



## Morocco Media Experts Survey Report Draft

The findings reported below are extracted from the survey of expert users (owners, editors, writers/journalists, freelance writer, director, production, speaker/presenter, administration and editor in chief) carried out by Information International for the benefit of ACRI. The survey included a sample of 150 experts out of which 61 were from Casablanca and 89 from Rabat.

The method of sample selection relied on systematic random sampling, based on the list of employees in each organization where the survey's implementation was approved. The stratified sampling procedure was then used in order to select the final number of participants (see Information International report for details; Appendix C).

The refusal/response rate was 23.5%. Overall, 46 media experts (إعلاميين) refused to participate or failed to hand in the filled out survey. These response rates may limit the authors' ability to generalise the survey's findings to the entire population

The findings from the survey are presented in two parts. The first part presents an overview of the major findings from the survey, while the second part presents detailed findings from the individual items in the survey. Appendix A presents the detailed findings for each item from the survey and will be referred to during the discussion of the main findings from the survey below.

### I. OVERVIEW OF KEY FINDINGS FROM SURVEY

#### Main Findings: Dimension Analysis

When items are combined to measure a dimension of a specific principles (e.g. items 1 to 9 as measures of “guarantees of media independence”, a dimension of the general “independence” principle), 5 dimensions proved to be problematic.

The most important grievance resided in “Absence of Censorship” dimension [independence]. Although still problematic, the least important complaint occurred in “Clear professional and ethical standards” [integrity].

#### Items Rated Most Negatively

An important finding is that the state of the media in Egypt tends to be negatively evaluated by expert users. Out of the 26 core items, 18 were negatively evaluated.

The domains with the most negative feedback lead to the following conclusions:

- 1- The defamation law is misused in practice to threaten the media
- 2- Journalists do not enjoy sufficient legal protection to do their job.
- 3- Journalists do not have effective access to government documents of interest to the public
- 4- Self-censorship significantly hinders the independence of the media
- 5- Journalists do not have adequate salaries



All of these items pertain to the independence principle.

### Items Rated Most Positively

On the more positive end of the analysis, the domains with the most positive feedback lead to the following conclusions:

- 1- The law and regulations outlining the requirements for obtaining a media license are clear (ind)
- 2- Journalists are able to independently organize their own professional associations (ind)
- 3- Journalists generally have sufficient qualifications to perform their duties competently (com)
- 4- Journalists decide on the content of their publication/broadcast (ind)
- 5- In general, journalists are governed by clear professional standards (int)

### Frequencies of specific items

The table below presents the highest frequencies on items dealing with clusters of questions.

			Good/ fine/ significant	Neutral	Poor/ weak/ insignificant
Guarantees	To what extent are the accessible government documents :	6. accurate	14.6%	16%	69.4%
		7. comprehensive	29%	12.4	58.6
		8. Received in a timely manner	11.6%	12.2%	76.2%
		9. Available without favoritism (towards some journalists but not others)	17.5%	11.2%	71.3%
Censors hip	To what extent the media is able to report openly on the following issues:	20. Political	49.3%	10.1%	40.5%
		21. Religious	41.9%	8.1%	50%
		22. Corruption	54.7%	5.4%	39.9%
		23. Social	80.5%	6%	13.4%
Media outlets' independence	To which degree is the media influenced/pressure d by:	26. Government (e.g. head of state, ministers, officials)	70.3%	12.4%	17.2%
		27. foreign governments ( e.g. embassies, officials)	25.4%	21.6%	53%
		28. political groups	58.5%	8.5%	33.1%
		29.	24.1%	19.7%	56.2%



