

Post-2018 Media Landscape in Ethiopia: A Review





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CENTER FOR ADVANCEMENT OF
RIGHTS AND DEMOCRACY

Post-2018 Media Landscape in Ethiopia: A Review

Center for the Advancement of Rights and Democracy (CARD)

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FOREWORD

The Center for the Advancement of Rights and Democracy (CARD) is a board-led, not-for-profit organization registered in Ethiopia under the Civil Societies Law 1113/2019 with registration number 4307. CARD acquired its legal personality on July 24, 2019.

With an aspiration to see democratic cultures and human rights values flourish in Ethiopia, CARD has been working with a mission of empowering citizens and groups of citizens to ensure their ability to promote and defend human rights and build democratic governance in Ethiopia.

For the realization of its mission and vision, CARD has been implementing multiple projects under five thematic areas including the Media Literacy Program. The Media Literacy Program aims at ensuring the development of the Ethiopian media capacity and protection of the space to bring about democratic culture.

Recently, the advancement of digital technologies, political and legal changes, and the expansion in the number of journalism schools in Ethiopia have generally contributed to the overall growth of media outlets and media practitioners. However, there is no comprehensive source of information that shows the impact of these changes and developments in the overall information ecosystem. Disinformation is still the major hindrance that the media landscape is grappling with. Furthermore, there are few developments in ethical and professional excellence among media practitioners. Therefore, CARD has been engaged in multiple activities to avail increased information about the media space, to raise the skills and capacities of journalists and online content creators, to bring journalists' associations together, and to collaborate with other media support groups to encourage a professionally vibrant media culture.

As part of this effort, CARD commissioned this review of the media landscape to help stakeholders have a vivid understanding of the size and capacity of media outlets in Ethiopia. The research ran a survey of registered media outlets, and journalist associations, and disaggregated the data by their preferred medium of outlets as well as the professional background (training) of media practitioners. In addition, desk research has been conducted to understand the impact of legal and practical changes witnessed in the media landscape of post-2018 Ethiopia

To this end, it is my firm belief that this survey will serve as an essential and powerful tool for stakeholders who are working in the media. It will also help one to have a better understanding of the capacity of media in Ethiopia to deliver diverse and alternative information to the diverse needs of Ethiopian society. Media support groups can accordingly design their project activities



to fill gaps and strengthen the promising developments identified by the survey/review. . The regulatory body, the Ethiopian Media Authority, can also use the findings to further refine the media policy and encourage where the media is falling behind.

Make Democracy the Only Rule of the Game!

Befekadu Hailu,

Executive Director, Center for the Advancement of Rights and Democracy



ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATION

EBA	Ethiopian Broadcasting Authority
EBC	Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation
AMC	Amhara Media Corporation
CPJ	Committee to Protect Journalists
FDRE	The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
EMA	The Ethiopian Media Authority
EMC	The Ethiopia Media Council
EMMPA	The Ethiopia Mass Media Professional Association
EPA	The Ethiopian Press Agency
EPRDF	The Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front
ESAT	Ethiopian Satellite Radio and Television
OBN	Oromia Broadcast Network
OMN	Oromia Media Network
SNNP	Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples
SPSS	Scientific Package for Social Science
TPLF	The Tigray People's Liberation Front



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This review highlights the current state of the media landscape, media practitioners as well as media-related proclamations and practices in Ethiopia. The review, therefore, aimed at providing data for key media stakeholders to initiate informed support and plan evidence-based interventions for the country's media sector. In doing so, through the qualitative data collection technique, the review collected data from different media houses, journalists, and journalism associations. The paper also reviewed different literature pertinent to policies, previous reports, and media proclamations. The collected data are presented both qualitatively and quantitatively.

The assessment recognizes that the newly introduced Ethiopian media law and media policy could play a pivotal role in promoting liberal and professional media in the country. The media proclamation 1238/2021 is intended to ensure media independence, and media self-regulation, enhance professionalism, encourage media ownership, and improve other factors that possibly could contribute to the overall development of the media sector in Ethiopia. Repealing the 2009 Anti-Terrorism Proclamation, which had posed a great danger to the freedom of expression, and the introduction of the new proclamation called Prevention and Suppression of Terrorism Crimes Proclamation in March 2020 can be considered a step ahead. The enactment of the controversial Proclamation No. 1185/2020 that governs Hate Speech and Disinformation Prevention, and Suppression Proclamation in 2020 is also another initiative taken by the government to mitigate the spread of hate speech and fake news in the country. Since the law has some loopholes in its scope and contextualization of the concept of hate speech, a critical review of Proclamation No. 1185/2020 has proved that it has created inconvenience on the freedom of the media, the rights of journalists, and freedom of expression by making it prone to manipulation by authorities.

On the other hand, the new civil society organizations' proclamation has also contributed to the growth in the number of journalists' associations as well as media support groups. This study mapped 22 journalism professional associations and educators who are currently engaged in activities of professional development and excellence in the media sector in the country. However, most of the associations are not well equipped with the necessary knowledge and skill and are not strong enough to provide suited support to their members as well as the industry. In addition, most associations exhibit structural, professional, and/or technical challenges. For instance, among the 22 associations, only 15 have a board of directors and a general assembly. Only six associations have employed experts to carry out daily project



activities while seven associations do not have offices. These associations are not also powerful enough to defend journalists' rights, support, and advocate for their causes, and advance the sector. Only seven associations are interested in engaging themselves in advocating the rights of journalists. Except for a couple of the associations, none of the associations tabled their concern about the unlawful appointment of the board of directors to the Ethiopian Media Authority. Hence, if journalism associations, wishes to realize their presumed mission such as serving as a defender and advocate of the rights of journalists attracting a large number of members, maintaining integrity, and sustaining their finances there should be continuous activity and engagement between the stakeholders and practitioners to enhance the capacity of the association.

The safety of journalists remains to be a huge concern for the practice of the profession. Close to 60 journalists were arbitrarily detained between 2020 and 2022. Two journalists were also killed during this period. Such arrests, and direct and indirect intimidations that targeted the media, have suppressed freedom of expression in the country. Subsequently, the country's media industry received much acclaim during the first few months of the reform has lost its spark of promise and Ethiopia's rank in the freedom of expression index has significantly fallen to 114th in 2022 from 99th in 2020.

Nonetheless, there is an increase in the number of media outlets in Ethiopia. The total number of public and commercial electronic media stood at 117 in 2022. Among these, 67 are public while 50 are commercial radio stations and television channels. Out of the total 117 media outlets, 39 of them are television channels, and the remaining 78 are radio stations. Regarding the number of print media outlets, there are 18 commercial/ privately owned, and 11 state-owned newspapers and magazines in circulation. On the other hand, registered community broadcasters reached 56, of which five are TV broadcasters. However, only 33 radio and 2 TV community broadcasters are operational. Furthermore, there are 34 registered digital media outlets in Ethiopia.

While the type of media is becoming diverse, language diversity has also shown improvements. Currently, both public and commercial media outlets disseminate their content in 67 languages. Community broadcasters also use 32 languages. However, the print media are circulated in four languages owing to their limited circulation. Four foreign languages are also used in the Ethiopian media.

The media sector in Ethiopia creates jobs for about 8,000 media practitioners. . Out of these, 2400 (+/-) are content producers and editorial decision-makers such as journalists, editors, and media managers. Women occupy a quarter of this although the number of women in content decision-making is fewer.



In terms of educational background and professional training, 47% of sampled journalists in this study indicated that they are graduates of journalism and communications programs. In addition, most of the respondents to this study indicated that they received various journalism training and workshops. However, they also seek further on-the-job training in the areas such as investigative journalism, fact-checking, peace and conflict-sensitive reporting, and other technical aspects. Furthermore, they also want to attend training workshops on the safety and security of journalists to help them understand safety mechanisms. Only one-third of the respondents are aware of safety mechanisms for journalists.

In a nutshell, different legal, policy, and practical aspects of journalism and freedom of expression are improving with an impact on the number of media outlets as well as professional associations and media support groups. Collaboration and solidarity of associations and media developers as well as government commitment are indispensable to not only making the media independent and professional but also to creating a safer and conducive environment for journalists.



The Post 2018 Media Landscape in Ethiopia

1. INTRODUCTION

This review aims at highlighting the current media landscape, in line with its changes, opportunities, and the challenges that accompanied the new political dynamics in Ethiopia. It, therefore, focuses on the fundamental changes, specifically, in media law, media landscape, professional training of journalists, and journalism professional associations operating in the country. The appointment of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed as a Prime Minister in 2018 resulted in the improvement of some aspects of the media landscape as well as other areas of democratization. The release of detained journalists, the unblocking of hundreds of inaccessible news websites, the welcoming of diaspora-based satellite TV channels, and the revision of laws that are pertinent to the media have been amongst the promising start of the new political development. Despite these promising improvements, no critical study had been carried out on the actual on-ground impacts of these changes on the practice, professionalism, and rights of journalists. Hence, this study maps out the current media laws, and their implementation, the state of the media and professionalism, journalists' associations, and other pertinent issues. The study is, therefore, believed to contribute its fair share to the knowledge production about the status of the media landscape in Ethiopia and aimed at triggering more researchers such as academicians to venture into studying the gaps identified in this report. Various stakeholders such as media practitioners, media developers, policymakers, and donors could also benefit from the study as they can learn more about the gaps that require interventions to initiate project ideas based on accurate data and tailored support to the media sector in the country.

2. STUDY APPROACH

A mixed approach was employed to gather and analyze data to map out the current media laws, and journalism associations, as well as to understand the level of professionalism in the sector, and the overall media landscape in Ethiopia. A qualitative approach is used to analyze the recently endorsed media laws, research papers, and study reports, while a quantitative approach is applied to collect quantitative data from media organizations, associations, and journalists through systematically designed questionnaires. The research used two techniques to gather data. The first was a census used to collect general data from all licensed and registered media and journalism associations in Ethiopia. The second was a systematic sampling technique to collect



relevant data from journalists working in purposively selected media houses. Questionnaires were circulated to 365 journalists from media houses (radio, television, print, and digital media). By using purposive sampling techniques, journalists were selected from 32 media outlets to fill in questionnaires. The selection of the media institutions and the total number of journalists who responded to the questionnaires was based on criteria such as the number of journalists in respective media houses, issues they cover, geography/location, as well as the types of media (electronic, print, online). Data collected by the questionnaires were processed using SPSS 23 and presented in graphs and brief analyses.

3. A REVIEW OF MEDIA LAWS

This section discusses major legal reform interventions relating to the media. The research will zoom in on revised, amended, drafted, and enacted media laws and policies in the period of Post 2018.

3.1. Legal reforms in the media sector

Freedom of speech and access to information is enshrined in and guaranteed by the Ethiopian Constitution. Article 29 (2) of the FDRE Constitution stipulates, "Everyone has the right to freedom of expression without any interference. This right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any media of his choice." By the same token, Proclamation No 590/2008 on Freedom of the Mass Media and Access to Information guarantees the freedom to access information to all. Article 12, Sub-article 1 of the Proclamation states, "All persons have the right to seek, obtain and communicate any information held by public bodies, except as expressly provided for by this Proclamation." The House of Peoples' Representatives has also recently endorsed the Media Proclamation No 1238/2021, which replaced some parts of Proclamation No 590/2008, to fully enforce the right to freedom of expression and freedom of the media which is guaranteed under the Ethiopian Constitution as well as other international human rights instruments that the country is a signatory to.

