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KUWAIT

The past year saw a boom in the business of Kuwaiti media and some unwelcome challenges to its practice—both because of recent changes to the country’s media laws.

In March 2006, after years of demands, a new printing and publication law was finally issued to replace one that was issued in 1961 and had granted the executive the authority to grant, cancel or freeze newspaper licenses through administrative decree. The new law created a liberalized process for new licenses, and allows applicants to go to court if their application is refused. As a result, daily newspapers proliferated in the period 2007-2008. The number of Arabic-language dailies reached 14 by August, 2008. In all, 110 applications for publication licenses were submitted and 37 were approved by July, 2008.

However, the new law not only sustained prohibition of materials that criticize Islam, the emir, the constitution, or offenses to public morality, it expanded the scope of crimes involving media. The number of possible media crimes rose from 253 in 2006 to 462 in 2008, with 382 classified as felonies.

In addition, two leaked official documents published by a daily newspaper, *Al Qabas*, appeared to show that the Kuwaiti government was considering steps to rein in the media for what it called “the abuse of rights and public freedom.” One of the documents stated that “political authorities should take many steps, mainly exercising discretionary power (and prudence) in licensing new newspapers, enhancing the print and publication law implementation, and punishing journalists, especially non-Kuwaitis, who publish rumors or false news that harm society.”

At the same time, general prosecutor Hamed Al Othman said in an interview that he had prepared a bill that criminalizes promoting vice, inciting against the country’s leadership, divulging state secrets, or insulting Islam on the web. Convicted offenders would be sentenced to up to one year in jail and/or a fine, but face seven years in prison if their victims were minors.

MSI panelists agreed that Kuwait’s media possess important freedoms that exceed those enjoyed in other parts of the Middle East. But some panelists expressed concern that the media sometimes exhibit irresponsibility that induces mutual attacks among political views, persons, or ideologies, and sometimes leads to lawsuits. The dilemma, they said, is how to balance free speech against the need for balance and the rights of individuals.

