



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Multi-Donor Programme
on Freedom of Expression
and Safety of Journalists

Sudan

Supporting the Media Reform Roadmap

Background

In 2019, Sudan underwent a revolution which succeeded to upturn a regime which had been in place for close to 30 years. While the country was notorious for its tight lock of press freedom, present day Sudan is experiencing fast evolutions. Thanks to technology, activists and reporters were able to live broadcast the waves of protests that led to the revolution, sharing minute by minute developments as some global channels broadcasted live streams. Much remains to be done in order to ensure compliance of Sudan's media laws with international standards and to promote pluralism, but the journey towards a free, independent media has started, and so has the fight to end impunity for crimes against journalists.

What we are doing

- Supporting the development and realization of Sudan's Media Reform Roadmap.

[Learn more about our work](#) (Story on the back page)

What we could further do with your support

- Supporting changes in the legal framework of the Sudanese media – it was found that at least 7 national laws have to be reviewed.
- Establishing infrastructures for Safe Journalism such as monitoring, rapid interventions, fair justice, among others.
- Establishing infrastructures for Ethical Journalism such as countering disinformation, preventing hate speech, fighting harassment,, among other issues.

Key Achievements

- A **Media Reform Roadmap** was drafted and media development gaps were successfully identified.
- **Establishment of a working group with 200 members** representing the government, journalists and media associations, human right activists, legal experts, civil society organizations and academics from all regions of Sudan, thus supporting an inclusive and multi-stakeholder reform process.
- **13 workshops and 66 expert meetings** were conducted, launching an open and transparent discssion on the situation of the Sudanese media and the way forward.

Actions in Sudan fall under the following outputs of the
Multi-Donor Programme (MPD):

Output 1:

Policy advice and reinforcement of duty bearers' capacities

Output 3:

Enhancing the safety of journalists

Output 4:

Awareness-raising and advocacy



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policies and actions to promote freedom of expression globally.

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**“We count on the training and qualification
of media professionals, with attention to
issues of peace and
democratic transformation.”**

.....

Faisal Mohammed Saleh

Minister of Culture and Information

► **Media reform in Sudan:
The beginning of a new era for
freedom of expression**

Following the 2019 Sudanese revolution and the signing of the August 2019 interim Constitutional Declaration, Sudan undertook an historic democratic transition.

Substantial commitments in favour of media freedom and safety of journalists were made, and UNESCO Office in Khartoum has upscaled work in the Communication and Information field, initiating an assessment based on UNESCO's Media Development Indicators as a contribution to developing a Roadmap for Media Reform, as well as an assessment based on UNESCO's Internet Universality Indicators (IUI).

For a long time, the lack of democracy did not allow media actors to “play [their] true role, which is to reflect the problems faced by the Sudanese citizens”, explains Ms. Lubna Abdalla, the President of the Sudanese Women Journalists Association.

She recalls the difficulties faced by journalists trying to obtain information from governmental institutions. Ms. Abdalla hopes that the current shift will mean “access to information for all journalists and the development of laws that protect democracy and press freedom, which will inevitably contribute to the progress of society.”

To her, the main challenges in this area are laws restricting press freedom.

By conducting an assessment of Sudanese laws and policies, UNESCO has laid the groundwork for a comprehensive reform of media legislation in line with international standards. The resulting Media Reform Roadmap will lead to the creation of a National Action Plan.

Such a reform is also deemed necessary by Ms Sara Fadul, the Director of the University of Khartoum Radio who observes that the existent legal framework laws was “put in place in favor of the State rather than in favor of the media and the public.” They are inherited from a time when Sudan “was suffering from government interference, security control and censorship”. One of the consequences is that today, still, “publication violations are treated as criminal offenses rather than civil cases”. As a result, “reforming the media sector must be accompanied by deep and real reforms of the legal system in Sudan,” she said.

Read more about our work, visit:

<https://en.unesco.org/themes/fostering-freedom-expression/mdp>



CONTACT

Aiman Badri
Communication and Information Officer
a.badri@unesco.org

Wael Mustafa
Project Officer
w.mustafa@unesco.org

UNESCO Office in Khartoum
Website: <https://en.unesco.org/fieldoffice/khartoum>