



Freedom of the Press 2007

Sub-Saharan Africa

Draft Country Reports and Ratings

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Angola

Status: Not Free

Legal Environment: 17

Political Environment: 24

Economic Environment: 21

Total Score: 62

Despite constitutional guarantees, freedom of the press is restricted in Angola. In February, the government approved a new Press Law which was enacted in May. The law is an improvement over previous legislation: it ends the state monopoly on television broadcasting, calls for the creation of a public broadcaster that ensures the “right of citizens to inform, seek information and be informed”, and allows journalists to use the truth defense in libel and defamation trials. However, the law includes several restrictive provisions and requires implementing legislation for the execution of some of the more positive reforms (including application for independent TV and radio licenses). Libel of the president or his representatives is still a criminal offense, punishable by high fines and possibly imprisonment (the wording of the legislation is vague). Authorities can suspend a publication for up to a year if it has published three articles that lead to defamation convictions within a three-year period. Particularly in the interior of the country, the judicial system has little independence to enforce legislation guaranteeing press freedom. The Law on State Secrecy permits the government to classify information, at times unnecessarily, and those who publish classified information are prosecuted. Private media are often denied access to official information or events. The new Press Law authorizes the creation—pending legislation—of an independent National Council for Media Communication.

Although the government generally tolerates criticism from private media, government officials often pressure independent media to cover the government in a more favorable light. Although less common than in previous years, arbitrary detention, harassment, and attacks on journalists continued to take place. For fear of reprisals, many journalists practice self-censorship. In July, Reporters Sans Frontieres condemned the murders of two Angolan journalists, though it was unclear whether their deaths were

related to their media work. Foreign media are able to operate with fewer government restrictions. However, journalists must first secure work visas to enter the country and then must receive authorization from the Ministry of the Interior to meet government officials or travel within Angola.

The government continues to dominate both print and broadcast media. The largest media sources are state run and allow very little criticism of government officials. The official Radio Nacional de Angola (RNA) is the only radio station with national coverage; the state also controls the only non-satellite television station. While the new Press Law opens television broadcasting to the private sector and establishes principles prohibiting censorship and respecting freedom of the press and access to information sources, the effective promulgation and implementation of the Law is another matter. Four private radio stations operate under government license from Luanda, the capital. As of 2006, authorities continued to prevent the outspoken Roman Catholic radio, Radio Ecclesia, from broadcasting outside Luanda. The country's seven private weeklies have low circulation and face financial constraints as well as high costs of production and distribution. Few outside the capital can afford private newspapers. Internet access is unrestricted and is available in several provincial capitals, though less than one percent of the population was able to make use of this new medium in 2006.

Benin

Status: Free

Legal Environment: 10

Political Environment: 10

Economic Environment: 10

Total Score: 30

Freedom of speech and of the press is protected by the constitution and the government has developed a reputation for respecting these rights in practice. However, in 2006 a number of worrying developments occurred that, if continued, could threaten Benin's status as one of the freest environments for the media in Africa. In December, a 1997 press law that criminalizes libel was implemented for the first time in two years. A court bailiff, Maxime Bankole, pressed charges against the private *L'Informateur* in December 2006 for refusing to retract a story accusing him of rape. The courts sentenced both the editor and a journalist at *L'Informateur* to six months in prison and a \$1,000 fine. During 2005, in preparation for the March 2006 presidential election, the High Council for Audiovisual Media and Communications (HAAC) passed provisions mandating fair and balanced coverage of all presidential candidates. The provisions also restricted the amount of time a media outlet could devote to a particular presidential candidate and forbade opinion pieces on the election that might jeopardize "national unity." At year's end, as part of the new government's effort to "clean up the journalism sector," the HAAC instituted a requirement that all working journalists obtain a new press card; the conditions for obtaining one of these cards are strict and were intended to apply to less than 40% of those currently in the journalism business to weed out the nonprofessionals.

During its final days in power leading up to the March election, Mathieu Kerekou's regime made a number of direct attempts to limit critical content in the media industry. In February, the managing editor of a daily newspaper, *Panorama*, was temporarily detained and charged with high treason after publishing an article describing an alleged coup attempt intended to keep Kerekou in power. Also, in early March Kerekou's Communications Minister fired two top officials at the state-run broadcast office after they refused to broadcast a government videotape allegedly proving the presence of electoral fraud due to doubts about the tape's authenticity. After the election, the newly-elected President Boni Yayi appointed a new minister of communications who immediately reinstated the fired ORTB officials. However, threats against the press did not entirely disappear with the resignation of Kerekou; in September three journalists with two separate privately-run newspapers were arrested and temporarily detained for articles critical of the police and the new president's family.

Benin's numerous established media outlets have a history of providing aggressive reporting and robust scrutiny of both government and opposition leaders. However, the media market has recently become saturated by a number of publications that emerged for the first time in the month preceding the election, many of which receive direct political funding. The inability of most of Benin's media operators to garner a consistent profit further limits accuracy and fairness in reporting by making poorly paid reporters susceptible to bribery and blackmail. Internet access is available primarily through dial-up internet cafes that remain unhindered by government censorship, and at 425,000 users, Benin had one of West Africa's highest rates of access to this new media in 2006.

Botswana

Status: Partly Free

Legal Environment: 8

Political Environment: 16

Economic Environment: 11

Total Score: 35

Freedom of speech and of the press is provided for in the constitution, and the government generally respects these rights in practice. However, recent years have seen deterioration in freedom of expression in Botswana. Libel is a civil offense, and in past years publications have been charged with defamation and have had to pay large amounts of money in court-ordered damages or as part of a settlement. The National Security Act (NSA), enacted in 1986 during Botswana's conflict with apartheid South Africa, remains on the books and has been used to restrict reporting on government activities. In August, the government presented parliament with a draft version of the Botswana Broadcasting Bill. The Bill included plans to establish a new community broadcasting sector—though the number of licenses available to community radio and television stations was not specified—as well as a public entity to monitor the quality and objectivity of state-owned media. Botswana does not have a freedom of information law, and critics accuse the government of excessive secrecy.

Journalists are occasionally threatened, harassed, or attacked in retaliation for their reporting. This was a particularly acute problem in 2005 when the government employed immigration legislation to deport two Zimbabwean journalists, Rodrick Mukumbira and Charles Chirinda, who had criticized state policies; both were not given specific reasons for their expulsion. Also in 2005, Kenneth Good, an Australian-born academic who criticized as undemocratic certain elements of Botswana's political system, was charged under the NSA and deported.

Independent print media and radio stations provide vigorous scrutiny of the government and air a wide range of opinions, mostly without government interference. Several independent newspapers and magazines are published in the capital. However, the state-owned Botswana Press Agency dominates the media landscape via its *Daily News* newspaper and two nationally broadcast FM radio stations; radio remains the chief source of news for the majority of the population. Botswana Television, also owned by the state, is the country's only source of local television news. Government-controlled media outlets generally confine themselves to coverage that is supportive of official policies and do not adequately cover the activities or viewpoints of opposition parties and other critics. The government sometimes censors or otherwise restricts news sources or stories that it finds undesirable, and editorial interference in the state-owned media from the Ministry of Communication, Science, and Technology has increased in recent years. In September, press freedom advocates and opposition political parties condemned a government warning to state-owned media to exercise "maximum patriotic solidarity, collective responsibility, [and] allegiance to country and nation" in reporting about the Central Kalahari Game Reserve. Radio Botswana's popular call-in segment of the morning show *Masa-a-sele*, suspended in 2003, began broadcasting again in 2006. Privately owned radio stations and the sole private television station have a limited reach, particularly within the rural districts; however, Botswana can easily receive broadcasts from neighboring South Africa. The financial viability of Botswana's independent newspapers is undermined by the fact that the *Daily News* is distributed nationwide at no cost. Internet access is unrestricted, though access is limited to approximately three percent of the population because of poverty and other financial constraints.

Burkina Faso

Status: Partly Free

Legal Environment: 12

Political Environment: 14

Economic Environment: 13

Total Score: 39

Freedom of speech is protected by the constitution under Article 8, and this right is usually respected by the government in practice. However, under the 1993 information code, media outlets may be summarily banned if they are accused of distributing false information or endangering national security. Libel laws are also unfavorable to the press and put the burden of proof on the defendant. No law exists to guarantee equal access to

information. The Supreme Council of Communication—which operates within the presidential office with limited independence—acts as the regulatory body for the media.

The most significant event for freedom of the press in Burkina Faso in 2006 involved the high profile investigation of the 1998 murder of prominent journalist Norbert Zongo. In July, the presiding judge dismissed the case against a presidential guard, the only person ever formally charged in the murder. A month later, the appeal made by Zongo's family was also dismissed. This effectively closed the case until new evidence could be submitted that might strengthen existing charges found to be insufficient. An attempt in October by Reporters Sans Frontieres to submit such evidence and reopen the case also proved unsuccessful. In another example of judicial disinterest in protecting the principles of press freedom, the policemen who beat a journalist covering the Hajj pilgrimage in February 2005 have yet to be formally accused by a court. In addition, Burkinabe journalists experienced occasional instances of harassment in 2006. During a January 16 demonstration, police confiscated the camera of a reporter with *L'Independent* and held it for the duration of the demonstration; and in April security forces detained and questioned a journalist for the private *Le Pays* following an interview he conducted with former soldiers accused of attempting to stage a coup.

A very open media regularly reports on the activities of the executive branch, and criticism of government action or inaction is regularly voiced. Although the state-operated media function with a noticeable pro-government bias, the media is generally free of overt censorship, and several newspapers were openly anti-government. The state-run television station, TNB, accepted funding, for remodeling the station headquarters, from a number of major private sources, including the wealthy entrepreneur Oumarou Kanazoé whom many consider to be a suspect in the Zongo case. TNB denies that this funding will influence coverage. Access to international print and broadcast media and the internet remains unrestricted by the government, but infrastructure limitations and poverty have held the percentage of the population able to access the internet at less than one percent.

Burundi

Status: Not Free

Legal Environment: 22

Political Environment: 31

Economic Environment: 24

Total Score: 77

Burundi has missed a unique opportunity to improve its press freedom status following the 2005 democratic election—the first since 1993—and the September 2006 signing of a ceasefire agreement with the last remaining rebel organization. Instead, the government abused its consolidated power and began a targeted crackdown on critical media outlets. The transitional constitution does provide for freedom of expression, but most media legislation is vague about the offences for which a journalist may be charged. For example, the 1997 Press Law forbids the dissemination of “information inciting civil disobedience or serving as propaganda for enemies of the Burundian nation during a time

of war.” The November 2003 Media Law also provides for harsh fines and prison terms of up to five years for the dissemination of information that insults the president or is defamatory towards other individuals. However, according to the International Crisis Group, a new law is being drafted which would more accurately define the responsibilities and duties of the media.

With the control that the Hutu-dominated ruling party has over government institutions and the disunity of the rival political parties, much of this year’s opposition originated from within the media and civil society. This fact, along with the alleged Tutsi dominance of the media elite, has propelled the government’s harassment and detention of media personnel in 2006. After the exposure of an alleged coup attempt and the subsequent arrest and torture of several prominent opposition leaders, the government directly targeted a number of media outlets that questioned the veracity of the supposed coup attempt. In November, two journalists with the privately-owned Radio Publique Africaine (RPA)—a frequent government target in recent years—and the director of Radio Isanganiro—a station backed by the American NGO Search for Common Ground—were all charged with “violating state secrecy” and sentenced to prison for publishing information about the alleged coup; all three journalists remained incarcerated at year’s end. In September, following three months of illegal pre-trial detention, Aloys Kabura, a reporter with the state-run Agence Burundaise de Presse, was also sentenced to prison for five months for making critical comments about the police’s temporary detention of 30 journalists at a news conference in mid-April. According to the Committee to Protect Journalists, this made Burundi Africa’s third leading jailer of journalists for 2006.

Burundi’s only daily newspaper, *Le Renouveau*, is controlled by the government along with the nation’s sole television station and the only nationally-broadcasted radio station. Six private publications operate on a weekly basis while private radio stations broadcast only irregularly and most are restricted to Bujumbura. Private ownership tends to be highly concentrated, but outlets do represent a wide range of opinions and some, like RPA, manage to present diverse and balanced coverage. No government restrictions on internet access are apparent, though the National Communication Council bans websites from “posting documents or other statements by political organizations that disseminate hate or violence,” and due to economic and infrastructure limitations, less than one percent of the population was able to access this new media in 2006.

Cameroon

Status: Not Free

Legal Environment: 20

Political Environment: 25

Economic Environment: 22

Total Score: 67

The Constitution of the Republic of Cameroon provides for freedom of the press and of speech, but the government restricts these rights in practice. Criminal libel laws are regularly used to silence criticisms of the state and government officials. Although much

of the independent press did persist in reporting critically about the government in 2006, a number of critics were prosecuted under the libel laws, and the threat of prosecution led many, particularly within the broadcast media, to self-censor their material. The most high-profile instance of such criminal libel convictions was when a number of newspapers published a list of supposed “secret homosexuals” within the government in January and February. Although this list was potentially offensive and insulting, the punishments of imprisonment and exorbitant fines that were handed out were disproportionate to the crimes committed. In March, Jean-Pierre Amougou Belinga, publisher of *L'Anecdote* was sentenced to four months in prison and a \$2,000 fine, while Ayissi Biola, publisher of *Nouvelle Afrique* was sentenced to six months imprisonment and order to pay a total of \$6,000 in damages to two separate plaintiffs. Separately, many other journalists were convicted of libel by the courts; most received suspended prison sentences. These included Dieudonne Mveng, publisher of *La Meteo*; Socrate Dipanda, publisher of *Le Constat*; Peter William Mandio, publisher of *Le Front*; Henriette Ekwe, a *Le Front* columnist; and Georges Gilbert Baongla, publisher of *Le Dementi*.

Journalists were arbitrarily arrested, detained, harassed, intimidated and physically abused in 2006, while some publications were confiscated by the state. In January, unidentified assailants set fire to Freedom FM, a private radio station that had yet to begin operations. In 2003, the government had originally forced the station to close before it ever began operating and refused to lift the ban until 2005. In November, after receiving numerous threats leading up to a radio show asking listeners to offer their opinion about the Biya regime, Agnes Taile, the host of the popular program on the local Sweet FM, was abducted from her home, beaten, and left for dead. Other instances of harassment of journalists included the illegal 5 day detention of Duke Atangana Etotogo, the managing editor of *L'Afrique Centrale* by the military security in September after he published articles address corruption and incompetence within the army.

There are about 25 regularly published newspapers; among them are the privately operating *Mutations*, *La Nouvelle Expression*, and *Le Messenger*, as well as the state's *Cameroon Tribune* which toes the government line in the majority of its coverage. Many of the private papers freely criticize government policies and report on controversial issues, including corruption, human rights abuses, homosexuality, and economic policies. Distribution problems and high government tariffs on production ensure that newspapers remain a uniquely urban phenomenon. There are about 20 privately-owned broadcast stations, among them five are television stations. The state owned CRTV broadcasts on both television and radio and was the only officially recognized and fully licensed broadcaster in the country. In general, the broadcast media is tightly controlled by the government and discussion or advocacy of secession is strictly prohibited. Several rural community radio stations were established by UNESCO in 2006, though they are all limited in the range of their broadcast capacity and prohibited from discussing politics at all. Foreign broadcasters, including the BBC and Radio France Internationale, are permitted to operate within Cameroon but they must partner with the state-owned CRTV. Despite the signing into law of the National Anticorruption Commission, corruption is rampant in many sectors of the media; many journalists expect and accept payment from politicians for writing articles containing unsubstantiated allegations against their opponents. Access to internet is not limited by the government although slow connections and high fees at cyber cafes serve to restrict access to only 1.5 percent of the population.

Cape Verde

Status: Free

Legal Environment: 5

Political Environment: 10

Economic Environment: 14

Total Score: 29

Status change explanation: Cape Verde's rating improved from Partly Free to Free as a result of the continued consolidation of democratic trends leading to greater opening in the media environment and a decrease in the number of cases of legal harassment of, and attacks on, journalists.

