



# MAPPING THE VOID

A STATE-BY-STATE MEDIA ASSESSMENT REPORT ON SOUTH SUDAN AND SELECTED NORTHERN STATES



# The Consortium on Promoting Freedom of Expression and Civil Society Involvement in Developing of Democratic Media Legislation in Sudan

## Programme Consortium Members



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## Table of Contents

Preface.....	5
Acknowledgement.....	8
Media/Press Law Infrastructure .....	10
Consortium Activities/Interventions.....	16
Historical Perspective .....	21
Internal, Regional & International Imperatives .....	24
The view from Juba .....	28
The view from Khartoum .....	31
State Media Assessment Report-South Sudan.....	35
The Great News and Information Void in South Sudan — An Overview... ..	35
The Specific Terms of Reference for the Mission .....	35
A Brief Sketch of the Means and Mode of News/ Information Flow into and From the States.....	36
Yei, Central Equatoria State.....	36
Western Equatoria State .....	37
Eastern Equatoria State.....	38
Jonglei State .....	39
Lakes State .....	39
Unity State .....	44
Western Bahr el Ghazal State.....	45
Upper Nile State.....	49
Southern Kordufan.....	53
Northern Bahr el Ghazal (Awiel) and Warrap State .....	54
A bird's eye view of the North.....	57
The Northern State .....	57
Red Sea State, Port Sudan.....	58
Al Gezira State .....	60
River Nile State .....	62
North State .....	63
The Serious Disconnect.....	65
Lack of Capacity .....	68
The Broadcasting Footprint .....	70
Lack of Budgetary Support.....	74
Addressing the Void.....	78
Observations .....	79
Conclusion: Mapping the Void.....	82

## PREFACE:

### 1 A Terrifying Vacuum — and Tremendous Potential

When it comes to media studies and research, Sudan in particular, South Sudan is literally one of the world's final frontiers. It has all the ingredients of uncharted territory. In this landmark investigation of the status of South Sudanese media, the authors map the media sector in a region just emerging from conflict and come up with an extraordinary picture. In the process they also identify a vast vacuum and acute shortfalls. It is morning yet on creation day in the world of Sudan media, which also means that there is hope yet although the needs and the wants are truly daunting. But daunting needn't mean intimidating. As the authors John Gachie and Co make clear after traversing more than 5,000 kilometres of South Sudanese territory, there is a great news and information void in South Sudan but there is also tremendous potential.

Consumers of media products, content and services in more developed parts of the world, including in such nearby places as neighbouring countries will be stunned by the South Sudanese media void delineated in this brief study. But it is also a void that harbours a great yearning, an immense hunger, for news, information, data, analyses and evaluation. South Sudanese are natural consumers of media products and seek them out both within the void at home and everywhere in their Diaspora.

This report builds on the findings of the report by **Consortium Promoting Freedom of Expression and Civil Society Involvement in Developing Democratic Media Legislation in Sudan** *Media in Sudan at a Crossroads* assessment report of November 2007 by International Media Support (IMS), which identified the need for a further assessment of the status of media in the states as not only apparent but crucial for a better and clearer understanding of the situation obtaining on the ground.

And put their boots on the ground in South Sudan in an empirical study of media product production, distribution and consumption the authors of this report definitely did. There are many remarkable scenarios in this study, with one of the most unforgettable being the video hall audiences who are avid viewers of Bollywood productions with Arabic subtitles!

From the fairly well developed system of printed products (newspapers and magazines), outlets and vendors in Yei to the vast expanse of Western Equatoria State, to Eastern Equatoria State and its international crossroads town of Torit to Jongolei State and far beyond, this study assesses the state of both print and electronic media, right down to vending, video halls and source of reading, viewing and listening material. Where it is to be found, a lot of South Sudanese viewing and listening media content is sourced from neighbouring regions, including Kenya and Uganda.

Aspects of the void were clear in the Lakes State capital of Rumbek, some 350 kilometres Northwest of Juba, where this study found very limited media products print and electronic – mostly sourced from Juba and other neighbouring states. Most of the printed products were usually a week or more old editions of English newspapers based in Khartoum, Juba and Nairobi, Kenya. There were no indications of any other media products from any other source.

A profound disconnect underpins the sometimes terrifying news and information void in South Sudan.

It was clear at the end of these field missions that there exists a gulf between the state governments and the Government of South Sudan (GoSS) on legal and policy formulation, development and co-ordination. This is most pronounced between the relevant ministries in charge of information/broadcasting at the states' level and the GoSS Ministry of Information and Broadcasting in Juba.

There was no clear linkage/support in terms of staff support/employment, training/deployment, capital equipment and broadcasting infrastructural support. Also lacking were professional standardisation and or harmonisation. The lack of financial support for operations and running costs was complete.

The all-important peace agenda and fundamental issues of right to information, media diversity and plurality were unknown, misunderstood and or ignored. The following field research makes an important point when it distinguishes between inadvertence and intentional shortcomings. In most states, there was no apparent linkage between the Executive and the Legislature on media/information. This report remarks: "There was no driving philosophy on media/information co-ordination to address voice poverty and or the vacuum that exists throughout the states".

This news and information vacuum is so terrifying precisely because the people of South Sudan are at such a critical juncture in the post-Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) period, an era in which the informed citizen needs and wants to make a number of informed decisions. Next year, 2010 South Sudanese enter a national electoral process leading to the referendum in 2011 during which they will decide on whether to secede or remain in the union with the North. The implementation of the CPA itself and the divvying up of the vast oil and other natural resource bounty are all issues that require a superlatively well-informed populace, particularly the electorate segment of it that will participate in both elections and plebiscites.

The core of the vacuum is a lack of capacity that is so complete it is positively intimidating. The lack of legal and policy frameworks in the country and throughout the states in terms of role/function of media and or development communication in serving the larger societal needs regarding information/communications can be overwhelming on first sight. The authors of this report note: "This particularly involves the role of the media in enhancing and entrenching human rights, freedom of expression, democracy and good governance. Of paramount importance is the lack of appreciation of the role of the media in informing and reporting on the peace agenda and, in particular, the CPA."

The nexus between a democratising society and a thriving and free media sector must be established in South Sudan, for one is not truly possible without the other. This study delineates the dimensions of a great vacuum. In other words it studies and defines the problem. It is essential reading for all who would want to help South Sudan towards establishing this all-important nexus. To paraphrase a great analyst of media on the subject of a great newspaper; a functioning media sector is a great (because informed) nation speaking to itself...and to the world.

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Mr. Richard Mogga, Advocacy officer, Association of Media Development in South Sudan (AMDISS) provided invaluable insights and helped in writing and editing of the first draft of the report.

The update and review for Malakal, in Upper Nile Province, was carried out in May 2009 by Mr Mac Maika, Manager, Juba Media Resource Centre.

The Report also includes valuable input and insights by Mr. Faissal El-Basir Mohammed and Ms Lemiaa Abu-Bakr, who carried out extensive media assessment missions to Al Gezira, Red Sea and South Kordofan States in northern Sudan.

The inclusion of these states from northern Sudan is solely intended to give a brief outlay of media/informational and communicational superstructure(s) in the northern states for comparative purposes only and capture the status quo as it obtains some states in the North.



# **A. The Media/Press Law Infrastructure**

# The Media/Press Law Infrastructure

January 9th 2009 marked the fourth anniversary of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) which had envisaged a thorough going democratic reform of the country's constitutional, legal and policy superstructure – but the reality on the ground was one of a failed and compromised reformist agenda.

Of major concern was the delay in reviewing and updating of the repressive media laws and policies, particularly with regard to the passage of the deeply contentious and oppressive Media Act in June 2009 by the National Legislative Assembly in Khartoum which compounded an already hostile and anti-media national superstructure.

Many of the envisaged legal and policy reform packages were far behind schedule and were beholden to extraneous political side-shows, in particular with regard to the International Criminal Court (ICC) indictment against President Bashir on March 4th 2009.

In South Sudan a raft of very liberal and democratic media legislations have now (moved) enjoyed and gained endorsement by the cabinet Cluster since they were drafted and adopted by a stakeholders' conference in 2008 May. These democratic media legislations were drafted and informed by a consultative round-table process led by the Consortium and enjoyed the input and quality control of ARTICLE 19, who provided the international best-practice and standards templates.

The immediate, swift and widespread repressive reaction by the Government of National Unity in 2009 against the media and the civil society organizations was indicative of a regime keen to clampdown on civil liberties and, in particular, to throttle and silence the media nationwide.

In the subsequent months prior to the indictment and afterwards, the democratic space in the country has been even more circumscribed and the media industry and journalists were one of the most adversely affected.

The then National Intelligence Security Service (NISS) head, Salih Gosh, set the grim scene by being quoted saying after the ICC indictment “...we [the Government] were Islamic extremists then became moderates and civilized, believing in peace and life for everyone. However, we will revert to how we were if necessary. There is nothing any easier than that.” (March 2009)

For the media and journalists, the obnoxious 2004 Media Law was supplanted by the equally obnoxious Media Law of 8th June 2009, which was heavily criticized by local and international human rights organizations, among them ARTICLE 19, raising, among other issues, its shortcomings on international standards and practice on Freedom of Expression. The law was also criticized by the Paris-based Reporters without Borders (RSF) and the New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ).

Indeed, Sudanese journalists held a major protest march outside Parliament in June 2009 Khartoum to lobby members of the House to vote against the Media Bill.

Amongst the most draconian measures in the Act are the power to arrest and detain journalists for long periods without recourse to the courts, the power to impound and dismantle newspaper printing presses and equipment and the power to impose hefty fines and sanctions against the media and journalists.

Indeed, during this period the prior and pre-press censorship of newspapers was dramatically increased and imposed on many publications with a high degree of success and intimidation.

Other draconian measures included the licensing regimes for chief editors and media institutions and the fact that the Media Council would be controlled and financed by the Government and, in particular, that

the President and would be empowered to impose criminal sanctions for violations of the Media Law.

Of major concern was that the 1999 Security/Intelligence Act is still in force and allows the security/Intelligence networks and organizations to arrest and detain people for long periods without recourse to judicial oversight. The security organizations are also empowered to impound news materials and close down media institutions while enjoying widespread indemnity from prosecution.

Coupled with the draconian media law, the constitutional, legal and policy framework for media and Press freedom in Sudan is compromised and beholden to security-Intelligence thresholds and benchmarks. This aspect makes it almost impossible to secure Press and media freedoms in Sudan. The situation is less tense and hostile in South Sudan, though the legal/constitutional and policy framework is not dissimilar and can be — and has been — used in the recent past to harass and intimidate journalists in South Sudan.

This state of affairs in South Sudan might change dramatically if the Southern parliament passes the draft of Media bills recently passed by the cabinet in Juba (August 2009). These bills include a Right to Information bill, Public Service Broadcasting and Broadcasting Frequency bill all developed with the support and involvement of stakeholders, the Government of Southern Sudan and the consortium.

