



MAY 17 – JUNE 4, 2011



INTERNEWS

Libya

Media Assessment

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Who we are

Internews is an international media development organization whose mission is to empower local media worldwide to give people the news and information they need, the ability to connect, and the means to make their voices heard.

A volunteer for the Libyan Red Crescent, on his way to Misrata to assist in local hospitals.

Cover photo: Near the Benghazi courthouse, a center of the rebellion.

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The Internews assessment in Libya was supported by the John D. & Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation and the Shelley and Donald Rubin Foundation.

Internews' assessment was part of an ongoing effort to understand local information needs, map available information sources, and develop recommendations to improve the flow of reliable local news and information in Libya.

About the Assessment Team

MATT ABUD and **BEN MORAN** conducted this assessment in eastern Libya and Misrata. The team visited Benghazi, Misrata, Ajdabya, Al Baida and Derna.

Matt Abud is a media development specialist who has worked for the last 10 years in several transitional and crisis contexts in countries such as East Timor, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Afghanistan. He was part of the Internews Emergency team that responded to the January 2010 earthquake in Haiti.

Benedict Moran is an award-winning journalist who has traveled to more than 70 countries. He has reported from the Middle East and Africa. As a Peace Corps Volunteer in Benin, he produced a weekly 30-minute youth radio program promoting HIV/AIDS awareness. He currently works as United Nations Producer for Al Jazeera English.

It is also important to note that the Internews team participated in a UN-led, inter-agency needs assessment mission to Misrata,¹ organized by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) with small teams of senior staff from agencies such as the World Health Organization (WHO), International Medical Corps (IMC), ACTED and Mercy Corps.

Internews' participation in this inter-agency needs assessment marks the first time ever that a media development organization has taken part in a mission of this kind to specifically look into the information needs of residents and the status of local media. The findings of the initial assessment will enable humanitarian agencies to get a broad overview of the situation in the city and help in the planning of a response to immediate and mid-term needs of the people there.²

The Assessment Team and Internews extends our thanks and appreciation for the many organizations and individuals who provided their time and substantial assistance during the research period, often providing support in the middle of hectic schedules and many challenges. There are simply too many to name here. We hope that the report itself, and the many discussions that have already followed it prior to release, will result in effective support for Libya's emerging free media sector.

NOTE This report was drafted in late June and should be read from that perspective. Although many circumstances have changed dramatically from that time many of the issues highlighted in the assessment remain pertinent and in several cases have become even more urgent. A few minor edits have been included immediately prior to publication to limit some outdated emphases caused by the changing situation, but the overall text remains unchanged.



Matt Abud



Ben Moran

¹ IOM Boat Returns from Misrata After Mission to Evacuate Migrants and to Assess Humanitarian Needs in City Ends, May 23, 2011 (<http://reliefweb.int/node/403288>)

² In a previous Inter Agency assessment in the Tunisia/Libya border in February 2011, with technical support provided by Internews, OCHA included a Beneficiary Communications component in its Inter-Agency needs Assessment. Internews conducted an assessment on the information needs in Choucha camp, in the Tunisia/Libya border.



Audio-visual materials of the Assessment

All audio-visual materials produced during this assessment mission can be found [here](#) on the Internews website, or listed below:

News from the Assessment

- [Information Critical to Stability in Libya](#) (May 25, 2011)
- [Local Media Needed to Explain Risks in Libya](#) (May 31, 2011)
- [Young Journalists in Libya Look to the Future](#) (June 2, 2011)
- [Photos of the Libya Assessment](#) (Flickr)

Videos

- [Voices of Libyan Youth](#) - hear from three young people from Benghazi, Libya (video)
- [Young Journalists in Libya Look to the Future](#) (photo slide show)
- [Libya Explores Open Media](#)

In the Press

- [From The Front Lines: A Simple Poster Might Have Saved These Libyan Boys](#) (Jacobo Quintanilla, Director of Humanitarian Media, Mediaite, June 3, 2011)
- [Aid Agencies Must Do More to Help Refugees Communicate Back Home](#) (Jacobo Quintanilla, Director of Humanitarian Media, InterDependent (UNA-USA), June 12, 2011)
- [Libyan Media: Past, Present and Future](#) (Jamal Dajani, Internews Vice President for Middle East and North Africa, On The Media, August 26, 2011)

Economic migrants from West Africa being evacuated out of Misrata on a UN mission.



Executive summary

An exuberant proliferation of media outlets is emerging in areas controlled by Libya's rebels. The ability to talk openly, publish, and broadcast without fear is an unprecedented freedom for a society repressed and heavily censored for decades, and one that is being seized with energy and enthusiasm.

This is a monumental – indeed revolutionary– shift in Libyan politics and society, and is one of the key channels for the extraordinary level of energy

released by the uprising. New initiatives include print and satellite TV; terrestrial TV and radio; multiple online collaborations; as well as cartoons, music, graffiti, theatre, and other forms. Free speech and free media are central rebel demands, which makes these new media efforts core to the uprising's very image and identity, key to its mobilisation, and an early embodiment of some of its main goals.