The constitution directly provides for freedom of the press, as well as confidentiality of sources, access to information, and freedom from arbitrary arrest. In recent years, the government has consistently demonstrated its ability to respect and protect these rights in practice, making Cape Verde an exemplary country in Africa. A 1999 constitutional amendment still excludes the use of freedom of expression as a defense in defamation cases; however there have been no such libel cases since 2002. While the law requires a formal licensing mechanism for mass media, there have been no reports of the government refusing such licenses for political reasons and no government authorization at all is needed for the establishment of a print publication. There were also no reported cases of political or extra-judicial intimidation or violence in 2006.

Much of the media is state operated, although there are a growing number of private publications and broadcast outlets. There are three privately-owned newspapers and one run by the state. While there are six independent radio stations that broadcast regularly in Cape Verde, the government owns a national radio station as well as the only national television station. The government does not generally restrict access to the media that it controls; nonetheless, a number of opposition political candidates reported having trouble accessing air time on the state broadcasters for the February presidential election. Self-censorship is also widely practiced among journalists and has been one of the largest obstacles in Cape Verde to the creation of a truly free press. Geographical barriers and harsh terrain in a country made up of several islands also constitute impediments to the distribution of newspapers and other media products. Access to the internet is not restricted by the government, and email messages and foreign broadcasts are uncensored.

Central African Republic

Status: Partly Free

Legal Environment: 18

Political Environment: 21

Economic Environment: 19

Total Score: 58

Status change explanation: Central African Republic's rating improved from Not Free to Partly Free as a result of improvements in the environment for the media following the government's adherence to, and enforcement of, the new press law and constitution passed in 2005 respecting freedom of expression and decriminalizing libel.

The 2005 constitution provides for freedom of the press, though authorities have used intimidation and legal harassment to limit reporting, particularly on sensitive topics such as official corruption. In December 2005, an overwhelming majority of voters approved this new constitution, which recognizes the freedom to inform and express opinions as fundamental rights of the country's citizens. In addition, a new press law decriminalizing many press offenses, including defamation and slander, was approved by President François Bozize in early 2005; criminal penalties remain for incitement to ethnic or religious hatred, and for the publication or broadcast of false information that could "disturb the peace." In 2006, the government generally respected these new laws—a noticeable improvement from the previous year when the security forces arrested, detained, and threatened journalists.

Maka Gbossokotto, one of the CAR's most prominent journalists and a correspondent for Reporters Sans Frontieres, led the struggle to decriminalize press offenses after his own imprisonment for defamation in 2004. No journalist was imprisoned in 2006, but Gbossokotto, who edits the independent daily *Le Citoyen*, received threats in January from a former member of the presidential guard after *Le Citoyen* reported on an outbreak of violence between factions of the military police in the capital, Bangui. The same month, Bozize dissolved the executive board of the newly created High Communications Council (HCC), in what appeared to be an attempt to strengthen the government's control of the media regulatory body. However, in July the president agreed to pass a new decree mandating parity between representatives of the private and public media within the Council, a move supported by local journalists' organizations.

More than 30 newspapers published, with varying degrees of regularity, in 2006. Many of these were privately owned, including at least three independent dailies, and most were able to report on political issues such as government corruption and economic policies. Nonetheless, meager salaries and real or self-imposed censorship in a less than dynamic media market continue to hamper the editorial freedom of news organizations. The CAR's private press is restricted almost entirely to the capital, the result of financial constraints as well as the danger of working in the countryside, where anti-Bozize rebels as well as militias connected to the ongoing conflicts in neighboring Sudan and Chad operate with impunity. The state remains dominant in the broadcast sector, and private radio stations, reined in by legal and financial restrictions, are often intimidated by the powerful. A prominent exception is Radio Ndeke Luka, a joint initiative of the United Nations and the Switzerland-based Fondation Hirondelle, which broadcasts on FM in the capital and on short-wave in the rest of the country. Internet access is open and unrestricted, though communications infrastructure is almost non-existent outside of Bangui and less than 0.5 percent of the population was able to make use of this medium in 2006.

Chad

Status: Not Free

Legal Environment: 23

Political Environment: 30

Economic Environment: 21

Total Score: 74

The constitution allows for freedom of expression, but authorities have routinely used threats and legal provisions criminalizing defamation and vaguely defined “incitement” to imprison journalists and censor critical reporting. In Chad’s conservative, ethnically polarized society, many subjects are considered off-limits for the press, including the armed rebellion on the border with Sudan and recurring tensions between tribal clans. The High Council of Communication (HCC), the official media regulatory body, has the authority to suspend publications and broadcast outlets for defamation or excessive criticism of the government, particularly President Idriss Déby. On November 13, 2006, amid worsening violence in the volatile east which borders Darfur, the government instituted a state of emergency in six regions of Chad including the capital, N’Djamena. The state of emergency included a ban on newspaper and radio coverage of issues and events “likely to threaten public order, national unity, territorial integrity, and respect for the republican institutions,” and required radio stations to submit their recorded material to government censors.

In the lead-up to presidential elections held on May 3, the government arrested Tchanguis Vatankah, president of the Chadian Union of Private Radios and director of an independent radio station in the remote southern town of Moissala, over a radio union press release criticizing HCC restrictions against broadcasting live political debates (Deby was reelected in a poll boycotted by the opposition). Vatankah was held for three weeks and released only after he pledged to stay out of politics, and to step down as head of the radio union. An Iranian national who has resided in Chad for decades, Vatankah has been a frequent target of government ire in the past in connection with his work for Radio Brakos in Moissala. Also in April, a journalist working FM Liberté in central Chad was briefly held by rebels as they advanced towards N’Djamena. In the months that followed, government censorship increased amid heightened civil conflict. Journalists in Chad are restricted from discussing Darfur or Chad’s confrontations with the Sudanese government. In October, a journalist for the private weekly *Notre Temps* was detained for four days over an editorial critical of the government’s conduct in the war.

Private newspapers, many of which were critical of the government before the state of emergency was imposed, circulate freely in the capital, N’Djamena, but they have little impact on the largely rural and illiterate population; radio is the primary means for mass communication. The only television station, Telet Chad, is state owned, and its coverage favors the government. Despite high licensing fees for commercial radio stations, there are over a dozen private and community-run stations on the air, some operated by nonprofit groups (including human rights groups and the Roman Catholic Church). These broadcasters are subject to close official scrutiny, and those that fail to pay annual fees to the state are threatened with closure. Access to the internet is limited

by the high level of poverty in Chad to less than 0.5 percent of the population, but the government refrains from restricting access to those who can afford it. Nonetheless, according to the U.S. State Department, the government does occasionally engage in monitoring e-mail through the main post office server.

Comoros

Status: Partly Free

Legal Environment: 12

Political Environment: 21

Economic Environment: 15

Total: 48

Freedom of speech and of the press are protected under the preamble to the 2001 constitution. These rights are generally respected by the government, but journalists are subject to harassment and harsh defamation laws. In March, paramilitary police detained Aboubacar M'changama, editor of the private weekly *L'Archipel*, for printing two articles concerning discontent within the military. M'changama, who also heads the Comorian Print Media Organization, was held for 54 hours, exceeding the legal 48 hour maximum detention limit. Several radio stations were targeted prior to the May 2006 presidential elections. Radio Ngazidja, the official government station of Grand Comore, and private station Moroni FM were ransacked and temporarily forced off the air by armed assailants. Equipment was confiscated from Radio Mohéli by the local military commander. Two journalists claim the Radio Mohéli censorship was the result of having aired protests against the director of a state-owned agency. Comoros has several independent newspapers and one state-owned weekly, *Al-Watan*. Of the two national radio stations, one (Radio Comoros) is run by the government, and the other (Radio Tropic) is run by the opposition. Private local radio and television stations have proliferated in the last few years and are funded predominantly by donations from locals as well as from citizens living abroad. Although available and unrestricted by the government, poverty, illiteracy, and poor telecommunications infrastructure severely limited access to the internet, which was utilized by only 3 percent of the population in 2006.

Congo (Brazzaville)

Status: Partly Free

Legal Environment: 17

Political Environment: 17

Economic Environment: 17

Total Score: 51

The constitution provides for freedom of the press, but several types of expression are considered to be criminal offenses, including incitement to ethnic hatred and violence. Following legal reforms in 2001, many press offenses are punishable by fines rather than

imprisonment, including libel and publishing “false news.” Nonetheless, these fines are often excessive and quickly handed down to publications critical of the government. Local stringers for international media outlets, as well as those employed by the state-run media, have in the past had their accreditation revoked if their reporting was perceived to portray the government in a bad light.

In April, authorities detained the director of a private newspaper, *Thalassa*, overnight and charged him with defamation, insulting the president, and publishing false news, after the paper published a report accusing the president of poisoning a retired general. A judge later imposed a six-month ban on *Thalassa*. Also in April, two prominent local anti-corruption campaigners were arrested and detained for three weeks after they contributed to a Global Witness report criticizing the government’s misuse of oil revenues. In a subsequent trial condemned by the World Bank and others, the two were given suspended prison sentences and fines of \$600 each.

In 2006, over 15 private weekly newspapers published in Brazzaville and provided some scrutiny of the government, though few were readily available in rural areas. Officially, the state does not publish its own newspapers, but a number of publications are believed to be allied with the regime of President Denis Sassou-Nguesso. Radio remains the best means of reaching large audiences nationwide. The government has been slow to loosen its grip on the broadcast sector and continues to run three radio stations and one television station. Political parties are not permitted to own radio stations or television channels; and although several private radio and television stations have won permission to broadcast in recent years, they rarely criticize the government. In 2006, little more than one percent of the population was able to access the internet, amounting to 50,000 people, few of whom resided outside of urban areas; the government is not known to restrict online traffic or content.

Congo (Kinshasa)

Status: Not Free

Legal Environment: 24

Political Environment: 32

Economic Environment: 24

Total Score: 80

The law provides for freedom of speech and of the press, but this right is limited in practice by President Joseph Kabila’s government and various non-state actors. Officials used an array of prohibitive licensing and criminal libel laws to restrict free speech and suppress political criticism by imprisoning journalists under the country’s repressive defamation laws, shutting down broadcast operations, and seizing copies of newspapers critical of the authorities. Several Congolese journalists spent time in jail in 2006, including a newspaper publisher in the capital, Kinshasa, who was arrested in November 2005 and held for nine months on charges of publishing “false rumors,” insulting the head of state, and “insulting the government.” Patrice Booto was finally freed after being sentenced to six months in jail and a fine, but many such cases never go to court. Local media outlets are also subject to regulation by the High Authority on Media (HAM), a

public agency created under the 2002 peace accords that formally ended the DRC's civil war. The agency's mandate is to ensure freedom of expression, but it has the authority to temporarily suspend media outlets for hate speech and other serious ethical transgressions. The HAM targeted several media outlets owned by politicians opposed to Kabila in 2006, prompting allegations that the sanctions were politically motivated.

Multiparty presidential elections were held on July 30, 2006, for the first time since independence from Belgium in 1960. Kabila, who had led the country's transitional government since 2002, won in an October run-off against his main rival, former rebel leader Jean-Pierre Bemba. In July, the government expelled a respected Radio France Internationale (RFI) correspondent after repeatedly denying her accreditation to cover the elections. During the pre-electoral period, journalists faced physical abuse, imprisonment, and threats from all parties to the country's debilitating internal strife. Instances of harassment and physical intimidation of journalists were particularly severe in the eastern Ituri, Kivu, and Kasai provinces, where the government in Kinshasa exercises little control and armed groups continue to terrorize journalists and the civilian population. On July 8, unidentified gunmen killed Bapuwa Mwamba, a Congolese journalist who worked for several local publications, in his home in Kinshasa. Authorities charged a soldier and two civilians in connection with the murder, saying that Mwamba was killed in an attempted robbery; however, the local press freedom group Journaliste en Danger (JED) ruled out robbery as a motive, based on their own investigation. The trial of three soldiers accused of murdering another prominent Congolese journalist in November 2005 began in July, but remained unresolved at year's end, and members of JED reported that they had received threats in connection with their inquiry into the incident.

The people of the DRC are largely illiterate and depend upon radio broadcasts for the news. Nonetheless, many private newspapers exist, and although not always objective, they are often able to be highly critical of the government. Multiple privately owned radio and television stations also operate in tandem with two state-owned radio stations as well as a state-owned television station. The state-owned broadcasters operate with a pro-government bias but permitted other major political parties represented in the transitional government to gain access to airtime. Together with the Swiss-funded Fondation Hironnelle, MONUC operates an independent countrywide radio network, Radio Okapi, which has set new standards for reporting and media objectivity in a volatile political scene. Journalists in all major media outlets are usually poorly paid and lack sufficient training, making them vulnerable to bribery and political manipulation. The government refrains from any overt internet censorship. However, only a tiny portion of the population (less than 0.5 percent) was able to access the internet due to financial constraints and the volatile political situation.

Cote d'Ivoire

Status: Not Free

Legal Environment: 19

Political Environment: 30

Economic Environment: 19

Total Score: 68

The constitution provides for freedom of the press, but since the 2002 rebellion that divided the country into government and rebel-held portions, the government has reduced press freedoms in the name of patriotism and national unity. Parliament scrapped criminal libel and other punitive laws for press offenses in December 2004. However, these legal improvements were disregarded in June 2006 when the editor and the publications director at the opposition daily *Le Font* were sentenced to three months in prison and large fines on charges of defamation. The journalists have not yet served their time in prison, hoping to overturn the ruling in the appeals court.

Journalists remain vulnerable to physical and other abuse by police and extra-legal militias and many journalists, particularly those involved in media outlets expressing dissenting views, were subject to direct attacks and intimidation efforts throughout the year. However, the primary threat to the media in 2006 came from the blatant attempts made by President Gbagbo and pro-government militias to control media content, particularly that of the state-run media. In January, following the UN's announcement that the mandate of the National Assembly did not extend beyond 2005, hundreds of members of the militant progovernment group, the Young Patriots and other government supporters rallied in front of the offices of the state-run media outlet, Radiotelevision Ivoirienne (RTI) eventually using force to gain access to the station and broadcast messages inciting violence and instructing protesters to target specific buildings including UN headquarters and the French embassy. This incident has intensified international concern about xenophobia and hate language in the Ivorian media. During the occupation of the outlet, which was aided by state security personnel and a number of senior broadcast officials, demonstrators threatened to kill or rape journalists who were unwilling to cooperate. Many other journalists were harassed, attacked, and threatened amid the wider violence that month, and a number of media outlets were intimidated into temporarily closing their offices.

As a further direct assault on the independence of the state media in general, and RTI in particular, in November Gbagbo dissolved the entire board of directors and fired the director general of RTI replacing him with Brou Amessan, who had served as the government's news anchor during the Young Patriots takeover in January. This move came during a period of heightened tension between Gbagbo and his Prime Minister after RTI aired one of the Prime Minister's press releases which condemned Gbagbo's actions following the dumping of toxic waste in Abidjan. In the same move, the director of the state-owned daily *Fraternite Matin* was also replaced with someone more favorable to the administration.

Little changed in 2006 for media practitioners in the northern rebel-held territory. Only one incident of media harassment was reported in which an independent journalist was allegedly beaten by security forces while leaving an interview with a rebel spokesman. The rebels operate at least one television and two radio stations in their zone and continue to allow the circulation of progovernment newspapers and the broadcasting of government television and radio programs.

The government controls two major radio stations, one of which is the only national station and key source of news in the country. Private print and community radio stations do present diverse views and frequently scrutinize the government, but they are

regularly harassed for these reports. Since 2002, pro-government media have led an ultra-nationalistic campaign against France, which they accuse of backing the rebellion; this campaign, supported by Gbagbo, has increasingly included calls for the removal of the UN mission and its peacekeeping troops stationed in Cote d'Ivoire. Following a 10 month ban on its FM radio transmissions, in May 2006 French government-owned RFI was allowed to resume its broadcasting in return for an \$18,000 fine and the reappointment of a permanent RFI correspondent in Abidjan. Internet access, though severely constrained by poverty and infrastructure limitations (only 1 percent of the population was able to access the internet in 2006), is unrestricted by the government.