Notwithstanding the fact that it has been more on a personal level and by individual officers applying and using these legal loopholes in South Sudan than a concerted government drive, the danger still lurks in the dark.

The very idea that media/Press freedoms are beholden to ad hoc and personal whim in South Sudan and security/Intelligence-driven in Khartoum is very troubling and vivifies the point about just how precarious and specious the claims to respecting human rights and media freedoms in Sudan are.

In terms of an enabling constitutional, legal and policy framework and

other superstructure and infrastructure, the South is still bereft of a functional infrastructure. An acute shortage of professional/trained and, or competent human resources and administrative policies and guidelines compounds the situation.

In the Media Project's case and in relation to Press/Media Freedom, the operating regime and policies, constitutional, legal and administrative guidelines are the patently undemocratic 2003 SPLM/A Administrative Orders in Southern Sudan and the 2004 Press Council Act passed by the NCP-led and dominated Parliament in Khartoum.

That these SPLM/A Administrative Orders and the 2004 Press Council Act are inconsistent and in contradiction of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and the Interim National and Southern Constitutions is not lost to the larger constituency of stakeholders. Rather, it is a clear testament of the underlying vested interests of both parties to defend and take advantage of the status quo for their own partisan ends.

In this regard, the Prosecutor- General of Southern Sudan has said most journalists and media professionals harassed and, or arrested and even charged are held and prosecuted under these anti-Press orders and the 2004 Press Council Act. Indeed, it was this Act that was applied against the Editor-in-Chief of the Citizen newspaper and a member of the AMDISS, our local counterpart, Mr Nhial Bol Nhial, in mid-2008, when he was held for nearly a week by the police in Juba.

In the national capital, Khartoum, the persistent harassment of journalists and other media professionals, including proprietors, the 2004 Act and the National Security Act of 1999 hold sway.

Indeed, the strangle-hold on the media and or press freedom in the North, by extension the whole country has been lightened by the enactment of the June 2009 media law which despite spirited internal and international pressure failed to stop its passage in the NCP dominated national parliament in Khartoum

In the last four years since the signing of the peace agreement, the National Security Intelligence Service has used provisions in these two

acts to close down newspapers, magazines, printing houses and arrest and detain journalists at will. The most sustained such campaign to harass the media in Sudan, and in particular in Khartoum, was waged in 2008.

## **B. The Sudan Media Development Consortium**

# Activities and Interventions

The Consortium Project on Promoting Freedom of Expression and Civil Society Involvement in the Development of Democratic Media Legislation in Sudan began in 2006. In the ensuing period, the Consortium has taken the lead in various activities, including lobbying, networking, drafting media bills for South Sudan, setting up a Media Resource Centre in Juba under the Association for Media Development in South Sudan (AMDISS) and engaging core staff for the Centre.

The Consortium has also held over 10 Media Roundtables with media stakeholders, both Southern and National, and conducted awareness-raising workshops with civil society, members of the National Legislative Assembly and political parties in Khartoum. These activities have been carried out by AMDISS and the Khartoum Centre for Human Rights and Environmental Development (KHRED) — local partners of the Consortium.

The Consortium was made up of international organizations and local partners. The members were ARTICLE 19-the Global Campaign on Free Expression, Norwegian People's Aid (NPA), International Media Support (IMS), the Olof Palme International Centre, the Association of Media Development in South Sudan (AMDISS), and The Khartoum Centre for Human Rights and Environmental Development (KHRED).

The Consortium was funded by the European Union, the Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Norwegian Agency for International Development (Norad).

Other interventions and initiatives include the development and adoption of a Journalists Code of Ethics and Conduct for South Sudan,



setting up a taskforce to explore and assist in the establishment of a Self-Regulating Media Council for South Sudan and, most recently, the formation of a taskforce that developed and adopted an Electoral Code of Ethics and Conduct for the Media in Sudan.

In this regard, a media self-regulation regime has been established in South Sudan with the adoption in June 2009 of a constitution for the South Sudan Media Council and the development and adoption of an electoral code of conduct and ethics for Journalists in Sudan. (May 2009).

Other related activities and interventions by the Consortium have included the review and critiquing of the existing constitutional, legal and policy framework in Sudan with reference to a Freedom of Expression and Media/Press Freedom environment, in particular, the engagement of key stakeholders on issues relating to Freedom of Expression and Media at the regional/Southern and National level.

In all these activities, engagement and interventions, the Consortium has sought to drive the process and lead in providing the requisite professional inputs/support in terms of human resource, skills upgrade, training and induction, lobbying and networking with key stakeholders, both State and non-state actors in the South and at the National level.

The Consortium has also sought to ensure local ownership of the process and engagement in all activities and interventions on the part of our local partners and associates.

One of the key benchmarks was the publishing of an updated national report on the status of the media in Sudan — Media in Sudan at a Crossroads — outlining the strategy for media support in the country in 2007.

These include field research missions to the 10 states in Southern Sudan and Nuba Mountains to audit the status of the media environment on the ground. There was also lobbying of the legislative assemblies, political parties, association building and networking with kindred and allied civil society organisations in Sudan to entrench ownership of the project's activities.

Other activities have included monitoring of the media in Sudan with particular reference to its performance, reach, outreach and consumer access, personal safety and security of media professionals and with our key local partners and associates.

This monitoring aspect of the project has led to developing and nurturing links and relationships with key stakeholders, civil society, political parties, the Legislature and Executive branch in Sudan, particularly and more successfully in South Sudan.

All this networking has also required the developing and nurturing of personal relationships with key personalities, especially at the National level, within the key political parties that are signatories to and custodians of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) and those aligned to and supportive of a new democratic power dispensation in Sudan.

In an effort to situate this media assessment report in the states in Sudan, it is imperative to draw up a brief political profile of the key players in the Sudan to situate the Consortium project in its social, political and economic environment as it affects the implementation and interventions.

In the South, the Consortium has had more “success” in terms of having the ear of the top leadership, and especially so the former and the current Minister of Information and Broadcasting and other senior leaders, in selling the need for democratic media legislation.

Through structured stakeholders’ Media Roundtables, the Consortium, through its local partner, AMDISS, has managed to develop draft media legislation with the full support and involvement of the Ministry of Information. If these draft media laws are passed by the South Sudan Legislative Assembly, they would be some of the best such media laws in Africa and would meet international best standards and benchmarks.

Indeed, the cabinet cluster committee of the Government of South Sudan (GOSS) in Juba has already passed these media bills for presentation (to the Legislative Assembly for debate and passage into

laws.) This media bills are

- (a) Right to Information Bill
- (b) Public Service Broadcasting Bill
- (c) The Broadcasting Frequency Management Bill

The Consortium has also developed a Code of Ethics and Conduct for Journalists in South Sudan and has formed a South Sudan Media Council Taskforce and has developed an Electoral Code of Ethics and Conduct for journalists in South Sudan.

In Khartoum, the rate and state of progress have been slow, ad hoc and disjointed, despite efforts by the Consortium and its local partner organisation to seek stakeholders' involvement and input.

This has been more on account of the fluid, unstable and hostile environment, in particular the heavy-handed security-cum-intelligence intimidating tactics employed against the media and civil society.

What's more, the media, civil society and other non-state actors in Khartoum are under constant threat and watch from the impervious and ubiquitous security-cum-intelligence network.

At a more practical and basic level, the stakeholders are wary of being identified and associated with a reformist agenda, movements and or associations for fear of retribution, either economic, monetary and judicial and, most importantly, for personal safety.

At the National level (North), it has been virtually impossible to engage the leadership on media and other related Freedom of Expression issues. The leadership has sought to mobilise and engage with stakeholders and other non-state actors that are beholden to and supportive of its larger core agenda — power consolidation.

## **C. Historical/Background**

# Historical Perspective and Background to the Political Environment

In an attempt to understand the media scene in Sudan, and in particular South Sudan, it is imperative to sketch very briefly the social, political and economic environment that has engulfed the region since Sudan's independence in 1956 in order to set a historical context and, better still, delineate a template.

Sudan has been and continues to be a country beset by deep divides, inequalities and inequities that define its contemporary history. These socio-political and economic attributes determine the composition, outlook and performance of every sector in the country, as well as often afflicting them, and are starkly pronounced in South Sudan.

The signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in January 2005 and the subsequent setting up of the Government of South Sudan (GoSS) in June 2005 were landmark dates in the South and opened up the space for a new power dispensation in the region. This new socio-political and economic power structure was faced with immense challenges of social mobilization and transformation, particularly the delivery of the 'Peace Dividend' to a people wracked by the bitter decades-long Civil War and subjected to utter deprivation and impoverishment.

In seeking social mobilization and transformation, one of the avenues and tools to deploy and employ was mass media, in particular development communication. But the informational, outreach and news superstructure and infrastructure were invariably rudimentary. Most were lacking the legal, professional, technical and financial capacity, competence and content.

The media/communication sector was no different, indeed it was more pronounced, the needs ever present, the gaps ever widening and the

vacuum ever deepening. The hunger for information was acute, as our Mission established in each and every corner of South Sudan. The Information Void was overwhelming and all-enveloping, the danger so glaring and the consequences so graphic. In short, this was the quintessence of Sudan's multiple woes. A country of so many priorities and urgent needs and interventions that they defy prioritisation, classification and order and can be daunting to those encountering this vast edifice of need, want and lack, filled by only one factor — suffering.

This status quo is so deeply ingrained in the South as to constitute that rarest of human predicaments — a clear Black and White scenario that has no grey areas, as we were to establish in different states. This almost Manichean divide between utter need and what must be done is unique to South Sudan in the early 21st Century.

# **D. The Internal, Regional and International Imperatives**

# The Internal, Regional and International Imperatives

The (CPA) Sudan Comprehensive Peace Agreement was signed in January 2005 after a lengthy and difficult negotiation process stretching over four years since the initial tentative overtures and contacts by key players, were made in 2000.

The two principal and key players are the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) and the National Congress Party-led Government of Sudan.

These two dominant stakeholders were brought to the negotiating table as a culmination of a number of tangible and intangible variables, the most dominant local variables being the military stalemate on the battleground, economic sanctions and down spiral, sagging morale and war fatigue on the part of their supporters and the civilian population in both the North and the South.

Another local variable that forced the hands of both key players was growing fear of losing political and military leverage. Intense power struggles within their organizations, in particular against and targeting the key principals, the late Dr John Garang and President Omar El-Bashir.

The global variables were the intensified and expanded US-led war on terrorism in the wake of the September 11 2001 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Centre in New York. Growing international concerns at the gross violations of human rights in Sudan and the spread of secessionist conflicts in other parts of the country also came into play. The spectre of widespread escalation of regional political instability and the threat of cross-border insecurity in the wider region also factored in.



There were also economic/commercial and trade interests and concerns, led primarily by the stiff competition for Sudan's rich natural resources, including oil and minerals. These rival interests were between Western nations and energy (oil) interests in particular, US, British and other European countries, against those from the East, led by China, India, Malaysia and Russia.