Yet current media initiatives are new, raw, and



Graffiti in Downtown Benghazi. Graffiti is found across the rebel-held areas: they are attempts to destroy the cult of the authoritarian leader, as well as a celebration of free speech, and in the early stages was encouraged by the National Transitional Council.

very fluid. They are building on an extremely thin base, with Gaddafi's regime repression ensuring there was little chance for media skills, systems, and debates to develop over preceding decades. Most (though certainly not all) of those pouring the greatest energy into this effort are brand-new to the field; they have not had the chance to build a range of journalistic, editorial, or technical production skills, or to debate roles and ethics, that they are

The uprising has created an unprecedented space for free media but engagement is needed for the development of a rights-based framework to support it.

now learning on-the-job and in public. These media are emerging in an uncertain and in many cases high-pressure environment, with the war, still hard-fought, taking top priority, and social and administrative structures tenuously evolving.

The uprising has created an unprecedented space for free media but engagement is needed for the development of a rights-based framework to support it. This is especially so because other influences that are part-and-parcel of the revolutionary effort could lead in several other directions. While momentum towards rights-based free speech is strong and universally championed, as with any fluid political and military movement changes in context could also change this balance over time.

A free rights-based media that is able to make positive contributions to the transition needs an increase in skills, an appropriate clear institutional and regulatory frameworks, and a public debate about just what Libya's free media should and could look like. While current expressions of agreement for rights-based media are strong, such a debate is still essential for future development – such media never simply emerge 'automatically.' The higher the quality of the debate, the broader the discussion, the more effective the training and technical support, the better Libya's media will become – with crucial implications for the country's political, social, and economic development.

Libya has many challenges in its future; with the right support, new media outlets will be able to make the strongest contribution possible to the transition's political stability, its democracy, and its social cohesion. But preparation for these challenges needs to begin now.

Introduction

The demand for freedom of speech and free media is universally stated in heartfelt terms at all levels of the uprising. The revolution has opened up space for media freedom that has never been experienced in Libya before. The energy and enthusiasm present in the emerging media sector is impressive and positive.

Yet one issue that needs consideration is the current imperative for media to adhere to or share the explicit identity of the overall revolution itself. While the uprising has an extraordinary level of popular participation and is mobilised by demands for a range of human rights, on the ground *any* revolution is first and foremost a political and military objective. Yet, perhaps almost inevitably, ideas of free speech and free media were frequently conflated by several interviewees with support for the revolution's political and military objectives. The revolution may *support* a rights-based media system, but it is not the *same thing* as such a system. This distinction may not be crucial now, but if a clear debate on Libya's media is to take place and frame its future development, it is a distinction that needs to be made.

Beyond free speech and free media issues themselves, demands for other civil and political rights are also high. Yet the issues and obligations contained within a system of rights are only now being explored: Gaddafi-era repression means civil society is a new concept, and many of these questions simply couldn't become part of public debate in previous years. The will is there – but a developed understanding of the differences between humanitarian principles, human rights, and political objectives is not well developed and may hold potential pitfalls for the future.

This means the possibility for misinterpretation and misunderstandings on rights generally also needs to be acknowledged in discussing the role of emerging media. Libya's new media outlets represent an opportunity and asset that can play a great role in developing public understanding of these issues. Conversely, if media outlets themselves are not clear on the issues and distinctions involved, they will almost inevitably spread misunderstandings



that can only complicate the political process, including human rights and humanitarian objectives.

Members of the transitional administration at all levels have expressed great commitment to free media and free speech, and in several cases taken early initiatives to ensure its development. But there is some jockeying for influence or resources in the media, and some political topics that are considered taboo and stated as such by figures in authority (see '[Note on Censorship](#)'). Political positions are still emerging; many potential difficulties can be generated simply by lack of skills, experience, and / or strong institutions, and a lack of general familiarity with relevant debates on the roles free media is obliged to take.



Media support needs to be targeted but flexible, meeting current needs but without becoming locked into a limited number of relationships or assuming events will take one particular course.

Reporters at Shabab Libya FM, in Benghazi.

These observations shouldn't be interpreted as broad generalisations across the whole emerging media sector. It is true that several national leaders and media practitioners are clear about the distinction between supporting the revolution itself, and supporting free rights-based media. Nevertheless, there are others for whom the distinction is

less clear. The current atmosphere does not yet exhibit a tension between free-speech principles and revolutionary goals, and there are many examples of initiatives that aim to use the new space to promote positive social change. But to repeat, commitment to the political cause of overthrowing Gaddafi's regime, and commitment to a rights-based



Producers and reporters at Shabab Libya FM record an announcement. “We are all still learning, we are all on trial,” said founder Yazid Ettaib. “Most of us are engineers, or accountants, and we have no idea about media.”

framework of free speech and free media, are not necessarily the same, even though there is great overlap between them at this point in time.

As the situation becomes more complex, the media’s role will become more challenging. Support in this context is crucial; however in such a fluid situation, it is impossible to predict which outlets will continue and develop and which will fold; or what different editorial stances or possible political positions they will take. It is also difficult to predict what the final regulatory and political environment will look like.

