international media support

Annual Report

2004 - 2005

Copenhagen, Denmark

JANUAR 2006

List of abbreviations

AFJ	Arab Federation of Journalists
AJH	Association des Journalistes Haitien
AJI	Alliance of Independent Journalists (Indonesia)
AoIJ	Association of Iranian Journalists
APFW	Arab Press Freedom Watch
ATFD	Tunisian Association for Democratic Women
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BJA	Bahrain Journalists Association
BMC	Baltic Media Centre
CDFJ	Centre for Defending the Freedom of Journalists
CIJ	Centre for Investigative Journalism (Nepal)
CJES	Centre for Journalism in Extreme Situations
CNLT	National Council for Liberties in Tunisia
CPA	Centre for Policy Alternatives (Sri Lanka)
CPJ	Committee to Protection of Journalists
CPRU	UNDP Crisis Prevention and Recovery Unit
DFID	Department for International Development
DJ	Danish Journalists Union
DSJ	Danish School of Journalism
EAMI	East African Media Institute
EBU	European Broadcasting Union
EFJ	European Federation of Journalists
EIDHR	European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights
EJC	European Journalism Centre
EOHR	Egyptian Organisation for Human Rights
EU	European Union
FLIP	Fundación para la Libertad de Prensa (Colombia)
FNJ	Federation of Nepalese Journalists
FRESTA	Freds- og Stabilitetsrammen
FUJ	Danish Association for Investigative Journalism
GAM	Free Aceh Movement
ICSN	Indonesian Conflict Studies Network
IFEX	Internal Freedom of Expression Network
IFJ	International Federation of Journalists
IJAZ	Independent Journalist Association of Zimbabwe
IMPACS	Institute for Media, Policy and Civil Society
IMS	International Media Support
INSI	International News Safety Institute
IPI	International Press Institute
IWPR	Institute for War and Peace Reporting

ISAI	Institute for the Studies on Free Flow of Information (Indonesia)
IWPR	Institute for War and Peace Reporting
JPA	Jordan Press Association
LRN	(UNESCO) Local Radio Network for Democracy (Indonesia)
LTDH	Tunisian League of Human Rights
LTTE	Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (Sri Lanka)
MFWA	Media Foundation West Africa
MISA	Media Institute of Southern Africa
MRA	Media Rights Agenda
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NPA	Norwegian Peoples Aid
NPI	Nepal Press Institute
OCHA	United Nation Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OSI	Open Society Foundation – Network Media Program
RMMP	Rwanda Media Monitoring Project
RsF	Reporters sans Frontieres
SNJ	Syndicat National des Journalistes (Algeria)
SOAT	Sudanese Organisation Against Torture
TNI	Indonesian Military
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Organisation for Education, Science and Culture
WAN	World Association of Newspapers
WAN	World Association of Newspapers
YJS	Yemen Journalists' Syndicate

List of content

1. Introduction

This annual report presents a review of the activities and interventions carried out by IMS from 1. September 2004 to 31 August 2005.

During its fourth year of operations IMS has focused on strengthening its core mandate activities, i.e. providing support to media and media professionals in conflict areas around the world. We have expanded our activities both in terms of depth and width covering an increasing number of countries and conflict areas. In some instances, i.e. in Liberia, Sudan, Nepal and Colombia, we have maintained a focus over a longer period of time. This has not fundamentally changed IMS as a rapid response mechanism. It is, however, an expression of a recognition that impact, through a low-cost approach, is only achieved through consistency, flexibility and strategic innovation.

Throughout the reporting period negotiations have taken place with the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs regarding the model for ongoing funding of IMS core mandate activities. A three year result-based contract has been signed with the Ministry. A two year Sida funding package has been extended with one year and Norad has requested an application from IMS for core-mandate support.

IMS has similarly developed three larger media programmes all funded through the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs; i) "Media Cooperation with the Arab World and Iran, ii) "Media Programme for Ukraine, Belarus and Western Balkans" and iii) "Terrorism, Extremism and Media in Central Asia". Due to their size and scope the three programmes fall slightly outside the core-mandate of IMS. To handle the programmes effectively the secretariat has established a separate programme section.

The new IMS office structure has been developed to ensure adequate and focused implementation of programme activities and also to protect the IMS core-mandate.

2. Programme Support: Activities and Interventions

During the reporting period IMS has carried out interventions within its core mandate in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean as well as Central Asia.

Africa	Asia	Latin America and Caribbean
Great Lakes	Burma	Colombia
Ivory Coast	Indonesia	Haiti
Liberia	Nepal	
Sudan	Philippines	
Togo	Sri Lanka	
Zimbabwe		
Somalia		

Central Asia	Arab World and Iran

Within its core-mandate IMS identified interventions regions based on a flexible analysis of the individual situations within each in relation to the level of human insecurity and conflict related developments, as well as the risk posed to press freedoms and freedom of expression in conjunction with the potential positive and negative impact that the media may have in either alleviating or

aggravating the situation in the given country/region. These considerations are conjoined with an assessment of the local needs and existing international attention on the country/region, the added value an IMS contribution may bring, and the ability of IMS to deliver in the conditions presented by the particular country/region.

In some circumstances IMS has been amongst the first organisations to provide support to the media in conflict areas or conditions of severe human insecurity, such as with the interventions in Sudan, Togo and Indonesia (North Maluku and Aceh). In Aceh IMS was present on the ground only a fortnight after the earthquake and tsunami in late December.

In other cases media support programmes already existed and IMS has brought specific expertise or has played a coordinating or catalyst role to ensure collaborative approaches and explore innovative methods for addressing situations, such as in Nepal and Liberia. In both countries IMS has played a central coordinating role in bringing together a dozen or more international organisations to pursue joint approaches and ensure coordination between activities.

IMS always seeks to work together with local media outlets or organisations, thereby trying to identify the most realistic and locally applicable approaches, as well as strengthen ownership and the sustainability of interventions. Furthermore, IMS has worked together with UN agencies and international professional media organisations – a cooperation that is facilitated by the fact that IMS has no vested interest in any particular kind of support and operates with a mandate for short-term involvement, thereby not competing for long-term prominence or funding. This inclusion of partners at all levels enhances impact through improved co-ordination.

In the reporting period, IMS played a central role in developing a joint strategy and undertaking a joint mission to address press freedom and freedom of expression in Nepal. In addition, IMS continued its coordinating role for the Partnership for Media and Conflict Prevention in West Africa, working with partners to ensure that media development strategies continued to be mainstreamed in development aid in Liberia. Moreover, the work of IMS in Sudan and Colombia has also laid the ground for the collaborative development of long-term media strategy in 2006.

The IMS Media Cooperation Programme for the Arab World and Iran aims to strengthen the professional development of Arab and Iranian media through the creation of strong links and engendering the development of cooperation between local actors and like-minded colleagues in the region and on an international level.

In order to achieve real partnerships, IMS and its partners have established an open-ended process, which from the onset is designed to be adjustable according to the recommendations of partners from the region. A process of genuine consultation with Arab experts and media professionals, and the encouragement of dialogue with like-minded Danish and international colleagues have conferred real ownership to the partnerships established.

3. Organisational Development

Organisational Component

The original organisational structure of IMS was simple based upon a small core staff working together with a relative large group of international and locally based consultants. Nevertheless, this structure has been going through changes with the initiation of two large Danida funded long-term media support

programmes directed towards the Arab world and Ukraine, Belarus and the Western Balkans. Both programmes have their own staff and consultants and subcontracted implementing organisations.

The inclusion of these two programmes means that the IMS mandate to provide rapid assistance to media in conflict environments is now supplemented by two geographically defined programmes. Although the new programmes do not have the same funding flexibility that is central to the IMS operational methodology for its media and conflict interventions (as described in the previous chapter), the new programmes have been developed based upon lessons learnt and intervention methodologies as refined by IMS.

The inclusion of the two programmes will mean that the management of IMS will allocate more time to strengthening systems for self-evaluation, systematisation of intervention methodologies and development of tool boxes. In addition, the recruitment of staff to implement the new programmes has meant that a division between these activities and the media and conflict interventions is required, although cross-fertilisation and sharing lessons learnt will be continually sought.

Although some training of staff has taken place in 2005, more resources will be allocated to this in 2006, having a comprehensive safety-training course as a first priority.

The linkage with Nordic and international actors have been under constant development, which clearly can be read out of the presentation of the interventions presented above and the number of partnerships and alliances developed with Nordic and other international actors around specific interventions.

Communication Component

IMS has a unique position for communicating on issues related to media and conflict due to its expertise in media development in conflict-related contexts and its very broad country experiences, and furthermore has the mandate to promote freedom of expression through public debate and otherwise.

Following this IMS has continuously worked for a strong external communication and the achievement of the three expected outputs mentioned above. Still, it has not been possible to accompany all major IMS interventions by mass media output, mainly due to lack of resources, which constantly has been used to attend to respond to needs in conflict areas. The main tools for external communication have been the website, where an overview of recent activities, as well as published reports and other documents are uploaded.

Presentation of IMS mandate and activities to academic and professional environments is also an important part of the external communication. Two examples of these such contributions from 2005 are the speech held on "The Role of the Media in the Peace Process in Sudan" at a conference in Fredrikstad organized by The Norwegian Institute of Journalism, and the presentation "Using Media and Communication in Conflict Resolution" at at conference in Copenhagen organized by University of Roskilde.

In order to enhance IMS external communication a comprehensive communications strategy is now under formulation. The main elements of the strategy will follow the following two lines of work.

First of all, IMS will feed into the public debate, where relevant. It is also foreseen that IMS will feed in to debates internationally, giving priority to Denmark, Sweden and Norway.

The second line will be directed towards the professional groups with whom IMS is collaborating, mainly media practitioners and organizations involved in media/conflict work. The yearly conferences on current issues within this field will be supplemented with other instruments such as a newsletter and more active use of the IMS website.

The communication efforts will be mainstreamed into the IMS activities as such, but IMS human resources for this purpose will also be increased. Due consideration for the confidentiality of some information and the safety of local partners will be made as a priority. The strategy will be finalized during the beginning of 2006.

4. Programme activities

In the following sections, the above-mentioned interventions are described in detail, based on the format below:

- Description and objective of intervention
- Obstacles and deviations encountered
- Budget considerations
- Results and effects and issues related to
- Continuity and follow-up.

4.1 Africa

Great Lakes Region

1. Background

Since the Rwanda genocide in 1994, the Rwanda/Burundi/Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) region has been among the most unstable in the world. Given the fragile, highly combustible and often violent political situation in the region, the need to increase information and cooperation across borders is acute. Inter-governmental initiatives concretised in the joint declaration on peace, security, democracy and development from Dar es Salaam in November 2004 is an indication of increased attention to regional solutions, but the problems still remain. Myths and misunderstandings concerning the neighbouring countries, their population and intentions are prevalent in all three countries, increasing tension and the danger of future violent conflict.

Increased cross-border cooperation among media outlets is an important means to alleviate this situation, both on the political level and especially in the broader population in the border regions. Given Rwanda's political and military prominence in the region, furthering the development of a free media in Rwanda is also in and of itself a significant step to peace in the region. The local radio stations in Rwanda urgently need both expertise and technical skills. They can get both of these from contacts and exchanges with the more experienced radio stations in Kivu and Burundi. They also in turn have something to gain from cooperation with the Rwandan stations, namely improved access to information from a closed society.

IMS activities in the Great Lakes Region are building upon knowledge and contacts developed since the first interventions in the region in 2002. The work in 2005 have followed the strategy laid out in 2004 exploring possibilities to increase cross-border media cooperation as a means to reduce tension and increase the level of understanding between both professional journalists and their audiences. Support to radio stations has been chosen as the most suitable media.

2. Actions

Taking stock of the needs for media development in Rwanda, Burundi and DRC and considering the needs for enhanced relations between the countries, IMS facilitated the establishment and activities of a network of ten radio stations from the three countries. This happened through a needs assessment mission among radio stations in November 2004, and the implementation of a pilot seminar for the radio stations in January 2005. The seminar created an opportunity for the exchange of experiences and creation of contacts across borders. The network "Reseau des Radios des Grands Lacs (RRGL)" was established and the principles and priority of activities were discussed. Following the January seminar, the radio network has produced a specific work plan, and has also put efforts into formalizing the network through the draft formulation of principles for cooperation between the radios.

