



Somaliland Journalists
Association (SOLJA)

ORGANIZATIONAL ANNUAL ACTIVITY REPORT, 2024



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Acknowledgments

The Somaliland Journalists Association (SOLJA) extends its heartfelt gratitude to all individuals and organizations that contributed to the successful completion of this Annual Report for 2024.

We would like to thank our dedicated team of staff, trainers, Board of directors, and volunteers who worked tirelessly to enhance the capacity of media professionals across Somaliland. Your commitment to promoting press freedom and ethical journalism is invaluable.

We are also grateful to our partners, including the National Electoral Commission (NEC), UNICEF, and the United Nations Support Office (UNSOM), for their collaboration and support in our various initiatives. Your expertise and resources have greatly enriched our programs and training sessions.

Special thanks to the government officials, civil society organizations, and international partners who engaged with us in advocating for a conducive media environment. Your support is essential in our pursuit of a free and independent press.

Lastly, we would like to acknowledge the journalists who participated in our training programs and events throughout the year. Your enthusiasm and dedication to improving the media landscape in Somaliland inspire us to continue our mission.

Together, we strive for a vibrant and informed society where the rights of journalists are upheld and press freedom is protected.

Ismail Ahmed Ismail
Executive Director

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Words of the Chairman



As the Chairman of the Somaliland Journalists Association (SOLJA), I am honored and responsible for upholding the principles of press freedom, professionalism, and journalistic ethics. Our role as journalists is not just to report the news; it is to educate communities, speak the truth, and create a space for open dialogue on Somaliland's issues.

SOLJA is committed to enhancing media knowledge, providing training, and protecting media rights to ensure that journalists can perform their duties freely and professionally.

As part of this commitment, the training we provided to journalists during the election period guided them in improving their reporting skills, enabling them to cover the November 13, 2024, elections in the most professional and accurate manner. Their coverage reflected the highest standards of ethical journalism, ensuring that the public received fair and balanced information throughout the electoral process.

However, we must also recognize the serious challenges journalists face in our country. The illegal detention of journalists remains a major concern, and we strongly condemn any action that restricts press freedom. Journalists should never be silenced for doing their job. Every journalist deserves to work freely without the fear of arrest or intimidation.

In our fight for press freedom, we are not alone. We extend our deepest gratitude to the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), Free Press Unlimited, NEC (National Electoral Commission), UNSOM, UNICEF, and the Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy (NIMD) for their unwavering support for journalists and media freedom in Somaliland. Their contributions in the form of resources, training, and advocacy strengthen our members and help protect journalists' rights across the region.

SOLJA remains firmly committed to ensuring that journalists in Somaliland have the resources, training, and legal protection to carry out their work without fear of retaliation. We will continue to advocate for journalists' rights, and we will not rest until the illegal detention of journalists becomes a thing of the past.

Let us stand together, united in the pursuit of justice, truth, and press freedom, working towards a safer and more transparent environment for media in Somaliland.

Shafi'i Mohamed Ibrahim

Chairman, Somaliland Journalists Association



Executive Summary

The Somaliland Journalist Association (SOLJA) continued its unwavering commitment to press freedom and the rights of journalists in Somaliland throughout 2024. This annual report highlights the association's significant strides in promoting media independence, safeguarding journalists' safety, and fostering a culture of responsible journalism.

Key Accomplishments:

- SOLJA actively engaged with government officials, civil society organizations, and international partners to advocate for a conducive media environment. This included lobbying for advocating for the implementation of laws that protect journalists' rights, and pushing for greater access to information.
- The association conducted numerous training programs for journalists on topics such as investigative reporting, ethical journalism, and digital security. These programs aimed to enhance the skills and professionalism of Somaliland's media practitioners.
- SOLJA prioritized the safety of journalists by documenting cases of harassment, intimidation, and violence against media workers. The association provided legal aid and support to journalists facing threats and attacks, advocating for their protection and accountability for perpetrators.
- SOLJA closely monitored the media landscape in Somaliland, documenting cases of censorship, restrictions, and violations of press freedom. The association issued reports and statements to highlight these issues and call for reforms.
- SOLJA actively engaged with international organizations and networks to strengthen its advocacy efforts and expand its reach.

Despite significant progress, challenges persist in Somaliland's media landscape. These include ongoing threats to journalists' safety, limited access to information, and a lack of media comprehensive laws. SOLJA recommends the following:

- Strengthen the legal framework for media freedom and ensure its enforcement.
- Promote a culture of tolerance and dialogue between the government and the media.
- Increase support for independent media outlets and journalists.
- Enhance media literacy among the public.
- Foster regional and international cooperation on media freedom issues.

Finally, SOLJA remains steadfast in its mission to promote a free and independent media in Somaliland. The association will continue its efforts to advocate for journalists' rights, enhance media professionalism, and contribute to a vibrant and informed society.

1.1. Introduction.

The Somaliland Journalists Association (SOLJA) is a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting press freedom, ethical journalism, and the professional development of journalists in Somaliland. In 2024, SOLJA embarked on a series of initiatives aimed at strengthening the media landscape and empowering journalists to play a crucial role in society.

This report provides an overview of SOLJA's key activities during 2024, highlighting the organization's commitment to fostering a free and responsible press in Somaliland.



Somaliland Journalists Association (SOLJA) has been actively engaged in a range of initiatives aimed at enhancing the capacity of Somaliland's media professionals and promoting a free and responsible press.

In 2024, SOLJA undertook several key activities, including:

- ✓ SOLJA, in partnership with the National Electoral Commission and NIMD, conducted extensive training programs for journalists across Somaliland to ensure accurate, unbiased, and ethical election coverage.



- ✓ SOLJA, in collaboration with UNSOM, organized training sessions to empower journalists to uphold press freedom and human rights, particularly in the context of elections.
- ✓ SOLJA and IPRT collaborated to strengthen media ethics and accountability, focusing on self-regulation and responsible journalism.
- ✓ SOLJA took steps to address the growing challenge of misinformation, organizing workshops to equip journalists with tools to identify and debunk fake news.
- ✓ SOLJA provided training to media staff on management skills, financial management, and human resources, aiming to enhance the overall performance of media organizations.
- ✓ SOLJA partnered with UNICEF to improve media coverage of health issues, particularly vaccination, to promote public health.
- ✓ SOLJA, in collaboration with DANWADAAG, organized a workshop to enhance journalists' capacity to report on climate change and disaster management.
- ✓ SOLJA facilitated dialogue between journalists and the police to strengthen collaboration and address issues related to press freedom.

Through these initiatives, SOLJA has made significant strides in improving the quality of journalism in Somaliland. By empowering journalists, promoting ethical standards, and advocating for press freedom, SOLJA continues to play a vital role in shaping a more informed and democratic society.

Chapter One

CAPACITY BUILDING



ACTIVITY ONE

Trainings on election Reporting for Somaliland journalists

From October 29 to November 5, 2024, the Somaliland Journalists Association (SOLJA), in collaboration with the National Electoral Commission (NEC) and the Netherlands Institute for Multi-Party Democracy (NIMD), conducted an extensive journalist training initiative across five regions of Somaliland: Togdheer, Sanaag, Sahil, Awdal, and Marodijeh. This initiative trained a total of **368** journalists, comprising 304 male and 64 female participants, drawn from various districts within these regions.

The training program was meticulously designed to address the unique challenges faced by journalists during electoral periods, such as managing misinformation, handling political pressures, and ensuring balanced reporting. With Somaliland's upcoming elections being a pivotal moment in its democratic journey, this initiative aimed to empower journalists to navigate these complexities while fostering a peaceful and informed electoral process. By strengthening the capacities of local media professionals, the training contributes to enhancing public trust in media and ensuring credible and responsible reporting during elections.

The training was covered various essential topics, including the **media code of conduct for elections**, understanding election cycles, dis-information, misinformation, mal-information's, conflict sensitivity, e, and the importance of avoiding tribalism in reporting. By participating in this program, journalists will not only enhance their reporting skills but also contribute to the overall integrity of election reporting standards and safety. The training was fostered



a more informed and responsible media in Somaliland that supports democracy and upholds the principles of fair journalism during the elections.

1.2. Key Highlights of the Trainings Program:

The Somaliland Journalists Association (SOLJA), in collaboration with the National Electoral Commission and NIMD, embarked on an ambitious training program aimed at enhancing the capacity of journalists across the country to provide accurate and unbiased coverage of the upcoming elections. Through a series of training sessions held in various regions, SOLJA sought to equip journalists with the necessary skills and knowledge to inform

the public about the electoral process and promote democratic participation.

The training program kicked off in **Ceerigaabo**, where journalists from the Sanaag region participated in a workshop focused on election reporting.



Election Reporting Training in Erigavo

Subsequent training sessions were conducted with journalists from prominent media outlets in the Awdal region.



Election Reporting Training in Borama

Followed by in Burco, over journalists from the Togdheer region.



Election Reporting Training in Burao

And succeeding Berbera Sahil Region also trained similar workshop on election reporting.



Election Reporting Training in Berbera

The training curriculum emphasized the importance of fact-checking, avoiding bias, and reporting on sensitive issues with sensitivity.

The final phase of the training program was held in **Hargeysa**, where journalists from various media outlets across the media house and freelancers gathered to participate in a comprehensive training session of election reporting.



Election Reporting Training in Hargeisa

In Marodijeh region, another training of election reporting was conducted at Gabiley District. This session focused on the specific challenges of covering elections in a highly polarized political environment and provided participants with practical tools for reporting on elections in a fair and balanced manner.



Election Reporting Training in Gabiley

The training covered topics such as election laws, media ethics, and the role of journalists in promoting democratic values.



- The training program reached journalists in all major regions of Somaliland, ensuring widespread coverage.
- The training covered a broad range of topics, including election laws, media ethics, and reporting techniques.
- Participants engaged in practical exercises, such as role-playing and case studies, to reinforce their learning.
- The training sessions were attended by high-ranking government officials, including the Governor of Sanaag and various ministers, underscoring the importance of media training in the electoral process.

1.1. Challenges Specific to the Journalists

- Insufficient training programs on ethical election reporting for journalists in remote regions lead to misinformation and heightened speculation.
- A strong demand for localized training programs tailored to the specific needs of journalists in the remote districts.
- Emerging journalists require enhanced skills and knowledge.
- Women journalists face unique challenges, including harassment, intimidation, and limited visibility exclusively during elections.
- The absence of formal journalism education in the regions other than Marodijeh and limited training opportunities.

1.2. Recommendations: To address these challenges, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Strengthen Media-Police Relations:

- ✓ Organize joint training sessions to improve understanding and cooperation between police and journalists.
- ✓ Establish a clear mechanism or guidelines for journalists to report harassment or intimidation.

2. Provide Journalist Identification:

- ✓ Facilitate the issuance of official journalist ID cards to all qualified journalists in the distant regions.



- ☒ Collaborate with relevant authorities to ensure smooth access to information for election venues.
- 3. Enhance Journalist Safety and Security:**
 - ☒ To establish complain and emergency hotline for journalists to report incidents.
- 4. Improve Election Result Dissemination:**
 - ☒ Provide regular updates to journalists to minimize misinformation and rumors.
- 5. Expand Training Opportunities in remote regions:**
 - ☒ Conduct regular training programs to address the specific needs of local journalists.
 - ☒ Offer specialized training in areas like conflict sensitivity, peace journalism, and ethical reporting.
 - ☒ Support the establishment of journalism clubs or associations those regions to facilitate networking and knowledge sharing.
- 6. Empower Women Journalists:**
 - ☒ Organize gender-sensitive training programs to address the unique challenges faced by women journalists particularly in Sanaag Region.
 - ☒ Provide mentorship and support to women journalists to advance their careers.
 - ☒ Promote gender equality in newsrooms and encourage the hiring of more women journalists.
- 7. Advocate for Journalism Education:**
 - ☒ Lobby for the establishment of journalism faculties or colleges in the regions.
 - ☒ Support partnerships between universities and media organizations to offer journalism courses and internships.