In this regard, the successful negotiations and mediation that led to the signing of the Peace Accord was a child of many, varied interests and far-flung interests, playing for some of the highest stakes. The prevailing local and international socio-political and economic template was mutually attractive to all and served their short, medium- and long-term political and power consolidation objectives.

For the international community, in particular the Western world, the peace agreement was an entry point into the larger Sudanese political superstructure. This was coupled with the immense possibilities of entrenching and safe-guarding its varied economic/trade and energy interests and effecting social, political and economic transformation in the Sudanese body politic.

For the region, the CPA had direct social, political and economic benefits in terms of repatriating the huge population of refugees from Sudan. Other immediate security gains were related to cross-border raids and armed groups operating along the porous and ill-secured international boundaries, not to mention political power consolidation by threatened regional leaders.

These benefits were most pronounced and immediate in Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia and Eritrea and, to a lesser extent, in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Central Africa and Chad.

For Libya, the benefits were far more long-term and more related to the larger issues of Islam and Pan-Arabism. For Egypt, the benefits involved included immediate, medium- and long-term political, security and economic interests that had resonance in particular with Egypt's strategic interests over the Nile water basin.

It was evident to all principal stakeholders, sponsors and guardians, if not the guarantors of the CPA that it was going to be a tough/difficult process to secure the Agreement, that the most delicate aspect was how to entrench, enhance and ensure ownership of the peace process and deliver the peace dividend to the Sudanese people.

The Sudanese people had endured the modern world's longest civil war, with all the attendant social and political upheaval, economic impoverishment and exclusion, and a near-total collapse of governance infrastructure.

This was most pronounced and apparent in the conflict-prone and infested regions in the South, Darfur to the west, other regions along the borders with Chad and the Central Africa Republic and the East along the border with Ethiopia and Eritrea, where the exclusion and marginalisation of the population were extreme.

It is therefore imperative to situate and locate the prevailing socio-political and economic template of the principal players in Sudan so as to appreciate that the variables at play might and may have affected the Consortium project implementation and delivery.

As acclaimed by most observers and political analysts, the CPA, if implemented to the letter and spirit, promises constitutionalism, democracy, good governance, the rule of law, citizen participation in the electoral process, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. Indeed, the Agreement envisions and promises to foster national unity and address issues of marginalisation based on political, economic, ethnic, religious, cultural and linguistic divides.

The Agreement has detailed schedules and annexes that set a rigid and functional time-frame, scale and ratios on political, security, economic and human resource power sharing formulae that would ensure equality, equity and representation in service delivery, social and economic development countrywide.

The manner and nature of the CPA's actual implementation therefore will have immediate adverse or positive impact on the entire national socio-political and economic template.

# **E. The Principal Actors**

# The View from Juba: The Militaristic Periscope

In this regard, any programme and interventions geared towards entrenching constitutionalism, democracy, good governance, transparency and accountability in Sudan would have to navigate a tight course, especially so if the project interventions were to address the core issue of Freedom of Expression and related Media/Press Freedom.

The Consortium and its local partners and associates have had to work in a very difficult socio-political and economic environment in both the South and the North — that is both different and similar. This is, perhaps most similar in the very nature of political-cum-military-security power projection and exercise of the same by both principal organisations.

At the outset, the two principal political entities, signatories and guardians to the peace agreement, the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army and the National Congress Party-led Sudan Government, are militaristic, monolithic, unrepresentative and undemocratic institutions.

For the National Congress Party in Khartoum, their claim to seeking to entrench democratic, popular and representative credentials are at the moment hollow and disingenuous and are widely perceived to be callous to the extreme.

For the SPLM/A-led GoSS, they speak the liberal language, at least the top leadership does, but that is perhaps the furthest it goes on the ground and at the grass roots.

The paramount objectives of both principal players in the immediate, medium- and long-term are to retain, hoard and consolidate political and economic power.

For the SPLM/A, the key player in Southern Sudan, the main pre-occupation is to ensure and entrench its dominance without regard to — and only partly accommodating — other players only in so far as it does not significantly alter the power matrix. It has been and still largely remains a militaristic organisation in which one's military rank, service, contribution, commitment and support during the Civil War counts above all other considerations.

Indeed, this state of affairs or rule of thumb is manifested in all spheres and sectors of governance infrastructure in the GoSS in terms of deployment, engagement and power sharing.

It also in many ways determines the rate of career mobility and level of engagement and deployment in the GoSS, the military and security placement and, most importantly, the pecking order, influence-wielding and -peddling.

It is for these reasons that more than half of the Cabinet positions in the South Sudan, including the Vice-President and other key positions of Interior and SPLA Affairs (Defence), postal services and communications, are held by individuals who are serving and, or retired military officers of the rank of Commander (Lt-Colonel) and above.

This is replicated at the state level governments in all 10 states in the South, including more than 70 per cent of the state governors and, perhaps even more telling, at the Southern Sudan Legislative level, where the Speaker is a Lt-General and is officially referred to as such.

Indeed, the Speaker is not in the minority at the Legislative Assembly in Juba and in all other state legislative assemblies in the South. They were so appointed and perhaps owe their continued stay due to their military past and, or current allegiances.

This militaristic background and mind-set is all the more engulfing at the lower ranks of the Civil Service and has led to numerous instances where junior staff defy instructions and, or second-guess their superiors with no military rank and experience.

There is also an apparent divide and mutual suspicion along political-cum-ethnic loyalties, and especially between the returning Diaspora and those who remained behind.

# The View from Khartoum: The Religious- cum-Security Prism

The situational analysis of the prevailing socio-political and economic environment in the North is not dissimilar. The ruling National Congress Party-led regime is a military-cum-security dictatorship that is beholden to and driven by an extreme Islamic fundamentalist philosophy and ethos.

Its modus operandi is militaristic, its political and economic superstructure and infrastructure are militaristic and its operations are first and last security-driven.

As most political analysts and observers concur, the current Sudanese power matrix and dispensation is militaristic where the chief protagonists settle their differences in the battlefield first and only seek an alternative if the military-security options are not tenable or sustainable.

President El- Bashir is, first and foremost, a Field Marshall of the Sudanese Armed Forces, his rise to power was through a military coup and his guarantors are the military-cum-security-intelligence superstructure and infrastructure that permeate every facet of the North Sudanese society.

Other than the formal military-security-intelligence infrastructure, President Bashir has established a veritable quasi-religious citizen militia network that rivals and at times threatens the formal State military structures. These various armed and religiously inclined groups operate under the guise of defending and protecting Islam, cultural and moral purity, rooting for religious and cultural supremacy and domination.

These so-called Popular Defence Mujahedeen — or God's Warriors —

are the first line of defence for Bashir and his inner core of military-cum-Islamic supporters. As in the South, but for very different reasons, the perception, the world view and ethos for the ruling elite in the North are insular and interpreted through the principles of a militaristic Islamic prism.

There are two key qualities that are absolutely critical for career mobility within the Bashir camp — impeccable military-security and, or intelligence credentials and an Islamic cultural/and, or religious pedigree.

The order and preference of these attributes and credentials for upward mobility in North Sudan favour the Bashir elite and edifice for now, as it has done since the spectacular falling out of Bashir and his then ideological and religious guru, the articulate Hassan El-Tourabi.

The Bashir regime is, like the SPLM/A, the dominant if not in fact the only political player in the North. It is the dominant economic player and at the pinnacle of the military-security-intelligence apparatus that is in charge in of the country.

The National Congress Party seeks to retain and hoard socio-political and economic power and will brook no challenge or contemplate sharing power.

In this regard, both principal signatories to the CPA the National Congress-led military regime of Bashir and the SPLM/A of First Vice-President Salva Kiir are not too dissimilar in their desire to retain and hoard power. Even though for different ideological, religious and perhaps cultural and linguistic imperatives, they are rivals with a common cause.

They are different at the negotiating table, their driving philosophies and ethos may differ, their experiences and outlook may differ, their supporters and allies may be different — but not in seeking to monopolise political power on the ground. The nuances and political situation on the ground might and may differ, but their need to direct the national social, political and economic agenda has not changed and takes the profile of control freaks.



The other political players and non-state actors in Sudan, including civil society and faith-based organisations have been edged out of the political and CPA arena. This is perhaps more acute in the North, where political organisation and parties have a long history.

These political parties and movements were excluded during the negotiations leading to the signing of the peace agreement and their support or buy-in into the CPA is suspect. This is, again, especially so in the North, where the main political organisations have sought to be involved and included in the implementation of the CPA without much success.

Indeed, most non-signatories of the peace agreement, especially in the North, question its mandate and ownership and have insisted that its implementation and provisions are not binding.

The Agreement, they aver, serves the interests of a minority, undemocratic and militaristic elite in the North in its attempts to stay in power. In the South, they claim, the beneficiaries are a militaristic movement that seeks to dismember Sudan.

In South Sudan, non-SPLM/A-affiliated political organisations suffer even further marginalisation and exclusion in the political arena. They lack organisational structures, finance and grass roots support and have struggled to stay relevant.

To these organisations, the peace agreement is in favour of, and a vehicle for, entrenching SPLM dominance in the South.

# **MISSION TOUR TO THE STATES**

# STATE MEDIA ASSESSMENT REPORT — SOUTH SUDAN

## 1. The Great News and Information Void in South Sudan — An Overview

With the launch of the Consortium Promoting Freedom of Expression and Civil Society Involvement in Developing Democratic Media Legislation in Sudan report, Media in Sudan at a Crossroads in November 2007 by International Media Support (IMS), the need for a further assessment on the status of media in the states was not only apparent but crucial for a better and clearer understanding of the situation obtaining on the ground.

In this regard, during a Consortium meeting held in Nairobi, Kenya, in September 2007, it was agreed that such an assessment be made to complement and supplement the national report with site visits and on-the-spot interviews with key media stakeholders, media practitioners and audiences in the states. It was agreed that the assessment would build up on what was already identified and earmarked in the national report and fill any gaps that might be identified during the assessment.

It was also agreed that the first phase of the media field assessment would be undertaken in South Sudan and in the special regions of South Kordofan (Nuba Mountains), Blue Nile and Abyei, while the second phase would take place later in North Sudan.

## 2. The Specific Terms of Reference for the Mission Were to:

- (a) Establish the means and mode of news/information flow into and from the states.
- (b) Assess the overall status of the media in the state (policy and reforms).
- (c) Assess media performance.
- (d) Needs assessment and capacity building.
- (e) Media association building.

The mode of research was by site visits, and group interviews with key media stakeholders, state, private, community and faith-based media organisations and, or media training institutions.

The mission team was composed of members of the Consortium led by John Gachie, Article 19 Sudan Programme Officer, Dr Pamela Lomoro, AMDISS Centre Manager and Richard Mogga, AMDISS Advocacy Project Officer, Stephen Tut, AMDISS Director, Mac Maika, NPA's Media Support Development Manager and Fasiel Elbagir, Programme Co-ordinator, Khartoum Centre for Environment and Development. .

