Media
Freedom
Status
in
Jordan
2009

مركــز حمــاية وحـرية الصحفيــن
Center for Defending Freedom of Journalists

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Center for Defending Freedom of Journalists

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Vision

To contribute towards creating an environment that protects freedom of press & expression, and enhances society's right to knowledge through professional capacity building of journalists, and affirming their commitment to international standards of independent and free media.

Mission

CDFJ is a nongovernmental organization committed to defending the freedom and security of journalists; by addressing rights violations, building sustainable professional capacities, enabling journalists to have free access to information, and actively developing and reforming media related legislation.

CDFJ Objectives:

- •To defend the freedom and safety of journalists.
- •To protect Journalist from rights violations.
- •To improve Journalists skills
- •To empower Journalists <access to information
- •To increase Journalists <participation in defending human rights and democracy
- •To contribute to developing change and update media legal frame work and legislations.
- •To contribute to the amendment and development of legislations related to freedom of media and expression.
- •To create communication channels between Arab and World journalists

Preface

Media freedom in 2009… loosing ground!

Executive Reform and support for media freedom should be demonstrated in deeds not words. This is what we said in the 2008 report on the status of media freedoms and this is what we continue to say.

Over and over again speeches on media freedom have not been coupled with practical procedures in spite of all the clear Royal messages addressing this issue. The importance of media freedom was reiterated once again in His Majesty King Abdullah's letter of designation to the government of Prime Minister Samir Rifai on December 9th, 2009. In this letter His Majesty King Abdullah stressed the need for taking all measures to ensure freedom of expression and provide a wider space for free, independent and professional media to exercise its role as a main pillar in the process of national development. The King instructed the government to introduce required amendments in legislation to ensure that media outlets have the right to access of information without restrictions or obstacles.

Unfortunately, His Majesty's words were not translated into reality. The situation in 2009 was still negative, leading to a regression in media freedom, which was clearly demonstrated in international human rights reports. Instead of remaining at a standstill, we are loosing ground.

This is not a pessimistic picture, but instead a realistic presentation drawn from a deep look into the details and indicators that are highlighted by this report. The poll drawn from 505 media professional and complains registered throughout Jordan, shows that 2009 has seen an increase in problems faced by journalists.

It is surprising enough that 2% of journalists described the state of press freedom in Jordan as excellent, while 19.9% say it is low. At the same time, self-censorship among journalists increased to reach 95.5% and we believe that this rate is to be expected in light of the accumulating pressures and interferences over the years. The poll shows that 39% of these pressures and interferences came from ministers and government officials, 26% by influential figures and 20% by

security bodies.

The bitter truth is that the decrease in interference by the security authorities from the media scene in 2009 did not create a leap in quality of freedoms or enhance professional performance for media personnel. This fact creates a need for the study of the basic elements that place pressure on press freedom.

● Nidal Mansour

Within the report, research titled; Illusion ad Reality: taboos and red lines in the Jordanian media highlights some of the most important problems effecting media freedoms in Jordan.

Without question, the crisis of media freedom in Jordan is increasing. Both internal and external indicators show that the independence of media outlets is declining. In addition, whether external or internal censorship, both seem to be carried out with an iron fist.

The code of conduct launched by the government has come under heavy fire. In spite of the positive content, it did not improve the situation and truly support media freedoms. At this point the government needs to restructure its priorities to create concrete action that will contribute to the development of media in Jordan.

In this matter the government's top priority must be to strengthen the independence of media outlets, stop interference in these institutions and hold those accountable who interfere in media freedom. These new priorities must also ensure the right of access to information, hold entities accountable that do not abide by this right, and stand up to all violations faced by journalists. All the above issues must take priority over stopping government subscriptions to the newspapers and the reconsideration of advertising

policies in media outlets.

In 2010, we must come out from the media bottle-neck and move forward on the road to unrestricted media freedom. At this juncture it is important to have a firm political will that does not accept apologies or delays and a steadfast motivation to stress that freedom of the press is a basic right for human beings that cannot be neglected.

Press freedom does not prosper in a society that does not believe in it and embrace it.

Therefore, it is the responsibility of the executive branch, parliament, judiciary and civil society institutions to work together to propagate a better understanding of the importance of free media. If this goal is ever to be realized journalists must work tirelessly in their struggle to defend their freedoms. The Media Freedoms Report for the year 2009 is a "candle" that helps to light a long path towards freedom. We urge all of you to stay with us on this path , lighting more candles along the way to greater media freedom.

Thanks for all those who worked on the report and who supported our efforts, extending a hand to help. Finally, thanks to those who criticized us, your input made us better along the way.

● Executive President of :
Center for Defending Freedom of Journalists
CDFJ

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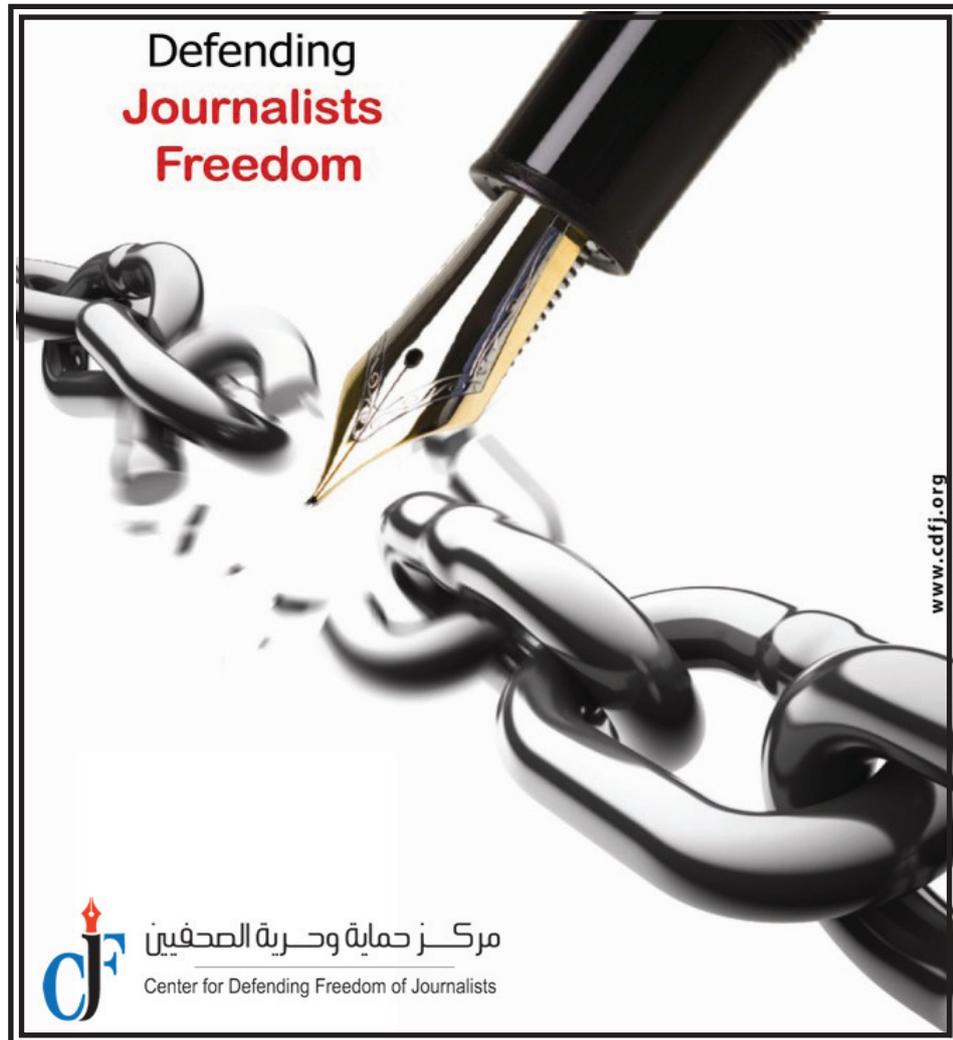
Introduction:

The Media Freedoms Report for 2009 highlights all aspects and dimensions of the Jordanian media situation. This report provides poll opinions, detailed observations and in depth research that answer many, sometimes disturbing questions, about the freedom of media in Jordan.

Following the success of the 2008 Media Freedom Report the CDFJ began an extensive revision of its methodology in anticipation of 2009. By learning from both its strengths and weaknesses, CDFJ revised first the poll and amended some questions and added new ones to reflect new developments on the media scene. The 2009 report follows both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. The combination of a quantitative polling process and a qualitative interview process creates the best and most accurate view of the state of Jordanian media. This system allows for a greater ability to monitor complaints and violations and succeeds in better reaching out to those journalists who faced problems during their course of work. This mechanism although extensive, is not perfect and we realize that our methodology needs to be constantly strengthened.

To compliment the polling and interview data two reports are also included in this year's Media Freedoms Report. The first covers taboos and red lines in the Jordanian media as well as reasons and motives. It not only provides theories, but also includes field testimonials by media practitioners themselves. The second study sought to address a very novel issue; the impact of social networking sites on the freedom of the media. Although, the legislative dimension of the issue was not addressed, how to legally deal with electronic media was touched upon in this informative report.

The Media Freedoms Report for 2009 contains the following chapters:

First: Polling journalists

A total of 505 male and female media practitioners took part in the poll, which included a questionnaire with 241 questions. The polling sought to measure the following:

-Journalists and media practitioners> satisfaction with the freedom of media.

- The impact of media legislation and professional codes of conduct on the media freedom.

-The impact of online media on the Jordanian media scene.

- Journalists and media practitioners' opinion on *Al-Ihtewaat naa'em* (translated as: "soft coercion, or soft containment") and *Al-khatoot al-hamera* (translated as "red lines" referring to topics censored by both the government and social pressure).

- The impact of advertising companies, government interference and self-censorship on media freedoms.

- Violations committed in 2009 and opinions of journalists and media practitioners regarding them. The 2009 questionnaire has increased in quality and quantity to follow up on new developments that have a clear impact on the situation of media freedoms. The poll was conducted by a specialized team of independent researchers after the questionnaire was presented to media experts for discussion and arbitration.

Second: Complaints and Violations

Documenting violations against media and problems faced by journalists is still a very complicated and difficult process. Although the mission of media practitioners is to unveil truth to the public, most of them shy from announcing their complaints and the violations they face because they may be punished. Documentation is also difficult because journalist will not report violations because they want to maintain their "thin" relationship with the government. Paradoxically, the government is the most common perpetrator of violations against journalists. Difficulties also arise due to the fact that journalists do not want to loose their relationship with any other entity, including their media institutions that do not prefer that journalists disclose problems they face.