Djibouti

Status: Not Free

Legal Environment: 23

Political Environment: 25

Economic Environment: 21

Total Score: 69

Although Article 15 of the constitution affords the right to express and disseminate "opinions by word, pen, or image" the government imposes restrictions on the independent press. Free speech is limited by prohibitions on slander and the dissemination of "false information" as well as difficulties in obtaining broadcasting licenses, arrest and detention of journalists, seizure of newspapers, and high court fines for "offensive" reporting, according to the BBC. The U.S. military presence in Djibouti creates additional pressure for self-censorship as journalists are encouraged not to report on soldiers' activities. On May 30, a journalist for the Radio and Television of Djibouti was suspended for three months for broadcasting a story on a child who reportedly had avian influenza and whose mother denied the illness accusing the Ministry of Health of creating the story to try and obtain foreign assistance. Because of extreme poverty, radio is the most popular news medium, as few can afford newspapers or TV sets. Television and radio broadcasts are controlled by the government and report favorably on government activities; however, the BBC World Service, Radio France International, and the Voice of America are also accessible. The largest newspaper is the bi-weekly government-owned *La Nation*, though opposition parties also print two weekly papers- *Le Renouveau* and *Le Republique*. The only internet service provider is government-owned. In January, the website of the Association for Respect of Human Rights in Djibouti (ARDHD) was blocked. The ARDHD is often critical of the government, who denied involvement in the blocking. Barely 1 percent of the population was able to access the internet in 2006.

Equatorial Guinea

Status: Not Free

Legal Environment: 27
Political Environment: 35
Economic Environment: 27
Total Score: 89

Freedom of expression and freedom of the press are legally guaranteed, but these rights are severely restricted in practice. The 1992 Press Law gives the government unusually extensive authority to restrict press activities through official prepublication censorship. All domestic journalists are required to register with the Ministry of Information, and equally strict accreditation procedures are in place for foreign correspondents. In 2006, the Committee to Protect Journalists listed Equatorial Guinea as one of the world's most censored countries, noting that almost all local coverage is orchestrated or tightly controlled by the government.

Local journalists, including the few who work for foreign news outlets, were subject to systematic harassment and surveillance. Mild criticism of infrastructure and public institutions is allowed, but nothing disparaging about the president or security forces is tolerated. In the past, foreign journalists have been closely monitored and occasionally deported if their coverage is deemed to be sensitive.

Equatorial Guinea is one of the few African countries to have virtually no independent media. Given the high level of poverty and illiteracy throughout the country, the most influential form of media is radio, but all domestic radio and television stations are owned directly by the government or by the president's family. The state-owned media is dominated by eulogistic coverage of the government and the president. Applications to open private radio stations have been pending for several years but have thus far not been approved. One opposition newspaper continued to appear occasionally throughout the year but practiced self-censorship because of government intimidation. A dozen other private newspapers are licensed to publish but function primarily as opposition mouthpieces and are therefore tied to the political fortunes of their sponsors. According to the U.S. State Department, foreign celebrity and sports publications were available for sale, but there were no foreign newspapers, bookstores, or even newsstands in the country. Foreign broadcasts are allowed, including Radio France Internationale and Radio Exterior, an international shortwave service from Spain. Through its interviews with opposition politicians, Radio Exterior operates as the only means by which opposition voices can reach rural populations. Internet access is limited to just over 0.5 percent of the population by the level of poverty in Equatorial Guinea but is not directly restricted by the government. Nonetheless, government operatives are believed to monitor citizens' e-mail and internet use.

Eritrea

Status: Not Free
Legal Environment: 30
Political Environment: 40
Economic Environment: 24
Total Score: 94

In an already inhibiting media environment, the situation for the Eritrean press further deteriorated in 2006 as the government tightened restrictions for foreign reporters traveling within the country. Eritrean law guarantees freedom of speech and of the press. However, since a government ban on all privately owned media was imposed in September 2001, Eritrea remains one of the harshest environments worldwide for the press and is a leading jailer of journalists in Africa. Following the official ban, an unknown number of government critics were detained, including many journalists. According to the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), at least 13 journalists remained behind bars in 2006, with two more enduring prolonged forced labor euphemistically called “national service.” Many of the jailed journalists are being held incommunicado in undisclosed locations, without access to their families or the Red Cross. Most have been incarcerated since the crackdown in 2001, and despite Eritrean legal guarantees, they were never formally charged. In response to queries from a number of press freedom organizations, the president and senior government officials have accused the journalists of espionage and threatening national security, but they have declined to provide details or evidence in support of these accusations.

The 1996 Press Law prohibits the establishment of private broadcast media outlets and foreign ownership of media and requires all newspapers and journalists to be licensed. It also stipulates that publications be submitted for government approval prior to release and prohibits reprinting articles from banned publications. The tiny handful of local and foreign independent journalists who continue to operate in the country on behalf of international media are constantly harassed, detained, and threatened. In June 2006, the government tightened restrictions on foreigners seeking to travel inside the country. According to CPJ, the new restrictions were partly intended as a means for preventing foreign journalists from reporting outside of the capital. The restrictions were imposed after Eritrea expelled several international aid groups that had provided food assistance in the countryside. An article in the *Economist* noted that the expulsions “may be one way of muzzling reports of any impending humanitarian disaster.”

There is currently no independent or privately owned press. Only three newspapers, one television station, and one radio station operate, and they all remain under state control. Journalists working for the state-owned media operate under strict surveillance and severe pressure to report positively on government programs. The importation of foreign periodicals is forbidden. Internet use is extremely limited (just under two percent of the population was able to access it in 2006), and authorities are believed to monitor private email communication.

Ethiopia

Status: Not Free

Legal Environment: 27

Political Environment: 30

Economic Environment: 20

Total Score: 77

Following a November 2005 crackdown on opposition political parties, as well as on the civil society groups and media outlets that were perceived to support them, press freedom in Ethiopia remained extremely limited during 2006. The constitution guarantees freedom of the press, but this right is often restricted in practice. Authorities frequently invoke the 1992 Law on the Press regarding publication of false and offensive information, incitement of ethnic hatred, or libel in order to justify the arrest and detainment of journalists. Court cases can drag on for years, and journalists often have multiple charges pending against them; at the end of 2006, three reporters who had been sentenced under the press law remained in jail. A 2003 draft press law, which has been widely criticized by the private press and by press freedom groups, remained under consideration in 2006, although certain provisions of the law were included in the new penal code that took effect in May 2005. Issues of concern include restrictions on who may practice journalism; government-controlled licensing and registration systems; restrictions on print and broadcast cross-ownership; harsh sanctions for violations of the law, including up to five years' imprisonment; excessively broad exceptions to the right of access to information held by public authorities; and the establishment of a government-controlled press council with powers to engage in prior censorship. The Ethiopian Free Press Journalists Association (EFJA), one of the most vocal opponents of the draft press law, continued to face harassment from the government, and EFJA president Kifle Mulat remained in exile by year's end. The administration has traditionally denied access to the independent press, limiting coverage of official events to state-owned media outlets, although these restrictions were loosened on several occasions during 2006 for the first time in more than a dozen years.

The broader political crackdown which began in November 2005 continued to have extremely negative implications for the media. Of several dozen journalists arrested alongside civil society activists and politicians, a number were charged with treason, genocide, and attempts to subvert the constitution, all charges that carry prison terms and the possibility of the death penalty. However, according to a report by the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), the government has not yet produced any evidence convincingly demonstrating that the work of these journalists was intended to incite violence or encourage ethnic tension or genocide. While the charges against some, such as a group of reporters who work for the U.S.-based Voice of America (VOA) service, were dropped in early 2006, at least 15 journalists remained jailed on these charges. Their trial began in February and could last for months or years, and meanwhile the accused are incarcerated, some in harsh conditions. Numerous other journalists fled the country to avoid arrest in late 2005 and remained in exile throughout 2006. Foreign journalists have generally operated with fewer restrictions than their local counterparts. However, they also faced official pressure during the year; in January, AP correspondent Anthony Mitchell was expelled for his reporting, and in February another foreign reporter was denied accreditation. As a result of the crackdown, those journalists still able to work are increasingly practicing self-censorship on sensitive topics, and face regular threats and harassment from authorities.

The state controls all broadcast media and operates the only television station. A 1999 law permits private radio stations, and although licenses were finally awarded to two private FM stations in the capital in February, neither was operational by year's end.

Dozens of print outlets publish regularly and offer diverse views, although many are firmly aligned with either the government or the opposition and provide slanted news coverage. Following the November 2005 crackdown, only a limited number of newspapers, including those English-language papers that are viewed as being relatively unbiased such as the *Reporter* and *Fortune*, were allowed to continue publishing without interruption. Authorities targeted the Amharic-language private press, banning or shuttering more than a dozen opposition-inclined papers that together accounted for more than 80 percent of total Amharic circulation. Fewer than 10 papers, most Amharic- or English-language weeklies with relatively small circulation figures, are now publishing in Addis compared to more than 20 in 2005. Most private newspapers struggle to remain financially viable and to meet Ministry of Information requirements that newspapers have a minimum bank balance in order to renew their annual publishing licenses. Printing presses are all government owned and frequently refuse to print some private publications, citing the fact that they are held accountable for the content of what they publish.

Access to foreign broadcasts is sometimes restricted, with VOA signals being sporadically jammed. Owing to an extremely poor telecommunications infrastructure, internet access is limited primarily to the major urban areas (less than 0.5 percent of the population) but is growing in popularity with the proliferation of internet cafes. As more citizens, faced with an increasingly restricted print and broadcast media environment, turned to the internet to get information, the government responded accordingly. Starting in 2006, access to some blogs and websites was blocked, including news websites run by members of the Ethiopian diaspora that were critical of the government. By year's end, the state telecommunications agency distributed regulations requiring that internet cafes register their users, and threatened to jail owners of cafes that served unregistered users.

Gabon

Status: Not Free

Legal Environment: 24

Political Environment: 23

Economic Environment: 22

Total Score: 69

The constitution guarantees freedom of expression and of the press, but authorities use legal harassment, threats, and financial pressures to curb critical reporting. While the imprisonment of journalists by the state is relatively rare, local media professionals face repressive press laws that allow for prison penalties for defamation—including a minimum sentence of three months for a repeat offense—particularly with regards to the president, his relatives, or members of his cabinet. A government agency charged with upholding journalistic standards, the National Communications Council (CNC), has a history of using intimidation tactics against the independent press and has forcibly shut down more than half a dozen publications in the last three years. In May, the independent website Gabonews commented that many journalists resort to self-censorship as coverage

of corruption or mismanagement within the government is seen as incitement to political upheaval. At least three news outlets remain banned since 2003 for allegedly defaming the president and “attacking the dignity of the institutions of the Republic,” among other charges.

In June, the CNC lifted a ban imposed in December 2003 on the private bimonthly *L'Autre Journal*, though no reason was given publicly for the decision. However, in September, the CNC banned the private weekly *Les Echos du Nord* for three months over an article criticizing the pro-government press for reports that several government officials had tried to sell a disputed offshore island to neighboring Equatorial Guinea. In October, the government arrested Norbert Mezui, director of the independent weekly *Nku'u Le Messenger*, and held him for 21 days on the pretext of a three-year-old defamation verdict that was pending appeal. The arrest, which appeared to violate Gabonese procedural law, occurred after Mezui's newspaper ran a similar article criticizing the pro-government press over the scandal.

Gabon has over a dozen private radio stations and four private television stations, while as many as twenty private weeklies and monthlies circulate in the capital, Libreville. However, the state-affiliated *L'Union* is the country's only daily newspaper, and local journalists complain that many nominally private publications are controlled by political factions. Much of the private press appears irregularly because of financial constraints and frequent government censorship. Almost all Gabonese private newspapers are printed in Cameroon because of the high cost at the only local printing company, and publications printed outside the country are subject to review before distribution. The government owns two radio stations and two television stations that are able to broadcast nationwide. Private broadcasting tends to be nonpolitical. The government does not restrict access to, or use of, the internet for the 4.6 percent of the population wealthy enough to have access, and foreign publications and broadcasts are widely available.

The Gambia

Status: Not Free

Legal Environment: 24

Political Environment: 33

Economic Environment: 20

Total Score: 77

Conditions for media practice in The Gambia worsened in 2006 as President Yahya Jammeh swept into office for a third consecutive five-year term following elections in September 2006. Media practitioners were already operating under severe constraints ahead of national elections as Jammeh maintained an iron grip on the media despite a 1997 constitution that, in theory, guarantees freedom of expression. At the end of 2004, the Parliament passed two bills intended to impose harsh penalties on the media, including mandatory prison sentences of at least six months, for media owners or journalists convicted of publishing or broadcasting defamatory or seditious material or “false news.” Jammeh signed these bills into law at the end of 2005. Following dissolution of a government-controlled media commission by Parliament in 2005,

additional oppressive gag laws were passed making all press offenses punishable by imprisonment.

Jammeh's electoral victory did not signal the likelihood that he was willing to make any concessions for relaxing the restrictive media environment, his inauguration taking place on the second anniversary of the still unsolved murder of journalist, Deyda Hydera. At the time of his murder, Hydera was managing editor of the private weekly *The Point* and a correspondent for both Reporters Sans Frontieres and Agence France-Presse. Asked about press freedom at a news conference following his election victory, Jammeh responded that the whole world could "go to hell," that he could ban any newspaper he wished to "with good reason," and that he wanted to rule Gambia for at least three more decades. Jammeh showed in 2006 that his disdain for press freedom was backed by continuing intimidation, imprisonment, and exile of journalists and political opponents. Ten journalists were arrested in 2006, many others fled into exile. Prominent cases include those of Malick Mboh, a journalist of the pro-government *Daily Observer* who was detained illegally by the National Intelligence Agency for 139 days and then fired from his job after his release. He was one of five journalists arrested for sending damaging information to a U.S.-based online publication, *Freedom Newspaper*. Another reporter employed by the state-owned Gambia Radio Television Services, Doudou Sanneh, was freed and then fired after one week detention by the National Intelligence Agency.

The government owns a daily newspaper, a national radio station, and the only national television station. Political news coverage at these outlets favors the official line. In the period leading up to the presidential election, the government did provide time slots for opposition candidates on the national television station, although the ruling APRC party received the most coverage. The Gambia has 3 private newspapers that publish bi-weekly or thrice weekly, and 4 private FM radio stations. These outlets are subject to considerable pressure from the government, but a few of them are able to provide critical coverage of the administration. A premium television network operates as a satellite station. The Internet is not as tightly regulated and over three percent of the population was able to access this new medium in 2006, which is among the highest rates of internet access in West Africa.

Ghana

Status: Free

Legal Environment: 8

Political Environment: 9

Economic Environment: 9

Total Score: 26

Freedom of the press is guaranteed by law, and the Ghanaian government has a reputation within the region for respecting it in practice. In recent years, President John Kufuor's administration has demonstrated its desire to expand freedom of expression by repealing the criminal libel laws. A subsequent spate of civil libel cases brought by former public officials and private citizens against media outlets with crippling high

fines—often in excess of \$100,000—took the place of criminal defamation convictions. Nonetheless, despite a number of new libel suits during the year, this trend abated slightly in 2006 as no new convictions were reported.

A proposal in Parliament for the establishment of a presidential commission for reforms that would strengthen the editorial independence and guarantee the funding of the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC) under an Act of Parliament was unlikely to gain much traction. The proposal was made by Member of Parliament Haruna Idrissu, who argued that access to information leads to greater public transparency, accountability, and good governance. But the minister in charge of government sector reform responded that whilst reform was necessary at the GBC; there was no need for a presidential commission to do so and that such reforms could be addressed under the Subvented Agencies Bill which covers the GBC. Ghana has yet to pass legislation protecting freedom of information. A civil society initiative in 1997 brought the need for such a bill to the nation's attention, but neither the president nor the parliament has taken any action as yet.

The press is generally free to function independently in Ghana, with private newspapers and broadcasters operating without any significant restrictions. The environment includes a lively private press which often carries criticisms of the government. Animated phone-ins on local radio broadcasts are also a staple of daily life in Ghana. However, the Media Foundation of West Africa did report an increase in the number of cases of harassment against journalists by non-state actors; eighteen such cases were reported by the foundation in 2006. In particular, a number of journalists were targeted by supporters of drug barons on trial for large cocaine scandals and a few other journalists were the victims of violent harassment at the hands of police offices while covering the news.

