

# **FOCUSED ASSESSMENT OF MEDIA DEVELOPMENT IN LIBYA: SAFETY OF JOURNALISTS AND PROFESSIONAL CAPACITY BUILDING**

**A Baseline Report based on a selection of UNESCO's Media  
Development Indicators (Categories 3 and 4)**

**Prepared by Altai Consulting for UNESCO - JUNE 2015**

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report was written by Clara Tardy and Adrian Carriere, both from Altai Consulting. Quantitative and qualitative research was conducted by Esra Mhanni, Manal Miladi and Abdelrahman Elbasir, all from Istishari Research and Consulting, Altai's Libyan research partner.

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## FORWARD

In addition to introducing the document, forwards offer the author or publisher an opportunity to present a caveat or two, to draw attention to a certain condition or aspect to situate the reader before he or she begins to negotiate the text.

This report is not an exception; indeed, the reader would find it wanting should there be no acknowledgement of the return to conflict in Libya that occurred shortly after the completion of the Media Development Indicator (MDI) assessment. Following the outbreak of widespread fighting in July 2014, everyone is fully aware that the media environment in Libya has fundamentally changed; Libyan journalists are now more likely to correspond with each other from cafes in Amman, Istanbul, Cairo and Tunis, not from Tripoli and Benghazi. The country is embroiled in a dangerous power struggle that has deepened the political, social, economic and geographic rifts noted by this report, and risks complete collapse should the UN-led dialogue process not take hold. However, this caveat does not extend to the MDI assessment itself for the report is not made superfluous by the changing context.

In planning for the Assessment, UNESCO and the national counterparts decided to limit the focus of the MDI assessment to the two areas most relevant to the challenges existing in the media sector at the time the assessment was being undertaken in early 2014, namely *Safety of Journalists* and *Professional Capacity Building and Supporting Institutions that underpin Freedom of Expression, Pluralism and Diversity*. In doing so, this report provides the essential background to understand why crimes against media professionals are committed with impunity, and perhaps more worryingly, where the media itself plays an active role in the conflict.

With regard to the safety of journalists, the term itself is difficult to employ in the current Libyan context where journalists are routinely threatened and attacked and media houses themselves are targeted. In Tripoli and Benghazi especially, the number of kidnappings, carjacking, improvised explosive device (IED) attacks and robberies have increased significantly since the outbreak of conflict. As a result, the concerns Libyan journalists flag in the Assessment have expanded significantly in scope; journalists have become increasingly targeted and at risk. This has been to such an extent that there are almost certainly more journalists outside Libya than within at the beginning of 2015; hundreds of media professionals have joined the over one million Libyans who have sought refuge elsewhere in the region. Were the structural impediments holding back the progress of media freedom in Libya addressed in the appropriate manner post-Revolution? Should more effort have been expended to organize an independent national journalist syndicate or union in Libya? Such questions need to be asked.

In terms of the second area of focus, Professional Capacity Building, the MDI Assessment highlights a number of issues with pre and in-service media training in Libya prior to the crisis that were generally well known to the international partners, such as the lack of technical and practical instruction in universities, the lack of standardization in curricula, etc. However, it also notes the dearth of ethical instruction or limited exposure to human rights concepts. Without exposure to these critical elements and in the absence of an ethical framework such as an accepted code of conduct, the media's role in inciting hatred and violence during the current conflict has effectively overshadowed the impunity issue.

Like all organizations working in Libya, UNESCO realigned its programming in late 2014 after an internal review to meet the new realities of the sector; the Organization is of the view that the sector itself is a priority and significant effort is required to refocus Libyan media on its fundamental role to support peace and sustainable, democratic development. It is little surprise that the warring parties themselves identified the effort against hate speech as among the priorities when making recommendations for international confidence building measures as part of the UN-led political dialogue in January 2015.

In 2015, safety concerns for journalists and media professionals, as well as the dire need to support conflict sensitive reporting and lessen the polarization of the media houses, are forefront concerns for UNESCO CI programming in Libya. The MDI Assessment was instrumental in providing

the analytical basis for this shift, and it is hoped its findings and recommendations may serve partners organizations and Libyan journalists to contribute to the search for peace in the country.

Michael Croft  
UNESCO Representative to Libya  
Tunis, March 2015

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## ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

<b>BBC</b>	British Broadcasting Corporation
<b>BBN</b>	Benghazi Broadcasting Network
<b>BTV</b>	Benghazi TV
<b>CFI</b>	Canal France International
<b>CSO</b>	Civil Society Organization
<b>DWA</b>	Deutsche Welle Akademie
<b>GMA</b>	General Media Association
<b>GMC</b>	Ghad Media Corporation
<b>GNC</b>	General National Congress
<b>HNEC</b>	High National Electoral Commission
<b>IMS</b>	International Media Support
<b>IWPR</b>	International War and Peace Reporters
<b>JANA</b>	Jamahiriyah News Agency
<b>KII</b>	Key Informant Interviews
<b>LJBC</b>	Libyan Jamahiriyah Broadcasting Corporation
<b>NTC</b>	National Transitional Council
<b>OTI</b>	Office of Transition Initiatives
<b>RSF</b>	Reporters Without Borders

# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 PROJECT BACKGROUND

In 2013 Libya gained 23 places in the Reporters Without Borders' (RSF) press freedom ranking, highlighting an improved context for freedom of expression and free media compared to Ghaddafi's era. Conversely, after a year of political deadlock and rising instability and insecurity, the country lost six places in the 2014 RSF ranking, illustrating a rapid deterioration of journalists' working conditions and the respect of freedom of expression.

As in any open society, the Libyan media sector has the potential to bolster Libya's democratic transition by providing reliable, unbiased and timely information to the population, and informing and educating the Libyan population about the broader political process. International donors have an opportunity to support the development of the Libyan media sector by facilitating training and promoting professional journalistic practices and a fair regulatory environment that will encourage the development of professional journalism.

In the three years since the fall of the former regime, many international actors have worked to develop the Libyan media sector. To track these developments, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) contracted Altai Consulting to conduct a partial baseline assessment based on the Media Development Indicators (MDIs), whose development was led by UNESCO to help evaluate five broad media development 'Outcomes':

- 1) System of regulation and control
- 2) Plurality and transparency of ownership
- 3) Media as a platform for democratic discourse
- 4) Professional capacity building and supporting institutions
- 5) Infrastructural capacity

In Libya, with a view to the current state of media development, UNESCO has chosen to conduct a baseline study of Outcome 4 'Professional capacity building and supporting institutions' and indicators 3.13 and 3.14 of Outcome 3 "Media as a Platform for Democratic Discourse" as these two outcomes overlap with the priority areas agreed upon by most stakeholders working in the sector. At a time when Libyan media professionals are working under increasing political uncertainty and increasing threats, it is more relevant than ever to assess their general working conditions in terms of safety and security.

## 1.2 LIBYAN MEDIA LANDSCAPE

Under the Ghaddafi regime, the media was little more than an extension of the regime and the voice of state propaganda, with the Libyan Jamahiriyah Broadcasting Corporation (LJBC) and the Journalists' Association tightly controlling the functioning of media outlets. Until 2007, media content produced by television, radio and publication outlets was directed and controlled by the Jamahiriyah News Agency (JANA), which was directly overseen by the regime's information apparatus. In 2007, Libya began to experiment with a slight pluralization of media, and the son of Muammar Ghaddafi, Saif Al Islam, created the Ghad Media Corporation (GMC). Two semi-private newspapers and one satellite television were established at this time, and journalists working in these outlets had some measures of freedom. They started to criticize some of the regime's policies and officials, and reported on social issues and corruption.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, this experiment only gave Libyan media the illusion of plurality<sup>2</sup> as the number of legal actions against journalists during this period also increased. This period of limited pluralization ended two years later, after the regime nationalized the Al Ghad Media Corporation and shut down the media outlets created during this period. In 2009, IREX gave Libyan media a score of 0.47/4 on their Media Sustainability Index, concluding that Libya's "government and

<sup>1</sup>Legatum Institute, Libyan Media Wiki: <http://en.libyamediawiki.com>. The Legatum Media Wiki was developed by international media experts after several months of fieldwork in Libya, and can be considered a credible if somewhat dated (as of April 2015) source.