Conclusion

SOLJA's election-related training program has played a crucial role in strengthening the capacity of Somaliland's journalists to provide accurate and unbiased coverage of the upcoming elections. By equipping journalists with the necessary skills and knowledge, SOLJA has contributed to a more informed electorate and a more transparent electoral process.



ACTIVITY TWO

Human Right Training for Journalists with the focus of Freedom of Expression

Introduction

The Somaliland Journalists Association (SOLJA), in partnership with the United Nations Support Office (UNSOM), has undertaken a significant initiative to strengthen the capacity of Somaliland's journalists. Through a series of two-day training sessions, SOLJA aimed to enhance participants' understanding of press freedom and human rights, equipping them with the knowledge and skills needed to report responsibly and ethically on sensitive issues.



opening ceremony officials

A total of 50 journalists from various media outlets across Somaliland participated in these training sessions. The comprehensive curriculum covered a wide range of topics, including: **International human rights standards, The role of the**

media in promoting human rights, Media laws and regulations and Safety of journalists.

- Participants were introduced to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other relevant international instruments, enabling them to recognize and report on human rights violations.
- The training explored the crucial role of journalists in holding governments and other powerful actors accountable for human rights abuses.

- Participants gained a deeper understanding of the legal framework governing media in Somaliland, including laws related to defamation, libel, and freedom of expression.
- The training addressed the safety and security challenges faced by journalists, particularly those covering sensitive topics such as conflict and human rights abuses.

Key Takeaways

- Participants emphasized the need to adhere to ethical standards in their reporting, ensuring accuracy, fairness, and impartiality.
- Journalists gained a solid foundation in human rights principles, enabling them to identify and report on human rights abuses effectively.
- The training fostered a sense of solidarity among participants and encouraged them to advocate for a free and independent media.

Conclusion

Through this collaborative effort, SOLJA and UNSOM have made a significant



Participants brainstormed

contribution to the development of a more professional and responsible media in Somaliland. By empowering journalists with the knowledge and skills to uphold press freedom and human rights, this initiative has strengthened the media's role

as a watchdog and a voice for the marginalized.

This narrative report provides a comprehensive overview of the election-related training program conducted by SOLJA. It highlights the key achievements of the program and underscores the importance of investing in media capacity building to promote democratic governance in Somaliland.



ACTIVITY THREE

Media dialogue session on access information in crises by enhancing community resilience through media

Introduction

The Somaliland Journalist Association (SOLJA) organized a pivotal media dialogue session focused on enhancing community resilience through media access to information during crises. The event was brought together a diverse group of stakeholders, including journalists, media professionals, civil society organizations, government officials, and community leaders. The objective



was to foster a constructive dialogue on the critical role of media in providing accurate, timely, and reliable information during times of crisis.

Key Discussions and Outcomes

1. The Importance of Access to Information in Crises:

- Participants emphasized the crucial role of accessible information in empowering communities to make informed decisions, mitigate risks, and respond effectively to crises.

- The session highlighted the need for transparent and accountable governance, particularly during crises, to build trust between the government and the public.
- The importance of early warning systems and timely dissemination of information was underscored, as it can save lives and minimize damage.

2. Challenges Faced by Journalists in Covering Crises:

- **Safety Concerns:** Journalists often face significant risks, including physical threats, harassment, and intimidation, while reporting from conflict zones or disaster-stricken areas.
- **Government restrictions, bureaucratic hurdles, and limited access to**



information sources can hinder journalists' ability to gather accurate information.

- Many media outlets in Somaliland face financial challenges, limiting their capacity to cover crises comprehensively.

3. Best Practices for Crisis Reporting:

- Participants stressed the importance of adhering to ethical standards, including accuracy, fairness, and impartiality, in crisis reporting.
- The session emphasized the need for rigorous verification and fact-checking to prevent the spread of misinformation and disinformation.

- The use of data journalism techniques to analyze and visualize information can provide valuable insights into complex issues.



group presentations

Recommendations

Based on the discussions, the following recommendations were made:

- The government should create a conducive environment for media operations, including easing access to information and protecting journalists' safety.
- Invest in training and capacity-building programs for journalists to enhance their skills in crisis reporting, digital journalism, and media ethics.
- Foster collaboration between media organizations, civil society, and government agencies to share information and resources.
- Encourage media outlets to engage with communities through town hall meetings, social media, and other platforms to build trust and understanding.
- Implement media literacy programs to educate the public on how to critically assess information and identify misinformation.

Conclusion

The media dialogue session was a resounding success, providing a platform for open and constructive dialogue on the critical role of media in enhancing community resilience during crises. By addressing the challenges and opportunities, participants expressed optimism about the future of media in Somaliland and its potential to contribute to a more informed and empowered society.

ACTIVITY FOUR

IPRT and SOLJA Partner to Strengthen Media Ethics During Elections

Introduction

The Institute for Peace, Research, and Training (IPRT) and the Somaliland Journalists Association (SOLJA) joined forces to conduct a comprehensive



SOLJA Executive Director Official Opened

training program for Somaliland media professionals. The training, focused on media ethics and accountability during elections, aimed to equip journalists with the necessary skills to uphold the highest standards of professionalism and contribute to a fair and

transparent electoral process.

Recognizing the critical role of the media in shaping public opinion, especially during election periods, IPRT and SOLJA designed a training program that addressed the unique challenges faced by journalists in covering elections. The training covered a range of topics, including:

- Participants explored the fundamental principles of journalistic ethics, such as accuracy, fairness, impartiality, and avoiding conflicts of interest.
- The training examined the ways in which media coverage can influence voter behavior and the importance of providing accurate and balanced information.
- Participants were introduced to best practices for covering elections, including fact-checking, interviewing techniques, and avoiding bias.

- The training emphasized the importance of self-regulation within the media industry and the benefits of adhering to a code of ethics.



Key Takeaways

- Participants recognized the crucial role of ethical journalism in maintaining public trust and promoting democratic values.
- The training highlighted the importance of media literacy in enabling the public to critically evaluate information and identify fake news.
- Participants discussed the challenges faced by journalists during elections, such as political pressure and the spread of misinformation.

Conclusion

Through this collaborative effort, IPRT and SOLJA have taken a significant step towards enhancing the quality of media coverage in Somaliland. By equipping journalists with the knowledge and skills needed to uphold high ethical standards, the training program has contributed to a more informed and engaged citizenry. As Somaliland prepares for upcoming elections, the skills and knowledge acquired by participants will be invaluable in ensuring a free and fair electoral process.



ACTIVITY FIVE

SOLJA Fosters Collaboration Between Journalists and Police

Introduction

The Somaliland Journalists Association (SOLJA) organized a crucial workshop in Hargeisa to strengthen the relationship between journalists and the police. The workshop aimed to foster mutual understanding, promote respect for the rule of law, and ensure the protection of press freedom in Somaliland during the election cycle. The workshop brought together representatives from various media outlets and the Somaliland Police Force.



Participants engaged in open and honest discussions on a range of issues, including:

- The workshop explored the delicate balance between press freedom and law enforcement, emphasizing the importance of protecting journalists' rights while ensuring public safety.
- Participants discussed the challenges faced by journalists in Somaliland, such as harassment, intimidation, and arbitrary arrests.
- The workshop highlighted the critical role of a free press in holding government officials accountable and promoting transparency.
- Participants explored ways to improve communication and cooperation between journalists and the police, including establishing formal mechanisms for reporting incidents and addressing grievances.

Key Outcomes

- The workshop helped to build trust and understanding between journalists and the police.
- Participants reaffirmed their commitment to upholding the law and respecting the rights of others.
- Both journalists and police officers agreed on the importance of a free press for a democratic society.



Conclusion

SOLJA's workshop on strengthening collaboration between journalists and the police was a significant step towards creating a more conducive environment for media freedom in Somaliland. By fostering open dialogue and mutual respect, the workshop has laid the groundwork for a more constructive relationship between the two groups.

ACTIVITY SIX

Engagement between Journalists and Law Enforcement Workshop, Buroa, Togdheer region

The Somaliland Journalists Association (SOLJA) has long expressed concern over the persistent arrests of journalists in Somaliland. Recognizing the need for a more harmonious relationship between journalists and security forces, SOLJA and its partners have initiated a dialogue aimed at fostering mutual understanding and cooperation.



A Step Toward Better Understanding: To achieve this goal, SOLJA organized a one-day workshop focused on the engagement between Somaliland journalists and police. The workshop delved into the complexities of Somaliland's police and press laws, aiming to mitigate harassment and unwarranted arrests of journalists.

Key Takeaways and Recommendations

The workshop brought together 30 participants, including journalists and police officers from the Togdheer region. Key takeaways and recommendations emerged from the discussions:

- Both sides emphasized the importance of mutual respect and understanding.
- Police officers stressed the need for journalist training in self-protection during protests and political events.

- Journalists were encouraged to carry identification and schedule appointments with government officials to facilitate smoother interactions.
- Both sides agreed on the importance of ethical conduct, with journalists respecting the role of the police and the police respecting the rights of journalists.
- Police officers should receive training on human rights and the proper treatment of journalists.
- Journalists should not be subjected to arrest without warrant or undue questioning while in detention.

Conclusion

The workshop represents a significant step toward improving the relationship between journalists and the police in Somaliland. By fostering open dialogue and addressing mutual concerns, both parties can work together to create a more conducive environment for press freedom and public safety.

Engagement between Journalists and Somaliland law enforcement



In a significant stride towards bolstering press freedom and fostering a harmonious relationship between journalists and law enforcement, the Somaliland Journalists Association (SOLJA) organized a pivotal one-day training workshop in

Erigavo. This event aimed to illuminate the crucial role of freedom of expression in democratic societies and to empower both journalists and police officers with the knowledge and tools needed to safeguard this fundamental right.



A Gathering of Key Stakeholders

The workshop brought together a diverse group of 30 participants, including journalists and police officers from Erigavo. The event was graced by the presence of prominent figures, including the Sanaag regional governor, the chief of police, the chief of the coastal guard, the commander of the prison, the regional information ministry officer, and SOLJA's regional representative.

A Shared Vision for the Future

The workshop delved into a range of critical topics, including:

- Participants explored the provisions of the Somaliland Constitution and the 2004 Press Law, examining their implications for journalists and law enforcement.
- The workshop highlighted the importance of adhering to international human rights conventions, particularly the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
- Through interactive sessions, participants identified key challenges faced by journalists, such as illegal arrests, abuse of power, and limited access to information. They collectively proposed solutions, including the need for legal reforms, enhanced training for journalists and police officers, and improved collaboration between the two groups.

A Call for Action

The workshop concluded with a strong call to action. Participants emphasized the importance of sustained efforts to:

- Amend and enforce Press Law 27-2004 to ensure its alignment with international standards.
- Encourage responsible and ethical journalism practices.
- Provide comprehensive training to police officers on human rights, media law, and the importance of protecting press freedom.



- Continue to build bridges between journalists and police through regular dialogue and capacity-building initiatives.



Conclusion.

By empowering journalists and police officers with knowledge and fostering a culture of mutual respect, the workshop represents a significant step towards a more vibrant and free media landscape in Somaliland. As the country continues its democratic journey, the protection of freedom of expression will be essential for ensuring transparency, accountability, and the well-being of its citizens.





