

## An Analysis of the Somali Media Environment



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## Foreword

In 2006 the BBC World Service Trust (BBC WST), funded by the UK Department for International Development, conducted research into media in 17 countries across sub-Saharan Africa in order to identify priorities for future media development initiatives. A series of *African Media Development Initiative* (AMDI) reports were produced, and this Media Sector Analysis builds on the Somalia component of that work.

This analysis has been produced in consultation with media stakeholders and is grounded in a review of previously published material. The report is just one component of a larger media development project being delivered by the BBC WST entitled '*Strengthening Radio Stations in Somalia to Promote Human Rights, Peace and Governance*' - a two-year project which aims to enhance the reach, levels of audience participation and professional capacity of Somali media.

The media, and specifically, radio, is seen as a key local institution well placed to promote individual human and civil rights, freedom of expression and democratic dialogue. The project is informed by a rights perspective, ensuring that actions separately and collectively empower marginalised citizens, in particular, women and young people, to engage in direct dialogue with local authorities and thus have improved access to their civil and political rights.

The project comprises two other strands in addition to the Media Sector Analysis:

- Capacity-building in six Somali radio stations, involving on-site training and mentoring of radio journalists and senior radio station staff (such as station managers and finance managers), designed to promote both rights-based broadcasting and to enhance standards of radio production work, including editorial values and judgment, reporting political differences and addressing needs of the audience through inter-active programming.
- Media-related training for civil society organisations, particularly those representing women's and young people's concerns. Such training will improve their ability to influence the broadcasting agenda, particularly by promoting their interests and rights.

This report will inform the above project strands, as well as providing a basis for the development of media policy in the Somali region.

The BBC World Service Trust is the BBC's international development charity. It uses media and communication to reduce poverty and to promote human rights.

## Commonly used acronyms

AFP	Agence France-Presse
AMISOM	African Union Mission in Somalia
BBC WST	BBC World Service Trust
CPJ	Committee to Protect Journalists
DfID	Department for international Development
IFEX	Freedom of Expression Exchange
IRIN	Integrated Regional Information Network
IUP	Indiana University of Pennsylvania
NMC	National Media Council
NUSOJ	National Union of Somali Journalists
SOLJA	Somaliland Journalists Association
SWIJA	Somaliland Women's Journalist Association
TFG	Transitional Federal Government
UIC	Union of Islamic Courts
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
UNDP	United Nation's Development Programme
VoA	Voice of America

# **Executive Summary**

## **Introduction**

Twenty years on from the collapse of the Barre regime, many regions of Somalia continue to be afflicted by violent conflict, a volatile political situation, and slow rates of development. The need for a strong media sector that can support development and the creation of effective systems of governance is well recognised. However with an international reputation for being one of the deadliest countries in the world for journalists, and a region that suffers from lawlessness, a lack of institutions, and severely limited infrastructure and resources, the capacity of the Somali media sector to play this role effectively is unclear. Building on the findings of the 2006 African Media Development Initiative (AMDI) study of Somali media, this analysis of the media sector aims to map the current media landscape and provide insight into the structures, relationships and practices which characterise the sector at present.

## **Research Methodology**

For this analysis, extensive primary research was carried out across the three administrative regions of Somalia – Somaliland, Puntland and South Central Somalia – as well as at the Diaspora and international level. Investigation was structured according to the BBC World Service Trust (BBC WST) four levels of media engagement (system, organisation, practitioner and audience) in order to develop a clear understanding of how the sector functions, from the highest levels of legislation and regulation, right through to audience engagement with output.

Conducting field research in Somalia is extremely challenging, due to instability and poor infrastructure in many regions. The BBC WST has a team of Somali researchers based in Hargeisa, Somaliland, however security issues prevent the team from conducting fieldwork in Puntland and South Central Somalia. To reach these locations, partnerships were forged with universities in Mogadishu and Dhusamareb (South Central Somalia), and Galkacyo and Bosasso (Puntland).

Across Somaliland, Puntland and South Central Somalia, the research team conducted audience and journalist focus groups, interviews with managers, journalists and other staff at local media organisations, and collected recordings of radio output. In-depth interviews were also carried out with media owners, representatives of journalist associations, international non-governmental organisations and other key informants on the media based in Nairobi and internationally.

The research findings are synthesised in this report to map the current media landscape and present the most dominant influences on the media sector and other important themes. Suggested priorities for future media development are organised according to system, organisation, practitioner and audience levels of engagement with media, as this model provides a practical framework for intervention.

**Chapter 2** provides detailed information on the research design and methodology, ethical considerations and challenges faced.

## **Media Landscape**

The Somali media landscape varies across administrative regions. There are numerous independently owned newspapers in operation in Somaliland, while radio and television broadcasts are almost completely state-controlled. In contrast the landscape in Puntland and South Central Somalia is characterised by a plurality of broadcast organisations both government and privately owned, but a practically non-existent press sector.

- **Radio is the dominant media.**

Like other parts of Africa, radio is a crucial source of information for a vast proportion of the population. At the time of writing, there are 35 local FM Somali stations in operation, however most of these have a limited geographic broadcast reach of approximately 30 kilometres. Many people living at a distance from the location of such FM radio stations have access to only international channels broadcasting on shortwave, such as the BBC and Voice of America. Influences from the political sphere, particularly in South Central Somalia, mean that the number of local stations in operation fluctuates constantly, with frequent suspensions and takeovers by militants.

- **Television is mainly accessed in urban areas, but is beginning to be used for political influence.**

There are nine television channels in operation, and the recent establishment of new stations in Mogadishu by the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) and the Islamist militant group, Al-Shabab, show that this platform is growing. Many television channels now broadcast via satellite, which allows them to reach a wider geographic area.

However while there is evidence that television is becoming more popular, low income levels, limited/poor access to electricity, and the nomadic lifestyle of a large number of Somalis, mean that radio is likely to remain the most widely used media for some time yet.

- **Newspapers now only exist in Somaliland.**

The destruction of infrastructure and lack of security has meant that the newspaper industry has died out in Puntland and South Central Somalia. Only Somaliland has succeeded in maintaining a vibrant press, however low literacy levels and poor distribution to rural areas mean that audience reach is much lower than radio.

- **Internet is growing in popularity and influence, yet still has limited reach.**

There are many Somali websites in existence but internet users are thought to be mainly young and urban-based. Many news websites are targeted at a Diaspora audience. This platform is a key source of news for practitioners, with media

organisation managers and journalists stating they use the internet regularly to inform news stories.

- **Mobile phones are increasing in popularity.**

Mobile phones are widely used in Somalia for personal communications and banking. While none of the media organisations contacted for this analysis reported providing a mobile platform for their output, mobile providers are increasingly targeting subscribers via text message with commercial advertising and other information (such as messaging from NGOs). Some key informants believe that mobile technology has untapped potential as a medium.

**Chapter 3** maps the media landscape and presents facts, figures and views of key informants on the above platforms.

## **Legislation, Regulation and Media Freedom**

**Media legislation is in place which enables media freedom, but in practice governments exercise censorship.**

All three regions have legislations in place, which recognise freedom of expression, however these are implemented and upheld to varying degrees. The growth and operation of the media in the three administrative regions has reflected their differing political situations.

In South Central Somalia there has been criticism of both the level of control awarded to the government-appointed regulatory body, the National Media Council, and the legal obligation for the media to promote Islam. In 2010, the Puntland Ministry of Information exerted its authority by issuing strict new directives on content that could be broadcast. The government in Somaliland retains tight control over the licensing of new broadcast media outlets with the result that just a single state radio station operates officially. Organisations in Somaliland and Puntland face pressure and often direct interference from government authorities who have been known to impose censorship on organisations and order arrests and detention of individual journalists where official interests are perceived to be undermined. The authorities in Somaliland are particularly sensitive to anything which might be perceived to jeopardise efforts towards achieving international recognition of Somaliland as an independent state. Arrests of journalists are most common in Puntland, with the most recent reported case being the jailing of an online journalist in July 2011 for publication of a ‘false news’ report, which incorrectly identified dead bodies found on a road as Puntland security agents. Journalists and experts complained that government officials and politicians were not well versed in the role of the media.

**As well as censorship from governments, journalists are attacked and threatened by Islamist militia.**



In South Central Somalia Islamist militias and insurgency groups have a much greater influence on the media than formal legislation, issuing directives to organisations about what can be broadcast, closing stations, and threatening or attacking individual journalists who are accused of violating strict Islamic codes. Of late, the TFG has also demonstrated efforts to increase control over the media in this region, with reports of acts of censorship, threats of criminal prosecution and physical threats to individual journalists working in Mogadishu, South Central Somalia.

## **Media Ownership, Funding and Diaspora Involvement**

**Media in Somalia is mainly privately owned for financial and political gain.**

Most media organisations in Somalia are opened as private business ventures, although state radio and television exist in Somaliland and South Central Somalia. Recent years have seen a shift away from the practice of opening stations to promote clan interests, with more emphasis on political and business benefits of media ownership.

**The Diaspora invests in media.**

The Diaspora is also heavily involved in the funding and establishment of media organisations. In a similar vein to their investment in development and private industry, members of the Diaspora invest in media to promote progress in their ancestral communities and often, to serve personal interests.

**Ownership of media organisations has a bearing on content produced.**

Personal and political interests are often thought to take precedence over the provision of objective and unbiased information. Journalists who participated in interviews and focus groups stated that they often practise self-censorship to represent the views of the owners and patrons of their organisations. Members of the audience also took media ownership into consideration when deciding how trustworthy content was.

**Media organisations often suffer from lack of resources and poor management.**

Key informants identified a need for media owners who have a better understanding of the role of the media, and are conscious of promoting professional journalism standards and developing their organisations. Many organisations suffer from poor financial management, with little reinvestment in resources or training. Some organisations assessed for this analysis lacked the resources to function effectively, sometimes being forced to suspend broadcasts, as they do not have access to essential equipment such as electricity generators.

## **Practitioner Working Environment**

**Journalists work in a very challenging environment.**

Journalism is an extremely dangerous profession in Somalia and journalists describe being threatened, arrested and attacked over their work. In addition to the physical dangers of the profession and the lack of media freedom, journalists' working conditions are characterised by long hours, low pay and the necessity to operate with poor equipment and resources. Interviewed journalists reported working 15 hour days, often without the security of contracts, and in some cases as volunteers. Female journalists tend to receive lower pay than men and are subject to increased threats from militant groups who do not believe women should work in media.

Interviewed journalists did not appear to dwell on these challenges however, and many described a desire to improve conditions for their local communities as a driving force behind the decision to work in media. The recognition and respect that the role garners was also a major motivating factor for some.

## **Professional Training, Experience and Journalism Standards**

### **Opportunities for formal journalism training have reduced in the last five years**

Very limited formal journalism training has been available in recent years, and existing university courses have suffered from inconsistencies in international funding and a lack of qualified personnel to deliver the syllabus. Journalists also receive very little professional development from their own organisations or journalist associations. However, there is evidence that new university courses will commence in 2011 (particularly in Somaliland and Puntland).

### **Journalists currently working in Somalia tend not to be educated to a graduate level and lack experience working in the media.**

Interviews with station managers revealed that the majority of journalists working for them are only educated to secondary level and have limited experience in the sector. In recent years many educated journalists have left the country, leaving a void that has largely been filled by self-made journalists, with little professional training or experience. Additionally, many of those in managerial roles do not come from media backgrounds, with employees complaining that their management could not provide them with the training and on-the-job mentoring that they required.

## **Journalist Associations**

**There is a plethora of journalists associations in operation but none of them have high membership or offer effective support to journalists.**

There are more than sixteen registered journalist associations, which while plentiful in number, are not perceived by journalists to provide the support that is needed. Journalists felt that associations serve the needs of media owners more than practitioners and were dubious about the use of donor funding. At worst, it was reported that some journalist associations have been created purely to access such funds, providing no legitimate services or support to the profession. Feedback from journalist association representatives was that there is a lack of recognition from media organisations of the legitimacy of their interventions in cases of journalist mistreatment.

**Journalist associations compete for funds, and do not cooperate together.**

The multiplicity of journalist associations means that there is high competition for funding and a lack of a cohesive voice to represent the profession at a regulatory level. Journalist associations work in silos, without combining efforts and approaches to lobbying and support activities. Experts believe that such a unified approach is necessary to achieve real progress.

**Chapter 4** provides further detail regarding legislation, registration and media freedom; media ownership and funding; the practitioner working environment; journalism training and experience; and the role of Journalist Associations.

## **The Somali Audience**

**Audiences are critical of media content.**

Research with audiences revealed that they have high expectations of media, and a good understanding of how owner interests and poor professional ethics can result in biased and inaccurate output. Audience members expressed distrust for some organisations, and an acknowledgement that information broadcast is often unreliable. Those who had access to multiple radio stations or other media reported comparing news coverage across different organisations to verify information or to get different perspectives on stories.

**Audiences desire programming that has a more positive and progressive focus.**

Audiences were generally satisfied with the level of news and Islamic programming available to them. However they also expect the media to play an active role in the promotion of peace and development, and as such, desire greater emphasis on these goals. An analysis of radio programme schedules shows that the priority concerns for Somalis – peace and security, governance, education, health and social and economic development – could be given a heavier focus.

**Audiences keen to contribute and interact.**

The Somali audience enjoys discussion and phone-in programme formats, and those who participated in audience research demonstrated an enthusiasm for programmes which would allow the public to ask questions and voice concerns to government officials and leaders. Audiences are keen to hear from opinion formers in their own communities such as elders and religious leaders.

**Chapter 5** provides an overview of the extent to which programming meets audience needs.

## **Quality of Output**

### **Training and experience impact negatively on output.**

Low levels of training and experience impact directly on the standard of media output. This was noted by interviewed media experts and audience members, who felt that many organisations broadcast or publish unreliable, biased and inaccurate information, often contributing to tensions and hostilities.

Content analysis of sample radio and online news output supported these views. Many reports were not thought to provide a balanced view, there was great variation in appropriate use of sources and many stories were not thought to be accurate. While the assessment showed that much radio and online output was clear to understand and provided adequate context for readers, there were very few examples of investigative reporting and journalists' own observations were often used as the sole source of information for stories. Overall there was a great deal of variation in the quality of output produced within individual organisations, which would suggest that standard editorial procedures and processes are generally not in place within organisations.

**Chapter 6** presents content analysis findings, and provides an objective analysis of the standard of journalism and adherence to professional best practice.

## **Recommendations for Future Media Development**

Based on this research, priorities for future media development have been outlined, according to the BBC WST four levels of media engagement.

At the **systems** level, development and enforcement of media legislation, as well as the protection of those involved with the media, is reliant on the presence of functioning institutions and improved stability in the region. Whilst this is a longer-term goal, the media will benefit more immediately from improved relationships with politicians and other officials, who are

trained in the ethics and role of media, and the development of training institutions through consistent long-term funding.

**Organisations** can develop through consultations with experts on approaches to upholding professional standards in an incredibly challenging and often, dangerous environment. Assistance in identifying the audience's programming needs, improved management, access to equipment and knowledge of how to utilise new technologies are also important. Support for the creation of an umbrella organisation that can provide a unified voice for professionals is a priority.

There is an urgent need for training of **practitioners** in journalism ethics and professionalism, as well as the fundamentals of writing and producing high quality output. Ongoing support and development through on-the-job mentoring and supported networking opportunities will be beneficial, particularly for female journalists who face significant challenges.

The Somali audience desires a plural and diverse media, which can provide them objective and unbiased news, in addition to crucial information on social, economic and development issues. The interventions outlined at all of these levels will serve to improve local media so that it better meets **audience** needs.

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# Chapter 1. Introduction

## 1.1. History and Political Environment

The Republic of Somalia was created in 1960, when the protectorate of British Somaliland and the colony of Italian Somaliland gained independence and merged into one country, under the leadership of the first President, Adam Abdulle Osman. The 9.9 million<sup>1</sup> inhabitants of the country are relatively homogenous, with Somalis, the largest ethnic group, constituting up to 95% of the population, alongside minority Arabic and Bantu communities. Most of Somalia's population belong to one of six descent-based clans<sup>2</sup> - the nomadic pastoralist Samaal (Darod, Dir, Issaq and Hawiye clans) and the cultivating Sab (Digil and Rahanweyn clans). The population is almost exclusively Sunni Muslim. Since independence, the country's development has been slow due to deep internal divisions between different clans, regions and religious factions.

Less than a decade after independence, political tensions came to the fore when the second President, Abdirashid Ali Shermarke was assassinated in 1969. Shortly after this, Muhammad Siyad Barre took power through a military coup. His authoritarian socialist rule was characterised by the persecution, jailing and torture of political opponents and dissidents. A combination of local and national grievances, identity politics and regional inter-state rivalries led to the collapse of Barre's regime in 1991, and South Somalia descended into lawlessness and clan warfare. The history and politics of the three major regions of the country – the South, Puntland and Somaliland, have since developed in distinct ways.

### South Somalia

Since 1991, South Somalia has experienced almost constant warfare. Initially this was primarily along clan lines, but more recently has shifted to ideological divides. After years of no effective government, a Transitional Federal Government (TFG) of the Republic of Somalia was formed in 2004, as a result of protracted talks in Kenya. However, the TFG has struggled to impose its authority in a highly divided society. In 2006, the Union of Islamic Courts (UIC), an Islamist group seeking to establish control by implementing Sharia law, took control of the capital of Mogadishu and other parts of the South after defeating the clan warlords who had held power there for 15 years. The UIC, which had declared Jihad on Ethiopia, was itself ousted in December of the same year by an Ethiopian-led force. However, Islamist militias emerged from

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<sup>1</sup> The CIA World Factbook, May 2011. Weblink: [https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/countrytemplate\\_so.html](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/countrytemplate_so.html)

<sup>2</sup> Somalia has a kinship structure based on clans, and genealogies define the belonging of kinsmen to certain clans, according to the ancestor from whom they stem. Reference: ACCORD, *Clans in Somalia*. Report on a Lecture by Joakim Gundel, COI Workshop Vienna, 15 May 2009 (Revised Edition).

the defeated UIC under the name of Al-Shabab, and, since 2007, have taken control of most of what is now referred to as *South Central Somalia*<sup>3</sup> <sup>4</sup>.

South Central Somalia's political environment remains defined by the intense conflict between the TFG and the Islamist militias of Al-Shabab and Hizbul Islam. The militias control most of the territory, while the TFG, backed by the troops of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), struggles to keep control of some parts of Mogadishu. The region remains lawless, with no effective administration or institutions in place. Additionally, the mandate of the TFG, led by President Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed, is due to end in August 2011.

***April 2011 - Alzaniya has been proposed as a new semi-autonomous region***

At least 10 regional administrations have been created in South Central Somalia over the past two decades. The most recent is Alzaniya, a new semi-autonomous region in the far south of South Central Somalia, formed on April 3 2011 during a week-long conference in Kenya.

**Puntland** - In 1998 the North Eastern region of Somalia, Puntland, was declared an autonomous state. Currently led by President Abdirahman Muhammad Farole, who was elected by parliament in January 2009, the region has managed to avoid the intense warfare that engulfs South Central Somalia. Amongst other concerns is the increasing incidence of piracy, which the government is struggling to address.

**Somaliland** - In 1991 the North Western region of Somalia, which formerly belonged to the British Somaliland protectorate, declared itself independent from the Republic of Somalia. Although heavily dependent on remittances from the Diaspora, the region has had a relatively stable history, and has its own currency, institutions and a vibrant business environment. The region is currently governed by the Kulmiye party. Ahmed Mohamed Silanyo came into power in July 2010, following elections considered largely free and fair by international observers. Despite its continuing efforts lobbying for recognition, Somaliland is yet to be recognised internationally as an independent state.

***Somaliland held successful presidential elections in July 2010 but the state is not recognized internationally as a sovereign nation***

**The Diaspora** - It is estimated that more than one million Somali's currently live abroad, with large Diaspora communities in the Horn of Africa, Western Europe, US and Canada. The UK has the largest Somali Diaspora outside of Africa but the majority of displaced Somalis remain

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<sup>3</sup> The region known as South Somalia following independence has since become known as South Central Somalia. This name is used throughout this report.

<sup>4</sup> Weblink: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/feedarticle/9578013>

in areas such as Kenya, Djibouti and Yemen. The migration of Somalis has been continuous over the last two decades, peaking during the early 2000s.

The Somali Diaspora is renowned for its support of relief and development work, social and business investment, and involvement with the politics of its home country. Findings from a recent study published by the United Nation's Development Programme

*Remittances from Diaspora  
are an important source of  
income*

(UNDP) suggest that it provides between US\$130-200 million annually for development and relief activities, and between US\$1.3 and 2 billion in private remittances<sup>5</sup>. The private sector is reported to be heavily dependent on remittances, which are estimated to account for up to 45% of GDP. On a political level the Diaspora has a strong presence in the administration of all three regions; almost half of the ministries in Puntland are headed by someone from the Diaspora, the existing cabinet of the TFG is drawn largely from Somali Diaspora leaders<sup>6</sup>, and approximately half of the current Somaliland cabinet are returned members of the Diaspora. The Diaspora has been both praised and criticised for its involvement in the affairs of its home country. In Somaliland for example, the Diaspora has been credited for its lobbying and investment in peacebuilding activities, whilst also criticised for providing financial and other material support for clan militias during the civil conflicts of the 1990s<sup>7</sup>.

## 1.2. Media History

The turbulent political environment has strongly influenced the development of the media sector in Somalia. During the Barre regime (1969-1991) media organisations were under total state control. The Ministry of Information and National Guidance published the only daily newspaper, October Star, in Somali, English, Arabic and Italian, while the Broadcasting Department managed the radio from Hargeisa, the current capital of Somaliland. The Somali National News Agency (SONNA) released press reports to international news agencies.<sup>8</sup>

Many newspapers and radio stations opened after the fall of the regime in 1991, but, with heavy fighting on-going within and beyond Mogadishu, they were often unable to remain in operation for more than 3 months. As many were affiliated to particular clans, who often used

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<sup>5</sup> Hammond et al (2011) Cash and Compassion: The Role of the Somali Diaspora in Relief, Development and Peace-building. Report of a Study Commissioned by UNDP Somalia

<sup>6</sup> Jamestown Foundation, Conflict Between Somali Leaders Halts Military Operations against Islamist Insurgents, 14 April 2011, Terrorism Monitor Volume: 9 Issue: 15. Weblink: <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/4dad7fa2.html>

<sup>7</sup> Ibrahim, M.H. (2010) Somaliland's Investment in Peace: Analysing the Diaspora's Economic Engagement in Peace Building. DIASPEACE Working Paper, published by the research project Diasporas for Peace: Patterns, Trends and Potential of Long-distance Diaspora Involvement in Conflict Settings.

<sup>8</sup> Weblink: [www.stanhopecentre.org/training/EA/Somalia.doc](http://www.stanhopecentre.org/training/EA/Somalia.doc)

them to promote their own interests, readers began to see them as tools for war. Media became a proxy for the political struggle of warlords.

Since 1996, the media has become increasingly independent from the clans, as a result of pressure from the public who would not accept what they perceived to be propaganda, and the need to look outside of the clans for recruitment of technicians and professional journalists. Although journalists became less inclined to serve the interests of the owners, they continued to face intimidation from various sides that wanted to promote their own political agenda. Political divisions have moved away from clan lines and towards a more ideological divide since 2006, but journalists continue to face harassment from both sides of the conflict.

The differing political situations in Somalia's three main regions have resulted in the media developing in different ways across the country. This is explored in detail throughout the report.

*Media has now become more independent from clans*

The development of media must also be considered in the context of social and demographic factors, with three quarters of the population in the whole of Somalia living in rural areas<sup>9</sup>, many with nomadic lifestyles and with only 38% of the population over 15 having the ability to read and write. Primary school net enrolment/attendance in Somalia was estimated at just 23% between 2005 and 2009<sup>10</sup>. Weak physical infrastructure also exacerbates the challenges of poor accessibility.

*Majority of Somalis live in rural areas. Only a third of the population can read and write*

**South Central Somalia** has seen an increase in radio stations. These operate under constant threats, with bans and violence from factions and in a setting of lawlessness and intense fighting (mainly between Al-Shabab and the TFG). However the chaotic environment has also contributed to the gradual disappearance of newspapers, partly due to destruction of essential infrastructure.

The media in **Puntland** has also become dominated by radio. Although the regional radio stations are deemed to be independent, the authorities maintain a strong control. This contrasts sharply with the lack of a central authority to influence the media in South Central Somalia.

The media in **Somaliland** has evolved in a different way. Newspapers flourished in Somaliland after its independence and have played a role in building the path to democracy and maintaining a strong sense of nationalism. Unlike South Central Somalia, there is a strong administration, which keeps tight control over the broadcast sector.

### 1.3. Objectives of this study

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<sup>9</sup> According to the CIA World Factbook a large proportion of these are thought to still maintain nomadic lifestyles. However accurate estimates are not available. Weblink: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/so.html>

<sup>10</sup> UNICEF, Weblink: [http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/somalia\\_statistics.html#0](http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/somalia_statistics.html#0)

While social and political developments in Somalia have strongly influenced the growth of the media sector, the media also has an important role to play in promoting the development of the country. Although the number of media organisations across Somalia is relatively high, it is clear that the sector faces a number of serious challenges, which may restrict its ability to fulfil this vital role. However, very little is known about the systems, organisations, practitioners that form the sector, and the audiences they serve. If the international community is to effectively support the Somali media sector, more information is needed.

This media sector analysis aims to address this knowledge deficit. The specific objectives of the study were identified in consultation with media practitioners in the country and internationally. These are to:

- Gain an **overview of the media environment** which maps the media in terms of organisation, ownership, broadcasting reach, number of staff, programme schedules and quality of content offering
- Give **insight into the working environment of media professionals** in the country and understand the role of journalist associations to support the sector
- Understand the **relationship between Somali Diaspora** and media operating in Somalia
- Evaluate the **journalistic capabilities** of the Somali media overall and by organisation
- Determine the effectiveness of Somali media to **meet the needs of the audience** from both researching the audiences and from evaluating media output
- Provide recommendations for **future media development interventions**

## Chapter 2. Research Methodology

This research was conducted as an update to the African Media Development Initiative (AMDI) report for Somalia which was compiled in 2006<sup>11</sup>, as well as to provide more data in an area where little primary research had been conducted.

The research was carried out in two stages – a preliminary scoping stage followed by the core primary research activities.

At the **scoping stage**, existing knowledge and information on the Somali media was gathered through desk research and meetings with organisations involved in assessing or developing media in Somalia. The aim of such consultations was to feed into the design of primary research activities and to ensure that this analysis would not duplicate previous work.

Consultations were held with representatives from organisations based in Somalia, Kenya and the UK, including:

- *National Democratic Institute (NDI)*, which has been active in Somalia since 2005, focusing primarily on programmes which aim to strengthen governance. Their activities include training politicians and parliamentarians, encouraging dialogue amongst citizens and developing leadership skills of women MPs
- *Somali Media Observatory*, which maintains a database of media organisations and media monitoring in Somalia
- *Albany Associates*, who work in media and communications alongside AMISOM in South Central Somalia
- *BBC Somali Service*

Desk research also drew on significant publications on Somali media such as:

- *National Union of Somali Journalists' (NUSOJ) reports on press freedom and working conditions of journalists in Somalia (2010)*<sup>12</sup>
- *BBC World Service audience survey data (2008)*
- *United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and Integrated Regional Information Network (IRIN) radio audience survey report (2010)*<sup>13</sup>

A large body of **primary research** was conducted across the three administrative regions of Somaliland, Puntland and South Central Somalia to gather original data, including telephone interviews, focus groups and face-to-face interviews. The research design of this stage was closely linked to the BBC World Service Trust's model of media engagement. The premise of this model is that relationships between social systems, media and the public are integral to

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<sup>11</sup> AMDI Report (2006), Weblink:

[http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/trust/researchlearning/story/2006/12/061208\\_amdi\\_somalia.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/trust/researchlearning/story/2006/12/061208_amdi_somalia.shtml)

<sup>12</sup> NUSOJ, Weblink: <http://www.nusoj.org/>

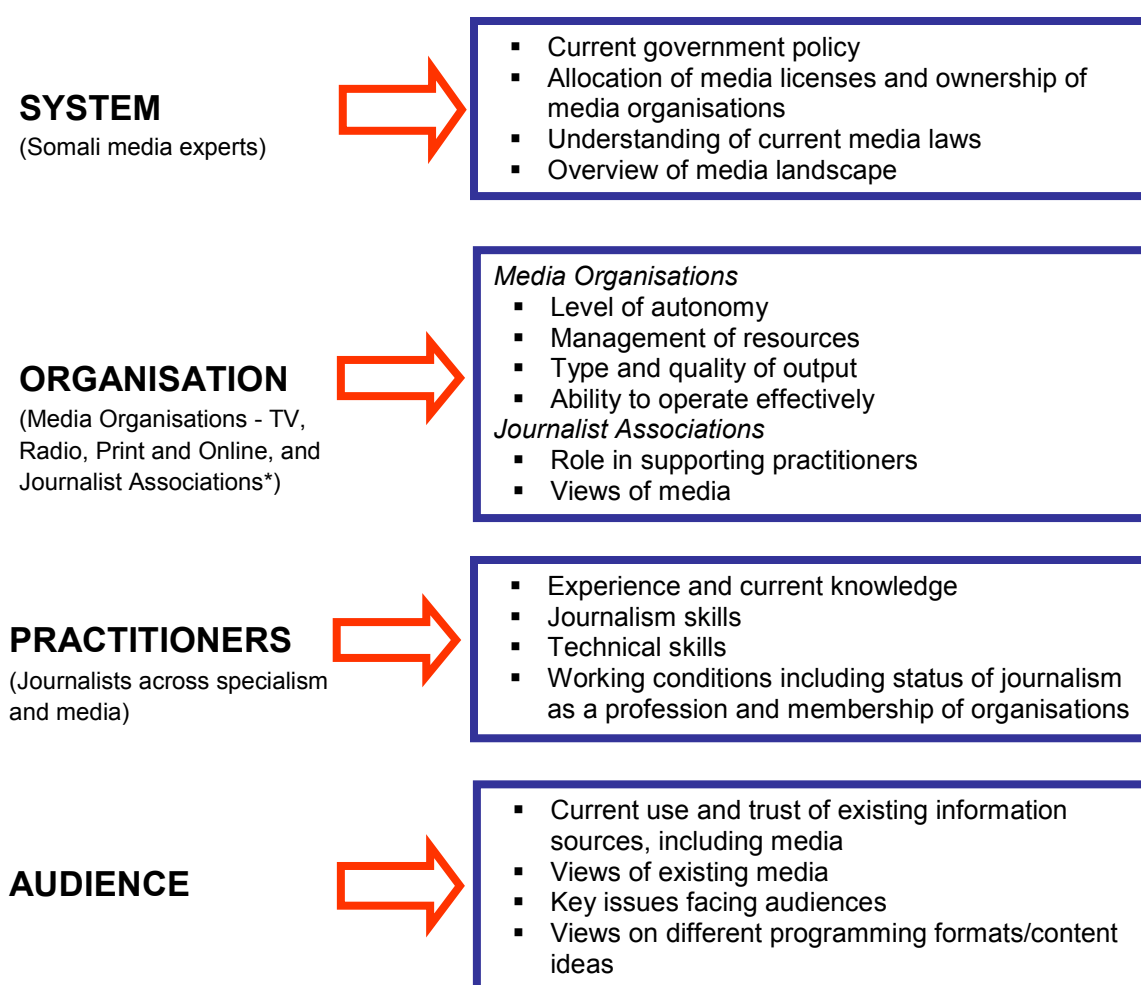
<sup>13</sup> IRIN Radio Listening Survey in Somalia (2010), Weblink:  
[http://www.irinnews.org/pdf/IRINRadio\\_ListeningSurvey.pdf](http://www.irinnews.org/pdf/IRINRadio_ListeningSurvey.pdf)

how audiences receive and use information from media sources. This approach also considers the contributions that political systems, institutions and broader social structures make to change and development within the media. The model outlines four levels of engagement with media:

- the **system** level which involves policy and decision makers
- the **organisation** level including state, commercial and not-for-profit entities
- the **practitioner** level comprised of professionals and opinion leaders
- the **audience** level, consisting of the wider target population of the media

This conceptual model provided a practical framework to approach the media sector analysis, and Figure 1 below illustrates how it has been applied to the Somali media environment. The scoping research, and learning from previous media sector studies, contributed to the identification of key stakeholders and important issues for investigation at each level of engagement. The research design aimed to explicitly address each of these levels and the topics identified therein.