Safety Training
The first concrete activity within RRGL was a two-day risk awareness training carried out in April 2005 and implemented by the International News Safety Institute (INSI). The training covered risk awareness and basic battle field first aid and – due to the recent history of Rwanda – an extra component dealing with trauma and post traumatic stress relating specifically to journalists. In total 20 participants from Rwandan media and media support organizations participated in the seminar. The seminar was financed by Open Society Foundation and SIDA.

Team Reporting
In July IMS deployed a consultant to the region in order to support the RRGL steering committee to conceptualise and plan a team reporting exercise. Furthermore, the mission also visited a number of additional radios in Burundi, DRC and Rwanda in order to assess the possibility to expand the RRGL network.

The team reporting was carried out in September with the participation of journalists from 18 different radios from the three countries, who in groups of three will made radio reportages from Burundi, DRC and Rwanda. Panos and Search for Common Ground will provide assistance to the exercise. IMS financed this activity using SIDA funding.

3. Assessment

Safety Training
The first concrete intervention in supporting the radio network was the safety training, which accomplished the expected results. The participants expressed that the seminar was very useful for them and that similar activities should be offered to RRGL members in the other two countries.

Team Reporting
Taking an overall view of the IMS support to the radios in the RRGL network during 2005 it has become clear that interventions should prioritise regional activities, where radios can participate in joint activities with the possibility to cooperate directly with radios in other countries. Although the final evaluation of the will only be made early 2006, it has demonstrated the importance of promoting

debate and joint work between radios from the different countries, as a means to increase understanding and reduce tensions. Through the exercise it has also become evident that joint activities and the sharing of work methodologies can strengthen the capacities of the radios, and in particular benefiting the institutionally weak radios in Rwanda.

4. Future Actions

The team reporting exercise helped in assessing the strengths and weaknesses of the RRGL network. On the basis of the evaluation of this exercise and the process in 2005 IMS will take decisions on future support and development to RRGL or other initiatives in the region.

IMS has promoted the engagement of Panos (Paris) and other media support organizations to support the network and regional activities. IMS expects that the activities related to the regional cooperation between the radios will be consolidated during 2006.

Ivory Coast

1. Background

The behaviour of the authorities and combatant groups towards the media has steadily worsened since the conflict in Côte d'Ivoire flared up in September 2002. This has increasingly constituted a serious obstacle to press freedom and freedom of expression and is most often characterized by the confrontations between members of the defence and security forces and the media community.

This upsurge has been characterized by the murder of journalists, physical attacks, abductions, destruction and confiscation of assets and equipment, tearing up of newspapers, and many other forms of violence and intimidation.

2. Actions

Following on from a meeting held in Accra in October 2004 between the National Union of Journalists of Ivory Coast (UNJCI), CNP (Le Conseil National de la Presse - Côte d'Ivoire), Media Rights Agenda (MRA – Nigeria), Media Foundation for West Africa (MFWA), IMS and International Freedom of Expression Exchange (IFEX), in late 2004 and early 2005 UNJCI, MFWA and IMS worked on developing an approach on media and security issues involving the media community and civil, political and military authorities in Côte d'Ivoire.

It was agreed that a seminar should be hosted in August 2005 by UNJCI, CNP and MFWA to examine how the security of journalists can be guaranteed and freedom of expression respected in Côte d'Ivoire, as well as how the security of journalists can be improved. In this regard, the objective of the seminar was to further the protection of press freedom and freedom of expression, whilst allowing the journalist to become involved in the dynamics of national reconciliation. It was foreseen that this could specifically be achieved through discussion on key media and security related issues between the media community and civil, political and military authorities, as well as to strengthen the security of journalists through the implementation of specific measures.

3. Assessment

Despite efforts to ensure a rapid pace in the refinement of the UNJCI proposal with the aim of getting substantive activities up and running quickly, this process took longer than expected. In this manner, the seminar was not actually held until August due to continuing discussions between IMS, MFWA and UNJCI and the constantly fluctuating security situation in the country.

The seminar assisted to develop a collective awareness about the imperatives of good governance and public security. This was confirmed through the drafting of a joint resolution outlining collaboration between media practitioners and defence and security forces. In addition, the seminar also enabled journalists to better understand the mechanisms of security forces.

4. Future Actions

As a follow-up to the seminar, UNJCI agreed with the participants to establish a framework for continued interaction and meetings both amongst the media community and between the media and political, civil and military authorities. In this regard, UNJCI will seek to create a 'platform' for focusing on the security of journalist's, ensuring that these issues are given higher consideration and public profile.

Liberia

1. Background

Over the past two and a half decades Liberia has been plagued by political autocracy, economic stagnation and civil unrest. However, in August 2003 a peace agreement was signed between the government of Charles Taylor and the LURD and MODEL rebel groups, thereby paving the way for and end to the conflict and a power-sharing administration. The strong regional and international presence in Liberia over the past two years has presented a significant opportunity to bring stability to the country in the short-term and establish the groundwork for addressing the country's problems and needs in the longer-terms. In this regard, the presidential and parliamentary elections held in October 2005 where a significant milestone, marking the end of the transitional government and ushering in a new phase in the post-conflict transition.

In December 2003 the 'Partnership for Media and Conflict Prevention in West Africa' undertook a mission to Liberia to assess the media situation. Based on the findings of this mission, member organisations of the Partnership initiated activities in the country during 2004 in key areas, including the reform of the media policy and institutional framework, development of a media centre, enhancing the capacity of the media for the elections, addressing public service broadcasting, assisting regional broadcast media and support for print media.

IMS has continued to provide coordination amongst the Partnership and has assisted its members with activities when applicable, although the main activity-based focus during 2004 and 2005 has been on media policy reform, the media centre, support for editors and publishers, and mainstreaming media support on the development aid agenda. In this regard, IMS undertook three missions to Liberia during 2005 in March, May and September.

2. Actions

Media Policy and Institutional Framework
During 2004 IMS provided international expertise to a working group comprised of the Ministry of Information, national media community and legal experts. This working group reviewed the media policy and institutional framework in Liberia and the resultant analysis was used as the basis for the 'National Conference on Media Law and Policy', which was supported by IMS and held in Monrovia in October 2004.

The Conference, which included 140 media experts and local journalists, reviewed of the media policy framework and discussed a number of repressive and restrictive laws that infringe on the rights of Liberian journalists. As a follow up, a 'Working Group on Media Law and Policy Reform' was formed, including government members, media, legal experts and others, to work towards the necessary legal reforms during the tenure of the transitional government. During the reporting period IMS, UNESCO and Article 19 cooperated with the Working Group to produce three alternative draft laws including[1]:

- An Act establishing an Independent Electronic Media Commission
- An Act establishing an Independent Print Media Commission
- A Freedom of Information Act

Liberia Media Centre
In September 2004, IMS, Media Rights Agenda - Nigeria, IREX – Europe, and the International Press Centre (IPC) in Lagos participated in a project initiation meeting for the Liberia Media Centre bringing together local media associations, media practitioners and a cross-section of civil society actors. This meeting agreed on the practical steps to implement the project and draw up statutes for an independent Liberia Media Centre. The statutes were finalised and the Centre officially registered in November, thus opening the way for Phase I of the project to get underway.

Phase I, which included the initial establishment of the Centre, provision of equipment and opening of computer facilities, was completed in mid-2005 after a tendering process for the equipment and minor construction work at the Centre.

During the first half of 2005 IMS also worked together with the IPC and LMC on the launch of the computer facilities and the development of income generating activities, as well as on preparing the Phase II proposal. It is foreseen that Phase II will get underway in 2006.

Study Tour for Editors and Publishers
In April 2005, IMS supported the World Association of Newspapers (WAN) and Ugandan Newspaper Editors and Publishers Association (UNEPA) in organising a study tour to Ghana and Uganda for five publishers from the Newspaper Publishers Association of Liberia. This tour was aimed at sharing experiences between the Liberian and Ugandan peers on a range of issues including management, advertisement, distribution and publication, as well as enhancing knowledge on options for collectively approaching and taking action on issues of common interest for publishers in Liberia.

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[1] However, following the final consultative meeting held in late December, it was agreed amongst the national stakeholders that there should be one law for the print and broadcast sectors. These two laws will therefore be merged in early 2006 to become an Act establishing an Independent National Media Commission, alongside the Freedom of Information Act.

3. Assessment

As with previous years, one of the main obstacles in 2005 has been sourcing funds for media support activities. However, the activities of the Partnership in Liberia are positive examples of where limited co-funding from organisations, such as IMS, OSI, IREX, UNESCO and others, can produce tangible results. Nevertheless, the paucity of funding has meant that all of the activities have taken longer than expected.

Media Policy and Institutional Framework
Despite the considerably improved media environment since the end of the conflict, outdated and restrictive media legislation remains in place and continues to threaten media freedoms. In this regard, the redrafting activities of the working group have provided alternative draft legislation that can serve to better safeguard press freedoms and freedom of expression in the future.

Liberia Media Centre
The LMC Phase I project took longer to complete than expected due to the tendering and selection process to ensure that the activities were implemented in a transparent manner and also served to build the capacity of the local counterparts. The intensive IMS involvement with the LMC has also strengthened the capacities and skills of the LMC staff.

Study Tour for Editors and Publishers
The study tour for the Newspaper Publishers Association to Uganda has helped broaden the Association's understanding of their role and the activities they could undertake in order to assist the print media. WAN will continue to work with the Association on these fields.

4. Future Actions

Media Policy and Institutional Framework
With the finalisation of the draft media laws expected by late 2005, IMS and UNESCO will work on a new strategy with the national partners for the lobbying process to get the draft laws through Parliament. It is foreseen that these activities should start in 2006.

Liberia Media Centre
The LMC Phase II proposal has been submitted to a number of donors and potential co-funders, including OSIWA, Ford Foundation West Africa, FreeVoice, International Alert and IREX. IMS has been proactively following up with these organisations and it is therefore hoped that funding will be secured for Phase II in 2006.

The LMC has also been working with support from IMS and IPC on developing its role in furthering the professional development of the media community. In this regard, the LMC has plans to work with UNMIL on a post-elections media coverage roundtable, as well as with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the Human Rights Commission.

Somalia

1. Background

Since the civil conflict started in 1991 the country has been through a period of violence and conflict. Without any central administration, the country has been governed by factions ruled by warlords. The former regions Somaliland and Puntland have pulled towards secessions and self-administration. Although the civil conflict is now over, fighting persists at the local level over regional interests. A general peace agreement was signed in 2004, but the implementation of the peace accord is pending. Mass media and journalists are working under extremely difficult situations, where physical threats and other obstacles are hampering the possibility to comply with their most basic functions.

Although the situation is very complicated for the media and media workers, the peace agreement has prompted the setting up of new media and the establishment of new media support and journalist organizations.

IMS has been active in Somalia since 2002 focusing on three lines of work. First of all, IMS has elaborated assessments of the media situation in the country, in order to identify needs and possible partners, as well promoting increased support from international media support organizations. Through collaboration with local partners, lobby activities for inclusion of freedom of speech considerations in constitutional and other legal frameworks have been conducted. Furthermore, IMS has supported the development of systems in Somalia for the monitoring of press freedom violations.

2. Actions

Although IMS in 2005 has not supported specific activities in Somalia, it has continued to be in contact with Somali organizations and those international partners – such as IFEX, IFJ, and MFWA – that are involved in supporting the media. In particular, IMS has focused its contribution in the discussions on stressing the importance of accepting several media support organizations working side by side in the country, and the strength of diversity of initiatives.

3. Assessment

IMS has played a constructive role in promoting dialogue between organizations, but has to a certain degree been limited in its actions due to the difficulties of communication and access to the country. Further, it has been difficult for IMS to identify specific interventions due to the conflicts between Somali organizations and the mere question of safe conduct in the country.

4. Future Actions

IMS will follow two lines of work in Somalia. First of all, the rapidly changing situation in the country calls for an updated overview of the media situation and identification of needs and opportunities for support.

Secondly, IMS will develop specific actions directed towards the promotion of dialogue between Somali media organizations. The organization of an international meeting outside the country is one possibility under consideration.