<sup>2</sup>IREX 2009, 29.

laws actively hinder[ed] free media development, professionalism [was] low and media-industry activity [...] minimal.”<sup>3</sup>

However, since the revolution, Libya's media environment has gone through a fundamental transformation with a vast proliferation of private media outlets. As of early 2014, there were at least 200 registered newspapers, 20 television channels, and 200 radio stations active in the country according to the Legatum Institute's Libyan Media Wiki.<sup>4</sup>

The fall of the former regime also allowed nearly unfettered interaction with international partners active in the media sector, and a number of media support programmes have been implemented by actors as varied as International Media Support (IMS), Internews, Institute for War and Peace Reporting (IWPR), the US Government's Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI), Deutsche Welle Akademie, Canal France International (CFI), BBC Media Action, Al Jazeera's Doha Training Centre and UNESCO. This listing is by no means exhaustive. Training programmes vary in scope and duration, with some focusing on television production (IWPR, BBC Media Action), and others focusing on developing blogging in Libya (RFI, France 24), radio support (Deutsche Welle Akademie, CFI, IWPR) or supporting newspapers (IWPR, IMS). Part of the goal of this report is to serve as a stocktaking exercise of developments in the Libyan media scene concerning journalists' safety and training programmes, as further developed in the research methodology below.

### 1.3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The overall objective of this research is to provide UNESCO, Libyan authorities and national and international stakeholders involved in the development of the media sector in Libya with a detailed and reliable baseline evaluation of selected indicators from Category 3 and of all indicators from Category 4 of the UNESCO MDI framework as applied in Libya.

In particular, the scope of the research was to determine:

- The general working conditions of media workers in terms of safety and freedom
- The capacity of journalism professionals and their knowledge of democracy and development
- The effectiveness and comprehensiveness of journalism education and media training programmes
- The existence and activities of professional trade unions and associations
- The existence and activities of media-focused CSOs

The project started with an inception phase in order to identify the research areas, design questionnaires and identify potential challenges before launching the fieldwork. This phase was also an opportunity to assemble material on Libyan media in the context of a literature review submitted to UNESCO in the Inception Report. The methodology was slightly modified due to the prevailing security situation in Libya. Specifically, the city of Sabha was excluded from the scope of work. Whereas it was initially planned to conduct certain interviews via focus groups or via telephone, the inception phase showed that discrete in-depth one-to-one interviews would be more efficient and would raise less concern especially for fieldwork taking place at universities. The Inception Report was then sent to UNESCO for approval before the start of the research phase. The research process involved a series of Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) conducted with 94 respondents interviewed between 16 February 2014 and 16 March 2014 in Tripoli, Benghazi and Misrata with participants selected according to a mixed approach based on both qualitative and quantitative research, building on Altai's previous contacts in the Libyan media sector. To ensure that all topics of the selected indicators from Category 3 and those from Category 4 of the MDI framework were covered during the research, interviews were conducted with six groups of respondents: journalists, media managers, journalism students, deans, media civil society organizations (CSOs), and international media stakeholders. The final sample is comprised of 94 respondents from all six target groups from Tripoli, Misrata and Benghazi, as illustrated in the table below, 21 of which were women including five journalists, one manager and 15 students. The relatively low number of women involved in the survey should be attributed to the poor level of representation of women overall in the media sector in Libya.

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<sup>3</sup> IREX 2009, 26. For more information on media under the former regime see Internews (2011).

<sup>4</sup> For an in-depth discussion of Libya's media landscape, please see Altai Consulting's report: *Libyan Media – One Year Later*, a follow up to Altai's 2012 Libyan media assessment.



	Tripoli	Benghazi	Misrata	Total
Journalists	5	5	5	15
Media managers	5	5	5	15
Journalism Students	16	16	16	48
Deans / Heads of Journalism Programmes	1	1	1	3
CSOs	1	1	1	3
International partners	10			10
<b>Total interviews</b>	<b>94</b>			

Table 1: List of interviewees by location and group

Each interview lasted between 20 and 45 minutes. Interviews were conducted at media outlets, universities, coffee shops or on the phone when the security situation prevented the research team from meeting respondents face to face.



Picture 1: MDI Interviews and studio visits in Misrata, March 2014

## 1.4 LOCATION PROFILES

The research team<sup>5</sup> conducted interviews in Libya's three major and most populous cities, which also have the most active media scenes: Tripoli, Misrata and Benghazi.



**Tripoli** is Libya's capital and largest city with around 1,095,000 inhabitants and is the main hub of Libya's politics and economy. The city hosts the main public television production facilities located between sites in Zawiyat Dehmani (Al Wataniyah), Nasr Street (Al Rasmiyah), and Gargaresh (Libya Al Riyadiyah). After the revolution, private companies created other important media facilities such as television channels in Tripoli, including the studios on Tripoli airport road for a new channel, Al Dawliya TV, and the studios of Al Nabaa TV. Several radio stations broadcast from Tripoli. One of the most

popular daily newspapers of the country, *Febrayer (February)*, is printed in Tripoli.<sup>6</sup> Despite the vibrant media sector, however, journalism professionals interviewed during the Assessment acknowledged that Tripoli was, with Benghazi, one of the most dangerous cities in Libya to work in as a journalist.

**Benghazi** is Libya's second largest city, with around 0.7 million inhabitants. In Benghazi, the local television sector is well developed with the existence of two state-owned channels, Benghazi Broadcasting Network (BBN) and Benghazi Television



<sup>5</sup> The research team composed of two Altai consultants supported by three Research and Consulting.

<sup>6</sup> Altai, Libyan Media Assessment – One Year Later, 2013

(BTV), as well as the prominence of the privately owned Libya Al Hurra. The city of Benghazi hosts several local radios and one of the country's leading publications *Qureyna Al Jadeeda*. Benghazi plays an important role in Libya's media landscape as it was there that most new media outlets began during the revolution. In terms of security, Benghazi media professionals affirmed that the city was nonetheless extremely unsafe and they were not able to exercise their job as journalists in a normal fashion.



**Misrata** is Libya's third largest city with around 450,000 inhabitants, but has a key advantage in that it is within a few hours' drive of many other north-western coastal cities, which represent a regional population of around 2 million inhabitants. The city has long been a trading hub and today the city is often described as Libya's largest import and internal trading center. Misrata hosts its own local radios and newspapers, including the popular Misrata TV, and as of March 2014, most private television channels established in Tripoli and Benghazi have opened a branch in Misrata. In terms of

security, Misrata professionals interviewed for this study stated that the city was safe for journalists, and physical attacks against outlets and journalists were reported as being less frequent than in Benghazi or Tripoli at the time of the assessment. This is likely because the city enjoys a more cohesive social framework than the larger urban centres of Benghazi and Tripoli, and should not be interpreted as it being a more open environment to practice journalism.

## 2. SAFETY OF JOURNALISTS (FROM MDI CATEGORY 3)

Media cannot exercise its role as a platform for freedom of expression and democratic discourse when journalists are routinely subject to threats. This indicator addresses the crosscutting issues of harassment, surveillance and violence against media actors in Libya (3.13). It then examines the working conditions of media professionals and whether these contribute to forms of self-censorship (3.14).

### KEY TAKEAWAYS

- A majority of media professionals interviewed reported being victims of a threat or an actual attack in the last 18 months. Most of the interviewees admitted they felt 'very unsafe' while exercising their jobs.
- Libyan journalists are exposed to a wide range of threats and attacks, from kidnappings and shootings to anonymous calls and threat messages on social networks. Amongst these threats, anonymous calls are the most frequent, often occurring before an abduction or aggression.
- Religious extremists or militia groups are reportedly the main sources of threats. Occasionally, media managers threaten to fire employees should they report on certain topics.
- Journalists in Misrata reported feeling safer compared to journalists in Benghazi and Tripoli. This is likely due to the higher level of insecurity that prevails in the latter two cities; working conditions directly relate to the prevailing security situation in any given environment.
- A majority of Libyan media professionals interviewed work under political, security, or societal pressure. According to media professionals, these pressures have become systematic such that they affect journalists' writing almost automatically.
- Self-censorship is common practice for Libyan journalists.
- Stories on rape, gender-based violence, militia activity and religious extremism were cited as the most taboo topics, avoided by journalists and the most likely to engender reprisals.
- Female journalists are often threatened or attacked for not dressing conservatively enough or for appearing on television.