**Figure 1 Four level model of engagement and research focus across levels**



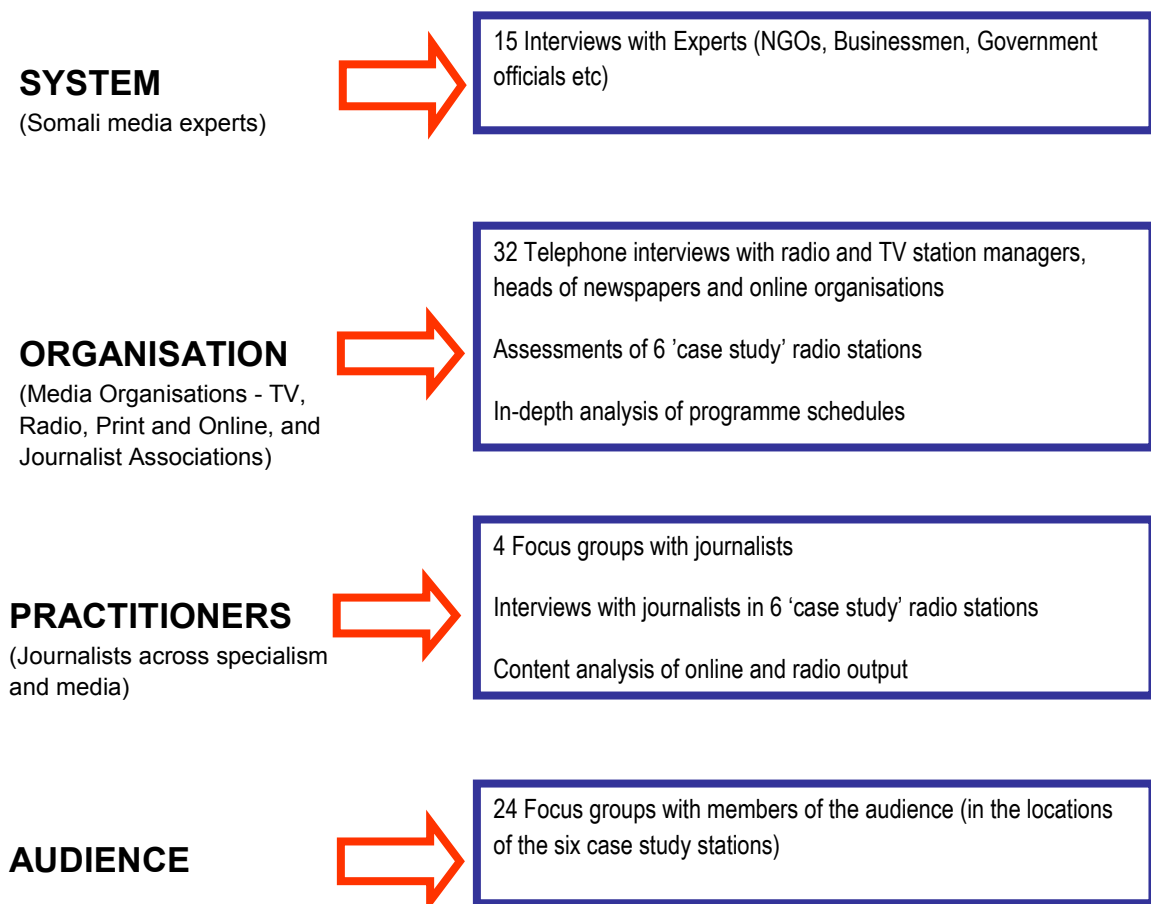
\*Journalist Associations can be considered at the *system* or *organisation* level of engagement. Findings from the scoping stage indicated that in the Somali context these entities function more at the *organisation* level.

Figure 2 summarises the main research activities that were conducted at each level of engagement, and further detail is provided in Sections 2.1 to 2.4.

All fieldwork took place between August 2010 and March 2011. Research activities were coordinated by BBC WST Somali researchers based in Hargeisa, Somaliland, who also conducted fieldwork in Somaliland and Nairobi. To conduct fieldwork in Puntland and South Central Somalia, partnerships were formed with universities in Bosasso, Galkacyo, Dhusamareb and Mogadishu<sup>14</sup>, as insecurity in those regions meant it was not possible for the BBC WST research team to travel and recruit participants in certain locations. Local researchers were recruited by the universities, and those selected attended a week long training session in Hargeisa, delivered by a BBC WST Research Manager.

Research tools used for this primary research can be supplied on request.

**Figure 2 Summary of primary research conducted**



<sup>14</sup> These universities were: Mogadishu University, East Africa University (Bosasso and Galkacyo), Plasma University (Dhusamareb)



## 2.1. System

To develop an understanding of the Somali media at the system level, extensive **desk research** was carried out on media legislation, licensing and policy across the regions of Somaliland, Puntland and South Central Somalia. To supplement this fact-finding research, interviews were conducted with individuals who were considered to have in-depth knowledge of the Somali media and who could comment on the impact of these system-level functions on the wider sector.

A contact list was drawn up of people who had extensive involvement in the Somali media and came from a range of media development organisations, journalist associations, businesses and media organisations, including those from the Diaspora. Fifteen **in-depth interviews** were conducted in total with individuals in Somalia, Nairobi and London.

**Table 1: Key informants on Somali media**

Sector	Organisation
Media Development	UNDP International Crisis Group (ICG) Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) UN OCHA-IRIN <sup>15</sup> Relief International <sup>16</sup>
Journalist Associations	National Union of Somali Journalists (NUSOJ) Media Association of Puntland (MAP)
Business	Dahabsiil
Media Organisation	Bar-Kulan Radio AFP Al-Jazeera Voice of America Somalia
Diaspora Media Organisation	Universal TV Somali Channel Horseed Media
Media Monitoring	BBC Monitoring

Interviews were semi-structured and, in addition to exploring views on policy and regulation, covered the following topics:

- overall assessment of the media – strengths, challenges, and quality
- impact of the Diaspora
- impact of new media and technology
- recommendations for media development

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<sup>15</sup> IRIN Radio Somali Service broadcast a one-hour programme of humanitarian information in Somali direct to Somalia and the Somali-speaking region every day on shortwave. IRIN conducted an audience survey in 2010 to assess the reach of the service and evaluate audience opinion of its programming

<sup>16</sup> Relief International is an NGO whose programmes address cross-cutting activities that emphasise the capacity-building of local leadership and grassroots governmental institutions to combat the denigrating effects of war.

All interviews were audio recorded and transcribed for later **thematic analysis**.

Desk research was also conducted to understand the training and education available to practitioners in Somalia at present. To supplement this, public and private universities in Somalia were contacted directly for information on the current status of courses offered in professional journalism.

## 2.2. Organisation

Research at the *organisation* level aimed to assess the capacity of local media organisations across editorial, technical and operational functions.

A two-tier approach was taken. Firstly, information was collected from a broad range of media organisations to understand general trends in staff resources, programming and training. Structures and practices were then explored in more depth by looking at six organisations in detail.

Thirty-two telephone interviews were conducted with managers of radio, TV, print and online organisations. Interviews were conducted by BBC WST researchers in Hargeisa, to gather data on:

- *Staff resources* – number of staff, management structure, ownership
- *Programme schedule/Publishing schedule* - hours of broadcast/frequency of publication; languages broadcast/published in, type of content and formats used
- *Information gathering* – sources of news referred to, extent of field reporting, number of journalists across region etc.
- *Skills and training needs* – staff education, experience and overall training needs

**The breakdown of these organisations by platform is shown in Table 2 below, and a complete list of organisation names and locations is provided in Appendix 2.**

**Table 2 Summary of media organisations surveyed**

Media	No. of Organisations
Radio	20
Print	6
Online	3
TV	3

More **detailed assessments** of six radio stations investigated editorial and management practices, and technical/financial resources (in addition to the aforementioned information on staff resources, programming, etc). BBC WST researchers in Somaliland and local researchers in all other locations conducted detailed interviews with station heads, office managers and technical managers. The stations represent local media across the three regions and all are

independently owned, with the exception of Radio Hargeisa in Somaliland<sup>17</sup>. These stations are referred to in the remainder of this report as *case study stations*.

**Table 3 Case study stations**

Region	Station	Headquarters
Somaliland	Radio Hargeisa	Hargeisa
South Central Somalia	Radio Xurmo	Mogadishu
	Radio Shabelle	Mogadishu
	Radio Dhusamareb	Dhusamareb
	Radio SBC	Bosasso
Puntland	Radio Voice of Peace	Galkacyo

In addition to interviews with station personnel, a weekly programme schedule was obtained from each case study station<sup>18</sup>, in order to conduct an objective analysis of the variety and quantity of programmes scheduled. Station broadcasts do not always follow the planned schedule, but analysis of the schedules enables a simple assessment of the extent to which the station *aims* to meet the programming needs of its audience.

At the research design stage, interviews with journalist associations were planned. However, in practice these were difficult to conduct due to political sensitivities and security of researchers. The heads of two major journalist associations were interviewed (see section 2.1) and the role of associations was discussed with journalists in focus groups and interviews.

## 2.3. Practitioner

Research conducted at the practitioner level had four main aims:

- To gain an understanding of personal experiences of working journalists, and how policies and processes at the system or organisation level impact on practitioners
- To understand the status of the journalism professions and motivations for entry
- To assess capabilities of journalists through self-reports on practices and approaches, and analysis of sample output
- To gather detailed information on individual training, working practices and development needs

Research activities included focus groups, structured interviews and content analysis of radio and print output.

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<sup>17</sup> These six stations had been selected to receive training as part of the wider project '*Strengthening Radio Stations in Somalia to Promote Human Rights, Peace and Governance*' being delivered by BBC WST. The research carried out at these stations also served the purpose of providing a baseline assessment of organisational capacity and journalistic capabilities for trainers and mentors involved in capacity-building activities at each station. Please refer to the foreword of this report for further information.

<sup>18</sup> Programme schedules were requested from all case study stations, however Radio SBC failed to provide documents in time for analysis.

Four **focus groups** with journalists were conducted - two groups with journalists working in Somaliland, one for Puntland and one for South Central Somalia. For security reasons all focus groups were conducted in Somaliland – one in Burau (Toghdeer region) and three in Hargeisa. Journalists from South Central Somalia and Puntland were recruited to the focus groups whilst visiting Hargeisa for training. Discussions were audio recorded and transcribed for later thematic analysis and focused on the following topics:

- Personal experiences and challenges faced as journalists
- Views on audience needs and preferences
- Working practices
- Recommendations on developing the media

**Structured telephone interviews** were also conducted with individual practitioners at the six case study stations, to gather more detailed information on working hours, education and training, approach to producing programmes/news and understanding of target audience. Forty practitioners were interviewed in total across the six stations, including journalists, newscasters, producers and technicians.

To obtain an objective assessment of quality of information and journalistic ability, **samples of radio and online news output** were analysed using a structured code frame. A number of news websites and radio stations were selected, to include a mix of independent, Diaspora, state and Al-Shabab run media.

For online output, three articles were selected for analysis from those featured on each website's home page on a particular date (two political and one non-political). For radio output, a morning news programme was recorded and analysed for each station. In the absence of audio recordings for Radio SBC, articles from their website were used.

The code frame assessed journalistic standards of output such as appropriate use of sources, quality of information provided and objectivity and bias in reporting.

**Table 4 Media selected for content analysis**

Online Output	Radio Output
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Dayniile (Diaspora)</li> <li>▪ Goobjoog (Diaspora)</li> <li>▪ Hadhwanaag (Diaspora)</li> <li>▪ Hiiraan (Diaspora)</li> <li>▪ Puntlandpost (Independent)</li> <li>▪ Garowe Online (Independent)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Radio Shabelle (Independent)</li> <li>▪ Radio SBC (Independent)</li> <li>▪ Radio Mogadishu (State)</li> <li>▪ Somaliland Radio (State)</li> <li>▪ Radio Banadir (Independent)</li> <li>▪ Al Furqaan (Al-Shabab)</li> <li>▪ Radio Galkacyo (Independent)</li> <li>▪ Bar-Kulan (UN Radio)</li> </ul>

Data gathered on training and education available to practitioners in Somalia was also drawn on at this phase to understand the context of skill and education levels of journalists (see section 2.2).

## 2.4. Audience

Audience figures on media usage in Somalia are difficult to obtain. Surveys conducted in recent years have tended to cover only the Mogadishu region, or have been focused on listenership of international broadcasts such as the BBC and IRIN radio<sup>19</sup>.

Conducting an audience survey across Somalia would require considerable resources, and there was not scope to do this as part of the current assessment. **Qualitative research** was therefore conducted at the audience level aimed to:

- Gather information on media usage and preferences
- Understand the key issues facing audiences and crucial information needs
- Collect feedback on audience perceptions of the standard of media generally, and priorities for improvement

In total 24 focus groups were conducted with around 200 **members of the Somali audience**, and discussions centred on the broad topics above. Participants were recruited by university researchers in the localities of each of the six case study stations (in Somaliland, Puntland and South Central Somalia). Four focus groups were conducted per location to include a mix of gender and age groups.

University researchers used structured recruitment questionnaires to select suitable participants according to age, gender and radio listening habits. Groups were held in local venues such as community halls, and two researchers conducted each discussion – one to moderate and the other to observe and take notes. Informed consent was obtained from all participants before recruitment interviews and focus groups were conducted. Participants were briefed on the nature and purpose of the research, and consent was given orally.

The make-up of groups took into account socio-cultural structures of Somali society and previous experience of conducting research in this context. Gender segregation is deeply rooted in Somali society and so it was necessary to conduct single-sex groups, so that women could feel more comfortable sharing their views and opinions. Social balances also influenced the decision to divide groups by age (18-30 and 30-45) as younger participants may feel less empowered to contribute in the presence of their elders, who hold a more dominant place in society.

Discussions were audio recorded and transcribed for later analysis.

## 2.5. Fieldwork challenges and research ethics

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<sup>19</sup> However Intermedia are currently compiling data that will cover the whole of Somalia and this is expected to become available during 2011.

Conducting primary research in Somalia is a complicated and slow process, requiring careful planning, sensitivity and use of researchers who are local to the area. The most significant challenges faced are outlined below, along with ethical considerations and strategies found to overcome these. These are valuable learning points for future research in the region.

- **Safety and security:** The safety and security of researchers and participants was paramount in planning the fieldwork. Recruiting local researchers was a major element of the fieldwork design, as it meant that fieldworkers had an excellent understanding of the context in which they working. Threats to safety varied widely across regions, and local researchers were able to tailor their approach in accordance with the social norms, customs and changing security situation in the area.

Security issues also influenced the decision to conduct interviews with media organisation managers over the telephone (although these would have ideally been done face to face). In recruiting audience focus group participants, local researchers had to approach the task in a low profile way, utilising personal networks and contacts with local organisations and releasing venue locations to participants only on the morning that the group was to be held.

- **Access to participants:** Difficulties were experienced in securing interviews with experts in South Central Somalia and Puntland, for both security and logistical reasons. As a result the majority of expert interviews were conducted in Nairobi.

Researchers also faced challenges when recruiting audience members for focus groups, as many were suspicious about the purpose of the research and unwilling to discuss their views on media in a group setting.

- **Standardising data collection:** Working with sample populations who have witnessed and often personally experienced extreme levels of conflict, harassment and intimidation, requires ongoing review and adaptation of research activities to ensure that the highest standards of research ethics are observed. In addition to the safety of participants and researchers previously discussed, the comfort of participants and acceptability of topics was considered. Focus group and interview guides were reviewed with local researchers before going to field to assess suitability for participants and appropriateness of translations.
- **Broadcast complications:** Many radio stations broadcast for limited and/or irregular hours, and even those with structured weekly schedules are often off air sporadically due to technical or resource issues. Such variation in broadcasts meant that collecting comparable sample output from stations for content analysis was extremely difficult. It was decided that to achieve some level of consistency in the output analysed, one hour of morning output would be recorded from selected stations during a specified one-week period.
- **Infrastructure and logistics:** Poor infrastructure presented challenges for BBC WST researchers in communicating with local researchers, obtaining audio recordings of

sample radio content and organising the return of hard copy research notes. Limited access to internet and slow upload speeds meant that much of the data had to be relayed via air carriers. Such logistical challenges had to be accounted for in planning timelines between fieldwork launch and analysis/reporting.

## Chapter 3. Current Somali Media Landscape

This chapter outlines the current status of the media sector in Somalia, and more in-depth analyses of the trends identified are provided in the remainder of the report.

### 3.1. Available Media

There is a broad selection of media organisations operating in Somalia. Radio is the most prolific media with 35 radio stations located across the three regions. In the last five years the number of radio stations has increased from 22 to 35 outlets. There are currently nine television stations operating in Somalia across the three regions, with two of these stations opening in 2011. Five years ago newspapers were quite prominent across South Central Somalia and Somaliland. However, in this intervening period many outlets have closed and print media is now prevalent only in Somaliland.

**Table 5 Somali Media organisations (as of April 2011)**

	2006	2011
TV stations	7	9
Radio stations broadcasting in country	22	35
Radio stations broadcasting from outside country*	4	4
Newspapers	36	14

\*Refers to media outlets outside Somalia for the Diaspora and does not include international broadcasters such as the BBC and VoA which broadcast in the country.

The number of media organisations, in particular radio stations, continues to fluctuate dramatically as organisations form and close due to a combination of practical and technical difficulties (such as equipment shortages and electricity supplies) and take-overs from militant groups.

In **South Central Somalia** the number of radio stations operating has increased (from 15 stations to 21) whilst many newspapers have closed down; now there is just one newspaper in circulation. However, the landscape is constantly changing, mainly due to closures and



pressure put on organisations by militant groups, such as Al-Shabab and Hizbul Islam. In the last year, seven radio stations<sup>20</sup> have closed in South Central Somalia.

**Table 6 Number of media organisations operating in Somalia by region (as of April 2011)**

		2006	2011
<b>South Central Somalia</b>	TV stations	2	3
	Radio Stations	15	21
	Newspapers	25	1*
<b>Puntland</b>	TV stations	2	2
	Radio Stations	6	13
	Newspapers	0	0 <sup>21</sup>
<b>Somaliland</b>	TV stations	2	3
	Radio Stations	1	1
	Newspapers	11	13

\* Some newspapers do exist in South Central Somalia but have a very small circulation

Unlike South Central Somalia and Puntland, the broadcast sector in **Somaliland** is very restricted, as the authorities refuse to issue licenses to private media. There is just one official government-controlled radio station, Radio Hargeisa, in operation<sup>22</sup>. In contrast with the other regions, Somaliland has a strong print industry, although high levels of illiteracy and the cost of newspapers mean that most of the population still lack access to print media.

### 3.2. Media usage data

Limited quantitative audience data is available for the whole of Somalia (as discussed in section 2.4). A BBC audience survey conducted in Mogadishu<sup>23</sup> in 2008 showed that over three-quarters of respondents had listened to the radio in the last week compared with a third having watched TV. In this survey, a relatively high level of internet use was also found, with over a third of respondents reporting having used the internet in the week previous to the survey. Over a quarter of these weekly internet users said that they used it to listen to radio programmes.

These internet figures are much higher than the latest World Bank internet statistics, which cite usage for the whole of Somalia at 106,000 as of December 2009 (just 1.2% of the population

<sup>20</sup> NUSOJ 2010 report 'State of Freedom of the Press in Somalia', p4.

<sup>21</sup> There are apparently two in existence which have very small circulation but details on these could not be obtained and so have not been included.

<sup>22</sup> There are additionally two stations in operation which broadcast from the disputed region of Sanaag, however these have limited reach and have not been explored for this report.

<sup>23</sup> BBC Marketing, Communications and Audiences (2008) Mogadishu Audience Survey

and an increase of 0.2% on *user per head of population* figures in 2006, higher than in neighbouring Ethiopia where only 0.5% of the population uses the internet). As of March 31<sup>st</sup> 2011, there were 21,580 Somali Facebook users, 0.2% of the population<sup>24</sup>. Therefore, usage data suggests that the internet is still a medium for the urban and educated.

All further information in this report regarding dominance and popularity of particular media platforms and outlets is based on primary qualitative research conducted with audiences and media experts. Audience focus groups explored preferred sources for local and international news and issues facing them in their community. **Radio** was the most common source of information for news and local information across all regions, with television and internet featuring to a much lesser extent.

However it is essential to first highlight the continuing importance of non-media sources of information for Somali people. **Word of mouth** is also a key means of information transfer for a large proportion of society, and respondents referred to family discussions, community gatherings, markets and even buses as places where they learn about current affairs and events. Amongst male groups in Somaliland, the **Mosque** was also a major source of information – primarily through formal speeches and sermons by religious leaders, but also through informal conversation with others who attend<sup>25</sup>.

*“Religious leaders used to talk about religious matters only, but today they discuss current issues in our country or the world, so they are also a new source of information”*

**Male radio listener, Hargeisa**

The significance of such non-media sources in this analysis is that although direct reach of certain media may be low, a strong oral culture means that wider populations receive information (or interpretations of information) produced by media through indirect means.

***“One thing you need to know is that Somalia remains an oral culture. The only radio station [in Somaliland], which is Radio Hargeisa, does not go beyond Hargeisa. It’s only the newspapers that are found in the regions but most people can either not afford them or are illiterate. TV is mostly viewed only in Hargeisa and [although] some are on satellite... the majority can’t access it or buy a satellite dish.”***

**Female Journalist, SWIJA**

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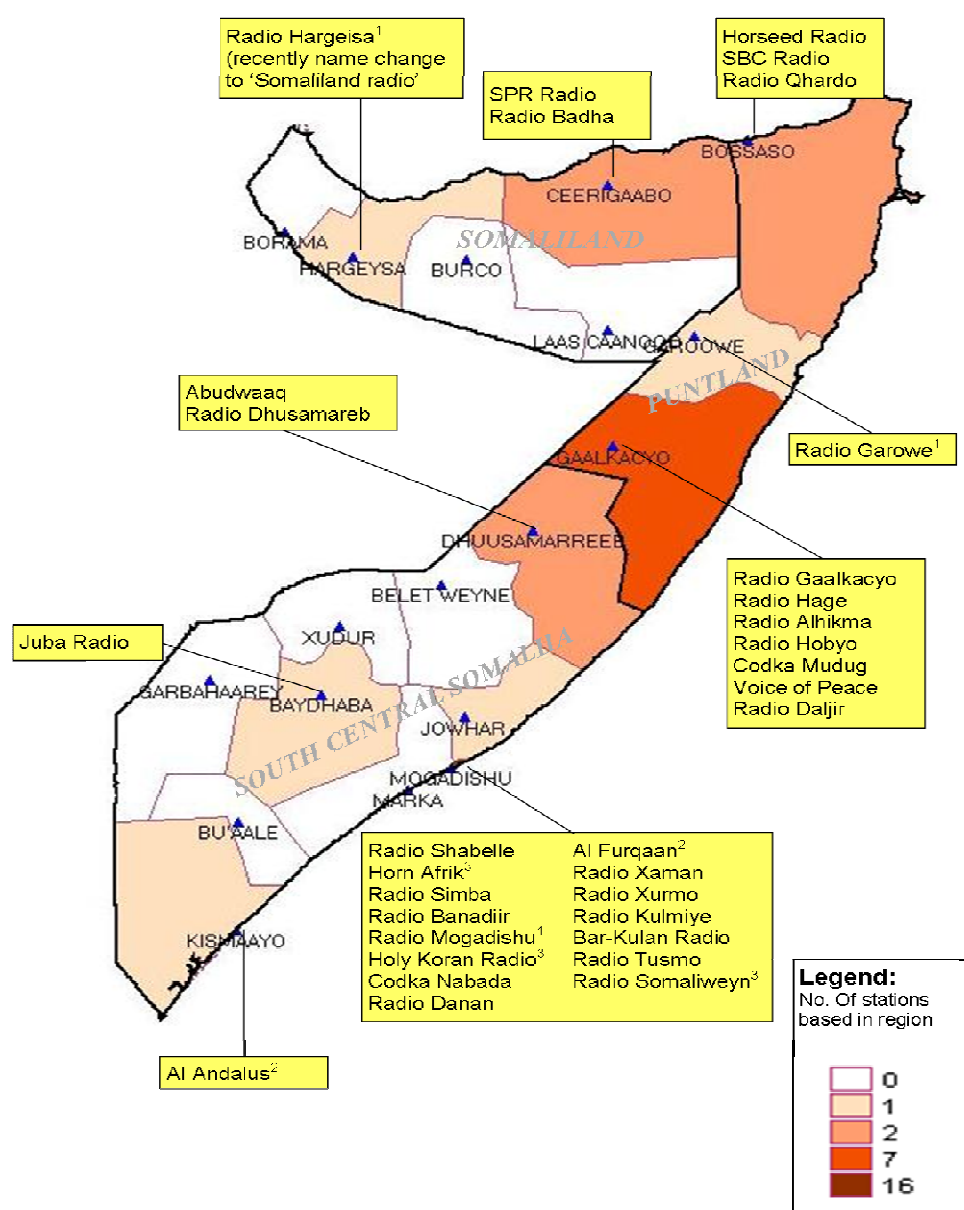
<sup>24</sup> Weblink: <http://www.balancingact-africa.com/news/en/issue-no-551>

<sup>25</sup> The Mosque was not mentioned as an information source in focus groups in Puntland and South Central Somalia

### 3.3. Radio

As in most of Africa, radio continues to be the dominant medium in Somalia. Interviews with key informants suggest that business and political interests are the two driving forces behind the opening of radio stations. These political interests include takeovers from militant groups Al-Shabab and Hizbul Islam. This is discussed in more detail in Chapter 4. Radio stations are highly concentrated in the major cities of Mogadishu and Galkacyo, where infrastructure is relatively good, and potential political and business gains high.

**Figure 3 Map of radio stations operating in Somalia**



**Notes:** The radio station information on this map is correct as of May 2011. However due to instability the operation and control of these media organisations may be subject to change. Where stations show a footnote:

1 = Government run station

2 = Al-Shabab run station

3 = Station recently taken over or shut down by Al-Shabab / Hizbul Islam

### 3.3.1. Radio station reach

Most of the radio stations shown in Figure 3 broadcast on FM which on average reaches a 30km radius, although some, such as Radio Daljir and SBC Radio, also re-broadcast in other areas as far as 800km away, using an improvised substation system. This involves playing the same broadcast from the original studio using a landline phone, and broadcasting over a similar radius in the chosen rebroadcast area.

To understand the reach of local radio stations, 24 stations were surveyed to find out which divisions they broadcast to. In total these stations covered 31 of the 121 Somali divisions, indicating that the majority of Somalia is not covered by local Somali radio. People living outside of the geographic reach of local radio stations can therefore only access international radio stations such as Voice of America and BBC, which broadcast on shortwave.

**Local Somali FM stations  
only reach people living near  
to main cities and towns**

### 3.3.2. International and Diaspora radio

International radio broadcasts have traditionally been important sources of information in both rural and urban areas across the three regions. BBC World Service audience research in Mogadishu (2008) found that the BBC Somali Service was the joint most listened to radio station in the capital, along with local station Horn Afrik<sup>26</sup>. At this time, over four-fifths of the men and two-thirds of the women interviewed were weekly listeners.

**Table 7 International radio stations broadcasting in Somalia**

Station	Type
BBC Somali Service	International
Voice of America (VOA) Somali Service	International
IRIN Radio	International UN radio

All three of these international stations broadcast in both English and Somali, and offer live streaming online as well as shortwave broadcasts, with BBC Somali Service additionally broadcasting on FM. News and other programmes from all of these stations are also re-broadcast on some local radio stations.

Whilst listenership of international radio is still thought to be high<sup>27</sup>, several media experts interviewed believed that the influence of international media channels has decreased in recent years, highlighting contributing factors such as the growth in popularity of the internet, the broader reach of satellite TV and an influx in local radio stations.

<sup>26</sup> BBC Marketing, Communications and Audiences (2008) Mogadishu Audience Survey

<sup>27</sup> In interviews, experts referred to audience figures from recent conducted surveys in Mogadishu, which showed that BBC and VoA still command high listenership.

*“Some people used to listen a lot to the BBC Somali section, and I can say that the impact and the influence Somali BBC has on the Somali people was enormous. But with the emergence of the internet, and increase in radio and TV channels set up by the Somali Diaspora... it’s not the way it used to be.”*

**Executive, Somali Channel**

Many participants in audience focus groups reported listening to international radio stations, however some also expressed a decline in their trust of international media and questioned the neutrality of these organisations.

*“BBC used to be neutral, VoA used to be neutral but now Amin [Arts] is the only neutral journalist I know.”*

**Female Listener, Galkacyo**

In addition to local and international radio stations, there are also a number of radio stations broadcasting outside Somalia to the Diaspora, which can be accessed online by those residing in the country.

**Table 8 Diaspora radio broadcasts outside Somalia**

Station	Headquarter Location
Radio Ogaal	Canada
Radio Halgan	Ethiopia
Star FM	Kenya
Radio Horyaal	Belgium
Radio Hormuud	Denmark

### 3.4. Television

Television broadcasts throughout the country with nine television stations currently operating in Somalia; three in Somaliland (one state and two private stations), four in South Central Somalia and two in Puntland. Table 9 shows the stations currently in operation in the country. With the exception of two stations owned by Somali Diaspora that were established in the late 1990s, the television stations currently in operation in Somalia have all opened in the last eight years.

***In 2011 both the TFG and Al-Shabab opened Television Stations***

Two television stations were launched in South Central Somalia early in 2011: *Somali National TV* (SNTV) owned by the TFG and *Al-Kataaib* owned by Al-Shabab. These launches, representing both sides of the current conflict, show that television is increasingly being seen as an important tool for propaganda and for having political influence.

**Table 9 Local television stations in operation in Somalia**

Region	Station	Ownership	Coverage	Date of launch
South Central Somalia	The Somali Television Network (STN)	International (USA)	Headquarters are in Atlanta (USA), but many branches in Somalia	1999
	Al-Kataaib	Al-Shabab owned	Terrestrial news channel which can only be viewed in Mogadishu. Has released short documentary films on video-sharing websites in both English and Somali. This suggests that the target audience is potential militants in the West and the Middle East, and the governments of Uganda and Burundi whose AU troops are currently deployed in Mogadishu <sup>28</sup>	February 2011
	Somali National TV (SNTV)	State-owned (TFG)	Satellite channel broadcast 24 hours a day. Currently only in Somali, but plans to add English and Arabic	Re-launched in March 2011, following SNTV's closure 20 years ago
	Global Broadcasting Corporation (GBC)	Al-Shabab controlled	Broadcast from Northern Mogadishu. Closed for 2 months in 2010 following an Al-Shabab raid.	2006
Puntland	Somali Broadcasting Corporation (SBC)	Privately owned	Originally covering just Bosasso and the surrounding area, broadcast reach extended to Garowe by 2008.	2006
	Eastern Television Network	Privately owned	Based in Bosasso Broadcasts 24 hours a day, seven days a week by satellite. Can be seen across all Puntland, Somaliland and South Central Somalia.	2006
Somaliland	Horn Cable TV	Privately owned	Based in Hargeisa. Broadcasts 24 hours a day and can be seen across all three Somali administrations as well as abroad.	2003
	Somaliland Space Channel	Privately owned. Founded by Diaspora in Qatar.	Broadcasts by satellite	1995
	Somaliland National TV (SLNTV)	State-owned	Covers all Somaliland, as well as broadcasting internationally via satellite, mainly East Africa and the countries that belong to the Arab League	2005

Many television channels now broadcast via satellite, which allows a very wide geographic coverage. For example, private channels such as the Eastern Television Network (ETN) in Puntland, can be viewed throughout Somaliland and South Central Somalia. Television

<sup>28</sup> Weblink: <http://www.criticalthreats.org/somalia/al-Shababs-first-news-video-recruit-westerners-expel-peacekeepers-aug-5-2010-8329>

broadcasts from outside Somalia via satellite are also increasing in popularity. However low income levels and nomadic lifestyles mean that reach remains lower than that of radio.

**Table 10 Diaspora television networks broadcasting from outside Somalia**

Station	Headquarter Location
Universal TV	London, UK
Somali Channel TV	UK
Somali Television Network	Atlanta, USA

#### **CASE STUDY: Universal TV**

Universal TV is a private TV station based in London, established in 2005 and targeted at Somalis around the world. The programmes can also be viewed from the Universal TV website. The CEO of the station, Ahmed Abubakar, explains the aim of the station:

*“We try to make it one global goal that we inform, educate and entertain Somalis wherever they are”.*

Universal TV has correspondents in various regions of Somalia, as well as in Djibouti, Ethiopia and Kenya and describes itself as a general entertainment channel. The programming includes ‘news, social affairs, integration and religious programmes’ and targets all ages and social groups.

The station sees itself as having a strong influence in Somalia, as Abubakar says:

*“I think it has a 100 percent influence...after we started this we realised that what we broadcasted had a significant impact at home. Because the channel is being viewed in Somalia, in Europe and worldwide it has become the communication or the bridge to experience all these different ideas between Somalis.”*

The channel was banned by the Somaliland authorities in October 2010, following accusations of biased coverage of issues relating to Somaliland politics.

### **3.5. Newspapers**

Newspapers are only prevalent in Somaliland and have played an important role in Somaliland’s development since it declared itself a sovereign state at the end of the Barre regime. At present at least nine papers are published on a daily basis, and most of these are privately owned. Table 11 highlights findings from telephone interviews with managers of newspaper organisations. This research shows that many newspapers are written in Somali but also include content in English. They are generally available throughout Somaliland.

**Table 11 Newspapers in daily circulation in Somaliland**

Name	Ownership	Readership	Content	Date founded
<b>Waheen</b>	Ahmed Hussein Cise	From across Somaliland	Published daily in both Somali and English. Use reporters in the regions to gather non-local news.	2007
<b>Saxansaxo</b>	Abdilaahi Mahamad Dahir	From across Somaliland	Published daily in both Somali and English. Reporters from around Somalia provide non-local news.	2007
<b>Saxafi</b>	Veteran journalist Mohamed-Rashid Muhumed Farah	Readers are from across Somaliland and some parts of Puntland. An estimated 30% of the readers are female.	Published six days per week in Somali, and on Wednesdays in Arabic.	2010
<b>Ogaal</b>	Independent: Muse Farah Jambir	From across Somaliland	Balanced and breaking news in Somali only. Reporters based in the region provide non-local news.	2005
<b>Jamhuuriya</b>	Faysal Ali Sheikh, Hassan Siciid and Khalif Nuh	Primarily based in Somaliland with some readership in Ethiopia, Djibouti, UK and Norway	Both local and from outside the local area, with correspondents in all six regions. 7 days a week in Somali; once in English.	1991
<b>Geeska Afrika</b>		The publication is available across Somaliland and in Djibouti. Readership is young and urban.	Reporters based in the regions for non-local coverage. Its political coverage avoids extremism and is fairly balanced. The newspaper has a stronger focus on entertainment and human-interest stories than many.	2005
<b>Haatuf</b>	Owned by Yusuf Gabobe. Part of Haatuf Media Network	Sold in the main towns of Somaliland. Also has an Arabic version, targeted to Diaspora in the Middle-East. The English language version is published weekly to an international audience.	Undertakes investigative journalism and uncovers cases of corruption, in addition to other news. Advocate for democratisation and liberal values, and has played an important role in nation-building.	Founded 2001 by Jamhuuriya journalists following disagreements over their editorial independence.
<b>Dawan (formerly Mandeeg)</b>	State	Mainly government officials	Started to counterbalance Jamhuuriya.	1995. Became a newsletter in 2006.
<b>Yool</b>	Information not available	Information not available	Information not available	Information not available
<b>Foore</b>	Information not available	Information not available	Information not available	Information not available



The vibrant, stable press environment of Somaliland contrasts with a practically non-existent press in South Central Somalia and Puntland.

