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CHAD

Chad's political struggles continued through the past year, with several ups and downs. In May 2009, after months of increasing violence, Chad and Sudan signed an accord to normalize relations. Rebels based in Sudan's Darfur region launched another attack soon thereafter, and violence escalated for several months. Both sides met again in October to confirm their commitment to peace, but ongoing differences simmer. Meanwhile, Chad is hosting approximately 180,000 internally displaced people and 320,000 refugees from Darfur and the Central African Republic.

Following an attempted coup in 2008, the government cracked down on the press, passing Decree No. 5, a restrictive new press law that "increased the maximum penalty for false news and defamation to three years in prison, and the maximum penalty for insulting the president to five years. It also requires permission from both the prosecutor's office and the HCC [Higher Communication Council] to establish a newspaper."<sup>1</sup> Although the state of emergency was lifted, Decree No. 5 stands. Pressure from the authorities has driven many journalists into exile or hiding; other journalists cope with the threat of prison through self-censorship.

In addition to dealing with harassment and legal pressure, the independent media are feeling the strain of the difficult economic environment. Human rights and religious organizations sponsor many private radio outlets. Poor management practices, lack of revenue sources, and widespread corruption have placed the notion of sustainability seemingly out of reach for the time being, and many journalists say that they do not have the resources to do their jobs well. Salaries for journalists are low, and across all media sectors, much of the equipment dates back to the 1960s. Options to obtain a degree in journalism are extremely limited, and most journalists in Chad train abroad. Still, Chad has a number of private and community radio stations, and the government allows access to domestic and international sources, including the Internet, although geography and cost limit access to available news.

While Chad did not manage to move into the near-sustainability category of the 2009 MSI, it did creep closer. Scores for Objective 2 (professional standards of journalism) and Objective 5 (supporting institutions) showed some gains, reflecting the small windows opening for the media despite the restrictive legal environment for journalists and the strained financial climate.

<sup>1</sup> Freedom House: *Freedom of the Press 2009—Chad*. (Accessible online from this page: <http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=251&country=7584&year=2009>)

