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MOROCCO

The characteristics of the Moroccan media over the course of 2008 remained basically the same as in previous years.

Despite their limited circulation, and even though their target audience is the elite, print media broadly affect public opinion and provoke fruitful social discussions in political circles. In particular, independent newspapers appear to be increasing their influence amid the continuing decline of party-controlled media and media that are close to the state.

However, problems persist with political control over the judiciary in trials of independent press companies that criticize state policy.

Public broadcast media remain subject to the influence of political power, which has sought to worm its way further into the media in recent times. The Moroccan government has made some moves to open the airwaves to greater private-sector participation. But in one of the most notable developments of early 2009, the government suspended issuance of new television permits just months after opening a competition for permits.

Since October 2006, media advocates have been calling for a law to be passed allowing access to information, but the government has not progressed on this issue.

MOROCCO AT A GLANCE

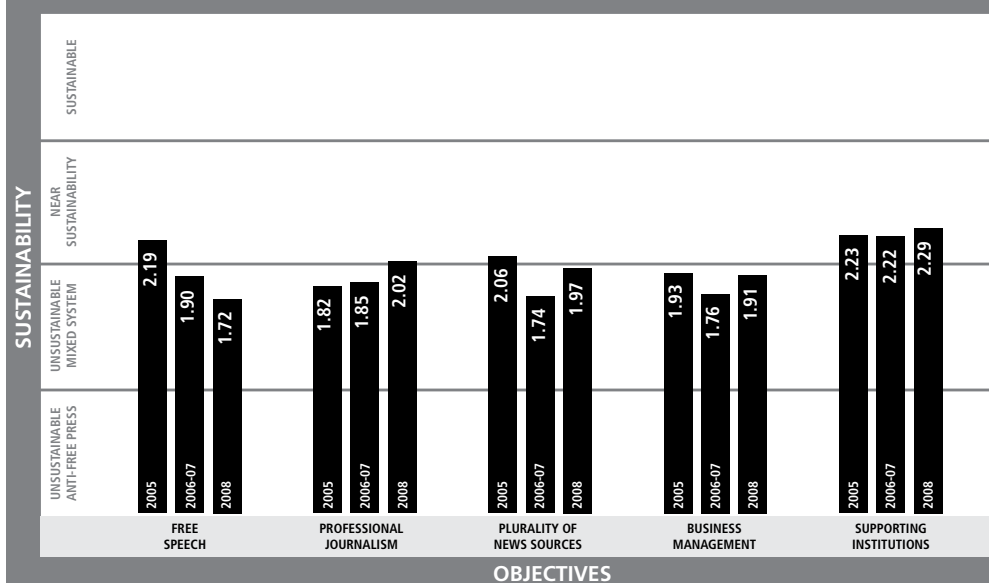
GENERAL

- > **Population:** 34,859,364 (July 2009 est., *CIA World Factbook*)
- > **Capital city:** Rabat
- > **Ethnic groups (% of population):** Arab-Berber 99.1%, other 0.7%, Jewish (*CIA World Factbook*)
- > **Religions (% of population):** Muslim 98.7%, Christian 1.1%, Jewish 0.2% (*CIA World Factbook*)
- > **Languages:** Arabic (official), Berber dialects, French often the language of business, government, and diplomacy
- > **GNI (2008-Atlas):** \$80.54 billion (World Bank Development Indicators, 2009)
- > **GNI per capita (2008-PPP):** \$4,330 (World Bank Development Indicators, 2009)
- > **Literacy rate:** 52.3% (male: 65.7%, female: 39.6%) (2004 census, *CIA World Factbook*)
- > **President or top authority:** King Mohammed VI (since July 30, 1999)

MEDIA SPECIFIC

- > **Number of active print outlets, radio stations, television stations:** Print: 398 newspapers and magazines (285 Arabic, 90 French, and 9 Amazigh language); Radio Stations: 13; Television Stations: 4
- > **Newspaper circulation statistics:** 300,000 daily
- > **Broadcast ratings:** N/A
- > **News agencies:** Maghreb Arabe Presse Agency (state-owned)
- > **Annual advertising revenue in media sector:** \$262 million (Electronic site of the Ministry of Information, 2005)
- > **Internet usage:** 10.3 million (2008 est., *CIA World Factbook*)

MEDIA SUSTAINABILITY INDEX: MOROCCO



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

Morocco Objective Score: 1.72

According to the National Union of the Moroccan Press (French acronym SNPM), Morocco's legal and institutional safeguards on freedom of speech are fragile, including in terms of legislation, the role of the judiciary, or security force action against the media and journalists.

The Press Law of 2003 protects freedom of expression, but certain chapters criminalize any "threat" to the monarchy, Islam, or territorial unity. Although some cases have relied on charges of defamation, the public prosecutor may bring other charges of "threats against due respect for the king," "harm to the institution of the monarchy, to territorial integrity, or to the Islamic religion," or "spreading false news likely to harm public order."

In addition, Morocco's counter-terrorism policy has allowed the government to tighten its grip on the media on the grounds of protecting the country's security.

More importantly, in the view of MSI panelists and a wide range of media advocates, the legislation is applied by a judicial system that lacks independence, especially in the government's cases against "troublesome" journalists.

Since 2000, the media companies most critical of the official line have come under the closest official scrutiny, and the courts have subjected them to the most severe penalties. For example, the weekly *Le Journal* has been subjected to a suspension, frequent large fines, and expensive awards of compensatory damages to civil parties. *Le Journal's* leading advertisers have also been targeted and pressured to break off their dealings with the paper. The official media have led campaigns attacking *Le Journal* and have hired other journalists to produce critical pieces against it.

One high-profile prosecution involved Al Jazeera's Moroccan branch, which has given air time to a number of legal activists and politicians criticizing violations of human rights and has aired many reports exposing the extreme poverty in many parts of Morocco. On June 13, 2008, Hassan el Rachidi, director of Al Jazeera television in Morocco, was charged with publishing false news based on a report of clashes in Sidi Ifni in southern Morocco. The channel quoted statements saying there had been fatalities, but also reported the authorities' denial of any deaths. The government investigated El Rachidi and a human rights activist that had held a seminar broadcast by the channel. The Ministry of Communication withdrew el Rachidi's credentials half an hour after receiving the report on the investigation.