Such legal and policy frameworks pave the way to consolidate the essence of a free press for the process of building a democratic system. However, the introduction of draconian legislation such as the anti-terrorism law of 2009, and the inclusion of certain ill-defined and restrictive articles within the earlier Freedom of the Mass Media and Access to Information Proclamation as well as the recently enacted Hate Speech and Disinformation Prevention and Suppression Proclamation have repercussions on the rights to freedom of expression and compromise the promised Constitutionally guaranteed freedom. The 2009



anti-terrorism Proclamation was one of the laws which not only caused the detention and exile of critical journalists and politicians for over a decade² but it also created a feeling of fear among the society to express their views due to the fear of the subsequent nemesis³ The Proclamation highly stifled political communication among politicians, citizens, and the media in general, and transferred the deteriorating media landscape “out of the frying pan into the fire”⁴ The Proclamation was criticized to a great degree by the local and international community for its ill-intention and abuse of journalists. Cognizant of the role of media in multifaceted national endeavors, in particular democratization, the current administration made amendments to these legislations. Apart from the amendments, some new laws have also been endorsed over the last four years as discussed below.

Revision/ amendment of the anti-terrorism law

For years, the suppressive nature of the Anti-Terrorism Proclamation No. 652/2009 and its impacts on the media industry have been at the center of media study in the country. This Proclamation, along with the heavy hand of the security apparatus on the press, successfully suppressed and led to the silencing of the Ethiopian media⁵. To this end, defenders and advocates of journalist rights were calling for the revision/amendment of this Proclamation for the assurance of freedom of the press and expression in the country. One of the reasons for the calls to the repealing and replacement was to put a limit on the arbitrary interpretations of the articles of the Proclamation by the executive body of the government to apply the law for their interest⁶. The strict execution of the vaguely defined terms in the proclamation had become the source of perceived and practical threats to the private press⁷.

Recognizing the chilling effect this Proclamation has, the current administration amended/revised the 2009 Proclamation on anti-terrorism with Proclamation No. 1176/2020 issued to provide for the Prevention and Suppression of Terrorism Crimes. In its preamble, this Proclamation clearly states that the revision/ amendment of the previous Proclamation is demanded due to: “substantive and enforcement loopholes which produced a negative effect on the rights and freedoms of citizens⁸.” It also iterates that this new Proclamation will adequately protect the rights and freedoms of individuals and ensure the accountability of law enforcement bodies.

²Mulatu A. Moges (2017) - Why Silence? Internal Conflicts Reporting in Ethiopian media; published at University of Oslo, Norway.

³Oakland Institute and EDLC (2015, p. 5)- Oakland Institute; EDLC. (2015). Ethiopia’s Anti-Terrorism Law: A Tool to Stifle Dissent. USA: The Oakland Institute and Environmental Defender Law Center.

⁴Dessalew, G. (2014). Political Communication vis-a-vis Anti-terrorism Laws: The case of Ethiopia. AA: AAU: MA Thesis.

⁵Mulatu A. Moges (2017).

⁶ibid

⁷Binyam, T. (2013). The Impact of Ethiopia’s Anti-Terrorism Proclamation on Freedom of the Press: The Case of the Ethiopian Private Press. AA: AAU: MA Thesis

⁸Proclamation No. 1176/2020- Prevention and Suppression of Terrorism Crimes Proclamation: Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia. Addis Ababa: Berehanena Selam Printing Press.



The new Proclamation removes the text “encouraging terrorism”, which permitted the governing body to arrest scores of journalists and politicians over the years, and replaced it with “incitement”, a more specific term.

Despite the improvements in the new Proclamation, it is subject to abuse as the government still uses the new law to target dissenting voices. The law has been used to detain and pressurize journalists in the country. The other concern is the criminalization of the vaguely introduced “intimidation to commit a terrorist act.” As per this provision, strong critiques towards the government could be taken as such, and terrorism charges could be pressed against them according to this article. This in turn leads to the suppression of critical and dissenting voices against the government or ruling party. This act is punishable by imprisonment of one to seven years.

REVISION OF MEDIA LAWS

Other changes include the repealing of the 2007 Broadcasting Service Proclamation and parts of the 2008 Freedom of the Mass Media and Access to Information Proclamation. This proclamation renamed the Ethiopian Broadcasting Authority (EBA) to the Ethiopian Media Authority (EMA). The new media law laid the foundation for the independence of the media regulatory body, introduced media self-regulatory mechanisms, allowed foreign shareholders in local media, and improved registration and licensing requirements and procedures. The new media law, apart from recognizing news websites, digital media outlets, and wire service content creators, allowed them to register and acquire media licenses to ensure operational responsibility. Furthermore, it introduced the concept of special public service broadcasting, which is a radio or television broadcast service established by civil society organizations according to the Civil Society Organizations Proclamation. Such broadcasters have a mandate of distributing content of public interest. For the first time in the media history of the country, this new law also allows foreign investors to own a minority share in an Ethiopian media company. Moreover, religious organizations are also allowed to acquire broadcasting service licenses. The new media Proclamation is said to have struck a balance between the freedom and autonomy of the media on the one hand and their obligations and responsibilities on the other hand. Another important aspect of the law is the appointment of a board of directors to EMA. The proclamation provides that the board of directors should consist of nine members drawn from diverse sectors such as Civil Society Organizations, media, and other institutions that have relevance and experience to the sector. Though it is not yet practiced, the law stipulates that no board member shall be a member of any political party.

Nonetheless, the Proclamation lacks to provide for access to information



that was previously part of Proclamation No 590/2008. Although the working group on media had drafted the access to information law reform formed under the erstwhile Federal Attorney General (now the Ministry of Justice), the Council of Ministers has not yet adopted it for further action. The right to access information is still governed by the 2008 Proclamation, with all its pitfalls in addressing issues related to accessing and making available public information to citizens. Hence, the promising legal reform initiated by the administration of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed falls short of ensuring access to information.

3.2. Endorsement of New Legislation

3.2.1. Hate Speech and Disinformation Prevention and Suppression Proclamation

The Hate Speech and Disinformation Prevention and Suppression Proclamation No. 1185 /2020 is one of the laws endorsed in post-2018 Ethiopia. The objectives of the Proclamation, as stipulated under Article 3, are: ensuring that while exercising their freedom of expression, individuals will not engage in a speech that incites violence, which is likely to cause public disorder, or promotes hatred and discrimination against a person or an identifiable group or community based on ethnicity, religion, race, gender or disability; promoting tolerance, civil discourse and dialogue, mutual respect and understanding and strengthening democratic governance; and controlling and suppressing the dissemination and proliferation of hate speech, disinformation and other related false and misleading information⁹.

Though these objectives are designed to introduce a constructive engagement, there are some concerns that the Proclamation could undermine the rights to freedom of speech guaranteed by the Ethiopian constitution. For instance, the Proclamation contains various provisions that may undermine online freedom of expression and access to information¹⁰. The Proclamation fails to determine the scope of hate speech as it is not clear where legitimate free speech stops and hate speech starts. The overly broad definition of the term renders it subject to discretionary interpretation by law enforcement bodies. This in turn leads to the abuse of citizens' rights of freedom of expression and the right to information¹¹.

⁹ Proc. No.1185/2020- Hate Speech & Disinformation Prevention and Suppression Proclamation, Article 3.

¹⁰ CIPESA. (2020, July). Analysis of Ethiopia's Hate Speech and Disinformation Prevention and Suppression Proclamation No.11 85 /2020. Retrieved from https://cipesa.org/?wpfb_dl=398

¹¹ Ibid



The other concern raised is about the term ‘dissemination’. Since the definitions of hate speech and disinformation are vaguely presented with the potential of affecting the rights to freedom of expression, prohibitions of hate speech and disinformation in Articles 4 and 5 respectively may aggravate problems related to free speech. In these two articles of the proclamation, a person may simply be considered to have disseminated either hate speech or misinformation despite intending to disseminate hate speech or disinformation¹². The other concern is related to how the Proclamation intends to combat the dissemination of hate speech via social media. Since the proclamation lacks clarity in defining hate speech, there is a concern that it may not be well understood and implemented by the executive. In the proclamation, hate speech¹³, which is problematic to define, is not only narrowly defined but also subject to interpretation and could result in the infringement of freedom of speech.

Another concern is related to the entity responsible for implementing the law. The legislation does not set out specific requirements for law enforcement bodies to decide whether or not statements are perceived to be criminal offenses; i.e., the law enforcement bodies may have the full discretion of determining what fits into the definition of hate speech and could result in inconsistency in an effort to implement the law¹⁴. This suggests that the Proclamation can be interpreted differently by different executive bodies and could open another loophole.

In addition, the law also lacks a substantive definition of hate speech based on the context of the country’s politics, culture, history, and other critical issues. Since hate speech is a contested term, it needs to be defined based on the social, cultural, political, and historical contexts that affect the way the term is understood. Moreover, with an interest in providing the rights to freedom of expression and critical views, the law gives wider freedom to academic studies, arts, scientific inquiries, or religious preaching. These venues, however, have been seen as potential sources of hateful and inflammatory messages.

The other concern is the extent of the penalty for people suspected of committing such a crime detailed in the Proclamation. The penalty for crimes committed by an individual for posting a story on social media is seemingly not proportional. For instance, as indicated in Article 7 of this Proclamation, “Any person who commits acts proscribed under Article 4 shall be punished with simple imprisonment not exceeding two years or a fine not exceeding 100,000 Birr¹⁵.”

¹²ibid

¹³ The proclamation defines hate speech as a speech that deliberately promotes hatred, discrimination or attack against a person or a discernible group of identity, based on ethnicity, religion, race, gender or disability.

¹⁴ Rahwa, W. (2020). Adequacy of the Prevailing Regulatory Framework Relating to Hate Speech on social media in Ethiopia.

Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University

¹⁵ Proclamation No. 1185/2020, Article 4, any person disseminating hate speech by means of broadcasting, print or social media using text, image, audio or video is prohibited.



In addition, the law has exempted social media users with less than 5,000 followers from being liable for their posts. However, someone with more than 5,000 followers may share a post originally written by someone with fewer than 5,000 followers and its consequence for causing disorder within the society is neglected by the law. At the same time, the source of the information who has fewer followers would not be held accountable. This is one of the weakest features of the law, that is, lack of clarity and strength to prevent the spread of hate speech and fake news in the country.

In short, despite its positive goals of curtailing the spread of hate speech and misinformation, Proclamation 1185/2020's exhibits flaws in definitions, contextualization, and disproportionate culpability of supposed offenders. It also affects the freedom of expression.

3.2.2. Media Policy

The Ethiopian Media Policy was approved by the Council of Ministers in 2020 to ensure that the mass media exercise their constitutional rights and responsibilities, which would result in boosting their credibility, enhancing collaborative work, prioritizing public interest, and strengthening national and cultural values. The policy also set goals such as ensuring that the media are safeguarded from any form of political and economic interference, ensuring the diversity and inclusiveness of the mass media vis-à-vis the public's right to access to information and enabling the media to render accurate, reliable, balanced, and updated information to the audience in an ethical way. This would then boost the role of the media in strengthening social cohesion and building national image.

The policy document contains principles such as ensuring plurality, accessibility of the media, enhancing the professionalism of journalists, and adhering to laws. The media policy also aims at mitigating challenges related to ensuring the rights to freedom of expression, and access to information, enhancing government support, as well as strengthening journalists' associations and their integrity. The policy also allows media ownership to religious groups. Foreigners are also permitted to own a media house with minor control/share. This is intended to attract foreign investors to render financial and technical support to the Ethiopian media landscape with minimal control.

The media policy is regarded as a valuable instrument to strengthen the Ethiopian media. The policy is strong in terms of featuring professionalization, institutionalizing self-regulation, and defining the roles of the state in media capacity building. However, it still exhibits ambiguity in certain aspects. For instance, it fails to address financial constraints, which are currently the primary challenges of the sector in ensuring professionalism and institutionalized self-regulation in the country.



The other concern related to the Ethiopian media policy is its restriction on political parties from owning media either directly or indirectly. Though, the policy clearly states that political parties are not entitled to own media outlets the reality on the ground proves to the contrary and where the ruling Prosperity Party itself controls public media¹⁶ as well as other privately owned media houses such as Fana Broadcasting Corporation and Walta Media and Communications Corporate which are being used by the party as state propaganda machines. Other political parties do not have direct ownership of any media though there are claims that certain political parties are dominantly using some media. Such practical deficits impair the political pluralism in the media as the state has the upper hand in media ownership.