More than 135 newspapers, including 2 state-owned dailies operate in Ghana while approximately 110 FM radio stations function nationwide, 11 of which are state-run. As of September 2005, the national media commission reported that more than 90 newspapers, 27 television stations, and over 140 radio stations were registered in Ghana. At least 11 of the radio stations are owned by the state, while most of the newspapers with national distribution are government controlled as well. Opponents of the government complain of biased coverage in the state-owned press, but independent and critical reporting is pervasive in the private sector. Radio remains the most popular medium in Ghana. Poor pay and unprofessional conduct, including newspapers that invent highly sensationalist news stories remain problematic. The ethical lapses are condemned by professional media bodies because they undermine media credibility. Limited revenue from advertising and reader subscriptions threatens the financial viability of private media outlets. Foreign media presence is highly visible, most notably through broadcasts from the BBC, Radio France Internationale, and the Voice of America. Access to the internet is available to less than two percent of the population, primarily through internet cafés, and remains unrestricted by the government.

Guinea

Status: Not Free

Legal Environment: 22

Political Environment: 29

Economic Environment: 16

Total Score: 67

Overall, press freedom in Guinea remained largely unchanged primarily because the aging regime of President Lansana Conte frequently resorted to old habits in launching reprisals against the press. But important qualitative changes did take place in 2006. The constitution guarantees freedom of the press, but this right is not respected in practice and has been widely abused in the past, including the enforcement of restrictive press legislation that considers defamation and slander criminal offenses and permits the authorities to censor publications. While there were fewer arrests and detentions than in previous year, the government did suspend a number of publications. In 2005, President Conte signed a media liberalization decree that finally permitted the establishment of private radio and television broadcasting. The decree limited ownership by political parties and religious institutions but did not restrict programming on these subjects.

The number of attacks on the press diminished during the year, in large part due to last year's media liberalization decree. However, this concession to the press did not come without cost. Four separate newspapers were suspended by the National Communications Commission (CNC) in 2006 for publishing excessively critical or contentious information. In February, *Les Echos* was banned for two months for publishing allegedly false information about a government minister; in April, *L'Enqueteur* was also suspended for two months for an article highlighting government corruption; and in October, the managing director of the state-owned and -published *Horoya* received an indefinite suspension after he refused to publish a picture of the president. Finally, in November, the *Kalum Express*, a private weekly based in Conakry, also received a two month suspension for publishing an editorial accusing the government of dishonesty in its dealings with a prominent businessman. The paper was accused of "damaging the reputation of the state;" the editor was forced into hiding and was later recalled and demoted to the rank of a reporter.

The independent journalist and respected newspaper editor, Boubacar Yaccine Diallo, now serves as chairman of the CNC. Following his appointment, Diallo initiated programs to increase professionalism in the practice of journalism and implemented a requirement that journalists must meet higher professional standards to obtain press credentials. State-owned media provide extensive, mostly favorable coverage of the government but also criticize local-level officials and increasingly report on opposition activities. The liberalization of the airwaves in August 2005 has led to the emergence of privately owned radio broadcasting, with four private stations broadcasting alongside Radio Television Guinea (RTG). The state-owned RTG is still the only television broadcaster. Within the private print media, newspapers openly criticize the president and the government. Ten private weekly newspapers publish in Conakry while a dozen others publish sporadically. Last year, the government gave financial subsidies of around \$100,000 to private newspapers through the Guinea Association of Independent Editors, which divided the money among various press organizations. The government does not directly restrict access to the internet although there was a previous case of reprisal

against a journalist in response to an article he had published online about economic corruption. Less than 1 percent of the population had the financial means to access this new media in 2006.

Guinea-Bissau

Status: Partly Free

Legal Environment: 14

Political Environment: 19

Economic Environment: 15

Total Score: 48

Guinea-Bissau's recent gains in the legal and political environments for the media, following a 2005 law that provided for freedom of speech and freedom of the press, appeared to be holding fast by the end of 2006. The return to power of President Joao Bernardo "Nino" Vieira, the former military ruler and exile has been accompanied by economic and political crises that have both fractured the governing coalition and led to a number of troubling cases of press intimidation. Media practitioners have also occasionally been caught in the crossfire of partisan political wrangling.

In November, the Media Foundation of West Africa reported that sympathizers of President Vieira besieged the privately owned station, Radio Bombolom, and forced a reporter, Antonio Iaia Seidi to disclose a source of information used in a report he had filed earlier. The angry group also forcibly broadcast a rejoinder to the story. In June, another radio journalist of Bombolom FM was detained and severely beaten in custody after being accused of broadcasting "false news" for accusing a police officer of violence against a woman in one of his reports.

While the country's only television station remains state run, three private radio stations, Bombolom FM, Radio Pindjiguiti, and Voice of Quelele, compete with the state-run radio broadcaster, Radio Nacional, as well as the Portuguese-owned public broadcaster, RTP Africa. Three privately run newspapers operate alongside the state-owned weekly *No Pintcha*. Owing to considerable financial constraints and government control of the sole functioning printing house, newspapers publish only sporadically. The impact of such financial constraints has been particularly severe for the state-owned media because of a lack of government ability to earmark adequate operational funding, as well as the fact that private advertising funds are directed primarily toward the private media sector. No government interference with or attempts to censor the internet were reported in 2006, and the rate of access to this new media was estimated to be just over two percent of the population this year.

Kenya

Status: Partly Free

Legal Environment: 20

Political Environment: 21

Economic Environment: 18

Total Score: 59

Kenya's constitution does not explicitly guarantee press freedom. The Kenyan media continue to operate under Section 79 of the constitution, which guarantees citizens freedom of expression. Nevertheless, the government routinely restricts this right by broadly interpreting several laws, including the Official Secrets Act, the penal code, and criminal libel legislation. The Miscellaneous Amendment Act of 2002, which raised publishers' mandatory insurance bond to 1 million Kenyan shillings (about US\$13,100), has had a negative impact on numerous independent newspapers that cannot afford to pay the increased fees. Although defamation remains criminalized in Kenyan law, in a 2005 defamation case the attorney general declared that the archaic law would no longer be used to suppress freedom of expression and no journalists were prosecuted for criminal libel in 2006. A freedom of information bill is still pending before the Parliament.

Although the media scene in Kenya remained vibrant, there were continued instances of extra-legal intimidation of private media outlets in 2006. In February, the premises of the privately-owned *Weekly Citizen* and the *Independent* were raided by police after the papers carried articles about power struggles within the presidency. Also in February, an editorial cartoonist with *The Daily Nation*, Godfrey Mwapembwa (Gada) was threatened with legal action after featuring the Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs in cartoon about the Anglo-Leasing corruption scandal. In an unprecedented move, in March the offices of the independent daily *The Standard*—one of the oldest and most well-respected papers in Kenya—were raided and three journalists were arrested for questioning in connection with a story of political intrigue within the government. Approximately 20,000 copies of the March 2 issue were seized and burnt, printing equipment vandalized, and computers confiscated. A similar raid also resulted in the closure of the national broadcasting station, Kenya Television Network, which is also owned by the Standard Group. The police action provoked local and international outrage, and came two days after Information and Communication Minister Mutahi Kagwe issued a warning against media abusing press freedom. National Security Minister John Michuki told journalists that the raid was carried out to protect state security, commenting that "If you rattle a snake, you must be prepared to be bitten by it." The charges against the three journalists were later dropped.

Although the number of private media outlets is rising, the government-controlled public broadcaster, Kenya Broadcasting Corporation, remains dominant outside the major urban centers, and its coverage still favors the ruling party. The private media are generally outspoken and critical of government policies. There has been a significant expansion of FM radio, particularly ethnic FM radio stations, increasing public participation as well as commentary unfavorable to the government through call-in shows. Individual journalists continue to practice self-censorship either due to political pressure, or because of bribes. Foreign media is widely available, including FM radio broadcasts of the BBC, Voice of America, and Radio France Internationale. Access to the internet is unrestricted; however, only 3 percent of Kenyans were able to access the internet in 2006 owing to the high costs involved.

Lesotho

Status: Partly Free

Legal Environment: 13

Political Environment: 15

Economic Environment: 14

Total Score: 42

The government generally respects freedom of speech and of the press, both of which are provided for in the constitution. However, a 1938 proclamation prohibits criticism of the government and provides for penalties for seditious libel. In recent years, extremely high fines have been handed down by the courts in libel cases against publications and radio stations known for criticizing the government, forcing some to the verge of closure. In August, the editor-in-chief of the Lesotho Police Service tabloid *Leseli Ka Sepolesa*, Clifford Molefe, received a \$422,000 defamation claim issued by former Lesotho Football Association Mohau Thakaso. Last year, the English-language weekly *Public Eye* was ordered to pay a private businessman, Lebohang Thotanyana, 1.5 million maloti (about US\$220,000) for alleged defamation. Journalism groups have urged the government to create a media council or other regulatory body empowered to mediate defamation disputes before they end up in court.

The government periodically attempts to pressure the independent press, and journalists have suffered occasional harassment or attack. Beginning in October, Thabo Thakalekoala—a prominent journalist and president of the Media Institute of Southern Africa—received daily death threats aimed at himself and his family. The threats are believed to be motivated by Thakalekoala's coverage, for international news agencies, of the October split in the ruling Lesotho Congress for Democracy, as well as his advocacy for a more independent state broadcasting sector. Several independent newspapers operate freely and routinely criticize the government, while state-owned print and broadcast media mostly reflect the views of the ruling party. There are four private radio stations, and extensive South African radio and television broadcasts reach Lesotho. Journalists reportedly have trouble gaining free access to official information, and media development is constrained by inadequate funding and resources. In 2006, fewer than 2 percent of the population accessed the internet, which remains unrestricted by the government.

Liberia

Status: Not Free

Legal Environment: 19

Political Environment: 24

Economic Environment: 22

Total Score: 65

Liberia's 1986 constitution guarantees that citizens enjoy freedom of expression, "being fully responsible for the abuse thereof." This opaque clause helped the Charles Taylor regime harass the media with a semblance of legitimacy during his presidency. Under the transitional government and the newly-elected Johnson-Sirleaf administration, respect for freedom of the press has noticeably improved. Nonetheless, strict libel laws are still in place and in March 2006 the private bi-weekly newspaper, *The Independent*, was banned for two days by the government in response to the publication of compromising photos of the ex-presidential affairs minister. In April, the directors of three separate newspapers were required to appear before the Senate on accusation of publishing "false and misleading" information in response to allegedly defamatory articles claiming that Senators received exorbitant salaries. Constitutional guarantees for access to information are vague; access to budgetary and financial information, in particular, remains difficult owing to bureaucratic inefficiencies and frequent requests for additional payment from civil servants involved. Decades of civil war and mismanagement also mean that there are very few public records to access. A media reform bill and a more progressive freedom of information law are currently being debated in the legislature; although this is a promising improvement from years past, in the last year little progress has been made in passing or implementing these bills.

Journalists frequently reported unfavorably on government behavior, and 2006 saw a noticeable deterioration in the relationship between the government and the media from the improvements made in 2005. In fact, a number of journalists were harassed, beaten, or detained while covering the news in 2006. In June when returning from a trip, President Johnson Sirleaf announced that she would only talk to three reporters of her choosing. The rest of the press corps became angry and a number of journalists were harassed by the president's security personnel. A week later, four journalists were hassled and briefly detained by security personnel at the president's executive mansion while attempting to authenticate reports of the dismissal of five senior security officers. Nevertheless, for these and other incidents the government has often made visible efforts to investigate the perpetrators; even so, many journalists claim that these investigations are often more image than substance. On a number of occasions, government representatives accused the media of acting unprofessionally. The most high-profile of these instances was when, while speaking at a university graduation, President Johnson Sirleaf accused many journalists of sensationalizing the news and often replacing accuracy and truth with lies and half-truths.

There are now approximately a dozen newspapers publishing in Monrovia with varying degrees of regularity. However, newspaper distribution is limited to the capital and most Liberians rely on radio broadcasts to receive news due to low literacy rates. There are now 15 different independent radio stations in Monrovia, 24 local radio stations outside of the capital, and one radio station run each by the government and UNMIL, all of which generally operate without excessive government influence. However, in May 2006 the Liberian Broadcasting System announced that all journalists working for state-run outlets would be required to obtain clearance before publishing articles accusing government officials of corruption. The independent media has grown significantly since the removal of Taylor, though the number of outlets has decreased over the last year typically due to financial difficulties. Such financial constraints, inevitable in the

operation of a news outlet in such a poor country recovering from war, cause some of the largest problems for unbiased accurate journalism. Reporters commonly accept payment from individuals they file stories about and even the placement of a story in a paper or a radio show can often be bought and influenced by outside interests. Access to foreign broadcasts and the internet is unrestricted by the government but is severely limited by the dire financial situation of most Liberians.

Madagascar

Status: Partly Free

Legal Environment: 14

Political Environment: 21

Economic Environment: 15

Total Score: 50

The Malagasy press celebrated its 140th anniversary in 2006. Although freedom of speech and of the press is protected by the constitution, strict libel laws and other restrictions are occasionally used to muzzle the media. In June, the government media regulatory body DIRM proposed a measure to regulate guests invited to appear on radio and television broadcasts. In November, higher fines and maximum prison sentencing of up to five years were proposed for journalists convicted of libel or “disturbing the peace.”

Unlike the previous year, no journalists were convicted of libel in 2006. However, several attempts to muzzle the media occurred prior to the December presidential elections. In October, a journalist from the daily *L’Objectif Malaza* was arrested for covering protests in Toamasina. Days later, a female journalist was harassed by security forces and reporter Eloi Ravalonjato was arrested at a welcoming rally for candidate Pierrot Rajaonarivevelo. Radio Don Bosco and TV Plus were warned by government officials to cease reporting on the failed coup attempt by “General Fidy” in November. President Ravalomanana additionally issued a public warning following the coup for journalists not to publish unchecked news, or face action against them, according to the U.S. State Department. The government continued to refuse to renew a work permit for Radio France Internationale correspondent Olivier Peguy. The agency assigned a new correspondent to cover Madagascar.

There are 14 major privately owned dailies and several weeklies and monthlies; however, because of the low literacy rate, print media are aimed primarily at the French-educated urban elite. The majority of the population receives news through the broadcast media, which the government continues to monopolize nationwide. There were nonetheless over 200 radio stations, 137 of which were licensed, and 20 licensed television stations. Due to low pay, journalists are subject to bribery. Occasionally the government also employs strong-arm tactics to pressure private media outlets to curb their coverage of political issues, causing many journalists to practice self-censorship. The internet is unrestricted by the government but was accessed by less than 1 percent of the population in 2006.

Malawi

Status: Partly Free

Legal Environment: 16

Political Environment: 20

Economic Environment: 17

Total Score: 53

Freedom of speech and of the press are constitutionally guaranteed, although these rights are occasionally restricted in practice. The government does not exercise overt censorship, but freedom of expression in Malawi is threatened in more subtle ways, resulting in some self-censorship. The Protected Emblems and Names Act prohibits insulting the president and threatens violators with fines and prison terms. A case was filed by Capitol Radio to declare the Act unconstitutional; however, the case has been pending since September 2005. Journalists are also subject to occasional restrictions and harassment.

In May 2006, President Bingu wa Mutharika fired his Attorney General Ralph Kasambara, two days after the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) Malawi asked Mutharika to protect the good relations he has with the media. Earlier Kasambara had made headlines after he moved police to arrest three journalists at *The Chronicle* for defaming him. The journalists had published a story exposing MISA Malawi's suspended National Director Charles Simango as vending a laptop that was stolen from a Reuters photojournalist. Throughout the year, a number of other journalists faced harassment at the hands of security personnel, primarily for defamation of public officials. A number of unofficial attempts at censorship occurred surrounding the visit of Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe in May. Reporters from *The Chronicle* were barred from attending Mugabe's arrival ceremony upon fear that their coverage would reflect badly on the administration.

