THE LOOMING STORM

Wesley Gibbings Journalist President, Association of Caribbean MediaWorkers

This State of the Caribbean Media Report makes no pretense at being an exhaustive examination of all free press issues in the Caribbean Region. Certainly, an exercise to achieve such an objective, while absolutely necessary, exceeds even the most ambitious potential of a strictly voluntary undertaking such as this.

The Association of Caribbean MediaWorkers (ACM) nevertheless proudly presents this compilation of national reports to you in the belief that it can inspire far more authoritative work through the eyes of Caribbean media practitioners themselves. Indeed, we recognise the uniqueness of such an approach and applaud all national associations and individuals who contributed toward completion of this modest project.

In my view, this Report ought to become the premier guide to press issues in the Caribbean region, serving as a key reference document for hemispheric and international studies inhibited by geographical and cultural distance.

Its unique nature owes much to the fact that here are journalists and other media practitioners offering an interpretation of the role and value of their craft in the broader context of press freedom and the Caribbean experience.

It is instructive that institutions otherwise charged with development of Caribbean mass media, inclusive of the regional universities and media houses themselves, have not accepted the challenge to maintain the strict vigil necessary to ensure the spirit of a free press is always present.

Such an act of vigilance requires that we chronicle the challenges and achievements and pursue acts of public and private intervention to guarantee the continued, active existence of our freedoms.

Since its inception in 2001, the ACM has been the single most important voice of free expression and a free press in the Caribbean. Wider civil society has not at all times readily associated pursuit of its ideals with the idea that only through freedom of expression do countries grow and thrive.

It has been said that examples of countries where a free press and hunger simultaneously exist are hard to find. But we face conditions in this region in which poverty resides in neighbourhoods where abundance also flourishes. It is only when the story is told that the fact of inequity and injustice is recognised and addressed. In that sense, an implicit developmental role for the Caribbean media truly exists.

Most of the reports contained here express such a sentiment. There is the ambivalence of 'respect' for the practice of journalism against the view that in many instances commercial and political agendas exist. Self-censorship becomes a foil against the practice of good journalism and citizens are denied a view of reality necessary to move themselves and their societies forward.

There are journalists in these pages who believe the deviant behaviour of young people owe much to media content, pointing to the need by our societies to explore far more open-minded approaches to the questions of alienation, discord and consequential violence.

We need urgently to determine the scientific antecedents. It is my guess, though, that the horrible decline of West Indian civilisation is much more due to the collapse of the institutions of public and private life that never grew in tandem with the challenges of modern existence. The crises abound everywhere. The storm looms.

If this Report provides one glimmer of hope that we are capable of dissecting the various elements of our state of collective crisis, we would have done well. It has certainly been an honour to have been associated with it.

Trinidad November 4, 2005

ANTIGUA & BARBUDA

Prepared by Executive members of the Antigua & Barbuda Media Congress: Colin James – President Anika Kentish – Vice President Brenda Lee Browne – Secretary Lawrence Mason – Ex-Officio



Breakdown of Media Houses:

- 1 television station
- 4 radio stations with active newsrooms
- 6 radio stations without active newsrooms
- 2 non-local stations transmitting via relay
- 2 daily newspapers
- 1 weekly (currently on sabbatical)
- 1 monthly periodical
- Total 18

Estimated number of Journalists (including freelancers): 35

MEDIA FREEDOM:

The media in Antigua & Barbuda can be considered to be marginally free.

While there have been advances in press freedom there are still limitations for local media. The government still owns and controls the operations of ABS Radio and Television. As a result, some public officials use their influence to push a political agenda either through the omission of certain stories or through the tainting of facts. The majority or private media houses with active newsrooms are affiliated with, or owned by a major corporate entity or

political party. As a result, objectivity is sometimes compromised in the reporting of some stories.

THREATS TO THE FREE PRESS:

The biggest threats to the free press (in order of significance):

- 1. Ownership of the Press
- 2. Political Pressure
- 3. Unprofessional Conduct
- 4. Laws
- 5. Commercial Interests

RESPECT FOR MEDIA

The work of the media in Antigua & Barbuda is not respected. Traditionally, this profession has not been seen as a viable career. Prior to the liberalisation of the press, all major media houses were controlled directly or indirectly by a political party. Media workers were therefore seen as political puppets dispensing information that was not necessarily news.

The lack of respect extends to persons in the wider community who feel they could use the media as a "PR machine" to be available at their beck and call, with no regard for deadline or news value.

Also of significance, is the fact that the media is often an afterthought. This is evident in the late notice (or lack thereof) of press conferences and other events. In some instances no provisions are made for the press (e.g. no seating for members of the press). Press briefings are cancelled at the last minute with no apology or explanation.

PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS

People think that the media are (in order of significance):

- 1. Politically biased
- 2. Sloppy and Unprofessional
- 3. Overly Concerned with profits
- 4. Independent and Free

As noted earlier, a significant number of media houses are affiliated with, or owned by a major corporate entity or political party. Politically biased media is therefore a natural byproduct. This situation has improved slightly in recent years. This was primarily due the opening of Observer Radio, a station that challenged the government of the day and encouraged the public to exercise their right to free speech.

Most of those working in the media lack formal training. Consequently, sloppiness and unprofessionalism are of major concern.

It is not a widely supported view that the media in Antigua & Barbuda is overly concerned with profits. In fact, a considerable number of major media houses are operating at a loss.

Given, that many share the view that local media is politically biased, the idea that it could be free and independent is not a popular one.

NEEDS

The biggest needs (in order of priority) of media workers are:

- 1. More Training
- 2. Better Salaries
- 3. Better representation by trade unions and other organisations
- 4. More Employment Opportunities
- 5. Better Working Conditions
- 6. Security

Most media workers in Antigua and Barbuda lack formal training and are not familiar with their rights and responsibilities. More training would naturally open opportunities for better salaries. Media workers, to a large extent, are poorly paid often because of their lack of qualifications.

Morale and camaraderie are lacking in the field. This only serves to highlight a need for professional organizations. Unions can also prove to be instrumental in settling labour disputes. Of equal importance is the need for the creation of more employment opportunities, to help ease the stressful situations in short-staffed media houses.

MEDIA LAWS

Media Laws ought to be:

- 1. Reduced to Create More Liberal Conditions
- 2. Changed to Deal with New Technologies
- 3. Strengthened to Deal with Violators
- 4. Completely Eliminated

There are still a number of restrictions for the media of Antigua & Barbuda. This is largely attributed to draconian defamation laws designed to intimidate journalists with threats of jail sentences. Outdated laws do not embrace new technologies like the Internet.

Unfortunately, there are some who use their access to mass media to boost their political platform. They do so by ignoring the principles of good journalism and engage in unwarranted targeted attacks on a rage of persons and groups.

MEDIA INFLUENCE

The media can influence behaviour, however, it cannot accept full responsibility for the deviant behaviour of young people in Antigua and Barbuda. The deteriorating behavior out of the country's youth is a result of a lack of discipline and also the poor examples set by adults.

Specific incidents that are considered threats to free press:

- 1. A criminal lawsuit filed by the Director of Public Prosecutions against Observer Radio's station manager. Lennox Linton faces three defamation charges relating to a statement he made during his morning show "Wake Up Call. Director of Prosecutions Gene Pestaina is claiming Linton's comment that he "would not be provoked into making any comment as to the suitability of Gene Pestaina for the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions," subjects him to "ridicule" and has the tendency to injure him in his office. The case is now pending before the courts. If found guilty, Linton faces up to 19 months in prison or up to EC\$7000.
- 2. Public threats to censor or "regulate" the media. Despite the declaration by the new government to be transparent and open with the media, government officials have on several occasions alluded to or made direct reference to a need to regulate the media. The term "hate" radio is often used to refer to media houses that may not be in the government favour. This "need to regulate" has been voiced by the Prime Minister as recently as August 18. Similar ideas have been expressed by the information minister in many a public forum.
- 3. Transfer of qualified/experienced news staff from state-owned ABS Radio and Television to other departments in the public service. In September 2004, a number of news staff at the state owned television were transferred to other areas of the public sector without any valid reason. The ABMC met with the Information Minister to register a complaint. While the transfers would not be reversed, the Congress recommended that future transfers be made based on an evaluation system.

OTHER OBSERVATIONS

A major milestone in the development of media in Antigua and Barbuda is the formation of the Antigua and Barbuda Media Congress. Since its inception on April 24, 2004 the organisation has placed training and professional development atop its agenda.

The Congress ratified a thirteen-point code of ethics to which all members are bound. All media owners and managers have been encouraged to adopt the code in their place of business. On June 27 the congress adopted a constitution and an executive elected on September 2nd.

Another important milestone in the young life of the ABMC was the successful staging of its first ever Celebrity Fete Match. The event showcased a team of who's who in Antigua's sporting, political and business circles captained by the Former West Indies Captain, Sir Vivian Richards. The Congress hopes that the match would be an annual event that would help fund ABMC training initiatives.

In keeping with the ABMC's commitment to undertake educational programmes for the improvement of the professional skills of journalists and media workers in Antigua and Barbuda. Thanks to the generous funding from the British High Commission the ABMC conducted its first-ever Journalism training workshop from September 26 to 28. The intensive course was facilitated by trainers from the BBC in London and CARIMAC at the

UWI's Mona campus. Thirty young and aspiring journalists attended the workshop – all gave positive feedback.

BARBADOS



This Report was prepared by Freelance Journalist, Ryan Gilkes.