This means media support needs to be targeted but flexible, meeting current needs but without becoming locked into a limited number of relationships or assuming events will take one particular course. Media support activities, including training, provision of equipment, facilitation of international links, and support for debate on the media’s roles, must aim to meet several immediate and short-term goals, but also to facilitate broad relationships and input that allow Libyan media practitioners to engage in their own discussions and set their own future directions.

In this context it is worthwhile noting that at a Round-Table meeting organized by the UN³ in Cai-

ro in June 6 the UN stressed “the key role that local media and other communication channels – civil society, religious community leaders – could play in creating crucial links with local communities.”⁴ The participants, including Internews, also agreed that efforts to engage civil society organizations and other stakeholders in the early recovery activities should be maintained.

In any of the potential scenarios in Libya, at present and in the future, the role of the media will be crucial in framing popular understanding and responses. This in turn will influence the possible activities of those in authority, including political and military decisions, and efforts in support of human rights and any humanitarian relief responses.

The most effective and principled roles media can take will require a high level understanding of professional ethics, increased journalistic and editorial skills, clear editorial mandates, and stable institutions. Libya’s emerging media is asking for support now, to give it the best chance possible to fulfil its crucial roles and future potential in a time of extraordinary change.

³ The Humanitarian Coordinator for Libya, Panos Moumtzis, the Humanitarian Forum, and the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) hosted a Round-table Meeting in Cairo, bringing together more than 35 Arab, Islamic and Western organizations involved in providing relief in Libya. Conducted in Arabic, the meeting was designed to strengthen partnerships

(Sharaka), better coordinate the provision of aid and come up with results-orientated action plans.

⁴ Report of the Humanitarian Partnership Forum “Shakara”, Cairo, June 6, 2011, p. 3.

1. Background

Libya's anti-Gaddafi uprising in February 2011 has marked differences from the popular protests that overthrew leaders in neighbouring Tunisia and Egypt. This is largely due to particular features of the Gaddafi regime, and sets the context for both the progress of the uprising itself, and the dynamics affecting media within it.

1.1. Gaddafi Regime⁵

Colonel Gaddafi claimed power by military coup in 1969, overthrowing King Muhammad Idris al-Mahdi Sanussi in 1969. At the time of Gaddafi's coup, the Libyan state was extremely young, formed only in 1951. The country's institutional heritage was weak, and Gaddafi dismantled what had existed as he sought to impose his own system and institute an authoritarian personality cult. The key feature of his rule has been to attempt to reshape the state according to his own personal concepts, and to suppress any dissent or debate. This has rested on a self-proclaimed ideology, the 'Third Universal Theory', ostensibly placed between capitalism and communism. This propagated through his 'Green Book', initially published in 1975, which expressly denounced all forms of political representation, including Parliaments, as a sham. Instead a system of local 'Basic Peoples Congresses', feeding up to a national 'General Peoples Congress', was established across the country. While the regime stated these were more truly democratic than representative parliaments, and would gather people's opinions and recommendations from the grass roots to feed them into national decision-making, they were instead politically controlled by regime loyalists, and often linked to the security apparatus.

Commentators and analysts repeatedly note that, as a result of these processes, Gaddafi as leader is bound up with the very shape of the Libyan state more thoroughly than is the case for any of its Arab neighbours. With significant national oil money, he distributed patronage and cultivated loyalty among selected tribal groups and personal networks; power and prestige flowed to those who were personally close to his leadership. Under his regime, the state

and its institutions barely have an identity separate from his individual rule.

To oppose Gaddafi in effect means to oppose the structure and institutions of the regime itself. To a large extent, this context is what has driven Libya's uprising to quickly emerge as a civil war; it simply was not possible to replace the head of the state, as happened in Egypt and Tunisia, and leave the rest of the apparatus and leadership intact. This has set the terms for the uprising and the scale of the current military conflict, and is a major factor that drives the identity of the revolution itself – including the current roles and practices of media within it.

1.1.1. Gaddafi Media

Ideology (especially the ideas outlined in the Green Book) and propaganda have been central to the Gaddafi regime's methods. His own image was everywhere, on billboards and in public buildings; praise of his leadership was required in public documents including newspaper articles. Common stories from his rule relate how members of government were only referred to by their title, not their name, and football players were referred to only by their numbers. This aimed to prevent any figures from competing with his own, or his children's, public prominence. He also changed the country's national symbols, replacing the previous national flag, adopted at the time of the independence struggle from Italy, with an all-green banner; changing the national anthem, and in 1977 changing the country's name to the 'Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya.'

A physically expansive but tightly controlled media was part and parcel of this system. In its 2006 report 'Libya: Words to Deeds', Human Rights Watch confirmed once again what had been long-said: "[A] review of the main newspapers, the state-run television and the state-run press agency JANA ... reveals a largely subservient and uncritical press that glori-

⁵ For more detail, refer to International Crisis Group, op. cit.

fies the government and Muammar al-Qaddafi. The media addresses sensitive topics like police abuse or improved relations with the United States only after they have been identified as acceptable for debate, often by al-Qaddafi himself. Criticism of the Jamahiriya system is unknown.” Journalists were also imprisoned for critical views.⁶