The print media represent a broad spectrum of opinion; 10 independent newspapers are available, and of the 8 major papers in circulation, 6 are privately owned and most are editorially independent. However, the independent media have come under substantial political pressure. The state-owned Malawi Broadcasting Corporation (MBC) operates the country's 2 largest radio stations, and there are approximately 15 private radio stations with more limited coverage operating mainly in urban areas. State-owned Television Malawi (TVM) is the country's only television station. State-run media generally adhere to a pro-government editorial line and grant opposition parties more limited access. In 2006, the Malawi parliament approved only half of the funding for the MBC and Television Malawi, accusing the two state broadcasters of bias towards government and the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP). The House said the rest of the funding for the two institutions will be approved only if they improve their coverage.

Independent radio broadcasters receive no support from the state in terms of advertising revenue, and all equipment must be imported and paid for in dollars. Import duties and high taxes imposed by the state threaten the economic viability of independent commercial broadcasters. There are no restrictions on access to the internet, although with access at less than 1 percent of the population, it is not widely used.

Mali

Status: Free

Legal Environment: 7

Political Environment: 9

Economic Environment: 8

Total Score: 24

Mali is home to one of the freest media environments in Africa with a constitution that protects the right to free speech, and a government that generally respects this right in practice. Nevertheless, severe punishments for libel still exist under a 1993 law that criminalizes slander. Legislation passed in 2000 reduced the maximum penalty for those convicted, but the accused still remain guilty until proven innocent. These libel laws, though rarely implemented, were enforced in April 2006 when a weekly independent newspaper, *L'Inter de Bamako*, was ordered to pay Diacounda Traore, the chairman of an opposition political party, a \$580 fine in response to an article published in February accusing Traore and fellow party leaders of corruption and mismanagement. In addition, two of the paper's editors were each fined \$135 and ordered to publish the court's ruling in three local newspapers at their own expense.

In 2005 a journalist with Radio Keledou was abducted and severely beaten by a group of unknown assailants. Although the investigation into the identity of the perpetrators continues, no charges had yet been filed at the end of 2006. In August 2006, the government chose to inflict a disproportionate punishment on a radio network when it was found to be operating one of its stations without a license. Police shut down the broadcasting capabilities of Radio Kayira's station in Southern Mali and arrested a number of station staff including the managing director, two station hosts and a station coordinator. Less than a week after their arrest, all were charged with "opposition to the authority of the State" and sentenced to, and served, a month in prison. Radio Kayira's defense claimed that they had submitted a license application as early as September 2005 but failed to receive a response from the authorities and many in Mali's media community believe that the lack of government response to the license request was politically motivated.

Today there are more than 100 private radio stations and over 50 independent newspapers, many of which openly criticize the government. The country's only television station remains under the control of the government but provides balanced political coverage. Access to foreign media and to the internet is unrestricted by the government, though in practice both are accessible only to the very wealthy or well connected.

Mauritania

Status: Partly Free

Legal Environment: 18

Political Environment: 20
Economic Environment: 17
Total Score: 55

Significant progress has been made in Mauritania's media environment since a bloodless coup in 2005 overthrew the existing authoritarian regime. The transitional military government has since followed through on a number of promises to reform archaic press laws; however, the government still maintains a monopoly over the radio and television broadcast sectors. In 2005 the military council established the "National Commission in Charge of the Reform of the Press and Broadcasting" which, in March 2006, submitted a report on the reforms the government should design and implement in order to democratize the media. An Ordinance based on the Commission's report was adopted in June eliminating the previous requirement for prepublication government approval of all newspapers, while still requiring publishers to submit a copy of each issue to the government prior to its distribution. The new law also transfers responsibility for journalists' registration from the Ministry of Interior to the Ministry of Justice and gives journalists the legal right to protection of sources. In addition, in October 2006 the government created the High Authority for the Press and Broadcasting (HAPA), the first independent media regulatory body in Mauritania. Nonetheless, HAPA's independence is far from certain as the president is responsible for appointing three of the body's six members, including the chair. HAPA has been tasked with monitoring public communications and ensuring equal access to the state-run media outlets. It is also intended to lead the process of creating independent, private television and radio stations; in 2006 it began accepting applications, though no new television or radio outlet was created in 2006.

Although no journalists were formally arrested or changed in 2006, a few reporters, including international correspondents, did spend time in temporary detention. In one instance, security authorities detained a correspondent for the Iranian satellite channel Al-Alam who was also the chief editor for Mauritanian TV after a guest on the state-run television station accused the Malian government of carrying out extrajudicial killings against opposition Tuareg activists during an interview. After being accused of "aiding someone hostile to a friendly nation," the correspondent was fired from his position on Mauritanian TV. In April two journalists for the weekly newspaper *Ahira* complained that they were treated harshly by police while covering the president's visit to a local town.

The government owns 2 daily newspapers, and approximately 40 privately-owned newspapers operate on a regular basis—nearly double the figure from last year. In the new press law passed in 2006, privately-owned newspaper operators and book publishers are exempt from all taxes on material used in their production. Nevertheless, a large and persistent impediment to a genuinely free press is the government's monopoly of all broadcast media. Internet access is available and has been unrestricted by the transition government, but less than .5 percent of the population has the means to access it.

Mauritius

Status: Free

Legal Environment: 6

Political Environment: 8

Economic Environment: 12

Total Score: 26

Freedom of expression is safeguarded by the constitution and these rights were respected in practice. In August, the government proposed a plan to diffuse the Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA), the media regulatory body, and replace it with a Media Commission. The Commission would have the power to sanction the press and impose stronger punishments for libel and sedition. Penalties for libel could reach Rs 2 million and a prison term of up to two years. An additional Broadcasting Compliance Committee would be established to respond to complaints against broadcasters, and would have the power to suspend or revoke licenses. These acts were pending at the year's end. Also pending is the proposed Freedom of Information Act, which would increase government transparency by giving journalists access to official documents. In September, 106 members of the press convened to establish the Mauritius Journalists Association to safeguard their rights. In December, the IBA sanctioned state-owned MBC-TV for biased political coverage. The sanctions were sparked by complaints by the Mauritian Militant Movement claiming that MBC-TV allowed the Republican Movement greater airtime. Mauritians receive the majority of their news from television, which is monopolized by the government. Radio broadcasts are dominated by the government's Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation (MBC), which is funded predominantly through a TV license fee, though private stations also operate. The private press is vibrant but ownership is concentrated to two main media houses, Le Mauricien LTd and La Sentinelle Ltd. The internet is unrestricted by the government and is widely utilized compared with African nations, accessed by 14 percent of the population.

Mozambique

Status: Partly Free

Legal Environment: 11

Political Environment: 15

Economic Environment: 14

Total Score: 40

Press freedom conditions continued to improve in 2006 due to fewer instances of physical harassment of journalists and limited progress in the key Cardoso murder case. The 1990 constitution provides for press freedom but restricts this right according to respect for the constitution, human dignity, the imperatives of foreign policy, and national defense. Reporters continue to face problems accessing official information. In August 2005, the government introduced a draft Freedom of Information law, the product of five years of consultations with journalists and press freedom advocates, but a final version had not been passed by the end of 2006. The 1991 press law, considered one of

the more progressive in Africa, was reviewed in 2006 by Gabinfo, the government press office, which suggested possible “improvements” such as provisions for mandatory licenses for working journalists and which omitted the much-needed freedom of information legislation. Defamation of the president is illegal, and criminal libel laws are sometimes used to prosecute media outlets. In May, three journalists with *Mabarwe*, a community paper in Manica province, were arrested as a “preventive measure” after being sued for libel and were detained for a week.

Journalists continue to be at risk of being threatened or harassed by officials or nonstate actors, although no such cases were reported during 2006. Developments concerning the 2000 murder of prominent investigative journalist Carlos Cardoso continued to unfold during the year. The retrial of Anibal dos Santos Jr. began in December 2005, and in January 2006, he was convicted for a second time of recruiting the men who killed Cardoso and was sentenced to almost 30 years in prison. After several years of refusing to investigate the role in the murder of former president Chissano’s son, Nyimpine Chissano, who had been implicated in the testimony of several of the accused killers, authorities charged Chissano with “joint moral authorship” of the crime in May 2006, but he had not been arrested by year’s end. Despite these positive steps, the chilling effect cast by Cardoso’s murder remains; many investigative reporters are hesitant to examine sensitive topics, and self-censorship is an issue.

The private media have enjoyed moderate growth in recent years, and independent daily and weekly newspapers routinely provide scrutiny of the government. However, publications based in Maputo have little influence on the largely illiterate rural population. The state owns a majority stake in the main national daily *Noticias* and the largest broadcast networks, Radio Mozambique (RM) and Televisao de Mozambique, although dozens of private radio and television stations also operate. While state-owned media have displayed greater editorial independence, the opposition still receives inadequate coverage and establishment views are favored. According to the Media Institute of Southern Africa’s African Media Barometer, the development of private commercial radio continues to be hampered by the fact that state advertisements are broadcast exclusively on RM. Instances have also occurred where newspapers have had advertising from state-owned companies withdrawn after publishing unfavorable stories. The financial viability of many outlets is affected as well by a law limiting foreign investment in any media enterprises to a 20 percent stake. Internet access is unrestricted, though less than one percent the population has access because of a scarcity of electricity and computers.

Namibia

Status: Free

Legal Environment: 8

Political Environment: 10

Economic Environment: 12

Total Score: 30

Namibia's constitution guarantees freedom of speech and of the press, and the government generally respects these rights in practice. The country's press is considered one of the freest on the continent. Independent media routinely criticize the government, though government pressure and sensitivity to negative coverage have led to some self-censorship. The Freedom of Information Act, introduced in 1999 as a fundamental component of the government's anticorruption initiative, was only put into effect in 2005.

In recent years, the most serious media restrictions in Namibia have been isolated incidents in which the government has canceled advertisements in a few newspapers for their supposedly critical coverage. In February, the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) reported that a government ban on the English-language independent daily *The Namibian*—in place since March 2001—persists to date. In September, former president Sam Nujoma and head of the ruling South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO) initiated a N\$5 million (approximately US\$ 650,000) defamation suit against *The Namibian* due to an August 2005 story implicating Nujoma in a corruption scandal. In addition, some restrictions have been sought in media coverage of the mass trials of accused secessionists from the Caprivi region. In December, the youth league of the ruling SWAPO party called for restrictions on "cancerous, racist, and parasitic media operators" after some newspapers reported critically on former president Sam Nujoma's role in a 1989 battle with South African forces.

Eight newspapers are in circulation, six of which are privately owned. There are at least 11 private radio stations and 2 private television stations that broadcast in English and German. A subscription satellite television service broadcasts CNN, BBC, and a range of South African and international news and entertainment programs. Private radio stations and newspapers usually operate without official interference, but reporters for state-run media have been subjected to indirect and direct pressure to avoid reporting on controversial topics. While many journalists insist that the state-run Namibia Broadcasting Corporation (NBC) enjoys complete freedom to criticize the government, others believe that it is biased toward the ruling party. In February, the government attempted to allow only photographers from the NBC to cover the opening of parliament; after vocal protests from non-state media and press freedom organizations, the government granted access to a wide range of media organizations. There are no government restrictions on the internet, and several print publications have popular websites, but access to this new medium is limited to less than 4 percent of the population due to financial and infrastructure constraints.

Niger

Status: Partly Free

Legal Environment: 21

Political Environment: 20

Economic Environment: 17

Total Score: 58

The rights to freedom of speech and of the press are protected by the constitution in Niger, but in practice they are frequently ignored. The life of a journalist is often made particularly difficult by a government that frequently implements a law criminalizing defamation and a judiciary ready to enforce it. In 2006, all on charges of libel or defamation five different journalists spent time in prison, one newspaper, *L'Opinion*, was banned, and a talk show on the private radio station, Tenere FM, received a three month suspension. Journalists who wrote or spoke about problems with corruption within business or government were particularly targeted. The most high profile of these cases began on August 4, when Mamane Abou, the director, and Oumarou Keita, the editor of the private weekly *Le Republicain*, were detained and interrogated over an article accusing the Prime Minister of "courting the Iranians" and thereby risking a rupture with Western donors. A month later, after being held in preventive detention, Abou and Keita were found guilty and each sentenced to 18 months in prison and a \$9,800 fine. However, the appeal of the case went all the way to the Supreme Court of Appeals in Niamey where the court decided the previous sentence had been too harsh and reduced the journalists' prison time to nine months, six of them suspended. As Abou and Keita had already spent nearly four months in detention awaiting the appeal, they were immediately released. Notably, this ruling came soon after hundreds of people protested in the streets of the central town of Agadez calling for the release of the journalists.

Although in 2006, there were no direct attacks on journalists, the government did continue its efforts to conceal the existence and impact of the famine that hit Niger in 2005. In April, the government withdrew the accreditation of a BBC television crew following its investigation into the hunger problem in central Niger. In addition, government officials have been formally prohibited from talking to the media about the hunger crisis.

The state-owned media consistently reflect the government line, while private publications have been very critical of government action. The broadcast media have a greater influence than the newspaper industry owing to the nation's low literacy level. The state continues to dominate the broadcasting landscape. Nonetheless, at least eight private radio stations broadcast reports critical of the government in French and local languages. Restrictive press licensing legislation and a heavy tax on private media outlets continue to prohibit the growth of a vibrant and dynamic press. Internet access is hard to acquire for most (less than 0.2 percent of the population access it regularly), but this is a result more of the country's high level of poverty than direct government interference.

Nigeria

Status: Partly Free

Legal Environment: 14

Political Environment: 24

Economic Environment: 17

Total Score: 55

Even though the 1999 Constitution guarantees the rights of freedom of expression, press and of assembly, the state often uses arbitrary actions and extralegal measures to suppress

political criticism and expression in the press. Libel still remains a criminal offense and the burden of proof rests on the defendant. In 2006, two journalists were jailed for two months for libeling a state governor. They were only released due to strong international and local pressure on the government. On November 15, the Senate finally passed the much awaited Freedom of Information Bill to facilitate access to information, particularly important for media practitioners. Among other things, the bill makes it a criminal offence, punishable by three years imprisonment, for any officer, government administrator (including the head of state), or public institution to destroy or falsify any official record before its release. Despite the passage of this bill, the situation for access to information is not yet ideal in Nigeria as there are still laws that restrict public access to government-held information, speech and assembly, including the 1962 Official Secrets Act and the Sedition Law among others. On August 28, the Senate rejected guidelines that would have limited the number of reporters covering the federal legislature from four to two.

Despite these encouraging legislative actions, various security agencies, particularly the State Security Service (SSS), continued to utilize arbitrary detention and extra-judicial measures in attempts to suppress expression in the press and to muffle political activism and criticism. This was a particularly acute problem for journalists who chose to cover critically President Obasanjo's attempts to change the constitution in order to legally run for a third term. For example, in March Muhamed Jega, the editor of *New Nigerian Newspaper* was sacked after running a story that criticized President Obasanjo's ambitions to continue in the presidency. Also, on May 14 SSS officers raided the Abuja station of AIT, the leading independent television station, during its broadcast of a documentary program comparing Obasanjo's ambitions to the failed efforts made by previous presidents to extend their respective term limits. The security officers confiscated a master tape of the documentary after stopping its further transmission. AIT was targeted a number of other times by the SSS throughout 2006. The editorial staff was threatened as a result of their plans to broadcast live the parliamentary debates on the term limit extension amendment; and in June the SSS detained AIT presenter Mike Gbenga Aruleba for a program he hosted investigating the cost of Obasanjo's presidential jet. Later, Aruleba, and another journalist Rotimi Durojaiya—who worked for the *Daily Independent* but contributed to the controversial report on the presidential jet—were both arrested, detained and charged with sedition. By October, the courts had dropped the charges against Aruleba but refused to do so for Durojaiya even by year's end.