The mission was carried out in four phases, Phase One in October-November 2007, Two in March-April 2008, Three in May 2008 and four in May-June 2009 for updates on changes that might have occurred in the intervening period.

Phase One was to Yei (Central Equatoria State), Wau (Northern Bahr-Gazel State) and Malakal (Upper Nile State). Phase Two was to Yambio-Maridi (Western Equatoria State), Torit (Eastern Equatoria State), Bor (Jongolei State), Bentiu-Kadguli (Unity State and Southern Kordofan State) and Phase Three was to Rumbek (Lakes State).

Other states/regions that were initially earmarked for the mission but as yet not undertaken are Kurmurk/Damazin in the Blue Nile State, Aweil-Abyei (Northern Bahr-Gazel State) and Warrap State.

### **3. A Brief Sketch of the Means and Mode of News/Information Flow into and from the States**

#### **3.1 Yei (Central Equatoria State)**

In Yei, the mission found a fairly well-developed system of printed products (newspapers and magazines) outlets and vendors. Also on display/sale were newspapers and magazines from Uganda and Juba and, occasionally, from Kenya. There were also makeshift video halls screening pirated movies and, occasionally, foreign premiership soccer matches from pay-digital satellite TV. There were two FM stations, one private and one faith-based.

In Yei and all along the border areas, residents would be able to tune into commercial FM stations based in northern Uganda and at times tune into the Uganda national broadcaster — Radio Uganda.

Another leg of the visit started with Yei (from Juba). Though not a state capital, Yei is unique in many ways as some infrastructure was developed there even before the final signature of the Peace Agreement. Indeed, Yei serves as a base to several NGOs and institutions, not least some from the media fraternity. The citizenry of Yei is also much more enlightened than relatively found in other areas and can give a better assessment and appreciation of the role and content of media.

There are a number of FM radio stations in Yei and an up-and-coming training school for journalists sponsored by the Sudan Development Trust Foundation, which produces the Sudan Mirror newspaper. There is also a public electricity supply in town which enables most people to watch TV, including international transmissions.

It was not possible in Yei to ascertain any media development plans in the pipeline as the top state authorities who have that responsibility are based in Juba.

## 3.2 Western Equatoria State

### **YAMBIO:**

In this expansive State, stretching from near the Democratic Republic of Congo to the south and the Central Africa Republic to the west and also traversing it from east to west, there were no indications of a regular flow of either print media products or broadcast stations. Most of the intermittent flow of printed media products (usually more than one-week-old newspapers/magazines) in Yambio, the state capital, would be sourced from Uganda through Yei, and from Juba, and there were no indications of products sourced from Khartoum, the Democratic Republic of Congo or from the Central Africa Republic.

There were numerous video halls screening pirated movies and foreign premier soccer matches. However, the State Ministry of Information also prints and distributes a rudimentary desk-top published

newsletter, The Pineapple Update, mostly for the consumption of state government staff.

This is the capital of Western Equatoria State. The Minister for Information and Communication doubles up as the Deputy Governor. Mr Joseph Ngere, who is also a Colonel in the SPLA, is a very well informed man with a lot of enthusiasm about media development.

The State had just licensed two private FM radio stations for the Catholic and Anglican churches. The Catholic station would be based in Nzara (just 20km to the north of Yambio town) while the Anglican one would be based in Ezzo. Half the time of their broadcasts shall be in local languages.

The minister and his staff are working to adapt the four Media Bills (drafted in Juba by GoSS) to suit local conditions and passage by their own parliament too. There are no immediate plans for TV broadcasting nor have there been any applications for publication of private newspapers or magazines.

The challenge is how to find trained manpower or how to source resources for that aspect. Training is badly needed in news gathering, programming and broadcasting as well as technical ability to operate the machines.

### 3.3 Eastern Equatoria State

#### **TORIT:**

In this State, and, in particular around Torit, some 200km to the south-east of Juba, there were printed products (mostly newspapers) from both Kenya and Uganda, the area being a crossroads town. It also received on a more regular basis printed (newspapers) products from Khartoum via Juba due to its proximity and a fairly well-developed road. Torit town is the capital of Eastern Equatorial State. To the surprise of the Mission team, there is a modern production radio studio well equipped with all necessary equipment for radio broadcast.

The authorities are very enthusiastic too and look forward to have as

wide a coverage of transmission as possible to cover all the far-flung villages of the state. There are no private newspapers nor is there a TV station. Radio transmission is the single easiest and most feasible medium for public outreach.

Particularly acute is the need for trained manpower. This comes through as a major challenge though they fare better than others as some of their staff is undergoing training in various courses related to news gathering, production, programming and broadcasting.

Like the other places cited above, it is only the Catholic Church (and, to a limited extent, the Anglican Church) which is trying to have private but faith-based media outlets. Otherwise most development in the media sector is government-owned.

### 3.4 Jongolei State

#### **BOR:**

Driving from Juba to Bor, the State Capital, some 200kms northeast of Juba, there were virtually no indications of any printed media or electronic media products either on display, on sale or in circulation, and, perhaps unsurprisingly, there were very few commercial video halls in Bor town and its environs.

The situation in Bor is in complete contrast the other states. There is no Radio transmission nor are there any TV stations or print media products. Word comes by mouth from nearby Juba (200km south) or through newspapers. Some people manage to listen to Short Wave radio broadcasts from Khartoum and international stations.

### 3.5 Lakes State

In the State Capital Rumbek, some 350km northwest of Juba, there were very limited media products, print and electronic, mostly sourced from Juba and other neighbouring states. Most of the printed products were usually week-old or more editions of English newspapers based in Khartoum, Juba and Nairobi, Kenya. There were no indications of any other media products from any other source.

The Lakes State Ministry of Information, Youth and Sports also operate a rudimentary FM radio station and TV broadcast service. The TV service only operates within a radius of about 10km, barely reaching the outskirts of Rumbek town. It runs four hours of programming in the evening, divided into two equal parts. The first two hours are based on local programming and the other two hours are used to relay either Omdurman TV or Al Jazeera TV. The relays are done via digital satellite decoder to download the TV programmes and then transmitted over the Lakes State Television. In effect, this is piracy and litigation can be instituted against the state by producers and broadcasting houses whose programmes are relayed in this irregular manner.

The Ministry of Information, Youth and Sports also produced a monthly desk-top published newsletter, The Cultural Identity, mostly for state government employees.

There problem of lack of resources and budget to pay the staff of the FM radio and TV stations was endemic.

The town had a number of video halls screening movies from pirated copies and showed live foreign premier soccer matches via commercial digital satellite television.

The Mission held meetings in the state capital with the key stakeholders, including the State Minister of Information and Communication, State Director General of Information and Communication, representatives from TV and Rumbek FM 98, Gurtong and Sudan Tribune journalists, UNMIS staff and members of the Catholic Diocese of Rumbek.

Lakes Sate consists of eight counties — Rumbek Central, Rumbek East, Rumbek North, Cueibet, Wulu, Yorol West, Yoriel East and Awerial. Following discussions with the Minster of Information and Communication and the Director General of TV and Rumbek FM 98, it was clear to the Mission that there are no plans at hand regarding the electronic media situation in Lakes State. The GoSS Ministry of Information and Broadcasting have expressed a wish to establish South Sudan Television (SSTV) in Lakes but this plan has not yet materialized.



The Mission observed that there has been little awareness of media products content such as newspapers among communities. A trader operating as a news-vendor pointed out the traders often use the newspapers as additional materials for wrapping sugar and salt for their customers. This actually means that they are not using the newspapers for news value. Indeed, only a few elite people around Rumbek Central County buy the newspapers for news-reading purposes.

A member of the Mission tried to deliver some Sudan-based news papers like the *Khartoum Monitor* and *Citizen*, but this did not last long because the airport authorities decided to tax the newspapers, with the result that they became prohibitively expensive.

Rumbek town had a TV station established in 1979 but it broadcast only within the town. The station operated until 1990, when the protracted Civil War re-emerged in Rumbek town.

Both the TV station and FM Radio are supported by the state government, with no support coming from the central Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, GoSS.

Rumbek FM 98 ceased operations in May 2009 due to a transmitter breakdown. The state authorities have placed a request to procure two transmitters from South Africa.

The state ministry has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with a Khartoum-based telephone company to operate inside the premises of Rumbek Radio and Television. The firm has connected its systems with the tower and the power used for the radio comes from this company. The company has connected Internet service to the offices of Rumbek Radio FM 98.

According to the Director General of Lakes State TV and Radio, the state does not have any plans yet to make the stations operational. The concern here is that state government electronic media do not target the forthcoming elections or even the referendum, though the FM broadcasts news in four different languages — English, Arabic, Dinka and Bele.

There are no women journalists in Lakes State, with the exception of trainees attached to the Ministry of Information and Communication as radio presenters. However, there is not a single woman Radio or TV trainee presenter, despite the fact that the State Minister for Information and Communication is a woman.

## **Radio Bakhita**

Radio Bakhita a Catholic Church station, is under construction and is scheduled to be ready in a year. However, their plans do not target the forthcoming elections or the referendum scheduled for 2011.

## **Miraya FM**

The Mission paid a short visit to the United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS), Rumbek Sector, to assess the operations of Miraya FM. We found no journalists on site. A UN staffer told us that there had been two radio journalists but they decided not to stay in Rumbek because they were threatened by security agents, with most of the threats coming from the governor's office. Miraya FM is used as a relay station by the UN in Rumbek.

## **Media Training**

There were a number of media training initiatives carried out in the State by the BBC World Trust, the Volunteers for Economic Growth Alliance (VEGA), and a Kenyan Editor.

As soon as the state government did their recruitment of 21 radio presenters, VEGA was asked, as an organization, to come in and assist in capacity building. VEGA hired a trainer and five weeks training was organized, focusing on the ABC of journalism. Accuracy, Balance and Clarity were the main topics of the training and were well covered, according to the State radio presenters interviewed. The training was conducted in May 2006. After about six months, most of the radio presenters decided to leave their jobs in search of greener pastures and now the total number of radio presenters stands at 12.

The BBC World Trust has largely been conducting its training in how to gather information and how a story is edited.

The content of the training provided by both the Kenyan editor and the BBC World Trust has focused on basic reporting skills such as news gathering, writing, interviewing, and ethics and phonetics; the training was administered on State officials of the Information and Communication Ministry and the 12 radio presenters employed by the government.

The BBC World Trust has also supported State radio with one desktop computer and recorders. The training conducted by one of the regional editors was done using flip charts and maker pens only, with no additional modern equipment used.

- **Challenges**

Broadcasters and print media face challenges in Lakes State mainly because the FM station is state government-owned and the authorities tend to impose restrictions on certain information and preventing it being broadcast.

The State government presenters identified other challenges as being logistical hurdles, lack of security, and financial constraints. Overall, the political situation in which the media operate in Lakes State has improved slightly in the past few years, but significant roadblocks remain to establishing a free, independent, and unconstrained media. Journalists encounter a variety of difficulties as they report news and information. They generally are required to check with SPLM officials to go through an issue before it is put on-air or even sent out to Gurtong and the Sudan Tribune.