Number of: Media Houses:

- Television:
 - o The Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation CBC TV8
 - Radio:
- The Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation CBC 900 AM, Q100.7FM, 98.1 THE ONE (Coming soon 94.7 TING FM)
- StarCom Network Inc. (Please note the this company is a part of the Nation Group)— VOB 92.9 FM, HOTT 95.3 FM, LOVE 104.1 FM, GOSPEL 790AM
- o OTHERS:
 - BBS 90.7 FM, FAITH 102.1 FM
 - RADIO GED 106.1 FM (Barbados Community College Radio which is on air between 11 and 3 p.m. during the school term)
- Newspapers
 - o The Barbados Advocate Daily publication
 - o The Nation Newspaper Daily Publication

There are approximately 125-140 journalists in Barbados. This includes Information Officers employed by the Barbados Government Information Service.

The media here can be considered to be somewhat free and unrestricted. However, I would say that their biggest threats to the practice of journalism would be political pressures, the laws (as there is no freedom of information act), commercial interest – as in some cases, stories are published based on who the advertisers with some papers are, ownership of the press, followed by unprofessional conduct.

As for the work the media here does, I would say that it is respected and given that – in the case of the Nation newspaper, they are signatories to the Eastern Caribbean Press Council. In addition, this year (2005) the newspaper now has a public editor who corrects or clarifies all errors of fact or misinterpretation.

Mainly, I would say that Barbadians believe that the media are free, BUT there is some degree of political bias and excessive concern with profits. Very few believe the media are sloppy and unprofessional.

The biggest needs (in order of priority) of media workers are training, a functioning media body - representation by trade unions and other organisations, better salaries, better working conditions and security.

I believe media laws ought to be reduced to create more liberal conditions as it is often far too difficult to get basic information from some Government agencies and other entities

Do the media in Barbados influence behaviour and are they responsible for the deviant behaviour of young people in my country? The answer to this is 'yes' the media influence behaviour but I wouldn't go as far as saying that the media are responsible for deviant behaviour in young people...The types of media maybe (movies ... "inappropriate" music etc.)

RECENT INCIDENTS

Media personnel were deliberately disadvantaged in coverage of the wedding of American golfer, Tiger Woods in October 2004, having to contend with unnecessary aggressive behaviour by the police, even as some staffers of Sandy Lane Hotel were denied, as they claimed, food and water during the long hours of that famous wedding day.

Subsequent related developments include the sudden withdrawal from viewing of the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation's scheduled "Press Club" programme – normally televised on Sunday nights – due to claimed controversial video footage involving the cops and media – followed by the suing of the police and Sandy Lane Hotel by television photographer Jimmy Gittens.

In late December, veteran photojournalist and Nation columnist, Clyde Jones, was taking pictures of a fire at the Sheraton Centre, the country's largest shopping mall. Jones said he was standing with a group of people watching the fire when a policeman knocked him to ground. When he showed his press card, the policeman apologised and accompanied him to hospital for treatment for the blow to his head. Jones said he would be filing an official complaint.

OTHER OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

The Barbados Government should consider post-cabinet (meeting) press conferences (like many other countries) as a means of creating a higher information flow to the general public on active Government projects or policies.

BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS

This report was prepared by freelance media consultant Angela U. Burns Piper.



The British Virgin Islands has two local television stations, five radio stations and three newspapers.

There are approximately 10 journalists hired in the private media.

The media can generally be considered to be free. The greatest threats in order of significance would be:

- 1. Ownership of the Press
- 2. Commercial Interests
- 3. Political Pressure
- 4. Laws
- 5. Unprofessional Conduct.

The work of the media is respected but people think (in order of significance) that the media are:

- 1. Politically biased
- 2. Overly Concerned with profits
- 3. Sloppy and Unprofessional
- 4. Independent and Free

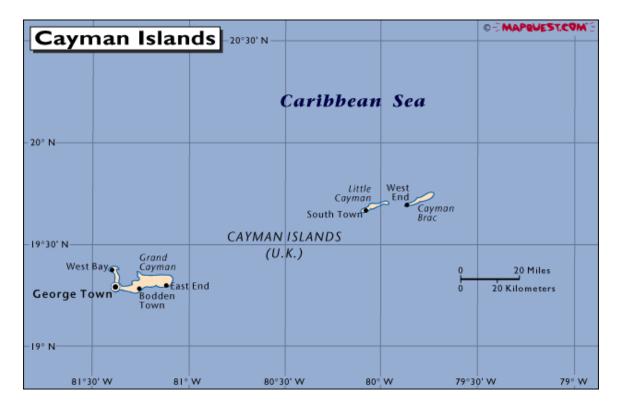
The biggest needs (in order of priority) of media workers are:

- 1. Better Salaries
- 2. Better Working Conditions
- 3. More Training
- 4. Security
- 5. Better representation by trade unions and other organisations
- 6. More Employment Opportunities

I believe media Laws ought to be strengthened to deal with violators and that the media influence behaviour and are responsible for the deviant behaviour of young people in my country.

