Jordan 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 from Amman.

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 16.6%. Overall, 30 media experts (إعلاميين) refused to participate or failed to hand in the filled out survey. Their reasons ranged from being busy to not willing to answer this specific questionnaire. 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 the "guarantees of media independence" [independence] dimension. Although still problematic, the least important complaint occurred in "Explicit and fair regulatory framework for media activity" [independence].

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, 20 were negatively evaluated.

The domains with the most negative feedback lead to the following conclusions:
1- Journalists do not have adequate salaries
2- Journalists do not have effective access to government documents of interest to the public
3- Government censorship significantly hinders the independence of the media
4- Journalists do not effectively enjoy freedom of expression without fear of reprisal
5- Journalists do not enjoy sufficient legal protection to do their job.

All these items refer to independence.

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 not subject to threats of physical harm (ind)
3- In general, journalists are governed by clear ethical standards (int)
4- Sanctions against journalists and media organizations (e.g. denial or suspension of credentials, closure, seizure etc.) are not arbitrarily imposed (ind).
5- Journalists effectively adhere to ethical 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	27.7%	19%	53.3%
		7. comprehensive	19%	19.7%	61.3%
		8. Received in a timely manner	10.4%	14.2%	75.4%
		9. Available without favoritism (towards some journalists but not others)	10.9%	21.7%	67.4%
Censorship	To what extent the media is able to report openly on the following issues:	20. Political	26.2%	11.4%	62.4%
		21. Religious	28.2%	16.8%	55%
		22. Corruption	12.3%	12.3%	75.3%
		23. Social	53.4%	10.8%	35.8%
		24. Others, please specify (refer to p. 13)			
Media outlets' independence	To which degree is the media influenced/pressured by:	26. Government (e.g. head of state, ministers, officials)	75.5%	12.6%	11.9%
		27. foreign governments (e.g. embassies, officials)	43.6%	18.8%	37.6%
		28. political groups	35.3%	32.4%	32.4%
		29. Religious/Sectarian groups	29.6%	26.7%	43.7%
		30. Social groups (e.g.	40.8%	22.3%	36.9%

		tribal, ethnic, etc.)			
		31. Civil society organizations	13.8%	31.9%	54.3%
		32. Advertisers	62.1%	11.4%	26.4%
		33. Businesses not related to advertisement	27.4%	16.3%	56.3%
		34. Military, security services or police	68.4%	13.2%	18.4%
		35. Other, please specify (refer to p. 13)			
	To which degree are the following types of pressures used to undermine the independence of the media:	36. Financial	92.4%	2.1%	5.5%
		37. political	86.2%	6.2%	7.6%
		38. Legal/judicial	68%	16.3%	15.6%
		39. Social	49%	19.6%	31.5%
		40. Threats of physical harm	40%	25.4%	34.6%
		41. Other, please specify….. (refer to p. 13)			
Diversity	To what extent does the content of the media accurately reflect the:	59. Gender diversity of society	37.3%	28.2%	34.5%
		60. Political diversity of society	44.4%	14.8%	40.8%
		61. Ethnic diversity of society	29%	30.4%	40.6%
		62. Religious/Sectarian diversity of society	32.2%	27.3%	40.6%
		63. Cultural diversity of society	46.9%	16.6%	36.6%
Open access	To what extent are the following factors used by the government to select employees in public/official media:	68. Political views/ affiliations	62.6%	16.5%	20.9%
		69. Gender	31.9%	38.3%	29.8%
		70. Qualification criteria	20.1%	15.3%	64.6%
		71. Ethnicity	37.9%	31.1%	31.1%
	To what extent are the following factors used by private media organizations to select employees in the media profession:	72. Political views/affiliations	46.8%	22.3%	30.9%
		73. Gender	32.9%	29.4%	37.8%
		74. Qualification criteria	40.7%	15%	44.3%
		75. Ethnicity	22.5%	31.8%	45.7%
Eth. stand	In your profession, how likely do you think journalists accept favors or bribes		40%	24.3%	35.7%

Opinions on Most Needed Reform in Judiciary

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.	1.43
51. Reforms are needed to guarantee the personal independence of journalists	1.46
67. Reforms are needed to strengthen the competence and qualifications of journalists	1.47
16. Reforms are needed in the regulatory framework to enhance the independence of the media.	1.50
25. Reforms in censorship practices are needed to strengthen the media's independence	1.54

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".

All the items pertained to independence, except for item 67 which refers to competence.

II. DETAILED FINDINGS FROM SURVEY

Independence of the Media
Overall, respondents are concerned with the independence of the media. The absence of fundamental guarantees on the independence of the media compromises the overall independence of the media in Jordan. The regulatory framework is explicit and clearly established, but some of the actions taken or decisions made by the responsible authority concerns respondents. The existence of censorship and inability of journalists to report openly on key issues undermines the independence of the media. The respondents cite many influences and pressures utilized that challenge the independence of the media. Also, respondents perceive journalists to lack personal independence, which further weakens the independence of the media.

Fundamental Guarantees On The Independence Of The Media
- Seventy-percent of respondents do not think that journalists effectively enjoy freedom of expression without fear of reprisal.
- A strong majority agree that journalists do not enjoy sufficient legal protection to do their job (66%), nor are they able to independently organize their own professional associations (43%).
- According to respondents, journalists do not have effective access to non-governmental documents (50%) and governmental documents (73%).
- Respondents do not think that the accessible government documents are received in a timely manner (75%), available without favouritism (67%), comprehensive (61%), and accurate (53%).

Explicit And Fair Regulatory Framework For Media Activity

- A plurality thinks that the authority responsible for regulating the media does not render fair decisions (43%).