In mid-2009, the National Agency for the Regulation of Telecommunications (French acronym ANRC) notified the Moroccan office of Al Jazeera that it had suspended all the channel's satellite broadcasting licenses, effective that day. And on July 11, a court in Rabat fined an Al Jazeera correspondent MAD 5,000 (\$600) for publishing false information.

One recent trial that drew international attention centered around Chapter 52 of the press law, which provides for imprisonment, fines, and civil damages against anyone who criticizes a foreign head of state or diplomatic representative, even if the criticism relates to actual events or a point of view on a political system. In June 2009, the Libyan embassy in Rabat brought an action under Chapter 52 against three Moroccan newspapers (*Al Jareeda Al ula*, *Al Ahdath Al Maghreb*, and *Al Masaa*), charging that they had criticized Muammar Gaddafi. Despite the defense's protests that Libyan law does not designate Gaddafi as head of state, a court in Casablanca ordered the three newspapers to pay MAD 1 million (\$120,000) each for "injury to the dignity and personality of the head of state." It also ordered the editors-in-chief of the newspapers and the journalists to pay a fine of MAD 100,000 (\$12,000) each.

Press law reform is not a priority of the government of Prime Minister Abbas Fassi, who took power in the fall of 2007. Under the previous government, the Ministry of Communications met frequently with representatives of the press union and the publishers' federation to discuss reforms. They reached some tentative agreements but made no formal progress.

The High Authority for Audiovisual Communication (HACA) was established in 2007 to regulate and monitor broadcast media, especially in the areas of political pluralism, program ethics, and public information. But it has proven unable to influence the senior officials of state-affiliated television channels to heed its policies or official guidelines.

Panelist Chakib Benomar (name changed to protect his identity), a producer working in national television, said that Moroccan television has become a system for broadcasting information that is recorded and then censored. He said that in rural areas, radio reaches citizens and raises issues, but television is still under censorship. Morocco has no regional broadcast news, and televised reports remain recorded, with no live outside broadcasting. Sometimes journalists present live outside coverage, but the state, specifically the Ministry of the Interior, will choose the topics for such coverage.

Print media have an open licensing system, based on issuing permits and regulated by the Press Act of 1958 as amended in 2003. At times the authorities appear to be working to hinder establishment of any new newspapers by refusing to grant

license holders the receipt required for starting operations. Although uncommon, such illegal practices do occur.

HACA, the agency responsible for issuing television and radio licenses, lacks transparency in its activities. Since 2006, HACA has granted licenses for 10 radio stations, as well as one television channel, Medi Sat 1. Most were granted to owners who are interested in music, chat, or the economy, and individuals close to the government whose primary aim is profit.

One of the most interesting developments in early 2009 was the suspension of television licensing, right after HACA held an open competition for licenses. On August 11, 2008, HACA announced a competition for the establishment and operation of two television services and a radio service with national coverage, in addition to four radio services with multi-directional coverage. In January 2009, HACA heard proposals for five television and 23 radio projects whose project files met the license terms and conditions.

Yet on February 23, HACA suspended licensing any television channels, justifying its decision with reference to the situation in the advertising market and the crisis at Medi Sat 1, which was struggling with low revenue. HACA deemed that licensing any new national television project at that moment would destabilize the sector, threatening the short-term stability of existing enterprises and their continuance over the medium term.

Media observers criticized the decision, charging that HACA should never have opened the competition if those

considerations were to affect its decision-making. Further, competitors would have borne the risks resulting from their decisions, and would not have been HACA's responsibility to protect them.

HACA's decision and justifications could be ascribed to political considerations. Almost all of the competitors for television licenses are close to the palace (Munir al Majeedi, director of the royal purse; Fuad Ali al Himma, a friend of the king, an active player in the reconstruction of the political field, and founder of a new party; Aziz Akhnosh, businessman and minister of agriculture; and Othman Benjelloun, a well-known banker). Thus, the king was surely aware of the introduction of competition and the decision to suspend licensing. Panelist Muhammad Al Awny, a journalist working for national radio, agreed that HACA's decision was ultimately subject to the will of the king.

According to Benomar, the director general of public radio and television had begged the king to protect the current broadcasters. Benomar also expressed the view that radio and television must be free and that whoever is appointed to be director general must evaluate the market. The state rejects private television because it could dilute the government's political influence over broadcasting, he added.

Abdelaziz Nouaydi, the moderator of the panel and a professor and lawyer, said that HACA is a referee in the radio and television field, but the agency is weaker than the public channels—tools of the state and political decision-makers.

Nouaydi said that at a time when Morocco has strong opposition newspapers, the state's logic is that Moroccans can have the print media while the state holds radio and television. Panelist Hisham Medasha, a researcher for HACA, said the authorities' desire to control live broadcasting is illustrated by the suspension of Al Jazeera's license to broadcast from Rabat. Panelist Ali Onozla, director of *Al Jareeda Aloula*, said that broadcasting is a security matter, so Al Jazeera had been suspended because it broadcasts live and cannot be controlled. However, panelists noted, technical innovations will eventually remove those obstacles.

According to panelist Khadeja Al Bakali, manager of a public regional radio station, broadcast permit applicants are either close to the decision-making process or are the economic beneficiaries. Licenses are not given to radio or television stations outside that circle.

Journalists are often harassed for their attempts to describe violations of the law, report tragic situations, and expose corruption. They are also attacked as a tactic to compel them to reveal their sources of information. Panelist Maria Mkrim, editor-in-chief of *Al Ayam*, said that a judicial officer had said he was willing to sacrifice his life to compel a journalist to

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.

reveal his sources. The journalist's house was invaded and his family members intimidated.