In 2009, the Center for Defending Freedom of Journalists continued its efforts to document and observe problems and violations from which journalists suffered. The complaints and violations

component of the 2009 report was tasked to Mohammad Ghneim, the research & media officer at CDFJ. Ghneim worked earlier on collecting information regard the problems in order to make the documentation process easier and more accurate. A volunteer colleague, Heba Jawhar assisted Ghneim in this task. In addition, the team of lawyers at the Media Legal Aid Unit (MELAD) at CDFJ supported their efforts.

The same mechanisms used to document complaints in the 2008 report were used this year, they include the following:

1. Receiving complaints directly from journalists who face problems by filling out a complaint form, especially prepared for this purpose.

2. Observing and following what is published in media outlets on problems and violations that journalists face during their work. These problems are posted electronically on the centre's official website www.cdfj.org. They were also filed in CDFJ's hard copy archives allowing research teams to following up on these problems, check information, and document it in the report.

3. To ensure intense follow up and observation of complaints and problems, CDFJ requested the assistance of a group of journalists in different media outlets to contact their colleagues directly and ask them to fill information out a form about any problem they have faced during their work. The group of journalist who volunteered for this task are Farah Attyat from Al -Ghad Daily Newspaper, Mamoun Masad from Jordan Television, Samar Haddadin from Al Rai daily newspaper, Mustafa Ryalat from Addustour daily newspaper, Walid Husni from Al Arab Al Yawm daily newspaper, Khetam Malkawi from the Jordan Times daily newspaper, Ikhlas Al Qadi from the Jordan News Agency (Petra) and Iman Abu Qaoud to follow with weeklies.

4. Following the 2009 experience, CDFJ decided to benefit from the polling and use the answers of some questions to track down problems and violations that journalists face. The report proved

success in obtaining responses from journalists about the obstacles they have faced

5. The research team revised all questionnaires and complaints to check them and determine if they contained incomplete information.

6. After identifying the documented complaints, CDFJ sent letters to official and civil entities that were accused of being responsible for the complaints and violations. CDFJ asked these entities to respond to these complaints in ten days so their response could be publish in the 2009 report. By receiving and publishing these responses the 2009 report, CDFJ aims at achieving a high level of   fair, balanced, objectivity in presenting both sides' views on the problem.

7. In 2009, CDFJ was keen on demonstrating and announcing a clear positions at a time when journalists face many problems, restrictions and pressures, in addition to the major effort that has been exerted by the team of lawyers at Media Legal Aid Unit (MELAD) in defending journalists in courts.

Third: Research and studies

1. Illusion and reality: Taboos and red lines in the Jordanian media

Red lines put pressure on journalists all around the world. Redlines combined with   self-censorship are very detrimental to media freedom. These red lines differ from one country to another; each society has its own idiosyncrasies that create its own red lines and taboos.

In Jordan, taboos and redlines in media has never been discussed or studied before. Therefore, this study titled Illusion and Reality is considered the first effort in examining this phenomenon. Mohammad Abu Rumman, columnist at Al-Ghad daily, and Walid Husni, Journalists from Al-Arab Al-Yawm daily, have exerted a respected effort to conduct this study. Abu Rumman and Husni, both are respected researches, who are in the same rhythm concerning the idea and the structure of the study. They have managed to

Introduction

highlight how Jordanian journalists view, understand and deal with red lines and taboos.

The study includes in depth interviews with media experts experienced in dealing with both taboos and red lines. CDFJ thanks these journalists for the transparent and courageous manner in which they addressed these tough topics.

Illusions and Realities not only looks into red lines locally, but compares and contrasts international redlines and taboos to the Jordanian norm, illustrating that such restrictions exist in the even the most democratic of societies.

Finally, <u>Illusions and Realities</u> discusses the endless ebb and flow of redlines and taboos. Such topics seem to constantly move between different classifications due to changing government interests. From redlines, taboos, "green lines", "illusionary redlines" and "gray lines" this study highlights the difficulties of being constantly aware of the changing nature of these topics.

2. Creative Chaos: the effect of Social Networking on Media Freedom

Examining the role and the effect of electronic social networks on media freedom is a complicated task due to the speed of development taking place in this virtual space. Social networking sites have created both virtual and material revolutions and attracted the attention of billions people. Sites like FACEBOOK have managed to connect people on an unprecedented scale. The strength of social networking sights is illustrated, as FACEBOOK has taken over Google as the most viewed website.

The 2009 report includes an exiting study titled <u>Creative Chaos: the Effect of Social Networking on Media Freedom</u>. The study conducted by Sameh Mahariq, columnist and researcher, looks at the effects of social networking sites on the struggle for free media in the Arab world.

The main conclusion of the study is that these social networking sites have exceeded their role as entertaining communication tools, and become a means for the exchange of information, interaction and change.

3. Electronic Media Opens the Door for Unresolved Legal Dilemmas!

This study, prepared by lawyer Mohammad Quteishat, Manager of the Media Legal Aid Unit (MELAD) at CDFJ focuses on emerging legal problems concerning the growth of electronic media.

The study also showed that, in 2009, a legal confusion occurred when dealing with electronic news sites, pointing to the decision by the court of cassation "court of appeal". The court decision stated that the press and publication law applies to electronic media. The court decision raised a controversial discussion; since some legal opinions emphasized the fact that the decision is non-binding to judges in any other court, stressing that electronic media cannot be regulated by this law. The study showed that the available legal foundations in the Penal Code are enough to cover electronic media.

Free Media = Free Society

3rd May World Press Freedom Day

www.cdfj.org

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Improving
professional skills
for Journalists

THE

Defending the Freedom of Media

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Executive Summary

First :Journalists 'Opinion Poll:

The opinion poll on press freedoms status in Jordan for the year 2009, conducted by the Center for Defending Freedoms of Journalists (CDFJ), has revealed that 73% of 505 surveyed journalists believe that online media contributed to raising press freedoms, 63% said it contributed to defending freedoms, and 50% considered it as a contributor to the improvement of the profession.

For the first time, the survey sheds light on the reality of online media, which began expanding its role in Jordan. Some 90% of journalists admitted that the electronic news websites allowed people the freedom to comment, while 73% demanded that these comments should be monitored by a website management.

The survey which is conducted for the 8th consecutive year, showed a decline in the indicators of press freedoms, following the optimism that prevailed in the past two years due to the royal directives that emphasized freedom of media, the king said that detention of Journalists is a redline should not be crossed, and detention of journalists must not be practiced
In this context, 54% of the polled journalists said that the press freedom status has not changed, 22% believed that it encountered setbacks compared to 11% in 2008. Of the total journalists, 23% said that it achieved progress, compared to 38% in 2008.

Figures also indicated that 2% described press freedoms as excellent, a figure that dropped from 4.5% the year before. Those who described it as low stood at a rate of 19.9%, that increased from 9.3% in 2008, an indicator the press freedoms can be described as «loosing ground» after it was described as a «standstill» in the 2007 and 2008 reports.

The 2009 poll was an attempt to monitor new developments in the media landscape, including the status of on-line media, professional codes of ethics, the code of conduct set by the government to deal with media, soft containment or soft coercion phenomenon and accusing journalists of being corrupt.

The survey indicated a rise in self-censorship among journalists. It revealed that 95% of the polled journalists exercise self-censorship, a 1% increase from the year before. This reflects the stability of the ratio over the past three years and the spread of this phenomenon that has raised wide controversy in previous years as reveled in the Press Freedoms Reports.

This year>s survey, tried to develop a better understanding for the definition of self-censorship among journalists. Approximately, 77% defined self-censorship as to «avoid publishing or broadcasting whatever contradicts with religions, 72% defined it as «avoid publishing whatever contradicts with legislations», 67% said, it is «to avoid publishing or broadcasting what is believed to be incompatible with norms and traditions». Meanwhile, 62% of the surveyed sample interpreted self-censorship as to «avoid publishing or broadcasting what is believed to be connected to sexual issues", as 45% said, «it is to obey the security services orders."
The survey also sheds light on issues that journalists avoid tackling, with 94% of them said they avoid writing about or broadcasting issues related to armed forces. Discussing issues related to judiciary authorities and security agencies ranked second at the level of 84%. In the same context, 83% said they avoid discussing religious issues, 81% said they avoid criticizing tribal leaders, while 78% avoid criticizing religious figures. The survey also indicated that 74% of the surveyed media people avoid criticizing Arab leaders, while 73% avoid discussing sexual issues.

Taboos in Jordanian media seems to be consistent, with overlapping causes of fear of legal responsibilities to fears of norms and traditions that leads to avoiding anything that would create any problems for journalists, even if they do not incur legal accountability.

Some 51% of the surveyed journalists supported the code of conduct streamlining the government-media relationship, while 33% opposed it. In the opposite direction, 42% of journalists said content of the code of conduct does not support press freedom, while 40% said it does. When asked about their opinion of this code>s content, 70% stressed their opposition to the government>s decision to stop subscriptions
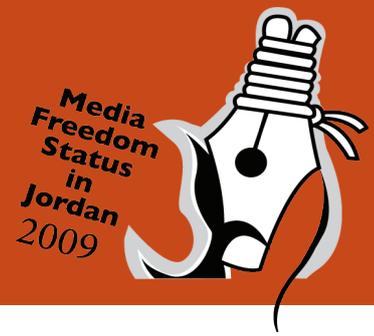
to newspapers, 59% opposed the government>s decision to minimize ads published in media outlets, while 61% supported a decision to layoff and not to appoint journalists as advisors or consultants in the government.

Back to electronic media, as 81% of the surveyed journalists stressed that a website management is professionally responsible for the comments posted, 66% supported developing standards for comments including disclosing the commentator>s identity and his/her. They said that this will make them responsible of the content of their comments. In the same context, 62% said these standards will limit the harming of an individual>s dignity, 60% said it will limit rumors, 58% said it will contribute to debate development and limit media chaos. According to 57%, these standards will contribute to increase the flaws of only credible information, 47% said it raises the level of media freedoms, while 46% considered it a development in the profession.

Despite the positive attitude of journalists to the role of electronic media, approximately 70% of them supported issuing a law that regulates its work, and 28% opposed this proposal. Of those opposed to issuing a legislation to regulate electronic media, 51% called for regulating their work in accordance to the codes of professional conduct, 33% agreed to organize electronic media work in accordance to the Press Law, 13% in accordance to the Penal Code law, with 72% of them said it should not be left without being regulated.

The new survey, however, revealed that 21% of journalists polled admitted that they have been subjected to containment attempts through the course of their work, while 57% said they heard about journalists who were subjected to containment attempts. Linking figures of those who admitted that they were subjected to containment attempts and those who heard about other colleagues raise the percentage and lead to a worrisome figure.
According to 43% of the surveyed journalists, either the government or semi-government institutions attempted to contain them, with the most common forms were financial incentives or gifts 53.3% of the time. The irony is that 77% said that these temptations and attempts did

not affect their work or position, especially when linked and compared to 64% of journalists who stressed that the government is doing so to earn their loyalty.