### 2.1 MEDIA PROFESSIONALS AND ORGANIZATIONS CAN PRACTICE THEIR PROFESSION IN SAFETY<sup>7</sup>

This sub-indicator focuses on harassment, which involves actual threats, or actual instances, of violence.

Under the former regime, journalists who published information undermining or criticizing the regime could risk a severe prison sentence or even the death penalty.<sup>8</sup> In some instances, opposition figures were attacked in a more clandestine manner, outside of this strict legal framework, as was the case with the writer of the London-based opposition webpage Libya Al-Youm, Daif al-Ghazal, who was tortured before being murdered in Benghazi in 2005.<sup>9</sup> In 2008, the journalist Jamal-al-Hajji was sentenced to 12 years in prison and was detained with 13 others for planning a peaceful demonstration in Tripoli.<sup>10</sup> Given the severity of these penalties, Libyan journalists regularly practiced

<sup>7</sup> Note that the numbering does not correspond to the official MDI framework. Here 2.1 corresponds to 3.13 in the UNESCO's MDI framework

<sup>8</sup> Article 207 of the former regime's penal code provides for the death penalty for 'anyone who advocates inside Libya, by whatever means, theories or principles aiming to change the basic tenets of the national constitution or the basic structures of the social system, or aiming to overthrow the state's political, social or economic structures'. [http://en.rsf.org/IMG/pdf/libye\\_2011\\_gb.pdf](http://en.rsf.org/IMG/pdf/libye_2011_gb.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> [http://en.rsf.org/IMG/pdf/libye\\_2011\\_gb.pdf](http://en.rsf.org/IMG/pdf/libye_2011_gb.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-press/2009/libya#.VPgv7ChiCWc>

self-censorship. Self-censorship is still today very much an issue in the Libyan media landscape, however. While journalists are now in principle free to report on all subjects since the fall of the regime, increasingly since early 2013 journalists in Libya have found themselves at risk. Moreover, this changing environment has been sadly somewhat facilitated by the less than ambiguous action of some Libyan decision-makers. Criticism of the General National Congress (GNC) and the government has been effectively stymied under an amendment to the penal code; the GNC legislated against journalists' rights and freedoms by amending the already highly controversial article 195 of the Penal Code. As approved on 5 February 2014, the amended version of this article, Amendment (5) 2014, reads:

*Without prejudice to any severer penalty, any person stating something that is detrimental to the 17 February Revolution is liable to be punished with imprisonment (...) The same penalty will be applied to any person who publicly insults the legislative, executive or judicial authorities or any of their members during or in connection with the execution of their duties, or who insults the emblem of the state or its flag.*

The challenges go much further than the legal environment. Journalists who report on extremist groups and militias are often targeted with threats and reprisal. According to Reporters Without Borders (RSF)<sup>11</sup>, in 2013, 75 journalists reported being threatened; it is likely that this figure is lower than the reality. According to RSF, that same year 14 journalists were kidnapped, authorities detained 13 others and at least eight practicing journalists left Libya believing their lives were at risk if they remained.

Journalists killed	Journalists detained	Journalists threatened	Journalists kidnapped	Journalists who left the country
1 (+2 under investigation)	13	75	14	8

Table 2: Reporters Without Borders' reported number of attacks against journalists, Libya 2013

In terms of location, more threats and attacks were reported in Benghazi and Tripoli than in Misrata. As mentioned previously, this is probably due to the overall security situation in the three cities as of March 2014. As a smaller centre, Misrata is in a better position to manage tribal disputes and to maintain social cohesion, which provides a safer environment for its journalists. Not surprisingly, journalists from Misrata reported that they were afraid when they travelled to Tripoli, owing to the capital being less safe than their hometown.

Amongst the 15 journalists interviewed by Altai in March 2014 in Tripoli, Benghazi and Misrata, in the past 18 months four had been attacked (three kidnappings, one shooting) and eight had been threatened (six in anonymous calls and two by direct visits to the outlet). According to KIIs, journalists who are abducted usually received threats prior to being taken hostage. The most frequent type of threat consisted of anonymous calls during a live show or on the private phone of a journalist. Although there is a wide range of cases of abductions and threats, it is worth illustrating each type of attack and threat with an example taken from Altai's fieldwork in order to understand the climate in which journalists have to carry out their daily tasks and the challenges they face.

Outlets attacked	Journalists kidnapped	Attacks by Firearm	Anonymous calls and SMSs	Direct visits of the abductor to the outlet
3	3	1	6	2

Table 3: Reported instances of threats and harassment, Altai baseline evaluation (n=15), Libya 2014

According to 15 journalists interviewed, threats most often resulted when a journalist referred to religious 'extremists', either in written articles or on television. For instance, a young female television

<sup>11</sup> At the time of the survey, RSF was identified as the only agency present in Libya with the ability to monitor with accuracy attacks and threats against journalists, which explains why they are frequently cited in the report.

journalist from Benghazi reported that after speaking about Ansar Al Sharia<sup>12</sup> on air, members of the group came to the channel to ask her not to talk about them anymore. Since then, she fears kidnapping and sexual assault. Other journalists in Tripoli reported that their fellow journalists had also received messages accusing them of being 'apostates' and 'Enemies of God'. Table 4 below shows examples of threats and aggressions reported by journalists and media managers during the baseline research.

Type of Attack	Description	Reported cases / Examples
<b>Attacks on outlets</b>	Attacks on outlets usually consist in attempts to destroy a media outlet or the home of its owner or manager	<p>The staff and the premises of Al Asseema TV, a private media outlet, were attacked on three separate occasions during the month of February 2014.<sup>13</sup> A manager at Al Asseema reported that the militia responsible for former Prime Minister Ali Zeidan's kidnapping regularly threatened the channel for being critical of the General National Congress (GNC) and thus "putting the country in trouble in the name of freedom of expression".</p> <p>The attacks on Al Asseema are not an isolated case. The private satellite television Libya Al Ahrar in Benghazi was raided on 5 February 2014 when masked gunmen opened fire on the Benghazi bureau of the station and set fire to its satellite transmission truck.</p> <p>On 15 January 2014, the home of <i>Libya Al Jadeeda's</i> chief editor was struck by a rocket-propelled grenade (RPG).</p>
<b>Shootings</b>	Shootings usually consist in attempts to kill or to frighten a journalist	In Benghazi a 26-year-old female television journalist reported she had been shot at in her car in December 2013. The shooting took place after she received threats by telephone and online.
<b>Kidnappings</b>	Kidnappings usually take place at night at the media outlet or in the street. Until now, most journalists abducted are released a couple of days after being kidnapped. These kidnappings often represent an opportunity for the kidnapper to threaten the abducted journalists by letting them know that they risk much worse if they go beyond certain 'red lines' again after their release.	On 11 February 2014, the chief editor of the <i>Tarabulus</i> newspaper was abducted at his office, and held for two days without food or water. The abductors first phoned him and told him they would kill him before they kidnapped him. Although he knew the identity of his abductors, he felt that he could not share this information without risking reprisals against himself or his family.
<b>Anonymous threats (often calls and text messages)</b>	Anonymous threats generally consist of journalists receiving anonymous calls and text messages either on their private cell phone or during a call-in show.	<p>A 40-year-old Tripoli-based journalist received a telephone and online message that read "keep laughing because you will die soon". After posting the message on Facebook, he received confirmation that other journalists had received the same message. The journalist reported later seeing the same message written in graffiti on his parking space.</p> <p>In Benghazi, another 26-year-old female television journalist interviewed said that she received anonymous death threats through telephone calls during her live show. The messages said "you are pro-Jibril, we will kill you" simply because she did not wear the hijab. She also had some of her pictures on Facebook marked with a cross on her face and saw articles about herself on extremists' websites.</p>

<sup>12</sup> Ansar Al Sharia is the name of a militant Islamist organization active across the MENA region.

<sup>13</sup> RSF reported that one of the three attacks against Al-Assima TV was directed against the owner Jumaa Al-Osta's home in the Tripoli suburb of Gurji which was bombed on 20 February 2014.