ACTIVITY SEVEN

SOLJA Empowers Media Staff with Management Training

Introduction

The Somaliland Journalists Association (SOLJA) has launched a comprehensive training program designed to enhance the management skills of media staff across the country. Recognizing the importance of strong leadership and effective management in ensuring the sustainability and quality of media organizations, SOLJA has initiated this initiative to equip media professionals with the tools they need to excel in their roles.



The training program, which commenced today, is targeting a wide range of media staff, including editors, reporters, and managers. The curriculum is focused on developing the following key skills:

- Participants will learn about effective leadership styles, team building, and decision-making processes.



- The training will cover budgeting, financial planning, and resource allocation.
- Participants will gain knowledge of recruitment, performance management, and employee development.
- The training will explore strategies for improving organizational efficiency and effectiveness.

Objectives of the Training

- To enhance the management capabilities of media professionals in Somaliland.
- To improve the overall performance of media organizations.
- To foster a more professional and sustainable media industry.

Expected Outcomes

- Increased efficiency and productivity in media organizations.
- Improved employee morale and job satisfaction.
- Stronger financial management and sustainability.
- Enhanced quality of media content.

Conclusion

SOLJA's training program represents a significant investment in the future of Somaliland's media industry. By equipping media staff with the necessary management skills, the program will contribute to the growth and development of a more professional and sustainable media sector.



ACTIVITY EIGHT

Workshop on Digital Resilience for Journalists in a Year of Election

Introduction

The Digital Resilience for Journalists in a Year of Election workshop was conducted from September 8th to 11th, 2024, in Hargeisa, Somaliland, by the



Somaliland Journalists Association (SOLJA).

This four-day workshop aimed to equip journalists with the essential skills and knowledge to navigate the digital landscape safely and effectively during the upcoming

presidential election.

The training focused on enhancing journalists' ability to:

- Identify and mitigate cybersecurity risks, including hacking, malware, and data breaches.
- Detect and debunk fake news, deep fakes, and other forms of online disinformation.
- Protect their devices, data, and communications while covering the election.

The workshop was attended by journalists and media professionals and facilitated by Eng. Mohamed Omer and Mustafa Adam. Key activities included interactive sessions, group work, practical exercises, and expert-led discussions on cybersecurity, deep fakes, and digital data protection.



ACTIVITY NINE

UNICEF and SOLJA Join Forces to Improve Health Reporting

Introduction

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the Somaliland Journalists Association (SOLJA) recently co-hosted a workshop in Hargeysa aimed at enhancing media coverage of health issues, particularly vaccination. The workshop brought together journalists from across Somaliland to discuss the



critical role of the media in promoting public health.

The workshop focused on the following key areas:

- Participants explored the significance of accurate and timely health reporting in shaping public opinion and influencing health-seeking behaviors.

- The workshop addressed the challenges faced by journalists when covering health issues, such as access to information, technical language, and ethical considerations.
- Participants were introduced to best practices for covering health issues, including fact-checking, interviewing experts, and using data to tell compelling stories.
- The workshop highlighted the critical role of the media in promoting vaccination and addressing vaccine hesitancy.

Key Outcomes

- Journalists gained valuable knowledge and skills in covering health issues, particularly vaccination.
- The workshop fostered stronger partnerships between UNICEF, SOLJA, and journalists.
- Participants expressed a commitment to providing accurate and unbiased health reporting.

Conclusion

The collaboration between UNICEF and SOLJA has resulted in a successful workshop that has equipped journalists with the tools they need to



effectively cover health issues. By improving the quality of health reporting, this initiative will contribute to better informed communities and healthier populations in Somaliland.



ACTIVITY

10

SOLJA and DANWADAAG Collaborate on Climate Change and Disaster Reporting

Introduction

The Somaliland Journalists Association (SOLJA) hosted a workshop in



Hargeisa focused on the critical role of the media in addressing climate change and disaster management. The workshop, which brought together journalists from various media outlets and representatives from humanitarian

organizations, aimed to enhance the capacity of media professionals to report on these pressing issues.

The workshop explored a range of topics, including:

- Participants discussed the specific challenges faced by Somaliland as a result of climate change, such as droughts, floods, and desertification.
- The workshop emphasized the importance of the media in raising public awareness of climate change and its impacts.
- Participants were trained on best practices for reporting on natural disasters, including safety considerations, ethical guidelines, and the importance of providing accurate and timely information.
- The workshop explored the role of the media in promoting community resilience and preparedness.



Key Outcomes

- Journalists gained a deeper understanding of the causes and consequences of climate change.
- Participants developed new skills in reporting on climate change and disaster management.
- The workshop facilitated networking among journalists, humanitarian organizations, and government officials.



Conclusion

The workshop organized by SOLJA and DANWADAAG has highlighted the critical role of the media in addressing the challenges posed by climate change and natural disasters. By equipping journalists with the knowledge and skills they need to report on these issues effectively, the workshop has contributed to a more informed and resilient society.

ACTIVITY

11

Multi-stakeholders meeting on Climate Change and Disaster Management Workshop

The Somaliland Journalists Association (SOLJA) today hosted a workshop in Hargeysa focusing on the role of the media in addressing climate change and disaster management.

The event, attended by various media outlets and organizations working in this field, was part of broader efforts to tackle the impacts of climate change and natural disasters, as coordinated by the DANWADAAG consortium.



Key points:

- The workshop highlighted the importance of the media's role in raising awareness about climate change and disaster preparedness.
- The event brought together various media outlets and organizations involved in climate change and disaster management.
- The workshop was part of the broader efforts of the DANWADAAG consortium to address these challenges.
- The workshop lead to more comprehensive and accurate reporting on climate change and disaster-related issues.

- Increased public awareness by equipping journalists with the necessary knowledge and skills, the workshop can contribute to raising public awareness about the risks and impacts of climate change.
- The event has facilitated collaboration between media organizations and other stakeholders involved in disaster management.
- Participants have developed guidelines or best practices for media coverage of has organized climate change and disaster-related issues.

Conclusion

SOLJA a workshop in Hargeysa to discuss the crucial role of the media in addressing climate change and disaster management. This initiative is part of a larger effort, led by the DANWADAAG consortium, to mitigate the effects



of climate change and natural disasters in Somaliland. The workshop brought together media professionals and relevant organizations to discuss ways to improve media coverage of these pressing issues.

Chapter Two

EVENTS





SOLJA Holds Event to Commemorate International Women's Day

The Somaliland Journalists Association (SOLJA) held a town hall meeting on March 8, 2024, focusing on women's leadership roles and disaster risk management reporting in the media sector.

The event brought together various stakeholders, including government and private media, social media influencers led by female journalists, female media associations such as WIJA and FIMO, and online media platforms owned by women. High-ranking officials from media houses, organizations, and influential



figures also attended, with the discussion emphasizing the role of women in media leadership and enhancing their capacity in disaster risk reporting.

The meeting featured speakers such as SOLJA Chairman Shaafi Mohamed Ibraahim, Secretary Muna Ibrahim Dhakhtar, and representatives from WIJA, independent media, and state media outlets, highlighting the significance of collaborative efforts in promoting gender inclusivity within Somaliland's media landscape.

As part of its continued commitment to empowering women in journalism, SOLJA also organized a panel discussion focused on the role of female journalists in media leadership and their contribution to reporting on social issues, particularly natural disasters. This platform provided an opportunity for female journalists and media stakeholders to exchange insights on strengthening women's voices in journalism, enhancing leadership roles, and improving disaster risk reporting.



World Press Freedom Day Celebration in Somaliland

Introduction

The Somaliland Journalists Association (SOLJA) orchestrated a commemorative event on May 4, 2024, in observance of World Press Freedom Day. The gathering convened key stakeholders from government, opposition parties, media professionals, and academia to deliberate on the current status of press freedom in Somaliland and propose pathways for enhancement. World Press Freedom Day, observed annually on May 3rd, stands as a pivotal testament to the indispensable role of a liberated and impartial press. It is a day dedicated to acknowledging the significance of journalists as watchdogs, holding governments and institutions accountable. World Press Freedom Day underscores the vital role journalists play in informing the public and safeguarding a robust democracy. It sheds light on the perils they confront, including violence, harassment, for their safety and the ability to work without fear of reprisal.

A free press is the bedrock of a democratic society, facilitating the unrestricted flow of information, diverse viewpoints, and critical analysis. World Press Freedom Day underscores the imperative for media outlets to operate independently, devoid of government control or undue influence. This autonomy fosters transparency, empowers citizens to make informed decisions, and bolsters public participation in governance. The event served as a platform for stakeholders to engage in discussions aimed at fortifying press freedom in Somaliland and fortifying the democratic framework. The collaborative discourse among the participants underscored the urgency of addressing media legal gaps, enhancing election monitoring, and bolstering the capacity of journalists to ensure a fair and transparent electoral process. The perspectives and commitments articulated during the event, coupled with the

identified challenges and proposed recommendations, underscore the critical importance of addressing media freedom concerns and ensuring a transparent and inclusive media law.



During the event, the participants highlighted several that this year's World Press Freedom Day, held on May 3rd, 2024, focused on the theme "A Press for the Planet: Journalism in the Face of the Environmental Crisis." Somaliland media can have contributed:

- **Raising Awareness:**
 - Somaliland media outlets keen to follow in covered environmental challenges facing the Somaliland, such as drought, desertification, and climate change.
 - Investigative journalists want to report environmental damage caused by human activities like deforestation or pollution.
- **Promoting Solutions:**
 - Media interest in showcased local efforts to address environmental issues, such as tree planting programs or sustainable resource management practices.



- Organize discussions and interviews with environmental experts or policymakers to be aired to encourage public awareness and discussion on solutions.
- **Advocacy and Solidarity:**
 - Somaliland journalists' Associations or individual journalists want to be issued statements calling for increased government commitment to environmental protection and press freedom.
 - Somaliland media outlets could have participated in online campaigns using the #World Press Freedom Day hashtag to raise awareness about environmental issues and the role of a free press.



But during the event ceremony, participants were stressed that Somaliland media may face limitations in covering environmental issues due to lack of specialized training or resources for investigative journalism.

Despite these challenges, Somaliland media likely played a significant role in raising awareness about environmental issues.

1. Stakeholder Perspectives

During the World Press Freedom Day event stakeholders expressed their perspectives and commitments:

- Somaliland's current media law is outdated and fails to adequately address the needs of the evolving media landscape. This has been a growing concern for some time. While an amended media bill has been in development for a significant period, it remains stalled. Participants in the discussions emphasized the urgent need for swift



passage of this bill. Enacting an updated law that aligns with international standards is crucial, especially in the lead-up to national elections. A robust legal framework is essential to ensure a safe and free media environment where journalists can operate independently and hold powerful institutions accountable. The completion of this amendment is critical for ensuring media freedom and safeguarding the rights of journalists.

- agreed upon to take concrete steps to respect, protect, and promote the rights to freedom of expression, access to information, and media freedom. This includes ensuring that journalists and media practitioners can carry out their work freely, without intimidation and harassment, especially during the election period
- suggested to provide training programs should be implemented to enhance the capacity of journalists, particularly in ethical conduct and professional reporting. This includes expanding regional opportunities for journalists, as well as continuous support and training for media practitioners to contribute positively to the political debate
- noted the important of media can participate election Monitoring in the context of the upcoming presidential election and political/associations in Somaliland, media election monitoring and capacity building are crucial for ensuring a transparent and inclusive electoral process, as well as other mechanisms such as review and development election media code of conduct.
- All participants showed their concerns of recurrent Journalists are confronting arbitrary arrests, leading to an atmosphere of fear and self-censorship. This hinders their ability to report freely and independently, impacting the overall media environment, in line of this, was agreed to strengthen open dialogues between media and law enforcement agencies to improve the relationship between them and reduce stigma.
- While the journalists explained about obtaining crucial information from government institutions is proving to be challenging, impeding journalists' capacity to provide comprehensive and accurate



information to the public. So that, agreed upon to hold a high level meeting between media and relevant stakeholders to discuss the challenges and will come up enhancement of these concerns.