3.2.3. Advertising Proclamation and Prohibition of Alcohol Advertisement

Article 26, Sub-Article 1 of the Advertising Proclamation No.759/2012, states that promotion of “liquor with more than 12% alcoholic content may not be disseminated directly or indirectly through any means of dissemination other than outdoor advertisements and newspapers and magazines which are not published on a daily and weekly basis”. However, this has been significantly changed in the recently endorsed Proclamation to Provide for Food and Medicine Administration No.1112/2019, which prohibits the advertisement of any beverage with an alcoholic content of 0.5% and more.

The Alcohol Advertising and Labelling Control Directive No. 41/ 2019, a directive issued to provide for alcohol advertisement, stipulates under 5 (1) that: “Advertising alcohol in broadcast, billboard as well as by associating it with any lottery system and reward is prohibited.”

3.3 Practical Reforms

3.3.1 Freedom of the Media

The first few months of the post-2018 political transition is marked as an enlightenment era for the media industry where a new space for freedom of expression had been demonstrated by the release of detained journalists and bloggers, the invitation of media outlets and journalists who were operating in exile, and the decision to restore access to more than 260 news

¹⁶ The new media law defines public service broadcasting as a radio or television transmission established at National or Regional State level, accountable to the House of Peoples Representatives; wholly or substantially financed by government budget with a mandate to provide contents that guarantee public interest while remaining neutral and independent of government. In practical terms, they are state run media, which are mostly dominating ruling party propagandas.



websites and blogs that had been blocked for years. Media outlets that had been disseminating news and programs in exile, such as the Oromia Media Network (OMN) and the Ethiopia Satellite Radio and Television (ESAT), were allowed to come to Ethiopia and operate in the country. For the first time in fourteen years, Ethiopia was internationally commended in 2018 for having no journalists in prison according to CPJ's prison index/census¹⁷. As a result, Ethiopia was nominated to host the 2019 World Press Freedom Day in Addis Ababa.

The promising start and the window of hope for free media in Ethiopia were short-lived as the freedom of the media has deteriorated since then. The great hopes raised by the newly recovered freedoms, including freedoms of the media, seem to be hanging by a thread. It is because the government is still reluctant to implement provisions meant to ensure freedom of expression and freedom of the media enshrined in the constitution and guaranteed in the laws adopted to govern the sector. Apart from writing the law on paper, the government has been weak in putting the media law into practice. Although the media law allows any independent media to express their opinions or write criticism on various issues, they do not seem free to express their ideas and critical views against the government. The government has continued to be intolerant of critical and dissent views, from the media. Albeit the superficial promises, journalists working both in the digital and mainstream media during 2020, 2021, and 2022 were the target of continued harassment and detention by the security apparatus¹⁸. According to the CPJ, at least 63 journalists and media workers have been arrested between November 2020 and August 2022 in the country, mainly in Addis Ababa, Oromia, Amhara, Afar, and Somali regions. Among them, eight were in prison until August 2022¹⁹. Two media workers were killed in 2021²⁰. The Ethiopian Human Rights Commission also confirmed that 39 journalists working in digital and mainstream media were detained and held incommunicado for days and months from July 2021- June 2022. There is also random custody with only some cases brought before the court²¹. Licenses of a couple of foreign correspondents were revoked and the journalists were expelled from the country²². Because of these, Ethiopia ranked 114th of 180 ranked countries in the global freedom index in 2022²³,

¹⁷ <https://qz.com/africa/1494561/ethiopia-has-no-jailed-journalists-in-2018-the-first-since-2004/>

¹⁸ CPJ Report <https://cpj.org/africa/ethiopia/>, accessed on July 20, 2022 and Reports without Borders

¹⁹ <https://cpj.org/2022/08/journalists-face-growing-hostility-as-ethiopias-civil-war-persists/> accessed Oct 12, 2022.

²⁰ <https://cpj.org/2022/08/journalists-face-growing-hostility-as-ethiopias-civil-war-persists/> accessed Oct 12, 2022

²¹ Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC) (2022). Annual Report: Executive Summary. Addis Ababa.

²² <https://rsf.org/en/rsf-condemns-nyt-reporter-s-unprecedented-expulsion-ethiopia>

²³ RSF – Ethiopian <https://rsf.org/en/country/ethiopia>, accessed on August 8, 2022



down 13 places from the previous year. In the preceding years, Ethiopia had shown significant changes in the global freedom index. From the 150th position on the list in 2018, its rank improved by 40 places to 110 in 2019. This rank also improved during consecutive years. Its rank was 99 and 101 in 2020 and 2021 respectively²⁴. In general, the freedom of the media in Ethiopia is still in limbo. Making it paradoxical, the state of media freedom deteriorated while restrictive media laws were revised. Constructive legal changes have been made to guarantee access to information and ensure the right to freedom of speech, but the Ethiopian government still needs to put the provisions to test. Further, it must endorse the drafted access to information law.

3.3.2. Assignments, and accountability of boards and media leaders

According to newly introduced legal frameworks a publicly accepted board of directors needs to be appointed to govern the Ethiopian Media Authority as well as public media houses, for instance, based on the newly endorsed media law, the House of Peoples' Representatives appointed nine board members for the Ethiopia Media Authority (EMA). Appointees are composed of three government officials, three university professors from Addis Ababa University, and three from religious groups. The board members are accountable to the House of Peoples' Representative.

The appointment of members of the board of directors from diverse interest groups and their accountability to the parliament can be considered an achievement for the Ethiopian media sector. Similarly, the appointment and accountability of the public media leaders (namely, the Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation (EBC), the Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA), and the Ethiopian News Agency (ENA)) have also shown certain changes in the last four years. Their appointments, which were previously done by the prime minister (the executive body), have now shifted to the House of Peoples' Representatives (the legislative body). The prime minister nominates the Chief Executive Officers to EBC, EPA, and ENA, while the House of Peoples' Representatives approves their nominations in addition to appointing a board of directors to these entities. These media executives and the board of directors are directly accountable to the House of Peoples' Representatives.

²⁴ <https://rsf.org/en/index?year=2020>, accessed October 12, 2022



Similar approaches and procedures have been applied in regions regarding the nomination and appointment of regional public media leaders and their accountability. This is a new trend in Ethiopia. However, there are still concerns related to the appointment of the board of directors to the EMA and the executives of public media. For instance, Proclamation No 1238/2021 under Article 9, stipulates that the board shall have nine members, of which two shall be drawn from civil society organizations, two from the media and two from other institutions that have relevance to the media sector. However, the newly established board of members of EMA did not include members from the media and Civil Society Organizations. To the contrary, members of the ruling party have been included on the board of EMA²⁵. The process of the appointment of the board members was not transparent and open to public comments. Such serious violations of the Proclamation suggest that the government still lacks the commitment to develop an independent media regulatory body in the country. These could have serious repercussions in the development of the media sector and ensuring of freedom of the media.

3.3.3. Media Self- regulation

Establishing media self-regulation in Ethiopia has been at the center of discussions concerning media development in Ethiopia. For instance, the process of establishing and registering the Ethiopian Media Council has taken four years until it gained its legal personality in 2019. The establishment of the EMC has brought some opportunities to practice media self-regulation. The EMC, which currently has 61 members, provides capacity-building training to encourage and develop professional ethics and standards in the country. It has also formed a body that will deal with complaints against journalists and media houses before it gets to the regular law enforcement body. Apart from capacity-building training for journalists to promote professionalism, which is up to the standard and within the legal boundaries, the Council also aims to promote media freedom by challenging improper intervention from the government. In 2021, it established an ombudsman and arbitration committee consisting of 18 members that settle conflicts and complaints concerning media houses and/or journalists brought up by all concerned bodies across the nation. The ombudsman and arbitration committee will investigate complaints and attempt to settle the cases according to the established set of standards. People with complaints might not need to head to courts to require restitution

²⁵ Proclamation No.1238/2021 under Article 11 Sub-Article 6, Members or employees of any political party cannot serve as board members of the Authority, as laid down in the proclamation.



for any alleged damages caused by journalists and/or media houses. This is cost-effective for plaintiffs and has lesser pressure on the professionals as they will be tried by people who would easily understand the nitty-gritty of the profession than the agents of the law enforcement body

Concerning safeguarding the safety and security of journalists, around 17 journalism associations have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to work together and advocate for the safety and security of journalists²⁶. The signatories to this MoU have underscored their responsibility in facilitating the establishment of a process for developing, implementing, and evaluating strategies to improve situations that threaten the safety of journalists that ultimately have repercussions on the quality of information they provide and the level of professionalism.

Another worth mentioning phenomenon during this period is the establishment of the Association for Ethiopian Broadcasters (AEB), which is legally registered as a non-profit association, by eight privately, owned broadcast media institutions. Its members now reach 13. The AEB was established in 2018 to promote and protect the favorable economic and regulatory interests of the broadcasting media in Ethiopia. The AEB says it aims at delivering high-quality content and services that local communities expect and deserve and advancing the interests of its members in government policies to promote fertile ground for democracy, diversity, and freedom of expression²⁷.

4. Mapping the Ethiopian Media

Article 16 Sub-Article 1 of Broadcasting Service Proclamation No. 533/2007, stipulates “Categories of broadcasting services shall be public, commercial and community broadcasting services”. Similarly, Article 31, Sub-Article 1 of the revised media Proclamation provides that “The categories of broadcasting service license shall be the following: a) public service broadcasting license, b) special public service broadcasting license, c) commercial broadcasting service license and d) community broadcasting service license. The new Proclamation added special public service broadcasting which is defined as “a radio or television broadcast service established by a civil society organization formed based on the Civil Society Organizations Proclamation with a mandate to provide content that guarantees public interest²⁸.” In this section, the survey seeks to show the overall development of the media, the number of staff members, the diversity of languages, and other relevant points to map out the media, associations, and the nature of journalism in the country.

²⁶ <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=411608630864712>, accessed October 25, 2022

²⁷ <https://aebethiopia.com/#4d692f77-e135-4611-bd5b-7a74a7e3a55d>, accessed on July 10, 2022

²⁸ So far, there is no media registered in this title.



4.1. Electronic Media in Ethiopia (Radio and Television)

The data collected for this study showed that 117 electronic media are operational in Ethiopia. As demonstrated in figure 1 below, radio stations take the largest share of the electronic media segment followed by television channels. In terms of ownership, 67 electronic media are funded by the state. The rest 50 are owned by commercial enterprises.

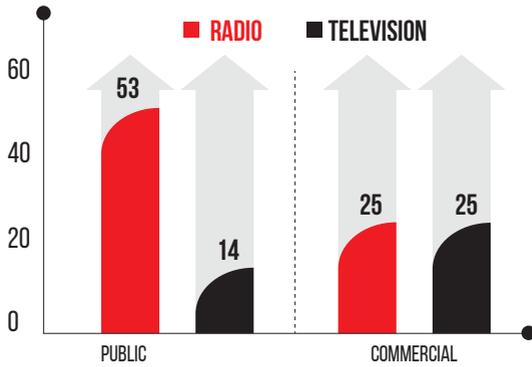


Figure 1- Broadcast stations: commercial and public

4.1.1. Spatial Distribution of the Media

While the number of commercial media is currently increasing, most of them are based in Addis Ababa. As presented in figure 2, below, the transmission of 14 of the 25 commercial broadcasters is limited to the capital. Eleven commercial outlets, which are owned by Fana Broadcasting Corporate (FBC), operate in the regions. No other than FBC-owned outlets operate in the regions. Commercial televisions are all based in Addis Ababa, but they use satellites to reach their audience in other parts of the country.