According to SNPM monitoring reports, the period between May 2008 and May 2009 was notable for an increase in attacks carried out by security officers, guards, and others. A notable incident occurred on February 10, 2009, when approximately 20 officers of the National Judicial Police (a division specializing in investigating terrorist crimes, major drug offenses, and complex crimes) illegally surrounded, invaded, and searched the headquarters of *Al Ayam* newspaper in Casablanca. They were looking for a photo of the king's mother, immediately after the newspaper had requested permission to publish it. When they did not find the director of the newspaper or its editor-in-chief on the premises, the police telephoned the director, traced the call, and arrested her at the home of one of her friends. Later, they arrested the editor-in-chief at home. Both were taken to the National Bureau of the Judicial Police and subjected to hours of interrogation and degrading treatment. They were released the next morning, but the police summoned the editor-in-chief again that evening and interrogated him for over four hours.

SNPM concluded that such incidents have intimidated journalists and created an atmosphere of uncertainty within media companies, which fail to take the necessary measures when their journalists are subjected to abuse in the course of their work. SNPM said that continuing this approach will encourage corrupt groups to plan and carry out attacks against journalists, following the pattern seen in a number of countries.

It should be noted that only print media outlets report on attacks against journalists; radio and television outlets do not report such incidents.

Morocco's press law and criminal code stipulate that libel is a criminal offense. The best-known recent case ended in a judgment on March 25, 2008. *Al Mas'a*, a newspaper known for its harsh criticism of government officials, was ordered to pay MAD 6 million (\$750,000) in damages and a fine of MAD 120,000 (\$15,000) to four royal deputies at Al Qasr Al Kabir for defamation. On October 30, 2008, the judgment was endorsed by an appellate court. The evident aim was to force the newspaper into bankruptcy; the courts have not handed down an imprisonment sentence, and observers and advocates consider the damages disproportionately large.

Another high-profile case involved the head of one newspaper filing suit against the head of another paper. On March 23, 2009, the lower court in Casablanca handed down a suspended sentence of two months' imprisonment and an award totaling MAD 200,000 (\$25,000) in fines and damages

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against two journalists from *Al Jarida al Oula*: managing editor Ali Onozla, an MSI panelist; and Jamal Bodoma, the paper's publishing director.

The case goes back to September 2008, when Hassan al Yaqoubi, the spouse of King Muhammad VI's aunt, shot and wounded a traffic police officer that pulled him over for failing to stop at a traffic light. This incident shocked the Moroccan public. *Al Jarida al Oula* covered the event, and its reports criticized the fact that al Yacoubi had not been brought to trial nor had a police report even been filed.

In response, Khalid al Hashemi al Idrissi, publication director of *Aujourd'hui Le Maroc* daily and chair of the Moroccan Federation of Newspaper Publishers, published an editorial in his paper about the incident. He stated that the newspapers that covered the incident, and the author of the *Al Jarida al Oula* piece in particular, lacked "national spirit" and did not understand "the ethics of the profession."

When Bodoma wrote a satirical piece on al Hashemi al Idrissi's editorial, al Hashemi al Idrissi filed a lawsuit against *Al Jarida al Oula* alleging "defamation and insult." In September 2008, a judgment was issued in al Hashemi al Idrissi's favor. Onozla claimed that the court never notified *Al Jarida al Oula* staff when to appear in court.

When *Al Jarida al Oula* republished the same article and an accompanying article questioning what it called the "secrecy" of the trial, al Hashemi al Idrissi filed another lawsuit against *Al Jarida al Oula*, accusing it of "defamation and insult," but this time, he added a new charge of "prejudice to the prestige of the judiciary." The result was the suspended sentence and fines handed down by the Casablanca court in March.

Morocco has no laws to protect the right of access to information, despite strong demand from researchers, teachers, students, NGOs, and activists—and despite the conflict with Morocco's ratification of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights in 1979 and the OECD Convention on Combating Bribery of Foreign Public Officials in International Business Transactions in May 2007. The law governing the conduct of public officials does not help to provide information; rather, it promotes the confidentiality

and privacy of information. However, a set of laws does require officialdom to publicize some of the preparatory procedures for decisions affecting rights and interests, and provides the authorities with broad latitude concerning the publication of reports of public and media interest.

In June 2008, the government-affiliated Advisory Council on Human Rights filed a lawsuit against a newspaper to stop publication of statements given in secret before the Equity and Reconciliation Commission. The testimony described human rights abuses that allegedly occurred between 1960 and 1999. The council called for a ban on publishing the information that *Al Jarida al Oula* obtained from the Equity and Reconciliation Commission archives, and requested that the court order the newspaper director to return all documentation and records to the council or be fined. The lower court in Rabat ordered a stop on publication.

The lack of laws guaranteeing the right to access to information becomes glaring amid Morocco's expansion of e-government and the promulgation of legislation on storage and protection of personal data. Morocco's ranking in the United Nations e-government index in 2008 remained 140th out of the UN's 192 states. In North Africa, Morocco ranks behind Libya (120th), Algeria (121st), and Tunisia (124th).

A number of institutions have mobilized to advocate for a law on access to information. Transparency Maroc, a Moroccan association combating corruption, published a study on the concept of the right of access to information and drafted a proposal for a law. In addition, a group from the Socialist Union of Popular Forces political party organized a study day at the House of Representatives on the right of access to news. It was held with the participation of the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs. The team had proposed a draft law in May 2006 that did not become legislation.

In May 2007, the Justice Association organized a national symposium on the right of access to information in Marrakesh. Judges, lawyers, journalists, lawmakers, and academics took part. The symposium resulted in the Marrakesh Declaration and a major document that included the proceedings of the symposium.¹

The Center for Media Freedom in the Middle East and North Africa, together with similar associations from Bahrain, Jordan, and Egypt, contributed to the foundation of the Arabic Network for Freedom of Information in July 2008. The aim of the network is to ensure that the issue of access to information is included in the discourse on economic and

political reforms in the Arab world. On December 22, 2008 in Casablanca, the center presented a field study carried out during September and October 2008 on private enterprise and access to public information in Morocco.² The study concluded that private enterprise is not satisfied with the quality of information received from the various public administrative bodies, and called for a law to guarantee the right of access to information.

State institutions discriminate when disseminating information, giving priority to the public media and providing access to only some events, al Makhfy said. Benomar noted that no entity within the administration is responsible for providing journalists with information.