	Religious/Sectarian groups	30. Social groups (e.g. tribal, ethnic, etc.)	14%	23.3%	62.8%
		31. Civil society organizations	23.5%	16.9%	59.6%
		32. Advertisers	82.5%	5.8%	11.7%
		33. Businesses not related to advertisement	42.4%	16.7%	40.9%
		34. Military, security services or police	54.7%	20.4%	24.8%
		To which degree are the following types of pressures used to undermine the independence of the media:	36. Financial	93.9%	2.7%
	37. political		77.2%	8.3%	14.5%
	38. Legal/judicial		73.6%	9.7%	16.7%
	39. Social		31.1%	18.2%	50.8%
	Diversity	To what extent does the content of the media accurately reflect the:	40. Threats of physical harm	29.5%	17.3%
59. Gender diversity of society			51.7%	14.7%	33.6%
60. Political diversity of society			67.1%	11%	21.9%
61. Ethnic diversity of society			31.7%	20.1%	48.2%
62. Religious/Sectarian diversity of society			32.1%	22.6%	45.3%
Open access	To what extent are the following factors used by the government to select employees in public/official media:	63. Cultural diversity of society	61.2%	6.8%	32%
		68. Political views/affiliations	63%	13.3%	23.7%
		69. Gender	25.9%	27.4%	46.7%
		70. Qualification criteria	29.6%	18.3%	52.1%
	To what extent are the following factors used by private media organizations to select employees in the media profession:	71. Ethnicity	15%	30.7%	54.3%
		72. Political views/affiliations	59%	11.5%	29.5%
		73. Gender	33.6%	21.9%	44.5%
		74. Qualification criteria	64.4%	17.1%	18.5%
Eth stand.	56. In your profession, how likely do you think journalists accept favors or bribes	75. Ethnicity	10.3%	28.6%	61.1%
			52.4%	25.4%	22.2%



## Opinions on Most Needed Reforms in Media

The questionnaire administered to the media experts included a series of “reform” questions. Participants were asked to rate the importance of reform in most of the subsections of the state of the media questionnaire.

Participants indicated the following items as those that require the highest need for reform:

Item	X
10. Legal reforms are needed to enhance the independence of the media.	1.34
67. Reforms are needed to strengthen the competence and qualifications of journalists	1.36
51. Reforms are needed to guarantee the personal independence of journalists	1.36
16. Reforms are needed in the regulatory framework to enhance the independence of the media.	1.39
42. Reforms are needed to increase the independence of media establishments from governmental influences	1.48
76. Reforms of existing laws and regulations that specify rules to select media employees are needed to create equal chances of access to the profession	1.50

*Note:* Scores represent the average (mean) for each item on a scale from 1 to 5. Scores below 3 reflect a positive evaluation of the item, while scores above 3 reflect a negative evaluation.

Items 10, 51, 16 and 42 pertain to independence, while items 67 and 76 refer to competence.

## II. DETAILED FINDINGS FROM SURVEY

### Independence of the Media

Respondents cite concerns with the independence of the media. The absence of fundamental guarantees on the independence of the media and a regulatory framework for media activity weakens the independence of the media. The media in Morocco is hindered by censorship and respondents cite many influences and pressures utilized to undermine the independence of the media. Additionally, respondents question whether journalists enjoy personal independence.

#### *Fundamental Guarantees on the Independence of the Media*

- Fifty-eight percent think that journalists do not effectively enjoy freedom of expression without fear of reprisal, and 71% agree that journalists do not enjoy sufficient legal protection to do their job.
- Respondents report that journalists are able to organize independently their own professional associations (61%).
- A majority think that journalists do not have effective access to non-governmental (56%) and governmental (70%) documents of interest to the public.



- According to respondents, the accessible government documents are not received in a timely manner (76%), not available without favouritism (71%), inaccurate (69%) and not comprehensive (58%).

#### *Explicit and Fair Regulatory Framework for Media Activity*

- Sixty-one percent disagree that the authority responsible for regulating the media renders fair decisions.
- Respondents agree that the law and regulations outlining the requirements for obtaining a media license are clear (66%).
- Forty-nine percent report that the law and regulations do not clearly state what constitutes defamations, and 75% indicate that this defamation law is misused in practice to threaten the media.
- A plurality agree that the sanctions against journalists and media organizations are arbitrarily imposed (45%).

#### *Absence of Censorship*

- Respondents agree that both self-censorship (65%) and government censorship (58%) significantly hinder the independence of the media.
- Fifty-eight percent disagree that censorship is regulated by explicit directives.
- The respondents believe that the media is able to report openly on corruption (54%), politics (49%) and social issues (80%). Religion (50%) is identified as an issue that cannot be openly reported on in the media.
- Fifty-three percent indicate that there are other issues that the media can openly report on including, economics (40%), sports (40%), foreign affairs (13.3) and culture (6.7%).

#### *Media Outlets' Independence from Governmental and Nongovernmental Influences*

- Respondents think that the media is influenced by advertisers (82%), the government (70%), political groups (58%) and the military/security services (54%).
- A majority agree that the media is not influenced by social groups (62%), civil society organizations (59%), religious/sectarian groups (56%), and foreign governments (52%).
- There are mixed opinions on whether businesses not related to advertisement influence the media (42% agree, 40% disagree, 16% neutral).
- Many think that certain types of pressures are used to undermine the independence of the media, including financial (93%), political (77%), legal/judicial (73%).
- A majority agree that threats of physical harm (53%) and social pressures (50%) are not used to undermine the independence of the media.