<b>Threatening visits</b>	Threat visits occur when a potential abductor pays a visit to a journalist or an outlet to criticize the outlet's position on a given issue for instance.	A 25-year-old television journalist interviewed in Misrata reported receiving a random visit of "someone from the Zintan militia" to ask him not to ever say again that there was an oil conflict going on in Sabha.
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Table 4: Examples of Threats and Aggressions Reported by Journalists

In terms of reporting, filing an official notice or complaint with the police involving a threat or aggression is not common as the general lack of security, justice and law enforcement in Libya have a deterring effect; journalists and other media professionals have little recourse to formal protection against threats or attacks.

***"I did not do anything after being kidnapped. I know the identity of the abductors, but there is no law, no justice, there is nothing I can do but get back to work."***

45-year-old print journalist from Tripoli

In terms of institutional protection, there is no established committee dealing with the safety of media workers at the national level, and only one Libyan NGO, Hesan, has attempted to create a center to defend journalists' rights and offer safety training courses that had not yet started at the time of writing. Nearly all journalists and media managers interviewed were unable to think of any place or organization where they could discuss issues regarding the safety of media workers.

Respondents mentioned that they usually return to work and report the threats to their managers. In reaction, managers may even go as far as paying their employees to discontinue investigating on a sensitive case in order to ensure their protection. To help draw attention to these issues, RSF maintains files on assaults on journalists, and produced some thirty separate reports between April 2012 and March 2013 alone.



Picture 2: MDI Interviews in Benghazi, March 2014

## 2.2 MEDIA PRACTICE IS NOT HARMED BY A CLIMATE OF INSECURITY

This indicator focuses on the reactions of media workers to threats of punishment, harassment and threats of violence, with a particular focus on instances where they take the form of self-censorship and defining 'red lines'.

## 2.2.1 PRESSURES FACED BY MEDIA PROFESSIONALS

As noted above, self-censorship was a widespread practice in the time of the former regime. It is unfortunately still prevalent in post-revolutionary Libya, mostly due to pressure from religious and political groups, and the absence of any significant security measures to protect journalists and media professionals from threats when challenging the 'red lines' established by such groups. A culture of impunity is widespread. While the source of the threats may have changed, the result is much the same; Libyan media practice self-censorship on a daily basis in their work.

All 15 journalists and nine out of 15 media managers interviewed during the baseline survey indicated that they felt that they work under some form of external or internal pressure. Media managers who reported that they did not work under external pressure generally worked in radio stations in Misrata, identified as one of the safest cities in Libya according to Misrata journalists (see Figure 2 below). For example, a 30-year-old radio manager from Misrata insisted that there were no particular external pressures felt in his city, mainly due to Misrata's relative social and political homogeneity compared to that of Benghazi and Tripoli, where many more ethnic and political groups are present. This respondent also mentioned that the balance of power between the political parties in Misrata prevents the city from easily resorting to violence.

***"The pressure starts from my family. I always have to be with them, it is hard to work. There are also political pressures since there is always a conflict between your consciousness and what you can say. There are economic pressures - we are waiting for funds and the money always comes late, especially in Benghazi."***

Mohamed, 26, Television journalist, Benghazi

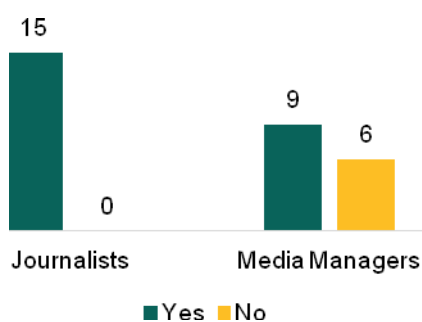


Figure 1: 'Do you feel that you work under pressure?', by category of media professionals (n=30)

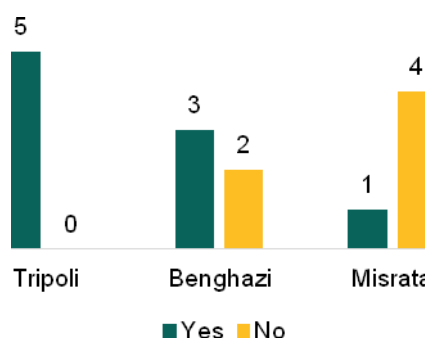


Figure 2: 'Do you feel that you work under pressure?', Media managers, by location (n=15)

Most of the 15 media professionals interviewed reported a wide range of pressures when at work. Security, political, societal and psychological pressures were most commonly reported by journalists and media managers. Table 5 provides descriptions and examples for each type of pressure.

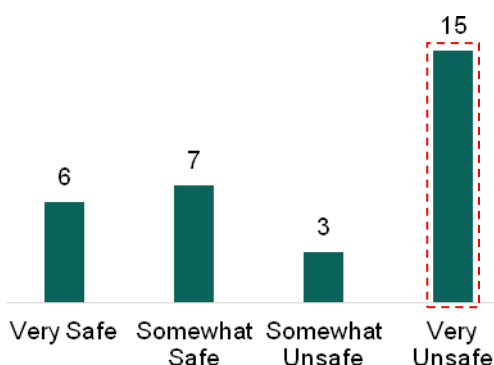
Type of pressures	Description	Example
<b>Security pressures</b>	Security pressures are linked to the absence of law enforcement measures to protect journalists and to the general climate of impunity in Libya. In consequence, journalists are pressured and limited in their freedom of expression.	Journalists interviewed mentioned the "pressures from the general atmosphere" due to the spread of militias and the security void in the country. For instance, a 26-year-old female television journalist from Benghazi explained that she worked with the constant fear of being kidnapped, killed or sexually assaulted. In Benghazi, a radio journalist explained that each day he would take a different road to go to work and would park some distance away from the radio station.

<b>Political pressures</b>	Political pressures are the result of the tight control that certain political groups exercise over the media as a consequence of which journalists fear to criticize certain militias, politicians or extremist groups and practice self-censorship.	A 27-year-old television presenter affirmed that she did not speak about the GNC, the HNEC or the Mufti out of fear of being killed. Other journalists mentioned the corruption of the political system and the threats of extremists as examples of daily political pressures.
<b>Societal pressures</b>	Societal pressures are the consequence of traditions and societal norms that prevent journalists from expressing themselves freely on certain topics widely considered as taboos. As a result, journalists are not comfortable reporting on these issues and practice self-censorship.	A 30-year-old radio presenter from Misrata described himself as "controlled by traditions" at work. Similarly, a 35-year-old television presenter interviewed in Misrata insisted that pressure was "everywhere, because we do not know where to stop as we only know the 'red lines' lie after going too far and crossing them". Other journalists mentioned they were going through 'intense psychological stress' and 'mental pressures' for the same reasons.

Table 5: Types of Pressures on Media Professionals

Security, political and societal pressures have become so systematic that they affect journalists' writing even sub-consciously. For instance, the manager of an English language newspaper in Tripoli mentioned that "fear was always in the back of the mind". He explained that fear "affects our writing sub-consciously through forms of self-censorship".

When asked to evaluate the climate in which they work, 50% of the 30 journalists and media managers interviewed said they felt they were working in a 'very unsafe' climate.



***"There are political pressures. The most dangerous topic is by far Al Mufti although I cannot talk about the GNC or the HNEC either. They would kill me. I am pregnant now, I can't afford that risk."***

Manal, 27, Television journalist, Tripoli

Figure 3: 'How would you evaluate the climate in which you work?' (Journalists and Media Managers, n=30)

## 2.2.2 EDITORIAL AND SELF-CENSORSHIP

According to journalists and media managers, two forms of censorship exist today in Libya: editorial censorship and self-censorship. These two types of censorship are not mutually exclusive and often overlap.

Self-censorship appears to be widespread across the sample group, with 12 out of 15 journalists reporting that they have to self-censor in order to protect themselves or keep their jobs. Most journalists have integrated so-called 'red lines' (e.g. issues surrounding sexual violence, sexual orientation, tribal conflict, religion and militia activity), which they feel they cannot be crossed without risk of reprisal, and tend to carry out self-censorship on a daily basis. A male television journalist interviewed in Misrata stated that he resorted to self-censorship "all the time" and that his works requires him to be very careful about

***"There is no sensitive subject to avoid, what we do is that we talk about all subjects with some limits. The limits are morals, the Quran and the Sunna. These are the morals of the profession."***

Rida, 30, TV journalist, Benghazi



what he reports on certain groups and topics.