The newspaper industry in South Central Somalia has been decimated by conflict in recent years. Despite having more than 25 newspapers in circulation in 2009, by 2011 there remained only one newspaper in Mogadishu, *Xog-Ogaal*, which was bombed in March 2011 during a mortar attack on the area in which the newspaper headquarters is based<sup>29</sup>.

***Puntland and South Central Somalia have not been able to sustain a print industry***

In South Central Somalia and Puntland poor infrastructure is thought to have had the biggest impact on the presence of newspapers.

*“At the end of the day there is not even quality paper to be printed on, and no ink...because of transport and publishing issues I believe that sector is completely dead.”*

**Executive, Universal TV**

Lack of security in some regions is also thought to have impacted on consumer access to traditional print media. Whilst the newspaper industry in Somaliland is vibrant, audience reach is still thought to be much lower than radio.

*“Somalis - they like to listen or to view things, but they don't like to buy newspapers, read newspapers.”*

**Executive, Universal TV**

### **3.6. The Internet and Somali Websites**

An abundance of Somali internet sites, particularly news websites, have formed in recent years. Most are in Somali, although many also have a dedicated English news page. Many republish news directly from news agencies without correspondents on the ground, as well as providing links to numerous other Somali sites. Popular websites include Jowhar, Hiiraan, Widh Widh<sup>30</sup> (manned from the disputed region of Sool<sup>31</sup>), Sanaag<sup>32</sup> (which has an office in Hargeisa and one in Holland), Hadhwanaag<sup>33</sup> (focusing on Somaliland) and Garowe Online<sup>34</sup> (published

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<sup>29</sup> Weblink: [http://www.ifex.org/somalia/2011/04/05/mohamed\\_injured/](http://www.ifex.org/somalia/2011/04/05/mohamed_injured/)

<sup>30</sup> Weblink: [www.radiowidhwidh.com/widhwidhnew](http://www.radiowidhwidh.com/widhwidhnew)

<sup>31</sup> Sool and Sanaag are administrative regions in the North of Somalia, which are claimed by both Somaliland and Puntland.

<sup>32</sup> Weblink: [www.sanaag.org/](http://www.sanaag.org/)

<sup>33</sup> Weblink: [www.hadhwanaag.com](http://www.hadhwanaag.com)

in Garowe, Puntland). Compared to most parts of Africa, Somalia is considered to have a very well developed online media.

*“In many ways we have a very sophisticated internet media. In Somalia we have around 200 outlets...If you were to go to Ethiopia and ask them how many websites operate there, people would look at you as if you are from Mars.”*

**Media Expert, International Crisis Group**

Websites have emerged in recent years partly to meet the Diaspora’s demand for up-to-date news from the country and as such, the Diaspora is often the target audience. However, the growth of the Somali internet media has benefited those based in Somalia as well.

*“It is a very symbiotic relationship. You have many websites based in Sweden, America, etc that are read by people back home. Then you have local websites like Horn Afrik and Shabelle, read by Diaspora audiences “*

**Somali websites have a strong influence on the media**

**Media Expert, International Crisis Group**

News websites can publish information, which formerly would have been censored. They are also an important source for journalists in compiling news reports for other media, providing them with access to information not previously available. For example content produced for the website Hadwanaag feeds into the production of Radio Shabelle in Mogadishu and newspapers such as Jamhuuriya, Haatuf, and Geeska Afrika.

*“It is a very good development, because first of all they have the liberty to say or publish what the radios in Somalia cannot broadcast.”*

**Journalist, Radio Bar-Kulan**

While many experienced journalists, living in exile, now write for popular online news sites, the standard of many other sites is questionable. As with traditional media, respondents comment that some websites are used as tools for propaganda, to serve certain ideologies and to promote political agendas.

*“The problem is every single person who can afford to pay is acquiring a website or a blog and is publishing whatever he wants, so that is the negative side of the internet.”*

**Journalist, Radio Bar-Kulan**

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<sup>34</sup> Weblink: [www.garoweonline.com](http://www.garoweonline.com)

The highest quality sites are thought to be the online versions of the main radio, television and print organisations. These usually contain audio podcasts or live streaming of news, as well as podcasts from the BBC and VoA Somali services.

As well as its indirect influence through other forms of media, the direct influence of the internet within Somalia is growing, although it remains limited. Access to the web is thought to be primarily rooted in the main cities and poor infrastructure means that internet speeds are often very slow, making media streaming or downloading very difficult.

Internet is currently most popular among the younger generation and those in urban settings.

*“If we divide Somali people into segments, we can say that a significant number of radio listeners are older people. Those who read newspapers are intellectuals, teachers and professionals and the vast majority of the younger generation goes on the internet.”*

**Executive, Somali Channel**

Whilst the number of Somalis who use the internet is small, statistics show that about 25% of Somali internet users are connected to Facebook and experts commented that Somali pages experience high traffic.

*“Very few African countries use the internet like Somalia does. Even on the Al-Jazeera website, the stories from Somalia are the ones that get the most traffic.”*

**Journalist, Al-Jazeera**

### 3.7. Mobile Technology

There are five network providers operating in Somalia at present. While the absence of official records makes exact figures for subscribers and fixed lines difficult to determine, it is known that mobile phone subscribers have now far surpassed fixed line rentals<sup>35</sup>. Reliable figures on mobile phone penetration are very difficult to obtain. World Bank Development Indicator<sup>36</sup> figures estimated that approximately 7% of the population were mobile phone users in 2009, compared with more than 1.5 million users (approx 15%) as estimated by a

***Mobile phones cited  
as an important  
potential information  
source***

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<sup>35</sup> Small Globe Solutions, (2011) Somaliland Telecom Industry: The New Decade and the Challenges Ahead, Hargeisa. Weblink: [http://www.smallglobesolutions.com/images/sgs\\_docs/somaliland-whitepaper\\_v2.pdf](http://www.smallglobesolutions.com/images/sgs_docs/somaliland-whitepaper_v2.pdf)

<sup>36</sup> Weblink: <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/IT.CEL.SETS.P2>

private telecoms services organisation<sup>37</sup>. Many Somalis rely on mobile technology for their day-to-day activities, such as personal banking and money transfers.

Anecdotal evidence from key informants suggests that mobile phones are more common in urban areas, but that services and ownership are now starting to increase in rural areas.

*“Not many people own mobile phones in the country. You will find them in the towns. In rural areas, telephone companies are starting to provide their services, so it is a sector that is developing at the moment. In the coming 5 to 10 years I think the number of mobile phones is going to increase, and this will really change the way people receive information.”*

**Media Expert, BBC Monitoring**

Key informants noted the potential of mobile phone technology. While phones are already used by practitioners to gather and share information quickly, many felt that the use of technology in media could be further enhanced. None of the media organisations interviewed for this analysis reported providing a mobile platform for their output. However, there was some evidence that mobile is starting to play a role in encouraging greater audience participation in radio and television programming.

*“Whenever we have a programme live on air, the SMS’s come in by the dozens, it evens blocks our service. These SMS’s are not just from the UK, but from Hargeisa, from Mozambique, from everywhere worldwide.”*

**Executive, Universal TV**

Additionally mobile providers are increasingly targeting subscribers via text message with commercial advertising and other information (such as messaging from NGOs). In the future, mobile technology could play an increasingly important role in enabling the public to access news and information, and engage with other forms of media, such as radio discussion shows.

### 3.8. Key Findings

- **Radio** is the predominant medium in Somalia. Thirty five local Somali radio stations operate in the region currently. In the last five years, there has been a sizeable increase in the number operating in South-Central Somalia and Puntland. In South Central Somalia, the number of radio stations in operation is ever changing due to technical constraints and closures by militant groups Hizbul Islam and Al-Shabab. Somaliland continues to have one radio station, the state run station Radio Hargeisa. In all regions of Somalia, local radio reach is mainly confined to the cities and surrounding areas.

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<sup>37</sup> Weblink: <http://blog.albanyassociates.com/?p=608>

- The **newspaper** industry has suffered in recent years, with many organisations shutting down in South Central Somalia. Somaliland is the only region where print functions to any capacity.
- The **television** sector is growing, albeit slowly. The country now has nine television stations, many broadcasting by satellite across Somalia. In 2011 the TFG and Al-Shabab opened their own stations in South Central Somalia, showing that television is increasingly seen as a tool for propaganda and spreading partisan information.
- Although **internet** access is still very low, the online media sector is growing, with websites increasing in Somalia and abroad. Despite the low reach, the internet has a strong influence on the media – it is a key source of information for journalists and provides a platform for free expression.
- The **mobile phone** sector is expanding rapidly but many people in rural areas still do not have access. Experts believe that mobile technology has untapped potential as an information source and vehicle to aid audience participation in radio or TV programming.

### Interim summary of report structure

The background, current status and emerging trends of the Somali media landscape have been outlined thus far. The remainder of this report presents a more in-depth analysis of the factors driving the trends identified:

- Chapter 4 explores the systems, structures and tensions that characterise the complex Somali media environment. Relationships between processes and stakeholders across three levels of media engagement (system, organisation and practitioner) are analysed; from legislation and regulation at the system-level, to the day-to-day experiences of practitioners on the ground.
- Chapter 5 assesses the standard of programming and the extent to which this meets audience needs.
- Chapter 6 discusses the quality of output and analyses the journalistic standards evident in samples of radio and online output.
- Chapter 7 presents conclusions on findings according to the study research objectives and suggests potential priorities for future media development initiatives in Somalia in light of this assessment.

## Chapter 4. Understanding the Media in Somalia

Research with experts, practitioners and members of the audience revealed that the media sector in Somalia is influenced by a broad range of factors across the four levels of engagement with media. In this chapter influences and impacts at system, organisation and practitioner levels are explored. These include:

- Media legislation and regulation
- Pressures on media freedom
- Media ownership and funding
- Training and development of journalists
- Journalists' working conditions
- The status of journalism

### 4.1. Media Law and Regulation

The administrations of South Central Somalia, Puntland and Somaliland have in place three different forms of media legislation. Each administration faces significant problems in enforcing its media laws.

*Each region is governed  
by different media  
legislations*

*"If you divide Somalia into three regions say, Somaliland, Southern Somalia and Puntland, there are three different categories. In Somaliland, you may see certain media there, but there is pressure from the government for them to operate locally and not against the regime. The same applies to Puntland, you may think that there is a growing democracy, but it is not the standard that we see in Europe. While in Southern Somalia, the government just controls two streets [laughs]."*

**Executive, Universal TV**

#### 4.1.1. Legislation in South Central Somalia

The *Somali Media Law*, approved by the Transitional Federal Parliament of the Somali Republic in 2007 guarantees "*freedom of expression and ideas*" and states that media cannot be subject to censorship. However, it presents a regulatory framework largely controlled by the government, with a National Media Council as the main regulatory body, consisting of 10 members from the private media and 5 members of the public media nominated by the Ministry of Information.

The law has been criticised by journalists and others, particularly for the important role given to the government-appointed National Media Council (NMC), and the legal obligation for media stations to promote Islam. In 2009, the then Secretary General of the National Union of Somali Journalists (NUSOJ), Omar Faruk Osman, described 17 points in the law as “*draconian and improper*”<sup>38</sup> and in 2010, NUSOJ called for the removal of the obligation to promote Islam, the lifting of license requirements for print media and the abolishment of the appointment of the council members by the Ministry of Information<sup>39</sup>. This is supported by Article 19, an organisation campaigning globally for free expression, which additionally called for a comprehensive *access to information* regime, clearer licensing procedures, and improvements to the general protection of journalists and media outlets<sup>40 41</sup>.

***In South Central Somalia, media laws are not enforced***

Of equal importance to the details of the legislation is the extent to which it is implemented. In South Central Somalia, the TFG, supported by the AMISOM, is struggling to maintain control. The lack of effective government leaves the region in a vacuum when it comes to enforcing laws or building the institutions to implement them<sup>42</sup>, resulting in a lack of accountability for content that is broadcast and a situation where militant directives over media are enforced to a greater degree than official legislation. This is discussed further in section 4.2.1.

*“In Somalia you have a very chaotic, unregulated media ... In the state that Somalia is in at the moment, that is anarchy and chaos, we cannot create a commission ... You can only talk of regulations when there is stability. These are part of institution building, and if you try to fast track something like that in the current context, then you will create something which will break.”*

**Media Expert, International Crisis Group**

In February 2011, the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) highlighted the crisis in Somalia’s media landscape and stated that “*the current lawlessness continues to endanger the lives of journalists and this must be reversed urgently*”<sup>43</sup>.

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<sup>38</sup> Weblink: <http://www.nusoj.org/Docs/NUSOJ%20conference%20Report.pdf> (page 32)

<sup>39</sup> Article 19, 13 September 2010 Weblink : <http://www.article19.org/pdfs/press/somalia-article-19-calls-for-media-law-reform.pdf>

<sup>40</sup> Weblink : <http://www.article19.org/pdfs/press/somalia-article-19-calls-for-media-law-reform.pdf>

<sup>41</sup> Weblink: <http://www.article19.org/data/files/pdfs/analysis/somalia-comment.pdf>

<sup>42</sup> NUSOJ 2010 report *The untold tales of deep misery* (page 3)

<sup>43</sup> Jim Boumelha, IFJ President. Weblink: [http://www.ifex.org/somalia/2011/02/08/call\\_to\\_protect\\_journalists/](http://www.ifex.org/somalia/2011/02/08/call_to_protect_journalists/)

#### 4.1.2. Legislation in Puntland

The semi-autonomous state of Puntland is governed by a revised constitution approved in June 2009. Article 14 of the *Constitution of the Puntland State of Somalia* forbids prior censorship and protects the right of individuals to express their thoughts “*through speech, the media, scripture, propaganda, visual arts and in any manner consistent with the Law and moral standards*”. Although article 22 states that “*press and media shall be free*”, it also subjects the regulation to the enactment of specific media laws. Despite promises of freedom of expression, media experts have been disappointed by the lack of progress since.

*“Things haven’t changed much in Puntland. When Farole [President of Puntland] came into power two years ago [2009] he promised freedom of expression for the media, and for some time there were indications that this was taking place, but things changed after the clampdown on some media houses.”*

**Media Expert, International Crisis Group**

In June 2010, the Ministry of Information of Puntland issued new directives for independent media, which ordered media to only broadcast religious programmes of Puntland clerics, banning broadcasts of independent media that had not been previously authorised by the government. Additionally, they placed a ban on commercials that were not in line with the culture of Puntland and ordered media to prioritise news about the government.

***In the last year the Puntland Government has imposed more regulations on the media***

Radio Galkacyo reported in January 2011 that the authorities of Puntland had announced an upcoming new law governing the operation of media and telecommunications<sup>44</sup>. The deputy minister of the Puntland regional administration, Abdullahi Warsame Aswad, stated that the new law would put a stop to the licensing of new media outlets and help monitor the quality of the existing ones. While the Puntland Government continues to defend its protection of freedom of speech, it sees the role of the media as “*to preserve and to defend the security and unity of the Somali people*”<sup>45</sup>.

The Puntland authorities are very active in monitoring media content and key informants reported that journalists are often arrested due to “*violations*” of media law. However the precise laws and clauses that have been violated are not always clearly stated or documented. It would appear that the legislative environment and manner of enforcement makes it difficult for journalists to work effectively in Puntland.

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<sup>44</sup> Source: Somalia Media Observatory. Information on the current status of this proposed law is not available

<sup>45</sup> Puntland Government press release, August 2010, Weblink: <http://puntlandi.com/?p=3161>



*“They continue charging journalists and journalists don’t understand which clauses they are being charged under. Once they have been arrested they should know which law they have violated.”*

**Journalist , Al-Jazeera**

#### **4.1.3.Legislation in Somaliland**

Article 32 of the *Constitution of the Republic of Somaliland* protects the freedom of expression of the press and other media. It also prohibits the subjugation of the media.

The media landscape in Somaliland is governed by the *Press Law (No: 27/2004)*. Although the initial draft faced strong opposition from journalists due to its restrictive elements on media freedom, the amendments proposed by the journalists were introduced before the law was passed<sup>46</sup>. It states that freedom of expression is protected by the constitution and that

***The Press Law which governs Somaliland media is currently being amended***

censorship is not permitted, and also allows journalists to form professional organisations that are under an umbrella association. The law does not, however, secure the provision of a regulatory body independent from government control.

In November 2007, the government of Somaliland submitted a controversial bill to the House of Representatives, the *Somaliland Press and Publications Bill 2007*, which was intended to replace the current *Press Law 2004*. The not-for-profit lobby organisation *Somaliland Law* rejected the bill, which was described as being based “almost word for word” on the *Yemen Law No: 25 of 1990 on the Press & Publications*. The bill is considered by the group to run against the international norms on freedom of expression and “not in line with the *Somaliland constitution*”. The bill has yet not been passed and is currently being amended.

In addition to the law, specific media codes of conduct have been adopted during the Somaliland election periods in 2005 and 2010, the most recent of which was signed by the Union of Somaliland Journalists (USLJ), the Somaliland Women’s Journalist Association (SWIJA), Somaliland Journalists Association (SOLJA), the National Electoral Commission and the Ministry of Information. The document contained the general principles, rights and obligations of journalists and media outlets during the electoral media coverage, including the voter-list display process, the election and the post-election stage. The code of conduct set ethical and professional standards for the media and aimed to protect the public’s right to information<sup>47</sup>.

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<sup>46</sup> AMDI Report (2006), Weblink:

[http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/trust/researchlearning/story/2006/12/061208\\_amdi\\_somalia.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/trust/researchlearning/story/2006/12/061208_amdi_somalia.shtml)

<sup>47</sup> Weblink: [http://www.somalilandlaw.com/Somaliland\\_Media\\_Code\\_of\\_Conduct-English\\_Final.pdf](http://www.somalilandlaw.com/Somaliland_Media_Code_of_Conduct-English_Final.pdf)

The government keeps tight control on broadcast licensing and as a result, no independent radio stations broadcast in Somaliland. After the 2010 elections, NUSOJ and International Freedom of Expression Exchange (IFEX) called upon the new Somaliland government to open up the broadcast media space and to grant licenses for independent broadcast media to operate<sup>48</sup>. However no new independent broadcasters have been seen to date.

*“The interesting thing [in Somaliland] is that I hear there have been attempts to open up FM stations but the government has not been very keen on letting that happen.”*

**Media Expert, International Crisis Group**

The press environment is richer but remains vulnerable to bans from the authorities, as discussed in section 4.2.2 below.

## 4.2. Pressures on Media Freedom

In Somalia, there are a number of key pressures that influence media organisations and media practitioners’ ability to report in a free and open way.

Attacks on journalists, bans on content and ordered closure of media outlets are a common threat to media freedom throughout Somalia, imposed by both Islamist factions and government forces. Al-Shabab is the main cause of harassment and intimidation in South Central Somalia, although NUSOJ has also recently expressed its concerns over the poor record of the TFG towards media freedom<sup>49</sup>. In Somaliland and Puntland the governments exercise more control. Across Somalia, media owners and politicians also put pressures on practitioners to protect and promote their interests, often pushing journalists to practise self-censorship in order to avoid reprisals for publication of unfavourable reports.

***Militant groups take over  
media organisations to  
exert control***

### 4.2.1. Militant pressures

Islamist militias, such as Al-Shabab and Hizbul Islam, began seizing media houses in South Central Somalia when, according to NUSOJ, it became clear that their earlier approach focusing on individual journalists had not succeeded in silencing independent journalism<sup>50</sup>. Key informants showed deep concern about the attacks and seizures of media organisations, which the Islamist groups then use for propaganda purposes.

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<sup>48</sup> [http://www.ifex.org/somalia/2010/07/30/broadcast\\_licences/](http://www.ifex.org/somalia/2010/07/30/broadcast_licences/)

<sup>49</sup> Weblink: [http://www.nusoj.org/?zone=/unionactive/view\\_article.cfm&HomeID=209751](http://www.nusoj.org/?zone=/unionactive/view_article.cfm&HomeID=209751)

<sup>50</sup> NUSOJ 2010 report *State of Freedom of the Press in Somalia*, p4 Weblink: <http://www.nusoj.org/NUSOJ%20Annual%20REPORT%202010.pdf>

*“For example when they take over stations like the one in Kismayo, they only broadcast what they want ... That is why they are taking over the radio stations in Somalia in order to talk to the people directly. They want to use them for their own ideological purpose. Last year they took over several radio stations from the capital Mogadishu and they are using them for their own political means.”*

**Journalist, Reuters**

*“They use propaganda and brainwash the young generation to think that they will take over this world in the near future.”*

**Media Expert, UNDP**

***Most media outlets in South Central Somalia have been harassed in some way by militia groups***

The NUSOJ report, *State of Freedom in the Press in Somalia*, details the seizure of seven private media houses by Al-Shabab and Hizbul Islam in 2010<sup>51</sup>. Additionally, militant groups have stopped media outlets from producing programme content previously broadcast, and have

imposed strict rules on entertainment, music and news. In this regard, many privately owned stations must directly censor what is broadcast to avoid harassment.

*“Al-Shabab is basically hostile to anything Western. They think that radio, TV and satellite broadcasting are Western... They do not mind radio as long as you broadcast what is Islamic, and Islamic to them is nothing beyond recitals of the Qu’ran and sermons. They do not even allow music on air.”*

**Media Expert, International Crisis Group**

Almost all media outlets in South Central Somalia have been affected to a greater or lesser extent, with those not seized or closed under threat of intimidation and violence.

*“Al-Shabab killed many people just to give a lesson to the rest. Killing someone says to others that they will be next if they don’t accept what they are being told. So it is very simple, it is not influencing it is just giving direct orders, like don’t play music, don’t say anything else other than ‘harakati ya alshabab mujahidin’ [Al-Shabab Islamist Movement].”*

**Journalist, Radio Bar-Kulan**

For example, in February 2011, journalists working on Radio Shabelle, recent recipient of the *Reporters Without Borders Press Freedom Award*, were issued with a ban on carrying out their activities (although the radio continued to broadcast)<sup>52</sup>.

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<sup>51</sup> NUSOJ 2010 report *State of Freedom of the Press in Somalia*, page 7

<sup>52</sup> A month later the Head of News of Shabelle Media was also summoned by the TFG for interrogation over a report broadcast on air.

*“There are many journalists, including myself, who face harassment from the different militia groups, especially Al-Shabab. That was the reason I left my post with Radio Shabelle. I wanted to continue but left out of fear for my life.”*

**Journalist, Reuters**

The control of the media by Al-Shabab and Hizbul Islam has resulted in an increase in censorship, either self-imposed by editors or practitioners, or dictated by political groups. During focus groups with journalists from South Central Somalia, there was a reluctance to discuss censorship generally, but those who did speak on the topic indicated that self-censorship was practiced.

***Increase in censorship and self-censorship as a result of militia pressures***

*“Those radio stations like Horn Afrik and Shabelle that are operating in a very hostile environment now practise censorship or get phone calls on how to share the news.”*

**Media Expert, International Crisis Group**

*“There are certain things we are not really afraid of but we just like to abstain from them. These include issues such as private business and religion, especially private business.”*

**Journalist, South Central Somalia**

In Puntland there are far fewer attacks by Islamic rebel groups than in South Central Somalia, although one journalist, Abdullahi Omar Gedi of Radio Daljir, was killed in 2010<sup>53</sup>. It would seem that Al-Shabab still has some influence on the sector, as this example of a journalist's experience of Al-Shabab shows:

*“We are not allowed to discuss politics. There is even a committee that ensures the media stays politics-free. Sometimes we are called by groups like Al-Shabab and, although we are supposed to be non-political, we take the calls as we fear reprisals and the loss of our lives.”*

**Journalist, Puntland**

#### **4.2.2. Government Pressures**

Whilst in South Central Somalia pressures from militant groups are very high, in all three regions of Somalia, the respective governments also exert pressure on journalists and media organisations.

This is particularly true of government authorities in Somaliland and Puntland, but in **South Central Somalia** NUSOJ has also shown concern about the possibility of the TFG countering

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<sup>53</sup> NUSOJ 2010 report *State of Freedom of the Press in Somalia*, page 7

militant interference in media by increasing their own control over the practices of journalists and operation of organisations in the region<sup>54</sup>.

In March 2011, the TFG ordered an independent station (Radio Kulmiye) to stop its services for airing an inaccurate report about defection of government forces to Al-Shabab<sup>55</sup>. In the same month the Minister of Information of Somalia, Abdikarim Hasan Jama, asked journalists to report on positive developments rather than “demoralising” the population<sup>56</sup>,

*There have been recent reports that TFG have been exerting more control on the media*

during talks with journalists focused on their role in the reconstruction of the country. NUSOJ also recently accused the TFG of carrying out acts of censorship and threats in order to “undermine the independent journalism”<sup>57</sup>, in a June 2011 call for the newly appointed Prime Minister to undertake reforms to allow for greater media freedom.

*“In Mogadishu we differ from the rest of Somalia in that where journalists in Somaliland and Puntland may be imprisoned for saying prohibited things, in Mogadishu we pay the ultimate price, we pay with our lives the moment we report on anything that is wrong in the eyes of the militia groups.”*

**Journalist, Reuters**

In its 2010 report, NUSOJ stated that the autonomous state of **Puntland** has been experiencing “a worsening press freedom climate due to an administration particularly sensitive to criticism”<sup>58</sup>. Media organisations and journalists are subjected to a high number of bans and arrests by government officials, who justify the curtailing of freedom under state security needs, often accusing the media of giving voice to insurgent groups that are against the Puntland administration.

Examples include the director of Horseed Media, who received a six year jail sentence in August 2010 after he interviewed a rebel leader fighting the government, before being pardoned and released; a journalist from Radio SIMBA who was beaten by a chief security officer of the high court in Bosasso, during a court hearing that the journalist was covering in February 2010; and a journalist from the Somali Broadcasting Corporation (SBC) who was arrested by the Puntland police in March 2011, while reporting a bomb blast in Galkacyo.

As highlighted previously, experts and journalists reported that journalist arrests in Puntland are often for reasons that are tenuous or unspecified.

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<sup>54</sup> Weblink: <http://www.voanews.com/english/news/africa/east/Somali-Journalists-say-Islamists-are-Wiping-Out-Free-Flow-of-Information-103301914.html>

<sup>55</sup> Operations recommenced at this station in June 2011

<sup>56</sup> Source: Somali Media Observatory –*Somali minister, local journalists hold talks in Mogadishu* (sourced from Radio Galkacyo).

<sup>57</sup> Weblink: [http://www.nusoj.org/?zone=/unionactive/view\\_article.cfm&HomeID=209751](http://www.nusoj.org/?zone=/unionactive/view_article.cfm&HomeID=209751)

<sup>58</sup> NUSOJ 2010 report *State of Freedom of the Press in Somalia*, page 4

*"I was arrested and held for several hours once when I was covering a story on a group of disabled people who were queuing for hours in the sun to see a minister. The officers outside saw me taking pictures and arrested me on the spot."*

**Journalist, Puntland**

Journalists and freedom of expression groups have highlighted the severe impact that these constant arrests and bans have on media freedom in Puntland, with more than fifty such groups writing a joint letter to the President of Puntland in October 2010, urging him to protect media freedom. Some experts felt that more scrutiny and pressure from outside Somalia would be needed to improve the situation.

*"I think this government [Puntland] needs to be told that if you still want to be partners with us you need to be having respectable and credible media laws. Right now Farole is only judged by what he does against piracy, nobody thinks we should use the yardstick of freedom of expression."*

**Media Expert, International Crisis Group**

The number of arrests authorised by authorities in **Somaliland** is very small in comparison to South Central Somalia and Puntland, and journalists can generally work without fear of government harassment. However, the authorities still impose bans and restrict what can be broadcast or published. For example, in March 2011, the government banned the operations of Universal TV, a Somali satellite television channel based in London, after accusing it of broadcasting false information and instigating clan disagreements<sup>59</sup>. This followed a previous lifted ban on the station, following accusations of bias<sup>60</sup>.

**Government of Somaliland  
controls broadcast content –  
it is checked before it goes  
out on air**

Somaliland's radio and TV outlets are controlled by the state and the government has been resistant to the emergence of new stations. The government further influences the information available by censoring the state media.

*"State radio programmes are often checked before they go live and if there are too many negative things about the government they are removed."*

**Journalist, Somaliland**

*"In Somaliland for example the editors have to comply with government orders because the media is controlled by the government."*

**Media Expert, BBC Monitoring**

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<sup>59</sup> Weblink: <http://www.somalilandtimes.net/sl/2011/476/8.shtml>

<sup>60</sup> Interestingly, the ban was supported by some sectors of society and a Facebook group supporting it was followed by almost 2400 people.

During the electoral campaign in 2010, the KULMIYE party, currently in government, said it would uphold and promote media freedom. According to NUSOJ, Somaliland initially experienced an improvement in the restoration of dialogue between the administration and journalists, however “*local authorities, law enforcement bodies, armed Islamists and independent armed groups continued to pose a problem for press freedom*”<sup>61</sup>. Since the new government took over there have been some reports of arrest and detention of media practitioners. The authorities are particularly sensitive to anything which might be perceived to jeopardise efforts towards achieving international recognition of Somaliland as an independent state.

The print media landscape in Somaliland is more vibrant (as highlighted by a 2010 Committee to Protect Journalists [CPJ] report<sup>62</sup>) and journalists have generally been able to report without fear. However, despite the new government commitment to upholding media freedom, print and online journalists have been facing some bans, mainly by the government authorities. Even within this relatively free environment, print journalists practise self-censorship to avoid “*igniting trouble*”.

***Print journalists in Somaliland enjoy more freedom to report stories than their broadcast counterparts***

*“We are independent and free to express ourselves, but we often stay away from controversial issues that may ignite troubles and things that oppose the cultural norms.”*

**Journalist, Somaliland**

#### **4.2.3. Other pressures on media freedom**

Apart from having to cope with pressure from government and Islamist militant groups, the ability to report freely in this volatile environment is affected by a number of other factors, including organisational ownership, politicians’ lack of understanding of the role of media and threats from the general public.

***Journalists practice self-censorship to ensure they represent views and interests of media owners***

**Organisational ownership and affiliations** significantly influence the level of self-censorship, which is practiced by journalists in Somalia. For example, Somaliland-based journalists indicated that although they feel little threat from government forces or other groups, the necessity to represent the views and interests of media owners is significant.

*“With so many privately owned news outlets the fear is in losing your job if you oppose the views of the owner.”*

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<sup>61</sup> NUSOJ 2010 report *State of Freedom of the Press in Somalia*, page 5

<sup>62</sup> CPJ report (2010) *Attacks on the press*



### **Journalist, Somaliland**

*"If you write a damning report on a social figure who is linked to the owner of the media institution you are working for, you can lose your job if it goes to print."*

### **Journalist, Somaliland**

The Diaspora media owners interviewed felt that their organisations are more objective and impartial in output, claiming that they do not experience the heavy political influences that local organisations do. However, several other key informants based within Somalia, reported that Diaspora-owned media are heavily influenced by personal interests and affiliations. Please see section 4.4 for further discussion of ownership.

*"I think, in the future, if they are free minded people, they can also contribute to support the interests of Somalis, because at the moment some are supporting tribes."*

### **Journalist, Radio Bar-Kulan**

Participants in audience focus groups showed that they are very aware of the role that media owners can play in the quality and content of output produced.

*"We always see how biased some radio station managers or website owners are. Sometimes I hear contradictory news on Radio Galkacyo, but we don't have any other option but to listen to these stations."*

### **Male Radio Listener, Galkacyo**

Informants felt that political leaders continue to see the media as a tool which can be used to promote their own interests and as a result, keep a tight control of what gets broadcast or published. Several thought that politicians and leading figures need to be educated about the purpose of a free and impartial media, and how they can engage with this effectively.

*"The current political leaders in Somalia are not up to the standard of European or American politicians. Dictatorship, whatever you want to call it, negativity [even] is in their heads. So if you are not with them they try to close you down... I don't feel our politicians are up to the standard of understanding the media currently."*

### **Executive, Universal TV**

***Audiences are acutely aware of influence media owners can have on media content***

***Political leaders thought to be uneducated on the role of the media and therefore pursue it for their own interests***



*“The parties are not aware of what it is the media is doing in the country and what the media is good for. So they also need to be trained in the laws of the media because we know the media is the fourth estate.”*

**Media Expert, NUSOJ**

In addition to attacks from Islamist militants and government officials, journalists mentioned that they sometimes also face intimidation from members of the **wider public** who may be offended or angered by what is reported.

*“It is problematic at times as rumours are plenty and the public can point fingers and say ‘so and so wrote about so and so’, and if the said report is damaging it may be the case that a journalist will end up with a gun to the head, as has happened recently.”*

**Journalist, Somaliland**

***Somalia is a very dangerous working environment for journalists who work in fear of being attacked or killed***

#### **4.3. Working in a volatile environment**

Despite the existence of media legislation, which purports to protect freedom of expression in the three administrative regions, the reality is that journalists function in a setting which is influenced by ineffective enforcement of laws and an unstable political situation, especially in the South Central region.

Reporters Without Borders (RSF) refers to Somalia as the “*deadliest country in Africa for journalists*”<sup>63</sup>. Journalists are fearful for their lives, particularly as they feel that the media organisations that employ them offer little protection or support.