Regarding entry into the journalism profession, Al Awni pointed out that problems with funding, training, and career structure affect journalism careers. He contended that journalism is not truly a profession in Morocco, as some work as journalists simply to escape unemployment. One panelist pointed out that the key positions in public broadcasting are subject to political scrutiny, and called for the Ministry of Communications to issue press cards to allow journalists to attend and cover official events and press conferences. Foreign journalists are required to have accreditation with the Ministry of Communications.

OBJECTIVE 2: PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISM

Morocco Objective Score: 2.02

Although Moroccan media have seen some progress as a result of competition among the independent press, panelists agreed that a lack of professionalism still prevails, and that a large number of media companies have weak ethical traditions.

Since the end of the 1990s, changes in the political landscape gave rise to two factors affecting the development of a professional independent press: the increase in competition between the independent press and the partisan media, and the boldness of the independent press in broaching a number of formerly taboo subjects. Since 1999, many new independent newspapers have appeared, such as the Arabic weeklies *Al-Sahifa*, *Al Ayyam*, *Al Watan Al'aan*, and *Al Hayat Al Gadida*; and *Nichane* weekly, the Arabic-language version of the French weekly *TelQuel*. Among French-language weeklies, panelists also mentioned *Le Journal Hebdomadaire*, and among Arabic dailies, *Al-sabah*, *Al Masaa*, and *Maghribi Events*.

¹ Justice Association: The Right of Access to Information between Legislature, Administration and Judiciary: Workshop of a National Symposium, May 2007, Dar Al Qalam, Rabat.

² CMF-MENA: *Entreprises privées et accès à l'information publique au Maroc*, December 2008.

Nouaydi said that the new independent, non-partisan press and the resulting competition has significantly improved the quality of newspapers, in terms of form as well as content.

Readers can find good investigative reports in independent press outlets such as *Al Ayyam*, *Al Hayyah Al Gadida*, *Al Watan Al'aan*, *TelQuel*, and *Le Journal*. In particular, these outlets report on corruption, bribery, how governmental decisions are made, people surrounding the king, security problems, the judicial system, and the army. On public television, Channel 2 has aired some important reports, though such programs come out only once a month.

In its 2009 report, SNPM said that despite disparities in the performance of Morocco's radio stations, their performance is positive on the whole, as they succeeded in introducing open and free programs, dialogues, and products that had not been allowed in the past. They also showcased the abilities of some young journalists in making creative contributions to broadcasting. The same could be said of the public radio sector, which has become bolder than the television sector in addressing issues.

However, SNPM also noted that many stations do not comply with certain professional standards. Language consistency is an issue, with programs mixing Arabic and French; and in some cases, programs descend into triviality and questionable morality.

Al Zenaki said that even though print and broadcast media have their differences, problems with professionalism, particularly shallowness, are common to all. He said that it is possible to do professional work at a number of media outlets, but a uniform logic among them results in statements

and information presented in much the same way in a number of outlets.

Broadcast media lack the basic elements of ethics, Medasha said. Benomar said that the National Radio and Television Company had allocated a significant budget to training courses given in cooperation with the French National Broadcasting Institute. Morocco's National Broadcasting Institute, however, is not capable of training journalists in either technique or professionalism.

Gamal Mohafez, a news agency journalist, added that most institutions do not have their own codes of professional ethics, although they are making some attempts. The official Moroccan News Agency introduced a code of ethics in 2000, but it was intended to be secret and to restrict journalists' freedoms, and journalists had to sign the code. There is also SNPM's charter, and the publishers' federation charter came as a response to threats to limit the freedom of the press. However, some media members think that a code of ethics is not of much importance, and that good professional practices are sufficient.

Benomar observed that the 2009 SNPM report stated that no newspaper has an editorial charter defining clearly the newspaper's orientation or setting professional and ethical rules to be observed by all journalists—and especially by editors, who remain subject to the wishes of their boards' backers. Moreover, the situation is deteriorating because of the intransigence of journalists, who are only too happy to use outrageous practices such as insulting, defaming, spreading false news, and libeling people and their reputations. At the same time, they will attack anyone who criticizes them while demanding that their victims respect professional ethics.

SNPM has a responsibility to exert pressure on press institutions to adopt codes of ethics, Bakali said. Onozla added that boards of editors should develop codes of ethics, and that a clear editorial policy could have a notable impact. Staff at *Al Jarida al Oula* have held lengthy meetings on the objectives of the newspaper and its editorial line; however, journalists continue to follow their own convictions.

Referring to her experience at *Al Ayyam* weekly, Mkrim said that supervisors raise the issue of ethics at the beginning of a journalist's employment with the paper, which is known for its clear editorial line criticizing state policy. Since the establishment of *Al Ayyam* daily in 1998, the paper has had a written editorial charter; *Al Ayyam* weekly is an extension of the daily. *Al Ayyam* had not yet written a code of ethics, she said, but if one were instituted, it would reflect a situation already at an advanced stage.

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).

Panelists noted that self-censorship is prevalent in the media close to the king. Independent media are generally bolder and more distanced than the other mass media from the practice of self-censorship.

Al Bakali and several other panelists cited the “Belaerg” case as an example of ethical breaches, particularly by the public media. On February 20, 2008, following the arrest of a group of citizens, the minister of the interior held a press conference accusing the detainees of being activists in an armed terrorist organization. The two public channels, Channel 1 and Channel 2, covered the case extensively, both taking a stance in support of the official position and often using the same information and wording used by the Ministry of the Interior. The channels provided no balancing opinions or differing points of view, especially not in defense of the suspects. Their coverage was in violation of the presumption of innocence and did not respect the rights of the accused, for whom the law provides confidentiality during criminal investigations.

On July 3, 2008, Nouaydi, acting as attorney for defendants al Mustafa al Mo’tasem and Muhammad al Marwani, made an application before HACA complaining of biased coverage by the two public channels and demanding the right of reply under the law that established HACA. On September 30, 2008, HACA handed down its decision, giving Channel 1 a warning but clearing Channel 2. Nouaydi challenged HACA’s decision before the Administrative Court in Rabat because the decision did not enable the defense to reply, and because HACA had cleared Channel 2 although it had committed the same violation as Channel 1.