- There is a pressing need for comprehensive training programs to enhance the capacity of journalists, particularly in ethical conduct and professional reporting. This is essential for elevating the standards of journalism in Somaliland.
- Some journalists may engage in unethical reporting practices, which can undermine the credibility of the media and contribute to the proliferation of misinformation, posing a challenge to the integrity of journalistic endeavors. Based on that, suggested to continue support to SOLJA to transfer capacity building of Somaliland journalists
- Limited Understanding and Stigma Between Police and Journalists: Addressing the limited understanding and stigma between police and journalists emerged as a critical imperative. Fostering a more collaborative and respectful relationship between the two entities is essential for ensuring a conducive working environment for journalists.

The identified challenges underscore the multifaceted nature of the obstacles facing the media landscape in Somaliland. Addressing these challenges is integral to ensuring a robust, free, and independent press that plays a pivotal role in informing the public and upholding democratic values. The perspectives and insights shared during the event, coupled with the identified challenges, provide a comprehensive understanding of the current situation of the media landscape in Somaliland and the imperative for targeted interventions to address these challenges.

Agreed Upon Actions

During the World Press Freedom Day event, it was agreed to conduct a high-level meeting with the Ministry of Interior, Police Commissioner, Attorney General, Human Rights Commission, and other relevant stakeholders to address the current legal gaps for Somaliland journalists. The meeting aimed to evaluate the amendment of the media bill and accelerate its completion as soon as possible. Key actions agreed upon include:

- Expediting the amendment of the media law through inclusive consultations.
- Ministry of interior and minister of information and culture called an urgent holding a high-level meeting to consultative on media legal gaps and census building the amendment of media bill and joint endorsement.
- Development of tools to monitor election coverage by the media and support effective mechanisms to reduce negative impacts.
- review of the media election code of conduct to ensure fair and unbiased coverage of the elections.
- Training programs targeting journalists across all regions to ensure comprehensive and ethical election coverage.



2. Conclusion.

This report provides a framework for summarizing the key points of the World Press Freedom Day event in Somaliland was addressed includes compared to neighboring Somalia, Somaliland has a freer media environment. There's no official censorship, a vibrant private media sector exists alongside state-controlled outlets, while laws exist, enforcing them to protect journalists can be weak, especially regarding libel suits against critical reporting and journalists, particularly those working for critical outlets, face harassment, including arrest, violence, and equipment damage, due to the fear of reprisals, some journalists may practice self-censorship, avoiding sensitive topics



Overall, the situation for journalists in Somaliland is precarious. While there's more freedom than in Somalia, there have been recent attacks and a climate of intimidation. However, World Press Freedom Day serves as a crucial platform for fostering a more robust and independent media environment in Somaliland, ultimately leading to a stronger democracy and a more informed citizenry. The efforts to address the challenges faced by journalists in Somaliland, particularly in the context of the upcoming election, are crucial for ensuring a free and fair media environment. The agreed-upon actions and the collaborative approach taken to demonstrate a commitment to positive change and progress in the Somaliland media legal framework.

AWAKE Award Ceremony: Celebrating Excellence and Advocating for Press Freedom



The annual AWAKE Award, a cornerstone event hosted by the Somaliland Journalists Association (SOLJA), continues to recognize and honor outstanding journalism in Somaliland. The 2024 AWAKE Award ceremony, held on October 10, 2024, was a significant event that brought together journalists, media professionals, civil society activists, and government officials to celebrate journalistic excellence and discuss pressing issues facing the media industry.

Key Highlights of the Event

- This year's event placed a strong emphasis on the crucial role of the media in electoral processes and climate change. SOLJA highlighted the importance of accurate and unbiased reporting, as well as the

need for journalists to be well-informed about climate change issues and their impact on Somaliland.

- SOLJA condemned the alarming number of journalist arrests in Somaliland and called for an end to such practices. The organization also highlighted the challenges faced by women journalists, particularly in terms of access to opportunities and safety concerns.
- The event emphasized the need for a comprehensive media law that would protect journalists' rights and ensure press freedom. SOLJA called on the House of Representatives to swiftly approve the pending media law.
- The event featured insightful panel discussions on various topics, including the role of the media in elections, climate change, and the challenges faced by women journalists. These discussions provided a platform for experts to share their knowledge and insights, and for participants to engage in constructive dialogue.



Awards handover

Key Speakers and Their Messages

- Emphasized the importance of the media in electoral processes and called for increased support for journalists
- Highlighted the challenges faced by journalists, particularly the alarming number of arrests, and called for greater protection for media professionals
- Urged journalists to be more professional and socially responsible, focusing on in-depth analysis and investigative journalism
- Stressed the importance of a strong and independent media in a



democratic society and called for greater support for journalists

- Emphasized the need for a media law to protect journalists' rights and called for accurate and unbiased reporting during the upcoming elections
- Encouraged journalists to focus on reporting on various societal issues, including the economy, education, health, and water
- Called for increased support for women journalists and highlighted the challenges they face in the industry
- Emphasized the government's commitment to supporting media freedom and the role of the media law in safeguarding journalists' rights

Conclusion

The 2024 AWAKE Award ceremony was a resounding success. It not only celebrated journalistic excellence but also provided a platform for important discussions on the challenges facing the media industry in Somaliland. By highlighting these issues and advocating for press freedom, SOLJA continues to play a crucial role in shaping the future of journalism in the country.

Chapter Three ELECTION MONITORING & CODE OF CONDUCT



SOLJA and NEC Collaborate on a Code of Conduct for Election Reporting

Introduction

The Somaliland Journalists Association (SOLJA) and the National Electoral Commission (NEC), in partnership with the Netherlands Multiparty Institute



for Democracy (NIMD), convened a workshop in Hargeysa to develop a comprehensive code of conduct for election reporting. This initiative aimed to establish clear guidelines for journalists covering the electoral process, ensuring fair,

accurate, and balanced reporting.

The workshop brought together representatives from various media outlets, including television, radio, and print media. The participants engaged in in-depth discussions on the challenges and opportunities facing journalists during election periods. Key topics covered during the workshop included:

- Participants explored ethical principles such as accuracy, impartiality, and fairness.
- The workshop addressed the delicate balance between the right to free speech and the responsibility of journalists to avoid inciting violence or spreading misinformation.
- Participants discussed the importance of the media in educating the public about the electoral process and promoting democratic values.
- The workshop culminated in the drafting of a preliminary code of conduct for election reporting, outlining specific guidelines for journalists to follow.

Key Outcomes

- Participants reached a consensus on the fundamental principles of ethical election reporting, including accuracy, fairness, impartiality, and avoiding hate speech.
- A preliminary draft of a code of conduct was developed, providing a



framework for regulating election reporting in Somaliland.

- Participants expressed a strong commitment to self-regulation and agreed to promote the code of conduct among their colleagues.

Conclusion

The workshop marked a significant step forward in establishing a more professional and ethical media environment in Somaliland. By developing a code of conduct for election reporting, SOLJA, NEC, and NIMD have provided journalists with a clear set of guidelines to follow. The code of conduct will serve as a valuable tool for promoting fair and accurate election coverage, fostering public trust in the media, and strengthening democratic institutions in Somaliland.

Somaliland Journalists Sign Code of Conduct for Elections



The Somaliland Journalists Associations (SOLJA), the Ministry of Information, the National Electoral Commission, and the (WIJA) officially signed the Code of Conduct and Ethics for Journalism during Elections.



SOLJA CHAIRPERSON SIGNED THE MEDIA CODE OF CONDUCT DURING THE ELECTION

At a ceremony held in Hargeysa, officials from all signatory parties signed the code. These included the Chairman of the National Electoral Commission, Muse Hassan Yusuf, the Chairman of the SOLJA Shafici Mohamed Ibrahim,



NEC CHAIRPERSON SIGNED THE CODE OF CONDUCT FOR MEDIA DURING THE ELECTION

the Minister of Information Ali Hassan Mohamed, and the Chairman of the WIJA Yasmin Ahmed.

This code, prepared by the Commission and with significant input from Somaliland media, is considered a crucial step in safeguarding press freedom and ensuring free and fair elections.

Objectives of the Code:

- The code outlines the proper conduct for journalists to follow during the election period to avoid misinformation, defamation, and anything that could disrupt the electoral process.
- It encourages journalists to seek truth and present accurate information to the public.
- The code emphasizes the importance of impartial journalism that does not favor any of the candidates.
- It protects the rights of individuals and institutions, preventing any unnecessary harm.

SOLJA Established Election Monitoring Center for Media



SOLJA Media election Monitoring Center, Hargeisa

The Somaliland Journalists Association (SOLJA) has reopened its Media Monitoring Center to keep a close eye on media coverage during the election period. The center will focus on identifying and reporting on:

- False or misleading information related to the elections.
- News report that incites hatred or discrimination.
- Stories that could create divisions within society.
- Content that could stir up tribal tensions.

The reports generated by the center will be shared with relevant authorities, including the National Electoral Commission, to ensure a fair and transparent electoral process.

In essence, SOLJA is taking proactive measures to ensure that media coverage of the elections is accurate, unbiased, and contributes to a peaceful electoral environment.

Chapter Four

OTHER

DEVELOPMENTS



Somaliland Media Law Presented to the Cabinet

The Somaliland Journalists Association (SOLJA) has welcomed the presentation of the amended Media Law to the Cabinet. The organization is pleased that this long-awaited bill has finally reached the Cabinet for consideration.

SOLJA urges the President and the Cabinet to expedite the approval of this crucial law, which is greatly needed by the country.



Conclusion.

The Somaliland Journalists association (SOLJA) has expressed satisfaction that the revised Media Law has been presented to the Somaliland Cabinet for approval. The organization has been advocating for this update for a significant period. SOLJA is now calling on the President and the Cabinet to prioritize the passage of this law, emphasizing its importance for the country.



Meeting with the Social Affairs Committee of Somaliland Parliament

Introduction

On December 25, 2024, a meeting was held between members of the Social Affairs Committee of the Somaliland Parliament and the leadership of Somaliland Journalists association (SOLJA) with representatives from the Independent Media sector. The primary aim of the meeting was to present the final draft of the Media Law that has recently been submitted to the House of Somaliland Parliament. This meeting served as an essential platform to discuss the implications of the law and gather input from various stakeholders.

Objectives of the Meeting

The key objectives of the meeting were as follows:

1. To present the final draft of the Media Law to the Social Affairs Committee.
2. To ensure that the Committee understands the nuances of the draft law.
3. To gather feedback and concerns from independent media representatives before the law is passed.

Discussion Points

The meeting commenced with an overview of the Media Law presented by consultant, highlighting its significance for media freedom and the protection of journalists' rights in Somaliland.

Concerns Raised by Independent Media Representatives

Members from the Independent Media who attended the meeting expressed several concerns regarding the draft law. Key points raised included:

- The need for clearer definitions of media rights and responsibilities.
- Concerns about potential restrictions that could hinder media freedom.
- The importance of ensuring that the law promotes transparency and accountability within media practices.

Outcomes and Next Steps

The meeting concluded with a mutual agreement to continue collaborative efforts on the Media Law. The following outcomes were established:

1. **Joint Collaboration:** The Committee and SOLJA will work together to address the concerns raised and refine the draft law.
2. **Future Meetings:** Additional meetings will be scheduled to discuss progress and gather further input from various media stakeholders.
3. **Commitment to Media Freedom:** Both parties reiterated their commitment to fostering an environment that upholds media freedom while ensuring responsible journalism.