*“For example, in Mogadishu when there is bombing or fighting breaks out between the government and Al-Shabab, we cannot report the truth because we are afraid of reprisals from both sides.”*

**Journalist, South Central Somalia**

*“I think the worry comes when you are reporting on events as they unfold. There is a need to watch what you say or the reality is you may not make it out of that room alive.”*

**Journalist, Puntland**

According to NUSOJ, during 2009 and 2010 more than 90 journalists went into exile to escape the constant threats, attacks and poor working conditions in Somalia.

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<sup>63</sup> Weblink: <http://en.rsf.org/report-somalia,43.html>

Figure 4 illustrates the geographical distribution of journalist killings since 2007. The situation dramatically worsened in the period up to 2009, with the number of journalist deaths increasing to seven in 2007, nine in 2009 and then falling to three in 2010. Although there has been a decrease in the number of deaths compared to 2009, there has not been a decline in arrests, harassment, bans and seizures of media outlets.

The majority of these incidents take place in Mogadishu, where there is an intense struggle between the militias and the government to control the capital<sup>64</sup>. Other threats and attacks on journalists occur throughout South Central Somalia and Puntland, and to a lesser extent in Somaliland. NUSOJ attributed most

***"We believe the profession  
is not for everyone but for  
the daring few."***

**Journalist, South Central  
Somalia**

attacks against journalists in 2010 to Islamist insurgency groups, mainly Al-Shabab and Hizbul Islam, followed by government-led attacks from the Puntland administration and the TFG<sup>65</sup>. The TFG has acknowledged the plight of journalists with the Minister of Information, Dahir Gelle, saying in April 2010 that Somali media was going through its toughest time<sup>66</sup>.

It has also been known for the general audience to be threatened if caught listening or watching certain stations. For example, a news report released by Bar-Kulan in May 2011 claimed that a young woman in Jowhar, South Central Somalia, had been flogged by Al-Shabab for allegedly listening to BBC Somali news in her home<sup>67</sup>. In audience research whilst most respondents said they do not worry when they listen to radio stations, there were a small number who admitted to being afraid.

*"I often listen to radio stations at night and I live on a corner so I always reduce the volume of the radio and feel a bit worried."*

**Female Radio Listener, Mogadishu**

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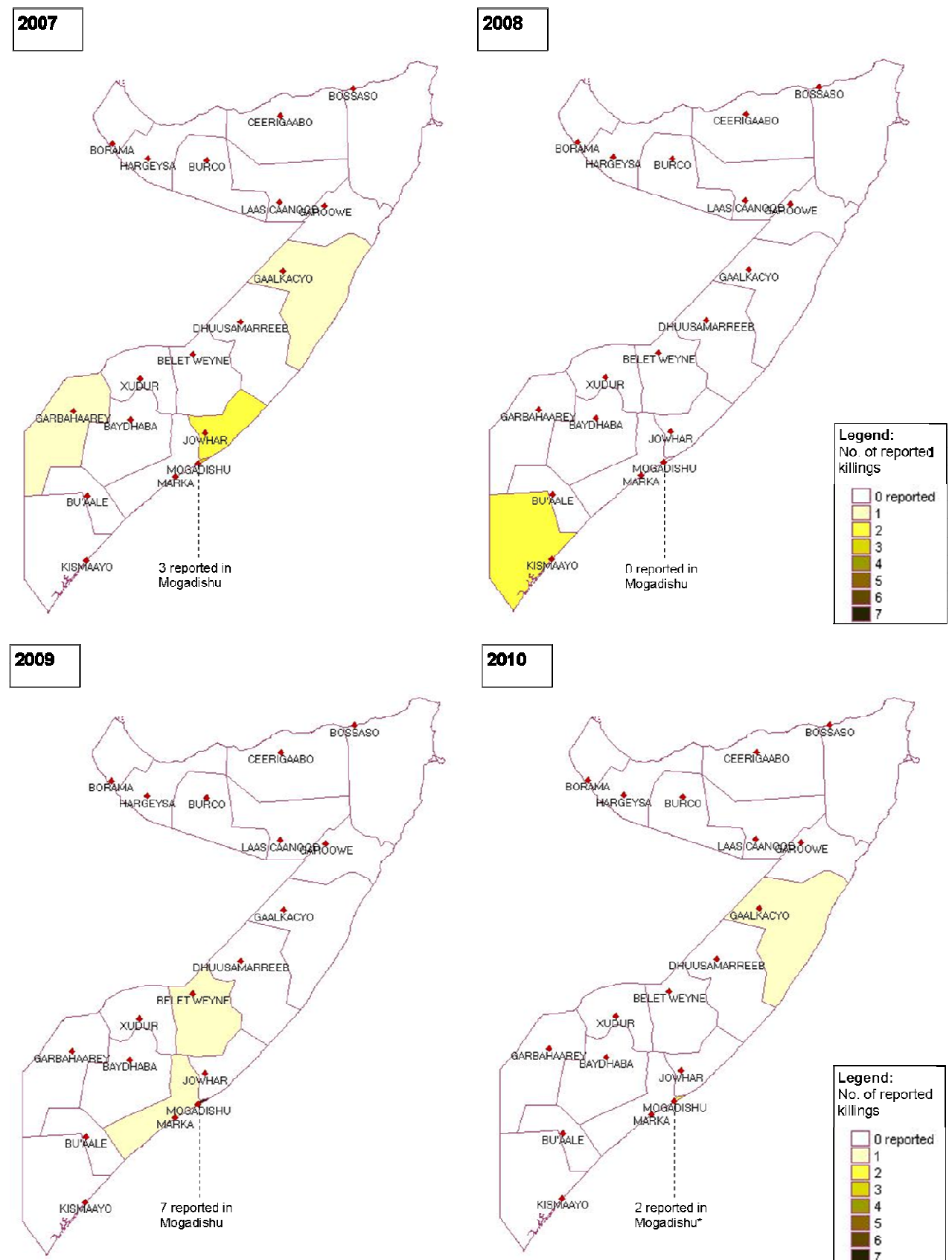
<sup>64</sup> For example, two journalists were killed in this region in 2010, including Sheik Nur Mohamed, who worked for Mogadishu-Voice of Somali Republic, a government owned radio station. Journalists believe his murder in May 2010 was a result of his work with a government media outlet, and the TFG officially accused Al-Shabab of the killing. Barkhad Awale Adan, the direction of Xurmo radio, which is owned and run by a civil society organisation, was killed in crossfire between Al-Shabab insurgents and African Union troops in Mogadishu in August 2010.

<sup>65</sup> NUSOJ 2010 report *State of Freedom of the Press in Somalia*, page 6

<sup>66</sup> <http://www.HornAfrik.com/?p=14>

<sup>67</sup> Source: Somalia Media Observatory

**Figure 4: Number of Journalists killed yearly 2007-2010**



#### 4.4. Media Ownership and Funding

Overall, most media organisations in Somalia are privately owned by individuals. However, there has also been a growth in radio and television stations owned by both Al-Shabab and the TFG in **South Central Somalia**. For example in February 2011, Al-Shabab started a television channel, *Al-Kataaib*, to propagate their actions and ideology, and in response, the TFG started a station called Somali National TV.

In **Puntland**, the ownership of both television and radio stations remains largely private, although the authorities keep a strict control on media. In contrast, while the newspapers are largely private in **Somaliland**, the government controls the broadcast sector and owns Radio Hargeisa and Somaliland National TV (SLNTV).

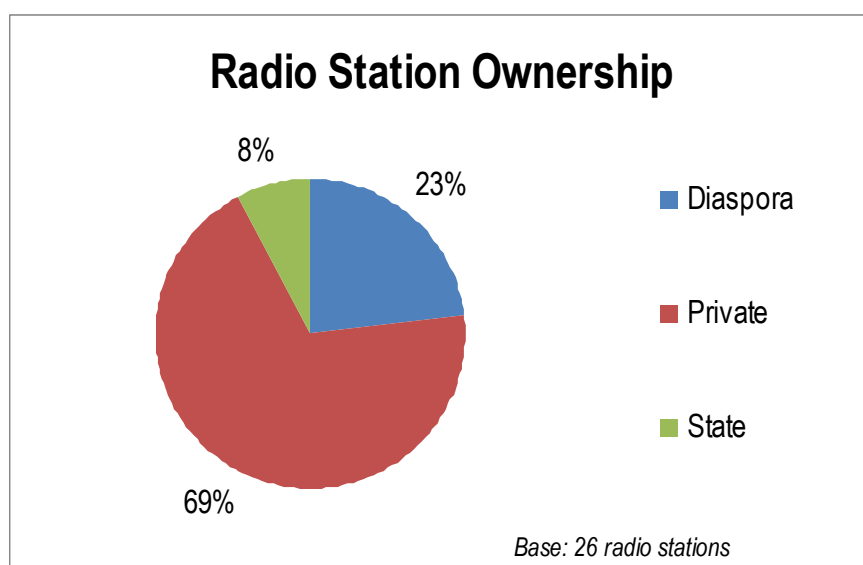
Out of 26 local radio stations surveyed in December 2010, 69% were privately owned. Twenty three per cent were owned by a Somali residing outside of the country, often in Europe. However these figures do not account for those stations privately owned by a Somalia resident but heavily funded by Diaspora members, or which benefit from equipment or training provided by the Diaspora. Interviewed informants confirmed that many private stations were established and continue to be funded by people living in the Diaspora.

*“Most of the owners of the radio stations are Somalis in the Diaspora, so in terms of investment and establishing new media houses in Somalia, yes, they do have an influence.”*

**Journalist, Radio Bar-Kulan**

**Many media organisations  
are run by the Somali  
Diaspora**

**Figure 5: Ownership of radio stations**



Business and political interests are both important motivations for opening a media organisation. Stations are opened as commercial ventures and advertising can generate high revenues for businessmen who back them. Interviewed experts reported that political influences come from business owners who have affiliations with politicians, or from direct funding of stations by politicians themselves who wish to use media to promote their own agenda.

*“Some of these radio stations are backed by businessmen who have a sort of affiliation with the warlords or the politicians who are now on the scene or were in the previous government, so there is also a political interest.”*

**Media Expert, International Crisis Group**

This is thought to also be the case for the Diaspora; while many invest in an effort to develop and improve information for communities, others have created their own media in order to influence politics and leadership.

*“The Diaspora has also created their own media in order to influence leaders back home. So it is a very symbiotic kind of relationship.”*

**Media Expert, International Crisis Group**

As political and personal gain are currently major motivations for becoming involved in the media sector, several experts identified the need for media investors whose interests are in providing unbiased information to Somali people and who have the knowledge and experience to do this effectively.

*“The first thing that should be done is to get skilled people who can run Somali media professionally and in a professional way. The people who own the media now have got no idea about media having only opened these organisations for business purposes.”*

**Executive, Somali Channel**

*“The private sector depends on who gets into this sector... It should be that the purpose is not to make money or to attack somebody or to be somebody’s mouthpiece. They have to have the purpose of providing information to a Somali audience who need balanced and reliable information desperately.”*

**Executive, Leading Business**

The ownership and funding of the Somali media influences the sector at all levels. In particular, journalists often feel the need to represent the views and interests of media owners, bringing up questions of media freedom and the quality of content, and owners do not always understand the needs of journalists. These issues are discussed in further detail in subsequent sections.

***Media organisations are opened for business and political reasons***

## 4.5. Journalist training, experience and opportunities for professional development

Interviews with stations managers revealed that most journalists working at their organisations have secondary level education<sup>68</sup>, which some have supplemented with basic journalism courses at private colleges, training obtained through media development initiatives from international organisations, or internal training by other members of staff.

*“Another difficulty we face is the lack of knowledge, there are some people in the profession who have not completed secondary school, and they have only attended courses in journalism for a short time, sometimes only a month. People need to understand what is expected from a journalist and at the moment they do not.”*

**Journalist, Puntland**

Of the minority who have university degrees, many are not directly in journalism. However, education levels are slightly higher in Somaliland and interviews with managers of print organisations showed that journalists working are more likely to have university degrees.

As well as many having a basic level formal education, the majority of journalists working currently have limited working experience. Figure 6 shows that most employees have five years or less experience, and the pattern is similar for newspapers.

The dearth of experienced journalists is largely due to the fleeing and exile of media professionals in recent years, particularly from the troubled South Central region.

*“From 2007 until now, they [professional journalists] have been fleeing day after day. So the Somali journalists working in Southern Somalia are mostly new journalists who are now joining the media, so this is the biggest challenge which is facing professionalism.”*

**Media Expert, NUSOJ**

The need for training and development of practitioners has therefore become paramount. The next section shows that opportunities for formal training opportunities have been very limited in the last five years but that media development organisations have stepped in to offer support.

***Most of the experienced journalists have left the country – leaving the young and untrained behind***

*“Training, training, training! That’s what is lacking. You don’t only need basic training on being objective, etc, but also training that gives the journalists an understanding of how the global media works.”*

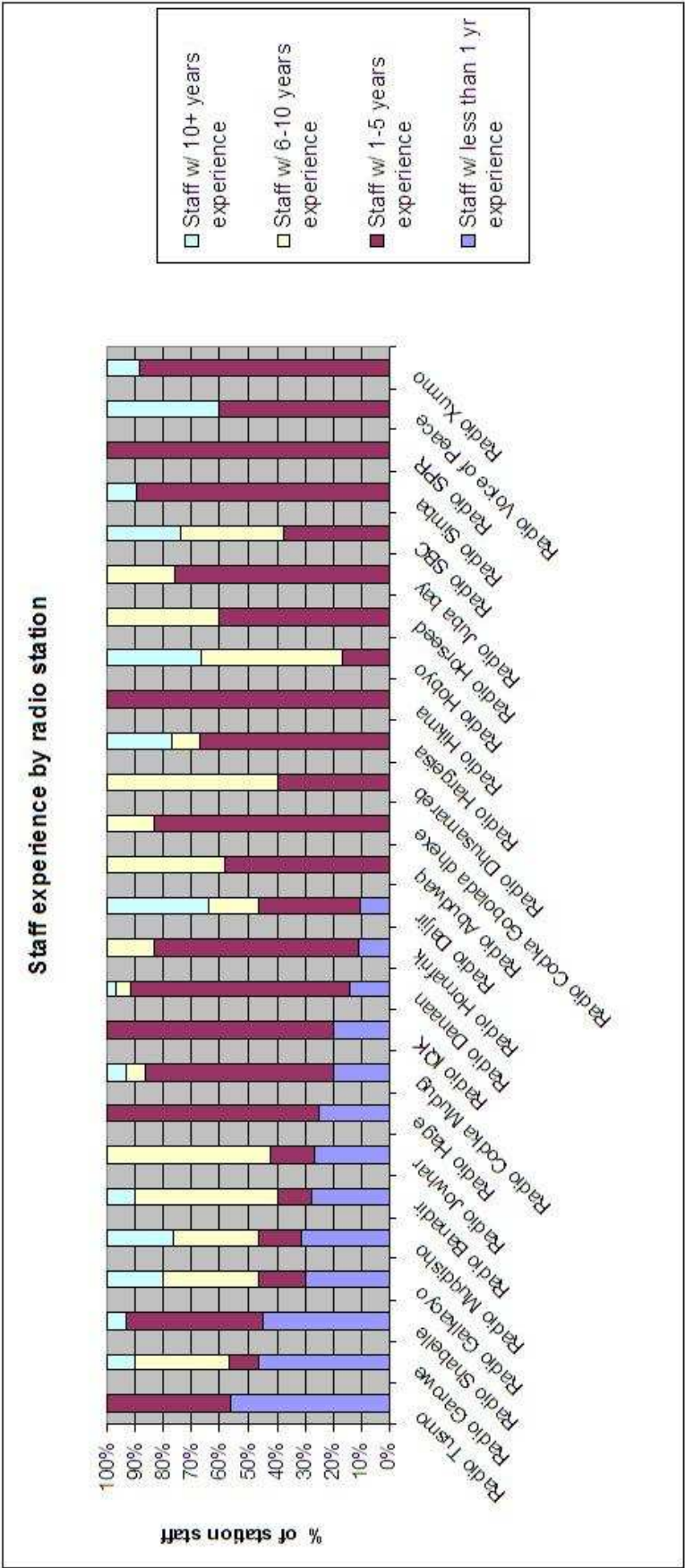
**Journalist, Al-Jazeera**

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<sup>68</sup> However, it should be noted that this is a reflection of the current level of education in Somalia generally, and is not unique to the journalism profession.



Figure 6: Chart showing years of experience of staff working at each radio station



#### 4.5.1. The training landscape

In the aftermath of the Somali civil war, the education sector, including institutions of higher learning was severely affected, with infrastructure destroyed and libraries looted. As many intellectuals and academics fled the country in the ensuing years, the education sector was left without a centralized body to plan, co-ordinate and deliver training.

Lack of government funding for higher learning resulted in an increase in unaccredited private colleges and universities across Somalia, which lacked proper resources, curricula and admission systems. As a result, today there is a severe lack of formal education institutions in Somalia, and of those that are functioning, very few offer training in journalism.

In Somaliland, the University of Hargeisa previously offered a certificate, diploma and degree in journalism, in partnership with the University of Pennsylvania and supported by UNDP. However this course was suspended in 2006 due to the withdrawal of funding. When asked

*There are fewer opportunities to study journalism than there were five years ago*

about the barriers in providing journalism courses, representatives of East Africa University (in Bosaso) and Puntland State University (in Garowe) reported that the courses they previously offered had been funded through UNDP or other international donors, and that uncertainty and changes in grants received meant that these courses

were either terminated or scaled back. A paucity of qualified and experienced teaching personnel, and a lack of student interest in media, also influence the courses they choose to offer.

*“We don’t have qualified lecturers around to offer the courses; we would need to bring them in from outside.”*

**Representative, Admas University, Hargeisa**

A representative of Mogadishu University also suggested that the value of journalism training is not recognised by those practicing in the field.

*“South Central Somalia has the highest concentration of media practitioners and outlets but practicing journalists don’t show any interest in pursuing the courses despite the fact that the university heavily subsidises the cost.”*

**Representative, Mogadishu University**

However, research has indicated that some more opportunities for training may be available in 2011. Fairland University, a newly established private university in Hargeisa, reported that registration for a degree in journalism is now underway and that they have recently engaged the services of two lecturers to deliver the course. In addition to these university courses, an organisation called ‘Aidam’, established by the Director General of the Ministry of Information in Somaliland, currently offers professional journalism training. During the focus group discussions, journalists also mentioned courses offered by SOMTAC (Somali Media Training



and Awareness Centre), the Somali Forum Organisation and the Somali Journalist Club (no longer operational).

Table 12 shows the main university-level journalism courses expected to be available in Somalia in 2011.

**Table 12 University- level media courses available in 2011**

INSTITUTION	LOCATION	TRAINING AVAILABLE	FUNDING
University of Mogadishu	Mogadishu	Degree and diploma courses under the Department of Political Science and Journalism	University heavily subsidises the cost of pursuing the course.
East Africa University	Bosasso	Certificate and diploma courses in Journalism and Mass Communication	Course is supported by IUP, which also covers fees for diploma students.
Fairland University	Hargeisa	Degree in Journalism	No information available
Admas University	Hargeisa	Multi-media skills in video and audio editing, as part of IT courses	No information available

In addition to the lack of formal training opportunities, journalists reported that they receive little mentoring and training from their organisations.

*“Most of them [journalists] have never learnt anything from the media houses. So they need to learn something about the ethics of journalism because if they don’t know about the ethics of journalism, this will end up harming them.”*

**Journalist, Reuters**

This has left a large vacuum, which has mainly been filled by training programmes offered by international development initiatives.

***There are few opportunities for training within a media organisation***

#### **4.5.2. Media Development Initiatives**

International organisations continue to play an important role in the media landscape of Somalia, both as broadcasters and as media development initiatives, aimed at developing journalistic skills as an alternative to university-led journalism education. Table 13 details of some of these initiatives.

**Table 13 Media Development Initiatives in Somalia**

Name of Organisation	Details of Media Development Initiatives
<b>BBC World Service Trust</b>	Has been active in Somalia for over ten years and has delivered a range of projects relating to media development, livelihoods, humanitarian response and literacy. For example it provided a comprehensive journalism training programme to over 250 Somali journalists in Hargeisa (Somaliland), Bosasso and Garowe (Puntland) and Mogadishu (South central Somalia) between 2001 and 2006.
<b>CARE</b>	Runs various programmes in partnership with local organisations. E.g. it supported the Somali Media Women Association (SOMWA) in creating a Media Women Empowerment Project. In 2007, CARE ran a development activity under the name Civil Society Media in Transition, which led to the creation of a new journalist association in Somaliland, the Somaliland Women Journalist Association (SWIJA).
<b>IREX</b>	In 2010, IREX conducted <i>Media Tools for Peace Advocacy</i> training as part of USAID's <i>Uniting Communities to Mitigate Conflict</i> program. The workshop was not targeted directly at journalists. The workshop was attended by thirty Somali youth and women civil society activists.
<b>UN Democracy Fund</b>	In 2010 the journalists association NUSOJ held a workshop backed by the UN Democracy Fund on human rights, good governance and democracy. The workshop focused on media as a tool for democracy and human rights. It included talks from NUSOJ, the TFG and the UNDP. <sup>69</sup>
<b>Press Now</b>	Based in the Netherlands and running a project on <i>"newsgathering, production and dissemination of journalistic programs for all Somali speaking areas, leading a network of Somali media outlets (radio, TV and internet)."</i> <sup>70</sup> The project includes aspects related to training.
<b>National Endowment for Democracy</b>	This American NGO has provided training for journalists and supported stations such as Radio Shabelle and Hiiraan Online. In 2010, the NED conducted a seminar on basic journalistic skills for the reporters of Hiiraan online.
<b>Relief International</b>	Partners with Somali organisations to provide journalism skills, media production and media literacy in Puntland. The training is supported with media awareness campaigns in the surrounding regions.
<b>Mogadishu Media House</b>	Opened in Mogadishu in April 2010 and describes itself as a local non-profit, non-partial and non- political media centre. The mission statement focuses on improving socioeconomic and security conditions for journalists, and promoting press freedom. The organisation has run a series of short training courses (training women journalists, technical skills, Adobe etc) in 2010/11.

<sup>69</sup> Weblink: <http://www.un.org/democracyfund/News/NFTF28Jun10.html>

<sup>70</sup> Weblink: <http://www.pressnow.org/vacancy/press-now-looking-editor-chief-media-project-somalia>

The benefit of training provided by international organisations was recognised by some key informants.

*“The BBC World Service offered some training to journalists; this continued for a few years and really changed the trend of the Somali media. You will now find some of these professional journalists working with the VoA or international media.”*

**Media Expert, UNDP**

While such initiatives play an important role in training journalists in the short to medium-term, they are predominantly project based and do not offer a permanent option. There remains a need for permanent local institutions which can offer education and professional development in the long-term.

### **4.5.3. Impact on journalists and the media**

The lack of training institutions and shortage of media experience amongst practitioners has a direct impact on the quality of the journalistic standards and media output. This is discussed in more detail in Chapter 6. These factors also impact on the individual practitioners’ understanding of their role and of media ethics, which a number of media experts highlighted as posing a challenge to the Somali media sector.

*“The most important challenge is the lack of professionalism. The people who produce media content are not well trained, they are not professionals, they did not go to school, and they do not know about ethics and regulations. They are self-proclaimed journalists.”*

**Executive, Universal TV**

***It is felt that young journalists lack understanding in ethics***

With a lack of knowledge on how to work professionally and ethically, journalists can be easily swayed by the influence of owners and those in politics and business. Some interviewees mentioned that journalists and organisations often accept payments in exchange for writing stories that are not necessarily newsworthy.

*“There is something called ‘Sharuur’, which is bribery for journalists – I give you money and you will write whatever I want.”*

**Executive, Somali Channel**

***Journalistic and professional standards are not maintained***

Experts also expressed worry that unprofessional reporting can hamper peace-building and contribute to propaganda and hostilities. They felt that journalists do not have a full understanding of the role they play in the politics and development of the country, through what and how they report.

*“It is an issue, especially where young people who are so ambitious and don’t know anything about ethics, and how the media can build and also destroy a country. So they do*

*whatever they want, they write whatever they want and most of the time that contributes to fighting and hostilities. But they are learning gradually, the hard way I must say, but still they need training professionally and ethically.”*

**Media Expert, UNDP**

One expert also mentioned that as well as a lack of skilled journalists, the growth and progress of the media houses is also hampered by the lack of management skills.

*“I was working for a newspaper which at the time was the biggest. I became the chief and one of the biggest challenges we faced is that we were unable to deal with the management side, because we were about 5 or 6 professionals with the help of other people who were being trained gradually. People liked our newspaper but we needed to expand and that was a major problem.”*

**Media Expert, UNDP**

## 4.6. Journalist Associations

A large number of journalist associations operate in Somalia, as seen in Table 14. These mostly operate independently of each other and are not grouped under an umbrella organisation.

**Table 14 Examples of Journalist Associations operating in Somalia**

Region	Name of Journalist Association	Date Founded
<b>South Central Somalia –</b> <i>(associations here mostly work across all three administrations)</i>	National Union of Somali Journalists (NUSOJ)	2002
	Somali Journalists Network (SOJON),	2002
	Associated Somali Journalists (ASOJ),	2004
	Somali Women Journalists Association (SOWJA),	1999
	Somali Journalists Society	2002
	National Association of Somali Science and Environmental Journalists,	2009
	South and Central Journalists Association (SOCJA).	
<b>Puntland</b>	Media Association of Puntland	2009
<b>Somaliland</b>	Society for Journals and Websites (SSJW)	2003
	Somaliland Journalists Association (SOLJA).	2004
	Union of Somaliland Journalists (USLJ)	2009
	Somaliland Women Journalists' Association (SWIJA)	2006
<b>Exile</b>	Somali Journalists Association Network (SOJANET),	2010
	Somali Exiled Journalists Association (SEJA),	2006
	Somali Foreign Correspondents Association (SOFCA).	

It remains unclear how many journalists are members of associations and how this varies across the country. NUSOJ, one of the most prominent associations, claimed to have 350 members as of 2009, but numbers of registered members for other associations are not available. Many of the journalists who participated in the research were unwilling to say which associations they belonged to.

Interviews with journalist associations highlighted that they see their role as including:-

- Carrying out advocacy for their members, including pushing regulatory developments
- Defending their members when arrested, including putting pressure on the government and hiring lawyers for them
- Providing training for their members on media skills and management

However, there was a shared view among the journalists who participated in focus group discussions that the associations do not fully represent their interests, or provide much-needed support. Across all of the regions the practitioners had little faith in journalist associations to aid and assist them, and journalists in Puntland and South Central Somalia were not aware of any associations that would protect or speak on behalf of them.

**Journalists do not  
felt supported by  
associations**

*“They have no real power; if a journalist was arrested today they’d most likely slander him instead of offering help.”*

**Journalist, Somaliland**

Several practitioners also felt that the associations were mainly populated by media owners rather than journalists, and that this was where their interests lie. Journalists felt that there was a need for associations that are dedicated to the support of journalists alone.

**Establishing one  
umbrella journalist  
association to  
provide a united  
voice will take time**

*“What I know is that there are associations of media owners. Media owners cannot be journalists as they are people after their own interests. If there can be an organisation of journalists then any authority in Somalia can negotiate and discuss the way forward ... to safeguard the welfare of the journalist.”*

**Journalist, Radio Bar-Kulan**

Feedback from journalist association representatives was that both government and media organisations are resistant to attempts to protect and represent journalists, failing to recognise their legitimacy and making the role of journalist associations a difficult one.

*“Interestingly we also find challenges from media organisations, for instance when they mistreat a journalist - like failing to pay them their dues. When we advise them to do so they are not cooperative and they ask why we interfere with their internal affairs.”*

**Media Expert, Media Association of Puntland**

The large number of associations means that competition for donor funding is high, and not necessarily utilised in the most effective way by individual organisations. At worst, a number of journalists and experts suggested that there are some journalist associations, which exist in name only, having been formed purely to benefit from international funding.

*“Many of these organisations ... take donations from foreign donors and do nothing for those affected.”*

**Journalist, South Central Somalia**

Experts believed that the effectiveness of active journalist associations is primarily impeded by the multiplicity of associations, which are mostly working in silos. The result of numerous, independent groups is that efforts to influence and lobby are not combined, and there is no single, unified voice to represent journalists to media organisations, government or the authorities.

*“It has to start with journalists themselves to unite, because when there is no unity it will be easy for the government to pass any Communication Acts that may affect them”.*

**Media Expert, BBC Monitoring**

Several experts believed that achieving some form of unity between associations is essential for progress. They felt that this would be a difficult feat but could happen as a gradual process, were the right incentives provided.

*“At the moment, you cannot achieve one single union. So, for me, even as a stock-up measure, you need to work with those individual entities, then you can use your incentives in training to try to cajole them towards merging. This proliferation of media organisations will always be there because of mistrust. That is the key.”*

**Media Expert, International Crisis Group**

## **4.7. Journalists’ Working Conditions**

Journalism is an extremely dangerous profession in Somalia and journalists describe being threatened, arrested and tortured over their work, as discussed previously. These dangers are exacerbated by the fact that journalists feel they cannot rely on either their employer organisations or journalist associations to support them, and are therefore personally responsible for monitoring and managing their own security.

In addition to such physical threats, journalists’ day-to-day working conditions, including long hours and low pay, also make the profession a difficult one. Journalists

participating in focus groups described working 15 hour days, many on a voluntary basis. An

***Long working hours,  
low pay and poor  
resources hamper  
journalists’ ability to  
work effectively***

Al-Jazeera journalist described local media organisations as ‘sweatshops,’ which pay their journalists almost nothing.

Old equipment and a general lack of infrastructure, including unreliable electricity, pose additional challenges to journalists. For example, some stations reported having just one working computer and recording interviews in the fields on cassette tapes resulting in poor quality, and sometimes indecipherable, recordings. One Puntland-based journalist described people breaking his equipment as one of the main challenges he faced, suggesting security risks to equipment, as well as to their own person safety, may hinder journalists in their work.

Table 15 describes the equipment available in six case study radio stations, as well as their new equipment needs. It shows that radio stations tend to be poorly equipped with some stations having no broadcast equipment, no generator and limited capacity to record audio content in the field.

Female journalists are reported to receive lower pay than that of their male colleagues<sup>71</sup>. They also receive increased threats from Al-Shabab and other militants, not only as journalists operating in a conflict-driven context, but also because Islamist groups do not agree with women working in such a profession.

**Islamic groups do not feel  
women should practise  
journalism**

*“Even when Radio Shabelle was having problems with the government, Al-Shabab did not like the station. Even though the station was against Abdullah Yusuf [former president of TFG] they did not like it that the radio was managed by a woman. They would say this needs to be managed by a man, the woman needs to stay at home.”*

**Media Expert, AFP**

The rise of the Islamist militias since 2007 has caused many female journalists to flee or to stop pursuing a career in journalism. This is illustrated in the following case study of a female Somali journalist.

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<sup>71</sup> NUSOJ, 2010 *Somali Journalists and their Precarious work*

**Table 15 Equipment in six case study stations**

	Electricity Supply	Access to Generator	Access to UPS	No of working computers	Reliable Internet	Software	No of studios	Equipment to record in the field	Equipment to record, edit, mix	Equipment to broadcast	New equipment needed
<b>Radio Hargeisa</b>	24 hrs	Yes	No	None	No	None	2	cassette tape recorders	Tape-to-tape	None	Computers, mini disk recorder, microphones.
<b>Radio SBC - Puntland</b>	23 hrs - not 3:00pm to 4:00pm	Yes	Yes	9 desktops and 2 laptop	Yes	Word, Excel, Powerpoint, Adobe Audition	3	cassette tape recorders	Computer	Mixer, microphone, computer	Digital recorders, mixers, computers
<b>Radio Galkacyo - Puntland</b>	9 ½ hours ( 7:30am - 5:00pm)	Yes	Yes	6 desktops and 2 laptop	Yes, apart from Fridays	Word, Sound Forge, Adobe Audition, Cool Edit Pro	2	cassette tape recorders, and IPOD recorder	Sound Forge, Adobe Audition, Cool Edit Pro	None	Mixer, microphones, digital voice recorders and cassette
<b>Radio Dhusamareb</b>	Local public supply	No	Yes	1 desktops and 1 laptop	Use Dial Up	Word, Excel, Powerpoint, Adobe Audition	None at time of assessment	2 cassette tape recorders	Adobe Audition	Not stated	Generator, micro phones, speakers, computers, mixers.
<b>Radio Xurmo</b>	Supplied by local hotel	No	No	2 desktops	Yes but slow	Word, Excel, Powerpoint, Adobe Audition	1	cassette tape recorders	Adobe editing	Mixer	Mixer, computers, generator, studio
<b>Radio Shabelle</b>	Supplied by private Company	No	No	8 desktops	Yes but slow	Word, Excel, Powerpoint, Adobe Audition	1	cassette tape recorders	Adobe editing	Mixer	Cars, generator, digital recorder



### **CASE STUDY: A female journalist in South Central Somalia**

Women journalists face the toughest challenge in what is considered the “*deadliest country for Journalists in Africa*.” The case of this experienced female Somali journalist, who has previously worked for large international news organisations, illustrates the obstacles that women face in such a political context.

For a long time, this journalist was the only female working in her profession in the region of her home in South Central Somalia. She started her career in 2003, first with a small local radio and later with a local branch of a popular station with extensive coverage of Southern Somalia. In 2006 she joined an international media organisation as a freelance journalist. However, following the takeover of her town by Al-Shabab in 2008, she started receiving threats. The Islamist group would not allow a woman to report. She was given two options: to stop working as a journalist, or to leave.