# CHAD AT A GLANCE

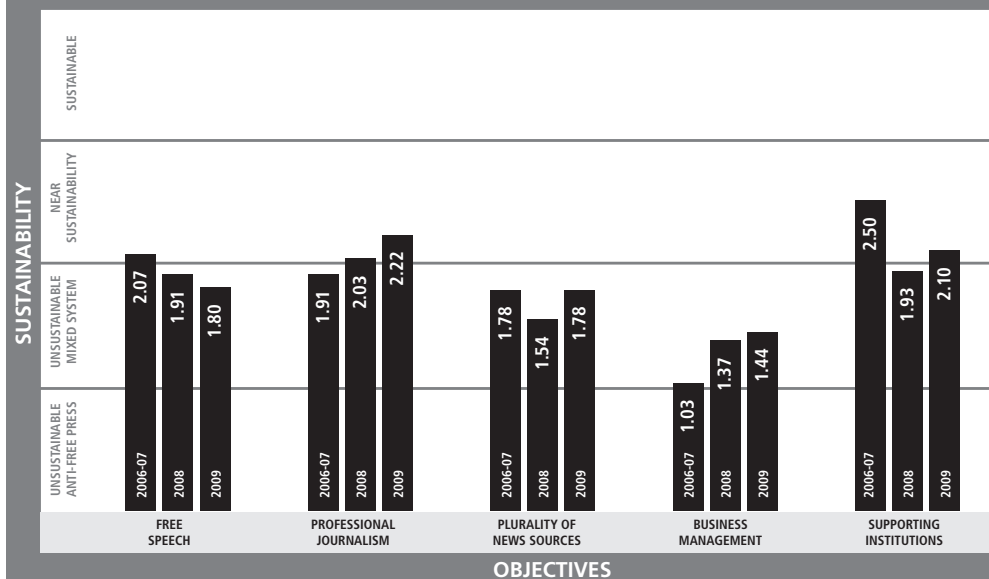
## GENERAL

- > **Population:** 10,329,208 (July 2010 est., *CIA World Factbook*)
- > **Capital city:** N'Djamena
- > **Ethnic groups (% of population):** Sara 27.7%, Arab 12.3%, Mayo-Kebbi 11.5%, Kanem-Bornou 9%, Ouaddai 8.7%, Hadjarai 6.7%, Tandjile 6.5%, Gorane 6.3%, Fitri-Batha 4.7%, other 6.4%, unknown 0.3% (1993 census, *CIA World Factbook*)
- > **Religions (% of population):** Muslim 53.1%, Catholic 20.1%, Protestant 14.2%, other 12.6% (1993 census, *CIA World Factbook*)
- > **Languages:** French (official), Arabic (official), Sara (in south), more than 120 different languages and dialects (*CIA World Factbook*)
- > **GNI (2009-Atlas):** \$6.865 billion (World Bank Development Indicators, 2010)
- > **GNI per capita (2009-PPP):** \$1,230 (World Bank Development Indicators, 2010)
- > **Literacy rate:** % (male %, female %) ( est., *CIA World Factbook*)
- > **President or top authority:** President Lt. Gen. Idriss Deby Itno (since December 4, 1990)

## MEDIA-SPECIFIC

- > **Number of active print outlets, radio stations, television stations:**  
Print: 1 daily newspapers, 4 other weeklies; Radio Stations: 6;  
Television Stations: 1
- > **Newspaper circulation statistics:** Top three by circulation: *Le Progres* (daily), *N'Djamena Hebdo* (private weekly), *L'Observateur* (private weekly)
- > **Broadcast ratings:** Top three radio stations: Radiodiffusion Nationale Tchadienne (state-owned), FM Liberte (private), La Voix du Paysan (Catholic station)
- > **News agencies:** Chad Press Agency
- > **Annual advertising revenue in media sector:** N/A
- > **Internet usage:** 130,000 (2008 est., *CIA World Factbook*)

### MEDIA SUSTAINABILITY INDEX: CHAD



#### Unsustainable, Anti-Free Press (0-1):

Country does not meet or only minimally meets objectives. Government and laws actively hinder free media development, professionalism is low, and media-industry activity is minimal.

#### Unsustainable Mixed System (1-2):

Country minimally meets objectives, with segments of the legal system and government opposed to a free media system. Evident progress in free-press advocacy, increased professionalism, and new media businesses may be too recent to judge sustainability.

#### Near Sustainability (2-3):

Country has progressed in meeting multiple objectives, with legal norms, professionalism, and the business environment supportive of independent media. Advances have survived changes in government and have been codified in law and practice. However, more time may be needed to ensure that change is enduring and that increased professionalism and the media business environment are sustainable.

#### Sustainable (3-4):

Country has media that are considered generally professional, free, and sustainable, or to be approaching these objectives. Systems supporting independent media have survived multiple governments, economic fluctuations, and changes in public opinion or social conventions.

## OBJECTIVE 1: FREEDOM OF SPEECH

### Chad Objective Score: 1.80

Chad's constitution and supporting laws set forth the legal and social standards for the freedom of speech. Enforcement is where the problem lies, explained the panelists. Assane Lame, a journalist with the National Radio (state-run) stated that Chad has legislation that upholds and encourages freedom of the press and access to public information. But a reality check reveals that journalists have trouble doing their job, he said. Other panelists stated that the laws are subject to the whims of the authorities, and disregard for legal and social standards is a serious problem. Maurienne Lobo, a member of the Union of Female Communication Professionals of Chad (known by its French acronym, UFPCT), said that corruption is eating away at society, making it very difficult for people to seek justice.

As the 2008 MSI reported, broadcast licensing is relatively fair. The HCC, made up of three media representatives and six political appointees, oversees the process. All types of media are subjected to the same procedures, and media creation is not unduly restricted. However, authorities exert control after the licenses are granted, closely overseeing the media's development, editorial content, and orientation.

The panelists cited excessive taxation as an obstacle to market entry. Print media must pay a VAT, while broadcast media outlets pay rent for their frequencies. The government'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.

*Hoinathy Gotngar Noubatan, of Radio Lotiko, said that journalists have been murdered and harassed, and newspaper offices have been vandalized, but the perpetrators—despite acting in broad daylight—are never arrested.*

failure to provide tax relief has driven media companies to increase their prices.

Hoinathy Gotngar Noubatan, of Radio Lotiko, said that journalists have been murdered and harassed, and newspaper offices have been vandalized, but the perpetrators—despite acting in broad daylight—are never arrested. Authorities confiscate motorcycles and reporting equipment regularly, and investigations generally lead nowhere. Another serious case in 2009 involved a Cameroonian journalist, Innocent Ebode, who penned an op-ed criticizing the environment minister's suggestion that President Delby deserved the Nobel Peace Prize. Later, the government effectively shut down production at his newspaper, using the excuse that the paper lacked an editor-in-chief. When Ebode returned to fight the order in December 2009, he was abducted from his home. Reports state that he is being held near the Cameroonian border.

