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SOMALILAND

Nearly two decades after declaring its independence from Somalia in 1991, Somaliland, originally colonized by the British, has established itself as a stable and constitutional polity in the Horn of Africa, although it has not been recognized by any state. After a decade-long bloody civil war, the northern protectorate of Somaliland split from the Italian-colonized south, which has since languished in chaotic fragmentation, based on clan and extremist ideologies. Somaliland, in contrast, enshrines the freedom of expression in its constitution and has allowed a free and vibrant media culture to evolve over the past two decades.

Despite Somaliland's low literacy rate (around 40 percent), it continues to display remarkable plurality in the media. The independent Somaliland media are currently experiencing fast growth in terms of media outlets coming into the market, especially the print media—including daily newspapers—and news websites. The panelists believe that this growth is partially attributable to the presidential elections, which took place on June 26, 2010. During the election year, 2009-2010, the daily journals grew by at least 30 percent. However, this growth did not extend to the broadcast sector, perhaps due to more stringent government licensing restrictions.

In the recent presidential elections, the ruling party (UDUB) candidates were defeated, and the opposition party (Kulmiye) won with a large majority (49.6 percent to 33.2 percent). A new government took office, amid strong expectations that many points of contention between the last government and the independent media would be relaxed. Already, the government radio and television are shifting toward a public media model, with some fairness introduced into their access and programming. The opposition-party politicians are already getting their message out on the government radio and television, without any obstacles. However, the new government has experienced problems with one international television channel, Universal TV, which it accuses of bias toward a regional insurgency group. The government has twice withdrawn its operating license.

The overall MSI score of 2.18 reflects an improvement from last year's score, indicating a freer media climate. Somaliland's constitution guarantees free speech, and the prevailing social norms of the Somaliland people strongly support and agitate for free speech. On the other hand, journalists are not meeting professional standards of quality and media institutions are still finding their footing. Journalism is a relatively new industry in Somaliland, and education and professional support structures are weak.

Somaliland has not been recognized as a sovereign country by any nation or international organization. However, the many differences between it and Somalia, including different legal and regulatory regimes, warrant a separate study of media in Somaliland.