- Fifty-six percent report that the law and regulations outlining the requirements for obtaining a media license are clear.

- There is a mixed opinion over whether the law and regulations clearly state what constitutes defamation (41% agree, 37% disagree), with 40% indicating that the defamation law is misused in practice to threaten the media (31% disagree).

- Respondents are also mixed on whether the sanctions against journalists and media organizations are arbitrarily imposed (35% disagree, 35% neutral, 29% agree).

Absence Of Censorship

- Respondents think that both government censorship (66%) and self-censorship (60%) significantly hinders the independence of the media.

- Forty-two percent disagree that censorship is regulated by explicit directives (34% neutral, 22% agree).

- Respondents think that the media is not able to report openly on corruption (75%), politics (62%), and religion (55%), but can report openly on social issues (53%).

Media Outlets' Independence From Governmental And Nongovernmental Influences

- Respondents think that the media is influenced by the government (75%), the military/security services (68%), advertisers (62%), foreign governments (43%) and social groups (40%).

- A majority agree that the media is not influenced by businesses not related to advertisement (56%), civil society organizations (54%), and religious/sectarian groups (43%).

- There are mixed views on whether political groups influence the media (35% agree, 32% disagree and neutral).

- Respondents think that certain type of pressures are used to undermine the independence of the media including, financial (92%), political (86%), legal/judicial (68%), social (49%). Only 40% of respondents consider threats of physical harm to undermine the independence of the media, with 34% who disagree.

Personal Independence Of Journalists

- Forty-two percent of respondents think that journalists do not decide on the content of their publication/broadcast, but 40% believe that they do decide.

- According to respondents, 36% report no opinion on whether journalists are subject to arbitrary criminal prosecution (32% agree, 30% disagree).

- Respondents agree that journalists are subject to threats of termination of work (61%) and economic sanctions (48%), but not threats of physical harm (45%).

- Eighty-percent report that journalists do not have adequate salaries, and 46% do not think that civil society groups protect journalists' rights.

Reforms

- Ninety-five percent of respondents agree that reforms are needed to guarantee the personal independence of journalists (95%). Legal reforms (93%) and regulatory framework (90%) reforms are necessary to enhance the independence of the media. Reforms in censorship practices (87%) are required to strengthen the media's independence. Reforms are needed to increase the independence of media establishments from governmental influences (84%) and non-governmental influences (70%).

Integrity of the Media

Respondents are concerned with the integrity of the media. Many respondents report that there are standards that govern journalists, but there is concern that journalists may be susceptible to bribery. The media only accurately reflects some aspects of Jordan's diverse society, but its failure to reflect others undermines the integrity of the media.

Clear Professional And Ethical Standards

- Respondents are mixed on whether journalists are governed by clear and professional standards (37% agree and disagree).
- Forty-two percent do not agree that journalists effectively adhere to professional standards, but 31% agree.
- Respondents think that journalists are governed by clear ethical standards (48%), but only 38% agree that journalists adhere to these ethical standards (35% disagree).
- Forty percent of respondents report that journalists are likely to accept favours or bribes, whereas 35% disagree.

Diversity of the Media

- Respondents think that the media accurately reflects society's cultural diversity (46%) and political diversity (44%).
- Forty-percent indicate that the media fails to accurately reflect both the ethnic diversity and religious/sectarian diversity of society.
- There are mixed opinions as to whether the media accurately represents society's gender diversity (37% agree, 34% disagree).

Reforms

- Eighty-nine percent report that more diversity within the media would enhance the media's integrity. Both higher professional standards (86%) and higher ethical standards (83%) are needed to enhance the integrity of the media.

Competence of the Media

According to respondents, the insufficient qualifications of journalists and the lack of specialized training undermines the overall competence of the media. While the government uses qualification criteria in its selection process, there is concern that other factors influence these decisions. Unlike the government, private media organizations are only influenced by political views in the selection process.

Adequate Qualifications Of Working Journalists

- Forty-five percent report that journalists do not have sufficient qualifications to perform their duties competently, nor do they think that journalists receive specialized training (47%).

Open Access To The Profession

- Respondents think that certain factors are used by the government to select employees in public/official media including ethnicity (46%) and qualification criteria (37%). Sixty-four percent think that gender is not used by the government to select employees for the media. Thirty-eight percent have no opinion on whether political views/affiliations are a factor used by the government in this selection process.
- According to respondents, political views/affiliations are a factor used by private media organizations to select employees in the media profession (46%).

- Respondents believe that ethnicity (45%) is not a factor used by private media organizations to select employees. Gender (37% agree, 32% disagree) and qualification criteria (44% agree, 40% disagree) receive only a slight plurality of respondents who agree that these are not factors used by private media organization.

Reforms
- Ninety-five percent agree that reforms are needed to strengthen the competence and qualifications of journalists. Also, reforms of existing laws and regulations that specify rules to select media employees are needed to create equal chances of access to the profession (89%).

III. Missing Data Analysis:

An analysis of missing data yielded significant findings that warrant attention. The overall pattern of missing responses did not exceed 3%. 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 23.3% 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 hovered around the 15% rate of missing data; these are: **Item 15** "Sanctions against journalists and media organizations (e.g. denial or suspension of credentials, closure, seizure etc.) are arbitrarily imposed." (15.3%), and **item 19** "Censorship is regulated by explicit directives" (14%).

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 media; the survey used a random sample of media experts, but the sample size is too small to allow for confident generalisations. Furthermore, difficulties accessing these population (see refusal rates) limit the ability to generalise to the population since those that accepted to participate in this survey and those that refused may have different characteristics and perspectives.