On matters I consider to have constituted threats to the operations of a free press, there is nothing really major that I could recall happened here in the British Virgin Islands, save the odd occasion when a media manager would ask a reporter to either not carry or 'go easy' on coverage of a particular story.

CAYMAN ISLANDS



This report was prepared by Mike Hennessy, News Director ZFKY/ZFZZ.

There is one television station, 15 radio stations, three newspapers and two periodicals in the Cayman Islands.

There are between 50 and 100 fulltime and freelance journalists. The media can generally be described as being free and the work of journalists is respected.

I do not believe that the media influence behaviour and are responsible for the deviant behaviour of young people in the Cayman Islands.

GENERAL COMMENTS

The lawsuit filed in 2004 by then Leader of Government Business McKeeva Bush against the owner of the Caribbean Net News site would have been laughable had it not been so blatant an attempt to stifle an unwelcome voice. Mr. Bush took exception to an anonymous e-mail that was published on the "letters" portion of the site. While the letter was obviously a thinly veiled accusation of wrong doing aimed at Mr. Bush it was also written in such a manner as to almost fall under the category of "satire."

Current Leader of Governor Business Kurt Tibbetts recently lectured a newspaper reporter over the wording of a story that Mr. Tibbetts said made it look like he was criticizing the former government for a certain problem. The concern may have been legitimate, but it certainly could have been addressed privately. The impression was that the reporter was being made an example of in front of his colleagues.

Cayman's Journalism is not in bad shape overall. Having said that, it could be better.

Some of the concerns could be addressed by constitutional guarantees of press freedom, others by individual legislation. Other situations might best be handled by judges in dubious slander or libel cases dismissing them and telling aggrieved parties to grow a thicker skin.

The biggest overall problem, in this reporter's eyes, is a problem that is also hampering U.S. journalism. The news is being seen as a profit center. Whenever push comes to shove and it's a choice between taking a courageous stand, too often in my opinion, the choice has been to protect profits. Going along to get along is not the recipe for the best journalism.

DOMINICA

This report was prepared by Thalia Remy, President of the Media Workers Association of Dominica.

There are two television stations, four radio stations, three newspapers and two periodicals published in Dominica.



The media can be considered to be free but, in order of significance, threatened by:

- 1. Political Pressure
- 2. Unprofessional Conduct
- 3. Laws
- 4. Ownership of the Press
- 5. Commercial Interests

The work of the media in my country is respected but people think that the media are:

- 1. Politically biased
- 2. Sloppy and Unprofessional
- 3. Independent and Free
- 4. Overly concerned with profits

The biggest needs (in order of priority) of media workers are:

- 1. More Training
- 2. Better Salaries
- 3. Better Working Conditions....
- 4. Better representation by trade unions and other organisations
- 5. More Employment Opportunities
- 6. Security

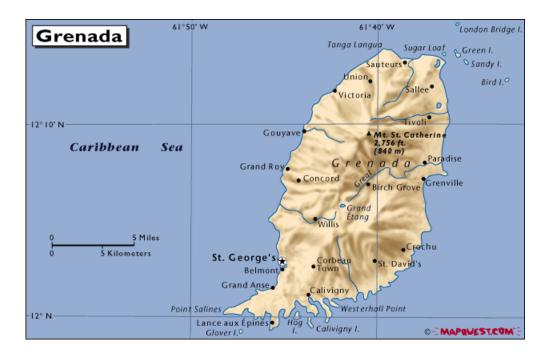
I believe the country's media laws should be reduced to create more liberal conditions and changed to deal with the new technologies.

I am not sure whether I believe the media influence behaviour and are responsible for the deviant behaviour of young people in my country.

Recent instances in which tensions with the media have been generated include:

- 1) Ridicule of media by Government officials
- 2) Castigation by the religious bodies

GRENADA



This report was prepared by Michael Bascombe, Acting President of the Media Workers Association of Grenada.

There are five television stations, 11 radio stations, four newspapers and five periodicals. There are approximately 40 journalists in the country.

The biggest threats to the free press (in order of significance) are:

- 1. Political Pressure
- 2. Laws
- 3. Ownership of the Press
- 4. Commercial Interests
- 5. Unprofessional Conduct

Most people think that the media are:

- 1. Politically Biased
- 2. Independent and Free
- 3. Sloppy and Unprofessional
- 4. Overly concerned with profits.

The biggest needs (in order of priority) of media workers are:

- 1. More Training
- 2. Better Salaries
- 3. Better Working Conditions

- 4. More Employment Opportunities
- 5. Better representation by trade unions and other organisations
- 6. Security

Media Laws ought to be changed to Deal with New Technologies.

I believe the media partially influence behaviour and are responsible for the deviant behaviour of young people in my country.

COMMENTS

1. In 2000 the Prime Minister Dr Keith Mitchell was alleged to have received US\$500,000 as a bribe for the appointment of Eric Resteiner as a Trade Ambassador. The allegation was subsequently published in the Miami-based publication, Off-Shore Alert in May 2004.

