cases, except that joining the Jordanian Press Association (JPA) can be restrictive—despite some recent efforts to open up membership. Under the Press Association Law, media outlets are barred from hiring journalists who are not members of JPA, and people may not refer to themselves as journalists unless they belong to JPA. But this condition is ignored in many cases, the panelists added.

In 2010, the JPA Council proposed new amendments to the Association's law. Under the amendments, journalism graduates who wish to become JPA members must at least hold a college diploma, while non-journalism students should have a BA degree; a previous clause allowing *Tawjihi* (secondary school) graduates to join the JPA was canceled. The draft also opened membership to employees in the audiovisual media, both in the public and private sectors, and online media personnel, provided they specialize in news reporting and journalism. JPA President Abdul Wahab Zgheilat told the Jordan News Agency, Petra, that the amendments are meant to expand the JPA membership base and ensure higher-quality journalism by setting minimum academic qualifications. "The new amendments are designed to keep pace with developments in the media sector and expand the umbrella of the JPA to include workers in radio and television news departments, as well as address all gaps in the current law," he said. Under the amendments, Jordanian journalists working abroad will be able to become JPA members, in addition to journalism graduates who do not work in the media sector. In addition, the JPA's share from advertising revenues in public and private media institutions was increased from one percent to two percent. Finally, the amendments suggest that JPA members, instead of the ten-member Council, elect the deputy president in post-elections meetings.

⁵ Freedom House, *Ibid*, p. 148.

Raed Awwad, Al Jazeera online correspondent in Amman, noted that no restrictions are imposed on journalists, but foreign correspondents are expected to obtain a license from the authorities to shoot video or take photos in the streets.

OBJECTIVE 2: PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISM

Jordan Objective Score: 2.07

MSI panelists agreed that reporting in Jordan still lacks professionalism and is heavily biased, especially when it comes to sourcing and accuracy. They feel that the prevalence of low professional standards is due to the government's influence, backward academic teachings, and the absence of continuous in-house training.

"No one criticizes an outlet for its bad product, or commends another for its skillful reporting," Omar Assaf, a senior editor with *Al Rai* daily and the Amman correspondent for the Lebanese daily *Annahar*, said, adding that this contributes to the overall weakness of the media in Jordan. Ironically, he added, a professionally run newspaper, such as *Al Arab Al Yawm*, has more limited readership than other papers that lack professionalism, such as *Al Rai*.

Panelists also agreed that the large number of existing media outlets and news websites lowers professionalism, as many of those working in some outlets are not journalists. Others practice poor forms of journalism, working for local "yellow" weeklies, which flourished in the 1990s, or tabloid style papers.

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).

“No one criticizes an outlet for its bad product, or commends another for its skillful reporting,” Omar Assaf, a senior editor with Al Rai daily and the Amman correspondent for the Lebanese daily Annahar, said, adding that this contributes to the overall weakness of the media in Jordan.

To address concerns about journalistic ethics, the JPA introduced a code of ethics in 2003, prohibiting journalists from accepting presents, financial or material gifts, or any aid of any kind without previous approval of its council. “Still, not all journalists abide by the code of ethics,” said Hani Hazaimah, a senior reporter at *The Jordan Times* English daily.

The 2009 Center for Defending Freedom of Journalists survey revealed that 21 percent of journalists polled admitted that they have been subjected to bribery attempts, while 57 percent said they heard about journalists who were subjected to such attempts. According to the survey’s authors, “The poll revealed that journalists believe that some negative phenomena, such as accepting gifts, blackmailing to obtain financial gains, accepting bribes, writing paid news and reports, in addition to favoritism/nepotism (*wasta*) are present.”⁶

The Center for Defending Freedom of Journalists survey findings also agreed that self-censorship is nearly universal among journalists: 94 percent of the polled journalists responded that they exercise self-censorship—treading especially carefully with any topic related to religion or national security.⁷ The panelists believe that estimate sounds accurate, given their experience.

Key events relating to the state and the king are covered in concert by all public and private media, according to panelists. But issues such as prisoners’ abuse, public unrest and human rights remain absent in pro-government media outlets, such as radio and television. Other outlets, such as *Al-Rai* and *Addustour*, downplay the anti-government criticism, in favor of illogical pro-government praise.

Concerning salary scales, the panelists feel that low wages are partly responsible for the ethical lapses seen in the press; Hosni said that journalists in Jordan are paid next to nothing, which sets some of them on a path to corruption.

⁶ Center for Defending Freedom of Journalists, *Ibid*, p.13

⁷ Center for Defending the Freedom of Journalists, *Ibid*, p.17.