The poll revealed that journalists believe that some media suffer from negative phenomena such as accepting gifts, blackmailing to obtain financial gains, accepting bribes, writing paid news and reports, in addition to favoritism (*wasta*). The prevalence of *Wasta* among journalists is 85%, gifts acceptance rate stood at 72%, writing paid reports and news leveled at 59%, while accepting bribes, blackmailing to obtain financial gains stood at 53%. In line of these findings, some 94% of the surveyed journalists said the spread of this phenomenon affects press freedom.

This year>s questionnaire included 241 questions designed to measure journalists' opinion of press freedom in Jordan, and their satisfaction in regards to legislation that governs media and its impact on press freedoms, in addition to the problems and pressure they are subjected to.

In this poll, we have taken measures to overcome the problems and difficulties which faced the research team last year, especially when answering open-ended questions. The latter were replaced with closed questions based on the results of the polls conducted in previous years. In addition, some questions from the previous polls were cancelled as they do not achieve goals and objectives of the poll, and their answers are not related to media situation. Responding to developments in the media landscape, new questions have been added to the poll. Those included questions about the code of conduct, electronic media and containment.

The questionnaire was also reviewed by a committee of experts for arbitration, and a pre-test was conducted to check the clarity of questions posed, where all comments were taken into consideration to come up with the final questionnaire (see the attached questionnaire).
The sample of this survey included 1,372 journalists. The survey covered journalists who are members in the Jordanian Press Association (JPA), and others who are in CDFJ's database and who are not members of the JPA at the time of conducting the survey between 13, January 2010 and 22, January 2010.
The percentage of journalists working in the private

sector from among the participating journalists reached 77%. Male participants accounted for 76.2% of the polled sample.

The polled journalists were divided into two categories: the first comprising those journalists who work for the public sector, and the second comprising journalists working for media organizations in the private sector.

The design of the survey sample was based on stratified random sampling, whereby the sample of the study was distributed to the two categories in a manner commensurate with the size of each category of journalists.

Some amendments were made to the weights of the survey because of the lack of responsiveness by some journalists in addition to other problems such as wrong phone numbers or non-existence in service.

Data was gathered from 505 journalists surveyed over phone. The concerned team members trained researchers who have a proven record in collecting data using this method without bias or insinuation in their answers to ensure accuracy and validity of the surveyed topic. In addition, a smaller team of researchers were trained to review the questionnaire forms and make sure that all data for all applicable questions had been filled out, coded, and then entered into a computer. The final stage included an analysis of the data collected in the survey, and the final results were extracted to be used for the purpose of this report.

Female participants accounted for 24.5% of the polled sample compared to 75.5% male participants, a percentage similar to that surveyed in 2008, and compatible with women>s participation in workforce that is still low. Women>s participation in the Jordanian economy stood at 16% in 2009.

As for the results of the survey, 34% of the polled journalists said that legislations imposed restrictions on press freedoms, a percentage up from 27% in 2008, while 48% believed that media legislation did not affect press freedoms.
The State Security Court Law topped legislations that restrict press freedoms, followed by the Press and Publications Law with 84% and the Penal Code followed by 81%. Others considering the Press Association's law as restricting, and this opinion increased to reach 61.6%. It seems that the government's decision to amend the Press and Publications Law that stopped referring journalists to the State Security Court was the right decision.

Around 85% of the polled journalists said Jordan News Agency, Petra is the most committed to the implementation of the code of conduct, followed by Jordan Radio with 80%, Jordan Television stood at 78%, daily newspapers followed with 65%, private radios leveled 55%, and 50% for private televisions. Magazines leveled at 43%, to be followed by electronic news websites with 35.8% and weeklies with 34.7%.

The survey has also reveled a drop in the role of the Audiovisual Media Commission, where 71% of the polled journalists believed that it has no affect on press freedoms, while 22% said it contributes to the setbacks of press freedoms.
With regard to the detention of journalists in media-related cases, we find that eight journalists were detained in 2009, a 0,2% increase compared to 2008.
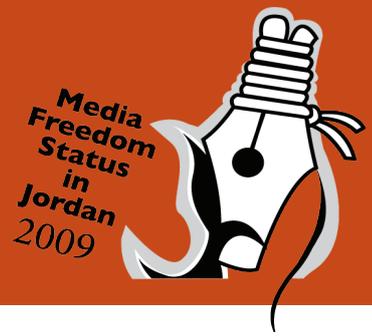
Second: Complaints and Violations

Complaints documented and monitored by CDFJ for Defending Freedom of Journalists suggest that problems, interventions and violations committed against journalists have increased in year 2009.

Although the majority of journalists are reluctant to speak about what they suffered, 44 complaints were filed and documented in this report. The remaining 206 complaints were either monitored or followed up on by the Legal Media Aid Unit (MELAD), tracked in media, documented through information forms distributed to journalists or referred to in the annual opinion poll.

The 2009 report reflects an increase in the number of complaints; 44 compared to 33 in 2008. The number of journalists who said they faced pressure also increased reaching 199 in 2009, compared to 100 journalists in 2008.

Methodology:

Monitoring problems and violations that journalists face is still a difficult and complicated process. Although the journalists' mission is to uncover truth for the public, journalists themselves are reluctant to talk about the interference they face because they seek to avoid any problems that could result from reporting such information.

In 2009, Center for Defending Freedom of Journalists [CDFJ] sustained its efforts to document and monitor problems and violations that journalists face. The documentation and monitoring task was assigned to researcher, Mohammad Ghunaim, research & media officer at CDFJ. Also Ms. Hiba Jouhar – an intern back then at CDFJ - was assigned to assist Mr. Ghunaim, and in a addition the lawyer team of Media Legal Aid Unit MELAD, supported them in creating the legal framework

The 2009 report followed the same methodology implemented in 2008 as follows:

- Receiving complaints directly from journalists who are exposed to problems, and asking them to fill in a form addressing complaints and violations for the purpose of documentation, accuracy and follow up. The form contains basic personal information, general information about the complaint, type of violation and a brief about it: the date, place and the party that committed this violation. In addition, a journalist should provide detailed information about the complaints, sign and date it before submitting the form to the center.

CDFJ has documented 20 complaints through this mechanism, and after revising them only 15 complaints were accredited and published in the 2009 report.

- Observing and following what is published in media outlets on problems and violations that journalists face during their work. These problems are posted electronically on CDFJ's official website www.cdfj.org. They were also filed in CDFJ's hard copy archives allowing research teams to following up on these problems, check information, and document it in the report. However, what is worth mentioning here is that journalists in Jordan have become more courageous and transparent in talking about the problems and pressures they face compared to years before. In addition, media outlets and news website have started to publish news about these violations, which facilitated the process of tracking and monitoring them.

The research team has managed to document 21 problems through published news, and after contacting journalists exposed to these violations and verifying the data, only eight of these problems were accredited to be published in the report.

- To ensure intense follow up and observation of complaints and problems, CDFJ requested the assistance of a group of journalists in different media outlets to contact their colleagues directly and ask them to fill information out a form about any problem they have faced during their work. The group of journalist who volunteered for this task are Farah Attyat from Al -Ghad Daily Newspaper, Mamoun Masad from Jordan Television, Samar Haddadin from Al Rai daily

newspaper, Mustafa Ryalat from Addustour daily newspaper, Walid Husni from Al Arab Al Yawm daily newspaper, Khetam Malkawi from the Jordan Times daily newspaper, Ikhlas Al Qadi from the Jordan News Agency (Petra) and Iman Abu Qaoud to follow with weeklies.

Of the 500 forms distributed ,ten (10) complaints were filed .After tracking these complaints and verify them, only six complaints were documented and accredited to be published in the report.

However ,this monitoring mechanism was not successful ,and we did not feel that journalists were serious in dealing with the forms .This might be due to the fact that the incidents had happened a long time ago ,the fear among journalists to fill in such form or the feeling that their institutions were not independent enough to have the capacity to deal with the problems they faced.

- Following the 2009 experience ,CDFJ decided to benefit from the polling and use the answers of some questions to track down problems and violations that journalists face .The report proved success in obtaining responses from journalists about the obstacles they have faced.

The 2009 opinion-poll covered 505 journalists ,with the research team revising and verifying information related to those journalists who faced problems .The team short-listed the name ,the remaining were called back in order to obtain more information and details, and to check information obtained over phone.

It is worth-mentioning here that 199 journalists said they were exposed to pressure and harassment .After calling back some journalists listed in the survey several of them refused to give more information .Some of them requested not to include their complaints ,while it was not possible to include other complaints in the report as they were of a personal nature or not related to their work as journalists.

After verifying more thoroughly the data monitored15 , new complaints were accredited to be published in the report ,although they were not monitored or documented

by CDFJ team before.

The opinion poll included the following question:
Were you exposed to pressures through the course of your journalistic work in?2009

The answer to this question were restricted to" yes "or "no ".For those who answered" yes "follow up questions identifying the types of pressures .This included: withholding information ,threats ,upholding some news and articles for irrelevant reasons ,ban of coverage, denial of freedom ,blocking websites ,apprehension, investigation ,ban of broadcast ,the interference of chief editors ,being defamed and/or being subject to writing offending news and comments ,dismissal ,beating and physical assaults and deprivation from incentives and promotion.

Surveyed journalists had the choice to select more than one answer if they were exposed to more than one problem .In addition ,they had the choice to add any other problem that was not listed in the questionnaire.

- The research team revised all the questionnaires and complaints to verify them and revise the data that required follow up.

- After identifying the documented complaints ,CDFJ sent letters to official and civil entities that were accused of being responsible for the complaints and violations .CDFJ asked these entities to respond to these complaints in ten days so their response could be publish in the 2009 report .By receiving and publishing these responses the 2009 report ,CDFJ aims at achieving a high level of   fair ,balanced, objectivity in presenting both sides 'views on the problem.

- In 2009, CDFJ was keen on demonstrating and announcing clear positions at a time when journalists face many problems, restrictions and pressures, in addition to the major effort that has been exerted by the team of lawyers at Media Legal Aid Unit (MELAD) in defending journalists in courts.

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Center for Defending Freedom of Journalists

Observations:

- Problems, pressures and violations that journalists are facing are repeated and similar to an extent, which is an indicator that the response to solve such incidents is limited.

- Despite the increased number of journalists who speak about the problems they face, still, the majority are reluctant to officially report it or file written complaints, to avoid any problems that could result from such an admission. This indicates that the report does not cover all problems that journalists face.

- The most common problem facing journalists was withholding information .A large number of these complaints cannot be documented ,and the journalists had no information to prove they were denied information.