Within hours of its publication and requests by journalists for government's reaction, the Government Information Service issued a memo to all the media warning them that if they reported the story the full force of the law would be upon them. Not a single broadcast station covered the story. Grenadians first heard the story on the BBC Caribbean Service news carried on local stations, and subsequently that daily BBC news broadcast was taken off the air for several weeks.

The Prime Minister addressed the nation and claimed the story was a fabrication and threatened to sue journalists and media houses if they repeated the story. In that national address however he admitted receiving "approx US \$12,000 to US \$14,000 from Resteiner. Not even the official opposition reactions to the allegations were covered. Government has now set up a Commission of Inquiry to investigate those allegations.

- 2. The Minister of National Security called a press conference and announced that a senior opposition member was being investigated on multiple fraud charges by the United States. Within hours of the announcement, the US denied it was investigating any member of the Opposition or Member of Parliament. The Media was then called by the Prime Minister's Press Secretary and told not to use the story.
- 3. The closure of a locally operated chat forum on the World Wide Web by a telecommunications company after pressure from the political directorate. The company was sued by the Prime Minister over its hosting of the forum as subscribers discussed several events in Grenada including the Mitchell-Resteiner affair.
- 4. The Prime Minister's Press Secretary has stated that the local media is too political and should consider other forms of coverage of events. His comments come in light of continued coverage of political scandals and other issues that are central to the governance of the country.

OTHER ISSUES

Government's indirect control of broadcast media is linked to the manner in which licenses are awarded. There is no independent Board of Directors that decides who gets a license and

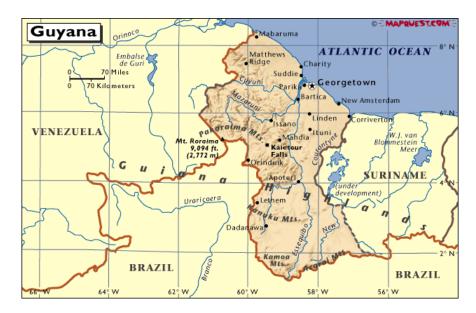
whose license is renewed, rather it's the Minister who determines it. This influence of the Minister impacts on station's coverage of events, moreso, events that put the government in a negative light.

One of the critical instruments used by the media is self censorship as there is fear of offending the political directorate in the coverage of news. Newscasts generally have become government Public Relations reporting as some journalists have found themselves having to take sides to secure their jobs.

Our Media Workers' Association dialogues with the Minister of Information on how changes could be made to the awarding of broadcast licenses. A broad-based committee drafted a media policy that includes criteria for awarding and renewing broadcast licenses. It's being discussed by the respective stakeholders.

GUYANA

This report was prepared by Julia Johnson, President of the Guyana Press Association. It includes independent inputs from journalist and former GPA President, Denis Chabrol. An attempt is made here to merge the two reports and to present differing views where they exist.



There are 23 television stations and two state-owned radio services. There are six national newspapers and six periodicals.

There are close to 100 freelance and fulltime journalists, 75 "on register". Still and video photographers, studio operators and technical editors account for another 200 media personnel.

Chabrol believes the country's media can be considered to be "very free" but the GPA considers the greatest threats to press freedom to be (in order of significance):

- 1. Political Pressure
- 2. Ownership of the Press
- 3. Laws
- 4. Commercial Interests
- 5. Unprofessional Conduct

The work of the media is generally respected but there is a view that they are (in order of significance):

- 1. Politically Biased
- 2. Overly Concerned with profits and sloppy and unprofessional
- 3. Independent and Free

The areas of greatest need are:

- 1. Better Salaries and Better Working Conditions
- 2. More Training
- 3. Better representation by trade unions and other organisations
- 4. Security

There is a view that media laws ought to be strengthened to deal with violators but reduced to create more liberal conditions for the work of the media and changed to deal with new technologies.

Johnson and Chabrol disagreed on whether the media influenced behaviour to the extent they were responsible for the deviant behaviour of young people in the country.

The GPA is concerned about:

- 1. Government's continued monopoly position in the area of radio
- 2. The reluctance of Government to move forward on the current Draft broadcast Code.
- 3. Police harassment of media workers. In some instances, journalists' equipment has been confiscated.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

Private media houses have experienced a greater difficulty getting government officials to comment on issues. No interviews granted; no call backs, instead media houses are seeing answers to queries they made in the form of releases from the Government Information Agency.

As Guyana heads to National Elections constitutionally due by August 4th 2006, the use and abuse of state media for government propaganda is appalling.