Additionally, Amnesty International reported that journalists writing about Chad's long-simmering conflicts and rebellions have been called "enemies of the state." In February, the government revoked the accreditation of Sonia Roley, a Radio France International correspondent, forcing her to leave the country.<sup>2</sup> Freedom House also reported that according to IFEX, at least 10 journalists were forced to flee the country or go into hiding during 2009.<sup>3</sup>

Media-related legislation does grant state media privileges, and according to Noubatan, the ruling party gives preferential treatment to public media. Public journalists are controlled heavily by their supervisors—who are ever-fearful of angering the authorities. François Djekombe, a journalist with Radio FM Liberté (a private station owned by a group of human rights organizations), said that the Ministry of Communication keeps the National Radio news department under rigid control, and has taken over the state-run television channel completely. According to Marie Laguerre of National Radio, "Journalists working in the public media

<sup>2</sup> *Amnesty International 2009 Report—Chad*. <http://report2009.amnesty.org/en/regions/africa/chad> (Accessed October 5, 2010.)

<sup>3</sup> Freedom House: *Freedom of the Press 2009—Chad*. (Accessible online from this page: <http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=251&country=7584&year=2009>)

*Moreover, Noubatan noted, authorities are arresting journalists for slander and forcing journalists to reveal their sources. The penalties for libel can be severe, often resulting in fines and prison sentences.*

are not independent—they cannot speak their mind, and they practice a type of self-censorship.”

Moreover, Noubatan noted, authorities are arresting journalists for slander and forcing journalists to reveal their sources. The penalties for libel can be severe, often resulting in fines and prison sentences. The burden of proof lies with the defendant, and journalists face a judicial process that is far from independent. Lazare commented, “Journalists are being slapped with lawsuits all the time.”

Again this year, the panelists agreed that access to information remains an enormous obstacle for private and public media journalists alike. Jonathan Radoumadji said that although journalists are free to criticize and denounce, access to public information continues to be a myth in Chad, and the government remains wary of the private media. While the government gives state-run media greater access than private media, access depends on the budget of the media outlet and a journalist’s social connections. However, Chad has no laws restricting media access to international news and news sources.

Takaobi Edouard, an independent journalist, said that anyone can become a journalist with no impediments, but difficulties crop up when journalists try to do their job. Previous MSI studies have reported that in the private media, anyone can become a journalist. Among the public media, however, journalists are required to have a degree.

## OBJECTIVE 2: PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISM

### Chad Objective Score: 2.22

Tchanguiz Vatakha, with the Moïssala-based Radio Brakoss, said that Chadian journalists are quite competent professionally, although he conceded that the sector has much room for improvement. He indicated that news reporting has improved clearly in comparison with the recent past. Radoumadji agreed, and traced the tangible change to the media liberalization that followed Chad’s conversion to democracy in 1980. Laguerre and Jehiel Djasrabe, with UTCF, also argued that many Chadian journalists do meet professional quality standards. Sony Mekondo, an activist with

the Association for the Promotion of Fundamental Rights in Chad, agreed that Chadian journalists abide by professional standards, but said that Chad’s cumbersome socio-political circumstances make it difficult for journalists to do their work properly—giving them a bad reputation. Lobo commented, “People are reluctant to name reliable information sources, so journalists have trouble finding enough news sources in order to provide reliable and objective news to the populace.” Maryse Dlgarlaldjin, of the Association of Women Sociologists of Chad, noted that authorities are especially hard on the journalists that do meet professional quality standards.

In 2002, the Union of Chad Journalists established a framework of ethical standards. Most panelists agreed that media members do not always uphold the standards, but according to Maji Maji Odjitan Djoutoun-Gona of the Union of Journalists for the Defense of Human Rights, some journalists in Chad do their job while also observing professional ethical codes. They may have an occasional breach, but that does not merit stating that Chadian journalism fails to meet professional standards, he asserted.

Radoumadji added that the creation of the Chadian Media Professional Ethics Observatory has been instrumental in upholding professional quality standards, and Noubatan agreed, commenting, “Today, the ethical problems identified at the beginning of the media privatization process are now almost entirely solved. Journalists pay increasing attention to ethics.” Takaobi said that journalists are careful not to infringe on professional ethical rules—which also keeps them out of prison.

Self-censorship is pervasive, given the delicate political situation and the threat of prison looming over journalists

## 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).

that attempt to write critical articles. Djasrabe claimed that journalists “are also free to tell the truth. The fact that they are free to denounce or criticize is proof that the freedom of speech is real since the democratization of our country.” But Noubatan disagreed, stating, “In the media, journalists and editors-in-chief often practice self-censorship to avoid government reprisals.” Lame said that censorship is present everywhere in the state-run or public service media, particularly when the news refers to public authorities.