- Until now ,It is still difficult to monitor, document and verify these complaints as some journalists prefer not to give detailed information about what they suffered .They suffice by providing generic information that is not enough for verification ,and some information lacks accuracy and circumstantial details ,which prompted us to search the internet and media to verify information provided.

- The complaints monitored by the research team did not match with those documented in the opinion poll conducted by CDFJ that surveyed 505 journalists .This can be attributed to many reasons .One of these reasons is that some journalists are only willing to answer with a" yes "or a" no "if he/she was exposed to pressures or violation ,without providing any details about these problems .Another reason is that the news covered in the media about such problems is still limited and does not cover all incidents .In addition ,it is worth to highlight that documentation and monitoring mechanisms are more accurate than the opinion polls as some of those surveyed people may provide inaccurate answers.

- Assigning journalists to have direct contact with their colleagues to monitor complaints led to progress in monitoring mechanisms and allowed us to document problems that were not known before .It also made journalists feel comfortable because the problems they face are followed up .The verification conducted by the legal team in CDFJ gave credibility to these complaints ,but prevented some journalists from providing us with more details.

Some of the remarks that were listed in last year's report are still present ,most notably:

- Journalists are not convinced yet that complaint is a useful practical tool to stop or reduce violations, because their complaints usually been denied, and no effective measures are taken to prevent the occurrence of such violations.

- Official authorities and sometimes nonofficial ones do not investigate the complaints forwarded to them.

- CDFJ has no legal jurisdictions, authorities or mechanisms to investigate and verify the validity of the complaints received in order to confirm that violations have indeed occurred or not.

- Some journalists are still confusing violations with administrative problems that they face during their work or even with some personal problems which have no relation to their media work. Some of those journalists seek to push those incidents to the limelight as if they were violations committed against them.

Executive Summary

Recommendations:

1- It became crucial to establish an observatory to document all problems and pressures facing journalists on a daily basis. This observatory should develop effective investigation methodologies to access to information and build a relation based on trust with journalists to enhance transparency.

2- CDFJ, through MELAD team, will work on activating an alert system includes urgent actions to uncover these violations and pressures, and will exert efforts to publish them through electronic media.

3- CDFJ will organize, this year, a training course for some journalists and lawyers on methodologies for documenting violations. It will also develop follow-up mechanisms with participants, to enable them to monitor these violations in their media institutions and document them on time.

4- CDFJ will review the legislation that restricts media freedom in comparison with international standards. In this respect, both the Right of Access to Information Law and Protection of State Secrets and Documents Law should be amended as they limit journalists' access to information.

5- Urging the government to activate the role of the official spokespersons in ministries and official institutions, in a manner that will allow them to practice their duties and provide journalists with information within the framework of clear policies.

6- CDFJ recommends that the government establish a complaints office affiliated with the Minister of State for Information and Communication to receive journalists' complaints through a hotline created for this purpose, and allow the government to adopt needed measures in this regard.

7- After the rise in pressure, interventions and violations to journalists work, there is a need to draft a bill for a law that can hold officials accountable if they interfere in a journalists' work.

8- A guidebook of good-conduct and rules of action must be produced to govern the relations between the security services and journalists to ensure independent media coverage of events in conflict and crisis areas.

We would like also to emphasize the recommendations that came in the "Rules of Independent Media Coverage in Conflict and Crisis-Infected Areas" seminar organized by CDFJ, which witnessed the participation of government officials, security personnel and journalists.
The seminar, organized in February 2009, aimed at building a joint vision and mechanisms among all parties to prevent any violation against journalists and allow them to work freely and independently, while taking into consideration the security requirements.
At the conclusion of the seminar, a declaration on the principals of independent media coverage in areas of conflict and crisis was announced. The declaration emphasized the need to devise a code of conduct and rules of action to regulate the relationship between the security personnel and journalists based on the following:

Security forces should:

1 .Allow media) journalists and photographers (to access crisis areas without hindrance or delay ,so that they can carry out their duty.
2 .Provide appropriate places for media) journalists and photographers (during a crisis to enable them to follow observe and cover events.

3 .Provide the necessary facilities to journalists and the information they need ,in addition to providing them access to information from primary sources.

4 -Protect them from any potential abuse.

5 -Not to restrict their work ,cause them any harm or to offend them.

6 -Not to interfere in their work neither during nor after covering an event.

مركـــز حماية وحــرية الصحفيين
Center for Defending Freedom of Journalists

The Media should:

1 -Introduce themselves to the security services.
2 -Wear a media badge to be distinguished from the public.
3 -Commit to their role in covering events and not participating in them.
4 -Stay away from risky areas and avoid areas of clashes between the public and security forces as much as possible.
5 -Not to obstruct the job of security forces.
6 -Not to tamper with evidences in possible crime scenes.

■ ■ ■ ■

The complaints that CDFJ has received and documented are varied .In the following we present some of these problems to shed light on journalists' suffering:

- **Beating: January 1, 2009**

Al Jazeera television correspondent in Amman, Yaser Abu Hilala, was beaten by anti-riot police while covering a demonstration in Rabia, Amman to protest the Israeli attack on Gaza Strip.

Abu Hilala narrated details of the assault incident in a discussion session organized by CDFJ on "The Rules of Independent Coverage in Areas of Conflict and Crises" in the Dead Sea Marriott Hotel on February 7, 2009, in addition to reporting the full story to Amman.net news website on January 13, 2009.

"It was on Friday after the evening prayer time. There was a group of people dressed in civilian clothes and they started destroying the symbolic cemetery built by protestors. Before that, I had received massages from officials saying all means of peaceful expressions are protected, and no one will touch this tent or any other," Abu Hilala said.

He added, "As a journalist I had to make sure if the person destroying these symbols was representing an official authority or just a citizen. I asked one of them if he represents a security authority or not, only to hear him say: "I am a citizen", and he added, "if you don't

leave I will smash your face"".

"I told him I am a journalist and you can not smash my face. He then threatened me to leave the scene and the Darak forces "Gendarmerie" - specialized Jordanian security force-   where near him and heard what he said to me. So I spoke to the Darak men and told them that this citizen is threatening me and you are supposed to protect me. One of them approached me and started beating me, while cursing the Divine. It was provocative; he was cursing while mosques were playing the call to prayer ".

"I told one of his colleagues that I want to file a complaint against him because of the cursing, and this started the group assault. What happened was video recorded by citizens, and I received the videos through the Bluetooth on my mobile. The assault continued and I was replying to them verbally and I identified myself saying: "I am Yasser Abu Hilala"".

"I have no idea why I was personally targeted. First, they had no idea who I am, but then the activist Khalid Ramadan told them that I was Yasser Abu Hilala, and they continued beating me, and they also beat one of Al Jazeera photographers. Due to this I had 12 stitches in my head, in addition to bruises in different parts of my body," Abu Hilala explained, adding that he was rescued by members of Public Security Directorate's preventive security department [PSD] who took him to hospital".

"The PSD's spokesperson, Mohammad Khatib was there doing a great job in trying to protect me and take me to hospital. There was also the King's Adviser Ayman Safadi who informed me that His Majesty the King rejects this assault and that HM will cover the expenses of the photographer's medication who was also a target of assault," Abu Hilala noted, adding that there was two photographers Mohammad Howaiti and Safwan Awawdeh who tried to protect him but they were also beaten as well and hospitalized.

Center for Defending Freedom of Journalists issued a statement of January 10, 2009 denouncing the assault of journalists and demanding the results of the investigation to be announced. It also called for the government and security departments to form a committee to hold

accountable those who attacked journalists during the coverage of the demonstration.

The video showing the beating Abu Hilala was also uploaded on Youtube, in addition to news websites, newspapers, Al Ikhbaryya and Al Arabyya satellite channels, as well as Al Jazeera that broadcasted the video on the day of the incident.

▪ Threats and physical attacks January 10, 2009.

Ashraf Majali, the executive editor at the Sports Department in Addustour daily newspaper said in a complaint he forwarded to CDFJ that he was attacked by two unknown people while he was leaving his work, adding that one of these men hit him on his head.

In a complaint sent to CDFJ by fax on January 14, 2009, Majali said while he was leaving the Addustour building on Saturday January 10, 2009 at 7:00pm, he was attacked by one person as two others associated with the attacker watched him from a bus parked in front of the newspaper's building. "They forced me to stop, which prompted me to leave my car. He added that one of them asked, "Are you Ashraf Majali?" "When I said yes, he hit me on my head and ran away. I filed a complaint to Shmeisani Security Office and attached to it a medical report issued from Prince Hamzah Hospital without accusing any party of committing this attack as I could not recognize the men".

According to Majali, the security office including the office's director showed concern for this incident and said that they will do whatever it takes to catch the attackers, in addition Addustour's chief editor, Dr. Nabil Sharif and the chairman of Jordan Press Association council Abdul Wahab Zgheilat demanded the Public Security directorate act to identify and detain the perpetrators.

Jordan News Agency ,Petra ,published a report with the title" Jordan Press Association) JPA (Denounces beating a journalist ."In its introduction the report said, "The JPA council denounced the beating of journalist Ashraf Majali by unknown people and calls for the Public Security directorate to investigate the incident and apprehend the perpetrators."

Also Ammon news Agency published a report about the incident under the title" An attack by unknown people on Ashraf Majali …The JPA denounced the accident." In its introduction the report said" ,Unknown people attacked journalist Ashraf Majali in front of Addustour newspaper a JPA member after leaving his workplace on Saturday ,he was hospitalized and underwent a medical checkup .His health condition is good and a complaint was filed to investigate circumstances of the accident."

It added that" ,The reasons might be related to covering sports events and accusing him of not being professional and transparent in tackling football news."

▪ Threats and physical attack, January 22, 2009:

Ahmad Mahmoud Tamimi, Al Ghad daily reporter in Irbid governorate said he was attacked by three people while he was on his way to work on Wednesday January 22, 2009. He said he was following up on a news report he published some days before about the private busses that transport passengers without official license.

In his complaint, Tamimi said, "while I was leaving my house in Hama village in Irbid governorate, heading to my workplace that is 10km away from home, I took the agricultural road, and I was surprised that there was a brown Kia bus on the road. When I was driving near the bus, three masked people came out of the bus and forced me to leave my car and dragged me to one of the neighboring farms. They attacked me leaving injuries on my head, foot and bruises in different parts of my body. I did not recognizing any of them".

"One of the masked men told me, this is to show you what to write again, and this is the first massage," Tamimi explained, adding that a shepherd passed by during the incident which made the attackers run away. "One of my relatives who lived near my house took me to the Specialized Irbid Hospital where I was hospitalized".

He noted that he filed a complaint in the security office in Irbid, but the attackers were not found.