To these are added the following observations by Chabrol in relation to recent developments:

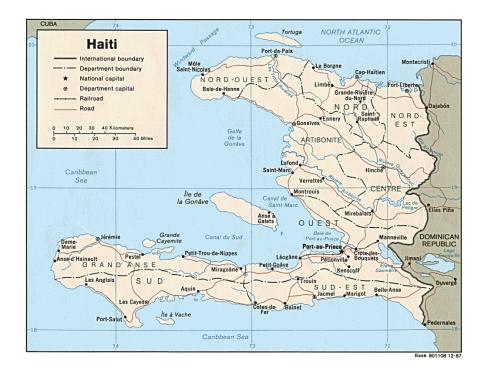
- 1. Physical attacks on media personnel and the one media house, the latter appearing to be a robbery but when correlated with the shooting at one of its vehicles days earlier raises serious doubts.
- 2. New rules for the coverage of parliament being proposed by Guyana's Parliament
- 3. Government's closure of CNS TV 6, seizure of its equipment and disconnection of its electricity, on the grounds that the utterances by the Leader of the Justice for All Party, Chandra Narine Sharma, who is also the owner of the TV station, was having an adverse impact on the government's flood relief efforts. This, however, is the mixture of politics and the media that must be addressed

Other observations by Chabrol

The future of private radio stations (i.e. the scrapping of government's decades-old monopoly) is still stymied by political gridlock between the government and the opposition. A High Court Judge is yet to hand down his ruling on the constitutionality of the government blocking the granting of private radio licenses. It is fair to predict, based on utterances by the Opposition Leader, that the government's monopoly may eventually lead to piracy as Guyana approaches general elections constitutionally due in 2006.

HAITI

This report was prepared by Jean-Claude Louis, Programme Director for Haiti of Panos Institute Caribbean.



MEDIA IN HAITI

- Communication and information has been a real boom for the last 20 years and reinforced by a tradition of oral culture in Haiti
- Radio plays a crucial role in the life of Haitian and reaches a very big audience. Television gets greater importance only in the cities.
- 92% of Haitians own/have access to a radio set.

MEDIA HOUSES

- About 250 radios stations countrywide including 40 community radio stations
- There are two private "daily" newspapers in Haiti with no more than 50,000 copies combined and mostly available in the Capital with a population of nearly 2 millions: Le Matin and le Nouvelliste. Another one: Journal L'Union mostly used for political propaganda under the regime of President Aristide has been shut down since he was "ousted" from power in February 2004.
- Three press local agencies (Haitian Press Network, Alterpresse, Haitian News agency) feed radio, print and publish online
- 3 weeklies printed abroad, partly published in Haiti
- One Association of Media Owners (ANMH: Association Nationale des Medias Haiti), though it comprises less than 10 well positioned media in the Capital

- Two main journalist associations: AJH led by Guy Delva and Federation de la Presse Haitienne led by Ady JeanGardy, plus a number of regional media associations linked either to one of the two organisations.
- Two or free health journalist network
- Cost of a newspaper (15-25 Gourdes =40-75 us cents), unaffordable for most people.

Approximate number of Journalists: I would put the number roughly at 400 based on info from our database.

The media can be considered free; however, there is as much division between the various media as the political organisations and even among the journalists. Many media, though independent, practise self-censorship.

There are at least two codes of ethics adopted by some associations of journalists, the debate has been timid and there is not a consensus with input of the various associations. The constitution of 1987 recognizes the freedom of the press in Haiti. The press has no political pressure now as a threat, however, as said before some media, given their part and position practise self-censorship.

Commercial interests are very high among the media in Haiti given the precarious situation as well as to share the commercial ads between all radios. The situation is aggravated by a lack of infrastructure, with only a few hours of electricity daily, they have to invest in alternative sources of energy.

Another condition that leads sometimes to unprofessional conduct are the meagre incomes of journalists in Haiti. The ownership of the press is private.

Another threat is the lack of professionalism. Many call themselves journalists because they have access to media or can speak over the microphone.

The work of the media is respected in Haiti but many people, even political stakeholders see the press as their enemy when positions contrary to their views are made public.

I believe media laws ought to be changed to deal with new technologies. The laws that regulate the press in Haiti is outdated and when there was no internet and no community radio. There have been some efforts to modernise media laws but little progress has been made in this area.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

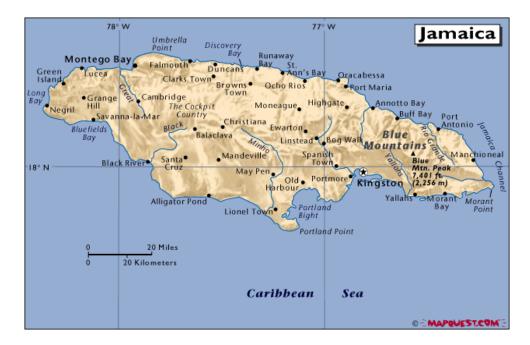
- 1. Attack on media infrastructure on the site of Bouliers. Millions in damage.
- 2. Twenty or so journalists have fled the country fearing for their lives and some had to stay under cover.
- 3. Judgment to find who killed Jean Dominique is still pending.