#### *Personal Independence of Journalists*

- While respondents agree that journalists decide on the content of their publication/broadcast (51%), 52% think that journalists are subject to arbitrary criminal prosecution.
- The respondents report that journalists are subject to threats of economic sanctions (65%) and termination of work (61%). A slight plurality think that journalists are not subject to threats of physical harm (42%), but 37% disagree.
- Sixty-one percent disagree that journalists have adequate salaries, but 47% agree that civil society groups protect journalists' rights.



### *Reforms*

- Ninety-seven percent agree that legal reforms are needed to enhance the independence of the media.
- Respondents think that reforms are needed to guarantee the personal independence of journalists (96%).
- Reforms of the regulatory framework (95%) and of the censorship practices (88%) are necessary to strengthen the media's independence. Respondents indicate that reforms are needed to increase the independence of the media from governmental (94%) and non-governmental influences (83%).

### **Integrity of the Media**

Respondents indicate that there are clear standards for journalists, but remain concerned that most journalists do not adhere to these professional and ethical standards. The integrity of the media is undermined by the actions of the journalists, not the lack of standards to govern their behaviour. The media does accurately reflect several aspects of society, but fails to represent society's ethnic and religious diversity.

### *Clear Professional and Ethical Standards*

- Forty-seven percent report that journalists are governed by clear professional standards, but 57% think that journalists do not effectively adhere to professional standards.
- Respondents think that journalists are governed by clear ethical standards (46%), but 62% disagree that journalists effectively adhere to ethical standards.
- According to respondents, journalists are likely to accept favours or bribes (52%).

### *Diversity of the Media*

- Respondents think that the media accurately reflects society's political diversity (67%), cultural diversity (61%) and gender diversity (51%). However, a plurality disagree that the media accurately reflects the ethnic diversity (48%) and religious diversity (45%) of society.

### *Reforms*

- Eighty-seven percent of respondents indicate that more diversity within the media would enhance the media's integrity.
- Higher professional standards (87%) and ethical standards (87%) are necessary to enhance the integrity of the media.

### **Competence of the Media**

Respondents cite concerns with the adequate qualifications due to a lack of specialized education for journalists. The government and private media's use of political views/affiliations to select employees in the media profession undermines the overall competence of the media.

### *Adequate Qualifications of Working Journalists*

- Fifty-one percent report that journalists have sufficient qualifications to perform their duties competently but 47% disagree that journalists receive specialized training.

### *Open Access to the Profession*



- Respondents think that political views/affiliations (63%) are a factor used by the government to select employees in public/official media, but ethnicity (54%), qualification criteria (52%) and gender (46%) are not used.
- The respondents report that qualification criteria (64%) and political views/affiliations (59%) are used by private media organizations to select employees in the media profession. Ethnicity (61%) and gender (44%) are not considered by respondents to be factors in the private media organization's selection process.

#### *Reforms*

- Ninety-seven percent of respondents agree that reforms are needed to strengthen the competence and qualifications of journalists. An overwhelming majority of respondents indicate that reforms of existing laws and regulations that specify rules to select media employees are needed to create equal changes of access to the profession (92%).

### **III. Missing Data Analysis:**

An analysis of missing data yielded significant findings that warrant attention. The overall pattern of missing responses did not exceed 2%. This indicates that the questionnaire, on the whole, did not create unexpected complications for participants. However, closer attention to the pattern of missing data points to

- 1- **Item 56** “In your profession, how likely do you think journalists accept favors or bribes” had the highest rate of missing data with 16% of participants reporting their inability to assess this item. Either participants felt the item to be too sensitive or they did not feel confident enough to provide an assessment on that question.
- 2- Two items, **item 71** “To what extent is ethnicity used by the government to select employees in public/official media” and **item 75** “To what extent is ethnicity used by private media organizations to select employees in the media profession”, had 14% rate of missing data, which was the second highest rate of missing data.

Analysis based on the 3 items highlighted above need to be treated with caution. Results may be biased by a series of factors. These three items seemed to be the most problematic for our sample. Other items with lower values of missing data may be of interest to authors, and are provided in appendix C, p. 5.

### **IV. LIMITATIONS**

It is important to note that the study does not allow sweeping generalisations about the state of the media; the survey used a random sampling, but the sample size is too small to allow for confident generalisations