Lakes State media suffer a lack of professional personnel. According to the Gurtong and Sudan Tribune journalist Manyang Mayom, media training remains neglected in Lakes State area as well as in the rest of southern Sudan.

Manyang was initially employed by the State Government Ministry of Information and Communication but because of intolerable censorship he decided to resign and stay at home. Manyang later joined Gurtong and the Sudan Tribune as freelance journalist. Since then he has experienced many threats, including attacks by security agents in

Rumbek. At one point, as he investigated a murder case where Kenyan and Tanzanian nationals had been gunned down, security agents beat Manyang to the point of hospitalization.

### 3.6 Unity State

#### **BENTIU:**

In this oil-rich state, and particularly in Bentiu, the State Capital, some 500km northwest of Juba, there was a variety of pirated movie DVDs on display around the Bentiu-Rubkona urban settlement area, nearly all of them sourced from Khartoum and other neighbouring states to the north.

All major Khartoum-based Arabic language papers were on sale and on display. Most of the private video halls screened pirated movies with Arabic sub-titles. However, traversing this expansive state to southern Kordofan State, some 450km north, there were virtually no media products, both print and electronic, on display or on sale.

There was no evidence whatever of any media products sourced or routed through Juba or any other area in the South.

During the Mission team's tour, the State was building two radio stations simultaneously (one for FM transmission and the other for Medium Wave transmission) as well as a TV station. The stations will broadcast in four languages (two local languages plus Arabic and English). There is also a permanent multi-purpose building under construction to house multiple studios in the near future.

The State Director General for Information and Broadcasting told the Mission that though they have plans for the physical infrastructure and equipment, they were in need of trained Human Resources, both technical and professional. But they had not yet identified staff or the training institutions and facilities where such would be available. He said that they were very well resourced and had no complaint about budget allocation or cash flow.

There were no initiatives for any private media entities in the states.

## 3.7 Western Bahr el Ghazal

### WAU:

The State Capital, Wau, is some 500km northwest of Juba, and, like Bentiu in Unity State, had a variety of Arabic language newspapers and magazines and pirated electronic products on sale and display, all sourced from Khartoum and neighbouring states to the north. The pirated electronic products had Arabic sub-titles. There was no evidence whatever of any English-language printed media products, particularly Juba-sourced.

Wau is the capital of Western BahrEel Ghazal State. Together with Juba and Malakal, they were the capitals of southern Sudan's three major provinces before the South was divided into 10 states. They had better infrastructure and facilities then. However, these facilities fell into disrepair and neglect, including both Radio and TV facilities, during the Civil War.

Both TV and Radio transmitters had very reduced and limited coverage range due to decrepit equipment as well as a number of other factors. The studios were outmoded and the equipment dilapidated. The small and inadequate physical structures were leaking and full of broken panes and holed everywhere. There were no offices for staff members and several would share one table. Because of this, staff members would wander off at will. The staff itself was very few, as many retired or died during the War. Those left behind had no training over the entire War period.

There was no transport available for the staff and this posed great difficulty during the rains. Though the majority of the staff was ageing, the few younger ones had no training and inspiration, except for one young lady who was the TV programme manager. She seemed to hold up her head against all odds and had high spirits and resoluteness. After the Mission tour and intercession with the Ministry of Information in Juba, this young woman was sent to South Africa for training and is currently working as a TV host on South Sudan TV in Juba.

The old, big and powerful transmitters installed in the 1970s needed

a lot of refurbishment and adaptation. The only functioning TV camera in Wau mostly followed news from the governor's office or the minister's rounds. Transmission for both Radio and TV was for one hour each in the morning and the evening, with announcers rushing out for a gasp of air from unbearable heat in the studio. Electricity was unavailable, with small generators providing power for the one-hour transmission duration.

When the Mission left Wau, a Catholic FM radio station was being prepared but had yet to go on-air.

Lack of training and orientation of staff was the most pertinent issue that came across in most conversations.

This state used to be part of the greater Bahr el Ghazel region before and during the Civil War. It included the following states: Warrab, Lakes, Western Bahr el Ghazel and Northern Bahr el Ghazel.

The State consists of three counties, namely Wau County, Raza County and Jur County. As a state capital, Wau initially was established as a zariba (fortified base) by slave-traders in the 19th Century. It became an administrative centre during the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium. Wau is a culturally, ethnically, and linguistically mixed town. Its residents include peoples of Fertit, Dinka, Luo, and Arab origin.

During the Civil War it was a government-held garrison town.

The Mission conducted meetings with the key stakeholders in Wau, starting with the State Minister of Information and Communication, the State Director General of Information and Communication, representatives from Wau Television, radio journalists from UNMIS Miraya FM and members of the Catholic Diocese of Wau.

The Mission visited the TV station area, including the premises allocated by the Church to the Catholic Radio Network.

The State Ministry of Information and Communication lack capacity and resources as most of the media activities are directly influenced and aided by the GoSS Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.

The Minister of Information and Communication, Mr. Efsio Kon Uguak, stressed that the lack of progress of media activities in the state is due to lack of modern media equipment, lack of journalistic capacity and of media legislation.

The Mission found that there is not a single print medium originating in Western Bahr el Ghazel State. All sorts of newspapers printed in Khartoum or Uganda are sent to Wau for circulation and for the population's own consumption. The circulation of these newspapers is confined to Wau town and does not get down to the other two counties.

There are two weekly newspapers from Khartoum, the Arabic Thabi (Focus) and the bi-lingual English-language and Arabic Khartoum Monitor. There are other newspapers such as Southern Eye and Citizen in Wau town and they are referred to as "Juba newspapers". The availability of these newspapers in Wau town mainly depends on transportation. The two newspapers from Juba are in English.

At the University of Bahr el Ghazel we sought to determine whether students get access to the newspapers and whether the papers are supplied to the university library. Surprisingly, the students only have access to the Khartoum Monitor. The Monitor is the only newspaper available in the university library.

The only South Sudan radio station received in Wau town is Short Wave (SW) and government-owned. The radio is supported by the GoSS Ministry of Information and Broadcasting and the Bahr el Ghazel State Ministry of Information and Communication. The radio journalists are government-paid and therefore focus on being on-message with government information, with very little coverage of community information. This radio covers a radius of 40km when broadcasting during the night and 30km during daylight, effectively operates only 12 hours daily.

Fourteen radio journalists have been trained by the GoSS Ministry of Information and Broadcasting and they are based in Wau, working for South Sudan radio.

- **Wau FM 90.5**

This is a government-owned FM station and operates from the premises of Wau Television, with its staff normally drawn from South Sudan radio. The range of this FM is too weak. The funds for the running and maintenance of this FM come from GoSS, with the State Ministry for Information and Communication overseeing its operations.

- **Miraya FM**

The Mission also toured the United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS), Wau Sector, to assess the operations of Miraya FM. Broadcasters Michael Manase Id and Achirin Achirin of Miraya FM were most helpful with the assessment inquiries. Miraya FM is the only modern station in Wau. The Juba-based United Nations FM in Wau also serves as a relay station.

Miraya FM is UN-operated and its mandate is to broadcast and disseminate information about the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, developmental issues and democratic issues. It is a fairly independent station and is supervised by a Swiss-based Foundation. Miraya FM operates 24 hours daily, with Short Wave (SW) broadcasts of three hours daily.

- **Catholic Radio Network**

Father Gabriel Leliwe and Brother Peppo were most helpful on the subject of the Catholic Radio Network. According to them, premises have already been allocated for the radio project and what remains is the installation of the radio equipment.

The establishment of the radio station is top on the agenda of the Catholic Bishops' Conference and the Wau Catholic Diocese General Assembly's development agenda. According to Brother Peppo, the Diocesan Administrator, funds have already been allocated for the radio project. A number of radio presenters from Wau Catholic Diocese are undergoing training in Juba.

- **Wau Television**

The TV station operates 6 hours a day if there is no insecurity and only four hours under conditions of insecurity.



Reception is very clear and covers the main Wau town only, but the operators say it can cover a radius of 10km. The presenters were trained by the Government and they are treated as government employees. They get their salaries from the GoSS Ministry of Information and Broadcasting and incentives from the State Ministry of Information and Communication, Western Bahr el Ghazel. The station takes its news broadcast feed from the North.

Wau TV broadcasts mainly in Arabic. The majority of Arabs residents in Wau prefer to connect their decoders to Northern TV because their main interest is to know what is happening in Khartoum and the Arab world.

The State Director General highlighted the fact that they have employed and trained 12 State TV journalists.

## **Ownership of Media Houses**

The findings of this Mission are that there is not a single privately-owned electronic media outlet, radio or television in Bahr el Ghazel State. Electronic media are in the hands of either the GoSS Ministry of Information and Broadcasting or the State Ministry of Information and Communication, the churches and the UN.

## **Condition of Journalists**

There are no well-trained journalists in Wau town. Most of the journalists serve short stints and normally come in to cover big official functions and leave.

The BBC World Trust has conducted training for some of the government journalists in Wau, including the broadcasters of Miraya FM.

## **3.8 Upper Nile State**

As in both Unity and Western Bahr el Ghazal, the state capitals of Bentiu and Wau, Malakal, the State Capital of Upper Nile State, some 500 kilometres northeast of Juba, had a variety of printed and pirated electronic media products on sale and display, all sourced from Khartoum and neighbouring states in the north. There were no

indications of local or English language printed and electronic media products sourced from Juba or any other region of the South.

On the occasion of CPA Day National Celebrations on 9th January 2009, held in Malakal, GoSS provided funds to upgrade TV and Radio services. There was also a military confrontation and subsequent skirmish between the SPLA and the SAF component of the Joint Integrated Forces in April 2009.

All the above impacted on media development in one way or another. In 2008, Malakal Government Radio was broadcasting at a range of 2.5 kilowatts instead of the 5 kilowatts capacity. The studios were in a rudimentary state not upgraded since the recently ended Civil War, indeed as far back as 1983. The equipment was from the 1970s. Management and programming staff lacked capacity and expertise as well as resources for services like cars, diesel, stationary, etc. There was also administrative confusion on staff discipline and lines of authority.

The transmitting station (far from the broadcasting studio) fared no better. It was un-fenced, with cattle, goats and children roaming about and climbing the mast. Children uprooted and cut exposed sections of wires for sport.

The Government TV station was in the same condition as the Radio station. Studios had no space or serviceable office furniture. The facility's Land had been settled on by other entities such as the Islamic telephone companies.

There was no private media apart from the Roman Catholic Church's plans to open an FM Radio station. Newspapers and magazines, mostly Arabic (many days old) came in from Khartoum and, occasionally, Juba.

The Mission's first port of call was at the offices of the Director General for the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. He told the Mission that nothing had changed much apart from some renovation of the Radio studios and offices but not the equipment or the transmitter. He said that the same condition prevailed with the TV station and

transmitter. But there was a silver lining as the Governor had contracted a builder to put up modern studios for both Radio and TV in the same compound as well as to fence the whole area.