CDFJ has issued a statement on January 22, 2009, denouncing this incident, and calling for the security department to investigate the case to find the attackers and hold them accountable.

Nidal Manour, CDFJ's executive president described the attack on Tamimi as a "cowardly act that aims at hindering journalists from practicing their work freely, faithfully and with responsibility".
He also wished him a quick recovery, calling for fellow journalists to support Tamimi.
Also Amman.Net website published a report about this incident titled "Tamimi tells the details of the assault he was exposed to".
In its body, the report added, "The JPA council has also denounced the assault on Al-Ghad daily reporter in Irbid governorate while he was on his way to work… chairman of JPA council Abdul Wahab Zgheilat has also denounced such irresponsible acts that journalists are exposed to from time to time in an attempt to confiscate freedom of expression, demanding security authorities to investigate the case and prosecute the perpetrators.

Al Ghad daily has also published an article by Mohammad Abu Rumman on Saturday, January 25, 2005 under the title "the Assaults on Journalists-exchanging massages". In its introduction, the writer said, "Here is a scary story told by our colleague Ahmad Tamimi, Al Ghad correspondent in Irbid, about the assault he was exposed to. He was kidnapped from a main street by unknown people who took him to a farm and beat him, before the interference of destiny that saved him due to having neighboring farms in the area".

▪ Denial of freedom May 17, 2009:
Journalist Ferial Belbeisi from Shahed weekly newspaper said she and other photographers were exposed to an assault during their attempt to cover and follow up a murder in Ghor Safi area.

Belbeisi said in the complaint form distributed by CDFJ that a murder took place in Karak governorate and she received a phone call from the murderer's family to write about story, noting that they told her they were subjected to pressures.

"On May 17, 2009, we went there and during our drive, me and the team from the newspaper felt that a car was following us. When we left the area where murderer's family lived, we decided to go to go the area of the victim's family to cover all parts of the story. The car was still following us and this was after 7:30pm. When we arrived there, a group of women and men in their 50s surrounded the car, they were holding guns and sticks and started smashing the car and threatening to burn it. Photographer Mohammad Tawil and the driver were beaten hard. This assault continued until Karak policemen arrived on the scene after I called them. Following negotiations, we were freed, but officials remained in contact with us until 1 in the morning of the next day, because they were afraid that the people are still following us. The story was published the other day under the title (Details of Faqqou Crime", and there was no harassment following this incident as the story covered all view points related to the crime".

She noted that the media office intervened to end the case and her colleague did not file a complaint. However, news websites published what happened on the day following the incident.

Rum News Agency published a report on May 18, 2009, under the title "Al Shahed team subjected to an attack in Ghor Safi".

▪ Denial of freedom
Al Quds Satellite Channel correspondent in Amman, Rasha Wahsh, said she was subjected to denial of freedom by policemen because she has no photography license.

In the complaint form she submitted to CDFJ via email, Wahsh said on February 1, 2010, "while I was filming in Baqaa refugee camp in April 2009, I was prevented from doing so and I was dragged to Ein El Basha police center because I had no license," Wahsh said, adding that the licenses usually take long time to be issued, especially for the purpose of filming inside the camps.

"I remained for almost two hours in the camp, before I left. I was accompanied by a police car to make sure I left the camp and would not resume filming".

- ▪ **Death threats June 4, 2009.**

Journalist Mwaffaq Kamal from Al-Ghad daily said he received death threats over the phone from a man claiming to be one of Ward's relatives (the missing Jordanian child).

Kamal said in the complaint form submitted to CDFJ that on Thursday, June 8, 2010 he received a call at 3:30 pm from a man claiming he is Ward's uncle from Jdeitta village. "The caller objected to the report I published in the newspaper about (a rumor claiming that there is a terrorist organization behind Ward's disappearance). He also started to threaten me by saying: If you were deemed not guilty by law, we will not leave you and will follow you, adding that he himself will come to the newspaper premises and attack me".

"I also received another call before this incident from a man claiming he is Ward's uncle and he objected to a news article I published saying that Ward's father has a criminal record".

Following these threats, Kamal informed North Amman Police Station which provided protection for him, as he said.

On June 6, 2009, Al Madinah news website also published a report on "A Jordanian journalist under protection after receiving threats from a person claiming he is the uncle of Ward Rababaa".

In its report, Al-Madina news said, "North Amman Police Station has put journalist Mwaffaq Kamal from Al Ghad daily under security protection following threats from a person claiming that he is the uncle of the missing child Ward Rababaa".

"Colonel Abu Rumman issued his instructions to take all possible security measures to prevent any potential assault on Kamal," the report added.

- ▪ **Preventing a satellite channel from work: June 30, 2009**

Al Alam Iranian Satellite Channel correspondent in Amman, Adnan Saud Bourini, said that on June 30, 2009 the Jordanian government has closed the offices of Al Alam TV and the Press TV. The government did not give them a license to practice work in Jordan.

In the complaint form presented to CDFJ on July 1, 2009, Bourini said: «A decision was issued by the Jordanian authorities to close Al Alam satellite channel office and stop its correspondent from work in Jordan. Minister of State for Information and Communication said the decision came because neither the channel nor the correspondent is licensed to work here». He added: «The channel has been working in Jordan for years and as a correspondent, I have been practicing my work for nine months and I obtained several filming licenses from the Jordanian Center for Media, and I even covered many activities in the Royal Court».

«We sent a letter to the authorities six months ago to approve our work here, but a sudden decision came from the minister to stop us from working and close our office in Amman» Bourini explained.

Following this complaint, CDFJ sent an official letter with the reference no. CDFJ/RC/31/259/2009 to the Minister of State for Information and Communication and His Excellency Dr. Nabil Sharif requesting him to "direct the concerned party to issue a license for colleague Adnan Bourini to allow him work as a correspondent for Al Alam Satellite Channel". However, CDFJ did not receive an answer from the minister's office.

The channel's manager Ahmad Sadat also sent a letter to Information and Communication office on July 19, 2009, with the reference no. 2412/2890 calling for the approval of Ibrahim Mohammad Abu Salma as Al Alam's channel bureau director in Amman and Adnan Bourini as its news producer, responsible for the production, preparation and presentation of the news reports and programs in Jordan, to be able to follow up on the events and deal with different institutions like many other channels that are granted the same rights.

CDFJ has addressed His Excellency Dr. Al Sharif again in a letter reference no. CDFJ/RC/31/280/2009, calling for him to instruct the concerned party to allow Ibrahim Abu Salma and Adnan Bourini from Al Alam channel to practice their work.

On July 2, 2009, Amman.Net news website published

a report that said: "In an interview with Amman.Net, sources in Al Alam channel considered this decision a political one, especially after the latest events that took place in Iran, following the win of Mahmoud Ahmadi-nejad in Iran's presidential elections".

Also KJ News website published a report on July, 2009 with the headline "Closure of Al Alam channel offices in Jordan." In its introduction, the report said: "the Minister of State for Information and Communication, His Excellency Dr. Nabil Sharif refused to address the link between the closure of Al Alam offices in Amman and the developments in Iran following the results of the presidential elections. In an interview with UP news he said, "We refuse to link our decision of closing the office of Al Alam channel with the current events in Iran. Jordan official authorities did not grant accreditation for the channel, and the measures we took are within the law, as foreign news are not allowed to practice their work in Jordan without approval from the concerned authorities".

On July 6, 2009, Reporters without Borders issued a statement "The closure of the offices of two Iranian satellite channels in Jordan". The organization said: "Reporters without Borders denounced the decision issued by Jordanian authorities to close the offices of two Iranian satellite channels offices, Al Alam and Press TV, that are funded by the Iranian Islamic Republic in Amman on June 30, 2009, noting that Al Alam is broadcasting in Arabic and Press TV in English".

It also called for Dr. Al Sharif at the time to "ensure equality in dealing with satellite channels, despite the ongoing political tension between Iran and Jordan".

It also called for revisiting the decision and giving the two channels all needed licenses and approvals.

The organization also said that "all media should operate freely, even if it was connected or funded by foreign countries".

▪ Physical and verbal assault: July 5, 2009

Amal Ghabaien from Al Haqiqia Al Dawliya Media Group said she was subjected to beating by Darak

forces (gendarmerie) while she was covering a protest organized by the Professional Associations in front of the Ministry of Agriculture. She said this happened on July 5, 2009, during the protest organized for the rejection of the government>s issuance of licenses to import fruit and vegetables from Israel.

In a phone call with the CDFJ>s research team, Ghabaien said: «While I was covering the Professional Associations> protest in front of the Ministry of Agriculture, there were clashes between the protesters and Darak forces, (specialized Jordanian security force), who started to disperse the demonstration. I was pushed and beaten by them, although I showed them my press ID, they responded with verbal retaliation».

Al Haqiqa news website published a report in the same day, with the title «Ghabaien was subjected to assault from the Darak forces during her coverage of the protest». The report said, «Although Ghabaien told the Darak forces that she is a journalist, this did not prevent them from assaulting her physically and verbally.»

▪ Death threats: November 10, 2009

Bassam Badarin ,Al Quds Al Arabi bureau director in Amman ,said he was exposed to death threats following a fabricated news report published in one of the electronic news websites that contained fabricated quotes.

In the complaint form he submitted to CDFJ on January ,2010 ,10Badarin said» Ejjbed news website published a fabricated report on November .2009 ,10 It said while I was in a mission outside the country ,I was in a dinner where a hot and sensitive debate took place .It also reported statements and comments that they claimed I said about the groups I belonged to in Jordan.«

»The fabricated report ,including all the details, contained hurtful words ,claiming that I said them and they touch my family and my people ,«Badarin explained.

Badarin has issued a statement on November,2009 ,15 that said» ,The dinner which the fabricated report was based on had not taken place during the period of time as Ejjbed said .However ,it took place more than seven

months ago ,which prompts suspicions about the motives of those who wrote and published the fabricated story and the timing of its publication .The dinner took place in the House of Representative Khalil Atiyeh in the presence of eight people and friends .There was no hot debate ,but on the contrary ,it was sarcastic discussion most of the time.«

Badarin also denied any of the events mentioned in the report and the statements purported to him.

»Following the report posted on Ejjbed ,many comments were posted threatening to kill me ,chop my head from my body and beat me with sharp tools ,in addition to threats of physical assault without listening to me as a potential victim .The Department of Criminal Investigation started an investigation following a

complaint I filed there ,«Badarin noted.