# KUWAIT AT A GLANCE

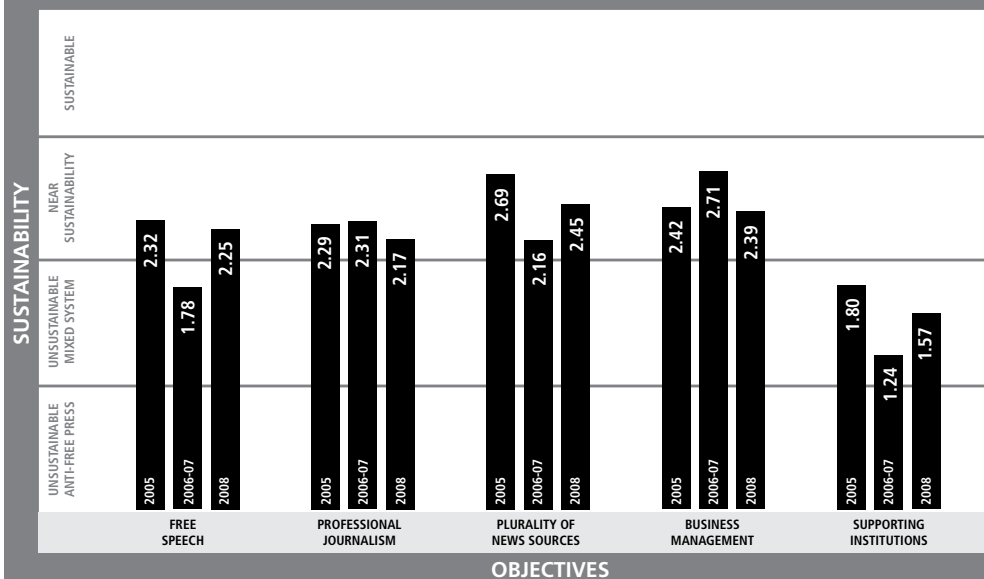
## GENERAL

- > **Population:** 2,691,158 (July 2009 est., *CIA World Factbook*)
- > **Capital city:** Kuwait
- > **Ethnic groups (% of population):** Kuwaiti 45%, other Arab 35%, South Asian 9%, Iranian 4%, other 7% (*CIA World Factbook*)
- > **Religions (% of population):** Sunni Muslim 70%, Shi'a Muslim 30%, other (includes Christian, Hindu, Parsi) 15% (*CIA World Factbook*)
- > **Languages:** Arabic (official), English widely spoken (*CIA World Factbook*)
- > **GNI (2008-Atlas):** \$99.86 billion (World Bank Development Indicators, 2009)
- > **GNI per capita (2008-PPP):** \$52,610 (World Bank Development Indicators, 2009)
- > **Literacy rate:** 93.3% (male 94.4%, female 91.0%) (2005 census, *CIA World Factbook*)
- > **President or top authority:** Amir Sabah al-Ahmad al-Jabir al-Sabah (since January 29, 2006)

## MEDIA SPECIFIC

- > **Number of active print outlets, radio stations, television stations:** Print: 14 Arabic language newspapers, 2 English language newspapers, several weekly newspapers, 70-75 magazines; Radio: 1 private (Marina FM) and many other state-owned stations; Television Stations: 1 private (Al-Rai TV), 9 other restricted stations
- > **Newspaper circulation statistics:** N/A
- > **Broadcast ratings:** N/A
- > **News agencies:** Kuwait News Agency (KUNA); it has an independent budget and 33 bureaus and correspondents outside of Kuwait
- > **Annual advertising revenue in media sector:** \$375 million in 2007
- > **Internet usage:** 1,000,000 (2008 est., *CIA World Factbook*)

### MEDIA SUSTAINABILITY INDEX: KUWAIT



**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

### Kuwait Objective Score: 2.25

Free speech is considered an essential facet of life in Kuwait, where intense interplay among the media reflects the country's diverse political opinions, views, and approaches. But while Kuwaiti law and social norms promote free speech, journalists observe certain "red lines" and often practice self-censorship to avoid crossing them, panelists said.

Aseel Al Awadi, an instructor of philosophy at Kuwait University and a nominee for the 2008 parliamentary elections, said that while freedom of speech is secured, some red lines—including those relating to religion and tribe—may make it hard to say that Kuwait is really a free-speech country. She added that it is not possible to say or write something that contradicts the dominant public view. Other panelists noted that criticism of Kuwait's ruling family, except for the emir, is no longer considered taboo, but that religion is becoming the main red line.

Article 36 of the Kuwaiti constitution states: "Every person has the right to express and propagate his opinion verbally, in writing or otherwise, in accordance with the conditions and procedures specified by law." And under Article 37, "Freedom of the press, printing, and publishing is guaranteed in accordance with the conditions and manner specified by law."

In 2006, the country replaced its 45-year-old printing and publishing law with a new one. The new law expanded the scope of media offenses, some of which are vaguely defined, according to most panelists. Defaming religion may provoke one year of imprisonment and a fine of about KD 20,000 (\$75,000). At the same time, any Muslim citizen may sue a journalist for offending Islam. A new broadcasting law passed in 2007 contains the same provisions about restrictions and punishments. Ghanem Al Najjar, a professor of political science at Kuwait University, said the laws have many deficiencies that make it easier to limit media freedom.

In fact, Kuwait has seen an increase in legal action against the media, mostly personal cases brought to courts by individuals, but also instances of the government bringing up charges against journalists. Panelists pointed out, however, that even this trend has a positive side, because the authorities are acting through the courts rather than taking discretionary measures.

Hesham Mesbah, an assistant professor of media at Kuwait University, expressed concern about the new printing and publication law's proscription against "harassing the allies of Kuwait," or the clause prohibiting the publication of "materials disturbing relations between Kuwait and Arab or

*There has been a sort of chaos on the airwaves, Al Anezi said, because some are controlled by the Ministry of Information, and some by the Ministry of Communication. As a result, he said, the government will soon create an association to organize communications.*

friendly countries." He said that these provisions are "vague" and may affect the coverage of foreign affairs.

Saoud Al Anezi, assistant managing editor of *Al Jarida* and head of the Kuwait Graduates Association, said the broadcasting law is worse than the printing and publication law and threatens many freedoms ensured by the constitution. Nevertheless, said Muzaffar Rashed, who heads the staff of the parliament's Defense of Human Rights Committee, the revisions of both laws constitute fundamental changes in the relationship between media and government, regardless of how the laws are implemented.