As for equipment and facilities, even state-owned media institutions are equipped with the latest technology, but they do not provide training to the employees, according to majority panelists. The purchase of state-of-the-art equipment does not improve the state of the media without real investment in human resources, they argued. Hosni, however, pointed out that not all media institutions own the latest technology.

OBJECTIVE 3: PLURALITY OF NEWS

Jordan Objective Score: 2.19

Panelists concluded that the majority of Jordanian citizens have access to international, regional, and local news resources, including regional Arab news networks such as the Doha-based Al Jazeera and the Saudi-funded Dubai-based Al Arabiya, as well as western news outlets such as BBC and CNN. Unfiltered Internet also provides Jordanians with a pluralistic media banquet, and bloggers and websites have become the main source of news for information-hungry young Jordanians. Much of the news is exaggerated, panelists said, but the majority of Jordanians with access to the Internet trust the news websites more than traditional local media.

There are seven daily Arabic newspapers and one English daily newspaper in Jordan—including *Al Sabeel*, published by the Islamic Action Front Party, which joined the scene in 2009, adding new opposition color to the media spectrum. According to Assaf, there are more than 140 local news

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.

websites across Jordan. "Although these websites essentially copy the same news, they are able to reach more viewers and readers than the print media," he explained.

In Amman over the past two years, private websites and blogs ballooned. The 2009 Jordan Media Survey (conducted by the USAID-funded Jordan Media Strengthening Program, in conjunction with IREX) revealed that over half of Jordanian Internet users rely on news websites. Independent news websites like Ammonnews.net, Sarraynews.com, Marayanews, and Rum Online attract a large number of Jordanians. Many people post comments on these sites, which often turn into lively platforms for debate. Mohammad Hawamdeh, co-founder of Khaberni.com, attributes high readership for the news websites to this interactivity. "Readers have the ability to comment on the news and express their opinions, unlike the state print media," he noted.

But the comments from readers sometimes stir heated debates on the Internet, especially when ethnicity comes into play, pitting native Jordanians against their compatriots of Palestinian origin. The authorities generally rely on website publishers to filter incoming comments. In 2010, the government also adopted a Cyber Crimes Law, which restricts the freedom of speech on the Internet. The law stirred opposition by website owners, which prompted the government to cancel one of its most controversial articles—Article 8. This article stipulated that "anyone who intentionally sends or disseminates data or information via the Internet or any information system that involves defamation, contempt, or slander of any person shall be fined an amount not less than JOD 100 (\$142) and not exceeding JOD 2,000 (\$2,831)."

Overall, however, panelists agreed that access to media outlets is not obstructed for most Jordanians. Newspapers are distributed across Jordan, including rural areas, and are sold at slightly more than \$.35 each. Pan-Arab papers such as *Al-Hayat*, *Al Sharq Al Awsat*, and *Al Quds Al Arabi* are also sold in Jordan at nearly \$.50 per issue. Other foreign publications also exist, but their audience is limited to English-speaking Jordanians, and their high price tags remain a barrier. But, Hosni pointed out that not all Jordanians have access to news websites, as the Internet penetration in villages and remote areas is far lower than in Amman. He explained that they resort to satellite channels as the main source of information.

The government does monitor activity, however, and in 2010, the government blocked access to a total of 40 websites, including local news websites, from public sector Internet service, claiming that public servants waste hours surfing these sites and neglecting their duties in service of the public's interest. For the most part, the government does not

Mohammad Hawamdeh, co-founder of Khaberni.com, attributes high readership for the news websites to this interactivity. "Readers have the ability to comment on the news and express their opinions, unlike the state print media," he noted.

restrict Internet use outside the workplace, except the New York-based *Arab Times*, run by Osama Fawzi—according to panelists, it continues to be the only blocked news website in the kingdom.

As noted in last year's MSI, the only news agency in Jordan is the government-run Petra. Although there are no Jordanian independent news agencies, international news agencies are permitted to operate freely in Jordan.

Regarding coverage of social issues, last year's MSI pointed to some progress in recent years. For example, journalists now cover previously taboo issues such as honor killings, the sexual abuse of children, and domestic violence. Minority issues (religion and ethnic subjects), however, are neglected; panelists noted that there have been no applications to start media focused on minority issues or any minority group (Christians, Circasians, Chechens, etc.). However, private clubs run by those minorities issue periodicals covering their special activities.