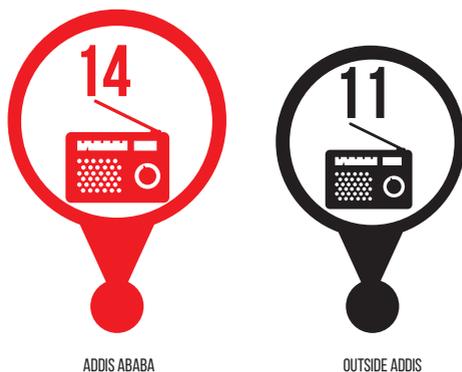


Figure 2- Commercial radio distribution in Ethiopia in 2022

As can be seen in figure 3, below, 45 of the public radio channels operate outside Addis Ababa.

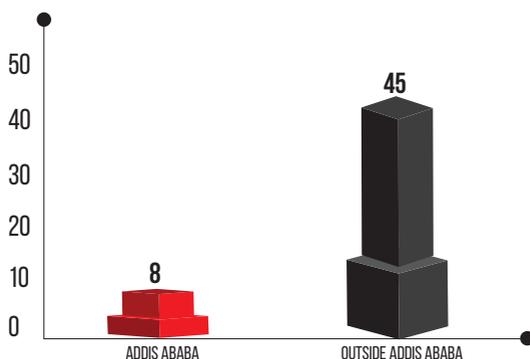


Figure 3- Concentration of public radio broadcasters

The first commercial radio broadcasting license was given in 2007 to two private limited companies. Fifteen years later, 25 commercial radio stations are running in the country. This number is encouraging considering the economic difficulties to set up the facilities and the lack of government support for the sectors.

4.1.2. Language diversity in the electronic media

Language diversity is one important element of the media to serve a wider audience. In this assessment, it has been found that electronic media in Ethiopia use 67 local languages and 4 foreign languages to disseminate content. As can be seen in figure 4 below, 42 stations use one language (Amharic, the constitutionally recognized working language of the federal government and some regional governments). Seventeen (17) broadcasters use two languages. Exceptionally, the South Mass Media Agency (SMMA) also known as Debub TV uses 48 languages. Next to the SMMA, the Oromia Broadcasting Network (OBN) uses 17 languages, including foreign languages. Foreign languages such as English, French, Swahili, and Arabic are used in electronic media, mostly by public outlets. A small number of commercial media such as Walta Media Corporation and Afro FM broadcast in foreign languages.

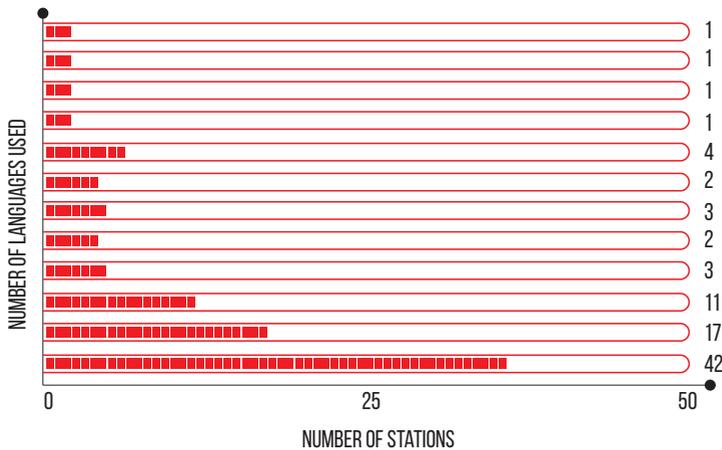


Figure 4- The number of languages used by the electronic media

4.1.3. Number of Journalists in the Electronic Media

This assessment found that close to eight thousand people work in the media sector. Out of these, more than 2,400 members of the editorial team and directly involved in the day-to-day content production and execution i.e., reporters, editors, and managers. Regarding gender representation, Female

journalists account for 25% of the total number of journalists in the country. The role of female journalists in editorial decision-making and leadership in electronic media is still minimal compared to their male counterparts (figure 5).

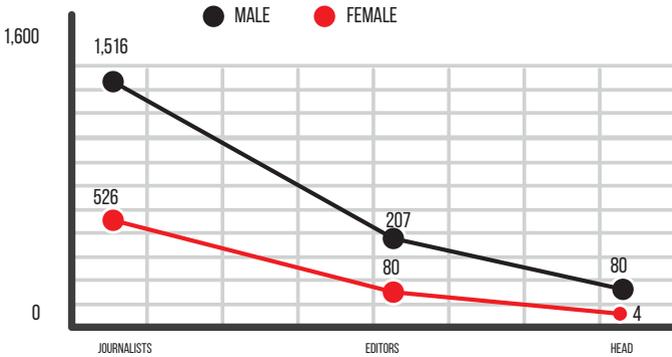


Figure 5- Journalists working in the electronic media

4.2. Community Media

Community radio was first initiated in 2006 and licensing of the sector began in 2007, soon after the enactment of the Broadcasting Proclamation No 533/2007. Since then, as presented in figure 6 below, their number has been gradually increasing. This might indicate that they are getting attention from their communities, local authorities, and higher educational institutions. Community television has also been introduced and there are five (5) licensed community television channels, two of which have already begun operations.

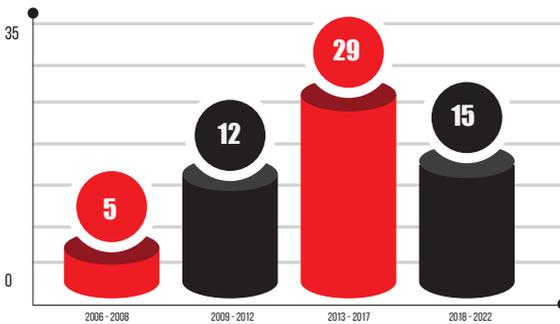


Figure 6- The periodic growth of community radio stations

Despite the growing number of licensed community media outlets, only 33 radio stations and two television channels are currently operational. As can be seen in figure 7 below, the remaining community media outlets are either in the preparation stage, failed to launch, or had their licenses revoked.

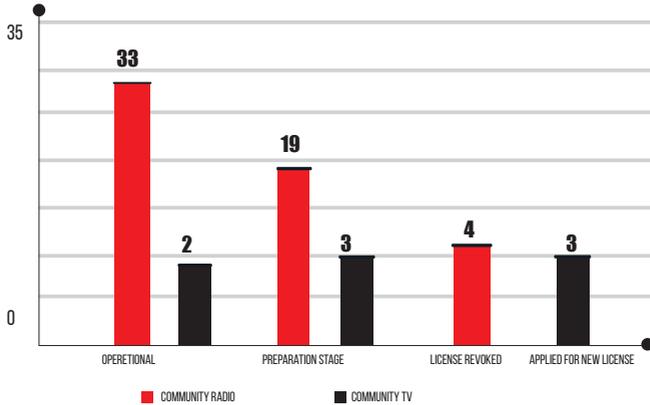


Figure 7- The status of community broadcasters in Ethiopia

Community broadcasters are diversely distributed across Ethiopia. Among the registered community broadcasters, more than 30 are in the Oromia and SNNP/Sidama Regions. As shown in figure 8 below, others such as the Benishangul-Gumuz, Gambela, Afar, and Somali regions still have fewer community radio stations.

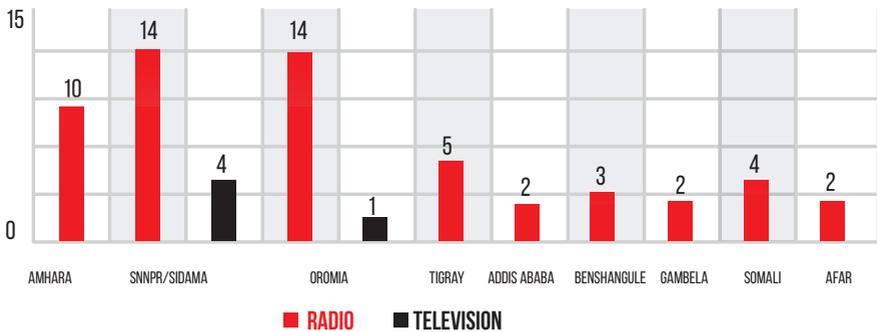


Figure 8- The spatial distribution of community broadcasters in Ethiopia

4.2.1. Airtime coverage

Data collected from operational community broadcasters show that they broadcast their programs for 2 to 14 hours per day. Twenty community radio stations broadcast for an average of six to ten hours per day (figure 9 below). Ten community radio stations broadcast for less than five hours a day.

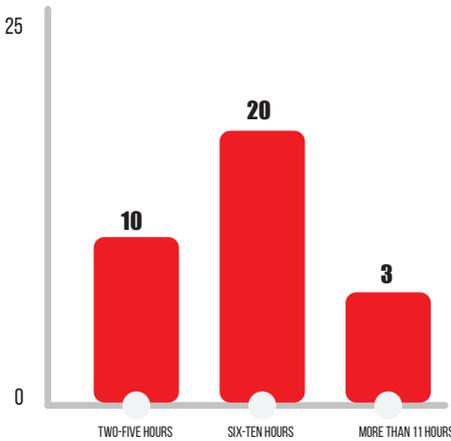


Figure 9- Daily broadcasting times of community radio stations

4.2.2 Language Diversity in Community Radios

One of the advantages of community broadcasting is the usage of local languages, which makes the content more accessible to the audiences. A closer look at community radios demonstrates that they use more than one language and they broadcast content in 32 languages. Five community radio stations use English²⁹ and most of these are university-owned stations. In short, 16 community radio stations use one language, 14 stations use two languages, two stations use three languages, and one station uses four languages.

²⁹ According to Media proclamation 1238/2021, Article 59 (1, L) the community broadcasters are encourage to produce programs with local productions and local languages.

4.2.3. The Number of Journalists working at Community Radio Stations

On average, 12 community media are currently producing content by six to 10 (ten) journalists. About 15 community radio stations are working with limited staff members (one to five). Exceptionally, one community radio hires close to 40 journalists³⁰. (see figure 11).

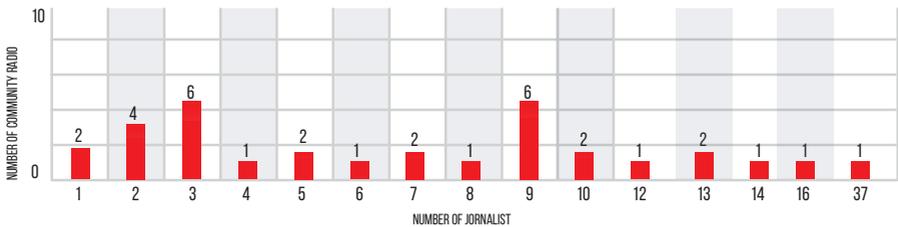


Figure 10 - The total number of journalists in the stations

4.2.4 Gender balance in Community Radio

In terms of gender, there is a high tendency to employ female journalists in community radio stations. Figure 12 below shows that 117 female and 132 male journalists work at community radio. The difference between the number of female and male journalists is very minimal.



Figure 11- The gender distribution of employees in community media

³⁰ This is Northern Ari Woreda community radio, which is also currently working on getting license for TV channel.

4.3. The Online Media

The EMA started registering online media in 2021 as the new media Proclamation mandates the authority to register online media³¹. 34 digital media outlets have been registered by the authority. These outlets disseminate content in diverse languages, but they predominantly use the Amharic language (See figure 13 below).