Conclusion

The meeting with the Social Affairs Committee marked a significant step toward finalizing the Media Law in Somaliland. By incorporating the views of independent media representatives, the Committee aims to create a law that balances media freedom with accountability. The collaborative spirit demonstrated during this meeting sets a positive precedent for future discussions and legislative processes.





Media Monitoring during Somaliland Elections 2024

Executive Summary

The media monitoring group is a crucial department responsible for overseeing media coverage related to elections, including the political campaigns of parties and organizations. This group diligently monitors and evaluates news broadcast on social media, as well as independent and public television, to identify content that violates journalistic ethics during elections. Their focus includes detecting fake news, information that promotes tribalism, and content that incites hatred.

Recognizing the significance of this issue, the Somaliland Journalists Association (SOLJA) has established a dedicated department for monitoring news, reports, and messages disseminated by both mass media and social media. This department serves as a monitoring system to ensure that media outlets adhere to the code of conduct during elections.

The Somaliland Journalists Association (SOLJA) recognizes the critical role of the media in ensuring free and fair elections. As such, it empowers the media during each election cycle to report transparent and accurate news while upholding journalistic ethics.

To achieve this objective, SOLJA operates the Media Monitoring Center during the election period. The center plays a vital role in monitoring how various media outlets cover election news—before voting day, on the day of voting, and in the days following the announcement of election results. This year, the center has prioritized monitoring social media and television platforms, while also closely observing the country's only radio station, Radio Hargeisa.

In accordance with the code of conduct jointly signed by press organizations, the Ministry of Information, and the Election Commission, the Media Monitoring Center is tasked with conducting daily assessments of media



content. Its primary responsibility is to ensure compliance with the press code of ethics throughout the election period.

This report highlights how various types of media have strived to uphold their commitment to reporting election news in a responsible and effective manner. While many major television stations in the country adhered to journalistic standards, it became evident that social media platforms were disseminating negative information related to the presidential election and national parties. A significant portion of the news circulating on social media carried a negative tone.

Overall, the information and news regarding the electoral process, the presidential election, and the national parties played a pivotal role during Somaliland's challenging 2024 election. The media—particularly social media—was widely utilized throughout the campaign period. Supporters of different organizations and parties competing in the presidential election leveraged both traditional and social media as powerful tools to convey their messages and engage with the public.

Introduction

The Media Monitoring Center has been proactively monitoring media coverage of electoral processes since 2012. Media monitoring is vital for safeguarding the integrity of information disseminated during elections. As part of SOLJA's commitment to upholding media ethics and promoting accountability, SOLJA launched a media monitoring project in conjunction with the Somaliland combined elections.

The center's mission is to promote free and responsible journalism, ensuring that the media plays a constructive and ethical role in supporting democratic processes.

The media plays a crucial role in shaping public perception during electoral processes. Media monitoring is designed to ensure that media coverage adheres to ethical standards and promotes fair access to information for all political parties.

To prepare for this effort, the project began with the recruitment of trained election monitoring staff, focusing on individuals with relevant expertise in media monitoring, journalism, and electoral processes. The center has assembled a highly experienced Media Monitoring Team tasked with documenting and addressing any violations of the media code of conduct committed by media outlets during the election period.

The purpose of this report is to present the findings of the media monitoring activities conducted during the 2024 electoral campaign in Somaliland. Media monitoring plays a vital role in ensuring fair and unbiased election coverage, supporting democratic processes, and holding media outlets accountable.

Background

The Media Monitoring Center, established in 2012, has been actively overseeing media practices during elections and other significant events in Somaliland, such as the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic.

SOLJA's past monitoring efforts include the Municipal Elections in 2012.

Since its establishment, the center has played a pivotal role in monitoring media coverage during various elections, including the Presidential Election in 2017, the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, and the combined Local Councils and Representatives Elections in 2021.

During the 2024 Somaliland elections, SOLJA conducted extensive media monitoring activities, which covered both the Presidential and political associations elections. The center's primary objective is to ensure that media outlets adhere to the code of conduct during election periods. This involves closely evaluating news broadcasts on social media, as well as independent and state media, with a focus on combating misinformation, fake news, and any other information that may incite conflict or division within the community.

Objectives

The key objectives of the media monitoring activities were to combat misinformation, hate speech, and incitement to violence within the community through the provocation of clan issues, the dissemination of fake news, and stereotypes, while maintaining impartiality through the following objectives:

- ✓ Monitoring specific media houses in election coverage, with daily assessments to identify trends, biases, inaccuracies, and adherence to the Media Code of Conduct for 2024.
- ✓ Evaluating the role of media in providing access to political parties and associations, ensuring equal coverage for all candidates.
- ✓ Identifying violations of the media election code of conduct during pre-election campaigns, election day, and the announcement of preliminary results.
- ✓ Monitoring news items related to feedback, complaints, and emergency issues.
- ✓ Producing daily reports and weekly updates for stakeholders, including election authorities, media houses, and the public.

Importance of Media Monitoring for SOLJA

Media monitoring is essential for ensuring that media outlets provide fair and unbiased coverage during elections. It supports democratic processes by holding media accountable and ensuring that all political parties and candidates receive equal access to news coverage and campaign programs. This, in turn, helps to maintain public trust in the electoral process and promotes transparency.

Methodology

The monitoring process was conducted from September to December 2024. The types of media monitored included televisions, radio, and social media accounts belonging to journalists. The criteria for selecting media outlets focused on the most influential televisions, eight influential stations were selected based on their reach and impact. The sole radio station in



Somaliland was included and social media pages and accounts owned by journalists and influencers were closely monitored. Media outlets were chosen for their influence and role in shaping public opinion, ensuring a representative sample of the media landscape.

The monitoring team utilized tools and technologies that facilitate the tasks including:

Flat Screen TVs: For real-time monitoring of television broadcasts.

Google Forms: For data entry and collection.

Data Analysis Tools: To analyze collected data and identify trends and violations.

Findings

Media coverage during the election was largely responsible and aimed at promoting peaceful processes. Most media institutions demonstrated high responsibility in reporting election-related information, ensuring accurate dissemination from pre-election campaigns to the announcement of preliminary results. However, notable violations were identified:

Clan-Related Incitement: Some media outlets engaged in divisive reporting, using clan affiliations to incite tensions and polarize the public.

Hate Speech: Instances of hate speech were observed, particularly on social media, from politicians, political party supporters, and traditional leaders.

Misinformation: The spread of misinformation and disinformation was a significant concern, with false or misleading information circulating on various platforms.

Exaggerated Allegations and Defamation: Some media outlets engaged in sensationalized reporting, Unbalanced information and defamation of other individuals and Political Association/party.

Fake News: Spread of false information.

Social Media Violations



- ✓ Spread of misinformation and fake news.
- ✓ Instances of hate speech or incitement.
- ✓ Unverified claims and exaggerated information.

When did this operation commence?

The Media Monitoring Center commenced its operations in 2012, coinciding with the local council elections in the country and the subsequent election of parties for the following decade.

Hence, this center has been operating continuously since then, up to the present day, particularly during the Presidential election campaigns and for the national parties, spanning from 2012 to the present. Following the local council elections, the center focused on the following events: In 2017, the country conducted the Presidential election. In 2020, it evaluated how the media covered information regarding the initial outbreak of COVID-19, and this was followed by the 2021 elections for the Local Councils and Representatives.

Scope of Work

The center operates to track, monitor, and assess all news, reports, and narratives concerning election affairs, including campaign-related content monitoring.

The evaluation will encompass fake news, hateful content, misinformation, disinformation, as well as news that fosters division and tribalism within the community.

How does the center work?

The center operates with a team contains seven members: six mentors and a focal point member. They are stationed in a setup equipped with screens and computers to monitor news from both traditional media sources and social media platforms. Their workflow involves evaluating and documenting information by filling out forms on a daily basis.

Coverage Area



The evaluation team at the Media Monitoring Center focused on news, reports, stories, and general information related to the two elections that were held for the first time in the history of Somaliland: the presidential election and the one contested by the national parties.

In assessing media coverage during the election period, the focus was on the news and reports prepared by the media about the political campaigns during the official campaign period, and on general news related to the election, which were sensitive and very sensitive this year.

Three major categories were evaluated at the Media Monitoring Center this year. They were: televisions, influential social media platforms and the national radio station (Radio Hargeisa).

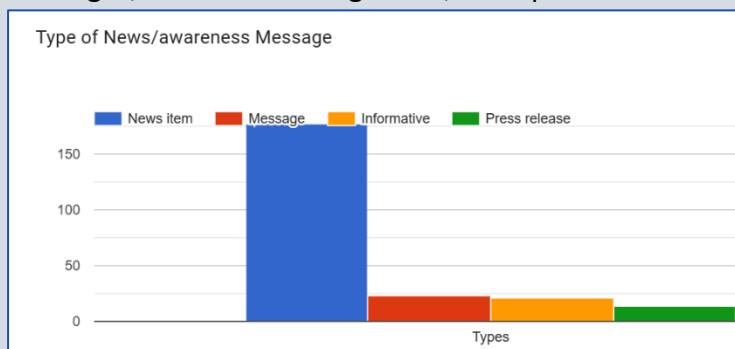
The televisions that were evaluated were 7 televisions, The second part included the evaluation of influential social media platforms, numbering 8.

The third part involved the evaluation of the national radio station Radio Hargeisa, which is the sole radio station in the country.

Televisions

1. Type of Information: -

The types of information that were rated on television included news items, messages, informative segments, and press conferences. The evaluation



team focused on the types of items first. As seen in this chart, the highest rating was for news items, which

were the most frequently broadcast by television stations. In second place were the various messages, such as awareness messages from the election

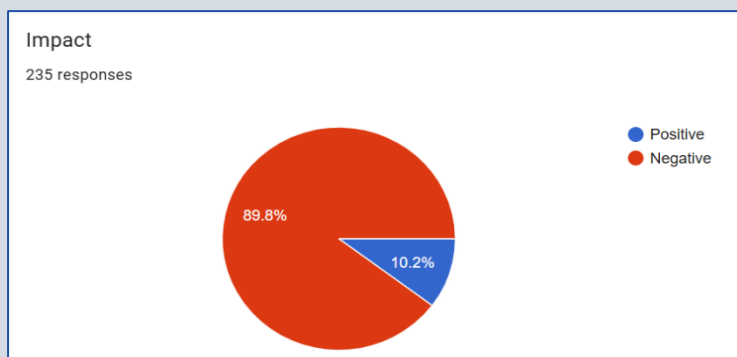


committee. followed by informative content, and last but not least, the press conferences.

Therefore, we can conclude that, as shown in this chart, the types of information broadcasted by the media, especially television, were predominantly news items, with press conferences being the least common. Press conferences are typically held by party leaders and commissions during the election period.

Impact

The next point in this evaluation was the impact of the data being assessed. This includes the impact of the news and general information broadcast by television. We can categorize the data into three phases: during the campaign, on the day of voting, and after the election, when the results were



awaited. The data we examined includes both negative and positive aspects.

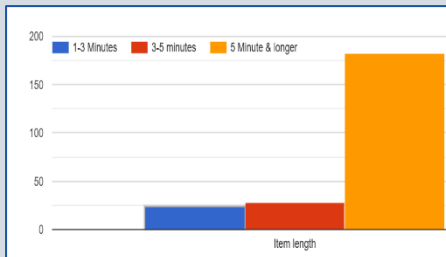
The group conducting this

evaluation highlighted the impact of inappropriate information, particularly the negative effects of television broadcasts during the campaign. The evaluation indicates that almost 90 percent of the information was negative. This does not mean that all the news broadcast was negative, but rather that they specifically focused on the negative content, such as tribal and hateful news.