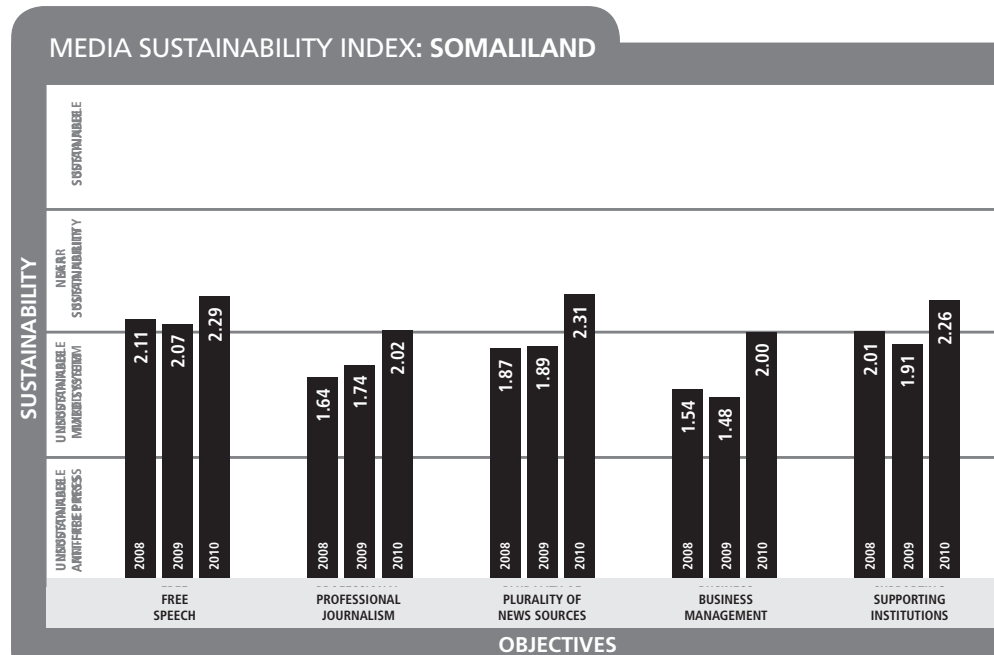
SOMALILAND AT A GLANCE

GENERAL

- > **Population:** Estimated at between 2.5 and 3 million
- > **Capital city:** Hargeisa
- > **Ethnic groups (% of population):** 100% Somali, with 3 major clans: Isaaq (majority) Dir, and Harti
- > **Religions:** Sunni Muslim
- > **Languages:** Somali (official), Arabic and English used for business purposes
- > **GNI (2010-Atlas):** N/A
- > **GNI per capita (2010-PPP):** N/A
- > **Literacy rate:** Estimated at 37.8%
- > **President or top authority:** President Ahmed Mohamed Mohamoud (Silanyo) (since June 26, 2010)

MEDIA-SPECIFIC

- > **Number of active print outlets, radio stations, television stations:** Print: 7 daily newspapers; 7 weekly/semi-weekly; 1 monthly magazine; Radio Stations: 1 local station, 2 international FM stations available; Television Stations: 4 local, 2 satellite, 1 cable, and 1 International
- > **Newspaper circulation statistics:** Top three by circulation: *Geeska Africa* (privately owned), *Haatuf* (privately owned), *Jamhuuriya* (privately owned)
- > **Broadcast ratings:** Top radio station: Radio Hargeisa (state-owned); Top three television stations: Somaliland National TV (state-owned), HCTV (private), Universal TV (privately owned)
- > **News agencies:** Somaliland National Newsagency (SOLNA) (state-owned)
- > **Annual advertising revenue in media sector:** N/A
- > **Internet usage:** N/A



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

Somaliland Objective Score: 2.29

In this objective, the panelists gave their strongest scores to indicator 8 (media outlets have unrestricted access to international news and news sources) and 9 (entry into the journalism profession): each scored about a point higher than the objective score. On the other hand, indicator 5 (state or public media do not receive preferential treatment) and 6 (libel) lagged behind the objective score by more than half a point each.

Somaliland's constitution guarantees the freedom of speech in Article 32, but Mohamed Abdillahi Abdi, a media researcher for the NGO Candle Light, said, "Protection of free speech is in the constitution but not implemented." Adan Haji Ali, a media lawyer at Hargeisa University, added that furthermore "the judiciary does not act independently to deal with free speech." As noted in last year's MSI, there is also a Press Law that has not been implemented previously, but panelists this year report that it is now being revamped by the parliament. During the six months before the MSI panel convened, the Somaliland parliament worked to introduce a media law in keeping with the standard of international democratic nations, to replace the existing weak and ineffective law that the government usually bypasses. The bulk of media houses oppose the move, however, fearing that the government may overstep and introduce strong

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.

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provisions that restrict their operations. Broadcast licensing and disciplining journalists through an independent media board remain points of contention. Negotiations on these points are still continuing between the parliament and the media houses. Aside from these sticking points, the panelists agreed that there are strong social norms that protect journalists, especially against excesses from authorities.

The new government has relaxed the licensing of the television stations somewhat, granting licenses to some of the television companies that the previous government refused to license, including RAAD TV. The panelists reported that several new applicants had been granted licenses, although they had not yet started operations.

However, radio licensing is still off-limits. In the words of Hodan Elmi, a governance expert with CARE, "The previous government had a phobia over radio stations; it even it refused to allow an educational radio program by the Education Development Centre (EDC)." The universities also have FM radios, which could be used for educational purposes, but their licenses are still pending. This ban, a leftover from the last government, has not yet been seriously challenged in court or by any public applications for a radio license. In Haji Ali's words, "Our local televisions do not work under any broadcasting law. The government should first make the relevant law and set regulatory mechanisms, instead of pressuring people not to open their own media outlets."