Sudan

1. Description

The 21 year long civil war in Sudan ended with the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) signed in January 2005 between the Government of Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A). The country is now facing a complex political process, where a number of benchmarks related to governance structures, including legal reforms, must be accomplished to fulfil the peace agreement. Moreover, the southern part of the country in particular is in need of support to build basic infrastructure in order to provide elementary services to the population.

IMS has been supporting media development in Sudan since 2002, starting out with a survey of the media situation among the mass media in the north of the country. In 2003, this was followed by a comprehensive assessment of the media situation in Sudan, including opportunities for support. One of the areas identified in the assessment was the need to foster debate and dialogue on media policy issues between the Government of Sudan, SPLM and journalists and media institutions from the north and south. A project was prepared by Article 19, Norwegian People's Aid and IMS, and financed by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs providing an outline of a series of media policy and legal framework roundtables and other support activities.

Meanwhile, in Darfur peace has not become part of daily life, and the ongoing conflict has lead to a humanitarian crisis, which affects more than two million people. One problem not addressed in any systematic way is the need for humanitarian information for the people affected by the conflict. Without constantly updated and accurate information on the humanitarian and security situations, it is difficult to effectively provide assistance where it is most required, which is essential for avoiding some of the worst humanitarian consequences of conflict.

2. Actions

In order to respond to the need for humanitarian information an expert mission was sent to Darfur in January 2005 to assess and identify the humanitarian information needs in the region. The mission also identified relevant partners, both local and international in gathering, providing and disseminating such information.

3. Assessment

The mission resulted in a report "Darfur Information Needs Assessment", outlining immediate and medium term support activities. The document was widely distributed, and a follow-up mission in June 2005 was carried out in order to further disseminate the report and to develop concrete project proposals. The recommended support for the BBC World Service Trust "life-line" radio programme, which now is being funded by Ford Foundation, has been the first concrete result of this effort.

4. Future Actions

IMS will during the second half of 2005 look into other needs for media support in Sudan, which the organization can respond to. The following interventions are foreseen, and will be assessed during missions September-Decemebr 2005.

Humanitarian information Darfur

Further initiatives will be taken along the recommendations in the "Darfur Information Needs Assessment".

Roundtable Process

IMS will continue to support the roundtable process managed by Article 19, which in 2006 will focus on concrete support and promotion of media legislation. IMS is participating in the steering committee of this project and will assist the implementation by provision of technical support.

Media Resource Centre

IMS will consider support to the establishment of a media resource centre in Juba in Southern Sudan. The centre can strenthengn the work of media practitioners in Juba together with incoming journalists from diaspora and other media. This initiative will be developed together with the Association for Media Development in Southern Sudan (AMDISS). IMS will be using previous experience with support to establishment of a media centre in Liberia.

Update of 2003 Assessment

IMS plan to update the 2003 assessment, in order to offer information and guidance to those decision-makers engaged in media development. The assessment will be generic and updated on a bi-monthly basis during a one-year period.

Coordination and Partnership

IMS will seek to facilitate coordination and information sharing among media development organizations and hope to reach a formalized partnership as has been achieved in Liberia, Nepal and elsewhere.

Togo

1. Background

The death of President Gnassingbe Eyadema in February and subsequent military coup d'etat created considerable political unrest in Togo, with the regional and international community pushing for the elections in April in order to allow the opposition to contest the Presidency. However, these elections were marred by incidents of harassment and assaults on journalists and resulted in the confirmation of Gnassingbe Eyadema son as President. Nevertheless, the death of the former President opened up the potential for the media community to reassert press freedoms in the country.

The Togo media is not free to report and comment on the news and other matters of public concern without fear of reprisal. This level of fear is such that a number of radio stations no longer broadcast news and have limited their broadcasts to areas other than news. In this regard, the media require assistance to protect themselves from attack and repressive actions.

A critical issue for the monitoring and protection of press freedoms is the state and capacity of professional media organisations in the country. In this regard, there is the need to strengthen these organisations so they can provide collective protection and welfare, undertake advocacy activities for the rights and interests of members and the industry, and offer leadership in promoting professional standards.

2. Actions

To this end, in mid-2005 IMS and the Media Foundation for West Africa (MFWA) together initiated a dialogue with the independent media community in Togo. A progressive series of four meetings in Accra were decided upon as the best form of engagement in order to allow for a process of consolidation and self-reflection by the independent media community, as well as to ensure that subsequently identified projects activities had broad local ownership and would not become divisive within the independent media community. These meetings were held in Accra rather than Lomé in order to bring the media practitioners out of their local context to a 'safer' environment in which to hold open discussions.

Combined with this approach IMS and MFWA also worked together to establish and equip a network of press freedom monitors to provide quick up-to-date alerts on transgressions of media rights in Togo through effective and consistent monitoring of abuses of press freedom and freedom of expression. Three monitors based across the country have been identified by MFWA to be part of the MFWA regional media rights network.

3. Assessment

It was originally foreseen that the meetings with the Togo independent media community could be held in mid to late 2005, thus allowing for the process to be complete by December when the Union of Independent Journalists of Togo (UJIT) was expected to hold its annual conference. However, identifying suitable dates for the meetings and the process of Togolese media organisations preparing their joint assessments took more time than expected. In this regard, the meetings were held in June, July and September, with the final meeting planned for December. UJIT also agreed to postpone its annual conference until March 2006 in order to allow time for generating international attention and participation.

The MFWA training of the three monitors was expected to take place in late 2005, but will now be conducted in Accra in January 2006.

The process of having a series of meetings over the course of a few months to allow the independent media community to identify and explore options for joint approaches has proven to be productive. With a bare minimum of external funding, these organisations have produced a series of papers on the media situation and identified a number of priority areas for action. In specific, this group has prepared papers on the state of media since the death of President Eyadema, the role of women in the media in Togo and an overview of media legislation (MFWA intends to publish some of these papers). The activities have also opened up possibilities for a joint regional and international approach on the broad range of issues of concern that exist in Togo under the auspices of the 'Partnership for Media and Conflict Prevention in West Africa'.

4. Future Actions

The intention for the engagement in Togo was to use the process to facilitate the involvement of other regional and international media development and freedom of expression actors under the umbrella of the 'Partnership for Media and Conflict Resolution in West Africa'. In this regard, it is foreseen that a core group of organisations from the Partnership will undertake a joint assessment mission to Togo in

January/February 2006 in order to prepare an assessment report based on the findings of the meetings in Accra. This document will then be used as a basis for preparing joint engagements in the country.

The aim was also to get significant international attention and involvement in the country. In this regard, MFWA and IMS will focus on securing international participation at the UJIT annual conference in March 2006, thus bringing international focus and backing to the efforts of the independent media community in furthering press freedoms and freedom of expression.

It is also noted that IMS participated in preliminary discussions during the year concerning the media situation in **Guinea Bissau**. As with Togo, this West African nation receives minimal international attention and it is therefore foreseen that during 2006 further attention and a potential assessment mission will undertaken to the country under the auspices of the Partnership.

Zimbabwe

1. Background

The political and economic situation in Zimbabwe has continued to decline during the past year. More than two decades of increasingly dictatorial rule under the Mugabe government has destroyed the county's political and economic structures, and increasingly stagnated civil society, with few signs of optimism remaining among the opposition. It is estimated that at least a quarter of the population have fled the country, with many more internally displaced.

Like the country itself, the media has suffered immensely during the last years. According to the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), Zimbabwe is now the third-worst place in the world to be a journalist. The once-flourishing independent media is all but gone, with only two independent weeklies remaining, while all other newspapers and radio- and TV-stations are government controlled. Much of the balanced and objective information being produced by Zimbabweans that is accessible to the general public is coming from diaspora media, which are forced to work from outside the country and exploit opportunities to get their media disseminated inside the country.

IMS has followed the situation in Zimbabwe since 2001 and has mainly focused on the provision of safety measures for media professionals inside and outside the country, as well as support to diaspora media and promotion of legal reforms. The cooperation has evolved around collaboration with ARTICLE 19 and the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA).

Following a conference in October 2003 on the media situation in the country, it became clear that there was a need for a coherent strategic framework for media sector advocacy. Consequently, IMS financed a workshop to discuss and prepare an advocacy strategy. Netherlands Institute for Southern Africa (NISA) followed up with finance for an advocacy programme within the framework of the Media Alliance for Zimbabwe (MAZ).

2. Actions

Journalism Workshop
Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA-Zim) carried out a workshop in February 2005, which aimed at having journalists lowering the incidence of hate speech in the media. The workshop was carried out. Both state-owned and independent media participated in the workshop. The course covered basic

journalistic skills, as well as gave room for examining how the media can successfully be a moderating force in the political crisis.

Conference
The difficult situation in Zimbabwe called for serious consideration and support for media, information dissemination and freedom expression in the country. Therefore media representatives from Zimbabwe together with international organizations jointly prepared an 'International Conference on Media Support Strategies for Zimbabwe'.

The conference has the intention to bring together national, regional and international media organizations and international donors, together with representatives of Zimbabwe's independent media community. The focus of the conference is the examination of existing strategies used by media actors, with the goal of adapting enhanced approaches that reflect the situation on the ground.

IMS has co-financed this conference together with NISA and Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa (OSISA). A particular concept was developed for the conference giving emphasis to a broad consultative process beforehand and the preparation of background documents taking stock of the current situation.

3. Assessment

The journalism workshop was carried out as planned and expected results achieved.

At the end of the reporting period the preparations for the conference had involve the relevant stakeholders and constructed a mutual understanding of the concept and goals of the conference. The conference was scheduled to be held in late November.

4. Future Actions

The Conference in November 2005 will be followed by a possible IMS intervention based on the resultant discussions and recommendations.

4.2 Asia

Burma

1. Background

During 2004 and 2005 the military authorities in Burma have continued to exercise tight controls over freedom of expression and press freedoms, enforcing severe penalties on those who seek to challenge these restrictions. In this regard, all media in Burma are strictly controlled through the Press Scrutiny Board (PSB). All news presented to the Burmese public has in principle firstly been approved by this body and accessing independent news about events inside the country, as well as about the democracy movement and activities outside the country, is difficult.

The IMS focus for Burma has therefore continued to be to work with the exile media community in order to support the production and dissemination of professional independent media inside Burma, as well as to strengthen communication between media professionals, democracy and human rights activists, and others inside and outside the country.

2. Actions

During 2004 IMS cultivated relations with the Mizzima News Group (MNG), an Indian-based Burmese exile media group and subsequently supported a six-month pilot program to send Mizzima publications to publicly accessible forums inside Burma and at the same time seek to develop other activities together with Mizzima News. The first step in this regard was taken in October 2004, when a meeting between representatives from the Burmese exile media community and the media community inside Burma was held in New Delhi. The meeting was arranged by Mizzima and IMS and brought together about 20 media professionals from inside and outside Burma.

The aim of the meeting was to discuss the Burmese media situation generally and specifically to develop methods to strengthen links and information flows between the internal and exiled media communities, thereby reducing the mistrust and envy that currently plagues the relationship between journalist from inside and outside Burma. The strained relationship between the two groups had been identified by IMS as one of the main unaddressed problems with the Burmese media, and at the same time one that - if bettered - might create synergies and new opportunities on a broader scale.

In order to address this IMS supported Mizzima to develop an internet forum to provide a space in which journalists from inside and outside of the country can get acquainted, exchange information and build trust and cooperation. This website, called Mingalarpar Forum 2005, has two forums available - the Public Forum and Private Forum. While anyone can register easily to get access to the Public Forum, only those who are given access by the administrator (Mizzima) will get access to Private Forum.

3. Assessment

The collection of information about the impact of the activities inside of Burma is mostly anecdotal due to the severe limitations posed by the authorities, as well as the threat any survey of recipients/users would pose to their safety. However, it does appear that the dissemination of Mizzima publication inside Burma has a reasonable readership. Mizzima estimates that approximately 30-35% of their 2,500 monthly copies (i.e. around 800-900) reach inside Burma either by land across the border or by direct posting to selected addresses.

Although the original deadline for setting up the Mingalarpar Forum 2005 website was 1 January, the website not completed until March 2005. In addition, the firewall on the website has not been stable due to the fluctuating electricity supply in Delhi, which in turn has on occasion blocked access to the website. Moreover, in mid-2005 the Forum had 33 participants, of which 27 were in the private forum, and almost all of these persons were from outside of Burma.