The negative news primarily originated from officials of political parties and organizations speaking on behalf of traditional tribes. The exchanges between parties, the responses from families, and the negative, unethical statements made during these interactions were the ones that ranked highest in this evaluation.

Television Item Length

In this section, the length of each item broadcast by the television stations was evaluated and recorded, ranging from one minute to three minutes, three minutes to five minutes, and finally, five minutes or longer.

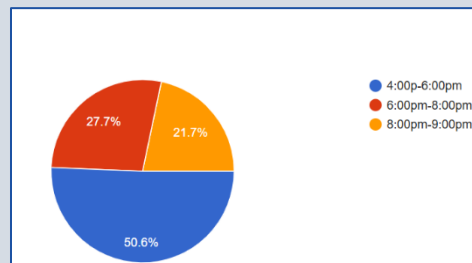


The evaluation of the length of the items they broadcast showed that most of them were five minutes and longer. The second item was the three-minute to five-minutes, and the smallest items were one minute to three minutes.

This shows that the information broadcast by the television stations related to the election news exceeded five minutes.

Time

As television stations broadcast their news at different times, we assessed in this section the times when the news and messages we were evaluating aired. Most Somali television stations broadcast their news from the afternoon until midnight, with the news being repeated multiple times thereafter.



The broadcasting of news and messages typically occurs in the afternoon and early evening hours. With this in mind, we focused on assessing the maximum number of times news and messages were disseminated. Specifically, we examined the following time frames: 4:00 pm to 6:00 pm, 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm, and 8pm to 9:00 pm.

Most of the news, messages, and other items broadcast by the television stations were during the evening hours. In particular, a majority of the news and reports were aired between 4:00 pm to 6:00pm (Prime Time). It can be said that this broadcasting window is the most popular for viewers. The news,

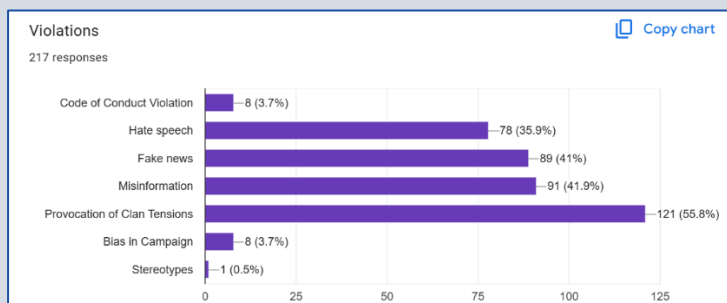
messages, and other information broadcast during this time were fresh, while afterwards, they became more repetitive.

More than 50% of the news broadcasts were between 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m., which was when television stations aired the most news related to the election. In second place was the time between six and eight in the evening, accounting for 27.7 percent, while the news aired between eight and nine in the evening constituted 21 percent. The news broadcasted at night mostly consisted of reports from regional and remote districts, often delayed by regional reporters.

Violations

The next point to be monitored was how the news broadcasted by television violated the code of conduct during the election. This section specifically focused on instances where election information broadcast by television constituted a violation. The electoral code of conduct, signed by stakeholders, prohibits information that is hateful, false, or misleading, as well as information that provokes tribal sensitivities. It also prohibits unbalanced information that favors one side.

The result of this evaluation indicated that the majority of the news that was specifically evaluated were those that provoked clan sensitivities, and these news pieces were prevalent during the election campaign. Following this, misinformation took the second spot, while the third was occupied by



information or fake news. Next in line were the news pieces that could potentially incite hate within the community. It is important to

note that this data does not suggest that all news broadcasted by television fell into these categories, but rather that these were the specific issues highlighted during the evaluation.



It is worth noting that the news that triggered tribal sensitivities was provided to the media by individuals claiming to be cultural leaders, as well as those fluent in the languages of the tribes who directly referenced tribal names during this election. This particular election witnessed a significant influence of tribal affiliations. The news that sparked unrest in society was predominantly disseminated by the media in collaboration with politicians representing parties and political organizations, some of whom openly attacked the media with statements that could incite hatred and provoke the public. Unfortunately, some television stations opted not to cover these issues and continued broadcasting such information.

One of the unprofessional practices they have engaged in is occasionally adding inappropriate and misleading captions to accompany every video clip uploaded on the television's social media pages. These captions often fail to accurately reflect the content of the clip, aiming instead to attract viewers through sensationalized titles.

It is also surprising how individuals are chosen during election periods. Reporters sometimes interview individuals who speak negatively, sow division, and foster hatred when questioned about election matters. Many journalists seem drawn to individuals who engage in unproductive discourse, such as hurling insults, verbally attacking certain tribes, or spreading unverified information. This behavior not only fosters discontent but also serves to further divide communities, for instance by targeting specific political parties or tribes.

Social Media Platforms

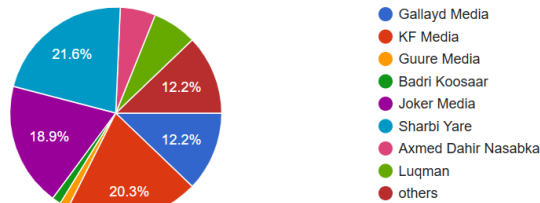


Social media, like in the rest of the world, is widely used by people in Somaliland and seems to have replaced other forms of media. Our country, which is among the nations with the most affordable and accessible internet services, has resulted

in many individuals, even those with limited financial resources, using the internet on a daily basis.

Social Media:

74 responses

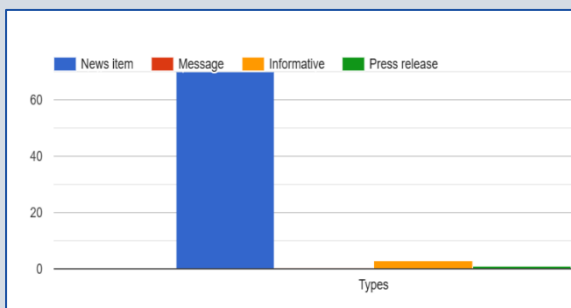


This trend has led to Somali people, who are already fond of news, increasingly using social media to share urgent information. The

reliance on traditional media for news is diminishing. Consequently, a significant issue has emerged regarding the dissemination of vast amounts of information on social media, regardless of its reliability.

Much of the information available is unrestricted, often unsafe, and can occasionally incite division and conflict among people. With the growing use of social media, this year coincided with presidential elections and national party activities. Election updates have become the dominant focus of social media monitoring, making it the primary platform for campaigning during the election season.

The second category of the team evaluating the Media Monitoring Center focused on how news about the elections and related general information were reported on influential social media platforms. As mentioned earlier in the report, we assessed 8 platforms and more. and the information that came out was like this: -

Types of items

Similar to the television channels mentioned earlier, the primary content type broadcasted on social media platforms was news. Following news, informative items took second place, with

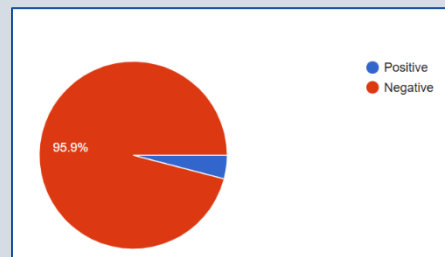
press releases ranking third in frequency on these social media platforms.

Impact



The impact of news and information broadcast on social media in Somaliland was significant. The evaluation revealed that over ninety percent of the information was negative, particularly when the Media Monitoring Center focused on news related to campaign

activities before the election, the voting day, and the period awaiting election results. Much of the information disseminated on social media lacked clarity regarding whether it was factual news or personal opinion. News concerning tribal affiliations, integration, and content inciting tribal sensitivities ranked highest in this evaluation of the impact of news broadcasts on social media.



The detrimental impact of the information disseminated on social media was most pronounced during the challenging campaign period. Social media content often targeted supporters of various political parties and organizations, with instances of threatening and hateful messages exchanged between opposing factions.

News Item Length

The MMC center was evaluating the length of each item uploaded to social media individually, much like television. They rated content based on duration: from one to three minutes, three to five minutes, and five minutes or longer.

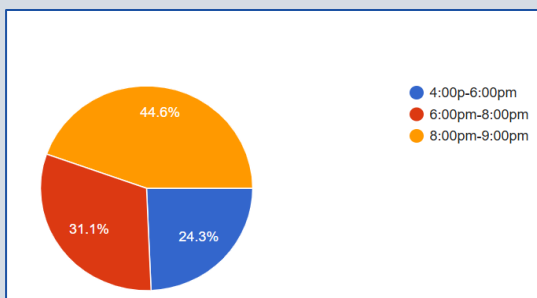
As a result, the majority of the content broadcast on social media was five minutes or longer, followed by content ranging from one to three minutes, and lastly, content lasting three to five minutes. This indicates that the video posts shared on social media tended to be longer than five minutes.

Time

As previously discussed, our evaluation also centered on the periods when social media operators shared news related to the election. Given the absence of time constraints for posts on social media, we examined this data to determine the peak times when the most information is shared on these platforms.



We investigated the time periods of four to six, six to eight, and eight to nine.

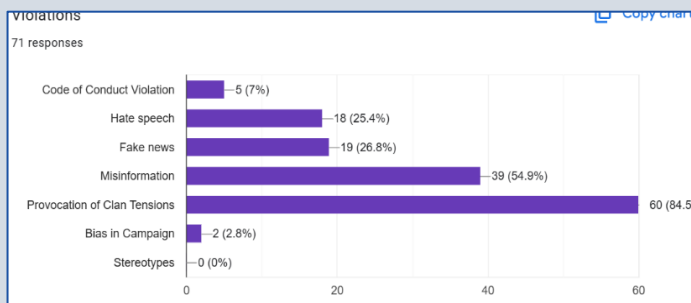


The results showed that the highest number of posts were made between **eight to nine** in the evening, accounting for almost forty-five percent (45%). The next most popular time for posts was from six to eight in the

evening, at 31%, followed by four to six in the afternoon, which accounted for twenty-four percent of the posts.

Violations

The next point to be monitored was how the news broadcasted by social media violated the code of conduct during the election. This section



specifically focused on instances where election information broadcast by television constituted a violation. The electoral code of

conduct, signed by stakeholders, prohibits information that is hateful, false, or misleading, as well as information that provokes tribal sensitivities. It also prohibits unbalanced information that favors one side.

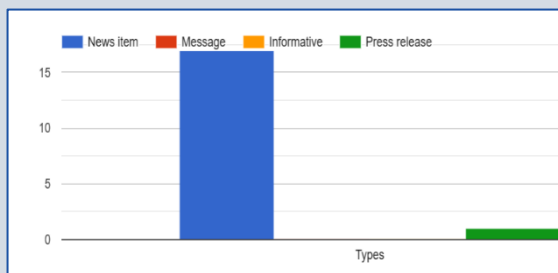
In this section, as depicted in the diagram, the main point to note is that news and information related to the triggering of tribal allergies constitute the primary issue shared on social media. Over eighty percent of the content posted on social platforms pertains to tribal news. Following closely in second place are deliberately distorted fake news reports, accounting for almost 27 percent of the total. This category is closely followed by other forms of content, with 26 percent consisting of hateful news or information that could evoke disgust among people.

Radio



The Evaluation and Monitoring Center for the news of the Somaliland elections, operated by SOLJA, was tasked with evaluating how the national radio station, Radio Hargeisa, was broadcasting news and reports related to the elections. As the country lacks independent radio stations, Radio Hargeisa stands as the sole operating radio station, owned by the government.