Abdale Ali Yusuf, a reporter with Horn Cable TV, remarked, "Bans on private radio stations affected the whole country; our people listen to other radio stations from neighboring countries, such as Ethiopia and Djibouti. Our people are in the dark about what is happening in their own country, while they are fully aware of what is happening in other neighboring countries." Other participants also remarked that the lack of adequate local radio broadcasts drives young people to send their participation to the stations of neighboring countries, diminishing their involvement with media and civil-society organizations in Somaliland.

But the general belief is that the government of President Ahmed Mahamoud Silanyo will relax on this front. Despite

the license restrictions, web-based radios operate without any government control, and people listen to many other radios in the region.

For Somaliland journalists and media houses, market entry is relatively free—especially for the print media. As noted in last year’s MSI, the tax structure is even more favorable than in other industries. There are virtually no taxes on media products.

Although social norms protect journalists to a degree, in practical terms, there is no official protection. Generally, if journalists publish something that might anger certain clans, they have to hide and lie low for a while. Journalists are also subject to occasional threats, which make them think twice when publishing. The general consensus is that the government does not adequately protect journalists and what little protection exists is only in the capital and not in the regions.

Elections frequently lead to government crackdowns on journalists, but the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) praised Somaliland’s journalists for their efforts to cover the elections, noting that they endured harassment yet still managed to deliver. CPJ wrote that the police detained several journalists for a day in June, after presidential guards attacked people displaying an opposition flag. In addition, the editor of *Baadiya*, Hadis Mohamed, was arrested and held without charge for three days—coinciding with the voting. According to CPJ, Mohamed “said he was targeted for giving equal coverage to the opposition.”¹

While state and public officials do not receive preferential treatment, there is still no consciously upheld culture of editorial independence, and media owners often influence editorial content. As noted in last year’s MSI, there are no official censorship laws or practices in place in Somaliland, but previously the government owned radio and television used to strictly follow government directions. This has also been relaxed, in the sense that editorial independence has improved and programs are becoming more diverse and less politically biased in favor of the government. There are now popular programs that bring higher public officials on television for public discussion.

The treatment of libel cases drew some of the lowest scores for this objective. Jail terms are still possible punishments, although libel cases are usually settled outside the courts, via the clan arbitration system. Compensatory payments are settled through the collective efforts of the clan of the accused. There is no formal insurance system in Somaliland to

provide coverage against legal damages involving journalists or, for that matter, any other industry.

Regarding the new government’s handling of libel cases, the panelists noted that the present government accused an editor of one of the daily journals of false information and slandering the president for unsubstantiated fraud. He was sentenced to jail but was later pardoned by the president. The case demonstrates the ongoing use of the criminal code, carrying possible jail sentences for libel.

Somaliland still lacks legislation to facilitate access to information. Journalists usually obtain information through interviews and telephone confirmation from public officials, but there was also general consensus among panelists that public officials generally share only information that is favorable to the government. Otherwise, it is still not easy to extract information from government departments. On the other hand, media outlets have unrestricted access to international news and sources, especially through the Internet and from international news networks.

There are no restrictions on entry into the journalist profession; in fact, panelists believe it may be too easy to become a journalist, as even those without skills or training are able to land jobs.

OBJECTIVE 2: PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISM

Somaliland Objective Score: 2.02

The overall score of this objective reflects a modest improvement over last year, but the panelists expressed serious ongoing concern with the lack of professionalism

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).

¹ “Attacks on the Press 2010: Somalia.” Committee to Protect Journalists, February 15, 2011. Available at <http://www.cpj.org/2011/02/attacks-on-the-press-2010-somalia.php> (Access November 19, 2011.)

and the underlying causes: poor education and support for journalists. All indicators scored within half a point of the objective score.

There are no journalism faculties or colleges in any of the universities, and professional associations are still in their infancy. Therefore, the quality of journalism in Somaliland is still low, due primarily to the educational background of the journalists.

According to Mustafe Adan Muse, manager of Universal TV, “Journalists do not check their facts, they do not cite multiple news sources, they do not conduct necessary background research, and they lack training, experience, and professionalism.” The panelists agreed, as did previous MSI panels, that while they see some improvements, journalists have a long way to go for fair and objective reporting. The available resources for the media are basic, especially at the technology level. While many of the satellite television and online radios are using modern technology, the Internet, and advanced software, the print media are still lagging in the use of modern technology.