Nevertheless, it seems that interest in such a site remains positive and consideration therefore needs to be given as to why the Mingalarpar Forum has been under-utilized. In order to try and encourage better participation, Mizzima has been looking at examples from elsewhere in the world, such as the www.talawas.org site from Vietnam.

4. Future Actions

The activities for distributing MNG publications inside Burma were extended as of September 2005 for an additional six months to ensure continued engagement. In addition, the Mingalarpar Forum project is ongoing until the end of the year.

However, further methods of developing internal-external linkages and bypassing the regimes severe limitations on freedom of speech need to be explored. In this regard, IMS will be meeting with Mizzima in early 2006 to discuss options for future collaboration and to review and refine current collaboration.

Indonesia

1. Background

Whilst some of the province-based conflicts in Indonesia have made notable progress towards peaceful resolution during 2004 and 2005, others have shown sign of regression. At present there are a number of conflicts in the country that are both specific to particular provinces and have complex political, ethnic, societal, economic and religious undertones. Therefore, whilst the overall political scene in the country increasingly moves towards stability, IMS has continued to pursue activities through an individual province-based approach.

In this regard, IMS has pursued four main activities in Indonesia during the reporting period, as outlined below:

2. Actions

Developing Linkages between Local Radio Stations and Academics
These project activities, which were started in early 2004, brought together academics from the Indonesian Conflict Studies Network (ICSN) and radio stations from the Local Radio Network for Democracy (LRND) in the provinces of Maluku, Aceh and Kalimantan. The joint radio/academic teams completed two out of three units of programme production during 2004. Units one and two of the project had run for longer than originally anticipated, so it was expected that unit three would take place in 2005.

However, the national elections in late 2004 and the earthquake and tsunami in December significantly hindered continuation, as the academic in Maluku ran for election thus dropping out of the project, the academic in Kalimantan moved to Aceh immediately following the tsunami, and the radio stations in Aceh were either destroyed or damaged. For this reason it was decided together with the national coordinators of both the ICSN and LRND to complete the reporting for units one and two before deciding whether to undertake unit three.

Support for Local Radio in North Maluku
The joint assessment report on the role of media in supporting peace-building and reconciliation efforts in Central Sulawesi, Maluku and North Maluku researched and written together with the UNDP Crisis Prevention and Recovery Unit (CPRU) and the Institute for the Studies on Free Flow of Information (ISAI) was completed in July 2004. Based on the findings of the report, IMS prepared a pilot phase

project together with the 68H Radio Network 68H to act upon a number of the issues of concern in North Maluku.

This project aimed at strengthening independent local broadcast media and addressing information vacuums through supporting two local radio stations in the main Christian and Muslim communities to enlarge their coverage and undertake cooperative productions and news broadcasts. This project was initiated in late 2004 and the activities ran throughout the reporting period.

Response to the Tsunami
The earthquake and tsunami that struck northern Sumatra in Indonesia on 26 December 2004 wrought widespread destruction to the coastal areas of province of Aceh. In response the UNESCO Jakarta Office and IMS fielded a joint media assessment mission to Aceh in January 2005. The mission team travelled to the tsunami affected-areas, specifically including Banda Aceh and Meulaboh, in order to collect first hand information and conduct a needs assessment on the situation of the media, with an emphasis on local radio.

The mission also provided basic training on humanitarian information for local broadcast media, as well as facilitated the provision of urgently required equipment. In addition, as an outcome of the mission IMS and UNESCO prepared a 'Joint Media Assessment Mission to Aceh' report that was made publicly available. The mission also made a number of recommendations for activities including continuing support for radio stations, the development of a media and culture media centre, and further work on enhancing the provision of humanitarian information.

Aceh Peace Process
In August, the Indonesian Government and the Free Aceh Movement signed a Memorandum of Understanding ending the three decade long conflict in Aceh. In order to look at options for an IMS engagement in support of the peace process, a desk study was initiated and a mission to Aceh planned for November 2005 with aim of identifing areas for a possible IMS engagement in support of the peace process.

3. Assessment

Developing Linkages between Local Radio Stations and Academics
The cooperation between the LRND and ICSN seems to have produced mixed results depending on the presence and engagement of the local participants. In this regard, the first two units seem to have been successfully implemented in Kalimantan and Maluku, but not in Aceh where the radio stations had little direct inter-action with the academic. However, this should be understood within the context of the ongoing threat posed to journalists or any person expressing their opinion contrary to that of the combatant parties in Aceh during 2004.

Moreover, due to the aforementioned disruptions for the project participants, coupled with the relatively complex organisational structure used, it took approximately six months to complete all of the reporting from the radio stations and academics on units one and two.

Support for Local Radio in North Maluku
The activities to upgrade and link the two radio stations in North Maluku appear to have had positive results. However, funds had to be redirected when the technical assessment of the radio stations identified that the transmitter at one was in a much worse condition than originally thought.

Response to the Tsunami

The IMS/ UNESCO mission reacted quickly and was on the ground in Aceh only a fortnight after the disaster. In this regard, the mission was the first international team to visit radio stations in some of the worst affected areas, including Meulaboh. In addition, the training undertaken during the mission went well and the report was produced and distributed in a timely manner. In response IMS received positive feedback from partners working in Aceh, who described the report as an important baseline study which they continue to use for programming activities in the region.

Aceh Peace Process

In undertaking the desk study and preparing for the mission in November it is clear that there are many actors involved in supporting the media in Aceh. Nevertheless, it seems that there are areas where IMS could provide new approaches that contribute to the wider picture of activities being undertaken, as well as explore innovative options for working with the media in support of the peace process.

4. Future Actions

Developing Linkages between Local Radio Stations and Academics

Due to the disruption caused to the project, continuity of the activities was severely hindered. However, it seems that the activities did achieve some success and IMS will be conducting a review of the project in late 2005.

Support for Local Radio in North Maluku

Radio Hikmah and Radio SPB have proven track records of operating within the existing commercial marketplace in North Maluku. In this regard, it is foreseen that both stations will be able to continue joint activities after the project is complete. Moreover, the activities in North Maluku served the dual function of being a self-contained project addressing urgent needs, as well as a pilot phase for long-term activities under the next phase of the UNDP CPRU programme. In this regard, the finalised UNDP framework for conflict prevention and recovery activities in Central Sulawesi, Maluku and North Maluku is expected to be published in late 2005.

Response to the Tsunami

Following the mission UNESCO has supported radio stations from the Local Radio Network for Democracy (LRND). Moreover, the proposal for a media and culture centre, which was prepared after the mission, has now generated interest and will most likely receive support in the months ahead. A proposal prepared by IMS and UNESCO to work with the LRND to establish a small humanitarian information unit on the ground immediately after the disaster could unfortunately not be implemented due human resource obstacles and its relevancy was quickly overtaken by larger-scale interventions in the weeks following the disaster.

Aceh Peace Process

IMS will undertake a mission to Aceh in November to assess the situation and identify potential areas for IMS interventions in support for the peace process.

Nepal

1. Background

The political situation in Nepal during 2004 presented an uneasy status quo between the main power brokers in the country, with the monarchy retaining de-facto control over the government. However,

the security situation worsened with the Maoist forces increasing their presence in the countryside, leaving the armed forces in control of the main urban areas. Nevertheless, media rights and freedoms continued to be vibrantly exercised.

However, on 1 February 2005 King Gyanendra of Nepal declared a state of emergency in an apparent response to the country's deteriorating security situation. This controversial move, which relied on military backing, dissolved the sitting government, overrode various civil liberties protected under the 1990 constitution, and effectively granted the monarchy absolute administrative powers. In the subsequent weeks and months the media community has come under considerable pressure from the authorities and tensions between the groups have escalated.

2. Actions

In the second half of 2004 IMS undertook two missions to Nepal, in October for an assessment of the media situation in the country, and in December to finalise and establish project activities with Federation of Nepalese Journalists (FNJ) and Center for Human Rights and Democratic Studies (CEHURDES) on advocacy and monitoring, and with Media Services International (MSI) and the Rory Peck Trust (RPT) on journalist's safety and a shelter.

Media Monitoring and Advocacy
In late 2004, IMS initiated a pilot phase project together with FNJ and CEHURDES to support media monitoring and advocacy activities. This project aimed to assist the FNJ to address the increasing harassment, abduction, torture and killing of media practitioners by the combatant groups. In this regard, the objectives of the project were to continue to broaden monitoring activities, enhance the advocacy capacity of national media community and raise awareness about media rights. These objectives were to be achieved through the monitoring and documentation of violations against the media, high-level media missions to address specific safety related incidents and awareness-building seminars with local media in the worst conflict-affected districts.

Safety and Shelter
In early 2005, IMS launched a project with MSI and RPT to address a number of concerns relating to safety issues. This included supporting internally displaced media practitioners who had been forced to flee their home regions as a result of their work. In addition, those media practitioners working in conflict-affected areas needed improved safety in conducting their work, as well as better financial security for themselves and their families. In this regard, the project activities provided a shelter in Kathmandu for displaced journalists, established a system for tracking journalists under threat, provided insurance and a 'grant fund' for journalist and their families, and documented lesson learnt and safety related experiences.

National Media Discussion Forum
IMS supported the Himal Association – Centre for Investigative Journalism to establish an informal Nepalese only 'discussion forum' for media practitioners in Kathmandu. The aim of this forum was to facilitate dialogue and coordination amongst the media community, which was functioning under increasingly difficult and divisive circumstances.

Response to the State of Emergency and the International Mission
After the 'state of emergency' declared by the King, IMS supported an advocacy mission to Nepal by the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) in February 2005, including the publication of the report, 'Coups, Kings and Censorship'.

Furthermore, in response to the ongoing deteriorating press freedom and freedom of expression situation in the country, IMS played a central role in bringing together twelve international organisations, including UN agencies, global media associations, freedom of expression advocates and media development organisations, to undertake a joint advocacy mission to the country in July 2005[2]. During the mission the international organisations met with persons and institutions representing a broad spectrum of opinions on the current media and freedom of expression situation in the country. In addition, the mission visited a number of the districts, including Butwal, Biratnagar, Nepalgunj and Mahendranagar, and met with local civil authorities and representatives from the local media in these areas.

The mission produced a statement and report on the situation in the country. A number of the participating organisations have also started activities in the country in support of the local media community, including Article 19, IFJ, UNESCO, World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters, International Press Institute and World Association of Newspapers. To support the activities of its partners, IMS used a follow-up mission in November to identify funding opportunities for the international partner organisations, as well as to secure funding for the return of the international mission to Nepal in March 2006.

3. Assessment

Media Monitoring and Advocacy
Due to the state of emergency declared by the King on 1 February, IMS agreed with FNJ to focus the funding on reactive advocacy missions to a conflict-affected district and for the monitoring media rights violations. In this regard, four missions were undertaken covering the areas of Dolakha, Dhankuta, Ilam and Jhapa, as well as a mission to Dailekh in which some 300 persons participated.

This project provided FNJ with resources to both continue and further develop its monitoring and advocacy activities. In specific, the FNJ has reported that the activities secured the released of several detained media practitioners, encourage local media communities to engage in their work more vigorously, familiarised the Kathmandu based media with the realities in the districts and brought civil society into closer contact with the media.

Safety and Shelter
The tracking of media practitioners under threat has had a great impact on receiving information for further action. MSI has built up a tracking mechanism, entailing 15 focal points who report all security related incidents and keep track of threatened journalists. The grant scheme has been used to assist three widows of killed journalists and their children. Sixty-eight freelance journalists are also receiving personal accident and medical insurance. The audio- visual production "Nepali Press in Crisis" was produced and displayed in the National Conference of International Mission for Press freedom in July 2005. It was also distributed to all media organizations throughout the country, although it proved not to be possible to broadcast it on national TV due to the current government restrictions.

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[2]The international organisations represented on the mission included ARTICLE 19, Committee to Protect Journalists, International Federation of Journalists, International Media Support, International Press Institute, Press Institute of India, Reporters Sans Frontières, South Asian Free Media Association, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters – AMARC, World Association of Newspapers and World Press Freedom Committee.