*“The Islamists called me several times, and they said that they could not allow a female journalist to operate from a strong Mujahidin area ... So they gave me two options, to either stay... and don't report, or to move to another place and do what I want. So I asked them why they were telling me this and not the boys, and they said that my voice was different, so I was not allowed to report.”*

*“I asked the man who called me where I was supposed to go since that was the area I had grown up and I did not have another career to do. Then he told me ‘you can do business or something else but we do not want to see a woman reporting’.”*

She was finally forced to flee her hometown, and crossed the border into Kenya. She now lives in Nairobi and works as a stringer for an international news agency. Before being forced to leave South Central Somalia she had been working in very difficult conditions, often unable to carry out the basic activities required to gather information for reports. She suggests that such challenges are contributing to the number of female journalists working in Somalia decreasing in recent years.

*“In the last three years I have seen the number of female journalists working in the media houses in Somalia fall ... In Mogadishu, it is very difficult to go to the Islamist areas even for a press conference. When I was [in Somalia] I used to hand over my recorder to the boys so that they could go for press conferences in the Islamist courts because I could not go there and say something... It's very important to encourage female journalists, to give them training.”*

She explains that this does not only happen in the media sector and that the Islamist groups also shut down NGOs owned by women.

## 4.8. Status of Journalism

The status that the journalism profession holds is generally quite high. Key informants explained that many journalists enter the profession because it gives recognition in an otherwise unstructured environment. Those interviewed expressed their respect for journalists, describing them as extremely courageous. This in part reflects journalists' motivations for entering the profession.

*“Mostly, the urge to exist, to be felt and seen as somebody in a society where there are no institutions. It is about visibility more than anything else...once people see you as successful or they can identify you, this gives a level of respect and recognition.”*

**Journalist, Al-Jazeera**

While many said that they had wanted to go into the media sector since childhood, others expressed a sense of duty to serve the community and to contribute to the progress of the country. Female journalists in particular emphasised the desire to serve the community. One mentioned that she wanted to “give women a voice” on sometimes controversial interpretations of religious matters. Another expressed her sadness at Somalia affairs often being covered by foreign journalists and wanted to present the audience with the Somali perspective.

Outside of fears about the precarious environment, journalists who took part in focus groups and interviews displayed resilience and a positive attitude towards the practical and technical difficulties they face in their work.

*“Apart from the small setbacks such as the electricity, people cancelling at the last minute and a little lack of freedom there are no big challenges.”*

**News Announcer, Puntland**

However, the understanding of the role of the media is low across all levels of society and one practitioner felt that this could cause some people to treat journalists with suspicion.

*“People have a different concept of the media and when you say that you are a journalist they may even treat you as a terrorist.”*

**Producer and Presenter, Puntland**

## 4.9. Key Findings

As evidenced by this research, the main issues facing the media are:

- The three administrations of South and Central Somalia, Puntland and Somaliland have different media laws and regulations. All three protect freedom of expression. However, none of them enforce law consistently or have a regulatory body independent from the government in place.

- The lack of enforcement in **South Central Somalia** is due to the weak position of the Transitional Federal Government (TFG), which has lost control of most of the land to the Islamist militias, mainly Al-Shabab and Hizbul Islam.
- In **Puntland**, the authorities maintain a strict control. The authorities have recently announced directives, which control the type of content media organisations broadcast.
- In **Somaliland**, the freer and more vibrant press environment contrasts with a very controlled broadcasting sector, with the government not issuing licenses to private media. To date, the new government appointed after the 2010 elections has not lived up to the expectations of greater media freedom.
- Media outlets are opened as business ventures or for political means and as a result, media is often used to progress the interests of owners and funders, or as propaganda. Many organisations are also owned by members of the Somali Diaspora who wish to promote personal economic and political agenda, which are not always in line with those of their ancestral communities.
- Media freedom is threatened by closures and attacks by Islamist militant groups, political pressures that vary by region and by individual actors across all levels of society (media owners, businessmen and members of the public) who lack understanding of the role of media and the importance of reporting freely.
  - In **South Central Somalia**, militant groups have closed seven media houses in the last year and others are under constant threat of interference. As well as these pressures, the TFG has increasingly been reported to be carrying out acts of censorship.
  - In **Puntland**, government officials arrest journalists for reports they publish and it is often unclear to them why they have been persecuted.
  - **Somaliland** Government controls the broadcast media and whilst the press enjoy relative freedom, the authorities are still known to impose bans and restrict what can be broadcast.
- **Media practitioners** work in a very volatile environment. Particularly in South Central Somalia, they are under constant threat of being arrested, banned or even killed. As a result, many practise self-censorship.
- In Somalia there is a proliferation of **Journalist Associations**, which are collectively failing to meet journalists' needs. The need for collaboration between associations and a unified voice was identified, in order to improve leverage with government and media organisations.
- There is now a dearth of practicing **journalists** with formal education in journalism and more than five years work experience in the media. Many skilled journalists have left the country and there have been few opportunities for young journalists to learn the trade, as formal training facilities for journalists deteriorated during the period 2006 – 2011 (although there are some signs of new courses being established at present). The exodus of experienced journalists from Somalia combined with the lack of media experience of many media owners has also meant there are little opportunities for mentoring and training within organisations.
- Despite these difficult conditions, journalists are praised for their bravery and it is seen as an important profession, which can enhance one's reputation in society.

## Chapter 5. Media Output - Programming and Topics

This chapter explores programming formats and topics offered by media in Somalia, and how these meet audience needs and preferences. As the most widely accessed medium, the main focus is on radio programming and to inform the analysis, the following data sources were utilised:

- Information on programming collected through interviews with managers at 26 radio stations<sup>72</sup>
- Detailed weekly programme schedules from 5 case study radio stations<sup>73</sup>
- Preferences and views on programming from 24 audience focus groups

Interviews with managers at 6 print organisations in Somaliland also provided data with which to comment on press content.

### 5.1. Radio Overview

Broadcast schedules vary widely across stations, with daily time on air ranging from 2 hours (at Radio Hage, in Puntland) to 18 hours at Radio Mogadishu and as much as 19.5 at Radio Hikma (which focuses mainly on Islamic programming). The average was 13 hours. All stations interviewed reported that they broadcast 7 days per week. Analysis of programme schedules found that most stations started broadcasting from 6 or 7 am, but that several went off air between 9 and 12 in the day. Finishing times ranged between 6pm and 12am.

**Table 16 Summary of average daily hours of broadcast (26 stations)**

Daily hours on air	Total
1 to 5 hours	1
6 to 10 hours	5
11 to 15 hours	13
16 to 20 hours	7
Total stations interview	26

Station managers were asked which of a range of different **programmes types** they broadcast. All stations stated that they broadcast news, programmes for women and programmes with an educational focus. The majority also broadcast programmes for children and youth, as well as programmes on human rights. Only two stations said they broadcast entertainment and nine broadcast music. However poetry is a very popular form of entertainment in Somalia and four stations spontaneously reported that they broadcast using this format.

Figure 4 shows the proportion of stations in Puntland and South Central Somalia, which reported broadcasting different programme types<sup>74</sup>. Puntland stations were more likely to broadcast programmes on sport, human rights

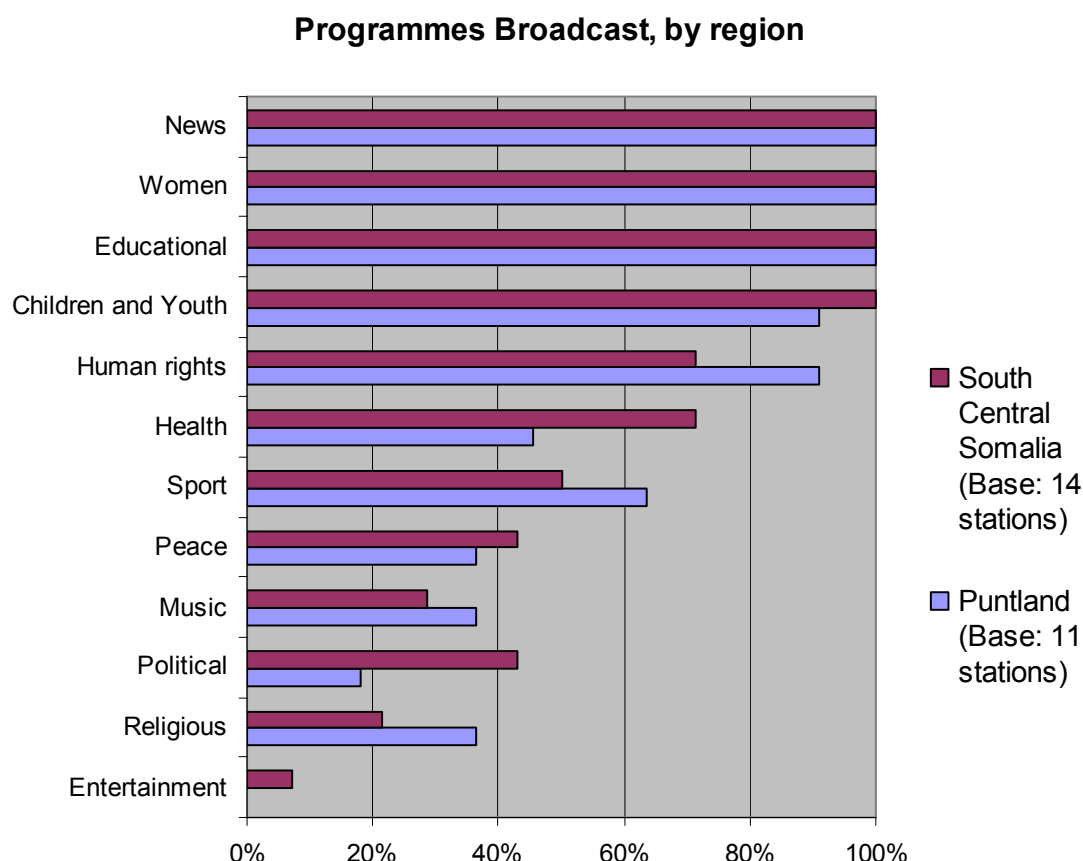
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<sup>72</sup> Note that the Al-Shabab owned Radio Al Furqaan was not interviewed for this analysis.

<sup>73</sup> Radio SBC did not provide documents in time for the analysis

and religion, whereas more stations in South Central Somalia broadcast content on politics and health. In addition to these main categories some station managers spontaneously mentioned specific topics that their programmes covered, which included migration, environment, livelihoods, family issues and economics.

**Figure 7 Programme types broadcast on radio stations in Puntland and South Central Somalia**



To build a deeper understanding of the proportion of broadcasts dedicated to different programme formats and topics, analysis of programme schedules from five of the case study stations was carried out. This analysis showed that most stations follow a standard programming schedule for six days of the week (Saturday to Thursday) and have a different schedule in place for Fridays (Muslim weekend). There is a large degree of variation between stations, in the time dedicated to particular topics and formats, and Table 17 below summarises the programming of the six case study stations by the approximate hours per week dedicated to different programme types.

<sup>74</sup> As there is just one station operating in Somaliland, this region has not been included in the graph. Somaliland's only station, Radio Hargeisa, reported broadcasting news, educational, political, human rights and entertainment programmes, as well as programmes for women.

Within their weekday schedules all stations have a 30-60 minute afternoon slot for special programme topics, with each day assigned a different theme. Health and wider current affairs (with either an African or global focus) are themes included by all stations at least once per week. Other special programme slots include religion, peacebuilding, politics and education. These 'special' programmes are reflected in the hours of programming for the specific topics they deal with.

**Table 17 Average weekly hours of programming by topic (based on 6 days, Saturday to Thursday)**

	Somaliland	Puntland	South Central Somalia		
Programme Type/Topic	Radio Hargeisa	Radio Voice of Peace	Radio Dhusamareb	Radio Shabelle	Radio Xurmo
Combined news	5.9	9	10.5	17	<b>25.5</b>
<i>News</i>	3.4	6			<i>10.5</i>
<i>World News</i>	2.5	3			<i>15</i>
Education		1.5		<b>18</b>	1
Islamic content	5.6	<b>16.5</b>	4.8	6.8	12
Rebroadcast of international radio*		<b>15</b>	6	<b>15</b>	12
Magazine show		<b>15</b>		5	
Local information and announcements	3.5	3	5.5	<b>12.5</b>	
Poetry and stories		4.5		<b>11</b>	1.5
Sports		3		5.8	<b>6</b>
Other world information and events		3			<b>6</b>
Youth					<b>6</b>
Economics					<b>6</b>
Discussion programme	<b>4.5</b>	3			
Music	<b>4.5</b>				
Politics and Governance			<b>3</b>	0.8	
Ads			<b>3</b>		
Other world information				0.8	<b>3</b>
Peace		1.5	2.8		<b>0.5</b>
Health		<b>1.5</b>	<b>1.5</b>	0.8	1
Other entertainment				<b>0.8</b>	
History and Culture	<b>0.5</b>				
<b>Total hours of programming per week</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>85.5</b>	<b>37.1</b>	<b>96.9</b>	<b>79</b>
<b>Average hours per day</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>12.8</b>	<b>6.2</b>	<b>13.2</b>	<b>8.9</b>

\*Rebroadcasts for these stations were as follows: Radio Shabelle – BBC, Radio Voice of Peace – BBC; Radio Xurmo and Radio Dhusamareb, ERGO (formerly known as IRIN).

Four out of the five stations rebroadcast content from international organisations such as BBC or ERGO<sup>75</sup>, and this amounted to between 15% and 16% of total daily output for all of these stations. BBC Somali Service covers news and current affairs, as well as content on governance, economy, culture and sports, while ERGO radio focuses on humanitarian information relating to issues such as health, gender equality and conflict prevention. This content is reflected in Table 17 as 'rebroadcast of international radio', and is not broken down into the specific topics covered (e.g. health, politics, etc). Therefore it should be noted that audiences listening to local stations may be receiving a slightly higher level of information on these topics than that which is produced in-house by the station itself.

At some stations, Friday programming varies quite a lot from the regular weekly schedule and therefore was not included in the above analysis. Shabelle and Voice of Peace were the stations with the most variation in their Friday schedules. Religion features more strongly in Friday programming, as well as lighter entertainment and more opportunities for audience interaction (such as poetry request shows and phone-in greetings). Programming for women and children was also limited to Fridays on most stations. The comparison between weekday and Friday programming at Radio Shabelle is given as an example below.

The time allotted to specific programme types is discussed in more detail in the next section.

## **5.2. Audience preferences and suitability of programming**

Audience focus groups explored preferences for radio programming, and participants discussed programmes they currently listen to most often as well as those they would like to hear on the radio in the future. The programme types which audiences valued most strongly are listed below, in approximate order of preference. However news and information, development and peace-building and education stood out as the most popular programme types.

- News and information (local, national and international)
- Development and peacebuilding
- Politics and governance
- Education and learning
- Discussion programmes and audience interaction
- Islam and culture
- Social and health issues
- Entertainment – including music, poetry and drama

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<sup>75</sup> Weblink: <http://www.i-m-s.dk/article/ims-support-somali-humanitarian-radio-service>

These themes are discussed below in relation to the programming offered by radio stations.

### **5.2.1. News and Information**

Approach to news programming varied widely across stations. The minimum amount of time spent on news was 30 minutes per day, and the maximum was as much as 4 hours. Most stations present news in 30-minute long programmes at different times of the day, with the exception of Shabelle and Radio Hargeisa broadcast 5-minute news headlines between programmes. Most stations have dedicated programmes for world news, and at Radio Xurmo world news amounted to 2.5 hours per day (the majority of their news programming).

Audience participants across all regions reported that they rely primarily on radio for information and current affairs, and when asked what programmes they preferred to listen to, the most common response was news. Both local and international news were of interest, but many stressed that they wanted information on the current status of the country above all. International news programmes were favoured for world events, however most feel that local stations are best placed at informing people about national news and information relevant to the region in which they live.

*“We get the news outside our region from media such as BBC. We get the regional news from people around us and from community radio – there we can get news that we would never hear from BBC”*

**Male Radio Listener, Dhusamareb**

Audience members particularly valued updates on local issues such as water shortages, basic services, and security. In South Central Somalia listeners reported tuning in to hear security information, which directly influences their daily movements and activities.

*“I listen to Radio Shabelle because their morning news always tells people in Mogadishu which road is safe today and which one isn't, and that kind of news really matters for us”*

**Female Radio Listener, Mogadishu**

Community announcements such as employment vacancies and births and deaths were also important to the listeners. The stations assessed appear to cater well to these needs, with some stations dedicating up to 2 hours of programming per day to local information, announcements and condolences.

Overall most audience focus group participants were satisfied with the level of news that is available to them. Chapter 6 explores audience views of journalistic quality of output in more detail.

### **5.2.2. Development and peace building**



Unsurprisingly, across all of the discussion groups, the most prominent concern for the audience was the issue of peace and stability. In South Central Somalia the focus was on building reconciliation, while in Somaliland participants were concerned with maintaining the stability that currently exists. Peace was considered by many to be the basis of all other development, and the two were generally referenced together. There was a strong sense that the media should play a role in encouraging such progress.

*“First, we encourage our community to keep their peace, because if there is no peace there will be no stability, education, health or all the basic needs that human lives depend on.”*

**Male Radio Listener, Hargeisa**

Less than 40% of station managers reported that they broadcast programmes on peace. Analysis of the programme schedules found that two stations had weekly special programmes on the topic of peace (*Life and Peace* on Radio Xurmo and *Youth and Peace* on Radio Voice of Peace). Only Radio Dhusamareb broadcast a regular daily programme on what peace is and how it can be achieved.

While many listeners reported listening to programmes about peace and conflict resolution on the radio, there was a consensus that more needed to be done in the media generally. When asked about preferences for future programming the overwhelming response was programmes, which would ‘preach’, ‘motivate’ or ‘educate’ Somali people on the topic of peace.

*“They could organise open debates on peace and then invite different people with different experiences in order to collect their ideas”*

**Female Radio Listener, Mogadishu**

Some listeners expressed frustration with what they felt was a focus in news and other programmes on the details of conflicts and attacks. They felt that this contributed to tensions, and many felt worn down by it. This sentiment was mostly held by females and younger audience members, who also believed that the more pressing need was information, which could promote development of basic needs, civil society and economy. In Puntland and Somaliland in particular, it was felt that the society was at a stage where it would benefit from programmes with a development focus.

*“We [in Puntland] are now in a developing stage of progress, unlike other parts of Southern Somalia where there are civil wars. Therefore I would like to hear the radio talk more about special topics, such as development, education, economy and security issues. Although it is very hard to find such programmes I strive to get them.”*

**Male Radio Listener, Galkacyo**

Increased attention to development, peacebuilding and civic education is a major priority for the audience.

### 5.2.3. Politics and governance

A strong interest in politics was evident across all of the groups, and people reported discussing regularly the impact that politics has on their lives, with acknowledgement by some that politics can dominate the thoughts of people in the community.

*“We always discuss about politics especially the disputes in Mogadishu and when youth meet we discuss about this”*

**Male Radio Listener, Mogadishu**

Most participants were interested in hearing about politics on the radio and updates on what the government is doing were of most interest, particularly in South Central Somalia. Several suggested inviting top politicians to speak on programmes. However some participants felt that a media focus on the problems of tribal/clan based politics was a threat to peace, stability and economic development. This was particularly true of those in the Somaliland groups, who felt that elections were a very tense period.

*“It’s a horrible situation when election comes about in our country – society is affected as the election divides people into groups or clans.”*

**Male Radio Listener, Hargeisa**

The value of political debate and discussion was also questioned by some who expressed frustration with the practice of political discussion at the expense of focusing on development and activity.

*“... it would be better to debate about how we can achieve development, and how we can operate our weak government positively and for the benefit of all. But unfortunately, they just discuss what politicians have said, like ‘Silanyo said that, Riyale said this’.”*

**Male Radio Listener, Hargeisa**

These views echo those expressed on the balance of conflict versus peace reporting, and would suggest that coverage of political affairs could be improved so that audiences have access to more information on *improving* government and political systems, rather than the less significant details of political debates and problems.

### 5.2.4. Education

Education was considered essential in promoting development in the community and society at large. In South Central Somalia education was considered a means of empowering people and a solution to many of the problems experienced. In Somaliland participants were particularly concerned about low literacy levels and poor access to

formal education. Across all groups, participants felt that education systems were in need of improvement and that people should be encouraged to participate in education more.

*“There is a need to support education where ignorance has affected our society. We can achieve development once we improve our education system”*

**Male Radio Listener, Hargeisa**

Programming on education was a major preference with audience groups, both in terms of programmes, which contain educational material to improve knowledge and skills, and those which discuss important issues such as promoting girls education. Popular topics for what some participants referred to as ‘self-enhancement’ programmes, were commerce, economics and entrepreneurial skills to aid with business activities.

*“For me I would like the radio to contribute and help people from the economic side, like teaching how to create a small business and become entrepreneurs.”*

**Female Radio Listener, Mogadishu**

All station managers interviewed (100%) reported that they broadcast programmes on education, but analysis of programme schedules revealed that the amount of time dedicated varies widely across organisations. Radio Shabelle for example has 3 hours of educational programming every weekday between 9am and 12pm, and a once weekly programme dealing with education issues. Other stations allocate just 30 minutes per week (special programme slots) to the discussion of education.

### **5.2.5. Islam and Culture**

Islam is a pillar of Somali history and culture, and it was evident from audience groups that one is rarely considered without the other. Participants linked such concepts as Islamic culture, societal norms and Somali history.

*“They should support Islam and release programmes on the tradition of Islam and Somali culture because most of the youth don’t know that much about the Islamic culture and the Somali norms”*

**Female Radio Listener, Galkacyo**

All programme schedules analysed revealed that religious or Islamic content is given a minimum of 1 hour of airtime per weekday (and as much as 3 hours on some stations). This content includes prayers, religious teachings and translations of the Qur’an. This trend differs to responses from station managers where just 31% overall said that they broadcast religious content. This may be because, like audience members, managers classify some of this output relating to Islam as *culture* rather than *religion*.

However it is defined, programmes on Islam are very popular with audiences, and focus group participants praised their local stations for Islamic teachings, prayers and preaching. Many felt that the radio should play a role in educating the community about religion, encouraging worship and discussing issues of morality.

*'I would like to hear them discuss about the worship of Allah... and how to connect about religion.'*  
**Male Radio Listener, Mogadishu**

Whilst radio programming appears to be addressing the religious and moral aspects of the Somali culture quite well, audiences mentioned that they were also interested in Somali culture from a more historical perspective. Several participants expressed an interest in producing new programmes, which draw on the knowledge and stories of the older generation, to educate others (especially youth) about cultural issues. One station addressed history directly with a weekly Friday programme, while others had short daily slots for stories and proverbs.

*"I would also like a program which talking about the stories about our society in order to record for our next generation"*  
**Male Radio Listener, Hargeisa**

#### **5.2.6. Entertainment, Music and Poetry**

Very few station managers reported that their stations broadcast entertainment programmes, which is unsurprising given that the Islamist group Hizbul Islam issued a ban on music, commercials and entertainment to private stations in Mogadishu in 2010 (please see section XX for information on bans). Analysis of programme schedules reflected this also, with music and song only evident on Radio Hargeisa in Somaliland (4.5 hours per week), and just one station (Radio Xurmo) broadcasting a once-weekly drama show on Fridays. Poetry however appears to be presented in an entertainment format on some stations. On Radio Shabelle and Radio Voice of Peace phone-in request shows or 'lucky number' dips are broadcast each day where audience members can request poetry recitations of their choice. Some stations broadcast up to 11 hours of poetry per week and the format was very popular with audience groups.

The absence of music was not spontaneously mentioned as a problem by any participants outside of Somaliland (although it should be noted that participants were not directly questioned about their views on this). Among Somaliland participants, music was mentioned by a small number who disliked hearing music on the radio. In these cases they complained that music was not useful or beneficial, or that it distracted from their religion.

*"And there is such programmes that they release after the "Translations of the Qu'ran" by Sheikh Dirir which is a kind of Religious songs as they claim, so I don't like them because in Islam music isn't allowed"*  
**Female Radio Listener, Hargeisa**

### 5.2.7. Social and health issues

Women in particular identified health as an issue that affects their lives, and an area in which they require more information in order to take proper care of their children, manage their hygiene and promote a healthy family life. Health services such as maternal child health facilities were considered inadequate and oversubscribed, and on a broader scale, many people identified problems with public cleanliness and general sanitation. In Somaliland, Hargeisa residents attributed many of these problems to overcrowding

*“We live in a very congested area, and sanitary conditions are not good, for example most people use the same latrines.”*

**Female Radio Listener, Hargeisa**

Many respondents expressed an interest in hearing programmes or spots, which would raise awareness of health issues; diarrhoea and the prevention of AIDS were of particular concern.

*“We need programme that would give them awareness about HIV Aids, and how they protect themselves from this disease.”*

**Female Radio Listener, Galkacyo**

All stations except Radio Hargeisa had scheduled programmes on health (usually a special weekly programme). However health programming amounted to no more than 1.5 hours per week on any station.

Respondents also felt that media programming should address important social issues experienced by communities. The specific social issues were dependent on the region but included migration, unemployment, street children and the use of the drug Qhat. Some respondents called for programmes that would raise awareness around these issues, as well as dedicated programmes to human and women’s rights. Three out of the five stations broadcast a weekly Friday programme on women’s issues.

### 5.2.8. Discussion formats and audience interaction

In terms of format, most people were in favour of programmes that are highly interactive and those that facilitate knowledge transfer from experts and other senior members of the society to the general public. There is a desire for more discussion programmes especially those that would link government officials and leaders with the citizens, where citizens would get an opportunity to ask questions and air their concerns to the leaders.

*“I would release a program called ‘talk with your people’ which is collecting the ideas of your people.”*

**Female Radio Listener, Hargeisa**

In groups, participants were asked to design their ‘ideal programme’. The majority proposed discussion formats, which would incorporate the contributions from experts and other relevant groups. The guests they proposed were highly skilled people (academics, topic experts), politicians, and members of the community such as women, elders, business people and youth.

*“I would invite experts, elder people and educated people to be part of such programmes.*  
**Male Radio Listener, Galkacyo**

Two out of the five schedules analysed had dedicated slots for discussion formats, where topics were not specified (Radio Voice of Peace and Radio Hargeisa). However, it is possible that the discussion format is used more widely in weekly special programmes and other slots<sup>76</sup>.

### 5.3. Newspaper Overview

Interviews with newspaper managers revealed that sport, news and politics are standard across all publications, as well as content aimed at women, youth and children. However, only two newspapers published opinion pieces and expert analyses.

**Table 18 Content published by newspapers in Somaliland**

	Jamhuuriya	Waheen	Sansaxo	Saxafi	Ogaal	Geeska Afrika
Sport	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
News	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Politics	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Content targeted at women, youth and children	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Education	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Advertisements	✓		✓		✓	✓
Human rights/civil rights	✓			✓		
Opinion pieces/expert analysis	✓		✓			
Peacebuilding	✓					
Other	Short love stories and history stories			Health	Religion	

<sup>76</sup> The ‘Strengthening Radio Stations in Somalia to Promote Human Rights, Peace and Governance’ project is currently working with six stations to develop their discussion programme formats. Please see foreword for more information.

#### 5.4. Key Findings

- Stations broadcast for an average of 13 hours per day, with morning slots between 6am and 9am being the most significant listening times.
- The most popular programmes amongst audience members are news, education and development/peace programmes, with strong interest also in information on politics and governance.
- Radio stations have a heavy focus on news (both national and international) in programming, but also provide a high level of local and community information to listeners who rely on their local stations for these updates.
- Islamic content features heavily across all stations, and includes prayers, Qur'anic translations and moral teachings.
- Audiences feel that media should play a central role in promoting development and peace, and that current programming needs to achieve a better balance between reporting on conflict and political problems and facilitating progress through content on civic education and peace building.
- Audiences want to be more connected with leaders and officials, and feel that radio can play a role in this.
- Radio is seen as a tool with which to improve the education situation in Somalia – be it through programming which teaches knowledge and skills directly or a forum for debate on how to progress and develop current systems.
- Poetry is a highly valued format for Somalis across all regions, both for entertainment and also as a means to promote and learn about Somali culture.

## Chapter 6. Quality of Output

This chapter assesses the quality of media output produced by some of the media organisations discussed in this report. Firstly, it presents the expert and audience views of local media, followed by their perceptions of media quality across a number of stations. The findings of content analysis of samples of radio and online output, which systematically assessed the standard of journalistic techniques, are then discussed.

### 6.1. Views of media output

Media experts described Somalis as ‘sophisticated media consumers’, and research with audience groups supported this assertion, revealing that the Somali public have a good awareness of the variation in quality, accuracy and objectivity of different media outputs.

*“Somalis are very sensitive people, and when they listen to radio or TV if they don’t find what they like they could decide straightaway that it’s ‘western’ or ‘TFG’. It depends on the content”*

**Executive, Universal TV**

***Listeners felt the quality of media has decreased***

In a diverse media space, audiences consciously choose information sources that they feel are most trustworthy or appropriate. Audiences were very vocal about which media outlets they thought to be most trustworthy and reliable.

*“I listen to Radio Shabelle and whenever they broadcast a rumour, they apologize on the same day.”*

**Male Radio Listener, Mogadishu**

Although radio stood out as the medium that most people rely on for news and current affairs, there was an acute awareness that the information might not always be reliable. In some areas, listeners acknowledged that they had limited choice in the media that was available to them and were therefore restricted to accessing information that may not be accurate.

***Audiences have a good understanding of the media***

*“We always see how biased some radio station managers or website owners are... sometimes I hear some contradicting news on Radio Galkacyo but we don’t have any other option but to listen to those stations”*

**Male Radio Listener, Galkacyo**

*“There are a lot of radios and I believe that all of them exaggerate their news, even Shabelle radio.”*

**Male Radio Listener, Mogadishu**



Listeners also remarked that they thought the quality of news had decreased over time.

*“Nowadays, radio and TV release contradictory news, which we can’t believe. So I feel regret sometimes. We should have one ethical main radio and TV.”*

**Male Radio Listener, Mogadishu**

Some listeners also gave examples of media output, which they did not think was journalistically acceptable.

*“I heard once a politician insulting someone and I was shocked when the radio station released such a thing.”*

**Male Radio Listener, Mogadishu**

In Mogadishu-based audience focus groups (South Central Somalia), Radio Shabelle was praised for being more transparent than other stations. Although participants recognised the mistakes that this station makes, they felt that it attempts to provide balanced news reporting, and is ahead of the other stations.

*“There was a former radio stations that I used to rely on their news but now I rely on Radio Shabelle for local news and some programmes on BBC”*

**Male Radio Listener, Mogadishu**

There were number of local radio stations that some audience members did not trust. These included Radio Mogadishu, Radio Xurmo and Al Furqaan. Content analysis also showed that Al Furqaan output was poor, they referred to very few sources, provided little context and showed bias. More detail on this is provided in section 6.2.4.

In **Puntland**, Radio Voice of Peace (Galkacyo) received the most mentions in terms of loyalty, usage and trustworthiness. The audience thought that they produced balanced news and covered a wide range of educative programming, whilst they valued the religious programmes that were aired. This was followed closely by Radio Hikma and Radio Daljir.

*“Yes, in fact Voice of Peace broadcasts an authentic news which about the new events or programmes which are new into the area”*

**Female Radio Listener, Galkacyo**

In, **Somaliland** the state radio and television stations, Somaliland Radio and SLNTV, did not garner trust. Audience members identified these channels as quite pro-government.

*“SLNTV can’t broadcast any news against the government which is a bias thing. So there should be a freedom of broadcasting.”*

**Female Radio Listener, Hargeisa**

## 6.2. Analysis of Media Output

This section will explore the quality of output in more detail. It will draw on objective content analysis of the following articles, which was conducted using a predetermined code frame:

- 33 online articles from 11 popular news websites
- 30 news items from 6 well-known Somali radio stations (including most popular, state-run and Al-Shabab run stations)

Each article and report was analysed twice, once by a media consumer and secondly by a journalist. The findings from this content analysis are triangulated with audience, journalist and expert views from in-depth interviews and focus groups where applicable.

Overall this assessment shows that radio and online output were clear to understand and provided context. However many reports were not thought to provide a balanced view, there was great variation in appropriate use of sources and many of stories were not thought to be accurate. More detail on each of these indicators is outlined below:

- **Clarity** - The vast majority of reports and articles were thought to be easy to understand.
- **Context** - 28% of the output was not thought to provide enough context and background information for the reader. In the articles analysed Garowe Online (independent) provided particularly good context to stories. The main facts were covered in all stories and detail was given on these, e.g. mentioning the name of the officers and diplomats who attended an official Puntland presidential meeting.
- **Explaining the 5 W's (why, where, when, what, who)** – 40% of the items analysed did not cover all '5 Ws', with many not explaining when a story happened and why it happened.
- **Provided a balanced view** - 73% of the items were not thought to provide a balanced view. This lack of objectivity is discussed in more detail later in this section.
- **Number of sources used** - Ideally, media output should gather material using first hand sources wherever possible. Reports should refer to more than one source and if only a single source is used, a named on-the-record source is preferable<sup>77</sup>. 12% of items did not refer to any sources at all, and 41% referred to only one source.

*50% of local Somali articles analysed referred to only one source compared to 33% of articles produced by Diaspora*

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<sup>77</sup> BBC Editorial Guidelines

- **Perceived accuracy** - The accuracy of the information was sometimes questionable, as some reports contained contradictory statements. For example, in a story covering an attack by Al-Shabab on a TFG stronghold in Afgoye, they first reported that TFG sources had ‘fled’, while later in the story stated that government forces were ‘patrolling all over the area’. In news and current affairs reporting, achieving accuracy is more important than speed<sup>78</sup>. Some respondents mentioned that they felt radio stations were so intent on broadcasting news quickly that the content suffered. One fifth (20%) of the items were thought not to be accurate, and with a small number (8%) the coder could not tell.