JAMAICA

In Jamaica, there are three national television stations, 16 radio stations, three main newspapers and 12 periodicals.

The media are generally considered to be very free but are threatened by (in order of significance):

- 1. Unprofessional conduct
- 2. Ownership of the Press
- 3. Laws
- 4. Commercial Interests
- 5. Political Pressure



The work of the media in Jamaica is respected but people believe (in order of significance) the media are:

- 1. Sloppy and Unprofessional
- 2. Overly concerned with profits
- 3. Independent and Free
- 4. Politically Biased

The greatest needs recognised by journalists are:

- 1. More training
- 2. Better working conditions
- 3. More employment opportunities
- 4. Better Salaries
- 5. Better representation by trade unions and other organisations

Journalists believe media laws ought to be strengthened to deal with violators but that changes are needed to deal with new technologies.

One senior journalist said he did not believe the media influence behaviour and are responsible for the deviant behaviour of young people in Jamaica.

ST KITTS & NEVIS

This Report was prepared by Clive Bacchus, President of the Media Association of St Kitts and Nevis.



There are two television stations in the country, eight radio stations and five newspapers.

The media are considered to be 'very free' but threatened by (in order of significance):

- 1. Political Pressures
- 2. Laws
- 3. Commercial Interests

The work of the media is respected in St Kitts and Nevis but there is a belief that journalists are politically biased and sloppy and unprofessional. People however also believe that the media are independent and free.

The areas of greatest need (in order of priority) are:

- 1. More Training & Better representation by trade unions and other organisations
- 2. Better Salaries
- 3. More Employment & Better Working Conditions

I believe specific media laws need not exist and do not subscribe to the view that the media influence behaviour and are responsible for the deviant behaviour of young people in my country.

COMMENTS

There are no serious overt threats to the press but self censorship, partisanship and tribalism are rife.

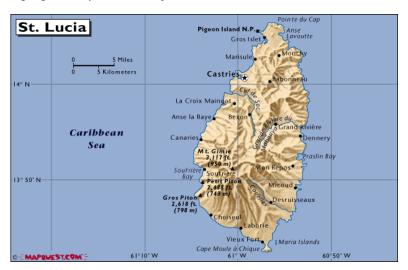
Information is heavily politicised and there is need for greater access to information that's in the public interest. Many media workers are also not formally trained.

The absence of a Freedom of Information Act combined with vigorous politically driven press releases create an atmosphere of uncertainty and widespread speculation.

The challenges include getting members of the media to pull together, in the interest of the profession, regardless of employer; attracting new blood and establishing a continuous training regime for new media

ST LUCIA

This Report was prepared by Freelance Journalist, Ernie Seon.



St Lucia has four television stations, seven radio stations and five newspapers. There are between 25 and 30 journalists employed in the country's private media.

The media operate in relatively free conditions but are faced with the following threats (in order of significance):

- 1. Political Pressure
- 2. Laws
- 3. Ownership of the Press
- 4. Commercial Interests
- 5. Unprofessional Conduct

The work of the media is generally respected though people believe that they are both overly concerned about profits and have journalists who are sloppy and unprofessional.

The biggest needs (in order of priority) of media workers are:

- 1. Better Salaries
- 2. More Training
- 3. More Employment Opportunities
- 4. Better Working Conditions
- 5. Better representation by trade unions and other organisations
- 6. Security

There is a view that media laws ought to be reduced to create more liberal conditions and changed to deal with new technologies.

The respondent to this survey did not believe the media influence behaviour and are responsible for the deviant behaviour of young people in St Lucia.

THREATS

- 1. The Passage of Legislation 361 and other laws in the guise of national security.
- 2. Reference by the Prime Minister to journalists as "terrorists"
- 3. Frequent libel suits filed by politicians, in particular, against journalists

ST MAARTEN

This report was prepared by Marvin Hokstam, President of the St Maarten Journalists Association.



There are two television stations, eight radio stations, four newspapers and two periodicals in operation in St Maarten.

There are approximately 40 journalists in the media which is generally considered to be free.

The biggest threats to the free press include political pressure, commercial interests, ownership of the press and unprofessional conduct.

The work of the media is respected but people believe that journalists are politically biased, sloppy and unprofessional.

The biggest needs of media workers include better salaries, more training, more employment opportunities and better working conditions.

The respondent to this survey said media laws should be strengthened to deal with violators but he did not believe that the media influence behaviour and are responsible for the deviant behaviour of young people in the country.

ISSUES

At least three times over the past year, politicians have threatened foreign journalists with expulsion.

SURINAME

Suriname has 4 daily newspapers, 30 radio stations, 13 television stations and 13 other periodicals. Of these media only one radio station, three community radio stations and two television stations are state owned. The rest are private enterprises, mostly operated by families.



Over the last three years there has been an expansion of media houses. Only two television stations have news casts. In 2004, a private company started a youth journal, which is very popular among the youth. The target group is from 12 - 14 year.