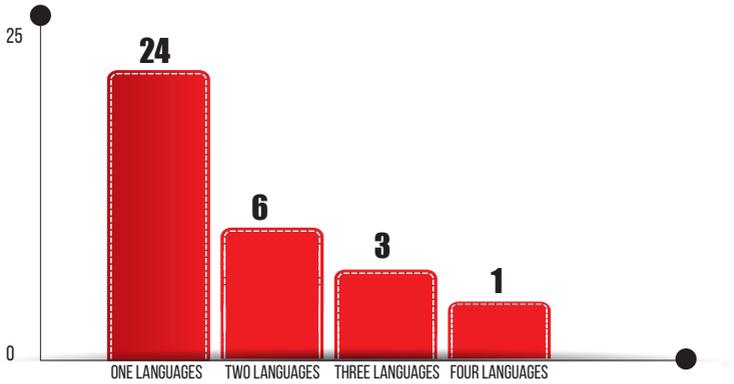


Figure 12- Language diversity in the online media

4.3.1. Spatial distribution of digital media

The registered digital media are predominantly working from Addis Ababa. However, as can be seen in figure 14, below, two digital media outlets are based out of Addis Ababa.

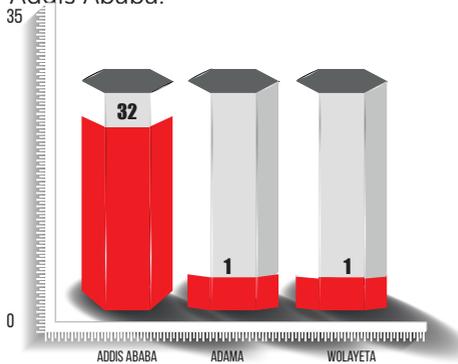


Figure 13- Spatial distribution of the digital media

³¹ Proclamation No. 12348/2021- article 6 (4)- collect periodical, online media and news service registration; broadcasting license; license renewal and the provision of the competency and technical standards of broadcasting services fees in accordance with the rate approved by the government.

4.3.2. Subscriptions

Digital media is a new phenomenon in Ethiopia despite its quickly growing audience. In this assessment, as can be seen in figure 15 below, the subscription of 14 of the registered online platforms lies somewhere between 50,000 and 200,000. There are five digital media, with subscribers between 400,001 and 800,000. This implies that there is a growing popularity of digital platforms among Ethiopians.



Figure 14- Number of digital media vs their subscriptions

4.4. Newspapers and Magazines

Seen in terms of broadcast media, privately owned newspapers and magazines are not new phenomena in Ethiopia. The coming to power of the EPRDF, and subsequent endorsement of the press Proclamation in 1992, created a conducive environment for interested individuals to own newspapers and magazines. However, the print media have gone through many hurdles over the last three decades. The number, circulation, and diversity of print media dwindled from time to time. For instance, there were 19 weekly and bi-weekly privately owned newspapers and 17 weekly and bi-weekly privately owned magazines in Ethiopia in 2013. After ten years, there are just 8 privately owned newspapers and 10 magazines in 2022³².

Magazines have become platforms for people to access/share political views. As can be seen in figure 16 below, magazines in the market are predominantly dealing with political issues. Newspapers that cover sports proved sustainable in the market; nonetheless, their numbers have been declining from time to time. For instance, the number of sports magazines declined from five in 2013 to two in 2022. Their language diversity is also limited to only Amharic and English.

³² Data collected from Ethiopian Broadcasting Authority in different period.

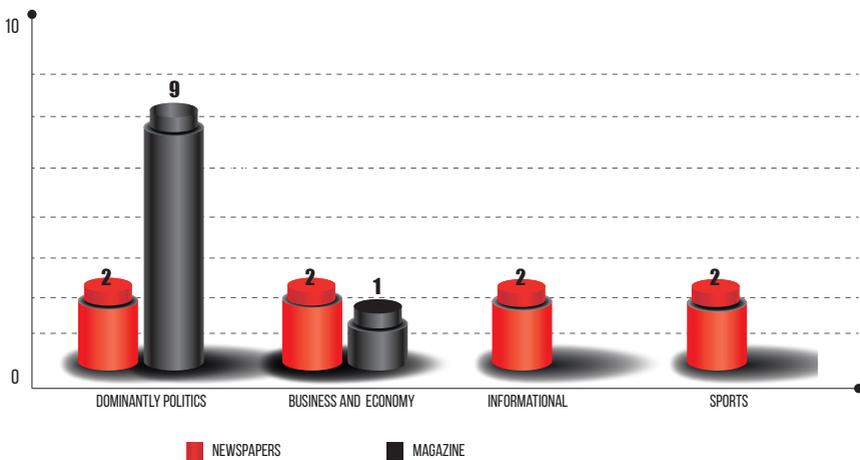


Figure 15- Issues covered by privately owned print media

In addition to the privately owned print outlets, there are also state-owned print media. Currently, ten state-owned newspapers and a magazine are printed. This number is very small considering the government’s capacity to own and operate print media. While all the government mass media agencies have either television and/or radio, most of them do not engage in print media. Only Addis Media Network (AMN), the Amhara Media Corporation (AMC), the Oromia Broadcasting Network (OBN), and the South Mass Media Agency (SMMA) have publications. The Ethiopian Press Agency (EPA) publishes the remaining six newspapers and one magazine, all owned by the state.

4.4.1. Language Diversity in the Print Media

As discussed above, the limitations in the small number of public and commercial newspapers are also poor in terms of languages of publication and circulation. The print media in Ethiopia use six languages, viz., Amharic, English, Arabic, Afaan Oromo, Sidama Afoo, and Tigrigna. The EPA uses the latter four languages for its publications. Four privately owned newspapers and magazines, which focus on politics, business, and economics, use English.



4.4.2. Journalists in the Print Media

Unlike electronic media, print media does not employ many journalists in Ethiopia. Looking at data collected from newspapers (figure 17), 13 of the print media hire 2 (two) to 5 (five) journalists including the editor-in-chief. Only one private newspaper hires a relatively large number of journalists. The highest number of staff members are employed by the state-owned Ethiopian Press Agency, which publishes six newspapers and one magazine.

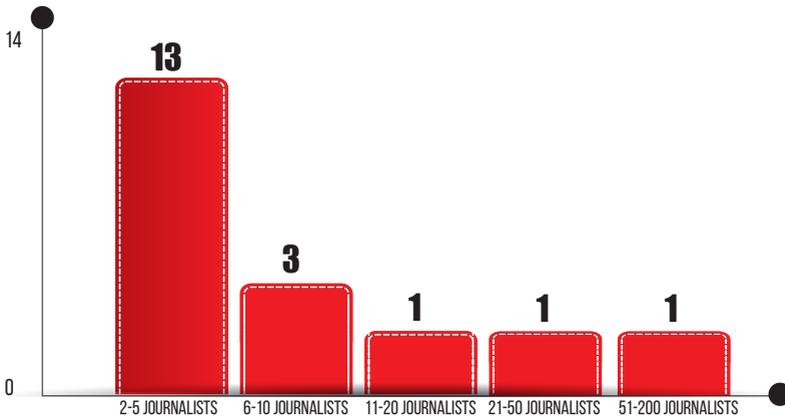


Figure 16- Journalists employed by the print media

Most newspapers and magazines produce content with a small number of journalists. It should be noted here that freelancers and columnist contributors write most of the content in newspapers³³ and magazines.

³³ Ethiopia Press agency currently printed out six different newspapers namely, Addis Zemen, The Ethiopian Herald, Berissa, Al-Alem, Wegaheta, Baakalch and one magazine, Zemen.

4.5. Journalists' Associations

Journalists' associations, networks, and forums are instrumental to promote and protect journalists' rights as well as to enhance the profession. They are particularly important in a country like Ethiopia where the media industry is at a nascent stage, and the profession and safety of journalists are not yet well protected. As documented in Appendix 2, 22 professional journalists' associations³⁴ have been registered in Ethiopia. Out of these, 17 are formed after 2018 (see figure 18, below). This is mainly associated with the amendment of the CSOs proclamation, which allows professionals to form associations and advocate for different causes including rights issues.

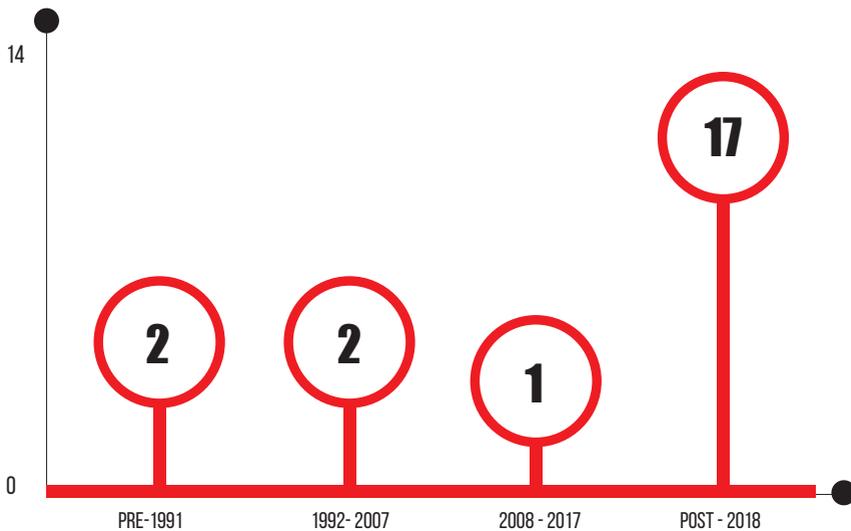


Figure 17- Number of journalists' associations and their years of establishment

³⁴ After collecting relevant data for this study, Media for Human Rights Association and Ethiopian Online Media Association have registered.



While the number of associations of journalists, media professionals, and educators is increasing, most are concentrated in Addis Ababa as eight associations operate in Addis Ababa. Only seven associations are active in regions and the other seven work in Addis Ababa and the regions (see figure 19, below).

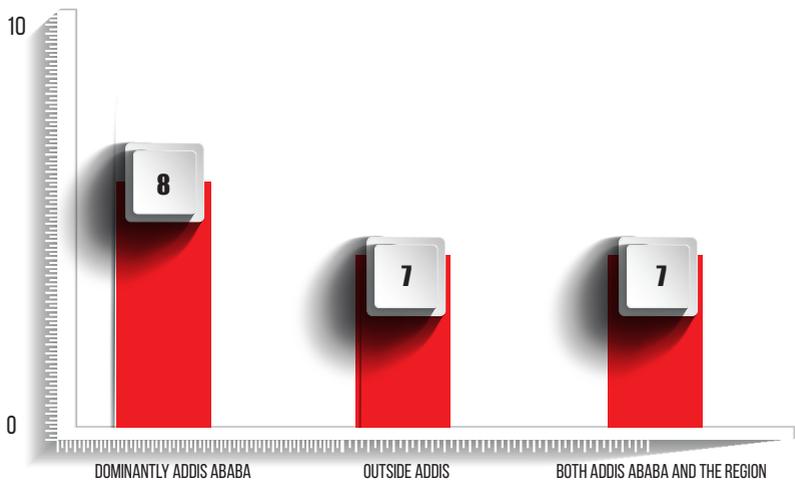


Figure 18- Spatial distribution of media associations

Structurally, 15 of the journalism practitioners and educators' association, accounts for 72% of the total number of associations, which have a general assembly and are governed by a board of directors (see figure 20, below). The remaining associations do not have either a general assembly or a board of directors. The executives carry out most of the activities. This is against the CSOs proclamation .Furthermore, seven out of the 22 registered associations do not have offices.