In 2006, the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) clamped down and imposed sanctions or bans on a number of media outlets. In March, the privately-owned Kano-based Freedom Radio was shut down for five hours and fined approximately \$1,700 for the alleged breaking of the broadcasting code. The NBC threatened to revoke the station's license if it failed to pay the fine. In January, the NBC also suspended the operations of five private television stations and five private radio stations due to their failure to pay their licensing fees. There was no apparent political motive behind the suspension of these stations. Violence against journalists is also a common occurrence, but often this is more a factor of the environment in which they report, rather than the particular content of their work. In one especially violent incident in December, Godwin Agbroko—the editorial board chairman of the privately-owned *This Day*—was assassinated while returning home from work and found dead outside of his car. At year's

end, no evidence had been put forward to suspect that the murder had been tied to his work.

There are about 100 national and local publications, the most influential of which are privately owned. The press is vibrant and vocal against unpopular state policies and was particularly critical when covering Obasanjo's third term ambitions. The broadcast industry has been liberalized since 1992, and by 2006 about 300 licenses had been granted by the NBC although most of the licensees are yet to take off or remain on air due to financial difficulties. Radio tends to be the main source of information for Nigerians, while TV is used mostly in urban areas and by the affluent. Foreign broadcasters, particularly the Voice of America and the BBC, are important sources of news in the country. Over five million Nigerians reportedly had access to the internet in 2006—more than three times the figure from last year. While this is only three percent of Nigeria's 160 million people, the percentage of Nigerians making use of this new medium is rising significantly every year even if it is primarily limited to urban areas and the wealthy.

Rwanda

Status: Not Free

Legal Environment: 24

Political Environment: 34

Economic Environment: 26

Total Score: 84

The constitution provides for freedom of the press "in conditions prescribed by the law." However, in 2006 the government continued to sharply restrict the ability of media to operate, citing the role that certain media outlets played in provoking violence during the 1994 genocide. A law passed in 2002 guarantees media independence by formally forbidding censorship, but in practice the media is still tightly controlled by the government. Articles of the same law impose criminal sanctions on the media for a wide range of offenses such as "divisionism" and "genocide ideology," punishable by up to five years in prison. Libel is still a criminal offence; however, in August 2006, the High Court of the Republic of Rwanda overturned a criminal libel conviction made by the lower courts against Charles Kabonero, the editor of *Umuseso*. Nonetheless, the High Court upheld his conviction of "insulting a public figure" and the one year suspended prison sentence and the \$1,900 fine that went with that conviction. In 2006, the government debated a new press law that could provide marginal improvements to the 2002 law by protecting newspaper printers and vendors from criminal libel prosecutions and removing a judge's obligation to impose the maximum sentence on journalists convicted of certain criminal offenses.

The government's attitude toward the press in 2006 continued to be one of suspicion and control. While there were no formal arrests of journalists in 2006, attacks on journalists critical of the government remained a consistent problem throughout the year. In particular, the biweekly independent *Umuco*, and its personnel have been repeatedly harassed and threatened for their criticism of the government since 2005. In

January 2006 and again in August, *Umuco*'s editor was forced into hiding after the publication of articles critical of the ruling party led to threats and a police summons. In a positive turn, an *Umuco* journalist was released from prison in July after spending nearly 11 months in jail on a murder charge related to the 1994 genocide, a charge of which he had been acquitted several years earlier. In June 2006, Sonia Rolley, a correspondent with RFI was expelled from the country, even after she received press accreditation from the Information Ministry. Then in November, when a French court accused Rwandan President Kagame of involvement in the 1994 assassination of former President Habyarimana that triggered the genocide, the Rwandan government formally severed diplomatic relations with France and ordered the entire RFI office to leave the country.

Although the government continued its confrontational approach to relations with the media in 2006, many independent print publications refused to censor themselves and published articles critical of government behavior. Nonetheless, all newspapers operating in Rwanda, including the state-owned papers, face financial constraints that make it impossible for them to publish on a daily basis and most independent publications only do so twice a month. In addition, the government has the potential to influence print publication content through its purchase of advertising space, upon which many newspapers are financially dependent, as well as its operation of the sole domestic printing press available to nonreligious media. In 2006, the government issued a number of new radio licenses; however, the authorities maintain tight control over the radio broadcast media and most of the independent stations stay away from political content and focus instead on music. Independent television is legally permitted, but the government continues to maintain a monopoly on the industry. Despite the expulsion of RFI this year, other foreign media like BBC and Voice of America are able to broadcast from Rwanda. Internet access appears to be unrestricted but is available to less than 1 percent of the population.

Sao Tome and Principe

Status: Free

Legal Environment: 4

Political Environment: 11

Economic Environment: 14

Total Score: 29

The constitution provides for freedom of the press, and these rights are respected in practice and upheld by the state. There were no known cases of government restrictions of, or crackdown on, the local or foreign media, and publications that regularly criticize the administration are freely circulated without arbitrary arrests or government intimidation. Nonetheless, self-censorship is widely practiced and newspapers often depend on official news releases as primary sources of information, which in turn inhibits the growth of investigative journalism. Some writers accept financial favors from news sources for doing their jobs. Severe problems with infrastructure including inadequate telecommunication and media distribution networks constitute major problems for the media. There are seven privately-owned and two state-run newspapers in addition to a number of state-operated radio and television stations. In 2005, the government

authorized two new private radio stations to operate within the country, both of which began broadcasting by the end of 2006. Access to the internet is not restricted by the government but is limited by a lack of infrastructure; nonetheless, over 11 percent of the population was able to access this new media during the year.

Senegal

Status: Partly Free

Legal Environment: 13

Political Environment: 21

Economic Environment: 12

Total Score: 46

Worrying trends continued in Senegal in 2006, particularly involving criminal defamation charges against journalists. Although the constitution guarantees freedom of expression and of the press, the government often restricts these rights in practice. Criminal prosecutions for libel against journalists in 2006 and the passage of a controversial broadcasting reform bill intended to muzzle the media both confirm earlier indications that President Abdoulaye Wade does not intend to live up to his lofty promises of decriminalizing several press offenses and consolidating the protections afforded freedom of expression under the constitution. Article 80 of the penal code is particularly harsh on journalists and imposes severe criminal penalties for libel and the publication of materials that compromise national security. In July, Mustapha Sow, the managing editor of the private newspaper, *L'Office* was imprisoned on charges that he defamed a local businessman. Sow was released on bail after two weeks when his lawyer filed an appeal. He had been convicted of criminal defamation charges and sentenced to six months in prison in February but an arrest warrant was not carried out until June. In September, two more journalists were given suspended sentences and fined the equivalent of \$100 each for a story involving alleged corruption by a construction company accused of bribing government officials for contracts. According to Diatou Cisse Coulibaly, the Secretary-General of the Senegalese Press Union, criminal libel accusations have been a particular problem under the Wade administration, resulting in broad intimidation of critical journalists and increased self-censorship.

A controversial broadcasting bill that was passed by a vote of 11 to 2 in the 120-seat Parliament in December 2005 still awaits the signature of President Wade, and if approved, will create a National Council for the Regulation of Broadcasting (CNRA). The new body would be made up of the president's appointees on a nine-member panel, only one of whom would be a professional with broadcasting credentials. The CNRA would function as a supreme tribunal with the power to monitor media behavior and impose punishments ranging from temporary closures to exorbitant fines of up to \$18,000. The new bill also strips the media profession's self-regulatory body—the Council for the Respect of Professional Ethics and Conduct—of its authority to monitor and sanction members of the media who act unprofessionally.

Despite the intimidation caused by the wave of criminal defamation prosecution, much of the private media still frequently criticizes the government in its reporting. Near

the end of 2006, during the campaign for the February 2007 presidential election, journalists working for the private newspaper *Sud Quotidien* and the private radio station Sud FM reported receiving intimidating and threatening phone calls by unknown persons. And in the central city of Mbacke, a correspondent for a local private radio station was beaten with metal cables and suffered head and back injuries after he broadcast a report critical of a local religious leader who was mobilizing his supporters for President Wade in the elections. On a promising note, a court dismissed charges of breaching national security leveled against several journalists whose private media company—Sud Communications Group which operates *Sud Quotidien* and Sud FM— broadcast an interview in October 2005 with the a rebel leader of the southern Casamance region. The court’s dismissal of the case against the journalists was seen as a rebuke to the Wade administration.

Senegal has many private, independent publications and a string of private and community radio stations. A number of community, private and public radio stations operate all over the country and 70 separate radio frequencies have been granted so far by the state. Nevertheless, the Wade administration refuses to accept private participation in the television sector except for entertainment channels. The only national television station, Radio Television Senegal, by law must be majority controlled by the government and broadcasts generally favorable coverage of the government. In the past, Senegal’s media watchdog, the High Audiovisual Council, criticized the government-run television station for not reflecting diverse viewpoints and not allowing equal coverage of opposition members and religious groups. Foreign satellite television and radio stations, including Radio France Internationale and BBC, are available, as is unrestricted internet access for the 5 percent of the population with the means to obtain it in 2006.

Seychelles

Status: Partly Free

Legal Environment: 20

Political Environment: 21

Economic Environment: 19

Total Score: 60

The constitution provides for freedom of speech but also restricts this right by protecting the reputation, rights, and privacy of citizens as well as the “interest of defense, public safety, public order, public morality, or public health.” These restrictions have limited freedom of the press, particularly because libel charges can easily be filed to penalize journalists. The law also allows the minister of information to prohibit the broadcast of any material that is against the “national interest.” The Seychelles Broadcasting Corporation, the state-controlled media regulation body, continued to ban a local singer’s music on the grounds that it was seditious.

There are two independent newspapers, the weeklies *Regar*, and *Le Nouveau Seychelles Weekly*. In the past the *Regar* has been regularly sued for libel by the government. In October 2006, the *Regar* stopped publication in protest against a lawsuit in which the paper was ordered to pay excessive damages (\$58,500) to the Seychelles tourism board president Maurice Lousteau-Lalanne for publishing a photo of him that had

already appeared in the pro-government paper, the *Nation*. Also in October 2006, protests prompted by parliament's rejection of a motion to amend the law banning political parties from setting up their own radio stations turned violent. Several people were injured during the protests and the editor of *Regar*, Roger Mancienne was arrested and then released on bail after being charged with "unlawful assembly."

The government owns the country's only daily newspaper, the *Nation*, which adheres closely to official policy. The state also has a de facto monopoly over the widely consumed broadcast media, and private broadcasters have been slow to develop because of restrictive licensing fees of more than \$185,000 per year. Telecommunications companies must submit subscriber information to the government, and the internet is available and unrestricted in Seychelles for the nearly 25 percent of the population that had access in 2006.

Sierra Leone

Status: Partly Free

Legal Environment: 17

Political Environment: 21

Economic Environment: 18

Total Score: 56

The constitution guarantees freedom of expression in Sierra Leone, but the Public Order Act of 1965 is still on the books which criminalizes libel and holds accountable not only journalists, but vendors, printers, and publishers rendering any guarantee for press freedom illusory. This oppressive law was implemented as recently as 2005 when the managing editor and a reporter with *The Trumpet* weekly were jailed and charged with seditious libel, but were acquitted the following month. Nonetheless, no new criminal libel prosecutions were filed in 2006. In fact, during the year President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah pledged to decriminalize libel, but this promise remained unfulfilled at year's end.

In February, the attorney-general of Sierra Leone declined to press charges of manslaughter against Fatmata Komeh, a member of parliament, and two others accused of assaulting journalist Harry Yansaneh, acting editor of the independent newspaper *For di People*, who was the victim of a violent attack in May 2005; from which he died of complications two months later. In August, Komeh and her accomplices were arrested on charges of manslaughter but were released on bail only a few days later. Explaining his decision not to pursue manslaughter charges, the attorney general said he relied on the report of the inquest into Yansaneh's death. A physician who testified at the inquest reported that Yansaneh died from chronic kidney failure and that the assault did not contribute to the journalist's death. The attorney general said he was considering filing lesser charges against the MP and the two others. In August, the High Court requested the extradition of Komeh's children, residents of the United Kingdom who were also implicated in the assault, but this was still pending at year's end.

Despite frequent media harassments, newspapers openly and routinely criticize the government, its officials, opposition political parties, and former rebel forces. The

diverse and lively media, particularly the growing print press, have been a strong voice against corruption. Nonetheless, poor journalistic skills, insufficient resources, and a lack of professional ethics all pose enduring problems for the quality of the press. More than 25 newspapers, catering to a wide spectrum of interests and political opinions, were published during the year. Most of these were privately owned, but several were affiliated with political parties. Consequently, the media are highly politicized, and there is widespread corruption among journalists. Several government and private radio stations, as well as international stations like the United Nations Radio, all provide coverage of domestic news and political commentary. The radio remains the medium of choice for most Sierra Leoneans, who for economic reasons have limited access to television, newspapers, and the internet. Less than 0.5 percent of the population was able to access the internet in 2006, though the government did not place any explicit restrictions on internet use.

Somalia

Status: Not Free

Legal Environment: 27

Political Environment: 34

Economic Environment: 24

Total Score: 85

In principle, Somalia's charter provides for freedom of the press, but with the lawless nature of Somali society, many of the local clan leaders have typically disregarded this in favor of a more aggressive approach to critical reporting. In 2006, the environment in which the media operated experienced a noticeable deterioration with the escalation of the armed political conflict between the internationally recognized Transitional Federal Government (TFG) based in Baidoa and the Islamic Courts Union (ICU) which took control of much of Somalia, including the capital Mogadishu beginning in June. According to the National Union of Somali Journalists (NUSOJ), 2006 was the most dangerous year for press freedom in Somalia in more than a decade.

In October, the ICU announced a 13-point code of conduct for the media which would effectively serve to eliminate press freedom in the areas under its control. If this were implemented, it would prohibit the publication of articles that could create division between the ICU and the public, require journalists to reveal their sources, and forbid media outlets from receiving foreign funding. However, the ICU eventually agreed to discuss this proposal with the media before it could be passed; at year's end no aspect of the code had been formally approved or implemented. Despite such legal setbacks, the ICU was still able to severely curtail the freedoms of the independent press in 2006 and generally helped to cultivate an atmosphere of fear and self-censorship that pervaded Somali journalism throughout the country.

In 2006, the number of violent attacks, arbitrary arrests, and instances of censorship noticeably increased. The NUSOJ logged 30 such cases—10 more than they had recorded in 2005. The most egregious of these occurred in June, less than three weeks after the ICU seized control of Mogadishu, when Martin Adler, the award-winning

Swedish freelance journalist and photographer, was shot in the back and killed while filming a pro-ICU demonstration in Mogadishu. Despite ICU promises that his killer would be brought to justice, at year's end no one had yet been identified or arrested. Among a wide number of other press freedom violations that occurred in territories held by the Islamists, in September the ICU began closing critical radio stations and detaining journalists. Private Radio HornAfrik and Radio Simba were both temporarily shuttered for their critical reporting. Radio HornAfrik was told it could begin broadcasting if it agreed to stop playing romantic music and refraining from critical reporting about the ICU.

Intimidation and harassment of the media was not unique to Mogadishu or the ICU. In fact, self-censorship was a particular problem in Baidoa where journalists were expressly targeted by the TFG for reporting on Ethiopian troops in Somalia prior to their announced entry on December 20. Such instances included the June closure of Radio Shabelle, a local radio station, and the October arrest and temporary detention of Abdullahi Yassin Jama, a journalist with Radio Warsan and the Somalia Broadcasting Corporation.

Despite the high number of press freedom violations reported in 2006 throughout Somalia, many more incidents are believed to have gone completely unreported, often out of fear of reprisal or an acceptance of the futility of attempts to bring perpetrators to justice. In fact, near total impunity currently exists in Somalia for perpetrators of crimes against the press; in the last two years, no suspects have been arrested for any of the multiple instances of harassment, intimidation, murder, abuse, or torture of journalists. This is particularly deplorable in the case of the two journalists murdered in 2005; BBC correspondent Kate Peyton and Duniya Muhyadin Nur, a reporter for the Somali-based radio station Capital Voice, were both shot and killed while working in and around Mogadishu.