Various state representatives described the media as ‘free’ because, they said, the revolution is of the people and the revolution owns the media, with assertions that opinion can be freely expressed in People’s Congresses – a practical impossibility. Space for free speech was closed. However recent satellite TV stations and to a lesser degree the spread of Internet connectivity in the late 1990s gave many Libyans access to a wide spectrum of uncensored news.⁷

In recent years there were moves to gradually reform aspects of the state, as part of Libya’s attempts to rehabilitate its international relations. Gaddafi’s

son Saif al-Islam was the public face of much of this process, with efforts that included some moves towards political reform and some reconciliation with opposition figures and release of prisoners⁸; his Qaddafi Foundation for International Charities was active in several areas. He also established two semi-private papers, *Oea* and *Al-Qurnya* through the Al-Ghad media group, which allowed some limited space for comment.⁹ However these relative steps towards openness also ran into resistance at the top; Al-Ghad was nationalised in 2009,¹⁰ and Saif al-Islam relatively sidelined. In 2010, Freedom House rated Libya in the lowest group of countries not free, together with the likes of Burma, Somalia, and North Korea.¹¹

Tripoli Street in downtown Misrata, where fierce fighting between rebels and Gaddafi loyalists took place.

6 “Libya: Words to Deeds”, Human Rights Watch, January 24 2006, at <http://www.hrw.org/en/node/11480/section/1>

7 For more detail, see “Libya: Words to Deeds”, Human Rights Watch, January 24 2006, at <http://www.hrw.org/en/node/11480/section/1>

8 International Crisis Group, op. cit., pp. 15-16

9 “Tripoli Spring”, Foreign Policy, May 27, 2009 at http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2009/05/26/tripoli_spring

10 See Country Report, Libya, at <http://freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=22&year=2010&country=7862>

11 See Combined Average Ratings, Independent Countries, at <http://freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=546&year=2010>



1.2. The Libya Uprising

The Libya uprising began in earnest in February, 2011, with many saying protests in Benghazi were initially sparked by the arrest of prominent lawyer and human rights activist Fathi Terbil on February 15. They quickly escalated; calls for a large-scale ‘Day of Rage’ on February 17 circulated via online social media networks¹² and protests took place in the eastern centre Benghazi, other eastern towns, and to a more limited extent in the country’s west, where security measures were much tighter. Reports flowed of government crackdowns and increasing resistance response, including the defection of several local army personnel. Protests and security reprisals were also reported in Tripoli.¹³ By February 20, Human Rights Watch estimated 233 people had been killed, a number which quickly rose. By early March, the uprising was claiming control of towns up to the eastern city of Brega, a short distance from Gaddafi’s hometown of Sirte.

Saif Al-Islam called for dialogue in the early days of the uprising¹⁴ but also vowed to fight “to the last man standing,”¹⁵ warning of civil war. Crackdowns continued; pro-Gaddafi forces, according to numerous reports bolstered by mercenaries, organised and began to attack rebel-held townships. Communications to the east, with infrastructure centralised in Tripoli, were cut, including Internet, landline, and mobile phones; during the conflict Misrata in the west also became similarly isolated.¹⁶ International journalists were harassed by the regime and its supporters, a number of them arrested; by late May five journalists were confirmed killed in the conflict.¹⁷

In his first speech after the uprising began, on February 22, Gaddafi described the rebels as ‘cockroaches’ and ‘rats’ who deserved to be executed.¹⁸ His forces began to re-take rebel-held cities including Brega and Ajdabya; on March 19 they arrived at Benghazi with heavy weapons and began entering the city.

The advance by Gaddafi forces was only halted by air-strikes by NATO, carried out extremely rapidly after United Nations Resolution 1973, authorising this action, was passed on March 17. At the time of Internews’ assessment, the frontline on the east was set between Brega and Ajdabya. In the west, after extremely heavy fighting that destroyed the centre of town, rebels gained control of Misrata in late May; fighting for towns and transport routes through the Nafusa mountains has continued, with reports that rebels had gained control of the Tunisian border crossing of Dehiba in late April.

The rebels centred in Benghazi established the NTC, which first met on March 5.¹⁹ This was initially set up not as an interim government, but to explicitly ‘provide an international face for the uprising’; it aims to oversee a transition to liberal democracy. In May an Executive Board was established, which acts as a kind of government to the Council’s ostensible legislative role. However these roles sometimes overlap, as some NTC members have taken on somewhat executive-style decisions, while the Executive Board establishes its own structures and capacities. In the current phase, the goal of a clear separation between the legislative and executive roles is ‘aspirational’ more than operational.²⁰ On March 29 the NTC issued a ‘Vision Statement’, which serves as a general ‘road-map’ for the establishment of a liberal democracy in the country.²¹

The humanitarian effects of the conflict have been immense. As of June 19, OCHA records over 100,000 Libyans have left the country and not returned; over 260,000 nationals from neighbouring countries; and over 280,000 Third Country Nationals. The UNHCR estimates there are 243,000 internally displaced within Libya; however this number is difficult to confirm. The death toll can only be estimated; however by late May the NTC estimated at least fifteen thousand had been killed.²²

12 According to the International Crisis Group (ICG), these calls were circulating at least by February 14, three days after Mubarak stepped down, and originated in Europe, not Libya. International Crisis Group, op. cit., p. 3