Al Makhfy said that ethics can be violated by a lack of restraint and not only during criminal investigations. Children have been photographed without the consent of their families in connection with crime reporting, for example. In terms of news sources, some newspapers still say that reports of crimes are just “rumors,” reflecting the lack of professionalism at those outlets.

Bribery is a problem in the media, and Al Awni noted this is especially true in sports coverage, where one can pay to have a photo published. He also noted that some newspapers engage in defamation of rivals. He cited *Al masaa* against *Tel Quel* as examples.

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Onozla expressed the view that some press institutions are being infiltrated by the authorities, and that editorial boards should be responsible for combating such ethical violations. He recalled that when he worked at *Al Masaa*, the authorities had tried to place some articles against their political opponents. When a journalist brought in a CD showing a member of the banned Islamic Justice and Charity Group with a woman in a house in Agadir, his paper refused to publish it, but it was published in *Al Nnahar* and *Al Sabaheyya*.

The independent and partisan print media cover major events, but during those events, public television channels broadcast entertainment programs such as music and romantic serials. Public media broadcast only government news at peak viewing and listening times, and cultural programs are broadcast at off-peak times.

Panelists saw no change in terms of salaries and working conditions. Well-funded newspapers pay higher salaries, with French-language papers paying the best. Public radio and television outlets pay better salaries and provide better working conditions than private media, especially in radio, but administrative costs consume much of the budget.

A 2005 collective agreement between SNPM and the Moroccan Federation of Newspaper Publishers specifies journalist salaries and benefits. It mandates a minimum monthly salary of MAD 5,800 (\$700) for a professional journalist, and that seniority be taken into account. It also mandates that employers register staff in the social security fund to cover pensions, stipulates that journalists have the right to training, sets the duration of annual leave, and outlines the journalist’s obligation toward the employer. Nevertheless, many newspapers are not able to assume all these obligations in the absence of subsidies. Even newspapers that can afford to meet their obligations nevertheless make journalists work without contracts.

Private radio stations recruit trainees and provide meager compensation, and employ others for short terms so that they do not qualify for benefits.

Al Awny said that low salaries leave media members tempted by corruption. Onozla agreed, but said that a low salary does not justify corruption. Some journalists whose salaries are indeed inadequate simply choose to make sacrifices.

Some panelists noted that because of the emergence of new papers, demand for journalists has intensified, and institutions are competing to attract them at the expense of newspapers that either cannot or will not pay higher salaries.

According to SNPM, the use of modern technologies also poses challenges for journalists, as employers try to turn them into technicians for various tasks such as printing, preparing audio and video reports, doing documentation, preparation, and other tasks that are normally carried out by other workers. In addition, employers in both the public and private sectors are trying to cut down on contracts with journalists and workers, relying on part-time workers without regard for quality. Al Awny said some contractors do not have college degrees yet are paid twice as much as professionals.

The panelists agreed that the public television sector values entertainment programs more than news and information, and that the government has no system to bring the public channels to account for wasting public funds on bad programs and senseless jobs.

Print media quality has benefited from the Internet, computerized editing, high-technology printing presses, and professional distribution companies, although those companies remain concentrated in Casablanca and Rabat.

OBJECTIVE 3: PLURALITY OF NEWS

Morocco Objective Score: 1.97

Morocco's print media are divided among the independent press, which often criticize state policy; the partisan press, which serve the objectives of various political parties and are subject to their positions; and the mainly private French-language press, which mostly serve economic interest groups and are close to the state. The private sector press represents 85 percent of total publications, with the rest being owned by the state or political parties. The total newspaper print run is about 300,000 copies, distributed mainly in major cities.

Although the Ministry of Communications has not published reports since 2005, statistics of the Sapro distribution company indicate that 78 percent of titles are Arabic-language and 22 percent French; the latter are 95 percent Moroccan and 5 percent other.³

In early 2009, the radio and television sector included two public broadcasting companies: the National Corporation of Broadcasting and Television (French acronym SNRT) and Channel Two (2M). SNRT has one national radio channel, one national television channel, and three other television stations: Moroccan Channel, a joint venture with Channel 2 to serve Moroccans living abroad; Channel 4, an educational outlet; and Channel 6, a religion-themed station. Morocco

³ http://www.sapress.ma/def.asp?codelangue=23&info=834&date_ar=2009-7-10

Despite the abundance of domestic programs on public broadcast stations, their overt political angles and poor quality have made many Moroccans, especially the elite, turn to foreign satellite channels.

has one regional station, in Al Oyouin city in Western Sahara, which rebroadcasts Channel 1. Channel 2 also has a radio station. Panelists said that they believe that these two broadcasters share a single editorial line.

Morocco has only one private radio station, Medi 1 Sat. Radio Sawa, originating from the United States, also broadcasts in Morocco. In 2006, HACA granted licenses to 10 more radio stations but suspended the licensing in 2009, as explained under Objective 1. HACA issued four "second generation" licenses to regional/thematic radio stations.⁴

Despite the abundance of domestic programs on public broadcast stations, their overt political angles and poor quality have made many Moroccans, especially the elite, turn to foreign satellite channels. The channels include Al Jazeera, MBC, English- and French-language channels, and in the north, Spanish channels.

Internet service is of key importance in Morocco. The basic Internet service provider in Morocco is Maroc Telecom, a company owned by the French Vivendi Universal company (53 percent share) and the Moroccan government (30 percent), with the remaining shares held by the private sector. In 2006, Maroc Telecom had 391,000 Internet subscribers, the vast majority over ADSL lines.

The number of people who use the Internet for news, information, and communication is growing. However, Moroccans use the Internet for entertainment and other services also. Since the exposure of corruption among *gendarmes* in Targist on YouTube in July 2007,⁵ citizens such as non-unionized police officers have used the Internet widely to expose corruption or violations of human rights and to express their views. The government has not placed restrictions on Internet access.