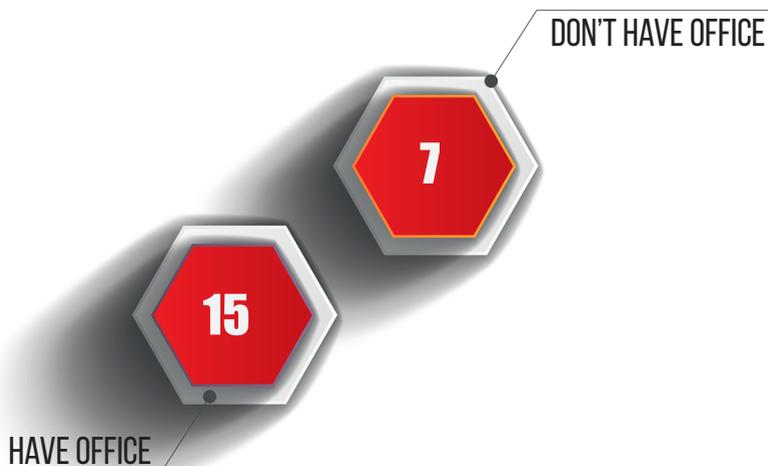


Figure 19- Associations with and without offices

4.5.1. Areas of Engagement

Among the 22 journalists' associations, eight of them are focusing on the areas of providing tailored support to their members in the form of capacity building and other activities. Twelve associations are working on networking and information sharing for their members (see figure 21, below). Ten associations focus on the safety of journalists and seven of them advocate for the rights of journalists and the promotion of professional autonomy.

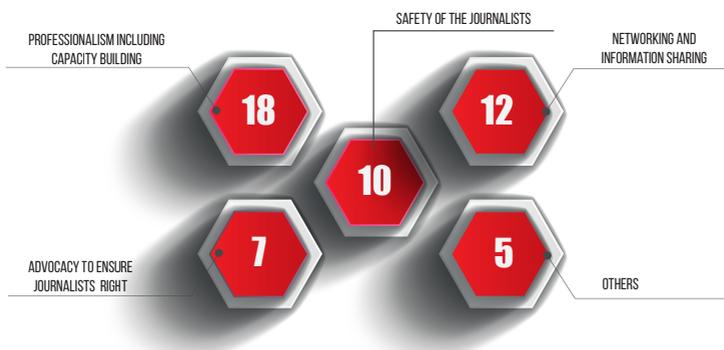


Figure 20- Media professionals' associations' areas of engagement

³⁵ According to Civil Societies Proclamation 1113/2019, an association shall be governed by a General Assembly as the supreme decision-making body. It also stipulates associations shall have a governing body to set policy direction for the executive body of the associations.



4.5.2. Membership and Contributions in Associations

Membership contributions, apart from helping to strengthen the associations' financial capacity, play significant roles in creating sentimental attachment and commitment to the realization of the principles and agendas of the association. Such schemes also help minimize external influences in executing their agenda. To this end, most associations encourage members to fulfill their membership fees and annual contributions. Though membership contribution varies from one association to another, nine associations do not demand membership fees from their members (see figure 22, below).

Close to 40% of the associations (eight associations) do not collect annual membership fees from their members. This may compromise their independence and make them depend on external funding. Furthermore, it could lead to a sustainability crisis.

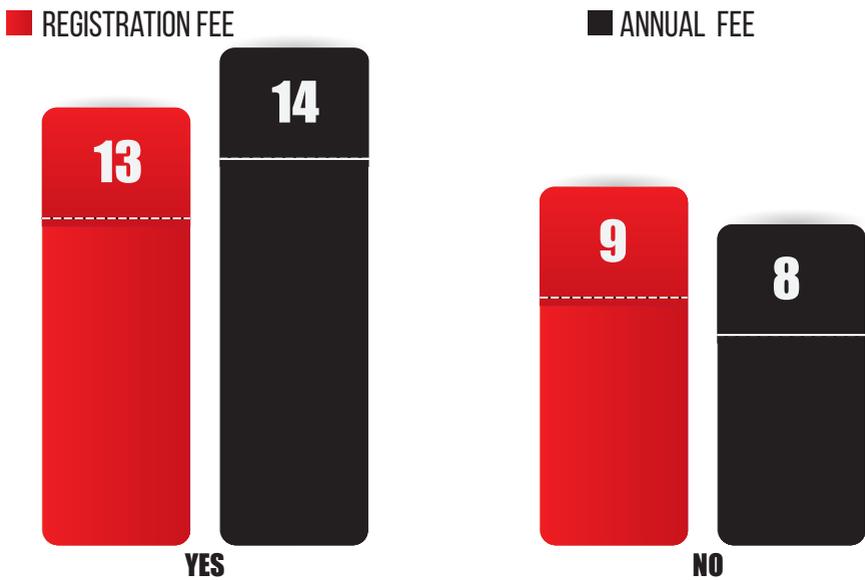


Figure 22- Number of journalists' associations collecting and not collecting membership and annual fees

4.5.3. Scope of Engagement

Although it is all established to promote journalistic disciplines and professionalism, the areas of interest or scope of journalists' associations in Ethiopia are diverse. For instance, seven of them are interested in promoting professionalism irrespective of the medium of transmission or language, or focus area. There are also others formed based on languages or areas/regions of operation like the Amhara Journalists' Association, the Oromia Journalists' Association, the Tigray Journalists' Association, the Somali Journalists' Association, and the Southern Ethiopia Journalists' Association. The rest are established based on other qualifications such as gender and specialization. For instance, three associations are based on the specialization of their members as Sports Journalists, Culture and Tourism Journalists, and Arts and Reconciliation. Three others focus on the nature of the media like the Community Broadcasters Association, the Amhara Educational Mass Media Association, and the Ethiopian Free Press Journalists Association (please see appendix 2) while two associations are gender-specific and only accept women journalists as members. Two other associations, the Ethiopian Media Council (EMC) and the Ethiopian Broadcasters Associations (EBA) are media organizations media that aim to influence policies and promote journalism ethics. In total, 22 journalism associations with different missions and areas of intervention exist in Ethiopia (see figure 23).



Figure 23- Lines of organization for media associations in Ethiopia



4.5.4. Staff Members in Media Associations

Among the 22 associations, 15 do not have experts or supporting staff members to initiate and execute projects. Only seven have experts, and only six associations have supporting staff members hired for projects. The rest do not have either expert and/or supporting staff to execute the daily day-to-day and project activities (figure 24). This is a clear indication that they are not well organized and structured by employing technical and administrative staff members.

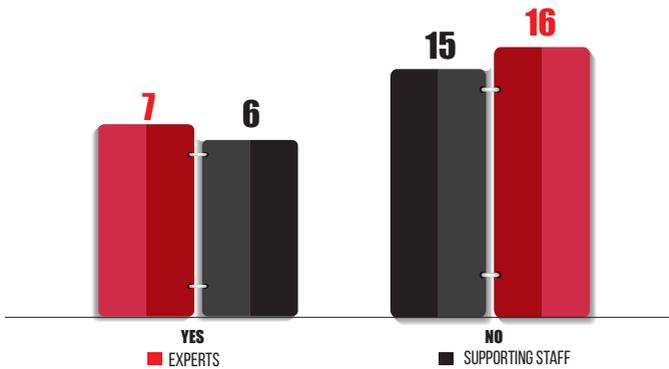


Figure 24- Availability of experts and supporting staff at associations

4.5.5. Tendencies of Journalists to Join the Associations

Among the sampled 365 journalists, 235 journalists are not interested in joining associations due to various reasons. As can be seen in figure 25, below, only 130 journalists (35.6% of the respondents) are members of journalists' associations. The remaining 235 journalists (64.4 %) have not been members of any journalists' associations.

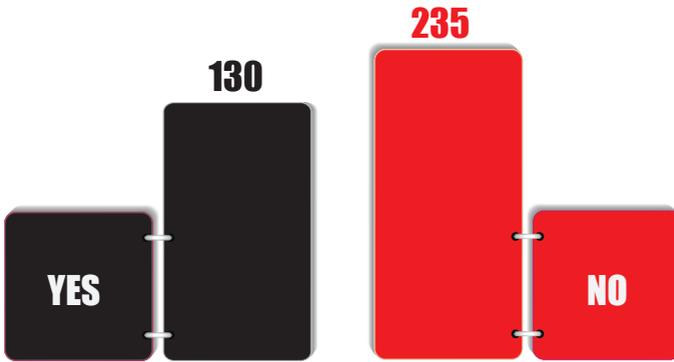


Figure 25- Association membership status of sampled journalists

Paradoxically, only fewer journalists are interested in joining media associations despite the increment of journalists' associations both in number and the challenges they encounter in their day-to-day activities. Although the reasons for journalists not joining the associations may vary, they all stem from the lack of legitimacy, transparency, and validity/wider acceptance of the associations (figure 26 below). This indicates that more needs to be done to strengthen the associations' legitimacy, efficacy, and credibility.

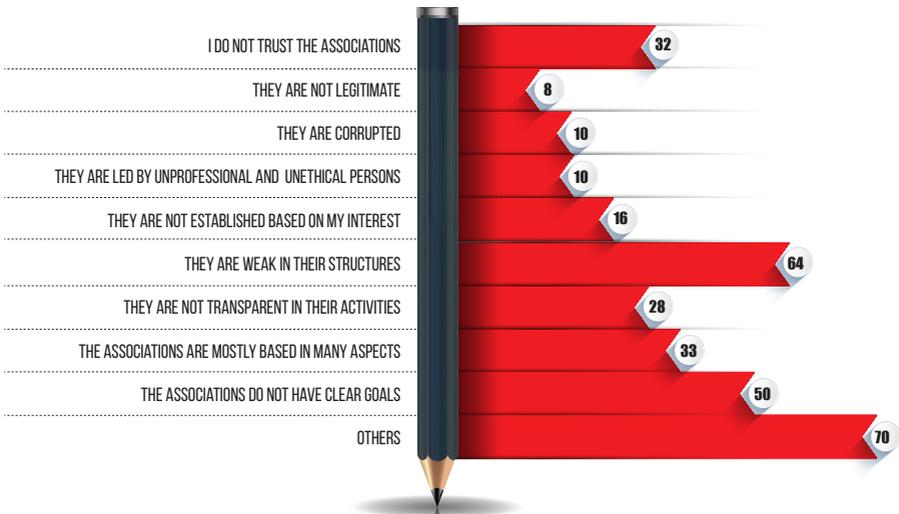


Figure 26- Reasons for journalists not to join associations



4.6. Professionalism in the Ethiopian Media

This section discusses the areas of training of journalists working in the Ethiopian media, the level of professionalism, access to on-the-job training, safety, and security of journalists as well as other pertinent issues related to professionalism.

4.6.1. Field of specialization of journalists

As can be seen in figure 27 below, among the survey respondents, 173 (close to 47%) are graduates of journalism and communication programs. They received Bachelor's or Master's degrees in Journalism and Communication. Journalists who graduated in Foreign Languages and Literature, Theatrical Art, and Political Science are ranked second, third, and fourth respectively in terms of prominence.

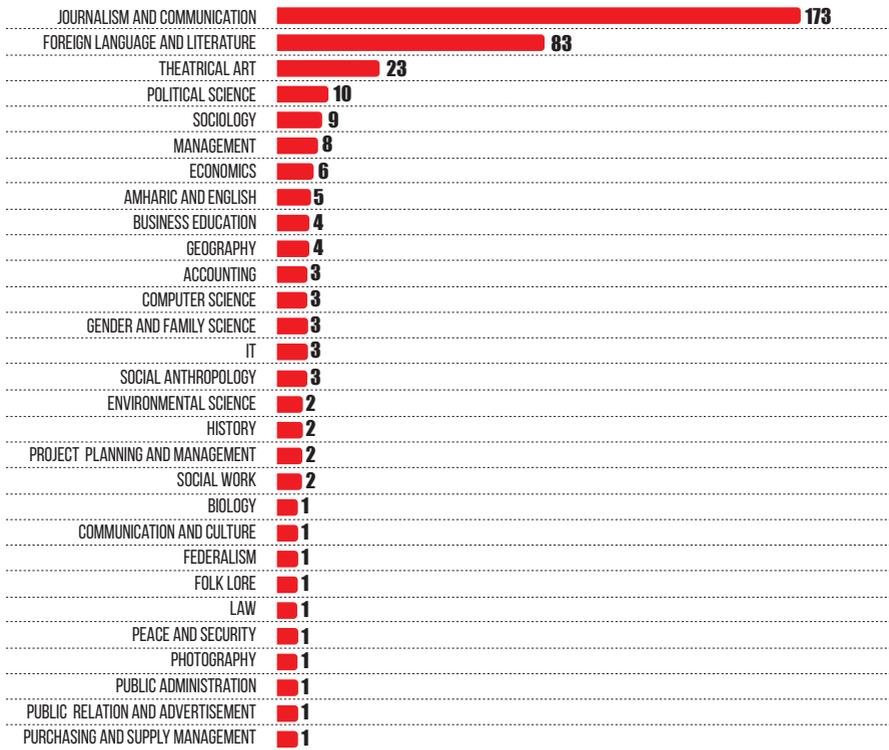


Figure 27- fields of specialization for journalists

The high number of graduates of Journalism and Communication might be associated with the increasing number of graduates from the 22 universities that enroll in Journalism and Communication in BA, MA, and PhD programs.