13 According to the ICG, “much Western media coverage has from the outset presented a very one-sided view of the logic of events, portraying the protest movement as entirely peaceful and repeatedly suggesting that the regime’s security forces were unaccountably massacring unarmed demonstrators who presented no real security challenge. This version would appear to ignore evidence that the protest movement exhibited a violent aspect from very early on”, although that doesn’t diminish the brutality of the regime’s repression. International Crisis Group, op. cit., p.4

14 “Profile: Libya’s Saif al-Islam, Al Jazeera, 21 February 2011, at <http://english.aljazeera.net/news/africa/2011/02/20112212175256990.html>

15 International Crisis Group, op. cit., p.9

16 Satellite phone provider, Thuraya, also accused the Libyan regime of deliberately jamming its signals; see “Thuraya Accuses Libya of Jamming Satellite Signals”, Space News, 25 February 2011, at http://www.spacenews.com/satellite_telecom/110225-thuraya-accuses-libya-jamming.html

17 See “Libya: the propaganda war”, Al Jazeera, 12 March 2011, at <http://english.aljazeera.net/programmes/listeningpost/2011/03/20113121012263363.html>, and “Missing Photographer Was Killed Six Weeks Ago in Attack by Gaddafi Forces on Brega”, Reporters Without Borders, 20 May 2011, at <http://en.rsf.org/libya-missing-photographer-was-killed-20-05-2011,40322.html>

18 “Raging Gaddafi orders forces to ‘capture the rats’”, ABC Online, 23 February 2011, at <http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2011/02/23/3146123.htm>

19 See the NTC website, <http://www.ntclibya.com>, for more detail on points mentioned here.

20 Internews Interview, NTC Media and Communications Committee representatives

21 See NTC website for this statement, at <http://www.ntclibya.com/InnerPage.aspx?SSID=4&ParentID=3&LangID=1>

22 “Libyan Rebel Official Says Death Toll After Revolt Reaches at Least 15,000”, Bloomberg, 20 May 2011, at <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2011-05-19/libyan-rebel-official-says-death-toll-after-revolt-reaches-at-least-15-000.html>

1.3. Genesis of media in rebel areas: a summary

Just a few months after the beginning of the uprising, media in rebel-held areas have moved forward at a rapid rate and quickly outgrown the initiatives from the first days of the protests. Yet the genesis of much of the current media lies in those early efforts. A detailed history of each initiative is beyond the scope of this report; given the rapid pace of events and the high level of informal participation, such a history – while fascinating – would also be challenging to compile. However a general summary of the major dynamics at play is still necessary, in order to gain an understanding of the early trajectory of media efforts in Libya's rebel-controlled locations.

Media activities have played a high-profile role in all stages of the uprising. As in other countries' Arab Spring movements, protagonists repeatedly refer to the importance of online social media networks to share information on protests, crackdowns, and responses; to foster debate; and to mobilise broad participation in the rebellion, including circulation of the call for the 'Day of Rage' protests.

This use of online forums got around the censorship and restrictions of state-controlled media outlets.²³ Also as elsewhere however, online wasn't the only major media factor; over the past decade satellite TV has become increasingly prominent, with the rise of Al Jazeera especially marking an enormous change. Coverage of neighbouring uprisings in Egypt and Tunisia on these channels is commonly cited as having a galvanising effect on protestors. As the regime's crackdown intensified and access to Internet was cut, material gathered by domestic citizen journalists was smuggled out of Libya as well as posting online, much was also re-broadcast back into the country via these channels,²⁴ informing a broad national audience; this

again is credited with boosting popular mobilisation. Ongoing coverage by international satellite TV, most of all Al Jazeera, continues to have enormous domestic significance for Libyan audiences. This is also recognised by Gaddafi himself; in his first televised appearance after the protests began, he urged audiences 'do not believe the channels owned by stray dogs.'²⁵

Rebellion participants quickly recognised the need to build on this somewhat organic interaction between different media platforms, and to connect with international media outlets. A celebrated early initiative was pioneered by Mohammed Nabbous, who led the set up of a series of webcams on top of the Benghazi courthouse to stream protests and events online as they took place, and who also uploaded footage gathered from around the city.²⁶

Around this and other efforts a **Media Centre** quickly emerged near the Benghazi courthouse, which had been taken over as a centre for the rebellion. The Media Centre developed and operated somewhat organically, and combined a variety of activities and services including online production, aggregation, and dissemination; newspaper and newsletter production; graffiti, posters and caricatures; music, and more. Crucially the Centre also aimed to provide support for international journalists as they arrived, including a translator / interpreter service, Internet connections, and formal press registration to facilitate journalists' travel and access. Many current initiatives have expanded from these early efforts; for example, Nabbous' online video streaming was the genesis of the rebels' new satellite TV, Libya al Hurra, which has since expanded, and changed location.