Journalists also reported the occurrence of editorial censorship, such as when managers instructed their staff about 'red lines' not to cross. A reporter interviewed in Misrata affirmed that journalists receive warnings from their own managers. According to this reporter, managers tell journalists that they cannot protect them if they choose to report on sensitive topics. Sometimes, managers go as far as paying high amounts of money to some of their journalists to refrain them from talking about a certain topic that could put the outlet in trouble. A journalist in Misrata reported that his channel had fired him yet continued to pay his salary for one year after he prepared a story about a woman who was physically injured in a car crash. The journalist allegedly received death threats from the individual responsible for the car crash, leading the channel's manager to dismiss him in order to protect the television channel and staff from potential attacks. Several journalists considered this form of editorial censorship as an indirect threat.

Journalists and media managers were asked for this study to identify the sensitive topics they tended to avoid in their reports. Sexual violence, sexual orientation, tribal conflict, religion and militia activities as appeared to be the key issues that both journalists and managers most often avoid covering.

### 1. Rape and gender violence

A 20-year-old female reporter from Benghazi explained that she deliberately avoided writing about rape, although sexual assault is widespread in Benghazi. She explained that "these are stories people do not want to make public and share". She gave the example of a couple that had recently been kidnapped and found dead in Benghazi. Although the subsequent investigation determined that the woman had been raped, according to this journalist no one reported that this had been the case. A 36-year-old male television journalist from Misrata said that for him every topic has its place and time, adding that "today I cannot talk about violence against women, it will make people angry".

### 2. Sexual Orientation

A 30-year-old male radio manager in Tripoli explained that it was impossible to speak about issues such as homosexuality on air. He clarified that journalists are very wary of reporting on the issue because families often listen to the radio together. He mentioned being "more afraid of people than of the government".

### 3. Religion

A 28-year-old male press journalist interviewed in Misrata said that for him a 'red line' appears when social issues interact with religious ones. A 40-year-old press journalist interviewed in Tripoli mentioned that "today you cannot talk about the Islamists. If you talk about them, they automatically say you are against Islam". Finally, a female television reporter in Tripoli affirmed that she would always avoid the sensitive topic of the Mufti, and the different fatawa<sup>14</sup> produced out of fear of reprisals.

***"I avoid reporting on the Mufti and the fatawa or I will be killed afterwards."***

Arwa, 26, TV Journalist, Tripoli

### 4. Militia Activity and Extremists

A 40-year-old manager from Tripoli affirmed that in general he cannot talk about militias and extremists because "they refuse any dialogue and [...] will not hesitate to shoot or kill if they disagree". A 30-year-old male television journalist in Misrata explained that his manager asked him to avoid the topics of Al Qaeda and the city of Derna, well known as a stronghold of extremist groups in Eastern Libya.

### 5. Legacy issues from the former regime

A 27-year-old female radio journalist in Misrata affirmed that she avoided all references to the Ghaddafi family and the Tawergha issue<sup>15</sup>. Another female respondent in Tripoli reported receiving

<sup>14</sup> *Fatawa* are rulings on points of Islamic law given by a recognized authority (Oxford dictionary, 2013)

threats during the show by people calling her `tahlooba' (pro-Ghaddafi) after she once said on air that those who are pro- and anti-Ghaddafi should be treated equally.

***"It is not really about taboos, it is about the very nature of the media environment and the failure of the state. It is about the inability to name things and people that prevents us from doing our jobs properly. If you name, you blaspheme. The system works against the freedom of the press. As a media outlet, our policy is not to attack Ansar Al Sharia. Our journalists have lives; they need to come back home. So we keep away from extremists, as the State is unable to protect us."***

Yusuf, 33, Newspaper Manager, Tripoli

## 2.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

- Ensure that freedom of press and expression are respected by training legal authorities and security forces on international standards related to media and freedom of expression.
- Explore the feasibility of counseling services for journalists at risk to mitigate psychological stress.
- Create an observatory monitoring instances of violence and threats against journalists.
- Create a group to study the special risks faced by Libyan female journalists and take appropriate measures to protect them accordingly.
- Encourage the Libyan Ministry of Information to take concrete measures to fight impunity and to prosecute perpetrators of attacks and crimes against journalists.
- Continue to closely monitor levels of actual press freedom and journalists' safety in Libya.
- Continue to closely monitor and report instances of impunity in cases of crimes committed against Libyan journalists.

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<sup>15</sup> Tawergha is a town under the administrative jurisdiction of Misrata and was the site of intense fighting during the Libyan revolution, opposing locals against anti-Ghaddafi forces.

### 3. PROFESSIONAL CAPACITY BUILDING AND SUPPORTING INSTITUTIONS THAT UNDERPIN FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION, PLURALISM AND DIVERSITY (FROM MDI CATEGORY 4)

Media professional training covers a wide range of activities and is often provided by a variety of actors from NGOs and media outlets to universities and professional associations. This category of indicators focuses on the availability of non-academic training programmes for media workers (A), as well as the availability of academic courses in media practice for students (B). It also assesses the presence and effectiveness of trade unions (C) and CSOs (D) to provide advocacy on issues of freedom of expression.

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#### KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Overall, when respondents received training, they were pleased with the quality. Over the past three years (2011-2014), international NGOs have managed to provide a wide range of training programmes to Libya's new generation of journalists.
- As of March 2014, the nine media colleges consulted for this research are perceived as not providing students with the adequate technical skills to enable them to practice their profession correctly after graduation.
- Universities lack qualified teachers able to provide practical training, as well as updated textbooks and modern equipment.
- University media curriculum remains partially based on that established under the former regime in 2008, and does not effectively educate about the role of media in a democratic society. Ethics, human rights and good governance are not represented significantly in media studies. Further, journalism students are not obliged to take any courses in history, sociology and political science to complement their journalistic training.
- Female journalism students often find media studies very challenging. Carrying out internships at media outlets or practicing at the media lab with male students appeared complicated if not impossible for some female students.
- Young professionals and students get most of their journalistic abilities from training courses taken directly within a media outlet or with international NGOs offering media training across Libya. Self-training is also popular for those isolated from training programmes or to complement the courses attended.
- At the time of the research, there was no active Journalist Syndicate in Libya.
- There is a relatively large network of CSOs in Libya, although only a handful of them focus on media issues and produce systematic media monitoring reports.

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#### 3.1 AVAILABILITY OF PROFESSIONAL MEDIA TRAINING

##### 3.1.1 MEDIA PROFESSIONALS CAN ACCESS TRAINING APPROPRIATE TO THEIR NEEDS

The transition from a completely controlled media sector to one with little tangible regulatory frameworks or common standards has led journalists and other media workers to redefine what it means to be a journalist. It is difficult to know how many of the journalists working in Libya at the time of this report developed their skillsets through formal institutions and how many of them trained themselves, since many journalists interviewed for this research were both self-taught and had

attended a variety of training courses. Outside universities, Libyan media professionals report being trained either by local media outlets or by national or international media NGOs.



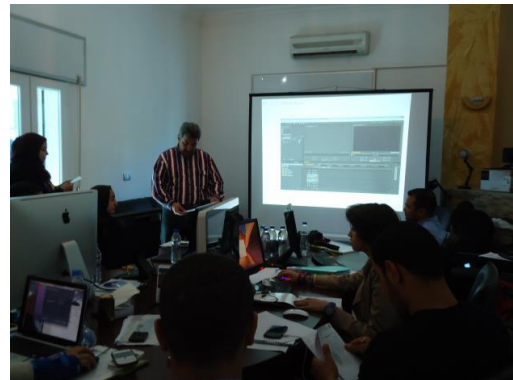
Picture 3: Reporters Without Borders Training on Electoral Coverage, 2013

Local public and private media outlets provide training to their new staff and to recent graduates. This appears to be particularly prevalent in Misrata and Benghazi, where most students interviewed attended external training courses at a media outlet. Training is accessible to men and women as well as to different minority groups. In Misrata, a 23-year-old student in media stated that Misrata TV trained her class for two weeks, while other students reported they took 10-day training courses with Al Ahrar TV. In Benghazi, Libya Al Hurra TV

and BBN TV are amongst the main training providers for young journalists. These in-house training opportunities aim at compensating the lack

of practical experience available to graduate journalists while they are still studying or have just graduated. However, there is no report available regarding the content and the quality of these training programmes, so it is difficult to assess their relevance for the attendees.