Although journalists do address key topics, certain issues concerning politics and the rebellion are silenced. At the same time, the media cover some political events too cautiously, panelists said. However, Laguerre disagreed on this point, claiming, “Journalists are free to address all topics.”

According to many of the panelists, low salaries are a serious obstacle to further improving professionalism. Dlgarlaldjin said that journalists’ salaries are unsatisfactory, and as a result, journalists are not given enough respect. Furthermore, Radoumadji noted, low salaries make journalists “vulnerable to enticements—as a result, sometimes they depart from the trade’s standards.” Noubatan and Laguerre added that journalists’ salaries are too low to protect them from the temptation of corruption. Djoutoun-Gona noted that salaries are particularly low in the private media, and this does not encourage their independence. Djekombe surmised, “We have to believe that their conscience often saves them from corruption.”

Entertainment programs continue to take precedence over news, Takaobi confirmed.

Takaobi also gave the opinion that outdated equipment remains an industry-wide problem; journalists in all media sectors still use equipment dating back 40 years. Lazare said, “The reporting and production equipment do not meet professional requirements. As a result, the sound quality of news pieces is inferior.” Noubatan noted that most radio stations are community stations with few resources, and added that the lack of working equipment and qualified personnel “...prevents the Chad Press Agency from fulfilling its mission.” Djasrabe described how the lack of transportation limits journalists as well. “For example, if a press outlet does not have a vehicle, journalists are forced to walk, take a taxi, or team up with someone else going in the same direction. The general impression is that Chadian journalists are impoverished.”

Offering a different viewpoint, Djekombe noted that most radio stations broadcast digitally, and Laguerre, from the public media side, said that news gathering, production, and reporting equipment is modern and efficient.

Regarding niche reporting, Lazare said that journalists are not qualified to address specialized topics such as economics. Most media professionals are generalized journalists with skills gained through on-the-job training.

### OBJECTIVE 3: PLURALITY OF NEWS

#### Chad Objective Score: 1.78

Chad’s media sector includes a variety of news sources, which are concentrated in the capital. Djoutoun-Gona said that citizens have unlimited access to domestic and international media. “The public can choose among multiple news sources. There are several newspapers as well as private radio stations providing news. The access to these news sources is free or affordable.” Lobo confirmed that some community media outlets provide local news to rural area residents. Djekombe said that access to the Internet and other news sources is also free and unrestricted.

Takaobi disagreed, saying that many citizens cannot afford to pay for news. “Access to news sources is limited and unaffordable,” and as a result, “Chadian citizens only receive partial news.” He also said that independent media lack influence, and the public media call the shots.

Last year, the MSI reported that 20 percent of the population has the means to buy or read a newspaper, and in fact, journalists themselves are not really in touch with the world, receiving news with a delay. Widespread illiteracy presents another obstacle. As Lobo noted, “More than half of the Chadian population is illiterate.”

#### 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.

*Widespread illiteracy presents another obstacle. As Lobo noted, "More than half of the Chadian population is illiterate."*

Regarding how well the public media reflect the views of the political spectrum, Vatakha stated categorically that the National Radio works exclusively for the members of the ruling party and the government. Mekondo agreed, commenting, "It is clear that the public media do not reflect the interests of the population," and added that its journalists are forced to censor themselves. Opposition voices are muffled, and the public media serve the interests of the government, he said.

There is only one news service, the government-run Chad Press Agency.

Independent broadcasters produce their own programs—and in doing so, exercise significantly more independence than the state media.

Considering the question of media ownership, Mekondo commented that such information is obscured, making it difficult to analyze the news objectively. Furthermore, while the government runs the public media, several groups and associations are active in the private media.

Minority languages have minimal representation in the Chadian media. Djekombe said that most private radio stations broadcast in three languages (French, Arabic, and Sara) and "only the National Radio broadcasts in thirteen languages—but then again, there is always some boss who decides on these languages based on [an] allegiance to or affinity with the ruling party."