National Media Discussion Forum

The national discussion forum has been continued through 2005 in the unobtrusive manner for which it was created. In this regard, the project has provided a 'media only' forum in which selected media practitioners from across the spectrum of opinion can discuss the situation in the country and explore options for common understandings and assisting one another.

Response to the State of Emergency and the International Mission

The international mission was the first time that such a large group of press freedom and freedom of expression organisations have come together to undertake a joint mission in support of the national media community. According to some national media practitioners and international partners on the ground in Nepal, the mission has had a positive impact in both pressuring the authorities and bolstering the morale of the national media community. Moreover, statements released by the international mission have consistently achieved front-page coverage in the Nepalese media and it seems that the collective stance taken by so many organisations has had an impact.

In addition, as a result of the mission a number of the international participants have followed up with activities in the country of varying scopes, including Article 19, IFJ, UNESCO, World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters, International Press Institute and World Association of Newspapers.

4. Future Actions

Media Monitoring and Advocacy

With the pilot phase coming to a close in late 2005, IMS sought to ensure long-term continuity in the monitoring and advocacy activities. In this regard, the Danida office in Kathmandu is finalising a large-scale programme to assist the FNJ with institution building and monitoring and advocacy, which will build upon the activities developed during the pilot phase. This programme will draw upon the expertise of the International Federation of Journalists, which will be partnering the FNJ during implementation over the two year duration.

Safety and Shelter

Due to the process of getting the support mechanism established, the safety and shelter activities are expected to continue into late 2005. IMS will also provide further interim support for the shelter to ensure that this vital facility remains open. In 2006, RPT, IMS and MSI will further jointly explore funding options for the continuation of the activities.

National Media Discussion Forum

Due to the limited size of funds required to facilitate the meetings of the discussion forum, sufficient resources remain from the original contract to carry the activities into 2006. When the forum has established a regular and steady rhythm and if it develops a reputation for discretion and excellence amongst the national media community, IMS will discuss the further development of this activity with the Himal Association - – Centre for Investigative Journalism.

Response to the State of Emergency and the International Mission

Despite the successes of the international mission, the press freedom situation has continued to deteriorate in Nepal. Most notably, the introduction of the new media ordinance on 9 October constitutes a serious setback for press freedoms and freedom of expression. In this regard, censorship and pressure applied by the authorities, security forces and combatant groups will most probably

continue in the coming months and it is therefore important that the momentum of the coordinated national and international advocacy established thus far be maintain.

The organisations that participated in the international mission in mid-July have agreed to continue their collaborative activities in support of the national media community, using the collective name of the 'International Press Freedom and Freedom of Expression Mission to Nepal', including a return to the country in March 2006. However, the continuation of individual project activities in the country by the international participants will be dependent on identifying funding.

4.3 Carribean

Haiti

1. Background

In February 2004, Haiti's first freely elected President, Jean Bertrand Aristide, was forced to leave the country and an interim government lead by Prime Minister Gerard Latortue took power. An international UN lead peacekeeping force (MINUSTAH) was subsequently deployed in order to stop the continuing political violence and crime. However, quelling violence in Haiti has proved difficult and it threatens to overshadow Haiti's local, legislative and presidential elections, due in February 2006.

Press freedom was incorporated in the Haitian constitution in 1987 and media has gained a steadily higher impact on the Haitian society. Furthermore, full press freedom in Haiti faces severe obstacles and threats from all directions in a situation where political groups and criminal gangs have become the order of the day. Moreover, media are still suffering from the lack of understanding and tradition for free democratic dialogue in the Haitian political life, leading to a constant state of fear and self-censorship within the media.

During a mission in 2004, which IMS conducted together with Institute for Media, Policy and Civil Society (IMPACS), it was found that the overall professional obstacles for the development of a free, democratic and independent Haitian media was the lack of resources and journalistic skills.

2. Actions

Based on the findings of the 2004 mission, the francophone sister organisation to IMPACS, Reseau Liberte, drafted and submitted an application to the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) for a media programme in Haiti. When approval was given by CIDA, IMS joined the return mission to Haiti together with IMPACS and Reseau Liberte in May 2005 to further define the media programme and to identify options for IMS to support the joint approach being taken by IMS and the Canadian partner organisations. As a result of this mission, two avenues were identified for an IMS engagement in conjunction with the CIDA funded programme.

Manual for Coaching of Radio Journalists
Within the CIDA funded media programme, coordinated by Reseau Liberte, strengthening media coverage was included, entailing the training of journalists at six different radio stations in Port-au-Prince. The May 2005 mission suggested that this training should take the form of on-site coaching, making it possible for the participants to practice and make their training operational immediately. While the actual coaching was to be financed and organized within the overall CIDA funded

programme, IMS decided to fund the development of a manual for this coaching, since this method of capacity building is not common and requires specific tools based on the experiences of those who have done such training in the past. IMS prepared this manual in close collaboration with IMPACS, Reseau Liberte and another Canadian NGO, called Media&Democracy.

Enhancement of Alterpresse Electoral Coverage
A second intervention conceptualised during the May mission was to strengthen the electoral coverage through the internet based news service AlterPresse (www.alterpresse.org). Together with the Canadian organization Alternatives, IMS supported the expansion of this internet service during a period of 5 months around the elections. The support included the re-launch of a weekly electronic newsletter on Haitian current affairs, a daily election web broadcasts by AlternRadio and one daily special election analysis.

3. Assessment

Both the manual for coaching of radio journalists and the enhancement of Alterpresse electoral coverage took place after the reporting period.

Future Actions and Exit Strategy

Manual for Coaching of Radio Journalists
The coaching manual will be evaluated after the CIDA training programme is finished. Feedback and lesson learnt from the trainers using the manual in Haiti will be used to adjust and improve the document into a generic manual and can be applied to future support for coaching media to enhance electoral coverage.

Enhancement of Alterpresse Electoral Coverage
Support to the Alterpresse website is aimed at the election period only, although the skills and network gained from the activities should be utilised for the continued production of professional media content.

4.4 CIS

Belarus

1. Background

The referendum of October 2004, which removed any limits on the time a President can spend in office in Belarus, has opened the way for Lukashenka to stand for re-election for a third term. In this regard, Lukashenka's grip on power in the country appears strong and the probable impact of the 'Orange Revolution' in Ukraine on the 2006 elections currently seems limited.

A major concern of the international community is the increasing isolationism of Belarus. Many donors concur that the most effective strategy until a fundamental change occurs in Belarus is to reduce or minimize isolation and ideological repression, and support the flow of alternative information to the

public. In this regard, the administration of President Lukashenka has over the past years systematically crushed the independent media and controlled the flow of information in the country[3].

By mid 2005 the few national independent newspapers left were struggling with the bad economic situation and hardly had any means of distribution left after the government cancelled distribution through the official post system. There are no independent electronic media other than FM radio stations that play only music or entertainment talk shows. Belarus has about 20 non-state TV companies, but all are directly controlled by the central or local authorities. Additionally, the closure of the two American media support groups, IREX and Internews, offered further evidence of the repression against the media.

Options for interventions are therefore limited by the realities of the situation facing independent media and civil society within Belarus.

2. Actions

In June 2004 the Belarus Election Package was initiated, to be implemented by IMS in cooperation with other partners, among them the Danish Union of Journalists (DJ). The aim of the activities was to support the media during the pre- and post-election period. Some of the activities have laid the ground for more long-term cooperation which will be continued under the forthcoming media programme for Ukraine, Belarus and the Western Balkans.

The activities carried out were mainly focused on five components: Media monitoring related to the election, which was implemented in cooperation with Article 19; support to the Belarusian Association of Journalists (BAJ), including regional and international links implemented by the Danish Union of Journalists; publishing of the magazine Media Expert; seminars for young journalists; and support to starting up an underground newspaper, implemented by the Latvian Transatlantic Organisations (LATO).

Some of the activities have been continued throughout 2005. In early 2005 a capacity building mission to Belarus was carried out by the Danish Union of Journalists in cooperation with IFJ, which resulted in input and recommendations for the strategy development of BAJ. Furthermore the underground newspaper has been published throughout 2005, partly with funds from IMS and partly with contributions from other donors.

3. Assessments

The capacity building of BAJ through international contacts and cooperation with DJ seems to have had an impact. BAJ has based on the input from IFJ and DJ started to discuss organisational matters such as membership issues, where BAJ has appointed a membership consultant. BAJ has also followed up on the recommendation from IFJ and DJ regarding strengthening of the regional branches of the union.

With hardly any independent newspapers left inside Belarus the importance of the underground newspaper is increasing. However the issue of avoiding that it is competing with other alternative

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[3] IREX Media Sustainability Index for Belarus (2004)

information channels is constantly being assessed, as well as the issue of rooting the newspaper with the media community inside the country.

4. Future Actions

The increasingly difficult situation for the independent media in Belarus underpins the importance of the continuation of the activities.

The activities in Belarus are envisaged to be part of the media programme for Ukraine, Belarus and the Western Balkans to be supported by the Neighbourhood Programme of the Danish Foreign Ministry.

Central Asia

1. Background

The Fergana Valley in Central Asia, which encompasses eastern Uzbekistan, northern Tajikistan and south-western Kyrgyzstan, has a number of commonly shared problems, which impact on all communities in the region. The break-up of the Soviet Union brought with it the establishment of five new states in Central Asia, creating new borders where they did not previously exist. As a result, communication between communities in different countries has been progressively constricted. This has created obstacles to solving shared problems, all of which have cross-border implications, not only in terms of commonly felt repercussions, but also because each requires significant inter-communal and cross-border linkage if it is to be understood and addressed.

In this regard, the violent clashes in the Fergana Valley region in the 1990s were to a large extent fuelled by this isolation and the ethnic stereotyping and hate-speech that thrived upon it. Numerous local experts from the Valley region point towards border and custom problems, religious extremism and ethnic relations as the basis for the societal tension of the region, which not only threaten inter-communal harmony and economic prosperity, but also bring the potential to spark ethnic clashes and violence.

During 2005, the Fergana valley region saw increasing socio-political unrest. In February 2005, parliamentary elections in Kyrgyzstan sparked a wave of protests as numerous independent and opposition candidates were barred from standing. These protects eventually led to President Akayev downfall. Moreover, in May 2005 violence erupted in the Uzbek town of Andijan, ending with a heavy handed response by the authorities causing numerous deaths. The government also closed the borders with neighboring countries, sparking further civil unrest in the town of Korasuv on the Kyrgyz border.

2. Actions

Media and Terrorism Assessment in Fergana Valley
In late 2004, IMS was requested by the Danish Foreign Ministry to undertake an assessment mission to Central Asia. The objectives of this mission were to analyse the key issues in the area of media, terror and extremism, and to formulate a project that would address these issues in the context of possible media support. The existing knowledge on the linkages between media, terror and extremism in Central Asia is limited and therefore the mission also included an analysis of these linkages.

After two postponements of the mission dates in January and May due to the unrest in the region, the mission when ahead in July 2005 and the 'Terrorism, Extremism and Media in Central Asia' programme document was drafted, entailing five different components of activities. These components included a radio network; a features network and magazine; support for local private radio broadcasters; monitoring and defending media rights and freedom; and advocacy and awareness-raising nationally and internationally. It was recommended that whilst IMS could implement the first three components, the International Freedom of Expression eXchange (IFEX) should implement the last two components.

Information Dissemination in the Fergana Valley
In response to the deteriorating situation in the Fergana Valley region in early 2005, IMS responded quickly with the 'Facilitating Information Dissemination and Support to Broadcast Media in the Fergana Valley' project which ran from May to August 2005.

This project sought to develop ties between the media communities of the three countries in the Fergana Valley, whilst also addressing common issues that fuel tension and create uncertainty and inter-communal violence through the co-production of radio documentaries. These programmes were to present balanced and objectives points of view, offering possible solutions to societal tensions and conflict in the region and seeking to develop the knowledge and awareness of the listeners by providing them with reliable and factual information.

3. Assessment

Media and Terrorism Assessment in Fergana Valley
Despite delays in the mission team travelling to Central Asia, the mission was undertaken and the programme document researched, written up and submitted to the Danish Foreign Ministry.

Information Dissemination in the Fergana Valley
The radio programmes were reportedly widely listened to in the Fergana Valley region, thereby providing local communities with objective and balanced information during this period of tension. In this regard, the first programme focused on 'finding the truth about Andijan'; the second on the international consequences between the countries following the events in Andijan; the third on the 'down to earth' consequences for the local population; and the fourth programme on the definitions of generally used terms - terrorism, extremism, Jihad and so forth.