In addition to the training provided by media outlets, international partners have offered a wide range of training for journalists since the Revolution. These trainings aim at closing the skills gap of journalists and media managers at different stages of their professional careers. For instance, the Deutsche Welle Akademie (DWA) provided manager training courses and content production courses to state and non-state outlets in both large and smaller cities across the country. DWA trainings include a mandatory course on 'ethics and the role of journalism' in all its modules to ensure that trainees understand the basics of the profession. Another important non-governmental training provider is BBC Media Action. In Libya, the work of BBC Media Action focuses on improving state media by training staff and management. At the time of the research, BBC Media Action had conducted a series of management training programmes for producers and journalists with Al Wataniyah TV, Al Rasmiyah TV and the Libyan News Agency (LANA). UNESCO itself collaborated with UNDP in December 2013 to deliver training on the media's role in elections and with UNSMIL in 2014 to launch a series of dialogues between media and security forces to promote a better mutual understanding of each institution's respective role. The Organization was also active with other international partners in promoting more coordinated and coherent action through its role in helping to establish the Media Sector Working Group.



Picture 4: IWPR Video Training, 2013

Also notable is the work of the Institute for War and Peace Reporting (IWPR) with Libyan radio stations. At the time of this report, staff at twelve radio stations in Yefren, Marj, Shahat, Zawiyah and Sabrata had received training on programming and human resources. IWPR has also contributed to the creation of two media labs at Tripoli and Zawiyah universities to enable students to acquire practical experience. A Libyan media NGO initially funded by International Media Support called the Libyan Media Institute (LMI) is dedicated to strengthening Libyan media. In December 2013, LMI began the first step of a capacity-building programme for newspapers. As part of this programme, two Danish experts travelled to Libya to work with the staff of *Libya Al Jadeeda*, *Al Ikhbariyyah* and *Tarablos* to improve their management systems (finances, human resources) and to provide general support to the newspapers. No cross-industry or cross-sector training councils grouping employers and academic institutions were identified during the research; however it is noted that UNESCO's work with Libyan institutions of higher education to update journalism curricula flagged this as a chief concern in early 2014.

When asked if they were satisfied with the training received, nine out of the 13 journalists interviewed who had received prior international training reported being satisfied with the training. They affirmed that they appreciated learning the basics of the profession from specialists as well as new techniques and practices. Journalists interviewed often mentioned that they appreciated more lengthy and comprehensive trainings compared to shorter courses. They also emphasized the importance of being trained by qualified trainers who are able to understand Libya and the challenges of its media culture. Not all training providers requested trainees to evaluate the training received as only eight out of thirteen journalists indicated having been asked to evaluate the training they had received. International partners are reportedly more likely to request feedback in this case.

Ethical standards are also of concern in the Libyan context. To measure levels of awareness of ethical standards, journalists were asked to provide a response on how they would react in a case of potential conflict of interest. Specifically, they were questioned on whether they would produce a report that concerns a member of their family if asked. While five journalists said they would immediately give the story to a colleague, more than half said they would participate in the report, suggesting a significant misunderstanding of conflict of interest.

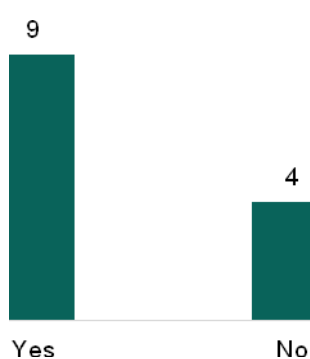


Figure 4: 'Were you satisfied by the training you received?' (Journalists, n=13)<sup>16</sup>

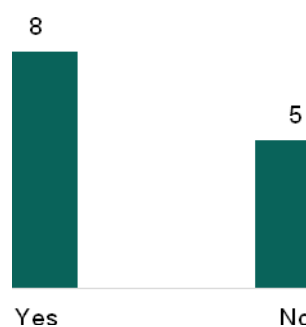


Figure 5: 'Were you asked to evaluate the training you received?' (Journalists, n=13)

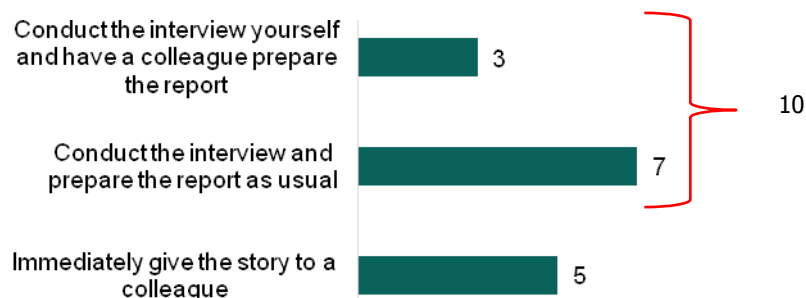


Figure 6: 'You are asked to produce a report on a member of your family, what do you do?' (n=15)

### 3.1.2 MEDIA MANAGERS, INCLUDING BUSINESS MANAGERS, CAN ACCESS TRAINING APPROPRIATE TO THEIR NEEDS

Few individuals received management training in formal institutions before becoming managers of media outlets. Libyan media managers interviewed had no more than two or three years of

<sup>16</sup> Note that two journalists interviewed had not taken any training

experience, and most came from a non-media background such as business or engineering. Most of the managers interviewed explained that they were self-trained and that hands-on experience was the best way to become proficient.

***"I acquired my management skills from working as a businessman and setting up several companies, notably in oil supply and market research. I gained my own experience in journalism while writing articles for a Tripoli-based newspaper."***

Tripoli, male, newspaper manager

The Deutsche Welle Akademie (DWA) provides long-term and comprehensive management training workshops, in particular for state media. DWA currently runs 'management workshops' with the state broadcasters Libya Al Wataniyah and Al Rasmiyah. These workshops encompass all aspects relevant to

media management, from administration to human resources.

In terms of sustainability and planning, private institutions such as Al Jazeera's Center of Strategy Planning in Doha provide short-term strategy planning training workshops. Finally, some respondents in Benghazi mentioned that they had received some business management training through the Warriors Affairs Commission.<sup>17</sup> A small minority (five out of 15 asked in the survey) reported that they had been requested by the organizers of the respective activities to evaluate the training they had received. Further, a common complaint by media managers was that the courses did not last long enough.

All of the Libyan media managers interviewed reported that they did not believe they had received appropriate training in the field of business skills including marketing and financial management. This lack of business training highlights a skills gap for managers that could negatively affect the sustainability of independent media outlets, who depend not on a specific donor but on advertising revenue and solid fiscal management to survive. Most of the managers interviewed were of the opinion that training does not necessarily have to take place through formal institutions and that one should practice self-education, for example, by reading articles on the internet. This could either indicate that there is a niche for online training in this area, or it could simply demonstrate that media managers underestimate the demands for professional rigour in this area.

It is common practice for Libyan media managers to train their journalists to take into account the opinions and ideas of minorities (e.g. the Tebu), although not often in great depth or detail. Most respondents could explain precisely how they went about making sure that their outlet reports the opinions of non-Arab Libyans. For instance, the manager of a Tripoli-based newspaper explained that they have a partnership with an Amazigh magazine and they often translate their stories into the Amazigh language. Most managers explained that they employed at least one

Amazigh staff member in order to make sure their voices are heard. A notable exception to this policy of inclusion appears to be Misrata, where most managers acknowledged they did not find it necessary to address minority issues, asserting that there are few minorities present in the city and that their audience is generally limited to Misrata.

***"Our team is composed of an Amazigh lady, a Tebu journalist and a Benghazi journalist in order to record a variety of voices."***

Abulkarim, 45, newspaper manager, Tripoli

***"Personally, I am supportive of these issues but here in Misrata there is no Amazigh so we don't talk about them."***

Ahmad, 39, radio station manager, Misrata

***"Yes we deal with all Libyans and we even send reporters to deal with the conflict in Sabha with the Tebu and we have Amazigh employees."***

Mohammed, 57, TV channel manager, Benghazi

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<sup>17</sup> Established in October 2011, the Warriors Affairs Commission is mandated to register and rehabilitate former revolutionaries via employment opportunities or further education.