Amer Al Tamimi, an economics researcher, said Kuwaiti laws protect, to some extent, free speech much better than many countries in the region. The problem, he said, lies in the interpretation of the laws and their implementation. He cited the prohibition of public employees from writing in newspapers as one example of the government's overreaction to the media.

### 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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Al Anezi said he was very concerned about two official documents published by *Al Qabas* that appeared to reveal a tendency within the government to limit free speech. On June 28, 2008, *Al Qabas* published a leaked official document that discussed dealing with “the abuse of rights and public freedom.” It said that “some movements (sectarian, etc.) began to appear through new newspapers, and some newspapers became a means for interest groups to attempt to dominate the executive institutions through threats, rumors, and misleading news.” The document suggested ways to “adjust” the situation, “mainly the use of discretionary power and prudence in licensing new newspapers, stepping up implementation of the print and publication law, and punishing journalists, especially the non-Kuwaitis, who publish rumors or false news that harms society.”

Soon after, on July 6, *Al Qabas* published another official document revealing that the government was considering imposing more limits on freedoms, especially in media. Although the minister of information distanced the government from this document, *Al Qabas* confirmed that it was distributed and discussed during a governmental session in January 2008. The documents either were leaked as a trial balloon to test whether restrictions could be implemented successfully, Al Anezi said, or were intended to remain confidential and therefore reflected a desire to reduce free speech.

At the same time, the new printing and publication law also liberalized the creation of new newspapers, eradicating a virtual monopoly held by a few families. The law permits the issuance of newspaper licenses—with the requirement that applicants post a deposit of about \$950,000—and permits applicants to go to court if they are refused. As a result, most of Kuwait’s political groups have launched newspapers, said Iman Hussein, a journalist with *Al Jarida*.

Similarly, the 2007 broadcasting law allows the licensing of new television channels and radio stations. It required applicants to deposit more than \$1 million for a television station and more than \$300,000 for a radio station. The number of broadcasters is expected to increase, but not as much as newspapers.

Al Najjar said that while the changes in the law have promoted fairness and competition in the print sector, the television sector remains weak. There are only two private television channels: *Al Watan* and *Al Rai*. Many television channels obtained licenses, but did not launch operations. Al Tamimi said that some newly licensed newspapers obtained a television license as well.

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Al Najjar noted that there are many ways to broadcast, a fact that became clear during the 2008 elections campaigns: many groups tried to obtain licenses abroad to broadcast back into Kuwait.

There are no taxes in Kuwait, other than deductions for the charitable donations, or *zakat*, required of Muslims. It is unlikely any tax proposal would be approved by the parliament.

Media market entry is complicated only by the relative difficulties of getting a license and going into operation, which is still influenced, in many cases, by those in power. The monetary requirement for licensing could be considered an indirect restriction, Al Anezi said.

Crimes against journalists are very rare, panelists said, though there were some cases in 2008 where policemen beat photographers covering certain news events. Some panelists blamed individual policemen for the abuse, yet they suggested that punishment would prevent its recurrence.

Most public information or news issued by the Ministry of Information is declared through government-run Kuwait TV, Al Anezi and Mesbah said. With the television sector gradually opening up, it is too early to judge whether public media do receive preferential treatment, Al Najjar said.

Libel is typically punished by fines, but Al Anezi said that the new printing and publication law opens a “dangerous” bridge into the penal code. A journalist may be severely punished, often on the basis of vaguely worded offenses.

Rashid expressed concern about sections in the legal code that forbid addressing some political and religious issues.

In a sense, Kuwaiti media enjoy a high ceiling, as no one other than the emir is explicitly protected in the media, Al Najjar said. However, the “protection of individuals is weak, especially in the case of television,” Al Najjar said, “which has caused direct harm to individuals.” He said this raises a problem that Kuwait needs to address, how to implement relevant laws without harming free speech principles.

Al Tamimi raised concerns about “social harassment,” when some groups, especially radical ones, bring lawsuits targeting outspoken writers, film makers, and poets who they believe have insulted Islam. He says that this issue has no remedy in the Kuwaiti legal system.