### **6.2.1. Gathering Information**

All 26 stations surveyed said that they cover news from outside the local area. When asked 'how' they get this non-local news:-

- 19 said they had temporary or freelance reporters based outside the local area
- 6 had ‘correspondents’/branches in other areas
- 1 reported that “people we know call us when there is news in the other regions”

Where stations sourced news from outside their own area, they generally sourced this through reporters or stringers based in those locations. Journalists interviewed, emphasised how the internet and mobile phones have helped them access more information from across Somalia in a timely manner.

*“Mobiles already play a great role in the media, from gathering news to disseminating. I saw a journalist using them to record interviews.”*

**Female Journalist, SWIJA**

### **6.2.2. Type of sources of information used**

Radio station and newspaper managers reported that their main sources of information for news were interviews with regular citizens and interviews with experts or officials. Other sources that were frequently used included the internet.

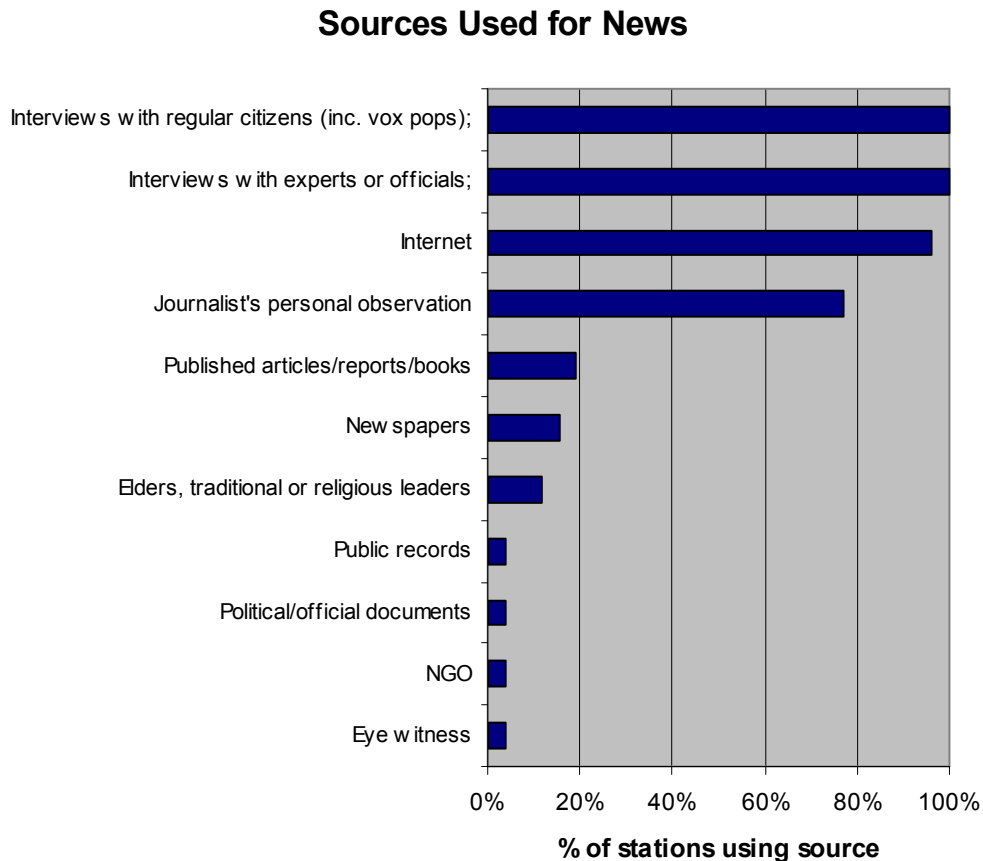
Journalists mentioned that they relied heavily on news websites for their research. A large number of media outlets also directly reproduce or rebroadcast news from news agencies, local radio stations and international media organisations. This content is largely gathered from the websites of media outlets. Audience participants were conscious that radio stations often use the same sources and repackage news from other stations.

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<sup>78</sup> BBC Editorial Guidelines

*“You know they take news from each other. The most reliable one is Radio Shabelle.”*  
**Male Radio Listener, Mogadishu**

**Figure 8 Main sources used for news by 26 local Somali radio stations**



Three quarters of the radio station managers interviewed, mentioned that journalists' personal observations are used as a source for news. Whilst it is editorially valid to use journalist observations, these should be clearly marked as such and used in conjunction with other sources.

Newspapers followed a similar pattern, although also cited the use of press releases and official documents. In a focus group held in Burau, Somaliland, journalists reported that they did not consider government sources to be very reliable.

*“Generally there are two sources of information ‘the active source’ and the ‘passive source’. The active sources are the prisons, police stations, hospitals, etc, and the passive sources are the other government offices that you happen to contact and that is not given much consideration or reliability”.*

**Journalist, Somaliland**

Although some journalists were aware of blogs and how these could be used for exchange of ideas or publishing stories, none reported accessing these regularly or indeed writing blogs themselves.

*“Even you can open one for yourself and then write an editorial or a story and then exchange ideas with the other readers and obtain their comments. It is your opinion and most of the international journalists use this, like BBC journalists, Kenyan journalists, etc.”*

**Journalist, Somaliland**

### **6.2.3.Using sources**

Whilst using a multiple number of sources is important, journalists also need to use the sources correctly. Stories and reports should draw on multiple viewpoints and statements should not be made without reference to a source.

Media outlets that showed the best use of sources in the analysis overall were Radio Shabelle, a radio station in Mogadishu, Jamhuuriya Online (Independent) and Hiraa online news (Independent). Both websites are published by the Diaspora.

Analysis of all media output highlighted the following themes:

- Media outlets in Puntland and Somaliland relied heavily on **government sources for information**. These included:
  - Radio SBC (independent), who only referred to government spokespeople in all articles analysed. For example, only the view of Puntland officials was used in a story regarding the disputed regions of Sanaag and Sool<sup>79</sup>, without any reference to views of the public or Somaliland spokespeople. Paraphrasing was used instead of direct quotation in most cases. However sources were clearly attributed.
  - Radio Hargeisa (state-owned) who relied heavily on SONNA - the Somaliland National News Agency, run by the Ministry of Information – for their sources.
- In South Central Somalia **pressures on some media organisations from Al-Shabab** is evident although cannot be confirmed through content analysis alone. Some organisations that aim to be independent, such as Dayniile online news, actually relied heavily on statements by spokespeople for Al-Shabab.
- There is **variation in how many sources are used** for each report or article, even within organisation. For example Radio Bar-Kulan (UN) sometimes used reporters on location who were interviewed for news items, and provided a variety of public interviews and official statements. However, other items presented just one source and lacked input from relevant stakeholders, such as government spokespeople or members of the public.

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<sup>79</sup> Sool and Sanaag are administrative regions in the North of Somalia which are claimed by both Somaliland and Puntland

- Media content rarely represented **multiple points of view**. Even media outlets which displayed good use of sources in other ways, failed to represent people who had different points of view or views from outside their local area.
  - Radio Shabelle (independent) – They used some well selected and attributed sources to inform the news stories - these included government spokespeople and authorities. However there was lack of multiple viewpoints across the stories.
  - Jamhuuriya Online (independent) - The choice of sources was good, as the reports included information from Jamhuuriya reporters in the region and relevant spokespeople from government, military, etc. These sources were considered to be relevant and reliable. However, only the Somaliland perspective was given on stories and so the lack of alternative views or discussion was a weakness.
  - Hiraan (independent) - The choice of sources were very relevant, ranging from AMISOM leaders when dealing with story of arrested soldiers, to government officials and shipping owners when dealing with piracy. All sources were well attributed. However stories tended to present just one or two sources, rather than multiple speakers and viewpoints.
- As well as not **presenting multiple sources**, some news reports critiqued a person or party and then did not give them the opportunity to voice their opinion and side of the story. For example, Radio Shabelle in a story reporting on criticism the TFG had received from the UN Security Council, did not indicate that they had sought a statement from the TFG.
- Some reports and articles gave **unnamed sources**; it is not clear whether this is due to security pressures or a lack of attention to detail. For example:
  - Radio Al Furqaan - On this Al-Shabab owned station some sources were unnamed, e.g. quoting “a Somali MP” without giving the name.
  - Garowe Online (independent) - Sources were not always attributed, with journalists using phrases such as “news that has come out of the area”, without specifying where such information might have originated.
- Rather than **sourcing information**, articles analysed drew on the journalist’s view a lot. This supports findings from station manager interviews, which show that journalists’ own views are used as sources of news information. For example, one article from the Diaspora news website Goobjoog (independent) relied exclusively on journalist opinion without citing a single source.
- There were also some incidences where the journalist made **strong statements** about issues directly, in the place of attributed opinion or analysis, or reproduced quotes directly without providing appropriate context. For example, in articles on the Dayniile website (independent), statements were made about

corruption in the government, without providing evidence of claims or indicating the source of such information.

#### **6.2.4.Objectivity and bias in reporting**

As the analysis of use of sources in the section above shows, media outlets often only present one side of the story. Interviews with media experts supported this finding, with many expressing that media outlets suffer from a **lack of objectivity** in their reporting.

*“People are not hearing the voice of balanced news, they are hearing the side of the Islamists who are recruiting people, or are going to fight the government, or impose the Sharia law. So, in those areas which are dominated by the Islamists, people listen to BBC and VoA in hiding, whenever they want to listen to a balanced voice.”*

**Journalist, Reuters**

Key informants also criticised the media for the role they feel it plays in **advocating** for the Somaliland government.

*“I have not been impressed by the media there. This is probably because this is a young nation and there is a strong sense of nationalism”*

**Media Expert, International Crisis Group**

Diaspora media was also criticised by experts for promoting personal affiliations and incorrect representations of events due to lack of understanding of events.

*“The role of the Diaspora is strong, but not like we expect it to be.... they are not in touch with the reality and they think the situation is still like it was when they left.”*

**Media Expert, AFP**

Content analysis showed that organisations which were affiliated to government and militant groups, unsurprisingly showed the most **bias**.

- Radio Al Furqaan (Al-Shabab owned) - Some news items were thought to support an Islamist viewpoint and did not present other perspectives. For example in a report regarding Israel and Palestine, country names were not used but rather ‘the Jewish society’ and ‘the Muslim society’ respectively. The Rafah crossing was also referred to as the ‘false border’ between Egypt and Palestine.
- Radio Hargeisa (state-owned) - Across the news items sampled, the government viewpoint was dominant overall and no other political viewpoints were represented.

Analysis of output showed that journalists from Puntland and Somaliland had strong affiliations with their regions:

- Output from Somaliland tended to be very strongly in support of secession. News content from Jamhuuriya (independent) demonstrated a strong Somaliland perspective, with little acknowledgement of other viewpoints. In an article that discussed the separation of Somaliland, the journalist failed to raise vital questions around the benefits or drawbacks of Somaliland's future as an independent state.
- In local news items from SBC Puntland the journalist reported solely from the Puntland perspective. However with wider Somali issues, where Puntland was not directly involved such as TFG/Al-Shabab conflict, the reports achieve a good level of impartiality. On Garowe Online (independent) one article referred to the dispute between Somaliland and Puntland as "*the provocation of Somaliland in the region*", and failed to give an opportunity for a Somaliland spokesperson to respond.

Radio Shabelle, South Central Somalia (independent), which was judged by Mogadishu audiences to be the most reliable, did not actually demonstrate very high standards in the content analysis. Whilst both the media consumer and journalist who coded the news items judged them to be written in an objective and unbiased way, they noted that there was a lack of investigative reporting overall, which meant that the reporter did not question the statements made by sources or ask them for further evidence to back claims. Additionally, while they did not directly back specific viewpoints, they often failed to include alternative views.

Media organisations that showed the least bias were:

- Radio Bar-Kulan, South Central Somalia (UN) - The items were thought to be unbiased and the reporter was objective in wording
- Hiraan, Diaspora (independent) - The level of objectivity varied in the Hiraan output. Articles varied from those which seemed to be objectively written without any political siding, to those which showed moderate support for some groups

### **6.2.5. Investigative Reporting**

There were few examples of investigative reporting in the news reports analysed, and this varied a lot even within organisations. For example a range of the best and worst examples of this are outlined below:-

- Garowe Online, Puntland (independent), had one of the best examples of investigative reporting where the journalists had fully researched a story of a conflict between Al-Shabab and Ahlu Sunna Wal Jamaa<sup>80</sup> - including the exact location of the conflict, the casualties and statements from eye witnesses. However the other articles analysed had some of the poorest levels of research and investigation.

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<sup>80</sup> Ahlu Sunna Wal Jamaa is a Somali group, which was founded in 1991 to protect the local Sufi brand of Islam, and has been engaged in conflict with Al-Shabab and Hizbul Islam in recent years.



- Radio Hargeisa, Somaliland (state-owned) - The journalists did not show evidence of investigative reporting, failing to question authorities about particular decisions and actions that they reported on, even when the story was based in Somaliland.

### **6.3. Key Findings**

Overall the analysis of output supports the assertions made by audiences and key informants on the journalistic standards of the Somali media:

- Journalists are poorly trained and unskilled in journalism ethics such as, referring to multiple sources and using them in an effective way.
- Practitioners and media practitioners are under pressure from government, militant groups and media owners to present their views in a favourable manner.
- Media output from Somaliland tends to be pro-secession and often supports a government viewpoint.
- Whilst media output from Puntland in some respects is of a high quality, in that many sources are used and some investigative reporting is displayed, they have strong allegiances with their government and their reports are therefore not balanced.

## **Chapter 7. Conclusions and the Future of the Somali Media Sector**

This analysis sought to provide in-depth information on the current media landscape in Somalia as well as insight into the structures, processes and relationships between stakeholders, which constitute the sector. Five major objectives were outlined for the primary research and the key findings for each are summarised below.

### **7.1. Overview of the Media Sector in Somalia**

The media sector in Somalia must be seen in the context of a volatile and often violent political environment, which has heavily influenced its development. There is currently a broad range of media organisations working in the country, although their distribution and reach is highly uneven. Radio stations in particular open and close frequently, as a result of broadcast bans, seizures and closures by both Islamist militants and government officials.

Radio stations are highly concentrated in the capital Mogadishu, in South Central Somalia, and the city of Galkacyo in Puntland. Strict licensing laws in the autonomous region of Somaliland mean that the only station broadcasting locally in this region is the state-run Radio Hargeisa. Despite the presence of 35 local stations in Somalia, the limited reach of FM broadcasts means that many areas are not reached by a local Somali radio (estimated at almost three quarters of Somalia's 121 districts, according to data from 24 interviewed radio stations). Therefore, those radio listeners who reside in rural areas are likely to be reliant on shortwave broadcasts by international stations. Stations broadcast for an average of 13 hours per day, with morning slots between 6am and 9am being the most common listening times.

The country's eight television stations are also based in the major cities (Hargeisa, Bosasso, Galkacyo and Mogadishu), and have the technical capacity to reach a wider geographical area than radio. While television ownership appears to be growing, low-income levels, unreliable electricity and the nomadic lifestyle of a large proportion of the population, mean that many Somalis do not have access to television. Whilst it is estimated that only 1.2% of the population has an internet connection, many more access the internet in public locations. Those who do have access are considered relatively heavy internet users, with the internet playing an important role in providing sources of information to journalists working in other media. In contrast to the rest of the country where there are almost no newspapers, there is a thriving free press in Somaliland, with at least nine newspapers in daily circulation.

Media organisations are mostly privately owned, and people from the Diaspora are hugely influential, either owning or providing funding or other forms of support to many stations. Although traditionally, stations were opened by the clans in order to push their political agenda, key informants highlighted that the primary motivations in most cases are now business related. Political interests remain important however and journalists often feel the need to self-censor to match the views of the owners of their organisations. The exception is Somaliland, where television and radio are run almost exclusively by the government.

Media organisations surveyed ranged in size, from 5 to 89 staff<sup>81</sup>. Employees generally have very little formal journalism training, with many having only a secondary school level of education. 65% of staff at 26 surveyed radio stations had five or fewer years of experience. This is a result of a combination of factors, including a weak education system and a lack of journalism courses in universities, media organisations offering few training opportunities, poor working conditions and pay, and many of the more educated and experienced journalists fleeing the country as a result of threats and attacks from Islamist militants and government pressures. Media experts highlighted that this has not only affected the quality of journalism, but has also left many practitioners, as well as other officials, with little understanding of the role of the media or media ethics. Training offered by international organisations as part of media development initiatives fills this void to a certain extent.

## 7.2. The Working Environment of Media Professionals

The legislation framing the working environment of media professionals varies between the three regions of South Central Somalia, Puntland and Somaliland. In each case laws protecting media freedom exist, but these are not necessarily implemented in a way that best promotes media freedom.

In South Central Somalia the TFG's 2007 *Somali Media Law* guarantees 'freedom of expression and ideas' and states that media cannot be subject to censorship, but has been subject to severe criticism from journalists and freedom of expression groups, such as Article 19, for the important role given to the government-appointed regulatory body, the National Media Council, and the legal obligation for media stations to promote Islam. The limited control the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) maintains over the country also means that in practice, the law is not implemented. However, there have been several reports of TFG trying to exert more control over the media in 2011, including incidences of censorship, intimidation and physical threats against journalists<sup>82</sup>. In Puntland the constitution states that "press and media shall be free", but directives issued by the Ministry of Information in 2010 severely limit the content that can be broadcast and journalists often find themselves 'violating' the law, without being fully aware (or informed) of the criminal offences for which are charged. In Somaliland the 2004 *Press Law* recognises freedom of expression and states that censorship is not permitted, but does not secure the provision of an independent regulatory body. Journalists can generally work without fear of government harassment or censorship, although there have been some cases of arrest and detention of media practitioners. However the government refuses to grant licenses to private organisations in the broadcast sector, meaning that the only station operating officially is state-owned.

In addition to the legislative environment and government influence, there are a number of other factors that affect the freedom afforded to media professionals. The most significant of these is the threat from groups such as Al-Shabab and Hizbul Islam, particularly for those journalists working in South Central Somalia. Islamists target both individual journalists and their organisations in an effort to silence media, which they consider to be un-Islamic or

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<sup>81</sup> Based on 26 radio stations and 6 newspapers, across Somaliland, Puntland and South Central Somalia

<sup>82</sup> [http://www.nusoj.org/?zone=/unionactive/view\\_article.cfm&HomeID=209751](http://www.nusoj.org/?zone=/unionactive/view_article.cfm&HomeID=209751)

unfavourable to their political interests. Although insurgents have less control in Puntland and Somaliland and intimidation is less common, journalists and organisations still fear reprisals and directive 'phone-calls' from these groups.

Journalists also describe feeling pressured to promote the views of owners of their organisations, who may be either resident Somalis, or part of the Somali Diaspora who invest heavily in the country. In addition, politicians are often highly influential, keeping tight control on what is broadcast and published, in order to promote their own interests. The practice of exchanging money for stories which promote personal interests, combined with a generally limited appreciation of media ethics at all levels, means media practitioners are accustomed to representing particular viewpoints.

Journalist associations are numerous and operate independently of each other. Representatives interviewed reported that their activities include representing journalists at a legislative and organisational level, including lobbying for better regulatory frameworks, raising awareness of the rights of journalists and threats to practitioners, and assisting in situations of arrest or detention. However, they believe that there is a lack of recognition, from both authorities and media organisations, of the legitimacy of interventions which journalist associations make on behalf of practitioners. Journalists themselves, although unwilling to indicate which associations they might be part of, did not feel very supported, questioning the motives of some and feeling that others represented organisations and owners more than individual practitioners. At worst, it was thought that some journalist associations have been created purely for monetary gain, without actually delivering any of the activities for which they receive funding. Funding for journalist associations comes mainly from international donors, and the multiplicity of organisations, all working in silos, means that competition is high. It is possible that this multiplicity impacts on the capacity of individual associations to provide the level of support expected by journalists. The lack of an umbrella organisation means that this part of the media sector also lacks the strong profile that a single, unified front would provide.

The day-to-day job for practitioners on the ground is one that requires long hours for little or no pay, with many providing services on a voluntary basis. They work with poor equipment and face many practical challenges, such as electricity shortages and lack of transport. However despite the harsh working conditions and few opportunities for professional development, journalism remains a well-respected and desirable profession for many. Individuals are motivated to work as journalists in order to help their communities and in some cases, to benefit from the significant recognition and status that they receive in return. The lack of formal qualification routes has meant that it is possible for one to become a 'self-made' journalist, with just a secondary level of education and experts reported that many 'fell into' the profession following the conflict, when other employment opportunities were limited.

### **7.3. The relationship between the Somali Diaspora and the media operating in Somalia**

The mass migration of Somali people since Independence has resulted in a large Diaspora located across the Middle East, Europe, and North America. Diaspora investment in their home country, either in support of the private sector, funding of humanitarian development programmes, or contributions to peace-building, has been well documented. It is not surprising then, that the Diaspora is extensively involved in media across Somalia through

both monetary investment in local organisations and the provision of alternative media to Somali audiences in the form of satellite television and internet sites.

Many local radio stations and other media organisations are owned or funded by Diaspora members, and the Diaspora was praised by several interviewed media owners and experts for training and developing the capability of journalists, and providing much needed funds and equipment to independent media. In addition to investment in local organisations, there are numerous Diaspora-owned media outlets run from the UK and other European countries, which target the Diaspora but are additionally broadcast by radio or over the internet in Somalia.

The Diaspora has therefore played a large role in the provision of media services in Somalia, both through investment in organisations operating locally, and by providing content aimed at an

international Somali-language audience but also broadcast in Somalia. In addition the Diaspora is also thought to play an important but indirect role in driving developments in new media. Their interest in up-to-date news from within Somalia has led to a dramatic increase in radio station internet sites aimed primarily at the Diaspora audience in recent years.

*“The Somali Diaspora has a lot of influence. ...Some write whatever they want, which they don’t know or have the exact background ...So, in a way, they are misleading the readers or the audience. So, yes, I can say the Diaspora has some positive role but I’m also afraid to say it also has some negative influence”*

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While many Diaspora members invest in the Somali media sector in an effort to increase the information available to communities and to contribute to peace-building, some respondents argued that members of the Diaspora have created their own media in order to influence politics and leadership. There also remains debate about the influence the Diaspora has had on the quality of media content available in Somalia. Diaspora media owners believed that their organisations were more objective and impartial than locally-owned organisations, as they are free from the influence of local politics. However, some media experts based within Somalia felt that Diaspora organisations often publish inaccurately and irresponsibly, adding to tensions and conflict. This is due to their distance from either the facts or the repercussions of their reports, or both. Several interviewees felt that there was a lack of understanding among Diaspora of the situation back in their homeland, resulting in output, which sometimes lacks context and accuracy.

#### **7.4. Journalistic capabilities of the Somali media**

As previously discussed many of the journalists working in the Somali media have limited media experience or formal training in journalism. This is exacerbated by the most experienced journalists leaving the country in the last few years, which deprives young journalists working in organisations of mentor figures that could train and develop

them in the profession. Research with both audiences and media experts revealed that both parties felt the quality of journalism is currently quite poor. They gave examples of output that was not accurate, biased and did not present multiple viewpoints.

Findings from content analysis of sample media output supported expert and audience views. Whilst radio and online output were generally clear to understand and provided context, many reports were considered to present a biased view and many of the stories were thought to lack accuracy. The analysis showed that some journalists lack an understanding of journalism best practice, such as appropriate use of sources and writing in a balanced way (only 27% of items were thought to be balanced). Journalists tended to use their own opinion to construct stories without effectively attributing them to a source. In the output analysed, there were few examples of investigative reporting. Often, journalists failed to question authorities about decisions that they had made.

Radio station managers reported that the main sources of information they referred to for news stories were interviews with members of audience, experts, the internet and journalists' own observations. This range of sources was also evident in content analysis of sample output. However, in many cases reports only drew on one source (41%), with a small proportion not referring to any sources (12%).

Websites are a key source of information for journalists, but some media experts thought that journalists working for online organisations were even less trained than their broadcast counterparts and therefore the content, particularly from outlets that were not linked to radio stations, was of poor quality. Content analysis found that some websites were poor in their use of sources, and lacked accuracy at times.

Content analysis of output provided objective evidence for some significant themes, which emerged from the wider media sector analysis:

- Journalists are poorly trained and unskilled in key journalism ethics, such as referring to multiple sources and using them in an effective way
- Practitioners and media practitioners are under pressure from the government, militant groups and media owners to present their views in a favourable manner
- Media output from Somaliland tends to be patriotic in nature
- Whilst media output from Puntland in some respects is of a high quality, in that many sources are used and some investigative reporting is displayed, they have strong allegiances with their Government and their reports are therefore not balanced.

## **7.5. The effectiveness of Somali media in meeting the needs of the audience**

Research with audiences revealed that they have high expectations of media, with a good understanding of how owner interests and poor professional ethics can result in biased and inaccurate output. They were vocal in identifying the platforms and organisations that they trust, and reported accessing multiple media sources to determine for themselves the 'full story' behind certain news reports.

As the most widely accessed medium, an analysis of the extent to which the media meets audience needs was centred on radio output.

Radio is the primary source of information for Somali audiences, with most relying on this for international, national and local news, as well as community events and announcements. Radio programming is therefore heavily focused on news and information with some stations dedicating up to 30% of airtime to local and world news topics. Audiences were satisfied with the news that was available to them, many choosing international radio broadcasts for news outside of Somalia and local stations for information closer to home. Islamic content is also a foundation of most daily schedules, with prayers and teachings airing at regular intervals throughout the day. Such content is highly valued by Somalis for religious, cultural and moral reasons. Entertainment is quite limited across most schedules, although there was very little objection among audiences with regard to the lack of music or drama. It would appear that poetry is broadcast in place of such entertainment formats and is enjoyed by many listeners. This is unsurprising, considering the oral culture of Somalia.

Outside of these common programme types, audiences reported listening most to programmes that dealt with topics that were of most concern to their communities. The main issues for participants across the three regions of Somalia were peace and security, education, politics, health and development. However there was variety between stations in the extent to which these were addressed. Most stations produce their own programmes on such issues for once weekly 'special' programmes, rather than as part of regular daily output. Audiences wanted continued and increased focus on these topics. International rebroadcasts such as IRIN and BBC provide additional coverage of these issues, although the content is not always context specific and cannot feature local voices and experts, as desired by the listeners.

Audiences expect the media to play an active role in the development of Somali society and governance. One of their main criticisms of programming and content was that the approach to addressing important issues often has a negative focus, which can impede rather than encourage progress. Rather than being bombarded with the details of political arguments or violent clashes and attacks, audiences want to see the media produce programmes that can promote both self-development and development of the wider community. Programmes which enhance people's knowledge and skills, and those which open up debate on important issues such as health, education and peacebuilding were favoured by most. Analysis of programme schedules would suggest that stations could do more to meet this need.

Somali audiences enjoy discussion programmes and are interested in interactive formats such as phone-ins and studio debates. Many said that they would value the opportunity to have access to leaders

*"At end of the day peace is very important as the media will not develop itself. The private sector will not develop there if there is no peace there, you need infrastructure, internet, power, transport to do your work, you need some other means to do your work if those are very limited because of security of course it's not easy to do your work."*

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and prominent figures in society through the media, and suggested formats where the public (including elders, women and youths) could have questions answered directly as well as have their views heard. As yet, radio stations have provided limited programming of this kind.

## 7.6. Implications for Media Development Initiatives and the Future of the Somali Media

This study used the BBC World Service Trust's four-level model of media engagement to identify and investigate the factors driving trends in the Somali media sector at the levels of system, organisations, practitioners and audiences. The resulting discussions have implications for development of the Somali media at each of these levels of engagement.

### Systems Level

Key informants agreed that the legislative and regulatory environment across all regions of Somalia acts to stifle the media sector. However amending legislation alone will not mean that the media sector progresses, and in all three regions significant changes need to occur before legislation and regulation can be enforced effectively. The low level of control maintained by government, particularly in South Central Somalia, and a lack of understanding of the role of the media by stakeholders at this level prevents the enforcement of media law, including the freedom of expression clauses detailed in the laws and constitutions of all three regions. Additionally, the volatile environment impacts on the infrastructure and resources, which are crucial for the development of the media sector.

While not directly aimed at media development, peace-building and institution-building activities may prove the most effective interventions in promoting the development of the media sector in Somalia in the long run. However the exact form of this support should be decided in consultation with key Somali media bodies and opinion leaders to ensure that the provision is tailored to the Somali context.

Additional suggestions for media development at the systems level include:

- **Media literacy training** – Media training for politicians and key officials could improve understanding of the media and encourage more professional and ethical engagement. This training should include the role of media in peace-building, development and good governance.
- **Radio licensing in Somaliland** – Promote a plural broadcast media in Somaliland by advocating for the government to issue more independent radio licences in the region.
- **Developing the education sector** – Work to establish and maintain degrees in journalism, through consistent investment in courses at the most well established universities. Additionally since many journalists go into the profession straight from secondary level, the inclusion of media and communications



in the secondary education curriculum could provide a basic grounding in the role and workings of the media.

## Organisations Level

Many media experts stressed that development of media organisations, including radio and TV stations and newspapers, is reliant on improved resources such as studio equipment. The Diaspora already plays a significant role in supporting local media organisations financially, and it is likely that media organisations will depend on international media development initiatives for the additional funding and capacity-building required in the immediate future. Journalist Associations have the potential to play an important role in bridging the gap between journalists and the systems and organisations they operate under.

Suggestions for media development at the organisation level include:

- **Journalist associations** – Support should be given to the development of an umbrella organisation that:
  - enables cooperation between the various journalists' associations to advocate for an improved legislative environment
  - promotes efficient use of funding
  - provides the support and networking structures which journalists need.
- **Provide consultation and support** – Research showed that conflict and pressure from insurgency groups impact on the ability of practitioners and organisations to adhere to professional and editorial guidelines. Trainers could provide courses and tailored 'on-the-job' solutions to support practitioners in working as effectively as possible in the challenging environment.
- **Management training** – Many organisations are in urgent need of training to improve management and financial processes, in order to sustain current operations and develop. Increased awareness of the need to provide adequate working conditions, pay and security for staff is also paramount, if experienced professionals are to be retained.
- **Supply media organisations with equipment** – Providing organisations with technical equipment and transport can both improve the quality of output produced, and the security of journalists working in the field.
- **Mobile technology** – Mobile technology could be harnessed to gain information and give information to audiences and to facilitate their participation in programmes.
- **Support programming which focuses on peacebuilding, social and economic development** – Audiences would like to listen to programmes that address their basic needs and promote development. Media organisations can be provided with long-term support to produce programmes on health issues; basic literacy and education; governance and human rights.

- ***Enable participation with audiences*** – Organisations should be supported to provide audiences with more opportunities to contribute and interact. These can include phone-ins and options to text in questions, feedback and contributions.

## Practitioner Level

The inexperience and lack of training of the majority of Somali journalists and other media staff makes doing their job to an acceptable standard a difficult task. While there is a long-term need for journalism training opportunities within the country, including new training institutes and university courses, training programmes offered by international donors are an important short-term solution.

Suggestions for media development at the practitioner level include:

- ***Journalist mentoring and training*** – There is an urgent need for training. Training programmes, which have the buy-in of management can be an important short-term measure to fill the vacuum in the journalism education system. They need to focus on professionalism, ethics and the role of media in promoting peace and good governance. Ideally the training should be ‘on-the-job’ where journalists are taught the fundamentals of journalism while producing new programming streams.
- ***Supporting women journalists*** – In addition to journalist training, supporting women to join or continue working in the profession should be prioritised.

## Audience Level

Audience members who participated in this research demonstrated an understanding of variations in standards of information and objectivity across different media outlets, and an interest in gathering news from multiple sources to draw their own conclusions. There is a demand for access to plural and diverse media, and programming which is participatory and relevant to their economic, social and development needs. Further interventions, which can directly benefit the audience should therefore focus on improving local Somali media capacity to provide this service.

Suggestions for media development at the audience level include:

- ***Increasing and maintaining access to plural and diverse media*** – The reach of local radio and other forms of media is limited, particularly in rural areas, meaning many Somalis are restricted in their choice of media. The inclusiveness of the sector could be greatly enhanced by increasing the reach of the media organisations that already exist, through investment in rebroadcasting to media dark areas.

- ***Understanding audiences*** – Training of management and journalists at media organisations should stress the importance of fully understanding community needs and audience views on programming and output. Training in audience research and methods to facilitate regular audience feedback are important.
- ***Aligning programming with audience needs*** – Whilst specific needs will vary across location, there are some overarching guidelines for programming to be taken from this analysis:
  - Listeners desire programmes that focus on development, peacebuilding and good governance
  - Audiences feel worn down by the heavy focus on conflict and political upheaval and would welcome inclusion of topics that are positive and inspirational.
  - Audiences are interested in interacting with media through contributing comments and posing questions to experts and others on discussion programmes.
  - Audiences expect media to be educative, cultural and entertaining.

Radio is likely to remain the most popular media over the coming years, however there is evidence that the television sector will grow in popularity, due to increasing access to satellite television and the growing interest of political groups in television as a means of communication. Internet use is also likely to grow as increasing numbers of young people start to engage. While mobile technology is as yet unexploited by media organisations it is likely that this will become more significant in the future.

Wracked by civil unrest, insecurity and vulnerability to drought, and lacking an effective central government, Somalia's political and economic challenges are likely to impede improvement in the media sector. However the Somali audience's appetite for information and discussion sets a demand for progress. As equipment and software become less expensive and as journalists begin to harness the potential of internet and mobile technologies to enhance their work, it will be interesting to observe the way in which Somalia media develops.

## Appendix 1: Media Organisations in Detail

This section details the media organisations operating in each region of Somalia, including radio stations, television channels, newspapers, websites, journalist associations and existing media development initiatives. The information presented on each of the organisations was compiled through a combination extensive internet research, and telephone and face-to face interviews with the managers of individual organisations. The amount of information available varies considerably between organisations. Additionally the volatile environment in Somalia means information about media organisations is subject to change. The information in this Appendix was last updated on 5<sup>th</sup> July 2011.