State media facilities were an early target as protests first began escalating; according to Agence France Press, cited by the International Crisis Group (ICG), Tripoli broadcast facilities and government offices were attacked and burned as early as February 18.²⁷ In other cases local media facilities were also either quickly targeted for takeover by those participating in the rebellion, or their existing staff publicly changed allegiance: staff from radio and TV stations in Benghazi, Al Bayda and Derna for example, pledged their commitment to the revolution and changed their programming accordingly, while state broadcast facilities and equipment were claimed by a mix of young, inexperienced broadcasters, sometimes together with experienced broadcast engineers in Misrata, Benghazi,

²³ In 2009 the International Telecommunications Union estimated 5.51% of Libya's population accessed the Internet; mobile phone users were estimated at over 9 million. See links, 'Estimated Internet users' and 'Mobile cellular subscriptions' at <http://www.itu.int/ITU-D/ict/statistics/index.html>. Cellular subscription numbers may be distorted with reference to population figures because of a high number of migrant workers in the country; however the ITU also named Libya as the first country in Africa to exceed a mobile phone subscription rate of 100% (number of phone subscriptions per population); see <http://www.itu.int/ITU-D/ict/newslog/Libya+Becomes+First+African+Nation+To+Pass+100+Penetration+Level.aspx>

²⁴ "Telling Libya's Story over the Internet", Los Angeles Times, 27 February 2011, at <http://articles.latimes.com/2011/feb/27/world/la-lyb-lybia-information-20110227>; "Libya: A Media Black Hole," Al Jazeera, 26 February 2011, at <http://english.aljazeera.net/programmes/listeningpost/2011/02/201122611327860400.html>; "Covering Protest and Revolution: Lessons from Al Jazeera's Mobile and Citizen Media", MobileActive.org, 02 March 2011, at <http://www.mobileactive.org/covering-protest-and-revolution-lessons-al-jazeera-innovation-and-mobile-citizen-media>

²⁵ Gaddafi was refuting rumours, mentioned by UK Foreign Secretary William Hague and reported upon by several outlets, that he had fled Libya for Venezuela

²⁶ Mohammed Nabbous was killed in a firefight on March 19. "Libya: Mourning Mohammed Nabbous," Global Voices, 19 March 2011, at <http://globalvoicesonline.org/2011/03/19/libya-mourning-mohammed-nabbous/>; "Libyan Journalist Killed in Benghazi," ABC, 21 March 2011, at <http://www.abc.net.au/pm/content/2011/s3169699.htm>,

²⁷ International Crisis Group, op. cit., p. 4

and Tobruk, to name just a few.²⁸ This mix of groups, all using previously state-owned infrastructure, now forms the basis of much of the terrestrial broadcast efforts in rebel-held areas.²⁹

1.4. Note on Censorship

Internews discussed the possibility of censorship with many interlocutors during the assessment, including media practitioners, university lecturers, students, and officials. The strong response was that official censorship doesn't currently play a role. However there were several who acknowledged that they practise some form of self-censorship in the interests of the revolution. For example, while individual leaders on the NTC were the subject of criticism, the NTC as an institution itself was deliberately not. Some practitioners clearly said that they were "going easy" on the NTC because "now is not the time" – there was a "bigger enemy" in the form of Gaddafi and his regime. Another practitioner explained that he would not publish some information from an NTC source about improvements in telecommunications infrastructure – in case that information turned out to be wrong, or unforeseen problems occurred in the infrastructure's roll-out, and resulted in rumours and resentment at failures to fulfil perceived 'promises.' Some in authority advocated directly for self-censorship, precisely in the interests of stability (see notes under 'Governance' in the [Media Mapping](#) section).

In all cases, these were framed as an expression of caution in support of the uprising, including support for the free-speech space that exists.

However all respondents said that if the authorities tried to control them more, especially later in the transition, they would resist. Indeed the transitional institutions are so fragile that it is doubtful they could push for any restrictions or 'caution' on media content *unless* it came with public support; the institutions on their own are not strong enough to enforce an edict autonomously. Censorship from

authorities is not currently a concern³⁰; however the use of public pressure on minority opinions in future debates – especially if for one reason or another such opinions are attacked for being 'against the revolution' – could become one, if a clear framework of rights for free speech, and how that would be implemented, is not clearly developed and articulated.

1.5. Note on propaganda

1.5.1. Regime Propaganda

Propaganda efforts were part of the Gaddafi regime's response to the uprising and held true to previous methods of control, noted in more detail above. Accusations of foreign involvement led the way, as did charges that those involved in the fighting were being supplied with drugs. The spectre of Islamic extremism, including statements that Derna in the east included a base for Al Qaeda, gained public airing; as did predictions of an all-out tribal civil war. Intimidation was a major part of this propaganda effort, with one of the most direct of these being Gaddafi's February 22 speech in which he declared he would hunt down the rebels in Benghazi 'house by house' and 'alleyway by alleyway.'³¹

Much of this propaganda was clumsy; perhaps the most obtuse was an effort to convince rebel and loyalist audiences alike that Gen. Abdel Fatah Younis al-Obeidi, a prominent military figure who had announced his defection from the regime a few days before, had in fact defected back in the opposite direction. Footage was shown of Gen. al-Obeidi meeting Gaddafi, apparently to back this up – but the footage was out-dated, and quickly refuted by al-Obeidi himself.³² Several rebels said that the regime's media efforts quickly deteriorated as the conflict became