OBJECTIVE 4: BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

Jordan Objective Score: 2.22

Although Jordanian media outlets are relatively efficient, profit-minded businesses, they still face a number of challenges to sustainability. Among these challenges are the tax and custom fees imposed on newsprint. There is a 16 percent tax on advertising sales, in addition to the one percent paid to the Jordan Press Association out of advertising revenues, and one percent paid to support the Culture Fund affiliated with the Ministry of Culture. In 2008, the parliament endorsed an amendment to the Culture Law that imposes a five percent tax on advertising revenue. But, following a campaign led by media outlets and the JPA, this tax was reduced to one percent in 2009.

As last year's MSI noted, advertising income is the major source of sustenance for newspapers; cover prices cannot sustain newspaper operations. The Jordan chapter of the

Further, media outlets cannot depend on the government for advertising because it sometimes pressures its ministries not to advertise in media outlets that it dislikes.

International Advertising Association commented that a declining growth rate in advertising spending, which the media research company Ipsos-Stat reported in 2008, can be attributed to the instability of consumer spending patterns, the high cost of living, and the taxes on advertising.

Panelists also noted that, in some cases, the advertising institutions attempt to control content.

The panelists agreed that the government does not support independent media outlets with subsidies. Also, according to the new code of conduct, the government decided not to renew its subscriptions to all types of media, and will resort instead to direct purchases from the local market. Some of the panelists, including Daraawi, said that this is a harsh blow to some media, as the end of government subscriptions deprived some outlets of a major source of income.

Further, media outlets cannot depend on the government for advertising because it sometimes pressures its ministries not to advertise in media outlets that it dislikes. For his part, though, Awwad shared his view that this is not a bad development, as governments in some other countries finance private media institutions as a means to impose their agenda on these institutions.

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.

Some media hire firms, such as Ipsos-Stat, to measure audiences or conduct market research. Such information is used in strategic planning, marketing toolkits, etc. In addition, the Jordan Media Survey measures radio, television, and Internet audiences and preferences. According to panelists, studies conducted regarding the circulation, readership and viewership of media outlets are directed according to the needs of certain institutions.

OBJECTIVE 5: SUPPORTING INSTITUTIONS

Jordan Objective Score: 2.34

Panelists noted that there are no trade associations actively supporting the media industry in Jordan.

However, the JPA represents media professionals, including journalists, editors, and employees of the state-run news agency and newspapers owners. Established in 1953, this association includes some 1,000 members from the private and state media. The 1998 Jordan Press Association Law mandates membership for those who want to practice journalism, and journalists who practice journalism without joining the JPA are subject to penalties. Nevertheless, dozens of journalists are not members of the JPA.

Several NGOs in Jordan work in support of freedom of speech and media, and also provide short-term training programs for journalists, such as the Center for Defending the Freedom of Journalists, the Arab Women Media Center, Arab Reporters for Investigative Journalism, and Amman-Net. Funded in part by international donors and NGOs, they are independent of the government and their activities. The Center for Defending the Freedom of Journalists acts as a media watchdog; it issues

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.

an annual report on media freedoms; lobbies for media law reform; conducts workshops for members of parliament, legal experts, and journalists, and; provides volunteer lawyers to represent journalists.

During the discussions, panelists said that university graduates fail to live up to the standards of the profession, and lack proper training and qualifications. The Jordan News Agency, Petra, and the pro-government paper *Al Rai* have also started to provide in-house training to empower its staff. There are also international organizations that support media training initiatives for Jordanian journalists.

The government does not control the printing industry. In fact, most newspapers own their own presses, which they consider profit-generating assets. There is also one commercial printing press in the country. The weeklies and other papers without their own printing facilities are printed by one of these other presses.

Similarly, the government does not interfere in the distribution of newspapers. The private company Aramex is the country's only distributor of newspapers and magazines, although a few papers, including *Addustour* and *Al Arab Al Yawm*, have their own in-house distribution systems.

List of Panel Participants

Omar Assaf, senior editor, *Al Rai*, Amman

Mohammad Hawamdeh, Khabberni.com, Amman

Haitham Shibli, manager, Farah Ennas Radio, Amman

Bader Agha, presenter and producer, Rotana Radio, Amman

Hani Hazaimah, reporter, *Jordan Times*, Amman

Fateh Mansour, program manager, The Center for Defending Freedom of Journalists, Amman

Salameh Daraawi, columnist, *Al Arab Al Yawm*, Amman

Osama Sharif, writer, *Addustour*, Amman

Khetam Malkawi, reporter, *Jordan Times*, Amman

Moderator and Author

Saad Hatter, correspondent, BBC, Amman