On November ,2009 ,15 Al Haqiqa website published a report» ,Bassam Badarin writes …this is a statement to the people …who fabricated this statement …that infected me with ignorance.«
Also Luwibdeh news website published a statement entitled» Bassam Badarin reply to fabricated news he was subjected to recently.«

The report that was published at Ejjbed website on November ,2009 ,10 contained a sub headlines quoting »Badarin ,Al Quds Al Arabi correspondent says :Each East Jordanian is schizophrenic and has a moral crisis, and is a burden in this country.«

3rd May

World

Press

Freedom

Day

مركــــز حمــاية وحــرية الصحفيين
Center for Defending Freedom of Journalists
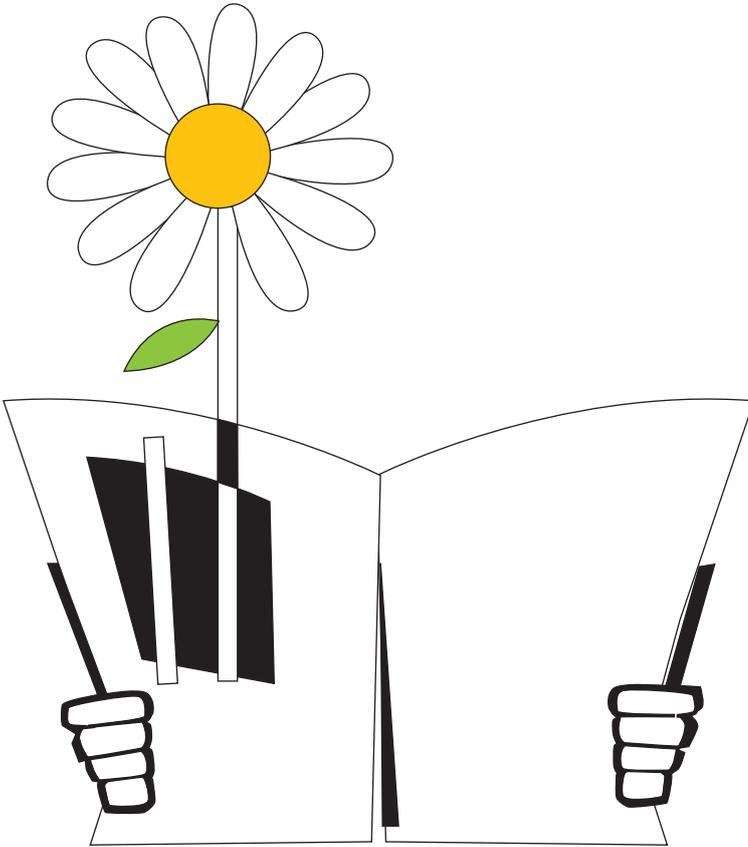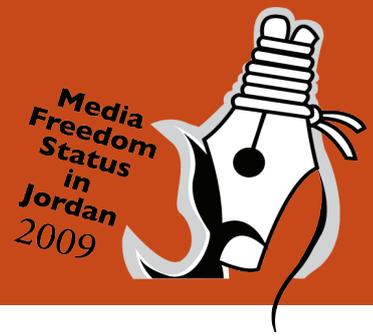
Third: Media Studies & Researches

Illusion and reality: Redlines and taboos in the Jordanian media

This study highlights the clearest and variant redlines and taboos in the Jordanian media. Most of the journalists polled as part of the study said the *Al-Khatoot al-hamera* (a term translated as "redlines" referring to taboos and subjects that are difficult to address) are divided into two parts. The first, are specific topics that are stipulated by a group of laws and legislation that unwaveringly restricts the press and media from covering them. The second part, however, includes other taboo topics that are not specifically referred to in the law or legislation, which makes them a source of confusion for journalists while dealing with their daily news stories.

The consensus developed by polling journalists was an important factor in determining the fixed and the changeable redlines that are enforced daily.

In this regard, columnist Jehad Momani says that the redlines in Jordan are "unfixed" and might emerge out of the blue, the rest are what is known as "closed taboos."

"I think that media, sometimes, creates its own redlines and makes up sources of fear that might be unreal, media blames these sources of fear for its helplessness, lack of courage and even competence in addressing serious journalistic issues and topics that are considered true fields of works for the free press." Jehed Momani said.

This is echoed by Al Ghad Chief Editor, Musa Barhouma who says that redlines in the Jordanian press are not fixed or final as they can be changed or developed based on the changing political conditions. This makes it important for the editor in chief or the

editor in charge to be flexible and move "smoothly in a field of mines" a distinguished journalist should write without giving up the professional standards and should activate his skills to jump over these mines and find a secure area for working."

Speaking about the multiple redlines, Barhouma says "what happens actually is that the redlines increase and multiply, every day there are new redlines and every day a new redline is born in the Jordanian press in an illegal, unconstitutional and maybe immoral manner."

Most of the problems this study highlights regard the redlines and the taboos in the Jordanian press were presented by Addustour columnist Osama Al Sharif, who stressed that the problem is not in the redlines that were stipulated by the Jordanian laws.

"The basis of redlines are unchangeable, but the problem lies in the gray area that witnesses constant changes and developments that do not usher in stability, which makes them unclear, in addition to having several legal points of reference that govern the freedom of expression such as the press and publications law, the Penal Code, the state security code, secret documents law and the right of access to information law, in addition to many others that might cause ambiguity and negatively affect the freedom of expression."

Addustour Chief Editor Mohammad Al-Tal describes the map of redlines that were guaranteed by laws and legislation by saying "we in Jordan have our own redlines that should not be tampered with or approached, they are known not only to journalists, but also to most Jordanians such as His Majesty King Abdullah, the Hashemite family, the army, the armed forces, religion and prophets, national unity and other than that anything is subject to criticism and refutation."

Al-Tal believes that the list of redlines is implemented in most countries and it is in line with what was mentioned in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights quoting: "We have to be fully aware that the redlines or the taboos are not stipulated by Jordanian

legislations but they also exist in the most democratic countries. International agreements have also allowed having such lists of taboos and redlines in line with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the special international charter on civil and political rights and the objective was clear, that is protecting the community and the lives of individuals."

The reasons behind redlines are diverse according to this study and they are mostly driven by temporary interests of state or government. Most if not all the time they are a problem for journalists. Redlines are often called "illusionary lines" or gray lines".

Chief Editor of Khaberni.com news website; Ghaith Adayleh refers to this by saying: "The story of redlines in Jordan is mainly linked with the perspectives of the executive authority in Jordan that makes these lines red in some cases and green in others."

In addition to these "illusionary and gray lines" problems emerge that place pressure on the work of journalists in addition to legislation that also imposes their taboos and plans.

Although government censorship is a major problem, self-censorship is also an issue. Some journalists impose censorship voluntarily in some cases starting with the editor in chief as well as the team of journalists.

Addustour Chief Editor Mohammad Al Tal says: "The real problem that we face as journalists and me as a chief editor is the ambiguity in some issues that is linked sometimes to the changeable and unfixed redlines. This problem creates self-censorship that lies in the head of the journalist and the chief editor and emerges usually on a daily basis."

"It is certain that journalists practice self-censorship to the extent that we all are below the redlines. In some cases journalists succeed in approaching these redlines and this is largely governed by political changes. In some cases a journalist is not allowed to criticize the state's policy and in some other cases that is allowed."

Al-Ghad Chief Editor Musa Barhouma believes

that, "it is the chief editor who broadens or tightens his margins and this is related to the chief editor's character and his background…what also remains is the standards for the chief editor and these standards are changeable and unfixed and mainly rely on the local political atmosphere. In this regard, it is important that the chief editor's compass is accurate and sensitive and he should envisage the upcoming stage with no hesitation."

Correspondent of the London-based Al-Quds Al-Arabi newspaper in Amman; Bassam Badarin described self-censorship among Jordanian journalists as a "a great giant among the Jordanian journalists."

Deputy board chairman of Jordan Press Association Hekmat Momani believes that governments take advantage of the redlines in the legislations as a tool of pressure on journalism according to the overall political mood and in line with the volume of criticism of the governments, thus journalism in Jordan lives in a gray area so it is not free in the absolute sense of the word and not restricted in the absolute meaning."

Addustour newspaper columnist Oraib Al-Rintawi believes that the "personal interests for those in charge of media organizations and the family interests" play a major role in intensifying self-censorship on the newspapers.

"Sometimes, censorship at newspapers increase because of personal or family aspirations of the person in charge of the newspaper. If he aspires to become director general or to recommend a member of his family or a friend to the post of director general, he will be keen on exercising self-censorship so no article or report negatively affects such aspirations. Therefore, the ceiling of freedom in Jordan differs between print, online or audio-visual media. This disparity is also clear inside the print media as limits of freedom are different between one daily newspaper and another or a daily and a weekly newspaper as if we do not live under one roof and are not governed by the same law."

Some journalists indicated that external interferences play a role in imposing illusionary or gray redlines
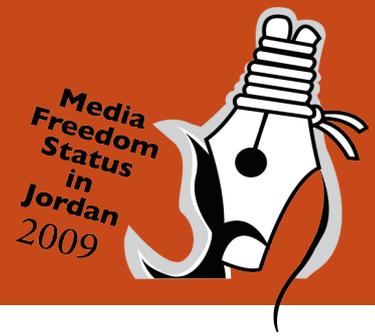
on Jordanian media. These interferences are;, social interference, tribal structures and interference by former and incumbent officials, in addition to the interference of advertising policies of some media outlets.

Oraib Al-Rintawi indicates that there are several types of censorship that are imposed on journalists such as monitoring by religious institutions, radical groups, tribal structures, former statesmen, centres of power all of which have the power to censor and create redlines.

The journalists interviewed as part of this study stress that the most dangerous part of censorship that journalists are subject to is the censorship by the society.

In this regard, the Director of the Jordan News Agency, Petra, Ramadan Rawashdeh says "the most serious type of censorship journalists might face is that of the society, as it is more dangerous than the political censorship. Social censorship is more dangerous than security monitoring as with politicians and security forces one can defend himself and debate your viewpoint, but the society does not allow you to clarify or defend your position as its decision and judgment is set out without consulting or debating, especially in issues like crimes, elections and municipalities."

Mohammad Al-Tal stressed that the "tightest and most serious source of censorship on journalists and editors is the society that has unclear and variable redlines and that is the most prominent problem that largely affects the work of journalists."

Osama Al-Sharif believes that the "real problem is not the clear redlines that are stipulated by laws and that are unanimously agreed upon, which we also reject, but the major problem is in the redlines that are imposed by the society or the concerned entities in the community or former officials that use the media to obtain certain demands or realize certain objectives that might be close to the redlines and sometimes cross them, thus ambiguity arises regarding knowing the redlines."

Caricaturist at Al-Ghad Newspaper Emad Hajjaj says: "The chief editor is the one who outlines the redlines, sometimes the government does that, but the real problem is that the society imposes the redlines on the caricaturist himself, and this is a problem."

Chief Editor of Al-Hadath weekly Nasser Qammash agrees.