²⁸ See for example: "Radio Free Tobruk is on the air – but what's the frequency?", Media Network, 26 February 2011, at <http://blogs.rnw.nl/medianetwork/radio-free-tobruk-is-on-the-air-but-whats-the-frequency>; "Radio Free Libya shakes up Gaddafi regime from Misrata", The Guardian, 29 April 2011, at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2011/apr/29/radio-free-libya-gaddafi-misrata>; "Rebels Hope for Qaddafi's Fall but Remain Fearful", New York Times, 23 February 2011, at http://www.nytimes.com/2011/02/24/world/africa/24rebels.html?_r=1; "Libya: 675/1125 kHz now in the hands of protestors", Media Network, 21 February 2011, at <http://blogs.rnw.nl/medianetwork/libya-1125-khz-now-in-the-hands-of-protestors>

²⁹ An inventory of Gaddafi-regime broadcast assets and their location is reportedly kept in Tripoli, but similar records were not available during the assessment period in the east. Internews interviews, Benghazi.

³⁰ Reporters Without Borders, in earlier research in April, did identify some examples of censorship. This may indicate that public opinion has become 'more consensual' since then, or it may show that issues of censorship, while relatively mild, can still ebb-and-flow at this early stage of the transition. The birth of "free media" in eastern Libya', Reporters Without Borders (RSF), 20 June 2011 at <http://en.rsf.org/libya-birth-of-free-media-in-eastern-20-06-2011,40487.html>

³¹ This is the famous 'zenga zenga' speech later remixed as a mocking dance tune that spread virally throughout the region and beyond (and which is now sold on CD on the streets of Benghazi). See "Qaddafi YouTube Spoof by Israeli Gets Arab Fans", New York Times, 27 February 2011, at http://www.nytimes.com/2011/02/28/world/middleeast/28youtube.html?_r=1

³² "Libya Crisis: Gaddafi loyalists warn of tribal conflict", The Telegraph, 19 March 2011, at <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/africaandindianocean/libya/8392872/Libya-crisis-Gaddafi-loyalists-warn-of-tribal-conflict.html>

more intense, although this would need detailed content analysis to chart more accurately.

Current regime propaganda emphasises the role of NATO, and frames the Alliance's role as an imperialist attack; claims of many civilians killed dominate the narrative. Confirmation of this is close to impossible; however international journalists in Tripoli have queried the level of official manipulation of the evidence they are shown.³³

1.5.2. Rebel Response

Rebels quickly appreciated that they also needed to win the battle for media representation and narrative. Many video and online efforts emphasise the attacks and brutality of the regime, and then finally the stand of defiance of the rebellion itself; they are proclamations that define the revolution purely in terms of its opposition to the regime, and used this as a motivational technique, to a greater proportion than they express the rebellion's future goals. These goals also existed within the narratives of the online and video material seen by the assessment team, but they were far less prominent than portrayals of regime abuses themselves.³⁴

Insistence that this was a revolution for liberal values of human rights and democracy were true to the spirit of those participating; they were also clearly a means of countering the regime's accusations of religious extremism and tribal divisions. The common refrain, 'We are one Libya', was a simple message emphasising unity across the country. However as noted by other analysts there are several streams in Libyan society in the east, including small, extremist religious groups; and tribal divisions have been thoroughly leveraged by the regime itself for decades, as a means to maintain power.³⁵ The revolution does publicly call unequivocally for democracy and human rights, and its initial transitional structures aim in this direction. However it is a simplification to state that this is the only stream and the only political goal in Libyan society.³⁶

Significant parts of the revolution's identity, then,



appear to also be formed specifically in response to Gaddafi's accusations.³⁷ This is by no means a surprise in a conflict – but it should not be confused with being itself a representation of all opinions and groups who are taking part. Those debates and differences will most likely emerge when the regime falls and the transition matures.

The revolution is a relatively informal, non-hierarchical effort; it has neither the ethos nor the means

³³ "Libyan officials try to control coverage", NewsOk, 07 June 2011, at <http://newsok.com/libyan-officials-try-to-control-coverage/article/3574852>; "Libya: Gaddafi regime's absurd attempts to trick the media", International Business Times, 06 June 2011, at <http://uk.ibtimes.com/articles/158108/20110606/libya-gaddafi-regime-s-absurd-attempts-to-trick-the-media.htm>

³⁴ Caution is needed here, as this was not part of an overall content analysis exercise and was purely impressionistic. That said, the impression was consistent.

³⁵ See International Crisis Group, op. cit.; "Special Report: Libya's Tribal Dynamics", Stratfor, 25 February 2011, at <http://www.stratfor.com/analysis/20110225-libyas-tribal-dynamics>

³⁶ For an example of coverage examining potential divisions among the opposition, see <http://english.aljazeera.net/video/africa/2011/08/20111814154513313837.html>

³⁷ For example in Derna, graffiti around the town refutes accusations that Al Qaeda has a presence there and demands democracy and rights instead – written in English, for any international journalists who arrived to cover this issue.



to centrally-control propaganda efforts. However it does have a strong group identity and solidarity – and this can mean that narratives and anecdotes that affirm this identity and the revolution’s objectives can be deliberately generated by small groups and take hold; or that unconfirmed stories can gain acceptance and become broadly-propagated if they match popular perceptions or expectations. These stories may be related simply because they are believed; or as part of a deliberate effort to gain an advantage in the battle for media representation. For media covering the conflict, this runs the risk of becoming propa-

ganda by another, small-group-based dynamic.³⁸

Some common stories circulating on the rebel side have these features. The accusation that Gaddafi troops have been supplied with Viagra and are using rape as a weapon of war³⁹ has been extremely

Graffiti in Benghazi.