Our focus was on observing how Radio Hargeisa broadcasts election news, how it allocates space for news concerning opposition parties and other



political organizations. Being a public radio station, it is expected to possess the capacity to do so, which would reflect positively on the ruling KULMIYE party. The radio station demonstrated a commendable level of responsibility in its coverage of news from all political parties and organizations, not solely emphasizing government and ruling party news.

The media code of conduct during the election period specifies that government-owned media outlets such as **Radio Hargeisa** and **SLNTV** should provide coverage to all national political parties. In this context, our focus



was on monitoring how the Radio Hargeisa fulfilled this responsibility. The investigation revealed that they broadcasted news, messages, and information related to the national parties in a fair and balanced manner, particularly during the election campaign.

It is important to note that Radio Hargeisa has frequently broadcasted interviews or reports from groups supporting the conservative KULMIYE party. These broadcasts have been unbalanced, fostering hatred and division within society.

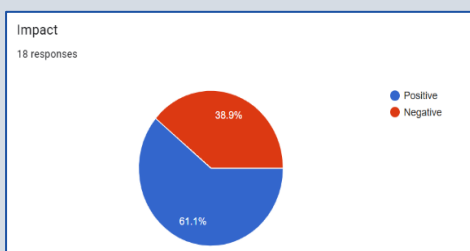
However, such news on the radio station was limited and sparse compared to the numerous other news items that had a positive impact. It is creditable how Radio Hargeisa provided substantial coverage of the campaign news of the opposition parties.

Radio Hargeisa airs broadcasts in the morning, at noon, and in the evening, with no afternoon broadcast slot. Meanwhile, the monitoring team conducted their work during the afternoon and evening, monitoring the station's information through its official website and social media platforms. The afternoon period coincided with the team's operational hours.

Types of items

Similar to television and social media, we examined this assessment to determine the most commonly broadcast information type. We discovered that the predominant type of information investigated Radio Hargeisa was news, followed by news from press conferences.

Impact



In a manner similar to the elections held in the country in 2010, 2012, 2017, and again in 2021, Radio Hargeisa, although a government radio station that aligned with the views and policies of the ruling party at the time, received praise for its coverage of the recent election. It actively reported on the campaign and election news. Upon evaluating Radio



Hargeisa's reporting methods, it was noted that there was no bias, and it operated in a neutral manner.

The news and reports broadcasted by Radio Hargeisa related to the election, the days of the campaign, the day of voting and the period of waiting for the results of the election were moderate and had a positive effect. The result of the investigation was that more than sixty percent were positive news.

Recommendations

To improve media practices during elections, the following recommendations are proposed:

- ❏ Media outlets should maintain impartiality and take responsibility for the news they share with the public.
- ❏ Implement training programs for journalists on ethical reporting and media laws.
- ❏ Establish a regulatory body/council to oversee media practices during elections, with special consideration to social media.
- ❏ Encourage collaboration between media houses and election authorities to ensure accurate and fair coverage.
- ❏ Address and mitigate news items that can cause harm to the community or appear biased.
- ❏ Encourage media outlets to prioritize fact-checking and verification of information before publishing or broadcasting news related to elections (Fact-Checking)
- ❏ Media organizations should be transparent about their funding sources, ownership, and any potential conflicts of interest that could impact their coverage of elections.
- ❏ Discourage the use of sensationalist headlines or coverage that prioritizes clicks and views over accuracy and fairness.
- ❏ Uphold ethical standards in reporting, including respecting the privacy of individuals, avoiding discrimination, and promoting fair and balanced coverage.



- Media outlets can play a crucial role in promoting civic education by providing voters with accurate information about the electoral process, candidates, and important issues.
- Actively work to combat the spread of misinformation and disinformation by clearly labeling false or misleading content and providing audiences with accurate information to counter false narratives.
- Foster an open dialogue between media outlets, election officials, political parties, and the public to address concerns about media coverage and work towards improving transparency and accountability.

Conclusion

The 2024 Media Monitoring Report reflects the critical role of media in shaping electoral outcomes and public perception. While the media in Somaliland has shown progress in promoting ethical practices, significant challenges remain. Addressing these issues requires collective efforts from stakeholders to ensure transparency, accountability, and the preservation of democratic values.

Media Case Report from January to December 2024

Overview

in 2024, Somaliland experienced dramatic increase of arresting journalists with a total of 13 media professionals taken into custody in various areas/ regions in the country as the media case report illustrates. Alarming many of these arrests lacked transparency as there were no reasons given for the detentions. Overall, none of the journalists were presented with arrest warrants and unlawfully detained them.

On January 6 2024 journalists named **Mohamed Abdi Sheikh** (Ilig) **Mohamed Abdi Abdillahi** (Andar) and **Ilyas Abdinasir** were all apprehended together by



the Somaliland National Intelligence Agency while at MM TV studio. While Andar and Ilyas were released three days later after their detention Ilig underwent a process. He appeared before the military court on January 13 2024 which was surprise illegal and shocking to appear before the military court and recorded as the first ever case that a civilian and a journalist was brought into the military court.

After public outcry and successive efforts SOLJA carried out and his case was later transferred to the marodijeh regional court on January 30 and February 10 2024. Finally, on February 18 2024, he was declared not guilty. Regained his freedom although some of the television's equipment was smashed while others taken away by Somaliland national intelligence agency (NIA). SOLJA is still working hard to get the materials back immediately.

Another concerning incident took place on January 14, 2024 when journalist **Abdirashid Abdiwahab Hussein**. A member of SOLJAs board of directors was arrested by the Somaliland National Intelligence Agency without a cause. Luckily, he was released on that day. This discloses that journalists are in danger of being detained without proper cause.

Furthermore 4th of February 2024 by the order of the manager and the deputy manager of the fuel storage tanks, **Abdirahman Mohamed Cige** was taken into custody, due to issues linked to the fuel storage. Cige publicly reported that the manager of the fuel tanks diverted funds intended for a boarding school in Sahil, while collecting the fund under the institution's name. He disclosed that he hired employees for an office in Hargeisa, while receiving payment, they were actively working from Baligubadle and Gorayo Awl for the government.

He also mentioned that his relatives had filled the fuel tanks as employees. Abdirahman stated that he had evidence for his news. Interestingly, on the 5th of February 2024, the manager expressed his desire to let him go in a letter.

During the time journalist **Abdirahman Awil Elmi** was held in custody, in Erigavo he shared details on his media about a farm owned by civilians. Subsequently the Deputy Minister of Agriculture detained him for 8 hours.



Following these elders from his family. Recommended him to remove the news, which he promptly did. Interestingly they later took a screenshot of the post. Initiated action against him. It is worth noting that his arrest coincided with his release, on February 4 2024.

These incidents highlight the pressing need to address challenges encountered by journalists and uphold press freedom in Somaliland.

On March 20, 2024, journalist **Ali Ahmed Diiriye Dhaga Dalool** was arrested by the Somaliland Police under orders from the Governor for reporting on the relatives of prisoners in Lasanod who were demonstrating for their rights. These protesters expressed their concerns about the financial plight of their loved ones, who were being held as hostages, and emphasized the support they provided to them. Ali's detention lasted 42 days.

On May 16, journalist **Ahmed Mahamoud Ibrahim (Ahmed Boqorre)** was detained in the city of Burao under circumstances that did not adhere to proper legal protocols. Reports indicate that the police command misled the journalist by stating that they wanted to conduct an interview with him. However, upon his arrival at the police station, he was promptly detained. This action was taken without the issuance of a legal warrant, which is a clear violation of his rights.

Similarly, on May 28, 2024, journalist **Siciid Cali Cisman (Xaalays)** was subjected to a physical assault and subsequent detention in Burco. Siciid, affiliated with Sky Cable TV's Burco office, was at Burco General Hospital at 10:00 AM, covering a protest by some hospital staff. During his coverage, he attempted to interview the Governor of the Togdheer region. In response, the Governor and his security detail assaulted the journalist

Notably, Siciid was initially denied an injury report despite multiple requests, which he only received later in that afternoon. This denial and delay infringe upon his constitutional right to file a complaint, as guaranteed by Article 28 of the Somaliland Constitution and Articles 14 and 21 of the Penal Code.



The Somaliland journalist association has verified the injuries inflicted on **siciid**, with numerous eyewitnesses attesting to the incident. on top of that the governor unlawfully detained for one Hour.

Moreover, on June 25, journalist **Khadar Cabdi Cabdilaahi**, a correspondent for Sky Cable TV, was detained in Wajaale. His arrest was directly linked to a news report he had broadcast concerning sanitation issues in the Wajaale district. The detention of Khadar Cabdi Cabdilaahi underscores a troubling trend of targeting journalists for their reporting on public issues. Such actions not only infringe on the freedom of the press but also undermine the public's right to be informed about critical community issues like sanitation.

It is noteworthy that Khadar was released on June 26th but subsequently re-arrested. Reports indicate that legal proceedings concerning Khadar's case are ongoing.

Warsame Abdirashid Adan, who works for MMTV, was detained on September 3, while **Mubarik Mohamed Adan**, who works for Horyaal TV, has been in prison for nearly a week. Both journalists are being held in the main prison of Ceerigaabo city, reportedly for news they posted on their personal Facebook pages.

It is concerning that after their initial appearance in court and being remanded, they were released on **September 9** but have not been brought back for any further hearings. The lack of follow-up proceedings following the remand order raises serious questions about the respect for due process and their legal rights.

On December 25, 2024, journalist Barre Khadar Koosar was detained by the Somaliland Police for videotaping and reporting on an incident at Hargeisa Group Hospital. His arrest, which lasted for 15 hours, raises concerns about press freedom and the safety of journalists. This incident highlights the ongoing challenges that journalists encounter while serving the public interest in Somaliland.

Chapter Five

SIDELINE MEETINGS





6.1 UK Ambassador and SOLJA Leadership

The Somaliland Journalists Association (SOLJA) held a significant meeting in Hargeisa with the UK Ambassador to Somaliland/Somalia, **Mike Nithavriankis**, and the Head of the British Office in Hargeisa, **Ilyas Malek**. The discussions provided an in-depth analysis of the media landscape in



Somaliland and the challenges faced by journalists. The meeting aimed to address media obstacles, develop a strategy to support and promote journalists, and enhance media freedom in Somaliland. Additionally, the two parties deliberated on the

role of the media in elections and the finalization of the Somaliland Press Act. The meeting concluded with a commitment to strengthening the cooperative relationship between SOLJA and the British Office in Hargeisa.

6.2 SOLJA, care international, VNG and media ink discussions on cross-cutting issues



In collaboration with Care International, VNG, and Media Ink, SOLJA hosted a meeting at its headquarters. These organizations, working together under the DANWADAAG program, engaged in discussions on information sharing and accelerating the project's activities to enhance media development in Somaliland.



6.3 Interpeace and NGOs Discussions on Strengthening Democratization and Role of NGOs on Elections



SOLJA, alongside various non-governmental organizations in Somaliland, also held a meeting with the Interpeace Organization at the SONSAF Office, led by Interpeace President **Mr. Itonde Kakome**. The discussions analyzed the role of the media in elections, the democratic process, youth

empowerment, special needs care, and the inclusion of minority groups. SOLJA reaffirmed its commitment to media development and election monitoring. Interpeace, in turn, pledged to collaborate closely with SOLJA in supporting its mission.

6.4 Ministry of planning and NGOs on localization of aid & ratification of NGO Act



A crucial meeting took place between members of non-governmental organizations and the Director General of the Ministry of Planning and National Development in Somaliland. The primary purpose of this meeting

was to foster mutual understanding and strengthen cooperation between the Ministry and the NGOs, ensuring a collaborative approach toward national development.