While no clear ethics and recognized standards have yet been set for Somaliland’s journalists, the panelists said again this year that in spite of that, many journalists try to report responsibly, and many journalists also respect their codes of conduct, especially during the elections. The panelists noted that reporting in a clan society, where one can easily incite conflict, carries special responsibilities and concerns. However, Yusuf raised the issue of disparity of development between the center and regions. In his words, “Journalists in the different regions have different journalism ethics and standards. Only those in the capital receive trainings and seminars on journalism ethics and standards.”

In terms of self-censorship, last year’s MSI noted that business interests frequently drive self-censorship more than official sources of pressure. In general, journalists working for private media outlets enjoy more freedom than their counterparts in the government-owned press, who work in a more restrictive atmosphere.

The degree to which journalists cover key events and issues is sometimes limited. Coverage of social, economic, and other aspect-of-life issues, for example, is neglected at the expense of heavy concentration on politics.

The panelists agreed that both public and independent journalists are underpaid and hence are easily corrupted. In fact, most of the young journalists operate as freelancers, lacking job security, which might render them especially vulnerable to corruption.

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In Somaliland, entertainment programming generally does not crowd out news. As explained in last year’s MSI report, news and information programming dominate content in both print and broadcast media, although in the print media, sports and advertisements sometimes crowd out news articles in newspapers.

The media continue to work with very basic equipment. While many of the satellite television and online radio stations use modern technology, the Internet, and advanced software, the print media lag. Last year’s MSI noted that the poor technology is reflected in the low quality of print products on the market. For example, layout techniques and use of graphics and color have not improved since antiquated printing machines were reintroduced to Somaliland in the postwar years.

The level of investigative reporting is low, largely explained by the poor professional capacity of most journalists. Quality niche reporting on important topics, such as economics, is rare. The panelists suggested that improved training offerings and exchanges could prove beneficial in this respect by offering exposure to more advanced journalistic environments.

Investigative reporting and niche reporting are still weak. The panelists called for more training to encourage niche reporting on topics such as economics.

OBJECTIVE 3: PLURALITY OF NEWS

Somaliland Objective Score: 2.31

Improvements in this objective reveal real progress. Indicator 3 (state media are non-partisan) even showed growth, although it remained about two-thirds of a point behind the objective score. Indicator 4 (news agencies) lagged behind by the same magnitude. On the other hand, indicator 5 (private media produce their own news) fared relatively well, showing

Cost and geography, however, limit access for some, along with illiteracy. The price of a newspaper, around 2,000 shillings (\$.30) is out of reach for many. All print media are concentrated in the capital city of Hargeisa, and there are no established publications even in the regional capitals.

improvement compared with last year and scoring about three-quarters of a point higher than the objective score.

Given Somaliland's low literacy rate, it is quite remarkable that over 30 news websites, a dozen daily and weekly journals, half a dozen online radio stations, and four local television channels all originate from Somaliland and cater to its people and a wider audience from the Horn of Africa region. The panelists said the Somaliland people are savvy news consumers, and hence there is strong demand for plurality of news sources.

By far, the radio is the most widespread source of news and is accessible to more people, but unfortunately the national radio reach is limited to the environs of the capital city only. People are served by various sources of the broadcast media, including international radio stations such as the BBC Somali Service, which has been around since the early 1950s and can rightly be claimed to have now become part of the Somali culture and psyche; the VOA Somali Service, which is a recent

but strong entrant in the Somali news sources; and several online radio stations. Another popular source is from the television channels, which include the Somaliland National TV and the Somaliland TV (both government-owned), the Somaliland Space Channel, and the Horn Cable TV; are all locally owned channels. Universal TV is an international channel that also has a large audience. There are no community radio or television stations, however.