At the Catholic Church, we met Italian Sister Hellen, who is responsible for the FM Radio project. We had an update on issues though she was much more concerned about the security situation at Malakal. The Catholic Church has outreach premises scattered around Malakal, including the FM station premises across Malakia Estate, a few kilometres from the main Church complex (Cathedral, school, hostels, offices, etc). The Church compound and Priests' quarters, where the FM station is being installed, were looted during the April (2009) skirmishes involving SAF and SPLM troops, hence Sister Hellen's worry.

Sister Hellen invited the Mission to attend an afternoon session and update trainees on recent media developments. The Mission had given her copies of the Code of Conduct for Journalists (recently updated in 2009) and the Media Election Code of Conduct (recently produced in 2009). She said that the equipment for the transmission had arrived in Malakal by river barge, but was not yet off loaded. The equipment for the studio was not yet in Malakal. She was worried that it would be vandalized if brought in early, particularly in case of another military flare-up.

Malakal University had been badly vandalized and all lab equipment, library, computers, utensils and bedding destroyed or looted during the April (2009) fighting, hence her apprehension, fear, reluctance, and confusion concerning whether she should move fast with the installation of the studio equipment.

At the Radio premises the Mission met with the Deputy Director. The Mission gave him copies of the Code of Conduct and updated him on media events in Juba. He then took us to the studio, which has been renovated, while the equipment remained the same. A recently installed A/C unit worked to cool the old machines. The premises were cleaner and gleaming and office space has increased a little. But, as the Director General had said, there was no improvement at the transmitting station.

From the Radio transmitter, we went to the TV Centre. There was no change in both the studio and transmitter. But the building (combined studios) mentioned above had started and walls reached three metres high.

In a conversation with the director of the TV station, he expressed regret to the Mission to the effect that they were not informed of progress in the media field apart from their own local work. He complained that they were not benefiting from trainings we had just briefed him on (his colleague at the Radio had also expressed the same sentiments).

At the Catholic training session, we distributed copies of the publications mentioned above and briefed the trainees. There was a lot of interest, but also regret that Malakal was so remote from Juba and that they did not get any updates.

At the market, where newspapers and magazines from Khartoum and Juba are sold, the Mission noted that the youth buy sports-oriented publications more than anything else. There are several sports newspapers that go to Malakal in bulk.

Upper Nile and Malakal, like all other state capitals, feel remote and left out of events. Arabic is still dominant and any training has to take double time because of translation. Many young people express frustration at not finding the chance to better their English language skills, especially the journalists. The journalists have no idea of Union of Journalists of South Sudan (UJoSS) and we took the opportunity to have them register with the Union.

There are no other private media houses apart from the Catholic Radio Project in Upper Nile State. It is clear that a much better outreach programme should be developed if the whole of South Sudan is to have any tangible development in the media field.

As in like Juba and Wau, the studios were as pathetic in Malakal. Power shortages were chronic even for the one hour allotted in the morning and the evening.

The transmitting stations were not fenced and children, dogs, goats and cattle could roam about and often lean on poles and posts. Children played football and other games and cut the cables for sport. As a result the transmission radius was reduced to coverage of only two-and-a-half kilometers around town, instead of 5km.

Reaching the surrounding villages by transmission was out of the question even for the Radio. No programmes were aired in local languages. The generator which powered the Radio Transmitter was housed in a sinking container.

Most land belonging to the institutions (Radio and TV) was hived off to allow Islamic companies like Mobitel and Sudatel to put up their transmitters. There was a very thin line between Islamic organizations, companies and the government before the CPA was signed. It will be another battle to repossess those prime lands.

Staff members were untrained and lacked motivation. Even management and administration was uncoordinated.

There were no local publications and the few newspapers come in occasionally from Khartoum whenever there is a flight.

### **3.9 Southern Kordofan State**

#### **KADUGLI**

In the State Capital, Kadugli, and other urban centres that we traversed for nearly 450km, the media products on display and sale were similar to what obtained in the three states referred to above. These media products were all sourced from Khartoum and neighbouring states and were all in the Arabic language.

Of particular significance and, or interest was the screening of Hindi movies with Arabic sub-titles in small halls in the state capital. There were no indications or evidence of any media products sourced from anywhere else but Khartoum. There were no indications or evidence of any media products sourced from Juba and or anywhere else in South Sudan.

This is the capital of the Southern Kordofan State. Though not traditionally a part of South Sudan, it had been part of the fighting and the SPLM wields a 45% power share. The citizens here look southwards for orientation, support and services rather than towards Khartoum, where their budget comes from.

At the time of the Mission's visit to Kadugli, the Director General of Information Services was handicapped by a strike by his staff that was in progress, protesting that they had not been paid for 3 months.

At the radio station, there was equipment for modern transmission studios lying untouched out in the open for three years, apparently donated by the European Union. The elements had clearly taken their toll on the boxes and exposed parts. Not much could be gleaned of the opportunities and challenges, though few of the staff idling around talked of lack of capacity for lack of training. Orientation training concerning the new realities after the CPA was lacking.

Juba Radio could be heard on Short Wave but the Khartoum-based Omdurman Radio was received nationwide.

### **3.10 Northern Bahr el Ghazal (Awiel) and Warrap States**

Although these states were not visited by the Mission team, it has been established that is a Community Radio FM station run by the International Rescue Committee (IRC) east of Awiel town in Malual Kuon. It covers a radius of about 40km, mainly covering the area to the immediate east of Awiel town. There is no form of print media outlet, let alone broadcasting houses and, or production studios in the neighbouring state of Warrap.

#### **Way Forward**

To boost the freedom of media development, particularly in the States, there is need for gender parity and in particular to train and strengthen women journalists and other media workers this way, they will participate more effectively in enhancing media freedom and professionalism and in the process enhance and consolidate on the few also experience the challenges positive media developments in the state.

There is need for lobbying and advocacy in the States to make the population and government officials understand why there is need for freedom of media and information. It is clear, indeed explicit, that some government officials are very aware of the need for media but this is only in the capital Juba. In the other states this is not the case. Most media trainings were only taking place in Juba, locking out the few journalists in the other states.

To share relevant challenges experienced by journalists in southern Sudan there is need for holistic involvement of the journalists from the relevant states to debate on these challenges. This will act as motivation for journalists. At present they seem to be fragmented. For journalism to be called a true fraternity in South Sudan, there is need for sharing of diverse experience.

Functions such as World Press Freedom Day and other media-related events and anniversaries should in the near future be conducted in the state capital to encourage awareness and change in attitudes where today there is little or no awareness of media content, issues and interconnections to the nation, the region and the world.

# **A bird's eye view of the North**



# A bird's eye view of the North

## The Northern States:

The Mission visited four states in the North — Al Gezira State, River Nile State (Naher Elniel Wilayat), North State (Wilayat Alshimalys) and Red Sea State.

The mission interviewed the Minister for Information in Al Gezira State and the Director Generals of the Ministry in River Nile, North State and Red Sea State on freedom of expression and media freedom in the states, capacity building and training, media policy, working conditions, the role of correspondents and the difficulties they face.

The Mission found that the main challenges facing the media in all states are:

- Major financial constraints
- Difficulties in accessing information, especially dealing with pressures exerted by security and other top officials on correspondents. The issue of censorship loomed large
- Harassment by security agencies and other top officials, particularly related to censorship, both pre-print and thereafter.
- Electronic media are owned and controlled by State governments and, by extension, the central government in Khartoum
- Training of journalists and media workers has been sporadic, un-coordinated and far in-between. Only the BBC World Trust has trained journalists in Northern States. The BBC World Trust also funded the training of journalists in Northern States
- All media in the states are under the control of the Government of National Unity, Khartoum
- The majority of local correspondents need more training to improve their professional skills and status

## Red Sea State, Port Sudan

Red Sea, rendered in Arabic as Al-bahr Al-Ahmar, is one of the 26 *wilayat* or states of the Sudan. It has an area of 212,800km and an estimated population of 1.4 million. Port Sudan is the state capital. Sudan still claims, but does not control, the Halaib Triangle, a region that is under Egyptian control and administration.

### Radio

The radio station was established on May 12, 1994, using American Harris transmitters. It broadcasts daily (Sundays to Thursdays) from 06:30 to 08:00am and 16:00 to 20:00pm, Fridays 07:00 to 12:00 noon and Saturdays 08:00am and 13:00pm.

However, the station does not cover the state's entire territory. According to a senior administrator at the station, from the outset, the radio used to cover the whole state, including the far areas. It could be heard as far a field as Jedda and Taif in Saudi Arabia, eastern parts of Eritrea, and southern parts of Egypt. According to the Official, the radio station has been rehabilitated nine times, the last time in September 2003, when it was recommended that it be totally overhauled.

In 2003, the station covered about 75 per cent of the state. The Government declared 2006 The Year of State Radio. The official observed that the American Embargo on Sudan has adversely impacted the procurement of spare parts. In 2005 a fire totally destroyed the recording and montage studios. The State Government had plans to rehabilitate the studios by November 2008. When it is eventually fully refurbished and modernized, the station will run as FM-105, covering 30 per cent of the State. It will broadcast in local Arabic dialects such as Bede wet Bija and a number of other regional languages and dialects.

### Training

The Mission found that there is a profound lack of training, both internally and abroad. However, the staff has recently received three short-course trainings by the BBC World Trust. There is also some training at The Sudan Academy for Communication Studies. But with the exception of the director, who took a course in Jordan in 2003, not

one of the staff has received any training abroad. In 2004, the BBC World Trust organized training for radio station directors.

## TV

The TV station was established in 1983, broadcasting four hours a day, later reduced to two hours only. At the outset, it used VHS, until 1998. Between 1998 and 2005, it used Sony Beta cam tapes. The station ceased operations in March 2005 for lack of up-to-date equipment. In 2004 new studios were built and a number of contracts for new equipment signed. However, as of December 2008, the transmitter covered only Port Sudan.

## Training

Training takes place only at National TV in Omdurman, Khartoum. No training was taking place at all outside Sudan at the time of the Mission's visit.

The programming and production have no budget allocated to them at all and there are enormous difficulties in production.

The approved budget is SDG 4 Million (approximately \$2 million) but the actual amount allocated was only SDG 2 million (approximately \$1 million).

## Newspapers

Unlike many other regions or states, Red Sea State has two regional local newspapers, a positive indicator towards eventually establishing regional papers elsewhere in the country. These papers deal with regional issues, national issues — especially issues related to the region — and news.

The two papers are designed and printed in Khartoum. The local offices only gather the information and do the editing.

The papers are *Port Sudan Madinati (Port Sudan My City)* and *Amwag (Waves)*.

Established in November 2005, Port Sudan Madinati prints about 3,000 copies. Established in 2008, *Amwag* also prints around 3,000 copies.

The city receives about 20,000 copies of other daily and weekly national newspapers.