#### **OBJECTIVE 4: BUSINESS MANAGEMENT**

#### **Chad Objective Score: 1.44**

Most of the panelists agreed that independent media are managed badly—according to Djoutoun-Gona to the point that they exploit journalists. Lobo said, "Journalists earn next to nothing, and very often managers hire people without appropriate qualifications or degrees." Only media owners are able to live decently, and newspapers in particular are managed more like a household than a professional enterprise, panelists said. Radoumadji, an independent journalist, added that the poor management creates instability and contributes to the journalist exodus. Djekombe said, "The managers of publications or radio stations run

#### **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.

their outlets as they please—with only a few exceptions." Furthermore, Lame said, "Media management is not always transparent. Even when there is a cash inflow, some press companies are not well managed."

As the previous MSI reported, the Chad Private Press Publishers Association has addressed these concerns by launching an effort to professionalize management and accounting systems.

A few sources of revenue fuel the media in Chad, panelists said. Advertising is the principal source, though the market is underdeveloped, and the country has no advertising agencies. Djoutoun-Gona noted, "There is an advertising cultural deficiency." Still, as reported in the 2008 MSI, the dependence on advertising is quite heavy; advertisements represented almost 80 percent of private media revenue that year.

Djoutoun-Gona said that the government is mandated to support private media outlets with an annual subsidy, which is designed to ensure their survival, but the private media are still struggling—primarily due to bad management. Vatakha said that the subsidy is insufficient, and Takaobi commented that the process for distributing subsidies is very unequal, so the media cannot count on this support. According to Djekourninga, government subsidies have not affected private media independence; outlets are still somewhat well managed and independent despite governmental support, in his view.

Laguerre said that Chadian media remain without market research to help tailor and improve their content. Mekondo confirmed that accurate circulation and ratings figures are still not available, either.

## OBJECTIVE 5: SUPPORTING INSTITUTIONS

### Chad Objective Score: 2.10

Mekondo said that Chad has no business associations representing media owners and managers, but it does have professional journalist associations. Djoutoun-Gona said, “There are multiple supporting institutions—NGOs, media professionals’ associations, human rights organizations, etc.—working to protect the interest of independent media professionals.” Djarabe agreed that a number of communications, journalist, and human rights organizations uphold the professional interests of the independent media.

Lobo agreed that some institutions are protecting the professional interests of the independent media, but said that their scope is limited due to tight finances. When the situation demands, they do get involved in professional development projects, he said.

According to the panelists, many NGOs support the freedom of the press and uphold the professional interests of the private or independent press. Radoumadji made note of the human rights organizations in Chad that are advocating for freedom of speech. For example, eight human rights organizations came together to create Radio FM Liberté in N’Djamena. Noubatan added that the country has many civil society organizations that speak out on behalf of journalists’ rights in cases of violations. The groups include international NGOs (Reporters Sans Frontières, Journaliste en Danger) and domestic NGOs. Some of these organizations also provide legal support to journalists facing charges.

Chad still has no journalism school. Mekondo noted the country has only one communications department dedicated

to training good journalists, housed within the Department of Language and Literature at the University of N’Djamena. Most of Chad’s journalists trained abroad.

Despite their limited degree options, journalists have some other training opportunities. Previous panels praised the work of MédiaExcel in this regard. Takaobi said that many domestic and international NGOs organize regular training sessions dedicated to improving the quality of reporting. Lazare commented, “The French NGO Le Gret supports the interests of the media, most notably by offering training and internships, and lobbies on behalf of the media in cases of conflicts between the authorities and the private media.”

Regarding sources of newsprint and printing facilities, the Chad Printing House holds a monopoly essentially; last year’s MSI noted that the minister of communication is a shareholder. Although Chad has no media distribution service quite yet, media members have a serious interest in creating a service, according to the panelists. For now, media outlets set up their own, generally informal distribution policy.

### List of Panel Participants

**Sony Mekondo**, activist, Association for the Promotion of Fundamental Rights in Chad, N’Djamena

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

**Djarabe Jehiel**, journalist, UTCF, N’Djamena

**François Djekombe**, chief of sales, Radio FM Liberté, N’Djamena

**Edouard Takaobi**, independent journalist, N’Djamena

**Maurienne Lobo**, member, Union of Female Communication Professionals of Chad, N’Djamena

**Hoinathy Gotngar Noubatan**, editor-in-chief, Radio Lotiko, Sarh

**Jonathan Radoumadji**, independent journalist, Ati

**Maryse Dlgarlaldjin**, member, Association of Women Sociologists of Chad, N’Djamena

**Marie Laguerre**, journalist, National Radio, N’Djamena

### Moderator and Author

**Odjitan Djoutoun-Ngona**, executive secretary, Union of Journalists for the Defense of Human Rights, N’Djamena

*The Chad study was coordinated by, and conducted in partnership with, Journaliste en Danger, Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo.*

### 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.