Organisations are presented in alphabetical order within each of the following sections.

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# 1) RADIO

The following radio stations are included in this assessment:-

**Table 19: Radio stations**

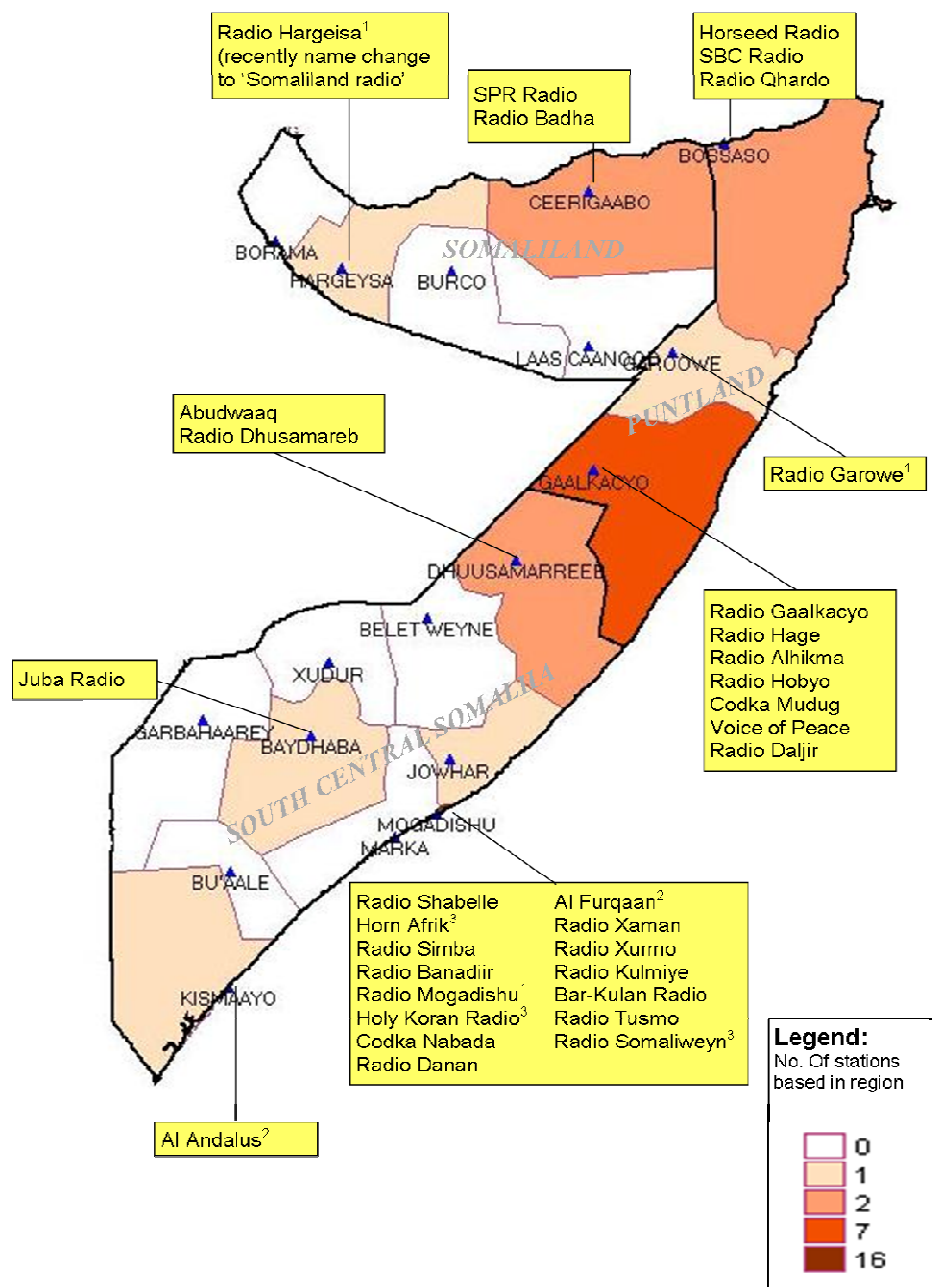
South Central Somalia		Puntland	Somaliland	International	Diaspora
Mogadishu	Outside Mogadishu				
Codka Nabada	(Al) Andalus Radio	Codka Mudug	Radio Hargeisa*	BBC Somali Service	Radio Halgan
Global Broadcasting Corporation Radio (GBC)	Radio Abud Waaq	Horseed Radio		IRIN Radio	Radio Hormuud
Holy Koran Radio (IQK)	Radio Dhusamareb*	Radio Badhan		VoA Somali Service	Radio Horyaal
Radio Al-Furqaan	Radio Jowhar	Radio Daljir			Radio Ogaal
Radio Banadir		Radio Galkacyo			Star FM
Radio Bar-Kulan		Radio Garowe			
Radio Danan		Radio Hikma			
Radio Horn Afrik		Radio Hobyo			
Radio Kulmiye		Radio Qardho			
Radio Mogadishu		Radio SBC*			
Radio Shabelle*		Radio SPR			
Radio Simba		Radio Voice of Peace*			
Radio Tusmo					
Radio Xurmo*					

\* indicates case study stations

## 1.a) Local Radio Stations

Some of the radio stations included in this section are currently off-air, mainly because they have been closed down or seized by Islamist militias. They have been included due to their significance in the media environment of the country and because the volatility that defines the media landscape in the region causes many stations to temporarily go off-air and to later resume their services, albeit sometimes under a new ownership.

The locations of the local radio stations operating in Somalia can be seen in Figure 9 below.



**Figure 9: Local Radio Stations Operating in Somalia**

Notes: The radio stations information on this map is correct as of May 2011. However due to the volatile environment the operation and control of these media organisations may be subject to change. Where stations show a footnote:

1 = Government run station

2 = Al-Shabab run station

3 = Station recently taken over or shut down by Al-Shabab / Hizbul Islam

### **1.a.i) Radio Stations in South Central Somalia**

#### **Radio Stations based in Mogadishu**

**Codka Nabada** - A privately owned station operating from a government-controlled area.

**Global Broadcasting Corporation Radio (GBC)** - This private station is owned by Ahmed Ali Ahmed but fell under control of Hizbul Islam in September 2010, at the same time that Al-Shabab took control of Horn Afrik. After falling under Hizbul Islam's control, the administration of GBC handed over both the radio and TV to the Islamist militia.

**Holy Koran Radio (IQK)** - This radio station was founded in 2000 and is also often referred to by its initials, IQK (Idaa'ada Qur'aanka Kariimka). Militia kidnapped an IQK reporter in February 2010 and arrested one of their correspondents in May 2010 before the station was taken over by Al-Shabab on 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2010. The owner has since established a station broadcasting on 102.2FM from the government-controlled area of Al-Risala.

**Radio Al-Furqaan** - This radio station was set up in late 2009 and is located in the Bakarah market area of Mogadishu. It has hard-line editorial content and has never broadcasted music. It is controlled by Al-Shabab and is now considered to be the main Al-Shabab outlet. According to desk research<sup>83</sup>, Al-Shabab have even refused to hold press conferences until journalists from Al-Furqaan radio were present. BBC Monitoring has observed that although it covers developments related to the opposition groups, it avoids derogatory comments about the government.

**Radio Banadir** - Radio Banadir Broadcasting (RBB) is a private FM station founded in 2000 and owned by Mahamad Ali, which broadcasts in Somali for six hours a day. They produce educational as well as political programmes, although they remain cautious about reporting on security issues. Radio Banadir has a reputation for being largely impartial and is still considered one of the most professional radios, although maintaining this has been challenging since the station came under Hizbul Islam controlled territory.

**Radio Bar-Kulan** - Radio Bar-Kulan was founded by the United Nations support office for the African Union peacekeeping mission and initially broadcast on short wave from Nairobi, Kenya, from March 2010. It has since expanded and now additionally uses an FM transmitter in Mogadishu. It began broadcasting 24 hours a day on its first anniversary in March 2011. Bar-Kulan broadcasts in a number of local languages as well as in English, and its website contains information in both English and Somali and offers web streaming 24 hours a day. It presents itself as a radio that gives 'non-partisan news, information, culture, entertainment and development programmes to Somalia and the Somali Diaspora.' It works with a network of correspondents working from various parts of

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<sup>83</sup> [www.somali-media.org](http://www.somali-media.org)

Somalia. Radio Bar-Kulan does not seem to be a preferred station as it is barely mentioned among audience focus groups. One of the reasons for this may be the fact that it is a UN backed station, as one of the key informants explains:

*'It is tarnished by those people who run it. The UN does not have a good reputation in Somali. People who listen to Bar-Kulan say it is good radio with balanced journalism, but as I said Somalis are very sophisticated radio listeners, and for now I would not say that there is much fan base for Bar-Kulan.'*  
Expert interview (ICG)

**Radio Danan** - This private radio station belongs to the Danan Broadcasting Network. It was established in March 2009 and is privately owned by Mahamad Omar Fiyoooye. Al-Shabab have recently taken control of the area it is based in and the station has since stopped broadcasting some of its former programmes, including music and formal education and health programmes, as these are contrary to Al-Shabab ideology.

**Radio Horn Afrik** - This is a popular FM station, which was established in 2004 and is privately owned by Ali Iman Sharmarke and Abdi Moalin Adan. The station broadcasts in Somali and has an extensive coverage of South Central Somalia relayed by FM transmitters in Baydhabo, Beled Weyne, Kismayo and Marka. It used to rebroadcast programming from the BBC World Service, and ran a separate service on the 88.5 FM, Capital Voice radio, through which it rebroadcast programming from Voice of America. BBC monitoring considered this radio to be the most professionally run station in Somalia, together with Radio Shabelle. However, it was raided by Al-Shabab militias in September 2010, who seized the station's equipment, including that of its sister radio Capital Voice, and has since then remained under Al-Shabab control.

**Radio Kulmiye** - Radio Kulmiye is a recent independent broadcaster operating in Mogadishu under the Kulmiye News Network since February 2011. The Radio was ordered off air by the TFG in March 2011 but later on resumed operations after establishing the legal and technical systems demanded. Its news bulletins can be accessed in the website (<http://www.kulmiyeneews.com>), which also has a section of news in English.

**Radio Mogadishu** - This is a government FM station, re-launched in 2009 by the TFG. It is operated by the Government from a compound under the TFG military control, which means it is protected from attacks by Al-Shabab. It airs from a single transmitter, with coverage limited to the capital. However, the station also broadcasts live via its website, which allows it to reach an international audience. Its website ([www.radiomuqdisho.net](http://www.radiomuqdisho.net)) includes news and interviews, as well as live access to the radio programs and a display of the number of viewers following the programs. Despite describing itself as a community radio during the phone interview, the station broadcasts in support of the government and the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), and is considered the mouthpiece of the TFG.

*'Mogadishu is the mouthpiece of the TFG, so it is up to the TFG to develop it. They have a lot of assets, like the archives of 1750. They are supported by the people in Somali and international community, but*



*the TFG is not a public broadcaster because a public broadcaster is somebody who is not making money out of Somalia, but working in the interest of Somalis in general. ‘*

**Journalist (Bar-Kulan)**

**Radio Shabelle** – Radio Shabelle was one of the six case study stations assessed in detail for this report, and the findings and background are provided in the case study below.

### **Case study: Radio Shabelle**

Radio Shabelle began operating in 2002 as part of the Shabelle Media Network, and is owned by Abdimalik Yusuf, a businessman based in London. It is considered to have a large audience and perceived to be one of the most reliable and balanced media outlets by both audiences and media experts:

*“I listen to radio Shabelle and it is the only one I trust the most”*

*“Shabelle is the one I trust the most. They tell the truth from everything”*

*“I trust radio Shabelle. Nowadays it is not like before but I still trust their news”*

*“I listen to Shabelle radio and whenever they broadcast a rumour they apologise”*

#### **Audience Focus Groups**

*“For me there are two professionally run radio stations in Somalia - Horn Afrik and Shabelle. They had clan bases but they did not stop there. These are radios that struggled very hard to bring a balance, and they tried hard to mimic BBC. For that reason, they raised radio standards very high, and also they were operating in very harsh conditions.”*

#### **Media Expert, International Crisis Group**

In December 2010, Radio Shabelle was awarded with the Reporters Without Borders (RSF) Press Freedom Award.

The radio has been a frequent target of threats and harassment by government authorities and fighting factions, and five of the stations' journalists have been killed in recent years. The station moved from Bakarah Market area, controlled by the Islamist militias, to a government controlled area of Mogadishu in 2010 to avoid the threats and bans on music imposed by insurgent groups. However in February 2011, Islamic clerics of the Ahlu Sunna Wal Jama'a group 'banned' its activities. On March 24 2011, the TFG ordered the National Security Agency, NSA, to summon the head of news of Shabelle Media Network to interrogate him about a broadcast report.

#### **Human resources**

There are 20 male and 10 female members of staff, who range from 20 to 40 years old. Their level of education is secondary level and diploma, and they have on average three to five years experience.

#### **Programming**

It broadcasts on 101.5 FM, from 6am to 9am and 12pm to 12am, mainly in Somali but also a few hours per day in Arabic and English. In addition to its own content, it also airs BBC Somali news.

#### **Editorial process**

The Head of Programmes and Head of News editors choose the stories for broadcast. The Head of News editor

checks and edits the news reports, and the Head of Programmes edits the pre-recorded programmes. All journalists attend daily editorial meetings.

### Equipment

The radio has eight working desktop computers with MS Word, Excel and Powerpoint, and Adobe Audition, and a reliable but slow internet connection. The station uses cassette tape recorders to record in the field, Adobe software to record, edit and mix sound, and a mixer to broadcast on air. Sound engineers manage the studio and the equipment. The station gets its electricity from a private company, paying on a monthly basis, and has no access to a generator or UPS system. Radio Shabelle also has a working car.

### Audience research

Radio Shabelle has conducted audience research in the past on how the station is 'heard' and also receives feedback from listeners via an 'opinion box'. They act on feedback to improve the station.

### Financial stability

Radio Shabelle's major revenue comes from advertising. They received less income this year than last year. The station has a business plan and the Station Manager stated that the long-term plan to increase financial stability is to broadcast by satellite and increase advertising.

### Website

The website of Shabelle ([www.shabelle.net](http://www.shabelle.net)) offers the news in both Somali and English and it also has access to audio-podcasts of its radio programs.



**Radio Simba** – This station is part of the Simba Media Centre. It launched in 2006 and gained a reputation and popularity similar to those of Radio Horn Afrik and Radio Shabelle. The station's journalists have suffered from attacks and arrests and the equipment of the station was damaged when it was hit by gunfire in September 2010. Al-Shabab has recently taken over the area where the station is based, and as such Radio Simba has had to restrict its programming, to appear in line with Al-Shabab's ideology.

**Radio Tusmo** - This is a private radio station established in 2009 and based in a relatively stable part of Mogadishu. It recently stopped broadcasting because the building it was based in collapsed. The station broadcast in Somali on 92.9 FM, 11½ hours every day, reaching a radius of 150 km, and covering areas such as Banadir, Lower and Upper Shabelle, Jowhar and Marka. It employed 23 journalists, whose level of education includes secondary school, trainings and courses in private institutes. Over half of the staff have less than 1 year of experience, whereas the remaining 10 employees, have between 1 and 5 years of experience. The station has undertaken risk assessments in an effort to reduce security risks. Following Hizbul Islam's ban on music in April 2010, it has used other sounds such as gunfire, the noise of vehicles and birds to link programmes. Its website can be found at: [www.tusmoradio.com](http://www.tusmoradio.com).

**Radio Xurmo** – Radio Xurmo was one of the six case study stations assessed in detail for this report, and the findings and background are provided in the case study below.

#### **Case study: Radio Xurmo**

Radio Xurmo is a community radio based in Mogadishu and established in 2004. The radio station is owned and run by the civil society organisation Peace and Human Rights Network ([www.inxa.org](http://www.inxa.org)) and it is well connected to the international community. The Director of the station, Barkhad Awale Adan, died in cross fire in August 2010.

#### **Human resources**

The station employs 12 male and 2 female journalists between 30 and 40 years old, all of whom work full-time. They are all educated to degree level and have received formal training in journalism, and have on average 3-5 years experience.

#### **Programming**

The station broadcasts in Somali on 96.0FM, from 6am to 9am and 12pm to 9pm. Its programming includes news, and educational and human rights programmes, covering content on women, peace, health, children and youth. It also has religious and cultural programmes such as Somali poetry. The station additionally broadcasts IRIN Radio programmes.

#### **Editorial process**

The station has daily editorial meetings, which all the journalists attend. The editors choose the stories for broadcast, and the news report is checked by the Head of Programmes who is also the editor. Journalists' reports are edited by the editor before broadcast. The Head of Programmes and editor edit pre-recorded programs.

## Equipment

The station has one studio managed by three sound engineers, containing one working desktop computer with a reliable, but not fast, internet connection. The software used includes MS Word, Excel, Powerpoint and Adobe Audition. The station uses cassette tape recorders to record in the field, Adobe software to record, edit and mix sound, and a mixer to broadcast on air. The station gets electricity from a local hotel (Hotel Shamo) and does not have access to a generator or UPS system. Radio Xurmo does not have a working car.

## Audience research

The station's audience is formed of youths and adults of the Banadir region. The station has conducted audience research in the past on how people listen to the radio and what they like to listen to. It has also received feedback from listeners via letters, as well as by personal visits, and reports acting on the feedback to make improvements.

## Financial stability

Radio Xurmo's major source of revenue is international donors. In 2010 they received less income than the previous year. The long-term plan to increase financial stability is to get more international funding for the station. However, the station does not have a business plan and the reason given for this is that it is a community-based station.

## Website

The website (<http://xurmo.net/>) is mainly in Somali but includes a news section in English. The website also has access to some of its radio programmes.



## **Radio Stations based outside Mogadishu**

**Andalus Radio** - This is an Al-Shabab controlled radio station, established by the Islamist group in 2001<sup>84</sup>, also referred to as Al Andalus. Al-Shabab closed down the local branches of Juba radio and Horn Afrik at the same time it opened Andalus Radio. It broadcasts on 88.8 FM in Kismayo, in Baydhabo in the southwest and extended its coverage to Jowhar in July 2010. Its news reports heavily promote Al-Shabab's version of Islam and its international news items focus on the Muslim world. The radio does not broadcast music.

**Radio Abud Waaq** - This station was established in 2003 and reaches audiences based in the city of Abud Waaq, in the Galgaduud region of central Somalia. Radio Abud Waaq currently employs 12 members of staff, none of whom have had formal education in journalism. 60% have one to five years of experience, compared to the remaining 40% who have six to ten years of experience. The station broadcasts in Somali 11 hours a day. Its programming includes news, political and educational content and programmes on youth, children, women, health and culture. The radio also airs IRIN Radio programmes. Its main sources of information are interviews with experts or officials, interviews with regular citizens, newspapers and the internet. The website (<http://abudwaaq.com>) and the news articles are mainly written in Somali, although the website contains information in English on the city of Abud Waaq. The articles appear to be regularly updated.

**Radio Dhusamareb** – Radio Dhusamareb was one of the six case study stations assessed in detail for this report, and the findings and background are provided in the case study below.

### **Case study: Radio Dhusamareb**

Radio Dhusamareb was established in 2005 in the Galgaduud region, and reaches an audience based in a 50km radius from Dhusamareb.

#### **Human Resources**

The station employs seven full-time and five part-time journalists, including eight males and four females, varying from 18 to 35 years old. Seven of these journalists have between one and two years experience and the remaining five have three to five years experience. They have a diploma level education, and four have received formal training in journalism.

#### **Programming**

Radio Dhusamareb broadcasts in Somali on 88.8FM, from 6.30am to 10am and 1pm to 11pm. The station's programming includes news, health, women, youth and children's programmes, educational content, and programmes related to peace-building and human/civil rights. It also includes religious and cultural content, including music, and broadcasts BBC Somali news in addition to its own content.

#### **Editorial process**

The station has daily editorial meetings attended by the Head of Station, reporters and editors. The editors choose the stories for broadcast, and journalists discuss significant stories with the manager before a decision to broadcast is made. The Head of Programming edits pre-recorded programmes.

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<sup>84</sup> Somali Media Observatory



**Equipment**

Radio Dhusamareb does not have a sound engineer. The station uses the local electricity and does not have access to a generator or UPS system. The station has one working desktop computer and one laptop, and a dial-up internet connection. The software used includes MS Word, Excel and Powerpoint and Adobe Audition. The station uses two cassette tape recorders to record in the field, and Adobe Audition software to record, edit and mix sound. Radio Dhusamareb does not have a working car.

**Audience research**

Radio Dhusamareb has conducted audience research in the past, and have received both positive and negative feedback by letter and telephone.

**Financial stability**

The station's major revenues come from advertising and private investment. The amount of revenues received in 2010 was similar to the previous year. The station does not have a business plan and the long-term strategy to increase financial stability is 'to be self-sufficient'.

**Radio Jowhar** - This is a community based radio station with six owners, established in 2002. It operates in an area now controlled by the Islamist militias, which has affected its impartiality, although at least one media expert commented that it still attempts to be balanced. It operates with 19 members of staff, who have been trained on basic journalistic skills by development organisations. More than half of its employees have over five years of work experience. Their sources of information include interviews with experts or officials, interviews with regular citizens, the internet and journalists' personal information. Unlike most radio stations, they do not have reporters outside their local area, but instead use contacts who call them when there is important news in other regions. Radio Jowhar has a weekly program target at young people on the risks involved in fighting and migration.

### **1.a.ii) Radio Stations in Puntland**

**Codka Mudug** - This station is based in Galkacyo and was established in 2006. It airs on 89.5 FM. Codka Mudug has 15 staff members. Although none of the staff have received a formal education in journalism, the station receives occasional training by international organisations such as CARE International and UNESCO. Most journalists have between one and five years of experience. The website ([www.codkamudug.com](http://www.codkamudug.com)) is written in Somali and appears to be regularly updated. It also includes videos from Universal TV.

**Horseed Radio** - Horseed, which means 'leader', was established in 2007 and is currently owned by members of the Somali Diaspora in Birmingham, UK. The station is based in Bosasso. Despite being based in a stable area, Horseed Radio workers are vulnerable to detention and threats. In August 2010, armed police officers stormed the radio station and arrested eight journalists. The Deputy Director was jailed for interviewing a rebel leader before being pardoned two months later. Horseed Radio airs on 89.2 FM and aims to advocate for peace and development through balanced reporting. Its editorial content includes programmes on human rights, peace-

building, youth, gender, music and culture in general, and the radio additionally airs the IRIN Radio programmes. The radio's sources include interviews with experts and officials, interviews with regular citizens, the internet, official and political documents and journalists' personal observations. The station employs 14 journalists, who have attended basic journalism courses in Somalia. In 2008, Horseed Radio took part in the United Nations Reham Al-Farra Memorial Journalists' Fellowship Programme, in New York. It has one of the strongest reputations in Puntland. The website of Horseed Media (<http://horseedmedia.net>) covers news from Puntland, South Central Somalia and Somaliland. It also includes a section of news in English. It claims to be the first radio in Somalia that streamed online, allowing audiences worldwide to follow the programmes via the web. However, the website does not currently stream its radio programmes live. It also reports over 10,000 daily visitors to the website and 800,000 listeners on FM from Bosasso.

**Radio Badhan** - This is a private radio station based in Sanaag, the disputed region claimed by both Puntland and Somaliland.

**Radio Daljir** - Radio Daljir is a private radio station, established in 2004 and based in Galkacyo, with branches around Puntland. It was closed in June 2010 by orders of the Puntland authorities, however it is now operational again. Radio Daljir broadcasts 17 hours a day, covering the whole of Puntland and also reaching some areas of Somaliland and South-Central Somalia. It mainly targets minority groups, and programming includes news, sports, educational and human/ civil rights content, programmes targeted to women, youth and children as well as political programmes. The sources of information are interviews with experts and officials, interviews with regular citizens, the internet and journalists' personal observations. BBC Monitoring previously reported that the radio was unbiased but frequently attacked the government over governance issues and corruption.

**Radio Galkacyo** - Galkacyo was the first radio to operate in Puntland, established in 1993. It was founded by the then rebel Somali Salvation Democratic Front (SSDF) and initially known as Radio Free Somalia, before changing its name to Radio Galkacyo in 1999. It is considered to be an impartial, community-based radio and receives support from local and international NGOs. In 2008, during the Puntland presidential elections, the police closed down the station and arrested its Director. Its website (<http://www.radioGalkacyo.com/>) is no longer operational.

**Radio Garowe** - Radio Garowe, based in the capital of Puntland, was established in 2004 by Somali Diaspora, but has become a community radio station. The station broadcasts 19 hours a day in Somali on 89.8 FM and its programming includes news as well as educational, religion, humanitarian and human rights programmes. Similar to the majority of the stations across regions, the radio's main sources of information include interviews with experts or officials, interviews with regular citizens, and the internet; however it also makes use of published articles, reports and books. The website ([www.garoweonline.com](http://www.garoweonline.com)) is well regarded and key informants noted that it is a common source of information for diplomats. It contains regularly updated news in Somali and English and audio podcasts of its programmes, as well as accessing the news bulletins of BBC and VOA Somali services.

**Radio Hikma** - Radio Hikma was started in 2005 and covers up to nine areas in Puntland, including Bossaso, Wehye, Qardho, Garowe, Xaro and Galkacyo. It airs 19½ hours a day. Unlike the other radio stations in Puntland, which broadcast only in Somali, Radio Hikma airs in Somali, Arabic and English. It is focused on Islamic programming.

**Radio Hobyo** - This radio station was established in 2008 in Galkacyo, although it also transmits radio programmes in Hobyo. It airs on 87.5 FM. The station broadcasts daily for 17 hours in Somali. Its regular programming includes news, sports, programmes for youth, children and women and content on human rights. Their website is found at <http://hobyoradio.com/>.

**Radio Qardho** - This is a private radio station based in the Qardho town of Puntland. Their website (<http://radioqardho.com>) is not currently operational.

**Radio SBC** – Radio SBC was one of the six case study stations assessed in detail for this report, and the findings and background are provided in the case study below.

#### **Case study: Radio SBC**

Radio Somalia Broadcasting Corporation was the first radio station in Bosasso, established in 2001. It broadcasts on 89.9 and 87.7 FM and has a wide coverage, with further stations in Garowe and Galkacyo. The station was closed between May 2002 and May 2003 by the Puntland authorities and in 2008, the Puntland authorities arrested its director, Mowlid Haji Abdi.

#### **Human resources**

SBC employs 14 full-time and 10 part-time journalists. There is a range of experience levels among the journalists: seven have one to two years, four have three to five years and five have six to ten years experience. Most have received diplomas and certificates from colleges. Only the Director has a university degree.

#### **Programming**

Radio SBC is considered an independent radio and declares itself to be neutral, non-political and non-partisan. It is also a broadcasting partner of BBC Somali service. The station receives ongoing support from the international non-profit organisation IREX and broadcasts 16 hours a day in Somali language.

The station sources information mainly from interviews with experts or officials, interviews with regular citizens, the internet and the journalists' personal observation. The programmes include news and sports, educational content on human and civil rights, health, security and migration. The radio has a weekly programme in which issues such as migration and security are widely discussed through talk shows and debates.

#### **Editorial process**

The station has weekly editorial meetings attended by all staff. The Station Manager and Head of Station choose the stories for broadcast, and the news report is checked by the News Editor. Journalists' reports are checked by both the editor and manager before being broadcast, and editors edit the pre-recorded programs.



## Equipment

Sound engineers are responsible for the equipment. Electricity is available during the day except from 3-4pm, and the radio has access to a generator and UPS system. The team has nine working desktop computers and two laptops. The internet connection is reliable and of a 'normal' speed. The software used includes MS Word, Excel, Powerpoint and Adobe Audition. Cassette tape recorders are used to record in the field, and a computer is used to record, edit and mix sound. The radio uses a mixer, microphones and computer to broadcast on air. Radio SBC has one working car.

## Audience Research

Radio SBC has conducted audience research in the past on how people listen to the radio, at what times and how many times a day. They have received feedback from listeners but do not state how this is used.

## Financial stability

Radio SBC's major revenue funds come from advertising, private investment and other income sources. They received more income this year compared to last. The station does not currently have a business plan, and the long-term plan is to increase the capacity of the station so that it can reach more districts and regions.

## Website

The website (<http://sbclive.net>) offers live streaming of the radio station from Bosaso and is written in Somali.



**Radio Somali Public Radio (SPR)** - SPR was established in 2010 in Dhahar, in the SSC (Sool, Sanaag and Cayn) area, disputed between Somaliland and Puntland. The radio's situation at time of writing was uncertain. The

website (<http://spr.fm/>) includes news in Somali and English, as well as information on its programming. It also has videos produced by SPR and links to its partner, IRIN Radio.

**Radio Voice of Peace** – Radio Voice of Peace was one of the six case study stations assessed in detail for this report, and the findings and background are provided in the case study below.

### **Case study: Radio Voice of Peace**

This is a private station established in 2003, which airs on 88.2 FM as well as on short wave.

#### **Human resources**

The station employs 16 local journalists and an additional 15 outside the area, some of whom are full time and others part time. Their level of experience is mixed. Four are educated only to secondary level, while five have received formal journalism training. The Station Manager stated that there were four male and 12 female staff, but further research is required to ascertain the gender of the remaining staff.

#### **Programming**

Voice of Peace airs a wide variety of programmes, including news, sports, cultural programmes airing songs and poetry, and programmes about women, youth, children, human rights and health. The station airs a programme called 'Economic Development', in which experts in economics, business owners and regular citizens are interviewed to offer updates on the economic development of the region. The station also airs religious programmes, in which the pillars of the Islam are explained and the teachings of the Quran and Hadith are translated.

The formats include dramas, phone-in discussions and interviews with audience members who have come into the studio and vox pop recordings from the field.

#### **Editorial process**

The station has editorial meetings once per week, which are attended by the managers, editors and all staff. The editors choose the stories for broadcast, and the news report is checked by the editor and manager. Journalists' reports and pre-recorded programmes are edited by the editor before broadcast.

#### **Equipment**

Sound engineers manage the studio and equipment. It previously paid for electricity from Telecom but the station is now supplied for free by Golis from 7.30am to 5pm. The station has access to a generator and UPS system. The team has six working desktop computers and two laptops. The internet connection is reliable and generally has a good speed, except for Friday, when the station has no connection. Software used includes MS Word, Sound Forge, Cool Edit Pro and Adobe Audition. Journalists use cassette tape recorders and an iPod recorder to record in the field. Radio Voice of Peace does not have a working car.

#### **Audience research**

The Station Manager stated that individual reporters are responsible for their own programmes and understanding how they have affected the audience, and what the listeners want to hear. They have received both positive and negative but did not say what is done with it. The Station Manager thought that the audience would most like to

hear views from government officials, opposition, experts, the general audience, elders and politicians (in that order).

### **Financial stability**

Voice of Peace Radio's major revenue funds come from advertising, international donors and other income sources. They received more income this year compared to last. The station does not have a business plan, and the long-term plan to increase financial stability is to increase the number of studios.

## **1.a.iii) Radio Stations in Somaliland**

**Radio Hargeisa** – Radio Hargeisa was one of the six case study stations assessed in detail for this report, and the findings and background are provided in the case study below.

### **Case study: Radio Hargeisa**

Radio Hargeisa was established in 1942 by the British army. It is owned by the Ministry of Information. It broadcasts on FM and short wave and reaches all parts of Somaliland, the rest of Somalia as well as Yemen and other East African countries. Despite being controlled by the government, the station is considered to have conducted a balanced coverage of the 2010 presidential elections.

### **Human Resources**

The station employs 89 journalists who have either university degrees or diplomas in journalism.

### **Programming**

Radio Hargeisa broadcasts 10 hours a day in Somali, English, Arabic and Amharic. The station's programming includes news as well as programmes on health, economics, politics and sports. Radio Hargeisa also broadcasts programmes targeted at women and cover educational content on family and community. It also broadcasts programmes for children, religion, arts and culture, including music.

### **Editorial process**

The station has daily editorial meetings, which producers, editors and presenters attend. The Programme Officer and Director of the Radio choose the stories for broadcast. News reports are checked by the News Editor, and journalists' reports are checked by the Programme Officer, edited by the editor and compiled by a producer before broadcast. The editor also edits the pre-recorded programs.

### **Equipment**

The station does not have any sound engineers. They have 24 hour electricity but did not name the source, and have access to a generator but not a UPS system. At the time of assessment the station had no computers or internet access. Cassette tape recorders are used to record in the field, and editing and mixing is done 'tape to tape'. Radio Hargeisa has one working car.

### **Audience research**

The station's audience is thought to cross the age range of 18-70. The station has conducted audience research in

the past on how people listen to the radio, at what time and how many times per day. They have received positive feedback and encouragement from listeners, and report acting on the feedback to make changes and improvements. The Station Manager believes the main issues facing the audience to be sanitation and mines, and that the audience would most like to hear views from government officials, opposition, experts, the general audience and youth (in that order).

#### **Website**

The website is found at <http://www.radiohargeysa24.com/#> and <http://www.radiosomaliland.com/>

### **1.b) International Radio Stations**

**BBC Somali Service** - The BBC Somali Service began on the 18th of July 1957, with two weekly broadcasts of 15 minutes. The service has increased significantly since, and on March 2000 began broadcasting for 45 minutes from Saturdays to Wednesdays, and for an hour on Thursdays and Fridays. It currently broadcasts two bulletins a day, followed by programmes that include culture, sports, economics and current affairs. The BBC Somali Service, together with the Voice of America (VOA) Service, remains popular with audiences. Interviews with key informants as well as focus groups with audiences illustrate the important role of international media organisations in the Somali media landscape:

*“People have listened to the BBC for the last 30 years, and VOA has also another important role, where they broadcast for 1 hour which they talk all around the country. Those two radios are outside of Somali and so they can say as much as they want, while the local radios cannot report as much as they want, they cannot say the truth.”*

**Female journalist**

**IRIN Radio** - IRIN Radio is a project of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. The Somali service broadcasts one hour daily, and is rebroadcast by other radio stations across Somalia, such as Codka Gobolada, Xurmo and Abudwaaq in South Central Somalia, and SPR and Horseed in Puntland. The programmes can be heard at the IRIN website (<http://www.irinnews.org/RadioCountry.aspx?Country=SO>), which also includes the programming schedule.