He says: "I am from a community with cultural backgrounds based on these taboos, I do my best to avoid dealing with them in my daily practice."

Community censorship is not the only entity that imposed its illusionary redlines as their direct or indirect interference. According to Jihad Momani: "Every chief editor of a newspaper in Jordan should be linked to a source of censorship, some of it is obligatory and some others are voluntary and from my experience as a chief editor for more than five weeklies I discovered that I have to maintain some balance that satisfy all sources of censorship that closely monitor what is written."

Musa Barhouma refers to these interferences but he says they are limited and they are not extremely important saying: "Government interferences are very small and are sometimes invisible because they only target the expression of very specific views and only on a few occasions .Certain news is also deemed as incorrect which makes the newspaper abide by the decision of the government. These decisions are made from information available to the executive authority."

Shihan weekly chief editor Jihad Abu Beidar says:"The bitterest truth is that the number of taboos is increasing without any new laws.

Bassam Badarin says: "That he finds himself sometimes forced to commit to some of these illusionary redlines such as tribal and political parties whether pro-government or in the opposition. Thus, the most prominent among my enemies as a journalist are those with authority that are inclined to use this authority to suppress. He noted that the community

does not support press freedoms. The Jordanian society is an exceptional expert in the promotion and creation of redlines. In addition, the persecutions that are perpetrated by some activists in the community and the judgments they issue are similar to the inspection courts and are more cruel that the official courts."

The journalists said advertisers enjoy a power similar to that of the community and the state in imposing redlines on the press as Chief Editor of the Jordan Times daily Samir Barhoum says, "There are also redlines imposed on us by the private sector that also wants to impose its policies, desires, and plans on the media."

Oraib Al-Rintawi says: "There is a redline that has been increasing notably; that is the advertisers and their influence on newspapers prevents the criticism of some commodities or services that they offer whether they were banks, company, factory, insurance companies or others."

Osama Sharif calls for addressing what he described as a real problem that is, "the problem of advertisers and their influence and authority on the press", saying one must acknowledge that, "This power is something that cannot be denied. In many cases, those who spoiled the advertisers were the press institutions that are less influential, because these institutions were in need of money and therefore took out ads and played this game, which then encouraged the advertisers and advertising agencies to distribute ads in a manner that ensures positive coverage."

"It is those non-influential and marginalized institutions that should be blame for spoiling the advertisers as these entities violated the profession's ethics and charters that govern the relationship between the advertiser and the journalist. This allowed advertisers to overstep their boundaries and directly interfere in the news and in some of the policies of press institutions."

Emad Hajjaj agrees in this regard, saying: "We have to admit that advertisers have a power and they have also their own redlines that negatively affect caricaturists."

In light of such interferences, emerges a new issue that is *Al-Ihtewaat Al-naa'em* (translated as "soft coercion" or "soft containment") Samir Barhoum says soft containment is the policy of perks and gifts that official entities, business people, private institutions or personalities provide. . "These perks and gifts to journalists are part of the soft containment of journalists' policy and " soft containment " is not restricted to the government and officials now that the private sector has begun to provide such gifts.". soft containment or soft coercion is not restricted to only gifts, it can include services, soft threats, prevision of insintives and other factors that influence journalists dicissions.

Ramadan Rawashdeh calls for admitting that "soft containment" exists, saying: "This phenomenon exists and journalists suffer from this phenomenon through the personal invitations, trips and other types of containment."

Emad Hajjaj describes "soft containment as a real disease that affects journalists and unfortunately it really exists, and the consequences to freedom of the press are major. Soft censorship prompts the worst types of self-censorship and in many cases it drives journalists to distort facts or maybe even cancel them".

Religion and public ethics are among the most prominent redlines that should not be crossed, Samir Barhoum says: "Politics is the least of the problems we face in our daily work, but dealing with religion is something completely different, thus we at The Jordan Times are very careful in publishing anything regarding that issue."

Barhoum says: "There are taboos related to religion and there are taboos related to sex. As you see, these taboos are varying and are interpreted by others in many different ways but certainly you will be accused and condemned if you get close to them. In addition, the ambiguity surrounding these issues makes the journalist or the chief editor bewildered in dealing with them."
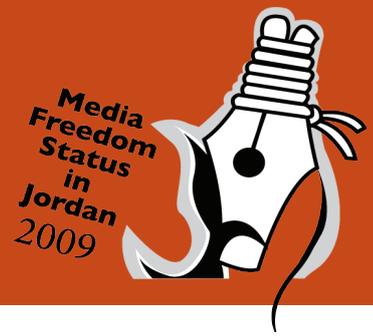
Caricaturist in Al-Arab Al-Yawm Nasser Al Jaafari says: "The social issues that are linked to religion are the most serious. Frankly, I could not get involved in these issues during my years of work as they have social taboos. In many cases, I refrain from addressing social issues in which religion and sex are main issues. In addition, I am also keen not to identify the character in my caricatures and associate it to certain geographic locations as that might provoke some people."

Al-Jaafari stresses that the most prominent taboo for caricaturists is any symbol that has religious connotations even if there is no intention to harm religion, thus the caricaturists are limited with certain elements that they cannot cross without taking risks with unknown consequences."

The study, in its different chapters, sought to create a glossary of global as well as national redlines. A new problem has been identified; understanding the terminology of taboos and then comparing the definitions of these Jordanian redlines to global media standards.

In its chapter on redlines in the global media scene, the study revealed that there are two perspectives. The first, focuses on the need for having a foundation of ethics and legal frameworks that govern press freedoms so breaking redlines does not turn into a tool that generates hatred among nations and cause religious or racial differences or "slandering of religions", while the second calls for protecting press freedom by law, without having any restrictions, legislative or governmental interferences that pressure the media to succumb to the government's will.

A third opinion promotes accepting restrictions on media freedom under the condition that these restrictions are professional and based on values of respect for the media. These restrictions can be manifested in a *soft tone and* applied through codes of ethics and codes of conduct for the media outlets which focus on the commitment to objectivity standards "accuracy, fair and balance" in addition to making a clear distinction between personal interests and media messages.

The study indicated that there is a deep gap between the first and the third world as the concept of redlines is common and prevalent, The majority of the media outlets in the third world are still owned directly of indirectly by the government. The private independent media sector, however, faces enormous pressures that largely limit its independence and freedoms through a series of taboos. Along with the consequences listed above violating there redlines can also prevent a media outlet from receiving public or private ads.

The study also sheds light on "self-censorship" that journalists impose on themselves fearing penalties or legal incrimination, especially in the Arab world, in addition to the societal censorship that imposes its illusionary redlines on the press.

The study indicates that there are several factors that impose themselves and their redlines on the press such as; political, economic, social and even moral factors, in addition to the interests of the owners of the media institutions and those of the advertisers as well as the variant overlapping laws and legislation which widen the map of red lines and negatively affect press freedoms.

 The chapter focusing on the ambiguity regarding the redlines in the Jordanian media, the study indicated that most of the redlines are vague and unclear except for some entrenched ones, especially those related to the King, the Royal family, the army, national security secrets, religion. There is no leniency when these redlines are crossed in a clear and stark manner.

Other taboos are governed by a group of factors and change with the political circumstances, public opinion and many other factors.

The reason for this ambiguity in drafting the legislation and laws that identify the redlines is the texts of these laws and legislation include very loose colloquial phrases that are hard to understand or translate into official legal documents. This leaves room for personal and selective interpretations. This means that these redlines can be extended to cover large areas of media freedom or narrowed to object to

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a more specific focus.

The study shows that the ambiguity in the legal texts is what gives the political, religious and cultural authorities, many weapons against the freedoms of the press. This also poses many legitimate and serious questions on where redlines start and end. This makes defining these redlines a matter that is subject to unwritten norms and understandings between the media and figures of authority or between the media and public opinion and many other social, economic or political discussions all of which limit the freedom of the press.

The study also refers to what is called the "gray area" that is somewhere between the redlines and the green lines: what is banned and allowed. In this gray area, external interferences or "security umbrellas" appear.

The study deeply highlighted the most prominent articles of legislation that govern press freedom in Jordan, presenting complete forms of these legal texts. The main objective is to provide a clearer picture of legislation that is related to what is allowed and not. It also seeks to highlight the redlines in these legislations and penalties for approaching these prohibited and criminalized terms.

Although the study did not follow up on all details of the map of what is banned and not in the Jordanian legislation, it gave a detailed presentation in this regard that serves the study's inquiries and hypothesis.

In its chapter on objective and actual specifications of redlines in the Jordanian legislation, the study put an almost complete list of taboos that cannot be crossed and other taboos that journalists are sometimes allowed to approach or cross. The study drafted a semi-final list of what is called "taboos according to laws and legislation."

This list or map of red lines is not final. In this chapter, the study posed many questions on the concept of these redlines and their objectivity and also refers to what is called as the forbidden triangle that is "religion, politics and sex". It also covers the illusionary redlines that are imposed by the society on

the media outlets that are not stipulated by legislation. It also includes the policy of media institutions; the authority of the chief editors and the power and the seriousness of self-censorship. Finally, the policy of advertisers and their interests that might make them resort to imposing their redlines on the media institution itself, in addition to what is called as "soft containment."

The study allocated a chapter for analyzing testimonies of many journalists and media practitioners as the study noted that these testimonies are the most important of its content thus it entailed listening to 14 journalists who included columnists, chief editors of dailies and weeklies, chief editors of new websites, caricaturists and correspondents of foreign newspapers.

The study includes a list of more than 30 journalists who's   testimonies were recorded. In some cases some of them apologized for not being able to respond for many reasons and some others were not able to set an appointment due to working conditions. The testimonies included in the study have great importance and highlight in a satisfactory manner the state of redlines and taboos and the personal experiences of the journalists survey in this regard to this subject in particular.

These testimonies are very important as they help to clarified through practice and experience where the redlines in the Jordanian media exists and when they appear and disappear and how journalists deal with them. It also highlights their brave answers to questions in the study on soft containment, self-censorship, the power of advertisers, external interferences and situations that have caused serious fear from law and the and societal censorship in their daily work.

The study extends appreciation for the courage of its fellow journalists who responded to its inquiries and talked bravely. It also extends its appreciation to the journalists who encouraged this study although their working conditions prevented them from giving their testimonials.
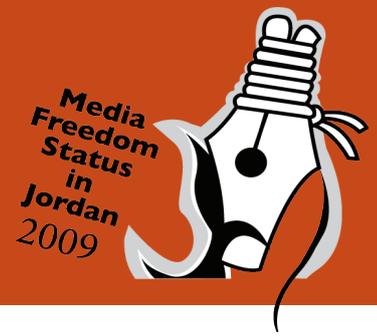
Creative Chaos: Social networking sites and their impact on the role and freedom of media

During the phase of finalizing the last touches by the researcher and CDFJ team, news agencies published a news article about a new study shows that Facebook exceeded the traditional and famous search engine Google in terms of traffic in the US.