4.6.2. Training Interest of the Journalists

As diverse as their field of training, the reasons journalists joined the sector also vary. Out of the sampled journalists, 287 respondents confirmed that they joined the media because they are trained as journalists. Some either joined the media by chance or by assignment (see figure 28 below).

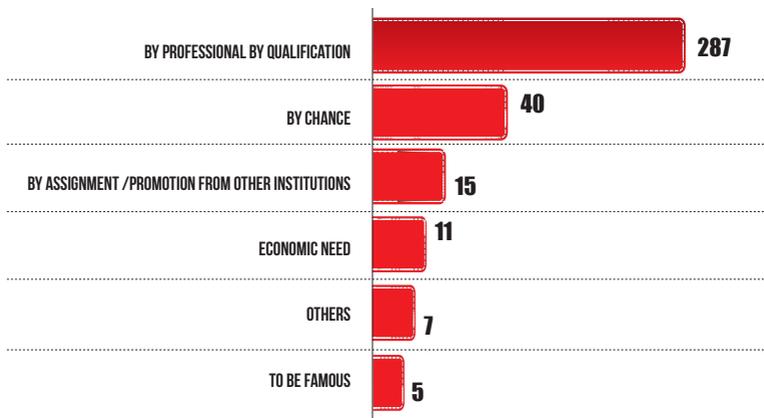


Figure 28- Reasons why journalists joined the media

4.6.3. Accessing Short-Term Training and their Interests

Data collected from the sampled journalists confirmed that they received various training on various issues including election reporting, peace journalism, conflict reporting, news writing and reporting, investigative reporting, etc. Journalists received training on election reporting (30 of the respondents) because there were various training workshops organized by different entities in connection with the 2021 General Elections in the country. More than 50 journalists attended training workshops on news writing and investigative reporting. However, relevant, and contemporary issues, such as conflict-sensitive reporting, fake news, hate speech, digital media and content production, ethics, and others were not part of the training and are easily available for the journalists. This indicates that there is a need to facilitate quite different training workshops on various themes to equip Ethiopian journalists with the necessary professionalism that takes in to account the digital era.

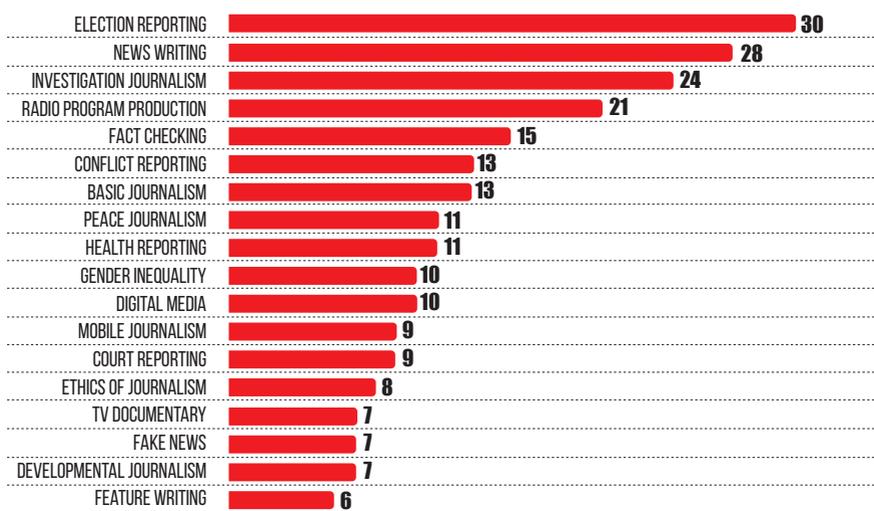


Figure 29- Various subjects of training offered to journalists

4.6.4. Training Needs

As can be seen in figure 29 above, 24 journalists from the respondents confirmed that they have accessed training on investigative journalism. However, the rest 150 respondents need more training in investigative reporting (see figure 30, below). In addition, 133 respondents indicated that they want to be trained in managing newsrooms and other departments in the media. The other 131 respondents are interested in training workshops on documentary production. Some skills such as the safety of the journalists, interviewing skills, and presentation skills got lesser attention from journalists.

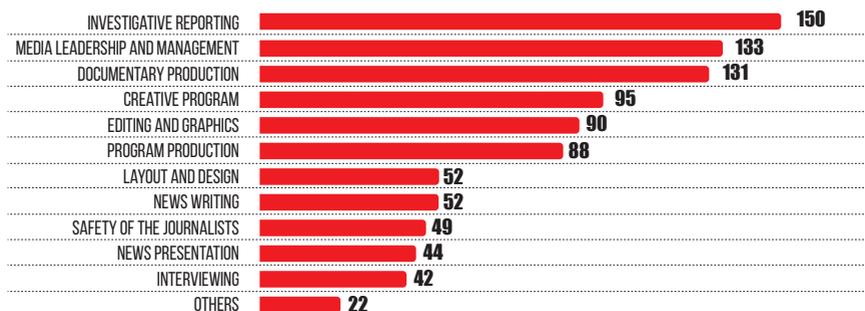


Figure 30- Training interests/needs among journalists



In terms of thematic areas, among the respondents, 178 journalists are interested in obtaining training workshops on peace and conflict reporting. This might be due to the current conflict and political tension in the country. Further, 117 respondents are also interested in fact-checking training. Quite a different number of respondents want to get access to training on business and economics, sports and entertainment, agriculture and environment, court reporting, and health and science reporting. Parts of the sampled journalists also want to get training on fake news and hate speech (see figure 31, below).

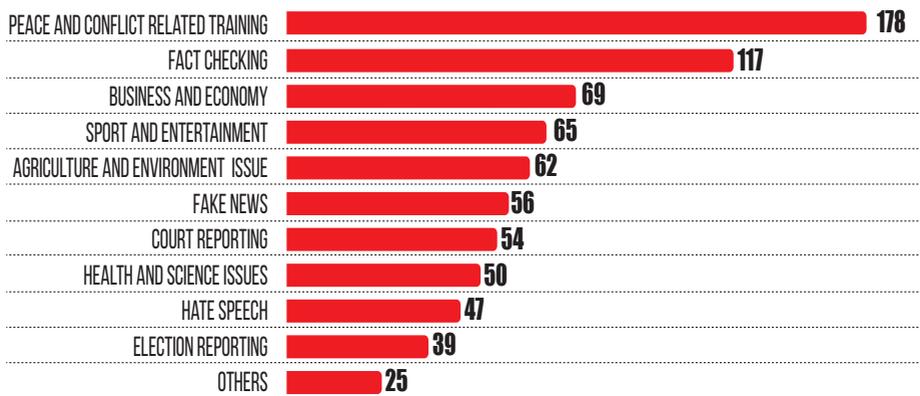


Figure 31- Thematic training interest areas of journalists

4.6.5. Training Related to the Safety of Journalists

As mentioned earlier, many journalists have been detained and other journalists who are critical of the state and politics have been threatened, intimidated, harassed, and warned by the security apparatus and others to silence and sow fear among other journalists. The data collected from the sampled journalists indicated that close to one-third of journalists know the safety mechanisms. The rest either do not know or partially know about the safety mechanisms. Among the sampled journalists, 329 respondents are interested in training on the safety and security of journalists. As indicated in the graph below (figure 32), except for 35 respondents, the rest are interested in safety and security training.

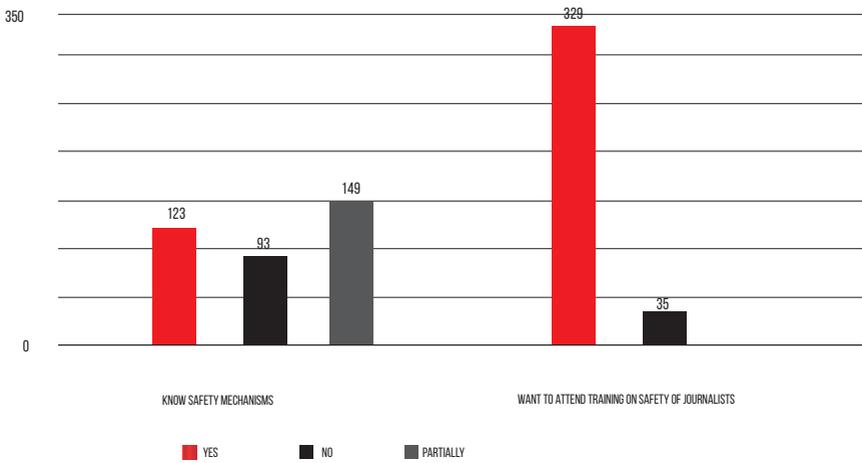


Figure 32- The need for training in the safety and security of journalists



5. CONCLUSION

This review of the media landscape in Ethiopia after the 2018 political transition employed both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Recently endorsed media laws, policies, and research and study reports were reviewed using a qualitative method while a quantitative approach is employed to collect data from media institutions, journalists, and media associations using questionnaires. Based on the data collected and analyzed, the researcher arrived at the following conclusions:

- ▣ The 2018 political transition in the country opened a window of hope for the Ethiopian media sector to be relatively free. This has been reflected in the government's interests not only in allowing diaspora-based/exiled media to come and operate in the country but also in tabling draconian media and other laws for revisions.
- ▣ Ethiopia has a liberal media law that allows journalism/media to be more professional, and independent. It has also adopted a progressive media policy for the first time. However, in practice, the government lacks political commitment and determination to implement most of the provisions of the media law and policy.
- ▣ In an attempt to control the spread of hate speech and misinformation or disinformation, the government endorsed the Hate Speech and Disinformation Prevention and Suppression Proclamation that governs the dissemination of content on mainstream and digital media. However, like the infamous 2009 anti-terrorist proclamation, this law might be used as a tool to silence critical and dissenting voices. The law also has a flaw in clearly defining and contextualizing hate speech.
- ▣ Despite the growth in the number and diversity of media, the number, diversity, and coverage are still small considering the importance of the media in ensuring democratic culture, peace, and development in the country. Moreover, most of these media are based in urban areas implying that people living in rural areas are somehow sidelined from accessing diverse information.
- ▣ While the number of commercial media is increasing in number, they are also predominantly based in urban areas. Only a small portion of commercial media, especially radio stations, is located outside Addis Ababa.

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- ▣ There are eight thousand journalists and supporting staff in media houses. Although this number is growing, it remains to be small. Most media organizations, especially commercial media produce content with a limited number of journalists.
 - ▣ One-fourth of the total media practitioners in Ethiopia are women but there is a gap in promoting women in editorial decision-making roles. This number further declines when it comes to media leadership, especially in public and commercial media. However, in community broadcasting services, the discrepancy in the number of female and male journalists is minimal.
 - ▣ Currently, 67 languages are used in radio and television channels, 32 in community radio, and 6 in print media outlets have been used to produce content for local audiences. Four foreign languages are also used to produce content in the media.
 - ▣ Although journalists' associations have grown in number, they are not strong financially, structurally, or technically. They are weak in addressing the needs of journalists. As a result, journalists lack interest in joining associations.
 - ▣ The study also found that many journalists are graduates of journalism and Communication discipline. Furthermore, journalists have received and are interested in receiving training in various subjects about journalism.
 - ▣ Moreover, journalists are still interested in receiving training in Investigative journalism, fact-checking, conflict-sensitive reporting, and business and economics reporting.