Access to public information varies widely, depending on the type of information. Some news or press releases are sent to all media; only well-connected journalists gain access to other news, especially important releases. Panelists said that journalists have their own methods to get news, which are not always fair or objective.

For example, Al Anezi said it is not possible for a journalist to approach a public agency for information; rather, they must employ other tactics. For example, “After Council of Ministers meetings journalists try to call ministers privately to get information,” Al Anezi explained. “Then a minister often makes the release of information conditional, attempting to influence content and even the writing... If information were transparently available, the media’s work would be much better.”

The government also deploys bureaucratic stalling techniques to hide information, Rashid said. For example, presented with information requests, they might direct journalists to the public relations office to submit an inquiry—a lengthy process, so that the news may be out of date by the time the release is secured.

Al Najjar said that every newspaper has journalists who work delegates to get inside information from ministries; these journalists often turn out to be the ministries’ delegates to their newspapers. Such journalist are, in effect, being influenced by powerful people in the ministry, he said, because they are urged to publish the news that is fed to them. Otherwise, these journalists will be denied information later on.

Al Anezi said that 94 percent of Kuwaiti workers are employed by the public sector, so the government controls them, and it is not possible for Kuwaitis to get information easily.

*Reporting presents problems, panelists agreed, especially where objectivity is abandoned. Many reports contain definite judgments, which do not leave any choice of interpretation for readers, Al Anezi said.*

Mesbah said the law imposes a double standard by punishing the publication of rumors, while not ensuring access to information in a transparent way.

There are no restrictions on entering journalism. Al Anezi said that, along with the booming of newspapers and the need for more editors, a “lot of very low-standard persons” are being hired at newspapers. Foreign correspondents need permission to work in Kuwait.

## OBJECTIVE 2: PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISM

### Kuwait Objective Score: 2.17

Professionalism varies from one newspaper to another, yet common weaknesses include news writing, language styles, and accuracy. Many newspapers also show weakness in editing, even Arabic grammar mistakes. Mesbah, who teaches news writing at Kuwait University, said his students often find examples from newspapers “full of mistakes” in language, editing, and meaning, even in front-page headlines. He mentioned that some local reports contain sarcasm, which undermines professionalism. Mastery of news writing, especially the harmonization between the headline, the introduction, and the body, seems to be lacking. Layout quality also varies greatly among newspapers.

Panelists expressed hope that the growing number of newspapers would in fact boost competitiveness, and they urged editorial teams to pursue greater professionalism.

Reporting presents problems, panelists agreed, especially where objectivity is abandoned. Many reports contain definite judgments, which do not leave any choice of interpretation for readers, Al Anezi said. He emphasized that objectivity has been fading. Rashid said, however, that analytical articles are rare, and commenting is mostly left to columnists, who analyze issues according to their own views.

Local reporting suffers the most from a lack of objectivity; reports often contain questionable facts or improper

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reasoning, or they may rely on anonymous sources, Al Najjar said. Reporting on foreign issues appears more objective.

It is common to find newspapers used unprofessionally for attacks on rival owners or political opponents. Such attacks may appear as articles or reports that include sarcasm, defamation, libel or caricatures.

Credibility is also a problem, Al Anezi said. He said a journalist may take a story or information from a colleague and publish it days later as his own report. It is also common, he said, "for a journalist to ask the person he wants to interview to write everything and send it to him." Adherence to ethical standards also differs among media outlets, and can even fluctuate within the same outlet.

Self-censorship is present in all media, but especially in newspapers, some panelists said. Journalists are used to steering clear of "red lines" linked to religious and tribal

#### 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).

issues, partly to protect public order. Other topics that may spur self-censorship but are not considered red line issues include news about certain foreign countries.

Key events are covered fairly, but the repercussions of such events are worth examining in newspapers, which can vary in their objectivity of coverage, especially when the issue is related to a political group or to public policy. Events related to a key person or political group may put self-restrictions on news coverage, or cause weak and unfair coverage.

Kuwait has a relatively high standard of living, and salaries are generally high—especially in comparison with those in the home countries of the foreign workers who make up two-thirds of the country's 2.6 million residents. Nevertheless, most Kuwaiti journalists have extra jobs, especially in public institutes, and this may reflect insufficient salaries in media.