However, access to media outlets remains a problem for many. Most Moroccans cannot afford newspapers because of poverty (the price of a newspaper is equivalent to the price

⁴ <http://www.haca.ma/indexAr.jsp>

⁵ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z8RgWRmRtUc>

Since the exposure of corruption among gendarmes in Targist on YouTube in July 2007, citizens such as non-unionized police officers have used the Internet widely to expose corruption or violations of human rights and to express their views.

of two loaves of bread) and illiteracy, especially in rural areas. Internet use, too, is limited because of illiteracy and poverty.

Similarly, the international press is not subject to any prohibition on distribution, but most people cannot afford the price. Prices would be reduced if those newspapers were printed in Morocco, but the press law requires a printing license issued by the prime minister. Al Awny said permission had been granted for French titles *Le Figaro* and *L'Équipe* to be printed in Morocco.

HACA cannot always ensure political and ideological pluralism, despite the complaints brought before it. Political pluralism is limited to the parties represented in parliament, and most media outlets leave little room for the opinions or voices of those who do not participate in elections or politics.

Morocco has 18 foreign news agencies. The only domestic news agency, Maghreb Arabe Presse (MAP), is operated by the state in Rabat and has 12 regional offices, in addition to 18 offices abroad. MAP publishes Moroccan news in Arabic,

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.

French, English, and Spanish. Moroccan newspapers receive a 30 percent discount on the agency's services. According to the 2009 press union report, MAP is considered the principal public news institution in Morocco, distributing news at the national and international levels.

MAP is known for how it selects and sometimes modifies the news. Established in 1959 and nationalized in 1977, the agency is governed by obsolete laws that date back to 1971 and subject it to the government's orders. Like the government, the MAP board reports to the prime minister. The panel agreed that MAP needs to be reformed to promote professionalism and independence. However, proposals that would address these issues have been postponed.

Al Awny said that when the king and the minister of communications appointed Ali Bouzerda director of MAP on January 9, 2009, Bouzerda took action against several journalists. Aziz Almaseeh was sent away to Bouarfa, in the south of the country, because of his union work. Bouzerda also prevented Mustafa Alloizi from writing for other newspapers, and ordered Nadia Abram, a correspondent in Beirut, to return after three months, despite the difficult arrangements made by her family to secure her financial stability and her children's studies.

In discussing the objectivity of public media, panelists noted the existence of a "black list" of persons who must not appear on television, especially in live broadcasts. At the same time, Channels 1 and 2 both have contracted with certain individuals and introduced them as independent experts in political science, although some have no experience subject and others are widely known as working for political parties close to the government. They have given analyses, upon request and under the pretext of providing independent expertise, attacking independent or opposition political parties. Media outlets likely have contracted with these figures upon recommendation of the government, and never call upon the true political science experts known for their critical analyses.

Ownership of private print media is not transparent. Banks, insurance companies, and companies operating in other sectors own shares in several newspapers, especially the French-language publications.

There is a movement to encourage and spread the recognition of Amazigh language and culture. Amazigh was the language of the pre-Arab population of Morocco and still used by people who identify themselves as Berber. On October 13, 2006, following a meeting of the joint committee of the Ministry of Communications and the Royal Institute for Amazigh Culture, an Amazigh channel project was announced. But on January 16, 2008, the signing ceremony

for funding of the channel was postponed. The Amazigh Network of Citizenship issued a statement expressing regret for the delay, saying those who opposed the Amazigh claims had done everything in their power to block the establishment of the channel.⁶

OBJECTIVE 4: BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

Morocco Objective Score: 1.91

Since 1999, several independent newspapers have been founded. They are managed as successful economic projects that earn profits from sales and advertising. Panelists cited the Arabic weeklies *Al-Sahifa*, *Al Ayyam*, *Al Watan Al'aan*, and *Al Hayat Al Gadida*; and *Nichane*, the Arabic-language version of the French weekly *TelQuel*. Among French-language weeklies, panelists also mentioned *Le Journal Hebdomadaire*, and among Arabic dailies, *Al-sabah*, *Al Masaa*, and *Maghribi Events*.

In addition, French-language papers such as *L'Economiste*, *La Vie Economique*, and *Maroc Hebdo* have achieved significant circulations because they address the world of business and management and issues important to the French-speaking elite.

In turn, the professionalism of these papers boosted professionally managed printing and distribution companies, as entrepreneurs made them profitable. Panelists cited the example of the Sapress distribution company, which was founded 30 years ago and has kiosks throughout every city in Morocco.

Public media are less well managed, however, in the opinion of several panelists. Benomar said that company regulations at Channel 1 do not describe professions, so assessments of cost-effectiveness cannot be carried out. Journalists become company staff members like any others. Since Channel 1 became part of the National Broadcasting Company, media bosses and entrepreneurs have been operating without controls and with high salaries.

Nepotism also impacts the return to taxpayers. One journalist said that the son of Prime Minister Abbas el Fassi was employed by Channel 1 to be responsible for the satellite channel, and received a salary of up to MAD 24,000 (\$3,000). Similarly, a number of HACA directors have recommended the hiring of many individuals, including the daughter of Naema al Mashriqi (a member of HACA) who has joined Channel 1's news staff. Medasha commented that a kind of brokerage is indeed going on in the recruitment process.

⁶ <http://www.forumalternatives.org/rac/article262.html>.

Moroccan media obtain revenue from four sources: publicity/advertising, sales, state support, and support from private sources (such as voluntary individual contributions or persons implementing government demands).

Most print advertising goes to French-language newspapers, given the relatively high purchasing power of the few who read newspapers in French. The most widely read Arabic-language newspapers have also begun to win important advertising contracts in the fields of communications and apartment rentals; both are marketed by giant real estate companies. Auto advertising in Arabic is also on the rise.

Political considerations also work for or against some newspapers, depending on their editorial lines and stances on public policy. Some newspapers will be supplied with advertisements for several years, while others will be punished for their political stances by a withdrawal of advertising. A large number of leading state-run institutions (including Morocco Communications and the National Commission to Prevent Traffic Accidents, which top the list of big advertisers) and a number of private companies try to influence the political direction of newspapers by refraining from advertising in papers such as *Le Journal Hebdomadaire* weekly and *Al Masaa* daily.