On the print media side, there are over a dozen daily Somali-language papers and several English-language sister papers. The main local daily or semi-daily papers include *Ogaal*, *Haatuf*, *Jamhuuriya*, and *Geeska Africa*, and all but the first have weekly English-language sister papers. Other English-language publications are appearing rapidly in the market, and they are also all weekly or biweekly papers. There is only one monthly magazine in the market. Additionally, around two dozen news websites focus on Somaliland news and audiences.

The media outlets usually reflect the opinion of their owners, but there are ample choices for audiences to hear alternative views. There are established papers and websites that are considered to be mainstream, and there are also new entrants into the market that take fringe views but gradually move to the center.

Citizens' access to all these media sources is not at all restricted by the authorities or any other actors. Cost and geography, however, limit access for some, along with illiteracy. The price of a newspaper, around 2,000 shillings (\$.30) is out of reach for many. All print media are concentrated in the capital city of Hargeisa, and there are no established publications even in the regional capitals. Thus, the print media mainly serve the elite and the urban population. However, most media houses now have reporters in almost all regions of Somaliland.

There are no independent news agencies; media outlets depend on their in-house news-gathering capacities and on international sources. Papers usually share news and invariably have the same sources. Independent broadcast media, such as the television stations and Internet radio stations, all produce their own news programs.

Last year's panelists expressed hope that the government-owned media would change their partisan approach after the presidential elections, in which the opposition campaigned to restore objectivity in the public media. Although some signs point to progress already, reflected in higher scores for this indicator, panelists noted that there is still no independent Public Media Commission, which could regulate the media and ensure media independence from the government.

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.

As reported in previous MSIs, media ownership is generally considered transparent, and no conglomerates monopolize the media in Somaliland. Media outlets generally fail to attract the interest of serious investors, as they are mostly not operated as profitable businesses.

As mentioned earlier, the Somaliland media are mainly urban-based and fixated on political issues rather than on social, economic, or even cultural ones. They are also based in the capital, and therefore issues important to the rural people, especially development issues, are hardly addressed. Even more marginalized are the interests of the minorities and peripheral communities. There is minimal coverage of issues about women, the disabled, and other marginalized groups. Last year's MSI reported that clans pressure journalists in this sense; the rule of the clan trumps the rule of law, and sometimes journalists feel compelled to back away from covering minority issues that go against clan wishes. Language is not a problem, according to the panelists, because everybody speaks Somali and there are no dialect variations in Somaliland, as is also the case in Somalia.

OBJECTIVE 4: BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

Somaliland Objective Score: 2.00

Although the score improved in this objective over last year, overall the panelists do not believe that the media outlets are effectively managed as businesses—despite the fact that the bulk of them are privately established. While several indicators did indeed receive higher scores, none did so enough to exceed the objective score by more than half a point; none lagged behind by more than half a point, either.

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.

In Somaliland, there is no access to bank credit for entrepreneurs, whether they are in the media sector or in other industries. Businesses are either established through individual savings or through a group of partners pooling their personal money. Most of the current media houses are funded in the former model.

There are no major investors in the sector, and hence it is still a small-scale business sector run on shoe-string budgets. People interested in opening a media outlet in Somaliland are often motivated by political goals more than business and therefore do not see the need for business plans. Many outlets are established to advance political or even clan interests, and many disappear after elections.

In Somaliland, there is no access to bank credit for entrepreneurs, whether they are in the media sector or in other industries. Businesses are either established through individual savings or through a group of partners pooling their personal money. Most of the current media houses are funded in the former model. The private media in their present state are not professionally managed and are not considered profit-making businesses.

The main media sources of revenue for the media include advertising, from both public and private sources, paid election campaign messages, and educational programs paid for by nonprofit organizations. There are no regulatory mechanisms or standards developed to rate the level of revenue generation from advertising or from other sources and to determine whether they are in line with international standards. As last year's MSI noted, advertising is less important for government-run outlets, which subsist on public funding. Also, news websites and radio stations are still free for consumers.

Panelists confirmed the importance of advertising as a source of revenue for the media houses, and it continues to grow. Last year's MSI noted that several new advertising agencies were building up the sector, including SAGAL Jet, ASAL, Code Media Centre, and Madar Advertising Center; they cater mostly to the television channels. It is still the case that media outlets solicit advertising contracts directly from the companies and often develop the content and layout themselves—both in print and broadcast media.