The desire to maintain high living standards drives some journalists to accept gifts, even informal monthly salaries, from politicians or other important people. "The journalist goes and gets an envelope every month," said Al Najjar. In some cases, Al Najjar continued, one journalist will specialize in distributing money to other journalists. In return for these gifts, a patron gets inside information about the newspaper, and stories set to be published. "All newspapers are breached," Al Najjar said. In one instance, Al Anezi added, "an officer in the capital municipality got mad because an editor didn't agree to take money from him. This officer considered it an offense!"

Entertainment and information programs are relatively balanced in newspapers; some newspapers give substantial play to culture and the sciences. But television, especially public channels, devotes more time to entertainment. Mesbah said that the budget for entertainment programs in public television surpasses that of politics and news.

Most media outlets have modern equipment, and public media's equipment was recently upgraded. News rooms are computerized, except at a few newspapers, and are linked to news agencies. Most newspapers have websites.

Regarding specialized journalism, Al Tamimi said that many business reporters and editors do not properly understand their field, which can make their reports—even their questions in interviews—irrelevant. He said that some have been working since the 1970's, but have failed to update their skills.

## OBJECTIVE 3: PLURALITY OF NEWS

### Kuwait Objective Score: 2.45

Media outlets are diverse in Kuwait, but not in a proportional way. Citizens, as well as residents, have access to all media outlets except blocked web sites or unauthorized foreign publications.

The medium that most effectively keeps Kuwaitis well connected is mobile telephony, panelists said. Instant messaging by mobile phone, or SMS, is the most essential news medium in Kuwait, especially for urgent news. "When there is a secret meeting of the parliament or Council of Ministers, the entire country knows what happened before the meeting finishes, thanks to SMS," Al Anezi said.

Private newspapers have gotten a big boost from the new printing and publishing law, making them the most widespread medium in the country. The number of newspapers reached 14 in August 2008, with two more in the works.

Broadcasting outlets are still limited, with a few radio stations and three television stations, one of them public. The Internet is a vital and essential form of communication in Kuwait. There are dozens of Kuwaiti blogs—political, social, and entertainment. The government blocks offensive websites, and some political or religious sites may be temporarily blocked for reasons of "national security."

Al Najjar said websites have been blocked both by government order and by Internet providers. The Interior Ministry sometimes asks Internet providers to block sites,

### 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.

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although it does not have the legal right to do that. Furthermore, there is no legal channel for contesting bans; a person can only post a note on the blocked site. However, there are many ways to bypass the blocking.

It is important to clarify that the printing and publications law does not apply to the Internet. The general prosecutor, Hamed Al Othman, said that he prepared a bill that criminalizes promotion of vice, incitement against the country's leadership, divulging state secrets, or insulting Islam on the web. If convicted, offenders would be sentenced to up to one year in jail (seven years if their victims are minors) and/or fined. Kuwaiti bloggers are angry at this proposed law, which they claim would eradicate their freedom.

Foreign publications are allowed in Kuwait, but only with official permission. Foreign news agencies are not restricted; it is up to local editors to decide whether to publish their material. News from satellite television can reach almost every home in Kuwait, eclipsing local television.

Some foreign radio services are very familiar in Kuwait, mainly the BBC and U.S. government-funded Radio Sawa. Local stations, mainly privately owned Marina FM, government-owned Kuwait FM, and the new Mix FM have a big share of listeners.

Public media mostly reflect the official view. Public television "lives in another world," as one panelist put it.

Kuwait News Agency, run by the state, gathers and distributes news of different varieties, but employs relatively less diversity of opinion when dealing with local stories. There are no independent news agencies, and media outlets depend on the major foreign agencies, such as Agence France-Presse, Reuters, the Associated Press, and Deutsche Presse-Agentur.

Most people generally read one or two familiar newspapers, often sharing their political or ideological outlook. Politicians tend to read most newspapers.



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## OBJECTIVE 4: BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

### Kuwait Objective Score: 2.39

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Notwithstanding the fact that most media outlets in Kuwait are on good financial footing, some aggressively pursue profits while others seem indifferent, satisfied with their strong political, ideological, or family agendas and backed by huge budgets and supplies from allies.