### 3.1.3 TRAINING EQUIPS MEDIA PROFESSIONALS TO UNDERSTAND DEMOCRACY AND DEVELOPMENT

While training courses on the role of the media in fostering human rights were not present under the former regime, it remains unclear to what extent these concepts are addressed in post-revolutionary Libya. Several interviewees indicated that at least some training programmes addressed democracy and human rights issues, yet none was able to define these concepts or explain in any detail the content of the courses related to these topics. This implies that awareness of human rights and associated concepts remains very limited in Libya, and international partners should redouble their efforts to advocate for and explain the essential role of the media in society in promoting and defending freedom of expression as an essential condition for the promotion of human rights.

## 3.2 AVAILABILITY OF ACADEMIC COURSES IN MEDIA PRACTICE

### 3.2.1 ACADEMIC COURSES ACCESSIBLE TO A WIDE RANGE OF STUDENTS

Under the former regime, media studies were essentially a platform for state ideology. Post-revolution, the situation can be best classified as somewhat mixed, a hybrid of old and new. Officially, the latest curriculum published by the Ministry of Higher Education in 2008 continues to be the basis of study in all universities. However, the Ministry itself is not fully aware of all of the various curricula implemented by public universities across the country, according to interviews conducted with several deans of public universities' media colleges. There appear to be few common standards, and there is a lack of effective quality control and oversight.

As of March 2014, study programmes in media and journalism can be found in nine universities, namely Benghazi University, the Open University of Libya, Tripoli University, Misrata University, Zawiya University, Zaytuna University, Omar Mukhtar University in Bayda, Sirte University and Sabha University. Of these, Tripoli, Benghazi, Bayda and Zawiya have the largest and most important media colleges, according to interviews conducted with university deans and international media stakeholders. It is difficult to know how well-established and developed these departments are due to the lack of official documentation available.

School	Student Enrollment
Omar Mukhtar University (Bayda)	100
Tripoli University	60
Open University of Libya	25
Zaytuna University	20
Benghazi University	20
<b>Total (estimate / non comprehensive)</b>	<b>225<sup>18</sup></b>

Table 6: Number of students accepted per year in selected Media Colleges in Libya, 2014<sup>19</sup>

The Benghazi Media College is known for being the first post-revolutionary media college and has inspired the creation of new media colleges in other cities. To construct their curricula, individual media departments often picked selectively from the 2008 curricula, choosing which courses to remove and which to keep. As of March 2014, all media colleges follow a relatively similar curriculum, although some courses and options are unique to certain departments. Interviews with media students confirmed that the journalism curriculum is still very much a work in progress. For example, students in Benghazi complained that new classes were added to their curriculum nearly every month, a source of much confusion as an interviewed journalism student stated. Other respondents noted that there appears to be little underlying logic to the media curriculum at universities, as course titles rarely match content. For instance, while many course titles often imply practical training, students describe their content as very theory-oriented with no time dedicated to the development of practical

<sup>18</sup> Note that the list received from these universities did not specify gender

<sup>19</sup> According to information collected by the UNESCO Media Sector Working Group and the University of Benghazi



skills. Moreover, media students reported that several classes offer the same content despite having different names or titles.

In Libya, journalism programmes typically last for four years. Universities usually only offer undergraduate education in media with the exception of Zaytouna and Benghazi Universities, which also offer graduate programmes in the field. After receiving general courses common to all media college students during their first year, students are normally asked to choose between four different specializations: Public Relations, Broadcasting (television and radio), Press and (when available) Theater/Cinema. In Benghazi, according to the Dean of the Media College, most students choose the Public Relations specialization, followed by Broadcasting, Press and finally Theatre/Cinema. Similarly, the Dean of the Media College at Tripoli University stated that most students chose to study public relations rather than journalism, although he believes the popularity of various courses in the journalism curricula would change due to the new media lab that the university has established with IWPR's support to provide students with more opportunities to get practical training.

The number of courses available also varies from one university to another. In Tripoli, students in Press and Broadcasting have to take 57 and 58 courses respectively over 4 semesters. In Benghazi, media students have to attend 46 courses in 4 years of study on average.

***"The biggest challenge is the mentality of the people who say that it is a shame for a girl to work in a media center or an outlet."***

Salwa, 20, TV student, Misrata

challenging. At Zaytouna University, female students cannot normally participate in the internship programme at a media outlet due to family and social pressures. In Misrata, two 20-year-old women studying broadcasting explained that female students in this city were afraid to practice in the studio, which was used mostly by male students. They explained that female students lack the confidence to train alongside male students, and were calling for the creation of a female-only lab in the Media College. Finally, a 23-year-old female student in Misrata explained it was harder for women to find jobs in the media sector after graduation due to city's social conservatism, which "puts shame on a woman" for working in the media sector and appearing on screen.

Media colleges often suffer from a number of organizational and financial constraints. First, students lack opportunities to obtain practical training, a shortcoming most commonly mentioned by students when asked how universities could improve their programmes. NGOs such as the Institute for War and Peace Reporting (IWPR) are progressively addressing this problem, notably through the creation of media labs at the universities of Tripoli and Zawiya. Starting April 2014, it is planned that each student of the Tripoli University Media College will have to spend 100 hours in the media lab on four different topics (press, radio, television and online journalism).

***"The teachers are old and do not know about the new techniques - I worry about my future."***

Sleimane, 18, TV student, Benghazi

Second, during the field trips conducted, Altai researchers noticed that universities suffer from a lack of qualified personnel able to provide practical training, which jeopardizes the quality of the teaching offered. This is partly due to the fact universities are forbidden from recruiting teachers who do not hold graduate degrees, which makes hiring practitioners who could teach practical skills very difficult, as these often do not hold graduate degrees. This rule, which predates the Revolution, no longer corresponds to the reality in Libya today, where most practicing journalists do not hold Master degrees.



**"The building is old, there are no white boards, no chairs, no air conditioning, and the environment is very bad. The relation between the students and the teachers can be improved as there is a big gap between us. We cannot understand each other, maybe because of the age difference."**

Abdelkrim, 25, TV student, Benghazi

facility was in poor repair and lacked basic materials such as white boards, chairs as well as air-conditioning.

Finally, no formal mechanisms exist to link academic institutions and potential employers in the media sector. As is the case with other sectors in Libya, media students reported that they primarily rely on personal connections to find a job. Occasionally, teachers provide their students with their media contacts on a case-by-case basis. This was particularly the case in the Media College of Tripoli University where media students reported that the Dean and some teachers were doing their best to connect them with potential recruiters in their field. For instance, several journalism graduates at the Media College of Tripoli University were placed at the television stations of Al Nabaa and Al Wataniyah after the conclusion of their studies. The Dean of Tripoli University's Media College was quite optimistic about the level of its students and their potential to start their own independent newspaper. For instance six of his students combined efforts and started their own art journal called *Mosaïque*. Conversely, media owners interviewed were not satisfied with the level of their journalists so far, and often mentioned the need to provide their employees with in-service training at the media outlet.

There are no well-developed or well-known private training or private education centers providing journalistic training at the time of publication of this study.

### 3.2.2 ACADEMIC COURSES EQUIP STUDENTS WITH SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE RELATED TO DEMOCRATIC DEVELOPMENT

At the time of this report, the media curriculum in the country contains no significant reference to contemporary political values or to democratic principles. Only the Media College at Tripoli University offers a course labeled 'Contemporary Political Systems'. However, it is unclear to what extent the content of this class contributes to equipping students with skills and knowledge related to democratic development.

Third, Libyan media colleges suffer from a lack of resources. Students complained that course materials are outdated and that universities are not able to provide the equipment required. Several students explained that in order to use a camera to practice with, they had to rent their own one. In Misrata, a group of students purchased equipment together and meet several times a week to train. In Benghazi, students of the Media College complained that their study environment was negative due to the fact the

**"No, the media cannot foster human rights because journalists have no rights in Libya."**

Yara, 22, TV student, Tripoli

**"Yes, the media can foster human rights by conducting interviews with people. For instance Al Aseema TV tried to help people express themselves and now they have been trying to destroy this media."**

Esra, 23, Press student, Tripoli

While courses about the role of mass media in fostering human rights were absent under the former regime, it remains unclear to what extent these concepts are currently addressed at university in post-revolutionary Libya. At present, the curriculum in use does not include any courses focusing on the role of the media in society.