The project also helped develop linkages between journalists and radio stations in the region, building upon the previous cooperation established under the prior Danida funded activities undertaken through Index on Censorship. The project included 2 journalists from Khujand (Tajikistan), 4 from Osh (Kyrgyzstan), 2 from Fergana/ Andijan (Uzbekistan), 2 from Tashkent (Uzbekistan) and 2 from Namagan/ Kokand (Uzbekistan).

4. Future Actions

Media and Terrorism Assessment in Fergana Valley
The 'Terrorism, Extremism and Media in Central Asia' programme was developed in late 2005.

Information Dissemination in the Fergana Valley
In July 2005, the IMS mission to Central Asia took the opportunity to review the radio activities. Due to the apparent success of the activities, it was foreseen that they would be ideally suited for inclusion

in the aforementioned Danida funded programme addressing terrorism, extremism and media in Central Asia.

SCOOP

1. Background

In Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova and the Western Balkans, concerns remain amongst national and international commentators over the capacity of the media to fulfil its role as the 'fourth estate'. The level of professionalism of journalists remains low and the content of media outlets is often journalistically weak. In particular, the media lacks the ability to produce serious in-depth reporting. Addressing these concerns has been a primary focus area for media development actors in the Western Balkans and Ukraine for a number of years, resulting in a notable amount of training on professional standards and investigative journalism. However, the impact of the vast amount of training that has been carried out can be questioned. In order to supplement and build on the training efforts implemented so far a need to support actual investigative reporting has been identified.

2. Actions

SCOOP is a support structure for journalists doing investigative reporting in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe through which assistance is given to carry out concrete investigations. The project was initiated in early 2003 by International Media Support (IMS), the Danish Association for Investigative Reporters (FUJ) and a group of journalists in Ukraine with the aim of boosting the quantity and quality of investigative reporting in the region. The project has since the beginning been focusing both at national and trans-national investigations. The activities have also been expanded to cover the Western Balkans, Bulgaria, Romania, Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine.

IMS provided the funds to start up the SCOOP activities in early 2003 and has since then had a representative in the steering committee. The Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs funded the continuation of the activities directly to FUJ. However, IMS has continued to provide advice and support to FUJ for the management and implementation of the activities, specifically in relations to the preparation of donor reports.

In spring 2005, the office for the Neighbourhood Programme (NAB) at the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs requested IMS to carry out an identification mission with NAB aimed at identifying a larger comprehensive media programme for Ukraine, Belarus and the Western Balkans, in which it was envisaged that SCOOP could be involved. These missions to Belgrade and Kiev were carried out in mid-April 2005 and the first draft of the programme document was prepared and submitted to the Foreign Ministry in June.

3. Assessment

It seems that by have a clear focus on concrete investigations, SCOOP is filling a gap in the previous international funding given in Eastern Europe and is building on and supplementing the training activities of the last few years. Moreover, the investigations are tackling issues of national concern to the democratic development of the countries involved, as well as helping to strengthen the overall perception of the media and its role.

An indicator of the success of SCOOP is the media awards and prices that have been given to investigations carried out under the project. For example, in Ukraine two investigations were awarded the prize for "best investigative journalism" in 2003 and 2004, whilst in Bulgaria an article was awarded a prize and in Romania an investigation into child slavery received an award. In addition, SCOOP itself was a candidate for the German Leipziger Medienpries, which is given to outstanding journalists and media projects.

Based on the previous good experience and results, IMS and FUJ have used the model in other regions and as part of other programmes, such as the Arab Initiative. More information and all articles can be found on the SCOOP webpage – www.i-scoop.org

4.5 Latin America

Colombia

1. Background

The conflict in Colombia between the paramilitaries of the United Self-Defence of Colombia (AUC), government forces and the guerrillas of FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia) and ELN (National Liberation Army) is also a conflict of information. Killings and persecution of journalists is a means of getting control over media content and avoiding critical coverage. The Fundación para la Libertad de Prensa' (FLIP) reported three media practitioners killed in 2004 and 77 victims of aggression. Although the number has decreased compared to former years, the situation is still critical. Adding to this, impunity continues to be a problem and figures from FLIP indicate that more than 90% of filed cases for killings remain unresolved.

IMS has been actively supporting journalist and media organizations since 2002 through interventions promoting the fight against impunity, enhanced monitoring of freedom of expression and support to safety measures, as well as improvement of web-based tools for improvement of journalistic quality.

IMS carried out a mission in February 2005 and following the recommendations and agreements made with Colombian media organizations, Reporters without Borders (RSF-Sweden) and SIDA, a number of new initiatives have been implemented. The aim for the continued support is to reach an overall strategy for media support work, which is backed up through a coordinated support and response from international media organizations and donors.

2. Actions

Following the February mission IMS has engaged in three specific interventions in support to Colombia mass media:

Fund for Investigative Journalism
The development of a fund for investigative journalism has been supported through a pilot project carried out jointly by various organizations under the lead of the umbrella organization Proyecto Antonio Nariño (PAN). The initiative co-financed by Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) has developed its methodology building on IMS experiences from similar work in Ukraine and the Arab world. The project plans to launch the call for proposals in September having human rights and civil ethics as the theme for the applications.

Internationalisation of MPP Website
The organization Medios para la Paz (MPP), which is a key organization in Colombia for providing support to improvement of journalistic standards and media coverage of the conflict, has developed a number of methods based on training of journalists. Since the tools and lessons learnt from this effort can be useful in other countries, IMS together with the British Embassy has supported MPP in systematisation of their experiences and their dissemination in English on the MPP webpage, and the organization produced a number of articles presenting the lessons learnt in a journalistic style and published these on the website. The project also aimed at strengthening the links between MPP and similar organizations outside Colombia.

Support to Newspaper La Opinion
During 2004 PAN carried out a needs assessment among regional newspapers in Colombia resulting in the formulation of an initiative to provide support to newsroom management and journalistic coverage to the six newspapers with the greatest needs. The organization has developed a methodology for this support, mixing on-site and distant training and coaching. In order to test this methodology and to provide direct support to the newspaper La Opinion, which is meeting serious constraints in their journalistic work due to conflict in the region Norte de Santander, IMS together with RSF-Sweden has planned to engaged in a pilot project directed towards support to this newspaper. The concrete activities will initiative towards the end of 2005.

3. Assessment

Fund for Investigative Journalism
The development of this project took place after the end of the period of reporting, and a thorough evaluation will be carried out later to analyse the experience and the results.

Internationalisation of MPP Website
The strengthening of the English part of MPP website and the lessons learnt has expanded the possibilities for organizations abroad to access information and experiences from MPP work and methodologies. Still, the dissemination and the linkages to organizations abroad were not achieved to the extent foreseen and further efforts are required.

Support to Newspaper La Opinion
The project has been delayed significantly, since the PAN wished to include private donors in the initiative and undertook lengthy negotiations with them. Eventually the donors did not integrate and the project activities were initiated at the end of 2005, to run until March 2006.

4. Future Actions

Fund for Investigative Journalism
IMS will continue to support this fund, giving particular attention to developing a concept and set-up for the continuation of the activities in the long-term, as well as bringing in donors. IMS will strengthen this initiative by linking it to resource persons experienced with investigative reporting from other countries.

Support to Newspaper La Opinion
The project will run into 2006 as planned and receive support from IMS.

Media and Elections

It is foreseen that the mass media needs specific support in relation to the Parliamentary elections in March 2006 and the Presidential elections in May 2006, and in particular related to safety needs and media coverage.

International Meeting

An international meeting planned for Spring 2006, which will be carried out together with RSF-Sweden, will be a major opportunity to put the discussion of strategies for media support in Colombia on the agenda. It is expected that the meeting will gather international and national media support organisations, together with media representatives and donors.

Guatemala

1. Background

Although the armed conflict was formally finished with the 1996 Peace Accords, the country continues to be marked by violence. First and foremost the violence is linked to organized crime, but is also related to turbulence growing out of social conflicts related to land rights and access to natural resources.

For years journalists have been victims of the violence. The IFEX-affiliated Guatemalan organization CERIGUA reported that 31 journalists were attacked during January to July 2005. The majority of the attacks allegedly were connected to the journalists' attempts to access public information from government institutions and courts, or when covering social protests and demonstrations. These figures demonstrated that it is very difficult for journalists to do their everyday work.

Journalists have very few mechanisms to rely on when being attacked or harassed. They lack confidence in judicial system and a fear of negative consequences means journalist do not bringing their cases forward. Consequently some journalists practice self-censorship and avoid topics like drug-trafficking and corruption.

The media landscape in Guatemala is dominated by television where the major channels are owned by one person, thereby creating a monopoly-like situation. Commercial enterprises dominate the radio sector, although a large number and variety of community radios do exist, but function under very difficult situations with problems in having frequencies legalized.

Prompted by the serious situation IMS together with a representative from ARTICLE 19 carried out a mission to Guatemala in February 2005, in order to gather information for an assessment of the situation in the country, and possibly to identify areas for IMS interventions.

2. Actions

Media Assessment

A large number of interviews with high-level government representatives, journalists and representatives from human rights organizations were carried out during the February mission. The first draft of the report assessing the situation in relation to freedom of expression and information rights has been completed.

Support to Radio Stations
IMS decided to focus on support to community radio stations in Guatemala. In many cases they serve as an alternative means of communication at the local level for information and promotion of participation of citizens in local development. Well organized and linked together, and with an adequate media platform, they can also serve as a promoter of an alternative media agenda at the national level. The strengthening of community radio stations as a means for enhanced communication among indigenous populations and allowing their active participation in Guatemalan democracy was one of the goals set for in the Peace Accords, and which has not been accomplished. The need to support an intervention in this area is therefore clear. In this respect, it is also important to take into account that obtaining stronger community radios will support to the poorest segments of the Guatemalan population, those persons living in the rural areas.

Meetings with a number of community radios led to the identification of two specific initiatives. One initiative originally identified by Baltic Media Centre (BMC) for support to community radio Acu'Mam was reconfirmed by IMS as important and relevant to support, and a project document was developed together with the Danish Union of Journalists (DJ). Eventually, expected Danida-funding (from "projektrådgivningen") for this project was not obtained and it was not able to provide support to the radio station.

A second initiative identified was support to specific radio programming at the University Radio, based in the capital, which provide an innovative news platform in the Guatemalan media landscape. These news programmes fill a gap in the Guatemalan media scene by being critical and reflecting alternative points of views. The interventions seek to respond to immediate needs for securing the continued development of this effort. The IMS support to the radio is coordinated with support from Danish NGOs MS (Mellemfolkeligt Samvirke/ Danish Association for International Co-operation) and DanChurchAid.

3. Assessment

Media Assessment
A preliminary report has been produced, but it has been decided to carry out a short follow-up mission to gather complimentary information. This will be carried out during first months of 2006.

Support to Radio Stations
The project with the University Radio received support and has developed according to schedule.

4. Future Actions

In order to finalize the IMS/ ARTICLE 19 assessment, IMS will send a follow-up mission to Guatemala in the beginning of 2006. The outcome of this mission will provide IMS with the information necessary to decide on future actions in Guatemala.

4.6 The Arab World and Iran

Arab Initiative Programme

1.   Background.

Media freedom and professional standards vary significantly throughout the region. In countries such as Jordan and Morocco, the conditions for free media are in the process of a positive and progressive transition, while in Iran the media has become a focal point for the battle between progressive and conservative forces. In Syria, Saudi Arabia and Tunisia, some media professionals are challenging the limitations for independent media to operate, whereas countries such as Lebanon and Algeria they enjoy a diverse and relatively free media scene - albeit restricted by confessional and political linkages. Yemen boasts a great deal of media freedom but the ability of the sector to realise its full potential is limited by dearth of journalistic and organisational skills.

Several of the region's journalists' unions and associations are currently engaged in developing their capacities to be able to carry out genuine trade union work. However, they are facing a difficult task. In some countries, journalists are barred from forming trade unions; in others associations exist but they lack the capacity to effectively defend journalists' interests; in other countries journalists' unions are well established, but need to be strengthened to be able to play a more decisive role in the struggle for the social and professional rights of their members.

