

PUBLIC

ANNEX 9.91

Title	Freedom of the Press 2010 - Libya
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Freedom of the Press 2010 - Libya

Status: Not Free

Legal Environment: 29

Political Environment: 36

Economic Environment: 29

Total Score: 94

Survey Edition	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Total Score, Status	95,NF	96,NF	96,NF	94,NF	94,NF

- Libyan media remain among the most tightly controlled in the world. While the law provides for freedoms of speech and the press within the confines of "the principles of the Revolution," other legislation, including the 1972 Publication Act, contains provisions banning libel and slander and broadly restricts critical speech. The government severely limits the rights of the media in practice, and journalists who violate the harsh press codes can be imprisoned or sentenced to death.
- The press avoids publishing any material that could be deemed offensive or threatening, particularly to Islam, national security, territorial integrity, or the country's leader, Mu'ammar al-Qadhafi.
- In addition to stifling criticism at home, al-Qadhafi filed defamation charges against journalists in Morocco and Uganda in 2009.
- Those who criticize the government from outside the country may be arrested upon entering Libya. There have been several cases in recent years in which the authorities have harassed or imprisoned Libyans who denounced the government on websites based in Europe. Secret police and informants are commonly used to root out dissident activities, leading opposition journalists and other government critics to practice significant self-censorship.
- While no journalists were imprisoned during 2009, the regime pursued a strategy of continuous harassment, frequently summoning journalists for questioning and forcing them to travel long distances on short notice. Impunity for past murders of journalists remains the norm.
- The government owns and strictly controls nearly all print and broadcast media, including the official Jamahiriya News Agency (JANA). The General Press Institute owns three daily newspapers – *Al-Jamahiriya*, *Al-Shams*, and *Al-Fajr al-Jadeed* – while the government-supported Movement of Revolutionary Committees owns the fourth daily, *Al-Zahf al-Akhder*.
- The private media group Al-Ghad, run by the president's son, Saif al-Islam al-Qadhafi, was allowed to launch the satellite television station Al-Libiya, two radio stations, and two daily newspapers in 2007. However, this small step toward a more open media space was quashed in April 2009, when the government formally nationalized all Al-Ghad outlets. No justification was given for the nationalization, but independent sources claimed that the outlets were preparing to broadcast a report about human rights abuses against dissidents. In addition, Egyptian authorities reportedly complained about remarks made by an Al-Libiya commentator. The radio and television outlets were absorbed by the state-run Jamahiriya Broadcasting Corporation, and the newspapers are now part of the Public Press Foundation.

- Although satellite television is accessible, the government occasionally blocks foreign programming. Popular pan-Arab satellite television stations such as Al-Jazeera and Al-Arabiya do not have local correspondents covering Libya. Few foreign publications have traditionally been available, though authorities are reportedly allowing a greater variety of international print media to appear on newsstands.
- Internet penetration remains relatively low; 5.5 percent of the population used the medium in 2009. Nevertheless, the government reportedly monitors internet communications, regularly blocks opposition websites, and occasionally blocks other sites, including those that support minority rights. The country's only internet-service provider is government owned.

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