Al Zenaki said that many large state-run institutions buy advertising space and are under political direction. Thus, who gets what depends on the head of a particular institution. Only about 10 or 11 public or private institutions are key players in the advertising market.

In radio and television, foreign companies and 10 major domestic corporations account for about 60 percent of the

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.

Most print advertising goes to French-language newspapers, given the relatively high purchasing power of the few who read newspapers in French. The most widely read Arabic-language newspapers have also begun to win important advertising contracts in the fields of communications and apartment rentals; both are marketed by giant real estate companies.

advertising on the two public channels. In the past, the Régie 3 company accounted for 76 percent of television advertising and more than 95 percent on radio, while the Independent Advertising Agency dominated advertisements on Channel 1.

Television has suffered from competition from advertising billboards and satellite channels. This trend could explain HACA's decision to suspend issuance of licenses, which in effect bolted shut a door to competition that had only just opened.

The 2005 collective agreement between the Ministry of Communications, SNPM, and the Moroccan Federation of Newspaper Publishers stipulated financial subsidies to print media. The program aims to enhance the professional qualifications of workers in the information sector; to help media outlets modernize; and to cover basic expenses such as paper, telecommunications, and international distribution. To receive such support, a publication must be legally sound, provide public news of a national or regional nature, not allow advertising to exceed half its column inches, be sold to the public at a specific price or by subscription, employ a minimum number of journalists and employees in accordance with its quality, publish its accounts annually and disclose its own bank account, sign the collective agreement with journalists to guarantee them a minimum level of rights, be published regularly, and indicate circulation in every edition. In addition, it must publish an annual account of its circulation, or account for two years if it is publishing for the first time.

In 2005, almost 35 titles benefited from government support, and in 2006, the state granted 50 titles for financial subsidies amounting to MAD 43 million (\$5 million). However, the Ministry of Communications has refrained from publishing the subsidy figures in detail or even the annual report on print and broadcast media from 2007 to date.

Some subsidy beneficiaries were newspaper proprietors and members of the subsidy distribution commission, which includes representatives of the publishers' federation. The federation was founded by the chairman of the Eco Medias group, which publishes newspapers and magazines and owns its own press, a radio station, and a high school of journalism and communication, and had received—until February 2009 at least—a significant proportion of the support given to the press. In 2005 (the last year for which figures were published) two Eco Medias titles received the highest subsidies, totaling MAD 4,950,664 (\$600,000).

Al Awny said that financial support in 2009 is already late, but that nobody is talking about it, and Ministry of Communications statements on subsidies have not been detailed. That blackout would make it difficult to expose any discrimination or collusion taking place within the subsidies commission.

Speaking as a member of the press union, Al Awny said that subsidies are a case of financing the rich. Subsidies should be linked to advertising revenue, he said—the greater the advertising revenue, the lower the subsidy. He also pointed out that subsidies to *Albayan* and *Bayan Al Youm* had increased during the tenure of two successive ministers of communication, both of whom belonged to the parties that published them; while the government stopped subsidies for *Alyassar almowahhad* newspaper of the United Left party.

Onozla said that the subsidies are not transparent. There are also partisan newspapers that received subsidies but were not printed (*Al Haraka/Ala'hd*). Onozla said that the method of delivering subsidies is offensive: A check is sent to the director of the paper instead of being allocated in such a way as to cover expenses for paper, telephones, or taxes. He wondered about the requirement for two years to pass before offering a subsidy to new and emerging newspapers, and likened it to sitting on one's hands while one's infant dies.

Le Journal has refused public funding, Onozla said, calling for transparency and a just way of distributing subsidies.

Al Zenaki recalled that, two years earlier, applications containing false information were submitted in order to receive subsidies. In the first year, there had been a lie concerning the consumption of paper. The minister had noted that some documents had not been authenticated and promised to take action, and also refused to give subsidies to a number of newspapers, but he was later subjected to pressure and handed out subsidies haphazardly.

In its 2009 report, SNPM indicated that results of the subsidies effort were not reflected in journalists' working conditions, nor had the program contributed, as legally required, to institutions' management modernization or to rationalization of their operations.

OBJECTIVE 5: SUPPORTING INSTITUTIONS

Morocco Objective Score: 2.29

In the broadcast sector, SNRT's income sources include government support; fees for television sets, which are collected as indirect taxes added to users' electricity bills, and; income from independent advertising agencies. The government budget supports public broadcasting channels in part to protect them from competition from foreign satellite channels. The state provided the broadcaster with MAD 2.5 billion (\$300 million) between 2006 and 2008, including MAD 1.7 billion (\$200 million) from the government budget and MAD 556 million (\$70 million) from the radio and television production support fund.

Since 2006, the Marocmétrique company has provided viewing and listening figures for the national broadcaster and Channel 2 to the advertising agency Régie3, the Advertisers' Group in Morocco, and the Association of Communications Consultant Agencies. However, some journalists had doubts about the ratings for public television.

Panelists also noted the increasing clout wielded by advertisers. Broadcast programmers' selection of scheduling and type of program is now driven by the requirements of the advertisements to be aired during the program.

For the print media, the Association of Advertising Authors, the Federation of Counseling Agencies, and the 59-member Moroccan Federation of Newspaper Publishers established the Morocco Audit Bureau of Circulations (French acronym OJD) in 2004 to gather circulation and distribution data. Thus, newspaper publishers are able to price advertisements based on circulation and distribution, and advertisers and advertising agencies can also choose the most popular publishers and justify their choices. In April 2009, officials of the OJD office in Morocco, with the assistance of the French OJD group, checked the distribution of 28 titles printed in Casablanca.⁷ OJD Morocco intends to monitor another group of newspapers in the near future.⁸

Advertisers also depend on the audit offices of Sapress and Shospress, the country's two largest distribution companies, for distribution statistics.

Even though OJD has always encouraged transparency in circulation figures, transparency has had hardly any direct implications in terms of advertising revenues. Advertising rates and distribution tariffs, which should be known as a result of documenting sales, remain uncertain because of subjective political and patronage considerations.

Although membership with the OJD does not directly affect advertising revenue, it doubles the chances of obtaining financial support from the state based on circulation figures.