In Kuwait, independent media do not receive direct government subsidies. The only form of government support is bulk subscriptions: the Ministry of Information buys about 1,000 subscriptions from each newspaper, as a means of subsidy.

Kuwait has the third-largest advertising market in the Persian Gulf region (\$650 million), and it is clearly growing. Advertising sales for newspapers surpass KD 100 million (\$374 million). Kuwait is the fourth largest among the Arab countries in advertising sales, after Egypt. However, despite the spread of newspapers, a few papers still monopolize the advertising market. Advertising revenues vary among papers, with the older ones possessing bigger shares due to their long cooperation with advertising companies. In contrast, most newly launched newspapers obtain much smaller shares, and Al Tamimi said their sustainability is questionable as a result. Many newspapers, especially the new ones, distribute a large number of free issues.

Newspapers undertake independent research and studies, and they may ask advertising companies to conduct them, but such research and studies remain few. Al Anezi said that some research institutions ensure that every newspaper is "first" in

#### 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.

at least one category, in order to keep a good relation with all of them.

Although print-run statistics are easily found, real circulation figures seem to be abstract. Some panelists charged that circulation figures declared by newspapers are fake or misleading. Many companies that examine circulation figures have been operating in Kuwait for a long time, but their work is inaccurate, Al Najjar said. They examine the quantity of papers, which is not the same as the number of circulated copies.

## OBJECTIVE 5: SUPPORTING INSTITUTIONS

### Kuwait Objective Score: 1.57

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In Kuwait, there are no media trade associations, and such associations are not likely to be established, since media outlets belong to political opponents and rivals. Some ad hoc gatherings for editors in chief take place, usually in response to specific incidents.

The Kuwait Journalists Association was established in 1964, but panelists agreed the association does not represent journalists or journalism. One panelist said, "This so-called association is far from journalism." Al Anezi said the association includes several hundred members who are not journalists, and those members do not pay annual fees.

A syndicate of journalists was founded in July, and registration has begun. This syndicate was founded by court order, after the Ministry of Social Affairs refused to authorize it. Some panelists expressed concern about the sustainability of this syndicate, fearing it could collapse over conflicts among the many political and ideological groups. Al Najjar

#### 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.

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pointed out an important difference between the association and the syndicate: the first can be dissolved by the minister of social affairs, whereas the latter cannot be dissolved without a court order.

There are no real media NGOs in Kuwait. The Kuwait Graduates Association includes a committee for defending journalists, who have no special rights.

Training programs occasionally are conducted by foreign agencies. The Kuwait News Agency organizes training courses from time to time, but training programs remain rare. However, Mesbah said the media faculty at Kuwait University is interested in cooperating with foreign institutions to develop more training opportunities. Additionally, Al Najjar described plans to found a Journalism Training Institution.

Printing has been mainly monopolized by a few powerful people in the country. These people may prevent some competitors from accessing newsprint, which has spurred some newspapers to secure paper from foreign sources.

## List of Panel Participants

**Saoud Al Anezi**, assistant managing editor, *Al Jarida*; director, Kuwait Graduates Association, Kuwait City

**Ghanem Al Najjar**, professor of political science, Kuwait University, Kuwait City

**Mudaffar Abdallah Rashid**, journalist; head of a committee office in the parliament; Defense of Human Rights Committee, Kuwait City

**Aseel Al Awadi**, professor of philosophy, Kuwait University; member of parliament, Kuwait City

**Iman Hussein**, journalist, *Al Jarida*, Kuwait City

**Fatima Dashti**, journalist, *Al Jarida*, Kuwait City

**Amer Al Tamimi**, economic researcher, Kuwait City

**Jenan Tamer**, journalist, *Awan*, Kuwait City

**Hesham Mesbah**, professor of media, Kuwait University, Kuwait City

**Kamal Al Ters**, journalist, Kuwait City

## Moderator and Author

**Jihad Al Mallah**, consultant, Gulf Forum for Citizenship; head of foreign desk, *Al Jarida*, Kuwait City

*The Kuwait study was coordinated by, and conducted in partnership with, Gulf Forum for Citizenship, Muscat, Oman.*