6.5 SOLJA and the supreme court: handling detention cases in the absence of media bill

The Board of SOLJA engaged in discussions with the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, Aadam Xaaji Cali Axmed. The meeting focused on reinforcing the relationship between the judiciary and the media while addressing concerns regarding the unlawful detention of journalists. A key topic of discussion was the urgent need for media law in Somaliland. The Chief Justice assured SOLJA of his commitment to close collaboration in ensuring media freedom and legal protection for journalists.



6.6 SOLJA meets with the speaker house of representatives on media law amendment



SOLJA's Executive Council also met with the Speaker of the Somaliland House of Representatives, Mr. Yaasiin Maxamuud Xiir Faratoon, to discuss collaboration on the ongoing Somaliland Media Law. The discussions aimed at ensuring a legal framework that enabled relevant

institutions to work effectively under the law, further strengthening the media sector.



6.7 SOLJA Receives UNSOM Head Office in Somaliland

In another high-profile engagement, SOLJA hosted a meeting with the UN Head of Office for Somaliland, Mr. Nikolai Rogosaroff. The dialogue centered on strengthening collaboration between SOLJA and the UN Office, with a particular focus on addressing key priorities for Somaliland's media sector. Mr. Rogosaroff acknowledged SOLJA's efforts and reaffirmed the UN's commitment to supporting media freedom in Somaliland.



6.8 FREEPRESS Unlimited officials meets SOLJA leadership

Further expanding its international collaborations, SOLJA welcomed a delegation from Free Press Unlimited (FPU), an organization that strongly supports media freedom and freedom of expression worldwide. The discussions revolved around enhancing their partnership, reviewing ongoing projects, and reaffirming their commitment to defending press freedom in Somaliland.



6.9 ministry of information hosts FPU and SOLJA to discuss the amendment of Media Law



Officials from SOLJA and the delegation from Free Press Unlimited later met with the Minister and Deputy Minister of Information to discuss the expedited legislative process for the recently finalized amendments to the Media Law. The meeting also explored

strategies for facilitating its approval. Additionally, FPU representatives visited various Ministry departments to assess ongoing projects and explore avenues for future cooperation.

7.0 SOLJA, FREEPRESS visits MMTV HQ

Following up on their previous engagement, Free Press Unlimited met with MMTv, one of the media houses supported by SOLJA in policy development.



They conducted a thorough review of MMTv's daily operations to assess performance and ensure effective implementation of the supported policies. Additionally, Free Press had a meeting with NADFORD, addressing issues related to disaster risk management and fostering professional connections.



7.1 SOLJA and national endowment for democracy (NED)

SOLJA also welcomed representatives from the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), a longstanding partner in advancing media development in Somaliland. The discussions centered on strengthening collaboration to enhance journalism, freedom of expression, and the development of media



institutions. Both parties reaffirmed their commitment to promoting press freedom and journalistic integrity.

7.2 SOLJA, NED visit to HORNCABLE TV HQ

SOLJA took representatives from the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) to HORN CABLE TV to discuss strategies for enhancing their working environment. The discussion focused on developing new policies and implementing capacity-building initiatives to support the advancement and quality of their operations.





7.3 Swedish representative held a meeting with SOLJA leadership

engagement, SOLJA met with Johan Bergqvist, a representative from the Swedish Embassy, to discuss the state of the media in Somaliland. The meeting has been vigorously addressed potential areas for collaboration, with Mr. Bergqvist expressing a keen interest in pursuing future cooperative efforts to support media development and advocate press freedom in Somaliland.

Through these engagements in 2024, SOLJA continued to play a pivotal role in advocating for journalists' rights, strengthening media laws, and fostering



international partnerships to ensure a free and professional media landscape in Somaliland.

The Somaliland Journalists Association (SOLJA) is making significant efforts to ensure that journalists across the country have access to high-quality education. Every year SOLJA seeks scholarship for journalists, signing MOUs with credible universities and grants free education for those who fill the requirements needed. In the year of 2024, Somaliland Journalists association had a concluded a memorandum of understanding with University of Burao, and Frantz fanon in order to underpin formal educational cooperation specifically the faculty of journalism and mass communication. It is step for the right direction.



7.4 SOLJA and the Ministry of Interior Discuss Press Freedom and Journalist Detentions



Hargeisa, 20 February 2024 – The leadership of the Somaliland Journalists Association (SOLJA) held a crucial meeting with the Minister of Interior, accompanied by the Deputy Minister of Interior, the Deputy Minister of Information, the Governor of Maroodijeex Region, and the Director General of the Ministry of Interior.

The discussions focused on key issues affecting the media, including press freedom, freedom of expression, and finding solutions to the recurring arrests of journalists.

Meeting Agenda:

- The state of the media and the role of the government.
- Press freedom and freedom of expression in Somaliland.
- Arrests of journalists and ways to resolve them.
- Strengthening collaboration between the media and the government.
- The role of journalists in maintaining ethical standards.

Discussions and Outcomes: Journalist Arrests

- SOLJA emphasized the need for journalists to be treated within the legal framework rather than facing arbitrary arrests and pressure.
- The Minister of Interior affirmed the ministry's commitment to establishing a legal mechanism to address media-related complaints.
- Both sides agreed to work on ending unlawful detentions of journalists.

Press Freedom and Media Rights:

- Both parties acknowledged that press freedom is a fundamental right in Somaliland and must be safeguarded.
- It was agreed that media outlets should have the opportunity to operate freely while upholding journalistic ethics.

collaboration Between Media and Government:

- It was agreed to strengthen the relationship between journalists and government institutions to prevent conflicts and misunderstandings.
- SOLJA and the ministry committed to holding regular meetings to discuss media-related matters.

Media Responsibility:

- The Minister of Interior urged journalists to adhere to professional ethics and avoid exacerbating national issues through misinformation.
- SOLJA pledged to enhance journalist awareness and training to ensure responsible journalism.

Conclusion:

- A joint mechanism will be established to resolve media-related disputes.
- SOLJA and the ministry will closely collaborate to reduce complaints related to press freedom.
- Regular meetings will be maintained to strengthen cooperation and safeguard media rights.

Decisions:

- Ending arbitrary arrests of journalists.
- Strengthening media-government relations.
- Enhancing journalist awareness of ethical standards.

Meeting Between SOLJA and the Ministry of Information

The Board of directors of the Somaliland Journalists Association (SOLJA) held a meeting on March 11, 2024, with the Minister of Information, accompanied by the Deputy Minister and the Director General of the ministry.



The meeting focused on finalizing the long-awaited new Media Law, finding a lasting solution to the recurring arrests of journalists, and working together to improve and develop the media sector in Somaliland.

Meeting Agenda:

- Finalizing the new Media Law process.
- Addressing the issue of recurring journalist arrests.
- Enhancing the professionalism and development of the media sector.
- Strengthening cooperation between SOLJA and the Ministry of Information.

Discussions and Resolutions:**1. The New Media Law**

- SOLJA emphasized the importance of the new Media Law in ensuring press freedom and providing a legal framework for media operations.



- The Minister of Information reaffirmed the government's commitment to completing the legislative process to establish a clear and effective media law.
- Both parties agreed to expedite the finalization of the law to ensure it aligns with both media interests and national regulations.

2. Journalists' Arrests

- SOLJA strongly urged an end to arbitrary arrests of journalists, advocating for legal processes to be followed in case of media-related complaints.
- The Minister and the Director General assured that the ministry is committed to implementing legal mechanisms to handle media disputes fairly.

3. Media Development and Professionalism

- Both sides agreed on the need for structured programs aimed at improving journalists' skills and professionalism to better serve the public.
- It was also agreed that SOLJA and the Ministry of Information would strengthen their collaboration to advance the media landscape in Somaliland.

Conclusion:

- Both parties committed to finalizing the new Media Law.
- Legal processes should be followed instead of arbitrary arrests for media-related disputes.
- SOLJA and the Ministry of Information will work closely to promote media development.
- Future meetings will be held to follow up on the discussed issues and ensure their implementation.

Key Resolutions:

- ☒ Finalization of the new Media Law.
- ☒ Strengthening collaboration between SOLJA and the Ministry of Information.
- ☒ Ending arbitrary arrests of journalists.
- ☒ Promoting media development and professionalism.

The meeting concluded with both parties agreeing to maintain open communication and collaboration for the betterment of Somaliland's media sector.

Chapter Six

EDUCATION AND SCHOLARSHIPS





SOLJA enters MoU with Buroa university

As part of these efforts, SOLJA and Togdheer Regional University have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) aimed at advancing journalism in Togdheer and the eastern regions of Somaliland. Additionally, SOLJA and Burao University have agreed to establish a faculty of journalism to enhance media education and strengthen the professional skills of journalists.

SOLJA leadership held meeting Buroa Journalists

The meeting between media representatives from the Togdheer region and SOLJA's leadership centered on enhancing journalists' education in the area. Discussions also explored expanding capacity-building programs to improve professional skills and further develop the media sector.



Participants expressed their appreciation for the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and committed to fully leveraging the opportunities it presents.

This collaboration aims to foster a more skilled and responsible media landscape in the Togdheer region.



SOLJA leadership meets with Awdal Journalists

SOLJA held a meeting with media representatives from the Awdal region, focusing on initiatives to strengthen the knowledge, skills, and professional standards of journalists in the region. The discussion aimed at fostering a more skilled and responsible media landscape to better serve the community.



Moreover, SOLJA's commitment to media education extends beyond journalism training. The organization is actively working to secure scholarships that enable journalists to further their education in fields beyond media studies, broadening their knowledge and skillsets.

CSI grant scholarship for Journalist

In this regard, CSI University has awarded five scholarships to journalists working in Somaliland, supporting their pursuit of higher education outside the media profession.



Frantz Fanon University grant scholarship

Ongoing efforts to enhance the educational opportunities available to media professionals in the country have taken a significant step forward with the recent initiative by Frantz Fanon, who has granted scholarships to 15 journalists. This generous act is part of a broader commitment to fostering professional development and supporting the growth of a well-informed media landscape.



This table below shows the number of participants trained in the year of 2024 in all Somaliland

REGION	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE
HARGEISA	398	262	136
TOGDHEER	146	112	34
SAXIL	50	47	3
AWDAL	48	38	10
SANAAG	65	55	10
TOTAL	707	514	193

This table below shows the number of detained Journalists in the year of 2024 in Somaliland

SN	Name	Date	Institution	Court	Warrant	Region
01	Mohamed Abdi (Ilig)	Jan, 06 2024	MM TV	YES	NO	Marodijeh
02	Mohamed Abdi (Andar)	Jan, 06 2024	MM TV	NO	NO	Marodijeh
03	Ilyas Abdinasir	Jan, 06 2024	MM TV	NO	NO	Marodijeh
04	Abdirashid Abdiwahab Hussein	Jan, 14 2024	Sky Cable	NO	NO	Marodijeh
05	Abdirahman Mohamed Cige	Feb, 04 2024	Horyaal Tv	NO	NO	SAHIL
06	Abdirahman Awil Elmi	Feb, 04 2024	Freelancer	NO	NO	Sanaag
7	Ahmed Mahamoud Ibrahim	May, 16 2024	Sky Cable	NO	NO	Togdheer
8	Siciid Cali Cisman	May, 28 2024	Sky Cable	NO	NO	Togdheer
9	Khadar Cabdi Cabdilaahi	Jun, 25 2024	Sky Cable	NO	NO	WAJALE
10	Warsame Rashid Adan	Aug, 28 2024	MM TV	NO	NO	Sanaag
11	Mubarik Mohamed Adan	Aug, 28 2024	Horyaal Tv	NO	NO	Sanaag
12	Barre Khadar Koosaar	25, Dec 2024	Horyaal Tv	NO	NO	Marodijeh
13	Ali Ahmed Diiriye Dhaga dalool	Mar 20, 2024	Freelancer	NO	NO	Awdal



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