Photocopied dailies and low-grade radio stations have proliferated in Mogadishu and elsewhere since 1991, and some 20 private newspapers and a dozen radio and television stations exist in the country. Nonetheless, a number of outlets ceased operations in 2006 or censored the subject matter of their reporting. Of those that continue to operate, many have been accused of bias, particularly in their coverage of the war or ethnic and inter-clan rivalries. The infrastructure for journalism in Somalia is relatively undeveloped as many journalists work with little to no pay and most are employed without a written contract. Unlike many other African nations, Somalia has a rich internet presence which is fueled predominantly by the Somali diaspora in the West and Gulf states. Nevertheless, due to pervasive poverty, less than 1 percent of the domestic Somali population has been able to access this resource. While online community has traditionally operated unhindered, there were reports in 2006 that the ISU monitored internet activity closely.

In 2006, the status of press freedom was visibly better in the two self-proclaimed autonomous regions of Puntland and Somaliland than in the rest of the country, although restrictions are still harsh and coverage of political and security issues is particularly perilous. The Puntland charter provides for freedom of the press "as long as they respect the law." In January, Radio Las Anod, the only radio station in the region of Las Anod of Sool was temporarily closed and all employees were briefly detained for violating the Puntland Vice President's order not to sell anything from Somaliland; they had broadcast

misinformation about a children's measles vaccination program originating from Somaliland. In Somaliland, liberal decrees nominally guaranteeing press freedom do not prevent the local administration from continuing to harass and detain journalists. In June, soldiers from the Somaliland Criminal Investigation Department arrested the editor of a popular newspaper on accusation that he had published an article written by an American reader; the editor was released the next day, but only following persistent demands by human rights groups. Separately, in March the government in Somaliland, gave its permission for Hargeisa Cable Television to begin operating an independent broadcast in the region; until 2006, the Somaliland government had maintained a monopoly on broadcast television media.

South Africa

Status: Free

Legal Environment: 7

Political Environment: 12

Economic Environment: 9

Total Score: 28

Freedom of expression and of the press, protected in principle by the constitution, is generally respected in practice. Nevertheless, several apartheid-era laws remain in effect that permit authorities to restrict the publication of information about the police, national defense forces, prisons, and mental institutions and to compel journalists to reveal sources. A proposed Film and Publication Amendment Bill was sent to parliament in August; the amended Bill would subject print and broadcast media to the same pre-publication screening for "indecent content" currently required of films, computer games, and magazines. After vociferous protest from media outlets and press freedom advocates, President Thabo Mbeki postponed a decision on the bill until 2007. Recent years have seen an increase in the use of interdictions and gag orders by both governmental and non-state actors, a trend the Johannesburg-based Freedom of Expression Institute likens to pre-publication censorship. In February, the Johannesburg High Court approved an interdiction request from a Muslim religious organization to prevent the country's largest newspaper, *The Sunday Times*, from reprinting allegedly offensive cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad. In September, the Johannesburg High Court granted an interdiction request brought by the former head of the national postal service against the *Mail & Guardian* newspaper; the court overturned the gag order ten days later. The *Mail & Guardian* was the subject of a May 2005 gag order that delayed for over a month the publication of an article on the "Oilgate" corruption scandal.

South Africa features vibrant press freedom advocacy and journalists' organizations, and a number of private newspapers and magazines—including the *Mail & Guardian*, *The Cape Times*, and *The Sunday Times*—are sharply critical of the government, political parties, and other societal actors. The state-owned South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) dominates broadcast media. Although editorially independent from the government, the SABC has come under fire for displaying pro-government bias and for encouraging self-censorship. In June, the SABC—apparently

under pressure from the government—opted not to air a commissioned documentary about President Mbeki because it contained allegedly defamatory statements about Mbeki. In the year's most worrying development for press freedom, in October the *Mail & Guardian* website leaked excerpts from an internal SABC report that found several outspoken government critics had been barred from SABC airwaves; the leaked report accused head of news Snuki Zikalala of repeated and inappropriate interventions in the SABC's news programs. The SABC then attempted to interdict the *Mail & Guardian* Online's publication of the "blacklist" report; the interdiction request was struck down by the Johannesburg High Court. In October, the SABC decided not to release the full report, only making available selected excerpts and summaries. In addition, members of government and other political figures continued to reveal a heightened sensitivity to media criticism—including accusing critical journalists of racism and betraying the state.

Most South Africans receive the news via radio outlets associated with the SABC. However, efforts are being made to expand the number and broadcasting range of community radio stations via the Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (Icasa). In April, press freedom organizations praised Mbeki's decision not to sign controversial legislation that would have enabled the Minister of Communications to select the Icasa Council. While the SABC's three stations claim most of the television market, the country's two commercial television stations, e.tv and M-net, are reaching ever greater proportions of the population—78 percent of the population accessed e.tv in 2006. Internet access is unrestricted and growing rapidly, although many South Africans cannot afford the service fee and only 7.4 percent of the population was able to access it in 2005.

Sudan

Status: Not Free

Legal Environment: 27

Political Environment: 30

Economic Environment: 24

Total Score: 81

While the situation for the press in the north of Sudan and the Darfur region remained largely as restrictive and inhibiting in 2006 as in previous years, improvements in media freedom were noticeable in the southern region, particularly as a result of an increased tolerance by the autonomous southern government for critical reportage. President Omar al-Bashir's power concentration has slightly subsided because of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and resulting power-sharing agreements signed with the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) in January 2005. The interim constitution provides for freedom of thought and expression, but this is only respected by those in power on a rhetorical level. The Sudanese government's main preoccupation in 2006 was how best to manage international reaction to the Darfur situation. While pre-publication censorship has been officially lifted, Sudan's security personnel regularly harass and censor journalists. In addition to the security forces, the National Press Council (NPC)

has the right to sanction journalists, suspend publications, and regularly abuses these rights in order to censor outlets with critical material.

Throughout 2006, journalists faced harassment, violent attacks, intimidation, and direct censorship at the hands of both the government and non-governmental forces. In a September case that shocked the Sudanese public and press core, gunmen kidnapped and beheaded Mohammed Taha Mohammed Ahmed, editor of the pro-government Khartoum-based daily *Al-Wifaq*. Police found his head and body on a road the following day. Taha Mohamed Ahmed had originally published an article about Prophet Mohamed's lineage in 2005 for which he was detained and questioned. The article's publication raised the ire of Sudan's religious establishment. An Al-Qaeda linked group later claimed to be behind the killing; but so far, no arrests have been made in the case which is shrouded in rumor and confusion. Several major private Khartoum-based dailies were censored or confiscated after reporting on the case. According to the Committee to Protect Journalists, Sudanese journalists said that the censored publications also carried articles about local demonstrations against rising fuel and sugar prices and the slow pace of democratic transition. Several television and print journalists were also detained, beaten and harassed during coverage of demonstrations in the summer over the rising prices as well as anti-government protests. Another major issue for Sudan in 2006 was control of journalists—especially foreign journalists—covering Darfur. Government spokesmen have regularly attacked the foreign media's coverage of Darfur as anti-Sudanese. In August, government forces in Darfur detained American reporter Paul Salopek, on assignment for National Geographic, as well as his translator and driver and eventually charged the three with espionage. They spent a month in detention before Bashir ordered their release in September.

Journalists in the largely autonomous region of southern Sudan are not as restricted as journalists in the north and have more leeway to criticize Khartoum and government policies. While there were no reports of direct censorship by the government in the south in 2006, local provincial governments did interfere with the independence of the press. Once such case occurred in July when the local radio station Liberty FM was forced to shut down after one caller on a talk show voiced criticisms of the provincial government.

Many daily newspapers operate in Sudan—though none are currently able to function regularly in Darfur—most of which experienced intense scrutiny from the government during the year. Still, some of Sudan's private newspapers are feisty and critical. Many newspapers employ columnists that regularly question and attack Bashir's policies. In 2006, newspapers published article about cases of torture and abuse at the hands of government forces and 'named names.' The Bashir administration in Khartoum runs one Arabic- and one English-language newspaper and also dominates the broadcast media, the main source of information for much of Sudan's population. Formal censorship is also mandatory for television broadcasts ensuring that the news reflects the government's viewpoint. But Arabic satellite channels like Al-Jazeera and Al-Arabiya are popular in Sudan and are increasingly turned to as an alternative to the pro-government domestic television and radio stations. The government also exerts pressure on international correspondents for such foreign broadcasters; in 2006 Al-Arabiya's Khartoum reporter quit after the NPC harassed him and he was repeatedly called in by security agents for questioning. The government is also trying to limit the broadcast reach

of the UN radio station in Sudan, which operates as part of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement.

Internet penetration in Sudan is among the highest in sub-Saharan Africa—though still low by global standards—with 7.6 percent of the population accessing the internet in 2006, almost exclusively in urban areas. The government has not traditionally displayed much interest in censoring this new media, but with the high rate of expanding internet consumption in Khartoum and other major cities, the government was reported to have monitored e-mail communications and internet activity in 2006. The National Telecommunication Corporation also censored websites during the year, though it claimed that most were of a pornographic nature and none were shut down for political reasons.

Swaziland

Status: Not Free

Legal Environment: 25

Political Environment: 26

Economic Environment: 25

Total Score: 76

Freedom of expression is severely restricted, especially regarding political issues or matters concerning the royal family. There are very few de facto legal protections for journalists and media workers in Swaziland. While a new constitution—which went into effect in February 2006—provides for freedom of speech, the king may waive these rights at his discretion. The 1938 Sedition and Subversive Activities Act bans publication of any criticism of the monarchy, and self-censorship is widespread, particularly regarding the king's lavish lifestyle. The Proscribed Publications Act (1968) also empowers the government to ban publications if they are deemed “prejudicial or potentially prejudicial to the interests of defense, public safety, public order, public morality, or public health.” The law has been used several times in recent years to punish newspapers that criticized or embarrassed the monarchy. In a potentially positive development, in April the government announced that it had hired consultants to assist in the drafting of the kingdom's first freedom of information legislation.

Harsh defamation laws are also used to stifle the press. In 2006, the *Times of Swaziland* lost three separate defamation cases and ordered to pay damages to the government's United Nations envoy, a member of parliament, and a Mbabane businessman. However, in May the Supreme Court overturned massive fines (approximately \$116,000) levied against the newspaper in a 2005 defamation case brought by the late Deputy Prime Minister Albert Shabangu. In October, a parliamentary committee charged the newspaper with damaging “the dignity and reputation of parliament” and mandated an unconditional apology for an article which accused MPs of interfering in the management of the state radio station, the Swaziland Broadcasting and Information Services (SBIS). The government routinely warns against negative news coverage. In August, Minister for Public Service and Information Themba Msibi warned the media against criticizing the king after Thulani Maseko, a human rights lawyer,

voiced concerns about the king's wide ranging constitutional powers on a SBIS program. In addition, journalists are subject to harassment and assault by both state and nonstate actors. In May, Musa Ndlangamandla, editor of the state owned *Swazi Observer*, claimed to have received death threats related to the newspaper's campaign against unscrupulous moneylenders.

The two major newspapers in circulation are the *Times of Swaziland* and the *Swazi Observer*. The *Times*, founded in 1897, is the oldest newspaper in the kingdom and the only major news source free of government control. Generally, the government withheld its advertising, a crucial source of revenue, from the *Times*. Despite being owned by a royal conglomerate, the *Swazi Observer* was shut down temporarily in 2002 because its editorial direction was viewed as too liberal; both newspapers continued to criticize government corruption and inefficiency in 2006 but steered clear of taking on the royal family. The Swaziland Television Authority is both the state broadcaster and the industry regulatory agency and dominates the airwaves. There is one independent radio station, Voice of the Church, which focuses on religious programming. A member of the royal family owns the country's lone private television station. However, broadcast and print media from South Africa are received in the country, and state broadcasters retransmitted Voice of America and BBC programs without censorship. The government does not restrict internet-based media, though less than 4 percent of the population had access in 2006.

Tanzania

Status: Partly Free

Legal Environment: 16

Political Environment: 20

Economic Environment: 15

Total Score: 51

Although the constitution provides for freedom of speech, several other laws limit the ability of the media to function effectively. Authorities are empowered to register and ban newspapers under the Newspaper Registration Act "in the interest of peace and good order," while the Broadcasting Services Act provides for state regulation of electronic media, and the National Security Act allows the government to control the dissemination of information to the public. Libel laws that impose criminal penalties intimidated journalists from reporting aggressively, particularly on issues of corruption. In August 2006, the Minister of Lands and Settlement Development, John Magufuli, initiated criminal proceedings against three journalists after the publication of an article relating to the funds for the construction of the Usagara-Chato road and the alleged diversion of the road to the Minister's constituency. There is no Freedom of Information law in place, but the government announced plans to table a draft bill in April 2007.

In 2006, journalists were subjected to extra-legal intimidation, particularly threats of deportation. On August 2006, the government threatened to deport journalist Richard Mgamba, an investigative journalist with the daily newspaper *The Citizen*, after he

appeared in a documentary film the authorities say has damaged the country's economy and image. The resolution of the case was still pending at year's end. Earlier in the year, Ali Mohammed Nabwa, former editor of *Dira*, a defunct Zanzibar newspaper, was stripped of his Tanzanian nationality by the Zanzibar immigration department, just three and a half months after having it restored by the Tanzanian interior minister.

The situation in Zanzibar remains more restrictive than in the rest of the country. Journalists in Zanzibar must be licensed, and the state tightly controls the broadcast media. Locals can receive broadcasts and reports from the mainland. Zanzibar's first independent private newspaper, *Dira*, remains banned, and there are no private broadcasters on the island. In 2005, the government made direct attempts to bar journalists from reporting critically in the region; no such incidents were reported in 2006.

The number of media outlets continued to grow, including 47 FM radio stations, 537 registered newspapers, and a dozen television stations. Only four radio stations have a national reach—state-run Radio Tanzania, as well as the privately owned Radio One, Radio Free Africa, and Radio Uhuru—and all are viewed as sympathetic to the ruling party. The government reportedly withholds advertising from critical newspapers and newspapers that report favorably on the opposition. Private firms that are keen to remain on good terms with the government allegedly follow suit, thus making it difficult for critical media outlets to remain financially sustainable. Independent media outlets as well as the state-owned newspapers regularly criticize official policies, although the government occasionally pressures outlets to suppress unfavorable stories. There are no reports of government restriction of the internet, though less than one percent had the financial means to access it in 2006.

Togo

Status: Not Free

Legal Environment: 22

Political Environment: 31

Economic Environment: 21

Total Score: 74

After a period of heightened aggression towards journalists during the 2005 coup and election intended to ensure Faure Gnassingbe of the presidency, the environment for the media has stabilized in 2006; nonetheless, the lack of any investigation into last year's attacks on the press has led to widespread impunity. Freedom of speech and of the press is legally guaranteed in Togo, but these rights are not always respected in practice. In 2004, in a deal to end trade sanctions from the EU, President Eyadema initiated legal improvements to the status of press freedom including abolishing prison sentences for libel and prohibiting the government from seizing and closing media outlets without judicial approval. However, following Eyadema's death in 2005 these legal improvements were disregarded as his son, Faure Gnassingbe, took over the presidency and began targeting and harassing independent media outlets in the wave of violence intended to secure his hold on power. In 2006, nominal respect for the 2004 press laws

have returned, but very few, if any, prosecutions have taken place against those responsible for the 2005 crackdown and intimidation of the media.

The 1992 constitution established the High Authority for Audiovisual Communications (HAAC) as an independent body intended to protect freedom of the press and ensure ethical standards in media operations. Despite its nominal independence, the HAAC has traditionally resided in the breast pocket of Eyadema's regime and has served predominantly as a tool for government repression of opposition or dissenting media outlets. This is no less true today, even with last year's appointment of Philippe Evegno, a prominent opposition journalist, as the chairman of the HAAC. In May 2006, the HAAC suspended for a month a daily political program on Radio Nostalgie, an independent station, charging that the program "attacked and systematically threatened national and international personalities" after a guest on the show criticized ECOWAS's support of the current regime. The HAAC has also announced that community and faith-based radio station will be heavily penalized for broadcasting political commentary.