In 2002-03, the newspaper *Alsharqia (The Easterner)* was published weekly before it collapsed for lack of funding. Owned by investors Mohieldin Mohamed Ali Shagar, Gafar Hassan Baao and Kamal Mahmoud Osman, The *Easterner* had a print run of around 1,000 copies and received advertisements mainly from the Sea Ports Corporation. When the SPC pulled out its advertising after complaining about a series of articles that were highly critical of it, The *Easterner* ceased publication.

### **Newspaper distribution**

The newspapers reach the town at evening, between 17:00 and 19:00 (Sudan local time), which means they start distribution late evening to some people, with the rest receiving their paper the following day. The newspapers arrive on public transit buses. There are no airmail newspapers in the city since there are no morning flights to Port Sudan.

### **Journalists**

The majority of the journalists are untrained. Many of them start as local correspondents with the Khartoum-based national newspapers. Usually, the chief editor must be a journalist registered with the National Press and Publication Council.

Lack of training is a major essential issue and handicap. Wages and salaries are also one of the major shortcomings.

### **Al Gezira State**

Al Gezira lies between the Blue Nile and the White Nile in the east-central region of the country. It has an area of 23,373km<sup>2</sup> and an estimated population of approximately 5,000,000. The State comprises five districts — Al Hasaheisa District, Al Kamlin and North Al Gezira districts, Al Managil and South Al Gezira districts and Um Al Gura District.

It is a well-populated area suitable for agriculture. The region has

benefited from the Gezira Scheme, a programme to foster cotton farming begun in 1925. Al Gezira is the Sudan's major agricultural region, with more than 2.5 million acres (10,000 km<sup>2</sup>) under cultivation. Wad Madani is the State Capital and is sometimes described as Sudan's "capital of culture".

At the time of the Mission's visit, three media Bills were tabled before the Al Gezira State Assembly. The Bills sailed through the second reading stage. One of the major concerns is that the Bills grant the Minister of Information and state authorities wide powers to appoint or recommend the appointment of directors of various departments and bodies.

## **TV**

Al Gezira TV was established in 1972 and broadcasts for seven hours daily. Until 2002 it was financially and administratively managed by the National TV Corporation with its headquarters based in Khartoum. It suffers from acute financial problems and handicap after being handed over to the state authorities for funding. This led has to serious erosion of capacity, both institutionally and professionally.

## **Al Gezira Radio**

The radio broadcasts 18 hours daily but has suffered the same financial, institutional and professional capacities fate as the TV service — lack of equipment, trained journalists and technical staff as well as severe under-funding for all its operations. The programming content is concentrated on politics (overwhelmingly the government view), culture and the arts.

The broadcast format is as follows:

- 20% Religious programming.
- 25% Cultural programming.
- 25% a variety (magazine-type) of programming.
- 30% Political programming.

According to Mr Ebaid Mirgani Ebaid, Deputy Director of Broadcasting in the State, some training and a number of workshops have been held in Khartoum, including three training sessions by the BBC World Trust.

The station has also experimented with broadcasts through the Internet, but had to discontinue the service due to financial constraints.

### **Gender in Al Gezira Radio and TV**

The station has also produced gender programming such as a special on gender violence. Out of a total of 193 staff members only 71 are women.

The station is in dire need of video editing equipment and modern cameras.

The state Radio broadcasting signal covers all the state and part of neighbouring states.

### **River Nile State**

Known as Nahr a Nil in Arabic, the state is one of the 26 wilayat and covers an area of 122,123 km<sup>2</sup> (47,152 mi<sup>2</sup>) with an estimated population of approximately 900,000 (2000). Ad-Damir is the State Capital. Slightly north of Ad-Damir is the important rail junction town of Atbarah. Other towns include Shendi.

The Mission visited the Ministry of Information, the Sudan News Agency, State Radio and TV and local correspondents.

According to the General Manager of the local station, the main challenges facing media in the state are financial problems, lack of skills and training. The State Ministry of Information is planning to train media workers in Internet and digital media operations.

There are newspapers published in Khartoum on sale in this state. The Sudan News Agency office is in dire need of modern equipment and still uses the telegraph to send news to the main office in Khartoum. Lack of training is the most serious problem that this sector faces on top of lack of equipment.

A number of external and local training sessions have been conducted by the BBC World Trust and at the National Radio and TV Station based in Omdurman, Khartoum.

## **North State**

Known as El-Shamaliyah in Arabic, it is one of the 25 wilayat. It has an area of 348,765 km<sup>2</sup> and an estimated population of approximately 600,000 (2000). Dongola is the State Capital. The town of Wadi Halfa, the headquarters of the British in the late 19th Century, is located in the north of the province.

There is no reliable means of communication, some of the reports are usually sent via express mail or fax. The Internet is prohibitively expensive at US\$5 per hour.

State Government officials, especially the ruling party, enjoy a media monopoly. The main language is Arabic. In North State the majority of the population is of Nubian extraction and although their mother tongue is Nubian and most speak Arabic there are no efforts to broadcast in their language.

The BBC World Trust has trained media workers in this state in news broadcasting, editing and reporting. There is an acute need for more training.

North State Radio broadcasts 10 hours daily. The station is in dire need of modern equipment.

## **State TV**

State TV broadcasts two hours daily. The service suffers all the shortcomings and constraints most other media are afflicted by in the places the Mission visited in the North.

# **The Connecting Gap**



## 4. The Serious Disconnect

It was manifest at the end of the field missions that there was a serious disconnect between the State governments and the Government of South Sudan (GoSS) on legal and policy formulation, development and co-ordination. This was perhaps more pronounced between the relevant ministries in charge of information/broadcasting at the states' level and the GoSS Ministry of Information and Broadcasting in Juba.

Of particular concern were lack of clear linkage/support in terms of staff support/employment, training/deployment, capital equipment and broadcasting infrastructure support. Also lacking were professional standardisation and, or harmonisation. The lack of financial support for operations and running costs is dire.

Even more disturbing were the lack of a coherent media and information policy guidelines and the appreciation of the crucial role information and communications plays in promoting national peace and reconciliation. The peace agenda and fundamental issues of the right to information, media diversity and plurality were unknown, misunderstood and, or ignored.

In most states, there was no apparent linkage between the Executive and the Legislature on media/information — there was no driving philosophy on media/information co-ordination to address voice poverty and, or the vacuum that exists throughout the states.

With the exception of Western Equatorial State, which was in the process of developing media/information and communication guidelines, all other states operated on an ad hoc basis and, or followed the pre-CPA guidelines and regulations.

Like the situation obtaining at the national level, the dire need for legal, policy, professional and capacity building interventions is explicit and urgent. There is a vacuum that has to be urgently addressed in a combination of planned immediate, medium and long-term sequential and concurrent interventions at the state, regional and national levels to fill these wide gaps and needs.

The mission established the direct link and relationship between the current status quo of the media at the national, regional and state levels and how the lack of progress at the national and regional level had a direct bearing on the state level.

Barring a few slight variations dependent on individual states' political-cum-financial and human resources capacity and ability, the overriding theme in the states was one of overwhelmed, under-funded, understaffed and underdeveloped/under-served media/information infrastructure in the midst of great needs.

The most profound was the lack of legal and policy framework right through the states in terms of the role/function of media and, or development communication in serving the larger societal needs regarding information/communications. This particularly involves the role of the media in enhancing and entrenching human rights, democracy and good governance. Of paramount importance is the lack of appreciation on role of the media in informing and reporting on the peace agenda and, in particular, the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA).

**Lack of Capacity**

## 5. Lack of Capacity

At the states' level, this cardinal role of the media in peace-building and the creation of a national consensus were held hostage by the lack of capacity at all levels.

The other major and pressing hurdle was lack of human resources/professional capacity in the states, which is untenable. In all the states visited the lack of trained cadre, from journalists to producers and technicians to management, was alarming and glaring. In particular, most states had no professional cadres to speak of, nor any technical/producer cadre. For those that had, most were ill-trained and inexperienced. Most were in great need of skills upgrading, induction and exposure to modern media operations, use and operation of modern equipment and, most importantly, in great need of an orientation course to align their outlook with the prevailing socio-politico-economic environment in this post CPA-era.

Of particular concern was the lack of young qualified and exposed professionals, particularly the absence of women professionals. In nearly all states visited, these particular issues were recurrent, common and, for the most part, unaddressed. This state of affairs raises the key contemporary issues of succession, continuity, context, inclusiveness, relevance and ownership of media/information processes in the states.

In most states the issue of youth and gender parity was explained away as a direct outcome of the civil war. The so-called lost generation, language and technical skills deficiency were other oft-cited reasons. However, the Mission noted that the real reasons more likely had to do with the apparent divide in the socio-political environment in South Sudan among those from the Diaspora and those who stayed behind.

# **The Broadcasting Footprint**

## 6. The Broadcasting Footprint

Indeed, most of the staff engaged and working for Broadcasting Stations in the states were those who had stayed behind and were employees of the then Regional Executive Council and were oriented into politically correct thinking, holding on to their positions to secure their careers and pensions.

In all states visited, the lack of equipment/supporting infrastructure and facilitation was another key hurdle. Most of the broadcasting equipment was outdated, dysfunctional and for the most part in utter disrepair, non-salvageable. This was most pronounced in the major former garrison towns of Wau, Malakal, Bor, Bentiu, and Torit.

In Wau, Malakal and Torit, the Sudan Catholic Radio Network was at advanced stages of establishing radio stations that would be linked to its network.

In the two former garrison towns of Bentiu and Torit, there are commendable efforts to establish broadcasting facilities and capability. In Bentiu, the State is in the advanced stages of establishing a television station and two radio stations, an FM and a Short Wave service.

In Torit, a modern State funded digital FM station with a 75-kilometre coverage range and housed in a modern studio building is undergoing trials.

In Bor, the last of the former garrison towns, the only sign of a potential broadcasting facility in the pipeline is a dismantled transmission tower lying on site, which the town's stray animals and children are happy with. However, unlike many other states, Bor has a relatively new office block.

In the past these garrison towns were part of an elaborate national broadcasting network that fell into disrepair during the Civil War. Indeed, there were stark remainders of this network in the form of obsolete earth satellite relay stations, transmission towers, broadcasting and production facilities, collapsing offices with no secure perimeter fences.

Even more apparent was the total lack of broadcasting facilities for both Radio and TV services in other towns visited in the SPLM/A liberated areas such as Yei, Yambio, and Rumbek. Even though Rumbek has in the last two years managed to establish a small functional Radio and TV broadcasting capability with a limited coverage of about 10km outside the town limits.

The programming TV content in Rumbek is local and downloaded by digital satellite dish from a Pay-TV station for a total of four hours in the evenings. The Radio runs for six hours daily repeated for a similar period in the evenings.

In Yambio, Maridi and Mundri, all in Western Equatorial State, there were no functional State broadcasting services, though plans were at an advanced stage to establish stations in the next budget year (2008-2009). Yei, one of the major urban centres in Central Equatorial State and near the Ugandan border, had one private and one faith-based FM station with a limited reach, broadcasting for less than 12 hours daily.