While demands for democratic change within the populace are currently on the rise in the region, journalists throughout Arab countries and Iran still face enormous challenges in establishing independent quality journalism.

All public media is still either run as a government monopoly by the state. Thus, the *press-government harmony model* exercised in these countries has relegated the State broadcaster to nothing more than the *"public relations arm of the government"*, a model more commonly associated with the old Communist systems.

It is indisputable that satellite TV has made a huge difference to the choice of media outlets available. It has opened windows to a world, which was inaccessible before except to the well to do, and it has provoked a lively and often heated debate about the implications for nations, communities and cultures.

Many Arab satellite channels are simply offshoots of state-run TV. Most were set up just so that governments could extend their influence beyond national borders. Whatever the real aim–information or propaganda, satellite broadcasting has helped turn TV into a major factor in the political life of a region which has never been noted for media pluralism.

After years of state monopoly, the arrival of regional satellite channels seemed like a breath of fresh air for the region's middle class viewers. Those with cable and satellite connections were suddenly liberated from their respective state broadcaster's paternalistic programming and were offered access first to a wide range of international channels and popular commercial programming specially made for Arab speaking audiences.

Today, Arab and Iranian media is faced with increasing demands for better quality and faster news from their target audiences and survival in a world with still stronger competition from an ever

increasing number of media players. Paradoxically, there is a real wish and desire from media professional in the region for professional development and modernisation.

With the new possibilities provided by new and cheaper technology, media entrepreneurs can now launch new, more independent-minded media. The Internet presents an avenue for expression in the more repressive environments through launch of web logs, news sites and even radio stations.

The IMS Media Cooperation Programme aims to strengthen the professional development of Arab and Iranian media through the creation of strong links and engendering the development of cooperation between local actors and like-minded colleagues in the region and on an international level. Such partnerships would in time, it is hoped lead to an expansion of media diversity and the dispersion of media to a wider section of the population through joint efforts which address the various obstacles to freedom of expression and opinion, hereunder freedom of the media.

2. Actions

International Media Support (IMS) initially engaged in developing a strategy for media cooperation with the Arab world and Iran in March 2004. An Inception Phase was initiated in August 2004, in order to test the feasibility of the strategy developed by IMS in line with the Danish Government's Partnership for Progress and Reform for cooperation between Danish and Arab media partners. The period September 2004 to August 2005 covers the completion of the inception phase of the programme and the finalisation of the activities and implementation structures for the beginning of the two-year programme phase.

As a result of the lessons learnt in the Inception phase, the Strategy Paper for Media Cooperation with the Wider Middle East outlined six thematic strategic areas;

- Monitoring and Advocacy,
- Capacity building of Journalist Unions,
- Strengthen professionalism and Investigative Journalism,
- Audiovisual Co-Production,
- Documentary Film Production
- Twinning and Exchange

Cooperation was extended through support to specific projects and programmes, which were seen to contribute to the expansion of capacity, knowledge, choices and freedoms as well as addressing the empowerment of women. All projects were primarily carried out through partnerships between Danish and Arab non-governmental organisations.

The strategic areas addressed in the programme all related to the role of media in society and ensuring a high level of professional standards and quality. Production of quality journalism under the auspices of the programme across all media challenged and enhanced the boundaries for freedom of expression while at the same time introducing new innovative story formats and appealing content which proved to be accessible to the audiences by being grounded in real local perspectives.

Another consideration of the programme strategy was to build the programme around areas where specific Danish expertise existed. Thus focus has been placed on investigative journalism, public service, production of children's TV programmes and internationally acclaimed film institutions.

For each of the components, partnerships of Danish, International and Arab stakeholders were established. The partnership models took different forms within each component but each partnership was responsible for organisation of the Inception Phase, specifically the strategic development, planning and implementation of test activities and the outlining and creation of future structures for management and cooperation in the programme implementation phase.

Monitoring and Advocacy

Activities within this area were developed in close cooperation with international and Arab partners, taking a broad and regional approach to challenges to media freedom in the Arab countries. The activities were guided by an attempt to develop a strategic view of monitoring media freedom in the Arab world. This included setting up of a consultative working group consisting of a number of Arab organisations with capacity to carry out the monitoring, assistance to the organisational development of Arab Press Freedom Watch (APFW), training monitoring groups from the region, organisation of monitoring of media coverage during elections in Tunisia, Palestine and Egypt, and support to development of a regional media watchdog radio programme (Eye on Media).

Strengthening Journalists' Unions and Associations

Most Arab and Iranian journalists' organisations are members of the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ). Given the experience with international projects and cooperation held by IFJ, a new model for cooperation was designed during the Inception Phase characterized by a close cooperation between IFJ and the Danish Journalist Association in cooperation with national Journalist associations in the pilot countries.

During the Inception Phase, national strategies for development of journalist associations in four pilot countries in the Arab region were created and trade union workshops were carried out. At the same time, an action plan for issues to be addressed at the regional level was drawn up. The initial contact to partners in each of the four countries which was successfully established by four representatives of the Danish Journalist Association, led to the continuation of this model in the programme phase.

Strengthen professionalism and Investigative Journalism

Test activities were organised by a Steering Group composed of media professionals and experts from Jordan, Lebanon and Syria. The activities consisted of organisation of a training seminar for promising young journalists and subsequent support to three journalistic investigations. The Steering Group additionally focused its efforts on building a structure for facilitation of investigative journalism in the three countries. The resulting platform has been named ARIJ or Arab Reporters for Investigative Journalism.

The steering committee was formalised into a board of founding members which met in Amman in August 2005 and finalised the platform for the formal network of Arab Reporters for Investigative Journalism (ARIJ). The organisation appointed an executive director and set up a secretariat in Amman which has been operational since October 2005.

Audiovisual Co-Production

This part of the Inception Phase focused on assessing the feasibility of carrying out a co-production project between Danish children's TV producers and Syrian TV. Activities centred on consulting and building confidence with the potential Arab partners, Syrian TV, Jordan TV and Tele Liban and in developing a proper format and structure for co-production and exchange of children's programmes. In addition, the Danish Broadcasting Corporation was included in the partnership. A pre production meeting took place in July 2005 in Damascus and a plan for co-operation was agreed upon.

Documentary Film Production

A group of Arab documentary filmmakers from 5 countries (Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Palestine and Egypt) has, in cooperation with IMS, developed a model for Danish involvement in establishing an Arab film institute to support Arab documentary filmmaking. The anticipated activities include, in the short term, vocational training and the creation of a fully-fledged Arab Film Institute in the long term.

The process was hampered by differences of opinion among the group of Arab filmmakers. However, these differences were overcome in August 2005 in close consultation with IMS.

Twinning and Exchange

A strategy for twinning partnerships involving three or more levels of cooperation e.g. the journalistic, the editorial and the management level was developed. Test twinning between Politiken and An-Nahar newspaper in Lebanon was organised. Danish journalists were twinned with Lebanese colleagues and worked in cooperation first in Denmark, then in Lebanon. At the same time, the further scope presented by the twinning concept between the two media houses were discussed at the management level, and an exchange of opinion pieces, also involving the Daily Star (Lebanon and regional) and Al-Ghad (Jordan) was organised.

A similar exchange programme involving Danish newspaper Information and an Iranian counterpart was also planned. The Inception Phase also involved establishing collaboration between IMS' and Images of the Middle East/the Danish Centre for Culture and Development. A joint platform for the cooperation was established to implement the twinning activities named Danish-Arab Media Forum.

3. Assessment

The programme developed from the inception phase has been designed to address Media in the Arab World at four strategic levels;

- A level dealing with media freedom/media political issues (monitoring, advocacy and legal protection);
- A level focusing on media organisational issues (union and association building) and
- A level addressing professional standards (capacity building and institutional development).
- A level providing space for alternative views and intercultural understanding (twinning & Arab film institute)

The four strategic levels of the Media Cooperation Programme consist of six components, each involving different stakeholders in the Danish, Arab/Iranian and international media environment. The programme maintains the six original focus areas although strategic priorities, activity fields, and working methodologies have been fine-tuned.

The exploratory approach adopted during the inception phase has thus been essential for the presentation of a targeted and cohesive strategy for future expansion of activities and partnerships established since August 2004 within each component.

The selection of the strategic areas was based on several considerations, including the potential for synergy between them. While the initial phase has involved undertaking analyses of the overall challenges facing media in the region, the larger perspective has been to ensure coordination with other

media interventions in the region, thereby ensuring complementarity's and avoiding duplication. For example, several initiatives are being undertaken by various organisations that target media freedom issues through engagement with media law reform, therefore IMS with the partners during the Inception Phase identified the related areas of monitoring, evaluating media coverage and enhancing legal protection to complement these ongoing initiatives.

In the Arab world, scepticism towards Western initiatives to engage in and support measures towards political reform abound. Specifically, the motivation and agendas driving such initiatives are always being questioned. The Inception Phase has been instrumental in overcoming such reluctance. The open-ended nature of the process, which was from the onset designed as adjustable according to the recommendations of Arab partners has been crucial to this end. A process of genuine consultation with Arab experts and media professionals and encouragement of dialogue with like-minded Danish colleagues has conferred real ownership to most of the partnerships established.

Most Arabs are enthusiastic about strengthening links between organisations and institutions and across national borders. Pan-Arab cooperation is seen as one means to obtain development, greater possibilities and prosperity. However, there is very little experience with such collaboration in the region. The Inception Phase has shown that this lack of experience is accompanied by vigilance towards others, their aspirations and agendas, and ensuing caution to commit to partnership in the real sense of the word.

Moreover, many Arab organisations are young and so do not yet have fully developed organisational structures and a broad base. In many cases, organisational structures lack entirely due to obstacles and prohibitions embedded in national legislations Limited understanding of organisational matters often hamper both planning and implementation of activities.

Following from this, a major lesson learnt during the Inception Phase is that time must be invested in the process of facilitating cooperation and helping Arab organisations and collaboration-structures mature. Establishing partnerships should therefore be considered a major task for the Media Cooperation Programme on par with and with equal priority to that of organising activities.

It should be noted that where cooperation has successfully been established, such as e.g. among three Tunisian civil society organisations and an Algerian academic nominated by Arab Press Freedom Watch, on monitoring media coverage of the Presidential Election, October 2004, it has spurred tremendous appreciation, aspirations of reinforced partnership and plans for joint action and advocacy.

4. Future Actions

Monitoring and Advocacy
A workshop for Arab Working Group and international experts including formulation of strategies, methodology and future cooperation will be held in December 2005. Support to media monitoring of the Palestinian elections in January 2006 will be carried out as well.

Capacity building of Journalist Unions
The inception phase is to be evaluated by IFJ and the Danish representatives at a joint seminar in November 2005 in order to include lessons learnt in the final design of the project. A launch conference of the project is planned to take place in November in Beirut.

Strengthen professionalism and Investigative Journalism
The board will meet in January in Beirut to approve the statues of the organisation and to plan the training and five workshops for national coaches and journalists who will receive support for an investigation. The first workshop is to take place in February 2006.

Audiovisual Co-Production
The first series of 6x5 minutes titled "Me and my best Friend" about children and animals will be shot during during November/December 2005 with three stories shot in Syria and three in Jordan. Editing will take place in Amman during January 2006 with delivery expected in February upon which all sides of the process will be evaluated with a view to implement lessons learnt as a prerequisite for the continuation of the programme phase.

The board will meet in Copenhagen in February 2006 to approve statues of the organisation as well as agreeing on the curriculum as well as a working plan for the coming programme phase.

Documentary Film Production
A meeting with the founding fathers will take place in Cairo in November 2005 to institutionalise the co-operation and to draw up a plan to set up the institute. The board will meet in Copenhagen in February 2006 to approve statues of the organisation as well as agreeing on the curriculum as well as a working plan for the coming programme phase.

Twinning and Exchange
Danish partners will be identified through a public call for partners, and research trips to the Arab region will be conducted in November 2005 and February 2006 to identify Arab partners. The final twinning of Danish-Arab partners is expected to be concluded by mid-February.

Iran

1. Background

Under President Khatami, the independent press in Iran, especially newspapers and magazines, had begun to play an increasingly important role by providing a forum for a debate regarding reform in society. Newspapers proliferated and the combined circulations of Iranian newspapers reached 4 million in a period euphemistically labelled "the spring of freedom".