In 2006, the political environment for the press appears to have returned to what it was under Eyadema with journalists wary of criticizing the government but infrequently facing direct physical harassment. The most prominent threat to journalistic freedom in 2006 was the culture of impunity that pervaded the country. Although the number of attacks, harassments, and closures of media outlets has dramatically decreased since 2005, the memory of last year's campaign of intimidation has led to self-censorship among much of the press. A number of instances of physical attacks and intimidations did occur in 2006, primarily originating from the family of the current and former president. In September, the brother of the president, and the head of the football federation, threatened the host of a show on *Radio Sport FM* for criticizing a decision the football federation had made. A more direct assault occurred in November when two of Gnassingbe's brothers physically attacked a journalist with the private radio station Nana FM for having criticized their late father.

Despite government intimidation efforts frequently resulting in self-censorship, Togo does house a lively and diverse independent media, even though many independent outlets are heavily politicized. The government made consistent efforts to paint all independent media as puppets of the opposition and frequently denied press accreditation to local independent media outlets for political events. Over 310 newspapers are registered in Togo, many of which are able to publish only sporadically or are forced to close soon after they open. There are 15 regularly publishing private newspapers, though even these are habitually plagued by inconsistent readerships. The government owns and operates the only uninterrupted daily newspaper, *Togo Presse*, and the only national television station, and all government outlets maintain a heavy pro-government bias. Improving on 2005, access to the internet in 2006 was generally unrestricted although proprietors of internet cafés were often required to provide records of clientele activity if asked to do so by a state official.

Tonga

Status: Partly Free

Legal Environment: 11

Political Environment: 11
Economic Environment: 9
Total Score: 31

Freedom of the press is guaranteed under the Tongan constitution, and is generally respected in practice. Tonga's media environment has been steadily improving since a 2004 Supreme Court ruling that reinstated a press freedom clause of the constitution and invalidated the controversial 2003 media operators and newspaper acts, which had been used to harass newspapers such as *Taimi 'o Tonga*. However, during riots in late 2006 the government cracked down on a pro-democracy newspaper.

A major riot ending in arson in Tonga during November 2006 destroyed an estimated fourth-fifths of the central business district in the capital Nuku'alofa. The authorities blamed the constitutional kingdom's pro-democracy movement for the rioting and the damage while pro-democracy campaigners blamed the government. 'Akilisi Pohiva, the leading pro-democracy parliamentarian and publisher of *Ko'e Kele'a*, an outspoken and investigative newsletter, was arrested and charged with sedition after earlier arrests of political leaders. The charges were later dropped. More than 700 people were reportedly arrested in relation to the riots.

Tonga has a remarkably diverse range of media considering the nation's small population and economy. Besides *Taimi 'o Tonga*, which has the largest circulation of the country's private newspapers (as well as editions in Australia, the United States, and New Zealand), other publications include the weekly government newspaper *Tonga Chronicle* and the independent monthly magazine and news website *Matangi Tonga*. The state-owned Tongan Broadcasting Commission owns one AM and one FM station and the free-to-air Television Tonga station. There are also two privately owned television stations and three private radio stations. There were 3,000 reported internet users in 2006, and the internet is open and unrestricted.

Uganda

Status: Partly Free
Legal Environment: 20
Political Environment: 21
Economic Environment: 13
Total Score: 54

Although the constitution provides for freedom of expression, laws enacted in the name of national security, have negated the constitutional provisions in practice. The situation for the press worsened slightly in Uganda during 2006 as a result of media harassment and criminal convictions against critical journalists surrounding the February presidential election. The government also set new restrictions on the accreditation of foreign journalists prior to the election; this included mandatory inspection for all foreign correspondents by the newly-established government Media Center. Even those who had previously received accreditation were told to re-register at the Center. Information

Minister James Buturo said the step was taken because foreign journalists had become a "security threat." On March 9, Canadian freelance journalist Blake Lambert was denied re-entry to the country following a visit to South Africa. Lambert's international reporting and his domestic radio commentary included criticism of the government; no official reason was given by the government for the denial of his entrance. However, in a positive move a new regulation restricting in-country travel by international journalists was rescinded soon after it was promulgated.

A number of media outlets were harassed, intimidated, and censored throughout the year, particularly those entertaining FDC perspectives during the election or giving voice to the Lord's Resistance Army in the north. In March, the Mbale offices of the private radio station Open Gate FM were raided by police who confiscated equipment and arrested two journalists for failing to produce a record of their March 18 interview with Nathan Mafabi Nandala, an MP and senior leader of the FDC. The two employees were later released without being formally charged. Also in March, two journalists with the private tabloid *Red Pepper* were temporarily detained and eventually released without charge after publishing a leaked cabinet list. Shortly thereafter, Martin Ojara Mapenduzi, the program manager of the private radio station Choice FM was temporarily detained by police without charge after broadcasting a piece in February that the government deemed to be threatening to national security. In fact, soon after the election, Choice FM was forcibly shut by police on accusations of operating without a license. The station adamantly denies operating illegally but was only permitted to reopen in July after paying a fine in excess of \$2,700. In 2005, the government passed a ban on coverage of the trial of opposition leader Kizza Besigye; this ban continued in 2006 even though it was widely disregarded in practice without penalty. Two journalists from the respected Kampala-based *Weekly Observer* faced charges of "promoting sectarianism" in connection with a 2005 article criticizing the government's prosecution of Besigye.

Independent media outlets—including more than two dozen daily and weekly newspapers as well as about 100 private radio and television stations—have mushroomed since the government loosened control in 1993, and they are often highly critical of the government and offer a range of opposition views. However, high annual licensing fees for radio and television stations place some financial restraints on the broadcast media. A ban on new radio stations, which was imposed in 2003 and was widely disregarded in practice without penalty, was lifted this year for upcountry radio stations, however, it still holds for Kampala. The state broadcasters, including Radio Uganda, the only national radio station, wield considerable clout and are generally viewed as sympathetic to the government. During the February 2006 elections, government controlled media provided more coverage of President Museveni's reelection campaign than his opponents'. The Uganda Journalist Safety Committee reported that in the run-up to the elections, electronic media devoted 43 percent of overall election coverage to Museveni versus six percent to opposition candidate Kizza Besigye. Self-censorship was widespread. There are no official restrictions on internet access, although on February 13, the government directed Uganda Telcom to block internal access to ww.radiokatwe.com, a US-based website that published antigovernment gossip. Access to the internet increased during the year, with almost 2 percent of the population accessing this new media during 2006.

Zambia

Status: Not Free

Legal Environment: 19

Political Environment: 24

Economic Environment: 21

Total Score: 64

Freedom of speech is constitutionally guaranteed, but the government often restricts this right in practice. The IBA and ZNBC Acts, which set up independent boards for the regulatory body and the national broadcaster, have not yet been fully implemented despite being passed in December 2003. The draft Freedom of Information Bill has also yet to be passed. Under Section 69 of the penal code, it is a criminal offense for any media outlet to defame the president. Journalists have regularly been subject to criminal libel and defamation suits brought by ruling party leaders under this and other legal provisions. In November 2005, Fred M'membe, the editor of Zambia's only private daily, *The Post*, was charged with defamation after writing a series of editorials that were critical of President Mwanawasa. In February of this year, the state finally dropped all charges. In March 2006, the government passed an amendment to the VAT Act that would have increased the standard rate applicable to the supply of newspapers and magazines and raised the costs of production by twenty-five percent. The amendment was later withdrawn after protests from local media organizations bodies. The Public Order Act, among other statutes, has at times been used to harass journalists. In March 2006, two journalists working for the Chikuni community radio station were charged with the "publication of false news with intent to cause fear and alarm to the public" after covering a suspected ritual murder of a young boy.

The government controls two widely circulated newspapers the *Times of Zambia* and *Zambia Daily*; and the state-owned, pro-government Zambia National Broadcasting Corporation (ZNBC) dominates the broadcast media. During the 2006 elections, the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) Zambia conducted a study that revealed imbalance and bias in favor of the ruling Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD) by the ZNBC in their coverage of news during the current election campaigns, despite legal provisions that required equitable coverage of all contesting political parties. There were also reports of harassment of ZNBC journalists by opposition supporters. As a result of prepublication review at government-controlled newspapers, journalists commonly practice self-censorship. Opposition political parties and nongovernmental organizations complained of inadequate access to mass media resources. However, a group of independent newspapers widely criticize the government, and an independent radio station, Radio Phoenix, presents nongovernmental views. Internet access is not restricted by the government, though its use is hindered by socioeconomic conditions and only two percent of the population was able to regularly access it in 2006.

Zimbabwe

Status: Not Free

Legal Environment: 29

Political Environment: 33

Economic Environment: 27

Total Score: 89

Press freedom in Zimbabwe remained extremely restricted in 2006, as President Robert Mugabe's government continued to tighten control over domestic media and attempted to block the efforts of foreign outlets to circulate unfiltered news within the country. Despite constitutional provisions for freedom of expression, officials display an openly hostile attitude toward media freedom, and a draconian legislative framework continues to effectively inhibit the activities of journalists and media outlets. The 2002 Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA) requires all journalists and media companies to register with the government-controlled Media and Information Commission (MIC). It also gives the information minister sweeping powers to decide who is able to work as a journalist, and a 2005 amendment to the law introduced prison sentences of up to two years for journalists working without accreditation. A number of private newspapers have been denied licenses since the AIPPA came into force. The *Daily News*, the country's only independent daily, was shuttered in 2003 for not adhering to the AIPPA, and the MIC continued to deny it a license in 2006. Constitutional challenges to the AIPPA by affiliates of the *Daily News* have proven unsuccessful. However, the high court in February ruled that the July 2005 MIC decision to deny registration to the banned papers must be reconsidered, and in March ruled that the MIC should recuse itself from the decision due to the obvious bias of its chairman.

Authorities continue to employ a range of restrictive legislation—including the Official Secrets Act, the AIPPA, the Public Order and Security Act (POSA), and criminal defamation laws—to harass journalists. Section 15 of the POSA and Section 80 of the AIPPA criminalize the publication of “inaccurate” information, and both laws have been used to intimidate, arrest, and prosecute reporters. The 2005 Criminal Law (Codification and Reform Bill) increased prison sentences for similar violations to a maximum of 20 years. The General Laws Amendment Act, which tightened the “presidential insult” and “communication of falsehoods” provisions of the Public Order and Security Act (POSA), was signed into law in February. Several times during the year, the AIPPA was used to threaten the remaining independent press. In January, the weekly *Financial Gazette* withdrew an article suggesting that the MIC was controlled by intelligence officers after the commission threatened to revoke the paper's license. Later that month, the MIC refused to renew the accreditation of 15 journalists working for the *Zimbabwe Independent* until the paper retracted a similar story. A number of former *Daily News* employees continued to face charges of working without accreditation, although none of those charged under AIPPA so far have been convicted. In January, freelance journalist Sidney Saize was detained for three days on charges of practicing journalism without a license and filing a “false story” for the Voice of America news service. In December 2005, police and government officials had raided the Harare office of the independent Voice of the People (VOP) radio station, which broadcasts locally produced programs into the country from the Netherlands. The authorities confiscated equipment and files, and arrested three employees. Six members of the VOP's board of trustees were also

arrested and charged in January 2006 with broadcasting without a license, but after several court appearances, a judge dismissed the case in September.

Professional and media monitoring organizations—such as the Zimbabwe Union of Journalists, the Media Monitoring Project of Zimbabwe, and the local chapter of the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA-Zimbabwe)—were subject to official harassment during 2006. These three groups were jointly involved in advocating for the introduction of an independent media council, intended to replace the MIC as part of a self-regulatory system.

Journalists are routinely subjected to verbal intimidation, physical attacks, arrest and detention, and financial pressure at the hands of the police, government officials, and supporters of the ruling party. In February, freelance journalist Gift Phiri was brutally beaten by attackers who accused him of working for foreign news outlets. Instances of arbitrary arrest and detention occur primarily when reporters are trying to cover politically charged stories. In July, two journalists covering an antigovernment demonstration were arrested, detained, and then released after paying a fine. Mike Saburi, a cameraman with Reuters Television, was assaulted by police officers and jailed in September after he filmed the police beating people involved in a banned trade union march in Harare. During the past several years, dozens of Zimbabwean journalists have fled the country, and according to a report by the Committee to Protect Journalists, more than 90 currently live in exile, predominantly in South Africa and Britain.

Foreign journalists are not allowed to reside full time in the country and are regularly denied visas to file stories from Zimbabwe. Locally based correspondents for foreign publications, particularly those whose reporting has portrayed the regime in an unfavorable light, have been refused accreditation or threatened with lawsuits and deportation. The Committee to Protect Journalists reported that in April, police arrested two journalists from BTV, the state broadcaster of neighboring Botswana; they were accused of practicing journalism without a license and violating Zimbabwean immigration law, and in November they were convicted and fined roughly \$20 each. Publisher Trevor Ncube, who owns several newspapers in both Zimbabwe and South Africa, faced repeated harassment, as authorities attempted to strip him of his citizenship and confiscate his passport.

The government, through the Mass Media Trust holding company, controls several major daily newspapers, including the *Chronicle* and the *Herald*; coverage in these news outlets consists of favorable portrayals of Mugabe and the ruling party, and attacks on perceived critics of the regime. Several independent weeklies such as the *Standard* and the *Zimbabwe Independent* continue to publish, although many journalists practice extensive self-censorship. Others, such as the privately owned *Daily Mirror*, have been effectively bought up and infiltrated by the intelligence service; during 2006, this new ownership engineered the forced dismissal of several journalists. Some foreign newspapers, mostly from South Africa, are available, although the authorities have threatened to restrict their importation. In October, police raided the Harare distribution offices of the *Zimbabwean*, an independent weekly printed in South Africa, and confiscated documents.

In general, newspapers have poor distribution networks outside the urban areas and have become relatively expensive, placing them beyond the reach of most Zimbabweans. Printing expenses have dramatically increased due to soaring prices for

newsprint and paper, causing many outlets to restrict their print runs. According to MISA's Africa Media Barometer, state-run companies do not advertise in private papers, and state-run media outlets do not accept advertising from companies known to be aligned with the opposition. Due to poor economic conditions and salaries that do not keep pace with inflation, corruption and cash incentives for coverage have become rampant.

The state-controlled Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation runs all broadcast media, which are seen as mouthpieces of the regime. The Broadcasting Services Act bans foreign funding and investment in this capital-intensive sector, making it very difficult for private players to enter the market. In addition, broadcasting licenses have been consistently denied to independently owned radio stations, although a parliamentary committee did call for an opening up of the broadcast sector in 2006. Access to broadcast media in rural areas is hampered by deteriorating equipment and a lack of transmission sites; according to MISA, only 30 percent of the country receives radio and television coverage from the state-controlled broadcaster, although the government has reached an agreement with China to help upgrade this infrastructure. Meanwhile, also using Chinese technology, authorities have begun to focus on jamming the signals of the increasingly popular foreign-based radio stations that broadcast into Zimbabwe. The shortwave signal of SW Radio Africa, a London-based station run by exiled Zimbabwean journalists, was blocked around the time of the March 2005 parliamentary elections; the station then added a medium-wave broadcast, but this was blocked in the Harare area in June 2006. Similarly, the Voice of America's Studio 7 service, although it remains accessible within Zimbabwe, has been periodically blocked on different frequencies. Although satellite television services that provide international news programming remain largely uncensored, their prohibitive cost places them out of reach for most of the population.

Access to the internet is not restricted by the government, but it is limited by the high costs at internet cafes and service disruptions caused by frequent power outages. Nonetheless, almost 10 percent of Zimbabwe's population accessed this new medium in 2006, one of the highest rates of internet access in all of Africa. The law allows the government to monitor e-mail content. In April, the government proposed new legislation, the Interception of Communications Bill, which would allow officials to intercept electronic communications to prevent a "serious offense" or a "threat to national security"; the bill would require internet service providers (ISPs) to pay the cost of surveillance. In August, media advocates and ISP representatives uniformly opposed the bill at a parliamentary hearing. While technology for implementing the legislation is already undergoing tests, officials said in November that the bill would be amended to reflect the concerns of the parliamentary legal committee. However, a revised version of the bill released that month was also criticized by MISA-Zimbabwe for containing undemocratic provisions. Online newspapers run by Zimbabweans living abroad are popular among those with internet access.