Yambio, Bentiu, Bor, Malakal, Wau, Rumbek and Torit all had transmission towers relaying the United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) Miraya FM programmes from Juba.

In Kadugli, Southern Kordofan State and part of the Nuba Mountains, the broadcasting services have been discontinued for the last three years due to a combination of factors. These ranged from obsolete equipment and non-payment of salaries to operational costs, despite being linked to the national broadcasting network in Khartoum.

This was despite the fact that newly procured broadcasting equipment was mothballed and rotting in containers out in the yard and a newly-installed transmission mast with Chinese-made equipment and a powerful generator lay disused and crumbling out in the open. Indeed, at the time of the field visit, the staffers were on strike for non-payment of salaries since December 2007.

The issues of staff recruitment, salaries, operations, deployment,

training, equipment and support infrastructure were key moot points that needed clarification and harmonisation in the states in terms of budgetary support. In fact, these issues continue to affect the performance of broadcasting staff/stations in the formerly garrison towns of Wau, Malakal and Bentiu.



**Lack of Budgetary Support**

## 7. Lack of Budgetary Support

At the core of these issues is the question of who has responsibility over budgetary support — the State Government or the GoSS Ministry of Information and Broadcasting in Juba. To a lesser degree, The same problem also affects other states, in particular the lack of budgetary support for operations and running costs.

The issue of budgetary support for state broadcasting services and the ministries in-charge of broadcasting and information continues to adversely affect the provision of services in all the states in South Sudan.

This is best captured by a current status report (May 2008) by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting in Juba which gives a brief historical perspective. According to the report, the assets and management of government-owned and -controlled broadcasting facilities and institutions were handed over to the then newly-formed GoSS in 2006 and are managed by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting in Juba. These capital, technical and personnel assets of the Southern Sudan Radio and South Sudan Television in Juba are managed by the Directorate of Radio and Television within the Ministry.

In Wau and Malakal, the salaries and personnel costs were transferred to the Ministry in Juba, while the physical assets (equipment and properties) are managed by the relevant state ministries.

The report acknowledges “.....However, in 2006 it was clear that the states concerned did not have the financial resources to cover the costs of personnel salaries The Ministry agreed to provide the Wau and Malakal outlets with support for salaries and personnel costs..... the Ministry considers Wau and Malakal to be affiliate stations of the Southern Sudan Radio and Television Services...”

The report projects ahead and envisages a three-year project, initiated in 2008 to enhance, improve and extend the range of its broadcasting signal to all 10 states using satellite-based technology to connect to FM transmitters in the state capitals with the national broadcasting service set to be completed in 2010.

According to the report, “the Ministry seeks to promote the ability of local public broadcasters to use the unique nature of radio to produce and broadcast local programming in local languages for local audiences. To do so, the Ministry is working with partners under the Government of National Unity (GoNU) in Khartoum to provide transmitters and equipment to stations in the 10 state capitals.”

As to what the parent ministry in Juba will provide in terms of financial, technical and human resource support, the report notes in part “As part of a three-year project to improve [the] capacity of the radio and television services, the Ministry has taken aggressive steps to re-engineer the Southern Sudan Radio and Television Service. Personnel are undergoing training in Johannesburg and Juba with the aim of launching a new 6-hour programme schedule to be broadcast initially from free-to-air transmitters in Juba, Wau and Malakal.”

The report envisages the extension of this service to other state capitals in 2009 and 2010, adding “In addition, public viewing centres will be established in rural areas that do not have access to urban-based television transmission footprints. The Ministry will also begin efforts to help support state-level broadcasting. Using the transmission infrastructure put in place by the MIB, local TV broadcasters will have the opportunity to begin producing their own local programming.”

However, the report fails to commit the Ministry to providing significant financial and technical support to the State broadcasting institutions and ministries, saying “The production and broadcasting equipment in place at state-level public stations are currently owned and managed by those stations themselves — under the auspices of the state-level ministries of Information and Communications”. It adds,, “The primary responsibility for operation and maintenance of this equipment lies directly with the local owners. This policy will continue in the future. The best method of building local capacity to maintain and operate equipment is to instil ownership of that equipment with local stations.”

On budgetary support, the report is categorical that the Ministry has not been able to provide direct financial support to state ministries

of information and communication, “We can expect this trend to continue, as the resources available to the Government of Southern Sudan are scarce first and foremost, state-level ministries should redouble their efforts to secure budgeted funds through the annual state budget planning process.”

As a further acknowledgement of the dire financial situation afflicting the state ministries of Information and Communication, the report says the ministry will from 2009 introduce functional budgetary grants to each of the states to support local broadcasting efforts and will be limited to amount no more than 500,000 Sudanese pounds (\$250,000) per year to each state.

# **The Great Void**

## 8. Addressing the Void

It is in this context that the state of the information/news void in Southern Sudan must be viewed — that the parent Ministry in Juba does not itself have adequate financial, professional and technical capacity to share with nor provide to the nascent public service media providers in the states. Further that in this news and information void Voice Poverty, Diversity and Plurality, particularly Freedom of Expression and, by extension, Democracy and Good Governance are threatened, compromised and violated.

The needs are immense, like everything and everywhere else in Sudan, particularly South Sudan. The implied and sustained threat to peace and reconciliation are real. The threats of renewed violence and the unravelling of the CPA are ever ominous and increasing by the day, with all the attendant socio-political and economic risks and consequences.

There is urgent need to address this news/information void in the states if the peace agenda, the promotion of reconciliation and entrenchment of a democratic culture are to be sustained in Sudan as whole and in South Sudan in particular. The voice/information and news marginalisation must be tackled sooner than later if the prevailing limbo in which the larger majority of the people are caught, despite their yearning for timely/reliable information/news about their country, themselves and their neighbours, is to come to an end any time soon.

It was apparent to the Mission team that there was a great need to seek linkage and association with the GoSS Ministry of Information and Broadcasting in Juba and at the state level to ensure that policy development in the states will conform to international best practice and standards to ensure issues of Freedom of Expression, Press Freedom and Voice Poverty are addressed.

It was clear that most of the professional cadre in the states were in great need of skills upgrading, induction, language skills and exposure to ensure sustainability, enhancement and development of media in South Sudan.

Also pertinent and urgent were issues of professional association building in the states, networking and management skills enhancement, especially in public service broadcasting operations, to ensure prudent financial and professional practices and procedures.

It was also apparent that the financial resources requirements were far above the capacity of the GoSS and the need for urgent, co-ordinated and structured international support to enable the public service broadcasting institutions in Sudan to meet their core mandate — empowering the public through information/news about the peace agenda, democracy and good governance.

This urgent need also applies to the private/community/faith-based media institutions and other organisations that operate in a very difficult and adverse socio-political economic environment that renders any successful commercial activity well-nigh impossible. The market and consumer purchase power is non-existent for the large majority of the people.

Most of the private/independent media institutions are operating on shoe-string budgets, lacking in supportive infrastructure, both technical/professional and human resources, and most face closure in the near future as the economics of media operations are almost impossible to create and meet in Southern Sudan.

The community/faith-based media institutions face the perennial question of securing long-term funding support coupled with a difficult socio-economic environment and the overwhelming demand for their services — however bare and simple the products may be.

It is a bleak picture but one that must be addressed by all stakeholders and partners, for the role of the media in securing democracy, enhancing peace and reconciliation and entrenching good governance is cardinal.

## **OBSERVATIONS:**

The visits were an eye opener in many ways. Where plans and aspirations existed, there were no funds. Where there were funds and plans there was no manpower. Where there was knowledge and hope,

media work was not a priority. Where rudimentary facilities existed, lack of motivation, resources and morale did not allow for much output.

The visits were only to the towns mentioned and it was not possible to cover the rural areas except where the traveling route passed. Yet it was clear that most if not all far flung areas were not reached by the media facilities available. Most information went to the rural areas by word of mouth with the attendant misreporting and distortions.

Most obvious and compelling was the lack of training for staff in all places visited. This also came through very strongly from the conversations held with many people.



# Mapping the Void

# STATES MEDIA ASSESSMENT REPORT

## Conclusion

As has been made abundantly apparent in this report, the greater limiting need is mainly lack of resources and facilities. Like all else in the Southern Sudan walk of life, resources have never been adequate. Prioritization might then be the prudent thing to do by those who have the funds/resources. As the main media practitioner is the GoSS and State governments, media development understandably comes fourth in the scale of priorities after employment (paying ex-combatants), health, education and roads, to say nothing of food production.

Another hindrance observed by the Mission — where efforts for media development are present, however rudimentary or inadequate, the lack of sensitization on the new dispensation of freedom of expression and the right to information accorded by the CPA and hence the Constitution is a major drawback. While the GoSS and States policy follows this liberality, some of the staff are still cocooned in the old ways and discourage liberalism, fearing reprisal as was the norm before peace.

Alongside these mind-set challenges is the lack of reporting and programming skills (many cannot as yet use a computer) and competent Media Management. Poor co-ordination was also observed between the GoSS MoIB and the States.

The glaring lack of private media outlets (except Juba) and initiatives is underlined by lack of resources (poor pay) and so they cannot attract better skills. When a plane crash killed some leading figures in the Go SS, none of the private daily newspapers in Juba was able to send a reporter to Rumbek to ascertain the facts. They simply could not pay for a reporter's up-keep and air tickets. This type of situation has also resulted in lack of initiatives for community media where a two-way flow of information and communication would have been desirable between authorities and communities.

It is very difficult in the above circumstances to suggest meaningful remedies to a situation which obtains in nearly all walks of life in south Sudan. However, serious international partner intervention would seem a way out in providing resources and expertise to help upgrade both facilities and skills.

The difficulty with deciding how to intervene in training is how to retain the expertise in the media sector. However, it is imperative and inevitable that training initiatives should be widely supported if just to create skills generally without necessarily controlling those skills to remain in the media sector. A follow-up (monitoring) system is desirable to keep abreast with developments in the fast changing South Sudan situation. Visits also help sensitize developing partners to reassess themselves and re-think.

AMDISS should be expanded, better resourced and encouraged to play a much greater role in these suggestions.

As has become apparent throughout this Report, the status of the media superstructure constitutional, legal and policies in Sudan is beholden to and characterised by State indifference both by design and fiat to serve a clear agenda — State control. In the North and state more by state control, design and state indifference and perhaps by design in the South. The end result is that media and information needs in Sudan and in particular in South Sudan are still largely unmet and well likely remain unmet in the foreseeable future.

That there are differences in terms of way forward and the role of media between the principal players in Sudan does not in any way decrease the desire by both parties to own, control, if not to constantly manipulate and intimidate the media and journalists in Sudan.

The differences between the two principals are only a matter of in nuance, public perception and articulation, and perhaps misplaced goodwill and optimism by donors, partners and the media/journalistic fraternity on the part of the Government of Southern Sudan.

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