The Association of Surinamese Journalists reports that the media in Suriname can be considered to be "very free" but that the greatest threats include laws, commercial interests and unprofessional conduct.

The work of journalists is respected by Surinamese but people believe that their work is "sloppy and unprofessional".

The areas of greatest need include better salaries, more training and better working conditions.

The Association believes media laws should be strengthened to deal with violators and there is a belief it is possible that the media influence behavior and are responsible for the deviant behavior of young people in Suriname.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

The following observations were made by Rachael van der Kooye, President of the Suriname Association of Journalists:

The trend of the new news media is 'sensation sells.' They do not consider ethical principals of journalism. This has attracted criticisms from politicians.

At this moment we experience complete freedom of the press. In the early 80s, we could not say that, because journalists were killed, media houses were destroyed and closed by the military regime. After that there was censorship and self censorship, but since the 90s, we can say that we have freedom of the press, because of the democratic process. But the government is not always transparent and it takes a lot of digging to get public information.

CONCERNS

Among our concerns is the belief that the government plans to introduce judicial provisions for ethical codes contrasted with the need for the protection of press freedom and the right to information and freedom of expression. Another concern is media legislation. We still have "muzzle" laws, which are occasionally used by politicians.

CHALLENGES FOR JOURNALISTS

It is a challenge for journalists in Suriname to practise the profession as a journalist with consideration for ethical principals. The salary of most journalists is worse, especially that of radio journalists. A radio journalist earns between US\$200 and US\$300 a month. Therefore journalists have to hustle to stay alive, with the result that the profession is not pure anymore.

Journalists produce advertising and practise public relations activities for private companies and the government and lose their credibility in the process.

Journalists are also active members of political parties. Some media owners do not care and even encourage them. Media owners are more concerned about selling of their product and less about the capacity of their journalists or the ethics of the profession. The profession of journalism is now slipping in Suriname.

The Association was not active over a three year period, but since June this year it has a new board. Last month 30 new young journalists of the new media became members of the association. They lack journalism skills, so the association is now implementing an education program to raise journalism skills in Suriname.

NEEDS OF JOURNALISTS

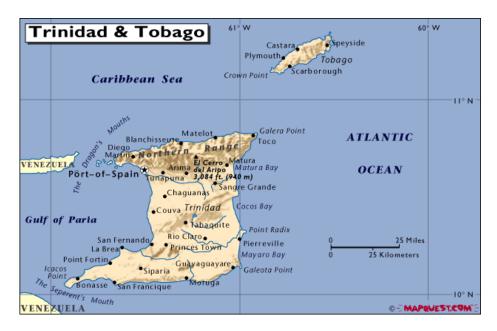
Journalists are in need of education, equipment, books, housing, good salaries and finances for research, They are able and also want to produce own productions like documentaries, but they do not have equipment what is very expensive to hire at professionals.

They also lack finance to do so, since the media do not invest in the time and production of documentaries. Media owners establish media not with noble purposes, but to make profit, like any other enterprise. That is why they do not invest in news programmes.

The radio stations just read news of the daily news papers. When a newspaper makes a mistake and rectifies it, the radio stations do not carry the corrections. In this way the society gets confused, because they get false information. The impact of the internet is noticeable.

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

The report was prepared by John Victor, President of the Media Association of Trinidad and Tobago.



There are four television stations, 31 radio stations, three daily newspapers and several weekly and other periodical publications.

Nationally, there are approximately 175 journalists employed in the state and private media. The media are considered to operate under free conditions though they face the threats of (in order of significance):

- 1. Political Pressure
- 2. Laws
- 3. Commercial Interests
- 4. Ownership of the Press
- 5. Unprofessional Conduct

The work of the media is respected and people think that they operate under conditions that are independent and free. However, there is concern that the media are also politically biased, overly concerned with profits and sloppy and unprofessional.

The biggest needs of media workers (in order of priority) are:

- 1. Better Salaries
- 2. More Training
- 3. Better Working Conditions
- 4. Security
- 5. More Employment Opportunities

I believe media laws ought to be (in order of priority):

- 1. Reduced to create more liberal conditions
- 2. Completely eliminated
- 3. Changed to deal with new technologies
- 4. Strengthened to deal with violators

I believe the media influence behaviour and are responsible for the deviant behaviour of young people in my country.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

- 1. There has been an attempt to introduce a Broadcast Code by the Telecommunications Authority
- 2. There is ongoing political interference in the work of the media
- 3. There are frequent acts of intimidation leveled at members of the media by police officers and members of the public.

OTHER OBSERVATIONS

- 1. There is a need for the business community to join with the Media Association of Trinidad and Tobago to provide ongoing training for journalists.
- 2. The rapid growth of broadcast media in Trinidad and Tobago has not helped provide any security of tenure for media practitioners.
- 3. Declining standards and ethics in the profession are largely due to a lack of trained personnel because of the phenomenal growth in media houses.