This news article proved that this study, in spite of the difficulties it faces, came at an important time to highlight the role and position of social networks in modern life and its impact on different aspects of life, especially when it comes to management of knowledge, media and information. Following a continued monitoring process of incoming data that need lots of assessment and analysis, this study seemed like an attempt to highlight a swiftly moving scenario in a still frame, trying to shed light on an issue that deeply affects the lives of humans, their thoughts and traditional realities.

This study sought to document an important stage in the process of individual freedoms and expression in the Arab world and in Jordan in particular in light of the technical developments that made social networking sites a new means of expression. The study also looks into some of the new trends in media studies that highlight a new reality where websites assumed advanced positions in the lives of people, their belongings and cultures.

The study also sought to document groundbreaking moments that witnessed the emergence of social networking sites, especially Facebook and twitter and other supportive websites such as Youtube, and their role in developing media, especially citizen journalism and creating social and political action through the internet.

The difficulty of this study is related to two issues; the first is the broad issue of research as the observation process itself entails dealing with a large volume of data that needs thorough follow-up, especially those social networking sites allowed users to permanently update and delete their sites and positions regularly. In this regard, a second problem comes to the surface when studying the hypothetical environment represented in the strong dynamism, not only in internal action though

constant and limitless update, but in the realities that they impose.

The ongoing argument in Jordan between the government and its affiliated monitoring agencies such as the Press and Publications Department and those in charge of the websites, indicates that the hypothetical world imposed its conditions in reality. This made it difficult to tackle the issue through research as the results are usually obtuse in light of the action between two sides that operate in two different environments with different conditions.

This study offered a theoretical presentation of the social networking sites studying their interactive features and highlighting the mechanisms to use such sites to perform different media and political roles. The relationship between traditional and the electronic media was also addressed in depth. Another topic of discussion was the impact of social networking sites on the habits of Jordanians in relation to receiving and taking part in the field of media when it comes to different issues and developments in Jordan.

The study also include a presentation of a group of people who are active in social networking sites and their personal assessment of how such sites help in fulfilling their goals and aspirations to communicate with their social or cultural communities. These active social networkers also shared their vision for the internet as an arena for the open expression of their opinion.

This study resulted in a group of guidelines on the impact of social networking sites in the role and freedom of media. The most prominent among these results is:

-The role of social networking sites exceeded its communication and entertainment role as they became an effective tool in interaction and change.

- The success of these sites in becoming one of the main sources for traditional media as a continued source of feedback from followers.

- Electronic media in Jordan is still maturing and needs a framework to enrich its participant's experience and activate their role.

- Social networking sites can be relied on as sources for news in accordance with firm professional conditions.

- Progress of social freedoms is not necessarily linked to the development of media freedom, although it is a factor that helps it advance under a complete process.

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Electronic media opens the door for up in the air legal questions

As usual, the government Legislation Bureau allocates a large portion of its work for legislation related to media. The amended Press and Publications Law that was issued in April, 2010 is a result of the movement witnessed in the legislative field in 2009 by some MPs and some civil society organizations concerned with media freedom, especially CDFJ.

The 2009 report includes a legal study titled "Electronic media opens the door for up in the air legal questions" conducted by Lawyer Mohammad Quteishat, the manager of Media Legal Aid Unit (MELAD) at CDFJ. The study focuses on electronic media and the legal dilemmas that arise as electronic media develops to become a powerful force in the media scene.

Although there have been no developments in the legislative structure concerning media in 2009 in terms of laws, regulations or bylaws, there have been increasing calls for amending the Press and Publications Law, due to the nature and severity of some lawsuits filed against media practitioners, especially some cases that were referred to the State Security Court. One of these cases lead to detaining one journalist for six days. In this instance, remarks were made by His Majesty King Abdullah ordering that journalists not be detained for press and publications issues.

Other cases concerning audio-visual media organizations also faced the same destiny. Radio Al-Balad station was finally acquitted, by the Court of Appeals, for the charges of violating the Audio Visual Media Law after it was convicted by the First Degree Court.

The notable increase in complaints against electronic media and the legal situation of published news items also aggravated the situation. The owners of websites, plaintiffs and prosecutors play a game of hide and go seek. Prosecutors look for journalists who wrote online articles, owners of the websites, the publishers of the websites and the editor and chief of the website. Owners and plaintiffs resort to saying that the laws do not apply to news websites, while others say there is nothing that proves that they own the websites and others claim there is no legal or legitimate proof that they work with these websites. This situation is caused by the media legislation that has not changed since 2007. The most important remarks in this regard are:

- There are many chances of being incriminated due to the multiple criminal provisions that violate the plaintiffs' rights until his proof of guilt.
- The incrimination policy in Jordan depends on mysterious and confusing concepts that cannot be understood by ordinary individuals.
- The journalists must pay a large civil compensation for the plaintiff.
- Criminal laws still allow the imprisonment of journalists for press and publications crimes.
- Lack of agreed upon legal framework that regulates the work of electronic media.

In addition, media personnel in Jordan do not have the sufficient legal rights to ensure access to information, because the Access to Information Law No. 47 for the year 2007 has many loopholes and legislative weaknesses. The legislative loopholes are as follows:

-The Information Council creates unneeded bureaucracy, due to its role as mediator between those asking for the information and the concerned entity.
-Responses to requests for information are untimely.
- Public entities that have the information are the only ones who can classify information as secret without any monitoring and without acknowledging the right of petition in this classification.
- Secret laws are still being enforced and there is new secret information.
- The legislator made it a condition that those asking for information have a legitimate interest or legitimate reason and gave the authority to issue the evaluation of the concerned public entity to the Information Council.
-The legislator abolished information deliberately, and does not penalize the employees who destroy said information.

This study came up with several conclusions and recommendations; most important is that there is a need for the special media law. The Press & Publication Law should include all crimes committed by press with clear definition for each one. The punishments for these crimes should also be defined according to the basic rules of criminal responsibility. The law should ban once and for all detention for crimes committed by media. The study recommended also amending the third article of the State Security Court Law to prevent this court from prosecuting journalists. It also recommended that its time to cancel the Protecting State Secrets and Documents Law and amend the Access to Information Law.
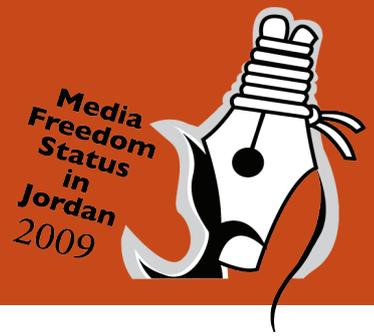
Success story: Media Legal Aid Unit (MELAD)

MELAD handled 28 lawsuits, and attended 698 cases with journalists in different courts in 2009

Media Legal Aid Unit (MELAD) intensified efforts in defending journalists in 2009, following the administrative developments on its work mechanisms, and increasing number of cooperating lawyers.

Since its establishment, MELAD handled about 102 cases, with 28 of the total in 2009.

In 2009, lawyers affiliated with MELAD attended 698 sessions in different courts with journalists. Courts issued five rulings in the cases pursued by MELAD; three of these cases for the benefit of defendant journalists; one ruling was not guilty, the second not responsible and the third dismiss the case or stop the prosecution. On the other hand, two verdicts were against journalists due to violating article 7.5 of the Press and Publications law. In the meantime 23 lawsuits are still before the court.

Majority of cases brought against journalists are based on violating articles 5 and 7 of the Press and Publications law, in addition to violating provisions of the Penal Code and related to libel and slander. Also among the charges against journalists that are being handled by MELAD is lack of respect for private life, violation of the sanctity of the court, inciting sectarian strife, violating the Telecommunications Law, and practicing journalism by those who are not journalist.

In 2009, MELAD conducted several activities, and organized an in-house training for its staff to develop their professional capacities, the workshop that took place on July 23rd until 25th 2009; it focused on building defense strategies in cases related to media. The training was part of a project funded by the Dutch Embassy in Amman.

It also continued its activities in developing legal awareness among journalists through organizing a training workshop in cooperation with UNESCO from 5th until 7th of July 2009 for 22 journalists.

In addition, MELAD has continued efforts in attracting new lawyers specialized in media cases. It organized a course from 8th until 10th of October 2009, with the participation of 21 lawyers.

MELAD was interesting in strengthening the relation with lawyers who were trained in the previous years on media cases and who voluntarily cooperate with MELAD's lawyers. CDFJ organized the first networking meeting for these lawyers, which took place on July 25, 2009. Lawyers were tasked to work on studies and research to support the legal library specialized with media lawsuits.

It is also scheduled to organize a reunion for all lawyers who participated with CDFJ to announce MELAD Lawyers Network in April, 2010.

In the same context, CDFJ continued networking and fostering relations with the International Media Lawyers Association (IMLA) and organized a joint workshop for judges, lawyers and journalist. The workshop entitled "Judicial approach in dealing with media lawsuits", took place in the Dead Sea on May 5, 2009.

MELAD in cooperation with IMLA nominated lawyer Ayman Abu Sharkh to participate in a two-week training course on media policies and legislations that took place in Oxford University in London.

MELAD and IMLA are discussing Memorandum of Understanding that aims to foster joint work and guarantee the effectiveness of MELAD in being an umbrella for lawyers specialized in media cases in the Arab world.

As part of "Media and Judiciary" program conducted in cooperation with the Judiciary Council of Jordan MELAD organized the first of a series workshops on "Judiciary specialized in dealing with media lawsuits". The training took place in December 2009, was supported by the Ministries of Planning and International Cooperation and Ministry of Political Development and the European Commission in Jordan.

In 2009, MELAD issued a non-periodical newsletter, printed and electronic, to develop legal awareness among journalists. This newsletter highlights issues concerning legal problems and urges lawyers to write in it.

MELAD, which was established in 2002, aims to achieve the following goals:
• Assigning lawyers to defend journalists who are subjected to detention or trail while performing their duties.
• Providing preventive legal consultations to journalists and media organizations without increasing restrictions or self-censorship.
• Enhancing the legal knowledge of journalists to help them exercise their constitutional rights in expressing their opinions freely and defend the society's right to knowledge without violating laws in any democratic society.
• Urging lawyers to be involved more in defending media freedom and develop their legal skills in this regard.
• Proposing draft laws to the parliament and government in an attempt to improve the legal frame work that governs the freedom of the media in Jordan and to ensure that these laws are in line with the international standards.
• Communicating with the judicial authority to ensure the promotion of media freedoms and to promote understanding of the international standards of the media freedom.