***"Yes, these minority groups live with us, it is our obligation towards them to report about their rights."***

Abdelrahman, 26, TV student, Benghazi

***"I believe it is important to deliver marginalized groups' opinions in the media. Right now you can't do that because there is no law to protect journalists, no army and no police we can trust to protect us."***

Hatem, 26, TV student, 26, Tripoli

that it was "part of the journalist's work" to represent all opinions, including those of minority groups. The most popular answers as to how to empower these voices were the following: directly hosting marginalized groups in shows; conducting awareness campaigns; and conducting surveys to understand their opinions and perspectives. A small minority of students noted that they would not take into account the voice of the marginalized if it had the potential to create conflict (*fitna*) in the Libyan society.

Journalism students interviewed have a fair understanding of the potential of media to foster human rights, and are cautiously optimistic about the current situation in Libya. Most agree in theory that media can foster human rights, while admitting that in practice this was not the reality in Libya. Most students recognized the role of the media as "the voice of the people", "the voice of human rights" and the "fourth power" in a political system. They explained that certain television channels such as Libya Al Ahrar and Al Asseema were trying to foster human rights despite the difficult and tense situation in the country. Nevertheless, students evoked several reasons as to why media was not fully able to foster human rights in practice in Libya. First among them were that "journalists have no rights", or are "asked to follow agendas" or that "some journalists are not aware of human rights". Some students were of the opinion that outlets should host experts for seminars and encourage journalists to study human rights.

When asked what the concept of press freedom meant to them, the majority of students said it meant the ability to express one's opinion "within certain boundaries". These boundaries correspond to traditional societal norms. For instance, expressing one's opinion in public should not affect security, offend people or create conflict.

***"There is no protection for Libyan journalists: if you talk about the rights of the handicapped and blind people like me, they<sup>21</sup> will attack you. If you talk about women's rights, they will attack you. If you talk about Tebu rights, they will attack you... so media cannot foster democracy or human rights!"***

Noor, 27, TV student, Benghazi

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<sup>20</sup> The majority of students believed that media and journalism had to play a strong role in presenting the perspectives of minority and marginalized groups

<sup>21</sup> Libyans tend to use 'they' without specifying anyone to avoid naming particular groups, and often use this pronoun to refer to violent Islamist groups.

### 3.3 PRESENCE OF TRADE UNIONS AND PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

#### 3.3.1 MEDIA WORKERS HAVE THE RIGHT TO JOIN INDEPENDENT TRADE UNIONS AND EXERCISE THIS RIGHT

The Journalist Syndicate in Libya, first created during the Jado conference<sup>22</sup> in 2012 to replace pre-Revolution structures, is currently inactive, has no apparent legitimacy and is not recognized by most journalists. Of the 30 journalists and media managers interviewed during this research, none declared being a member of the Journalist Syndicate. According to several interviewees, including media managers and university deans, the Syndicate acts as a branch of the Ministry of Information and rejects the concept of independence from the government. This analysis is supported by the fact that no journalist, student, journalist teacher or media manager interviewed as part of this report was a member of the Syndicate. While smaller associations are believed to exist, nothing resembling an independent journalists' trade union with a national scope exists in Libya at present.

When asked whether media managers provided any type of social protection for their journalists, interviewees responded that they did not implement any such measures. Furthermore, journalists themselves confirmed that their employers had few means of protecting them. At present, no credible professional association exists to defend journalists' rights in Libya, highlighting a serious deficiency in the Libyan media sector.

#### 3.3.2 TRADE UNIONS AND PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS PROVIDE ADVOCACY ON BEHALF OF THE PROFESSION

As can be inferred from the above, the Journalist Syndicate has no capacity or legitimacy to advocate for journalists' rights, freedom of expression or issues of media policy.

### 3.4 PRESENCE OF CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS

#### 3.4.1 CSOs MONITOR THE MEDIA SYSTEMATICALLY

Only a few Libyan CSOs actively monitor the media sector. In Tripoli and Benghazi, H2O and Bukra (Tomorrow) have begun to systematically monitor media content related to politics and the actions taken by the General National Congress (GNC) in the media since 2013. At the time of publication of this report, these two NGOs produce a twice-weekly joint media monitoring report which focuses on the work of the GNC, and issue a monthly report on the Government's performance entitled 'Eye on Congress'. The representative of another Tripoli-based CSO, Step by Step, explained that they regularly monitor the media, especially content linked to the High National Electoral Commission (HNEC) as they are concerned with election issues in their work. In Misrata, the CSO Naam (Yes) report that they monitor topics most relevant to Misratis for security purposes.



Figure 7 - "Eye on Congress"

While the above illustrates that there is some indigenous media monitoring taking place in the country, dedicated media analysis by CSOs is not common in Libya. No CSO is at this point entirely dedicated to monitoring and analysing media content. Overall, this was not viewed as overly problematic, with several NGOs explaining that it was not required for them by the civil society to monitor the media.

<sup>22</sup> The Jado conference brought together 1,000 media professionals in June 2012 to attend a Media forum and create the basis for a code of conduct for journalists; the document that resulted from the conference was never approved or implemented. Jado is the name of a mountain town in western Libya where the conference took place.

### 3.4.2 CSOs PROVIDE DIRECT ADVOCACY ON ISSUES OF FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

Libyan CSOs are well integrated in international networks anchored by organizations that are concerned with freedom of expression such as Human Rights Watch or Reporters Without Borders. Nevertheless, issues relating to media policy and freedom of expression are not often the subjects of debate, although Step by Step reported organizing social media awareness campaigns. In Misrata, the NGO Naam condemned the series of attacks against journalists perpetrated in Libya in January 2013, and demanded freedom for media outlets in Misrata and in Libya more generally.

### 3.4.3 CSOs HELP COMMUNITIES TO ACCESS INFORMATION

A relatively large network of CSOs exists in Tripoli and Benghazi, and to some extent in Misrata and in the South of the country, working in different sectors. Nevertheless, Libyan CSOs rarely focus on helping communities to access information, as Libyans are already well connected to media in general. The scope of the project did not allow the research team to assess first-hand and in detail the extent to which CSOs are able to assist communities to access information relevant to their lives, and no external study has been conducted to date on this subject.

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## 4. RECOMMENDATIONS

### 4.1 UNIVERSITIES AND MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION

- Encourage more flexibility in recruitment practices of teaching staff, through the recruitment of both academics and practitioners/professionals even when the latter do not have a higher degree.
- Promote and create journalism curricula that build competencies in the field of political science, history, sociology, economics and other applicable disciplines on top of basic media and journalism studies.
- Given the current dearth of practical training available at universities, training programmes should focus on practical techniques in order to fill gaps.
- Support current teachers in the process of attending study trips and exchanges at faculties in other countries to learn about new technologies in journalism (social media, blogging, etc).
- Encourage the creation of student media outlets with student-generated content to facilitate practical training.
- Encourage the creation of student representation groups to ensure that there is adequate consultation of journalism students.

### 4.2 MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND GOVERNMENT OF LIBYA

- Ensure adequate funding for up-to-date technologies and equipment at media colleges.

### 4.3 MEDIA OUTLETS AND JOURNALISM PROFESSIONALS

- Encourage the creation of professional journalist associations to enhance the exchange of best practices and advocate for journalists' rights.
- Foster relationships between media outlets and Libyan media colleges for traineeship programmes and professional opportunities.
- Explore the opportunity of convening an annual convention of the major media outlets to discuss challenges and developments in the field.

### 4.4 INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

- Whenever possible, work with universities and already existing institutions to complement their training and avoid setting up competing courses and institutions.
- Provide adequate training on media monitoring and its importance to local civil society organizations.

### 4.5 CIVIL SOCIETY

- Encourage the creation of social awareness campaigns on freedom of expression.
- Encourage the creation of campaigns showing that it is respectable for women to work in the media, in order to fight against the notion that women should not work in this field.
- Encourage CSOs to monitor the media systematically and establish feedback mechanisms with media outlets.