**Voice of America Somali Service (VoA)** - The Voice of America is an international broadcasting service funded by the US government. The Somali service started in 2007, and can be heard on shortwave as well as on the Internet at [www.voasomali.com](http://www.voasomali.com). The programmes are rebroadcast by various local radio stations. They are aired at 6.30am, 4pm, 7pm and 8pm. As with the BBC Somali service, VOA benefits from a high level of respect.

*“But I think both the BBC and VOA are much more respected than the other local radio stations, because they are far removed from the conflict and they tend to give people more air time. Also one of the things I forgot to mention is VOA has been cleverer in looking at non-political news. They have some of the best cultural programs, they managed to hire one of the best Somali true historians, and he has a weekly*

*program, and this is a man who has great wisdom and I think this was a great catch. People are fed up with this hard news and disasters so a little different programming helps.”*

**Media expert (ICG)**

### **1.c) Diaspora Radio Stations**

**Radio Halgan (Ethiopia)** - Radio Halgan was previously linked to the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Somalia (DFLS), which used to be supported by Ethiopia<sup>85</sup>. Its website can be found at <http://www.halgan.net/>.

**Radio Hormuud (Denmark)** - Established in 1998 and based in Denmark, Radio Hormuud presents itself as an independent community radio. It broadcasts on 107.2FM, in Somali language, for the Diaspora community, 15 hours per week, as well as rebroadcasting the BBC Somali service. The radio programmes can be listened live through the website ([www.radiohormuud.dk](http://www.radiohormuud.dk)), which also includes an online TV channel.

**Radio Horyaal (Belgium)** - Radio Horyaal was launched in 2005 by Diaspora Kulmiye supporters. It broadcasts from Belgium, as the government of Somaliland does not grant local radio stations licences, although it has an office in Hargeisa and its correspondents operate from Somaliland. Radio Horyaal is reportedly the only opposition-run station that can be heard throughout Somaliland<sup>86</sup>. Its website is found at <http://horyaal.net/>

**Radio Ogaal (Canada)** - Radio Ogaal operates from Toronto, mainly online at <http://www.radioogaal.com/>.

**Star FM (Kenya)** - Star FM is a private Kenyan-Somali radio, based in Nairobi. It began also broadcasting in Mogadishu on 97.0FM in August 2010. It broadcasts in Swahili, Somali and English.

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<sup>85</sup> <http://www.clandestineradio.com/intel/station.php?id=168&stn=160>

<sup>86</sup> <http://somaliland1991.wordpress.com/2010/04/02/how-somalilands-diaspora-is-engaging-with-politics-at-home/>

## 2) TELEVISION

The following television stations are considered in this review:-

**Table 20: Television stations in this section**

South Central Somalia	Puntland	Somaliland	Diaspora
Al Kataaib	Somali Broadcasting Corporation (SBC)	Horn Cable TV	Somali Channel TV
Global Broadcasting Corporation (GBC)	Eastern Television Network	Somaliland National TV (SLNTV)	Somali Television Network (STN)
Somali National TV (SNTV)		Somaliland Space Channel	Universal TV
The Somali Television Network (STN)			

### 2.a) Local Television Channels

#### 2.a.i) Television in South Central Somalia

**Al Kataaib** - On July 26 2010, Al-Shabab announced in Jihadist web forums the launch of the Kataa'ib News Channel. In the official announcement<sup>87</sup> the channel claimed itself to be 'Jihadist media' with an aim '*...to transmit the news of the Mujahedeen directly to the people, away from the fraud, manipulation and trickery of the media channels of falsehood and fabrication, and in response to their grudge with Allah's grace; the Dear and Capable.*'

The terrestrial news channel was launched in February 2011, and the trial broadcast was documented on one Jihadist forum as: '*a huge and innovative step in Mujahedeen Media in general and in Somalia in specific. It can also be regarded as a huge defeat for the Sherif government, as they have no TV channel of their own. We present this good news to you after the channel has been successfully airing on a trial basis for five days.*'<sup>88</sup>. Al Kataaib can only be viewed in Mogadishu at present. However an analysis of a number of English language short documentary films about the conflict in Mogadishu from Al Kataaib<sup>89</sup>, available on video-sharing websites, revealed that both

<sup>87</sup> [http://www.globalterroralert.com/images/documents/pdf/0710/flashpoint\\_kataibmedia0710.pdf](http://www.globalterroralert.com/images/documents/pdf/0710/flashpoint_kataibmedia0710.pdf)

<sup>88</sup> Weblink: <http://www.ansarullah.co.cc/en/2011/02/04/the-mujahideen-youth-movement-the-successful-trial-broadcast-of-al-kataa%E2%80%99ib-news-channel-and-a-video-of-a-cia-agent/>

<sup>89</sup> *Al Kataaib - The African Crusaders* Weblink: [http://www.metacafe.com/fplayer/4848092/the\\_african\\_crusaders.swf](http://www.metacafe.com/fplayer/4848092/the_african_crusaders.swf)  
*Al Kataaib - Mogadishu the Crusaders Graveyard* Weblink: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1PZWudu2Rw8>

English and Arabic language are used on the channel. This suggests that the content of such short films is not targeted at Somali people, but rather to potential militants in the West and the Middle East, and the governments of Uganda and Burundi whose AU troops are currently deployed in Mogadishu.<sup>90</sup>

**Global Broadcasting Corporation (GBC)** – The GBC TV station was founded in 2006 in a pasta factory located in northern Mogadishu. As with its sister radio station, GBC TV was stormed on 15th April 2010 by Hizbul Islam militias and ordered to go off air, after the militias accused the radio of airing music, which Hizbul Islam had prohibited in a ban imposed a few days before. At that time the station had just recently reopened, having shut down in 2007 when Ethiopian troops established a base in the factory. Two months into the 2010 closure, Hizbul Islam's Banadir district officer announced the resumption of broadcasting under condition that the station complies with the music ban. Its website can be found at: <http://www.gbcsomtv.com/>

**Somali National TV (SNTV)** - In March 2011, the TFG's Ministry of Information launched a satellite television channel with the plan to broadcast daily 24 hours. This channel is a re-launch of the government-owned SNTV, which went off air 20 years ago, around the time of the regime collapse. The re-establishment of a state channel is considered to be a reactionary move by the TFG, in response to Al-Shabab's launching of their Al-Kataaib News Channel in February 2011.<sup>91</sup> SNTV currently broadcasts in Somali, but the Ministry of Information have announced plans to add English and Arabic at a later date.

**The Somali Television Network (STN)** - STN was established in 1999, broadcasting via satellite from Atlanta, USA, to serve the Somali Diaspora worldwide. A television and radio broadcasting station was launched in Mogadishu in 2002. The small Mogadishu-based operation closed in 2006 following a case brought by employees against the station for unpaid salaries, resulting in the confiscation of STN equipment by the Mogadishu Courts. STN Satellite TV was re-launched in June 2010. Although the headquarters are in Atlanta (USA), it has many branches in Somalia.

## 2.a.ii) Television in Puntland

**Somali Broadcasting Corporation (SBC)** - Expanding on its radio broadcasts in Garowe, Bosasso and Gardo, SBC established a television channel in 2006. Originally covering just Bosasso and the surrounding area, broadcast reach had extended to Garowe by 2008. In May 2008 the Director of SBC was arrested and detained by Puntland Regional State Police, reportedly in relation to SBC's coverage of recent armed conflict in Puntland, and in 2010 a journalist was arrested while covering the story of a bomb blast.

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<sup>90</sup> Weblink: <http://www.criticalthreats.org/somalia/Al-Shababs-first-news-video-recruit-westerners-expel-peacekeepers-aug-5-2010-8329>

<sup>91</sup> Weblink: <http://www.raxanreeb.com/?p=87558>

The station employs 24 people, who have received a formal education in journalism, in the form of either university degrees or diplomas. Over half of the staff has between one and five years of work experience, and only one has more than ten years experience. The station broadcasts a wide range of programmes, which includes news, sports, music, talk-shows and discussions, political programmes, educational content on human and civic rights, and programmes targeted at women, youth and children. Journalists use the internet, interviews with experts and officials, and interviews with regular citizens as the main sources of information. Their website is available at <http://sbclive.net>.

**Eastern Television Network** - This TV station began broadcasting from Bosasso in 2005. The station broadcasts 24 hours a day, seven days a week and can be seen across all Puntland, Somaliland and South Central Somalia. Staff education levels vary; some journalists have university degrees whereas others have no formal education. The level of experience is also diverse, varying from one to over ten years of experience. The station airs a wide range of programmes, including music, news, sports, politics, talk-shows and discussion programmes, as well as content targeted to women, children and youth. ETN also airs programmes on culture, economics and development, and issues related to peace-building, as well as human and civic rights. The station broadcasts in Somali, and audiences are invited to take part by coming into the station, calling in talk-shows and via email and the website (<http://www.etntv.tv/>).

### **2.a.iii) Television in Somaliland**

**Horn Cable TV** - Horn Cable TV defines itself as the leading private TV station in Somaliland. It is based in Hargeisa, and was established in 2003. It broadcasts 24 hours a day and can be seen across all three Somali administrations as well as abroad, serving the wide international Diaspora. News programmes represent the main part of the station's programming, alongside public information and entertainment programmes, and commercial advertisements. As stated in the website (<http://www.HornAfrik.com/>), Horn Cable TV has established partnerships with organisations and companies such as Dahabshil Private Company, Telesom Communication Company, International Migration Organisation, UN-HABITAT, World Vision and Population Services International. It has been awarded with the Responsible Media Award (Somaliland NGOs Forum, 2008), Somaliland Free Media Award (Timacade News Network, 2009) and the Youth Empowerment in Media Award (SONYO Umbrella Organisation, 2010). The TV station claims to have a pro-staff training policy, in order to train and protect their journalists, especially those working in Mogadishu.

**Somaliland National TV (SLNTV)** - This is the government owned TV channel, established in 2005. It covers all of Somaliland and also broadcasts internationally via satellite, mainly in East Africa and in the Arab League countries. The channel currently employs 140 people, most of whom have one to five years of experience. The level of education of the staff varies and includes informal education, courses from institutes, diplomas, and degrees. The channel broadcasts every day and programming includes news, sports, music, educational programmes, content on human and civil rights, talk shows and discussions, as well as programmes targeted to women, children and



youth. The main sources of information are interviews with experts and officials, interviews with regular citizens, the internet and journalists' personal observations.

**Somaliland Space Channel** - According to the Somali Media Observatory, the Somaliland Space Channel was the first TV channel to operate in Somaliland. It is a private initiative from Diaspora in Qatar and began broadcasting in 1995, before laws regulating the broadcast sector were introduced.

## 2.b) Diaspora Television

**Somali Channel TV (UK)** - This is a Diaspora initiative, based in the UK, which targets Somali communities around the world. The channel broadcasts via satellite and reaches the Ogaden region of Ethiopia, Djibouti, Kenya and all of Somalia, and Diaspora in other countries, such as the US, can follow the programmes online (<http://www.somalichannel.tv/>). The station considers news to be the most important content and it has a popular political show, which receives calls from audience members outside the UK. Its reporters are based throughout South Central Somalia, Puntland and Somaliland.

**Somali Television Network (STN) (USA)** - This is a private station based in Atlanta, USA, which broadcasts via satellite. It also re-broadcasts Al-Jazeera TV and CNN.

**Universal TV** – Background to the station and input from the organisation's Chief Executive are presented in the case study below.

### CASE STUDY: Universal TV

Universal TV is a private TV station based in London, established in 2005 and targeted at Somalis around the world. The programmes can also be viewed from the Universal TV website. The CEO of the station, Ahmed Abubakar, explains the aim of the station:

*"We try to make it one global goal that we inform, educate and entertain Somalis wherever they are".*

Universal TV has correspondents in various regions of Somalia, as well as in Djibouti, Ethiopia and Kenya and describes itself as a general entertainment channel. The programming includes 'news, social affairs, integration and religious programmes' and targets all ages and social groups.

The station sees itself as having a strong influence in Somalia, as Abubakar says:

*"I think it has a 100 percent influence...after we started this we realised that what we broadcasted had a significant impact at home. Because the channel is being viewed in Somalia, in Europe and worldwide it has become the communication or the bridge to*

*experience all these different ideas between Somalis.”*

The channel was banned by the Somaliland authorities in October 2010, following accusations of biased coverage of issues relating to Somaliland politics.

### 3) NEWSPAPERS

The following newspapers are detailed in this section. All are based in Somaliland

**Table 21: Newspapers in Somaliland**

Almis
Geeska Afrika
Haatuf
Jamhuuriya
Maalmaha
Maandeeq (The Horn Tribune)
Ogaal News
Saxafi News
Saxansaxo
<u>Somaliland Times</u>
Waaheen

**Almis** - This is a bi-monthly newspaper published by the Somaliland Women in Journalism Association (SWIJA), which started as an outcome of a project sponsored by the International NGO CARE. Almis has also received support from the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), and is the first newspaper in Somalia to be produced exclusively by women. Although it also covers political issues, the newspaper has a large focus on social issues such as women's rights and education or children rights. However, despite its support for women's empowerment, its impact is limited due to the small readership.

**Geeska Afrika** - Geeska Afrika was founded in 2005 and soon grew into a popular newspaper. It is published six days per week in Somali and English, and has a young, urban readership. The publication is available across Somaliland and in Djibouti. The paper's speed in producing and printing news stories is believed to have forced its competitors to improve their quality and efficiency<sup>92</sup>. Geeska Africa employs 17 staff in total, of which eight are journalists, who have a mix of university and other college-based journalist educations. Most have between one and five years of experience. The main training needs identified by a manager at the paper were skills in editing,

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<sup>92</sup> Somali Media Observatory

collecting effective news and marketing. Regular content is published on news, sport, education, politics, content aimed at women and young people, and advertising.

The paper also publishes short stories dealing with social issues. Sources used include interviews with experts, officials and citizens, internet research and press releases. The paper has reports based in the regions to provide news from outside of Hargeisa.

A manager at the paper described the main interests of its readers as social affairs, economic, sports, and politics. Feedback is received from readers via letters to the editor, informal conversations and emails/calls to contacts. According to desk research from the Somali media Observatory, the newspaper's political coverage avoids extremism and is fairly balanced. The newspaper has a stronger focus on entertainment and human-interest stories than many other newspapers, which often focus more heavily on politics. This may be in part because the journalists working in Geeska Afrika belong to a younger generation, which is considered to have a milder national narrative in advocating for Somaliland's independence.

The website ([www.geeska.net](http://www.geeska.net)) is written in English and is regularly updated. It includes a play list of Somali music

**Haatuf** - Haatuf is one of the leading newspapers in Somaliland, published six days a week and sold in the main towns of Somaliland. It additionally produces an Arabic language version, targeted to Diaspora in the Middle-East. It belongs to the Haatuf Media Network, which also publishes the weekly Somaliland Times and Haatuf Al Arabia. Haatuf was started in 2001 by a group of journalists who left the newspaper Jamhuuriya after disagreements with the management on their editorial independence, and has played an important role in the nation-building process. In particular it has been an advocate for democratisation and liberal values and has actively lobbied for issues such as the opening of media licenses.

Haatuf has differentiated itself from other media outlets by undertaking investigative journalism and uncovering cases of corruption. Haatuf's owner, Yusuf Gabobe, and its editor in chief, Ali Dini, were imprisoned in 2008, after reporting the use of public funds by the president's wife. One of Haatuf's correspondents, Mohammed Sheikh, was also arrested after reporting another case of corruption. Its website is available at- <http://www.haatuf.net/>.

**Jamhuuriya** - Jamhuuriya (which translates as The Republican) was established in 1991, one of the first newspapers that appeared after the end of the civil war against the Barre regime, and in 1994, it became the first to use a printing press<sup>93</sup>. It is currently published seven days a week in Somali and once per week in English. The readership is based in Somaliland, as well as abroad, including in Ethiopia, Djibouti, UK and Norway. The newspaper is co-owned by Faysal Ali Sheikh, Hassan Siciid and Khalif Nuh.

Jamhuuriya has 28 employees, with education levels ranging from informal journalism training to degree level, and correspondents in all six regions of the country. Of the 28 staff, 23 have six to ten years experience and five have more than 10 years. Training needs identified by the managing director include: field reporting, design and layout, editing, researching stories / methodologies, interviewing and investigative skills.

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<sup>93</sup> Somali Media Observatory

The Managing Director understands the main issues facing the audience to be drought and politics. Content published regularly includes news, sport, education, politics, human rights/civil rights, opinion pieces / expert analysis, content aimed at women, children and youths, entertainment, and short love and history stories. Sources used include interviews with experts or officials, interviews with regular citizens (including vox pops), the internet and journalists' personal observations. Their website is available at: [www.jamhuuriya.info](http://www.jamhuuriya.info)

**Maalmaha** - Maalmaha is an independent newspaper founded in 2007, based in Hargeisa and published 4 days a week. It is sold in Hargeisa and Boroma (Adwal region). Although it has a small circulation, it has found a niche in the market by focusing on issues related to the Adwal region. They have admitted being close to the former government.

**Maandeeq (The Horn Tribune)** – This state-owned newspaper was started in 1995 to counterbalance Jamhuuriya. However, it struggled to compete with the other newspapers due to its uncritical coverage of the government. In 2006 it became a newsletter following a subscription model. It is published 4 days a week and sent mainly to government officials. Maandeeq's website (<http://maandeeq.net>) has sections on news and Somali music, but is not frequently updated.

**Ogaal News** – This independent newspaper based in Hargeisa is owned by Muse Farah Jambir and was founded in 2005. The paper aims at reporting balanced and breaking news for a Somaliland audience and publishes daily. The newspaper employs 25 staff in total, of which 14 are journalists. All of the journalists have been educated to degree level, some internationally, and most have between one and five years experience. The newspaper publishes in Somali only and regular coverage includes news, sport, education, politics, religion, short stories and content aimed at women and youth. Non-local news is gathered by reporters based in the regions, and sources used include interviews with experts, officials and citizens, press releases and internet. A manager understood the main issues facing the audience to be news, sport and family affairs. Readers provide feedback through letters to the editor, personal visits and calls/emails. It also publishes online (<http://ogaalnews.net/>) and has an active Facebook group, which is updated with news stories on a daily basis.

**Saxafi News** - Saxafi News was founded in March 2010 and is owned by veteran journalist Mohamed-Rashid Muhumed Farah. The publication is available six days per week in Somali, and on Wednesdays in Arabic. Readers are from across Somaliland and some parts of Puntland, with 30% reported to be female. Saxafi News employs 19 staff, three of whom have degrees in journalism. There is a wide spread of experience, with seven staff having less than five years and at least three having 10 years or more. According to the owner, the main staff training needs are field reporting, design and layout, editing and skills in researching stories and interviewing. Regular published content includes sport, news, education, politics, human rights and features on entertainment and health. Journalists use both interviews and personal observation as sources for stories, and the paper has several correspondents who provide news from outside of Hargeisa. The owner defined the main issues facing

readers as drought and other issues relating to lack of water, and publishes information on where to access clean water and sustain livelihoods in times of drought in an attempt to address these issues. The paper has a suggestion box to collect reader feedback and also receives letters to the editor.

**Saxansaxo** - Saxansaxo was founded in 2007 by Abdilaahi Mahamad Dahir, and is currently published daily in Somali and English. Readers are from across Somaliland and are primarily those interested in politics. The paper employs 14 staff, most of whom have had journalism training in private institutions. The majority have between one and five years experience. Staff training needs include field reporting, design and layout, editing and skills in researching stories and interviewing. Regularly published content includes sports, news, education, politics, opinion pieces, expert analysis and content aimed at women, youth and children. Sources used for stories include original interviews with experts, officials and citizens, internet research and political/official documents. The paper has reporters in various places around Somalia who gather non-local news. The website can be accessed at: <http://www.saxansaxopress.com/>

**Somaliland Times** - This is the English language-version of Haatuf, part of the Haatuf Media Network. It publishes weekly and targets an international audience, including Somali Diaspora as well as governments and NGOs. The online version of the Somaliland Times (<http://www.somalilandtimes.net/>) allows the newspaper to reach its target audience abroad.

The newspaper's editorial content focuses on international affairs and politics, such as diplomatic meetings between the Somaliland government and foreign leaders. It has wide social coverage focused on the development of Somaliland, which appeals to the international NGO community, and also covers news on trade, such as prices of commodities, and other market-related news. Other stories are targeted specifically to the Diaspora, such as the recent call to the UK community to take part in the Somaliland Community Census.

**Waaheen** - Waaheen was founded in 2007 and is owned by Ahmed Hussein Cise. The paper is currently published daily in Somali and English, with the mission of informing and educating people of Somaliland with accurate and informative reporting. Readers are from across Somaliland and are primarily those interested in politics. In January 2011 the editor, Mohamud Abdi Jama, was given a three-year jail sentence for alleged 'defamation' of local officials following publication of reports of nepotism within the police and Somaliland Electrical Agency.

There are 12 staff members, including a number of university-trained journalists. The majority have between one and five years experience and two have worked as journalists for more than 10 years. A manager reported that the main staff training needs are field reporting, design and layout, editing and skills in researching stories and interviewing.

Regular content includes sport, news, education, politics and content aimed at women and young people. Journalists at Waaheen use interviews with experts, officials and citizens, and the internet as the main sources of information. The newspaper uses reporters based in the regions for non-local news.

The website (<http://waaheen.com>) was created by members of the Somaliland Diaspora.

## 4) WEBSITES

There are numerous Somali websites operating both within Somalia and by the Diaspora. Below are some examples of the more popular and regularly updated sites:

### 4.a) Websites with a focus in Somaliland

**Widh Widh** – [www.radiowidhwidth.com/widhwidthnew/Radio/](http://www.radiowidhwidth.com/widhwidthnew/Radio/)

Widh Widh is an online news website manned from Laasanaod town, in the disputed region of Sool. Widh Widh does not operate a radio station, but the website includes audio content.

**Sanaag news** - [www.sanaag.org/](http://www.sanaag.org/)

This website was founded in 2007 and is updated every day, seven days a week. It is published in Somali. The website has an office in Hargeisa and one in Holland. It has six staff members, who were mainly educated in private institutes. Most have between one and five years of experience working as journalists. The website's content includes sport, news, education, politics, content aimed at women, children and youth. It does not regularly carry content such as music, human rights/civil rights, peace-building or opinion pieces / expert analysis. The content produced for the website feeds into the production of newspapers such as Jamhuuriya and Ogaal. Sanaag's readers tend to be internationally based members of the Diaspora, as well as those living across the region of Somaliland. The website takes its name from a disputed region in Northern Somalia claimed by both Puntland and Somaliland.

**Hadwanaaq** - [www.hadhwanaaq.com](http://www.hadhwanaaq.com)

The site was founded in 2001 and is updated on a daily basis. It has a staff of 22 people, with varying levels of training: three studied at university whereas others have obtained diplomas or attended other courses. Seven staff members have between one and five years of experience, whereas the remaining 15 have 10 years or more. It is published in Somali and English. The content produced for the website feeds into the production of Radio Shabelle Muqdisho Golif in Toronto, Canada, and newspapers such as Jamhuuriya, Haatuf, and Geeska Afrika. The organisation reports that the audience consists of primarily young men from across Somalia and other areas of East Africa. It also reports that the audience is mainly concerned about politics and that, for this reason, the website covers issues on employment and on how youth can become involved in the political processes of their countries.

### 4.b) Websites with a focus in Puntland

The websites operating in Puntland are also numerous. Garowe online is one of the most popular.

**Garowe online** - [www.garoweonline.com](http://www.garoweonline.com)

The website is based in Puntland and named after the city where it is published, Garowe, the capital of Puntland. The independent news website GaroweOnline.com is the online sister publication of Radio Garowe. It was

established in 2004 and reports being ‘an independently-operated news agency that specializes in publishing objective and timely Somali news from direct sources inside Somalia’. The site publishes its news in Somali and it also has an English platform. The site says it has a worldwide audience and it claims to offer them ‘a variety of views on different and relevant topics, stretching geographically from the Horn of Africa to the far ends of the globe.’

Garowe also has a Facebook profile ([www.facebook.com/GaroweOnline](http://www.facebook.com/GaroweOnline)) and a YouTube Channel ([www.youtube.com/user/GaroweOnline](http://www.youtube.com/user/GaroweOnline)).

## 5) JOURNALIST ASSOCIATIONS

Most journalist associations work and advocate for the journalists of all three regions of South Central Somalia, Puntland and Somaliland.

The **National Union of Somali Journalists (NUSOJ)**<sup>94</sup> is one of the most established journalist associations in Somalia. NUSOJ was founded in 2002 under the name of **Somali Journalists Network (SOJON)**, and changed names in 2005 when it decided in the General Assembly to change from being an Association to a Labour Union. By 2009, the union claimed to represent 350 of Somalia’s 400 journalists. Although the scope of its work includes Puntland and Somaliland, the regional dynamics hamper NUSOJ from serving these areas completely.

NUSOJ carries out systematic monitoring of media freedom and regular surveys to journalists, which provides a rare stream of information in an otherwise fragmented environment. It also organises conferences to promote media development, lobbying government authorities and promoting professional journalism.

NUSOJ is a member of the Federation of African Journalists (FAJ), the Eastern Africa Journalists Association (EAJA), the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) and a partner with Reporters without Borders (RSF). In March 2011, the union was reported to be undergoing an internal restructuring after its former Secretary General was accused of fund misappropriation and non-democratic procedures in governing the union<sup>95</sup>. The Secretary General appeared to still be in office in June 2011.

Another organisation is the **Associated Somali Journalists (ASOJ)**, which was founded in 2004. Its vision is to become a unifying association for the journalistic community, fragmented by ‘civil wars, tribalism and politicized aspirations of clan warlords.’<sup>96</sup> The ASOJ lists in its website several other partner associations that exist in Somalia, including the Federation of Somali Journalists (FESOJ), established in 2010. Other partners include the Somali Exiled Journalists Association (SEJASS), the Somali Journalists’ Rights Association (SOJRA), Somali

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<sup>94</sup> [http://www.nusoj.org/?zone=/unionactive/view\\_page.cfm&page=About20Us](http://www.nusoj.org/?zone=/unionactive/view_page.cfm&page=About20Us)

<sup>95</sup> <http://horseedmedia.net/2011/03/13/nuso/>

<sup>96</sup> [www.asoj.org](http://www.asoj.org)

Journalists in the Netherlands (SOMJON) and Women Journalists in Action (WOJA). The association is also a member of the Arab Press Freedom Watch (APFW).

Other organisations operating in Somalia include the **Somali Women Journalists Association (SOWJA)**, established in 1999, which aims to empower women journalists through education and development initiatives. The **Somali Media Women Association (SOMWA)**, founded in 2006 also works to empower women journalists, by promoting information to build an equitable society and to defend the rights of women. In December 2010, SOMWA conducted journalism training workshops with the support of IREX, an international development NGO that also runs the Media Sustainability Index.

There are other journalists associations, such as the **Somali Journalists Society**, created in 2002; the **National Association of Somali Science and Environmental Journalists**, which used to be part of SOJRA but became an independent partner in 2009; and the **South and Central Journalists Association (SOCJA)**.

There are also several associations of journalists in exile. The **Somali Journalists Association Network (SOJANET)** was launched in 2010, in Uganda, with the objective of serving as a network of all Somali journalists around the world. Other organisations include the **Somali Exiled Journalists Association (SEJA)**, which has been operating since 2006, and the **Somali Foreign Correspondents Association (SOFCA)**.

The **Media Association of Puntland (MAP)** established in 2009 in Garowe, the capital city of Puntland, works exclusively in Puntland. It has been voicing attacks on journalists in the region and demanding the government to respect press freedom. It is often a source cited by international media watchdogs to monitor the media environment in the region.

The **Society for Journals and Websites (SSJW)** was the first union to be established in Somaliland in 2003, although it failed to attract journalists working for government media. Instead, the **Somaliland Journalists Association (SOLJA)** was established in 2004 as a result of initiatives of the Ministry of Information. Initially formed by journalists working for government-owned media, it soon started to incorporate journalists from independent media. SOLJA currently attracts funding from international donors and media development NGOs.

The **Union of Somaliland Journalists (USLJ)** was created in 2009, following a workshop organised by the SSJW and funded by the international organisation National Endowment for Democracy. The USLJ works to promote media freedom, register journalists and in addition, organises training workshops.

The **Somaliland Women Journalists' Association (SWIJA)** was founded in 2006, also as a result of a training project funded by the international NGO CARE.



## **6) EXISTING MEDIA DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES**

### **BBC World Service Trust**

The BBC WST has been active in Somalia for over ten years, and has delivered a range of projects relating to media development, livelihoods, humanitarian response and literacy. The BBC WST's reputation in Somalia has been further enhanced by the extensive reach of the BBC Somali Service.

Between 2001 and 2006, the BBC WST provided a comprehensive journalism training programme to over 250 Somali journalists in Hargeisa (Somaliland), Bosasso and Garowe (Puntland) and Mogadishu (South Central Somalia).

The BBC WST's Somali Livestock Programme, in conjunction with listening groups across the country, has provided knowledge and information to the 65 percent of the Somali population who rely on the livestock sector for their livelihoods.

The Trust has also worked in partnership with the African Education Trust (AET) since 2002 to provide basic literacy, numeracy and life skills through a mix of radio programmes and face to face teaching to out-of-school children and adults who missed out or were denied access to conventional schooling. Radio production training and support were also provided to Somali radio programme makers. The Trust's education programmes reached areas throughout Somaliland, Puntland and Somalia where there are no other forms of education delivery.

More recently, the BBC WST has produced weekly Lifeline radio programmes to provide life-saving information to Somali population affected by multiple emergencies such as displacement due to conflict, drought, and food crises. The programmes were produced in-country and broadcast despite the worsening security situation with the help of the BBC WST's network of Somali producers in Hargeisa, Baidoa, Dhusamareb, Garowe and Nairobi, and BBC stringers and NGO partners, such as IIDA, in Mogadishu and other difficult to access areas.

### **CARE**

CARE runs various programmes in partnership with local organisations. For example, it supported the Somali Media Women Association (SOMWA) in creating a Media Women Empowerment Project. In 2007, CARE ran a development activity under the name Civil Society Media in Transition, which led to the creation of a new journalist association in Somaliland, the Somaliland Women Journalist Association (SWIJA).

### **IREX**

In 2010, IREX conducted 'Media Tools for Peace Advocacy' training as part of USAID's 'Uniting Communities to Mitigate Conflict' programme. The workshop was not targeted directly at journalists, but attended by thirty Somali youth and women civil society activists.

### **Mogadishu Media House**

Mogadishu Media House opened in Mogadishu in April 2010 and describes itself as a local non-profit, non-partial and non-political media centre. The mission statements focuses on improving socioeconomic and security

conditions for journalists, as well as promoting press freedom. The organisation's website says that it provides journalism training, although as yet there do not appear to be any courses underway. [www.mogadishumedia.org](http://www.mogadishumedia.org)

### **National Endowment for Democracy (NED)**

This American NGO has provided training for journalists and supported stations such as Radio Shabelle and Hiiran Online. In 2010, the NED conducted a seminar on basic journalistic skills for the reporters of Hiiran online.

### **Press Now**

Based in the Netherlands, this project includes training and focuses on 'newsgathering, production and dissemination of journalistic programs for all Somali speaking areas, leading a network of Somali media outlets (radio, TV and internet)'<sup>97</sup>.

### **Relief International**

Relief International partner with Somali organisations to provide journalism skills, media production and media literacy training in Puntland. The training is supported by media awareness campaigns in the surrounding regions.

### **UN Democracy Fund –**

In 2010 the journalists association NUSOJ held a workshop backed by the UN Democracy Fund on human rights, good governance and democracy. The workshop focused on media as a tool for democracy and human rights. It included talks from NUSOJ, the TFG and UNDP<sup>98</sup>.

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<sup>97</sup> Weblink: <http://www.pressnow.org/vacancy/press-now-looking-editor-chief-media-project-somalia>

<sup>98</sup> Weblink: <http://www.un.org/democracyfund/News/NFTF28Jun10.html>

## Appendix 2: Participating Media Organisations

The following newspapers, websites and radio and television stations provided information about their organisations for this analysis through telephone or face-to-face interviews

<b>Radio</b>	<b>Newspapers</b>
Radio Hargeisa	Waheen
Radio Codka Mudug	Sansaxo
Radio Galkacyo	Saxafi
Radio Garowe	Ogaal
Radio Hage	Jamhuuriya
Radio Hobyo	Geeska Afrika
Radio SBC	
Radio SPR	<b>Television</b>
Radio Voice of Peace	ETN
Radio Daljir	SBC
Radio Horseed	Somaliland National TV
Radio Hikma	Universal TV (Diaspora)
Radio IQK	Somali Channel (Diaspora)
Radio Abudwaq	
Radio Banadir	<b>Online</b>
Radio Codka Gobolada dhexe	Hadwaanag News
Radio Danaan	Hiraan
Radio Dhusamareb	Sanaag
Radio Horn Afrik	Dayniile (Diaspora)
Radio Jowhar	Horseed Media (Diaspora)
Radio Juba bay	
Radio Muqdisho	
Radio Shabelle	
Radio Simba	
Radio Tusmo	
Radio Xurmo	