Regarding NGO support to the media, there are lingering concerns that NGOs do not provide enough support for important issues, such as media legislation.

Independent media houses do not receive any subsidies from the government; they are totally self-financing.

The practice of incorporating research into media design is not yet part of the Somaliland media culture. No media outlets undertake marketing research to enhance their advertising revenue and to tailor their products to the needs and preferences of their audiences.

While it is clear that newspaper sales are not strong—the panelists' rough estimates suggest they are in the range of 1,000 copies for the most popular dailies—no reliable circulation figures are available, and there are no independent agencies that provide such services. On the broadcast side, there are still no listenership or viewership statistics available to guide decision-making.

OBJECTIVE 5: SUPPORTING INSTITUTIONS

Somaliland Objective Score: 2.26

The weakest link in this objective is the lack of trade associations to represent the interests of the owners (addressed by indicator 1; it scored slightly more than half a point lower than the objective). However, various professional associations have developed to represent the

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.

independent-media journalists; they include the Somaliland Journalists Association, the Somaliland Women Journalists' Association, the Union of Somali Journalists, Media Monitoring Group, and the Somaliland Online Association.

As noted in previous MSI studies, these associations have stepped up to uphold codes of conduct and advocate for journalists who find themselves in trouble with the authorities. They also advocate for or against legislation that could affect journalists' work. They successfully lobbied the parliament to keep debate off the floor of draft Law No. 27, which the last government initiated, allegedly to clamp down on free speech. It is now being revamped to make it more comprehensive and to bring it up to international standards. A draft in circulation includes a free-information-access component and the formation of an Independent Media Board. Some journalists are resisting such a move, viewing it as a controlling mechanism, although they now operate in a legal vacuum.

Regarding NGO support to the media, there are lingering concerns that NGOs do not provide enough support for important issues, such as media legislation.

There are still no journalism degree programs in Somaliland, and the lack of training opportunities clouds journalists' prospects for professional growth. However, media professionals do receive some short-term training, both locally and in neighboring countries, from international organizations, including IREX and the BBC Trust. Somaliland journalists are often invited into programs run in Nairobi, Addis Ababa, and Kampala. High-caliber journalists also participate in short courses, seminars, and conferences offered by journalism institutions in the United Kingdom and other EU countries.

Last year's MSI study noted that one shortcoming of training opportunities is that journalists often receive training on upgraded equipment, which they have no access to in their jobs. Also, journalists complain that the same basic trainings are offered over and over; they would like to receive training on the business management side of media instead, for example.

The panelists generally agreed that Somaliland news sources and newsprint are in private hands, apolitical, and not restricted, and they assigned the related indicator the highest scores for this objective—despite the fact that last year panelists noted that even owners of private printing facilities have been known to interfere when controversial topics are involved.

While print media distribution channels are also private, apolitical, and unrestricted, the radio transmitters are in the hands of the government and subject to their control.

List of Panel Participants

Abdishakur Muhumed Muuse, editor, *Oodweyne News*, Hargeisa

Sahra Mohamed Ali, reporter, *Ramaas News*, Burao

Rahma Abdilahi Maygaag, reporter, Radio Hargeisa, Hargeisa

Mustafe Adan Muse, manager, Universal TV, Hargeisa

Mohamed Abdihakim Mohamoud, reporter, Somaliland National TV, Hargeisa

Abdillahi Abdi Mohamed, media researcher, Candle Light, Hargeisa

Hodan Abdi Elmi, civil society representative, CARE, Hargeisa

Hinda Mohamed Jama, National Electoral Commission, Hargeisa

Ayan Abdirizak Mohamed, secretary, Women Journalist Association, Hargeisa

Jimcale Abdilahi Jama, reporter, *Hadhwanaag News*, Barbera

Abdale Ali Yusuf, reporter, Horn Cable TV, Borama

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The Somaliland study was coordinated by, and conducted in partnership with, the Social Research and Development Institute, Hargeisa.