⁷ See <http://www.ojd.ma/site/ma/adherents.php>.

⁸ http://www.ojd.ma/site/ma/news_detail.php?id=26.

The Moroccan Federation of Newspaper Publishers has emerged as a union for newspaper proprietors, and some members are also members of SNPM. Since November 2007, the federation has included proprietors of radio stations and is no longer restricted to publishers of newspapers.

In February 2008, the federation renewed its structures so that it could contribute decisively to the rehabilitation of print media in Morocco by negotiating with the government. As a result, the number of press institutions meeting the conditions for government subsidies increased to more than 70, up from 13 when the subsidy agreement came into effect in 2006. The federation believes that it has achieved its objectives, and is now calling for a subsidy increase from MAD 50 million (\$6 million) to MAD 100 million (\$12 million).

Just as the federation has contributed to the establishment of a body to verify newspaper circulation figures, it also has complained about the lack of rationalization and transparency in the commercial market and the difficulty of obtaining government advertisements, which affect many newspaper budgets. In addition, the federation has fought against prison sentences for press-related issues.

The publishers' federation came under criticism from several panelists, however. Mkrim said that newspaper proprietors and their federation defended their material interests alone, and that no strong solidarity is evident among them. The director of *Al Ayam* submitted his resignation to the federation after he and his paper's editor-in-chief were harassed by the authorities because of the affair surrounding the photo of the king's mother. Onozla said that the relationship between the federation and *Al Ayam* during the crisis clearly was not one of solidarity. Mkrim added that *Al Masaa* left the federation when the paper had problems with Kamal Lahlou, president of the federation.

SNPM—the only union in which all Moroccan journalists participate—provides unwavering support for media freedom and for the rights of union members. The union has 1,200 members from all channels and publications. It contributes to training sessions with the International Federation of Journalists.

Al Awny said the union has become neither a professional body nor an authority. Press cards should be issued by the union instead of by the Ministry of Communications, he said, and training also should be the union's responsibility. In addition, he said, the union condemns journalists for their

political positions rather than speaking out in solidarity with them and their rights.

El Bakali said that in general, professional bodies in Morocco are weak, with the principal problem being Morocco's own non-democratic traditions. Some union members are journalists who came together to protect their work, while others—she mentioned private broadcasters—joined the union to protect themselves from being fired, but tend not to follow up their membership or participate in union activities.

Recently, media members have formed unions for bloggers and the e-press. On April 4, 2009, the first conference of the Moroccan Bloggers' Association was held in the Bar Association Club in Rabat. The president of the Bar Association expressed willingness to support and help bloggers at all levels.

Even before its formal establishment, the bloggers' association expressed strong solidarity with one of its members, Muhammad Alraje. On September 8, 2008, Alraje was sentenced to two years' imprisonment on charges of breaching due respect for the king, because he had criticized the king's practice of granting undue privileges. SNPM, Reporters Without Borders, the Arabic Network for Human Rights Information, several Moroccan newspapers, and others also denounced the sentence. As a result, the Court of Appeals in Bokadir quashed the sentence of the lower court on September 18, 2008, and ordered that Alraje not be further investigated or prosecuted.

Human rights organizations also provide strong support for press freedom and freedom of expression. Such organizations include ADALA, Human Rights, and Transparency Maroc.

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.

The Higher Institute of Information and Communication, which is a public entity, provides training for journalists. Students are accepted on a competitive basis and spend four years studying the theoretical and practical aspects of media. In their final year, students must complete an internship, spending two days a week at a media institution. However, Al Makhfy said that training at the Institute is no longer of high quality. The senior journalists on the teaching staff work for four or five newspapers. As a result, those staff are always working on their own projects and hardly ever available.

There are three private media institutes but panelists pointed to the limited language and practical skills of their graduates.

Regarding the training of working journalists, Bakali said that training does not form an integral part of media outlets operational plans; consequently, training courses abroad are simply a form of tourism, and the investment in it is wasted. Benomar added a nuance to that view: The internal structure of radio and television is not keeping pace with the training institutes.

Onozla said that journalists are often deprived of training opportunities because their employers need their services and they cannot be spared.

Al Makhfy said that the ambition of any publication is to have its own printing press to ensure its sustainability. Some partisan newspapers and journals receive support from the state or through international assistance because they have presses and appropriate infrastructure. At the same time, free and independent titles continue to suffer from the lack of their own presses and infrastructure. Some party newspapers have received subsidies to establish printing presses, Onozla said, and outlets receive European support under MEDA programs.

The cost of distribution eats almost half of sales proceeds, said al Zenaki. Sapress and Shospress distribute most print media. Onozla said that Sapress has launched a war against Al Waseet, a new distributor established by *Al Masaa* daily, because of a dispute. As a result, the government confiscated MAD 5 million (\$590,000) from sales of *Al Masaa* newspaper, and the matter went to court.

Transmitters are the most problematic aspect of private television stations because of the state's fear of live broadcasting, al Makhfy said. SNRT would be keen to have a monopoly on television transmitter systems. In addition, the state wants to regulate Internet video conferencing. Medasha said that transmitters cannot be brought through customs without a license from the National Agency for the Regulation of Telecommunications.

List of Panel Participants

Ali Onozla, director, *Al Jareeda Aluola*, Casablanca and Rabat

Sahib Bin Omar, director and producer, Moroccan Public TV and Radio, Rabat

Muhammad Al Awny, journalist, Moroccan Public TV and Radio, Rabat

Maria Mkrim, journalist, *Al Ayamli*, Casablanca

Khadeja Al Bakali, journalist, Moroccan Public TV and Radio, Tangiers

Jamal Mohafezm, journalist, Maghreb Arabe Presse, Rabat

Basher Al Zenaki, journalist, independent, Casablanca

Hisham Medasha, researcher, Employer for the High Authority for Audiovisual Communication, Rabat

Jalal Al Makhfy, correspondent, Dubai Channel, Rabat and Casablanca

Abdul'Ilah bin Abdul-Salam, lawyer, Moroccan Association for Human Rights, Rabat

Moderator and Author

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