However, the judiciary worried that the open debates being engendered in the press was beginning to undermine their authority, started a crack down on media outlets closing more than 110 publications and putting a significant number of high profile journalists into jail. This crack down has intensified with the election in June 2005 of former Teheran mayor Mahmoud Ahmadinejad as President who targeted the control of the press as a key component of his "return to revolutionary ideals" manifesto.

As a result, worried for their own safety, journalists in Iran now have to exercise a level of self censorship that makes debate on any contentious issue virtually non-existent and the circulation of newspapers has now more than halved to less than 2 million.

The Iranian regime tries to contain what becomes public through rhetoric and imagery, based on ideology. To express any opinion outside official state ideology is condemned as un-Islamic and punishable in law. As a result, political debates and commentary have now switched from mainstream media to alternative media sources such as the Internet, documentary films and student media outlets.

2. Actions

In order to assess the media situation and identify possible areas of intervention for IMS, a mission was carried out in May 2005. The mission met with a large number of media representatives, journalists, filmmakers and other media practitioners, as well as those in academia.

The mission found that all media organisations and individuals were cautious about dealing with Westerners, particularly those that brought funding from Governments. Thus all dealings in Iran would have to be carefully planned and special care would have to be taken not to be seen to be giving support and thereby Danish Government validation to any particular political faction.

The mission developed a strategy for future interventions in Iran and identified a number of possible projects and partners, but all activities were temporarily suspended after the election of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad to enable the new political climate to be assessed before proceeding.

3. Assessment

Several project outlines have been produced and contact has been maintained to possible partners in Iran. Concretization of specific projects are planned to take form in the beginning of 2006. These include:

ISNA.
Most agree that the Iranian Students News Agency has managed to retain it's independence and is possibly the most balanced source of news in Iran. It is proposed that the agency be supported to help build capacity and to provide video/audio feeds.

Twinning of Journalist faculties.
Desire was expressed by Tehran University to twin with Danish institutions to allow exchange of students.

Co-production of Documentaries.
Introducing Iranian producers to Western counterparts to co-produce documentaries.

Cyber Journalism.
The government's crackdown on print media has driven many Iranian journalists to the web. Farsi has become the 4th most used language on the internet.

Support for minority press.
In the battle between the conservatives and the reformists, the minorities are being ignored. Thus there is a need to provide technical and capacity building support to Kurdish/Turkish/Arab press.

4. Future Actions

The Danish Institute for Human Rights has developed a programme promoting a free and pluralistic media landscape in Iran, mainly through academically based studies and dialogue. IMS will participate as a resource institution in this initiative.

IMS will also further develop the initiatives identified during the May mission and move towards turning these into activities with a follow up mission in the first half of 2006.

Iraq

Background and Objectives

The media in Iraq has recently emerged from nearly two decades of suppression by the Saddam Hussein regime. Since the ousting of Saddam, there has been a proliferation of media outlets in the country. Generally the majority of media available in Iraq is perceived to be freer than other countries in the region, but it still falls into three broad categories; the State owned Iraqi Media Network which has taken over the previous State broadcaster's frequencies and newspapers, private media which is owned and run by either political parties or religious factions, and foreign channels broadcasting into Iraq via satellite. Truly independent sources of news in Iraq remain limited.

Iraq's news-stands seem to be dominated by sensationalist tabloids and political party newspapers that promote their own agendas. Few of these address the issues of concern to the Iraqi public in a substantive, fair or impartial way. The main source of news and information for the Iraqi people have become the Arabic-language satellite channels based outside Iraq who are winning an ever-widening audience as satellite dishes, which were banned under the government of deposed president Saddam Hussein, now proliferate.

Problems facing all newspapers are virtually the same, while most are perceptibly freer than their electronic media counter-parts, publishing something that offends some section of the community could be dangerous. Also all editors bemoan the lack of suitably trained journalistic staff which has a profound impact on the quality of the reporting.

This assessment of the media situation in Iraq was reconfirmed during an IMS mission carried out in June 2005. In particular, the lack of newspapers' independence from political and religious interests was of particular concern. The strong government control of the Iraqi Media Network (IMN) and thus the news paper *Al-Sabah* (which has the largest circulation in the country) was also identified as problematic.

2. Actions

Overview of Media Assistance
Since the invasion of Iraq a number of initiatives for supporting the media have been implemented by international organizations. In order to provide an overview of current and planned activities for international support to media development IMS carried out a desk study of international assistance to media development in Iraq from 2003 to the formation of the Iraqi government and first weeks of the constitutional process in April-May 2005. The overview gives an account of the existing media support initiatives in Iraq and the challenges they are confronted with. The study concludes that the security situation and physical danger severely affects the functioning of the media and the possibilities for providing support from abroad. A consequence of this is only limited international assistance to media development which does not respond to the needs. The assessment was published and disseminated broadly to relevant actors.

Twinning
One of the initiatives the May mission looked into was the development of a twinning initiative between Iraqi and Danish newspapers. The mission identified possible partners for this initiative which lead to a first inception visit of two Iraqi editors to Denmark during July 2005. Based on meetings with journalists and editors from several newspapers the relevance for a twinning exercise was confirmed and the project was further developed. A central aspect of the concept is to develop the twinning at three levels: journalistic and editorial level, technical level, and management/business level. Due to security reasons Danish newspapers will not be able to travel to Iraq, thus it is not a full twinning programme which will be carried out. Furthermore, the concept paper outlines that the selection of participating newspapers from Iraq will seek to strike a balance between political, religious and geographical criteria.

3. Assessment

Overview of media assistance
The study was finalized and disseminated.

Twinning
The possibility for Iraqi newspaper professionals to be familiarized with Danish newspapers could significantly support their development. Furthermore, the interest demonstrated by Danish newspapers in participating also underlines the benefits Danish media professionals can get from this process, having the possibility to better understand the conditions and situation in Iraq. In this sense the project can be an important contribution to media development and strengthening understanding between two distinct realities.

4. Future Actions

The twinning exercise will be initiated with a one-week visit to Denmark by 10 newspapers professionals, which will take place in February 2006. Following the conclusions from this visit a 16 month programme will be initiated.

As the overview of media assistance to Iraq demonstrated, the support so far has been rather limited and needs exist in a number of areas. IMS will seek to identify further involvement in media support to Iraqi media and the possible use of twinning as a platform for identifying relevant initiatives and partners.

5. Methodologies for Media Assistance

IMS is constantly revising and adjusting the variety of intervention methodologies it uses, thereby ensuring that it is changing within the context in which it is operating. Lessons learnt from the interventions and methodologies applied are extracted and used as feedback into the institutional knowledge of the organisation.

Some of these methodologies have been transformed into manuals or other written instrument and made available to partners and the organisations involved in media support related to conflict situations. Part of this effort is the promotion of debate and development of joint understandings and strategies for media support among actors operating at international level. An example of this is the yearly conferences on current issues, such as the conference in November 2004: "Friends or Foes? –

Peacekeeping Forces, Humanitarian Aid and Media Development", which addressed the issue of how to bridge the gap between the immediate provision of humanitarian information and longer-term goals of promoting freedom of expression and development of independent media. A publication from this conference has been elaborated during 2005 to bring this discussion further on. No conference was held in 2005, but is planned for 2006.

The methodologies used by IMS can be broadly categorised into eight roles. These are as follows:

- Catalyst
- Assessment
- Media operations and emergency assistance
- Networking and linkages
- Media professionalisation
- Content transformation
- Monitoring and advocacy
- Safety

IMS often plays the role of a **catalyst** for media support in conflict and post-conflict areas. Being an organization without vested interest in any particular media support and emphasizing short-term interventions, the organization has been international acknowledged in the role of coordinating media support and facilitating joint approaches by national, regional and international organisations to formulate comprehensive assistance strategies in a given country or region. In this regard, IMS has developed specific formats and strategies for the promotion and establishment of coordination and alliances, which seek to bring organisations with a variety of expertise together to formulate concrete actions.

IMS often takes a lead role in carrying out **assessments** in order to analyse and provide recommendations with regard to the media situation in a given country and region. An assessment of a media and conflict situation is not only an essential precursor to project activities, but also acts as an intervention in its own right. In Sudan, for example, IMS in 2003 carried out assessment with recommendations for possible actions prior to the peace agreement between North and South. The assessment has served as a baseline for many subsequent media development initiatives in the country, and will now be updated considering the needs for coordination among media support organizations entering in Sudan after the January 2005 peace agreement.

The particular format IMS has developed for assessments focuses on a broad overview, strong analysis and concrete recommendations for future actions based on experiences on media support in conflict-affected areas. The assessments are often carried by an international IMS consultant working together with one broadly representative organisation or groups of national stakeholders, thereby promoting ownership and capacity building.

In many circumstances media in conflict situations require rapid and targeted assistance if they are to continue operating and producing professional media products. In such conditions IMS can take a role in facilitating **media operations and emergency assistance** with the local media. This support can take the form of replacing destroyed equipment or opening up alternative avenues for the publication or broadcasting of news. The intervention methodology applied for such interventions normally entails a quick assessment of needs together with technical advice and support for media programming. One of the strong IMS assets in this regard is the possibility to provide fast responses to urgent needs.

Currently, IMS is looking into developing this support within the field of humanitarian information, given particular focus on bridging between humanitarian information and media development initiatives, and the SIDA funded programme officer has prepared a concept paper for the IMS involvement in this field.

Promoting **networking and linkages** between media outlets and media organisation has shown important in many post-conflict countries, where interaction and communication within the media community has broken down. IMS works towards creating and supporting networking and linkages both within a media community and between the media and civil society, academia and authorities. As an example of such work, IMS has supported the development of a regional network between radio stations in Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo and Rwanda. The methodology in this case has focused in concrete actions of immediate benefits for the participating radios, such as the recent team reporting exercise with 18 participating radio stations.

A key role for IMS is support to **media professionalisation**, which aims at enhancing the existence of an independent, impartial and reliable media as a cornerstone for the development of a peaceful democratic society. This may involve institution building, such as in Nepal where IMS has supported the FNJ in developing its organisational capacities, or facilitating national media communities to strengthen their adherence to ethical standards, such as in Sri Lanka where IMS worked with the national media community in developing a code of conduct for the 2005 elections. IMS may also assist to promote professional journalism, possibly through the establishment of funds for investigative reporting. Such funds have been established in Ukraine and later the Arab world. Most recently a fund is under establishment in Colombia.

Support to **content transformation** seeks to respond to challenges media practitioners are confronted with in conflict, where special interest groups often seek to control or influence the media. Together with other organisations, IMS has been developing manuals in conflict reporting, how to cover elections and most recently the formulation of a manual to be used for coaching of radios in elections, which is currently being applied in Haiti. IMS is typically supporting the development of concepts and tools, but only occasionally the implementation of training, since other organisations often choose this area to focus on.

The **monitoring and advocacy** role, which IMS takes in certain situations relates to the needs for establishing effective networks to monitor press freedom violations in conflict and post-conflict societies. Effective monitoring helps journalists for protection, supports national advocacy efforts and, when disseminated through the alert system of the International Freedom of Expression Exchange (IFEX), helps mobilise international support and lobbying. In some areas of conflict, networks are already in place and IMS is able to help strengthen and expand existing activities. In others there is total absence of systematic monitoring and capacity must be built up from scratch. In this work IMS is building upon its expertise in institutional support and ability through vast contact to international organizations to link the local with the international level.

Finally, **safety** of media practitioners is a main concern of IMS. In this regard, IMS safety related interventions often take two distinct forms dependent on whether the threat can be effectively addressed within the country or not. When possible, the IMS approach is normally to develop the safety environment within a country. If this is not possible, IMS also assists with establishing safe havens for media professionals in neighbouring countries. Tools for safety are being developed together with local partners drawing in expertise from key organizations in this are such as IFJ and INSI.

These different roles which have been further refined during 2005 demonstrate the scope of methodologies and approaches used by IMS.

In 2006, IMS will aim to further benefit from an improved structure for accumulation and systematisation of lessons learnt. Furthermore, IMS will also seek to strengthening the dissemination and sharing of methodological improvement with partners and stakeholders who can find IMS methodology relevant in their work.