6. RECOMMENDATIONS

The researcher found that there are gaps in various aspects of journalism in the country. The following recommendations were put forward to address the challenges faced due to the gaps.

- ▣ The government should fully implement the provisions in the media proclamations and the media policy. Associations, forums, and networks should also strengthen their capacity and solidarity to advocate for the full implementation of the media law.
- ▣ The government and media developers should support private media organizations to expand their reach to the regions, and the commercial media should be committed to expanding their accessibility to semi-urban and rural areas to ensure access to the side-lined communities.
- ▣ The government and media institutions should devise mechanisms to increase the number of female journalists in the media. Furthermore, CSOs and other interested groups should capacitate women and enhance their professionalism and editorial decision-making capabilities so that they can assume leadership roles.
- ▣ Government and other key stakeholders should render support to community broadcasters to function and operate well to serve their communities. For instance, a center can be formed for community broadcasters that assists, guides, and provides tailored and immediate support when needed. This can address challenges of professionalism and minimize frequent interruptions in transmission.
- ▣ Government and other stakeholders should optimize their efforts to increase the number of community radio stations in remote areas to deliver information relevant to the community in the local languages and the local context.
- ▣ Thus, the government and other concerned stakeholders need to support the community to initiate community broadcasting that can serve as a main source of information in the local context.
- ▣ Given the large audience bases of community broadcasters, NGOs, and other institutions can collaborate with them to advocate for development, health, peace, and other issues. This will be mutually beneficial as these partners can tap into the large audience bases as well as language and context leverages at the community level. This in turn helps community broadcasters to strengthen their technical and financial capacity.
- ▣ Digital media have become important platforms to access information in Ethiopia. The government, NGOs, and higher education institutions should work closely to enhance professionalism in digital media and



minimize the prevalence of fake news and hate speech emanating from such platforms.

- ▣ The print media in the country are currently declining both in number and diversity, and it seems that they are on the verge of extinction. Hence, all concerned bodies should support the print media to withstand the turbulent media market and remain intact. For instance, there should be some form of subsidy to newspapers/magazines so that they can maintain circulation.
- ▣ Journalists' associations should reach a consensus among their members to fully engage not only to collect payments of registration and annual fees but also to the activities of the associations as well as the media development in the country.
- ▣ In addition, the associations should work more on increasing their members and collecting membership and annual fees to be financially sustained and maintain their independence. In addition, the associations should work to ensure strong collaboration and solidarity among journalists and their associations and establish networks in the sector to consolidate efforts for the effective use of resources.
- ▣ Journalism associations should also regularly hold general assemblies and appoint a board of directors to maintain their legality and integrity among members and other stakeholders,
- ▣ While many of the practitioners joining the media sector are graduates of Journalism and Communication, it is also imperative to provide tailored training to the reporters on various thematic areas. Thus, CSOs and other media developers may facilitate various training workshops and on-the-job training for journalists to keep them well-equipped with the necessary professional principles and knowledge based on their needs.
- ▣ There is high demand for training in digital journalism, fake news, and hate speech. Thus, government organizations, CSOs, and other interested stakeholders should work on facilitating training on these themes.
- ▣ Training institutes and other media developers should also organize training workshops on safety and security for journalists to make them aware of safety procedures and protocols while on assignment in a media hostile environment.
- ▣ Journalists are increasingly arrested, harassed, and threatened by different actors including the government security apparatus. Hence, human rights organizations, media developers, media actors, and journalism associations should advocate for the rights of journalists. Moreover, journalism associations should establish solidarity and become strong to advocate for journalists' freedom of expression and stand together against any form of harassment be it verbal or physical.

APPENDIXES

Appendix 1- List of radio and television channels under operation in 2022 in Ethiopia

1	Channels/Stations	Ownership	Media type
2	Abbay Media TV	Commercial	TV
3	Afar Mass Media	Public	TV
4	Afri Health Radio	Commercial	Radio
5	Afri Health Television	Commercial	TV
6	Ahadu FM	Commercial	Radio
7	AMC- Amhara FM Bahir Dar	Public	Radio
8	AMC- Amhara FM Debre Birhan	Public	Radio
9	AMC- Amhara FM Debre Markos	Public	Radio
10	AMC- Amhara FM Dessie	Public	Radio
11	AMC- Amhara FM Gondor	Public	Radio
12	AMC- Amhara Region Radio	Public	Radio
13	AMC- Hiberbehir	Public	Radio
14	AMC- Addis Ababa FM	Public	Radio
15	AMC- TV	Public	TV
16	AMN-TV	Public	TV
17	AMN FM 96.3	Public	Radio
18	Arada FM	Commercial	Radio
19	Arts TV	Commercial	TV
20	Asham TV	Commercial	TV
21	Awash FM	Commercial	Radio
22	Balageru TV	Commercial	TV
23	Benishangul Gumuz Mass Media TV	Public	TV
24	Assosa FM	Public	Radio
25	Bisrat FM 101.2	Commercial	Radio
26	Dire TV	Public	TV
27	EBC - FM Addis 97.1	Public	Radio



28	EBC- Ethiopia Radio	Public	Radio
29	EBC- ETV	Public	TV
30	EBC- FM 104.7	Public	Radio
31	EBC- Harar Radio	Public	Radio
32	EBC- Bahir Dar FM	Public	Radio
33	EBC- Metu Radio	Public	Radio
34	ETV language	Public	TV
35	ETV Entertainment	Public	TV
36	EBS Film	Commercial	TV
37	EBS Music	Commercial	TV
38	EBS TV	Commercial	TV
39	ESAT TV	Commercial	TV
40	Ethio FM 107.8	Commercial	Radio
41	Fana FM	Commercial	Radio
42	Fana FM Assela	Commercial	Radio
43	Fana FM Debre Birhan	Commercial	Radio
44	Fana FM Dessie	Commercial	Radio
45	Fana FM Gondor	Commercial	Radio
46	Fana FM Haromeya	Commercial	Radio
47	Fana FM Jimma	Commercial	Radio
48	Fana FM Mizan Aman	Commercial	Radio
49	Fana FM Naqamte	Commercial	Radio
50	Fana FM Shashemenie	Commercial	Radio
51	Fana FM Wolayeta Sodo	Commercial	Radio
52	Fana- Harere	Commercial	Radio
53	Fana- Radio	Commercial	Radio
54	Fana TV	Commercial	TV
55	FIB TV	Commercial	TV
56	FM Dire 106.1	Public	Radio
57	Gamo Media Network (GMN)	Commercial	TV
58	Hagerie TV	Commercial	TV
59	Harari FM	Public	Radio
60	Harari mass media TV	Public	TV



61	J FM Radio	Commercial	Radio
62	JTV	Commercial	TV
63	Kana TV	Commercial	TV
64	Life Television	Commercial	TV
65	Nahoo TV	Commercial	TV
66	NBC	Commercial	TV
67	OBN- Oromia Radio Station	Public	TV
68	OBN – Horn of Africa	Public	TV
69	OBN- Gamme	Public	TV
70	OBN- Dambalii Gababa	Public	Radio
71	OBN- Finfinnee (Geejja Jawwee)-	Public	Radio
72	OBN- Adama	Public	Radio
73	OBN- Robe	Public	Radio
	OBN- Naqamte	Public	Radio
74	OBN- Addis Ababa (Finfinnee) FM	Public	Radio
75	OBN- Adama FM	Public	Radio
76	OBN- Ciroo FM	Public	Radio
77	OBN- Harar FM	Public	Radio
78	OBN-Shambu FM	Public	Radio
79	OBN- Dambidolo FM	Public	Radio
80	OBN- Jimma FM	Public	Radio
81	OBN- Shashamane FM	Public	Radio
82	OBN- Yabalo FM	Public	Radio
83	OBN- Walisoo FM	Public	Radio
84	OBN- Hacalu FM	Public	Radio
85	OBN- Gimbii FM	Public	Radio
86	OBN- Gobba FM	Public	Radio
87	OBN- Dagam FM	Public	Radio
88	OBN- Wadara FM	Public	Radio
89	OBS-Oromia Broadcasting Service	Commercial	TV



90	ONN- Oromia News Network	Commercial	TV
91	Prime Media	Commercial	TV
92	Sheger FM 102.1	Commercial	Radio
93	SNNP – Jinka Branch	Public	Radio
94	SNNP- Arba Mich FM	Public	Radio
95	SNNP Arbaminch Branch	Public	Radio
96	SNNP Bensa Branch	Public	Radio
97	SNNP Bonga Branch	Public	Radio
98	SNNP- Debub FM 100.9	Public	Radio
99	SNNP- F/Genet Branch	Public	Radio
100	SNNP Gedeo Branch FM	Public	Radio
101	SNNP -Hossana Branch	Public	Radio
102	SNNP- Mizan Branch	Public	Radio
103	SNNP- Sawela Branch	Public	Radio
104	SNNP- Waka Branch	Public	Radio
105	SNNP- Welqitie Branch	Public	Radio
106	Somali Region Radio	Public	Radio
107	Somali FM	Public	Radio
108	Somali Region Television	Public	TV
109	South Radio and Television	Public	TV
110	Tireta FM	Commercial	Radio
111	Tsedey FM	Commercial	Radio
112	TV 9	Commercial	TV
113	Walta Radio 105.3	Commercial	Radio
114	Walta TV	Commercial	TV
115	Warka FM	Commercial	Radio
116	Ye Ethiopia Lijoch	Commercial	TV
117	Yegna TV	Commercial	TV



Appendix 2- List of Journalism Associations in Ethiopia

1	Amhara Educational Mass Media Association
2	Amhara Journalists Association (AJA)
3	Amhara Private Media Association
4	Amhara Women Journalists Association
5	Ethiopian Journalism Educator's Network (EJEN)
6	Association
7	Community Radio Broadcaster Association
8	Editors' Guild of Ethiopia
9	Ethiopian Broadcasters Association
10	Ethiopian Culture and Tourism Journalists Association
11	Ethiopian Free Press Journalists Association (EFJA) (it is now dormant)
12	Ethiopian Journalism School Association
13	Ethiopian Journalists Association
14	Ethiopian Mass Media Professionals' Association /EMMPA
15	Ethiopian Media Council (EMC)
16	Ethiopian Media Women Association (EMWA)
17	Ethiopian Sports Journalists Association (ESJA)
18	Mizan Journalists Association
19	Oromia Journalists Associations (OJA)
20	Somali Region Journalists Association
21	Southern Ethiopia Mass Media Journalists Association
22	Tigray Journalists Association



Appendix 3- List of online media registered by the EMA in 2022

1	Focus Multimedia
2	Jeilu Media and Communication PLC
3	Firezer Multi Media
4	Eyoha Media
5	Addis Standard
6	Andafta Media
7	Wolaita Times Media and Advertising Service
8	Ethio News
9	Ethio South Media Network
10	Tikvah_Ethiopia
11	Tikursew Film Production
12	Ghion
13	Shega Media
14	Ubuntu TV
15	Ethio News
16	ET ART
17	Elehun Media Plc
18	Harmony Tube
19	Channel 7 Ethiopia
20	Yami Media
21	Outdoor Ethiopia
22	Menelik Media
23	ZNA Jokers
24	Nilotic Post
25	Zema Media
26	Sheger
27	Addis Zeybe
28	Dire Tube
29	Ethiopia Insider
30	Naod
31	Habesha Media



32	Yeneta Tube
33	Feta Daily
34	Abel Birhanu_Yewoynuwa Lij

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