³⁸ For an overview of the difficulties involved in confirming this story, see <http://english.aljazeera.net/programmes/peopleandpower/2011/06/2011062964345738600.html>. See also “WhoWhatWhy Factchecks the Media: More Questions About the Libyan Sex Atrocity Reporting”, Business Insider, 15 June 2011, at <http://www.businessinsider.com/whowhatwhy-factchecks-the-media-more-questions-about-the-libyan-sex-atrocity-reporting-2011-6>, for some details on the possible – unconfirmed – nature of the dynamic that may generate or spread such stories.

³⁹ Gaddafi forces accused of rape, Al Jazeera, may 3, 2011 (<http://english.aljazeera.net/video/africa/2011/05/20115381016787271.html>)



difficult to confirm; some are questioning its veracity. The high presence of mercenaries among Gaddafi forces has been highlighted again and again, and invokes the regime's historical involvement in other conflicts in Africa. However some commentary states that this, too, has been harder to confirm than anticipated and merits further questioning.⁴⁰ At least some of these stories may be true, and they are certainly believed by many on the rebels' side –

but the point is they have been widely disseminated as truth without rigorous confirmation. Even without a cynical centrally controlled system as the regime operates, this risks being propaganda generated by another means. Driven by the rebellion's own identity, this dynamic highlights some of the potential risks if the principles of free media were to conflict with the political and military imperatives of the revolution itself.

Kids playing around the remains of battle in Benghazi.

⁴⁰ "Patrick Cockburn: Lies, damn lies, and reports of battlefield atrocities", The Independent, 19 June 2011, at <http://www.independent.co.uk/opinion/commentators/patrick-cockburn-lies-damn-lies-and-reports-of-battlefield-atrocities-2299701.html>

2. General Trends and Issues

2.1. Media and Transitional Governance

The NTC and related municipal councils, as explicitly transitional arrangements, have avoided any attempts to promulgate laws and regulations or set up ongoing institutions until the conflict is resolved: while a large part of the country, particularly those in Tripoli, are unable to take part in the decision-making process, any moves to establish apparently permanent institutions may risk accusations of the east attempting to ‘take the lead’ in the revolution at the expense of those who are still living in areas under the regime’s control. However the longer the transition continues, the greater the need for institutional frameworks and systems to sustain and give direction to current efforts. This is a core dilemma affecting many areas in current transitional arrangements, whether that it is health, finance, or education; it is also pertinent for media.

Transitional structures are already taking shape and framing media efforts, in general positively, but not without ambiguity generated by this uncertain context. The ‘Media Mapping’ section below outlines these structures in more detail; briefly, they are:

- The Media and Communications Committee (related to the NTC as the incipient national ‘legislative branch’ of the transitional administration)
- The Media Ministry (part of the incipient ‘executive branch’ of the transitional administration)
- The Benghazi Municipal Council’s Media and Culture Department (other municipal councils also have structures or individuals that deal with media issues, though many are not as formalised or consolidated as they are in Benghazi)

Both within and beyond Benghazi different and even contradictory opinions can be found on what approach should be taken with media now, including by those with significant authority. For example, the need for a media ministry is dismissed outright by some, and highlighted as a requirement by others. The need for directly state-owned media (as distinct from an ‘arms’ length national broadcaster model) while dismissed by most, is still advocated as a necessary measure by some others in authority to ensure ‘the government perspective is heard.’ Completely open and unregulated media is championed by some; others espouse the need for some liaison, or indeed coordination, exercised by local government bodies, which can include authorities ‘clarifying government expectations’ for local media, issuing and managing licenses for both broadcast and print, and so on.⁴¹

Within a given institutional structure, whether at national or local level, it is difficult to define a single tendency amongst these divergent trends; different individuals with significant roles in the same transitional administrative body have express different opinions. It may also be too early to highlight any given individual’s opinion as a committed agenda or position; many people are just now discussing what steps and models are most appropriate. Reflecting this, the statements of some key individuals changed during the period of the assessment itself, at least in part as a result of ongoing debates.⁴²

⁴¹ Many independent media efforts currently rely on or are linked to some form of official support, even if this is limited to a providing building from which to work, or Internet and power connections; some other media efforts are more actively driven by transitional administration bodies. Yet the question of who gains final ownership of Gaddafi-state media assets, including transmitters and other equipment, or even which media efforts have permanent occupation rights of former government buildings, has not yet begun to be resolved and could well be a source of future conflict; some initial tensions and standoffs have already reportedly occurred.

⁴² The line between current individual ‘administrators’ and ‘citizens’ is of course a recent one: almost all of those involved in the transitional administration were in fact only recently ‘citizens’ themselves, and are operating in a voluntary capacity. Several of those who have become involved in media-related issues have done so out of a genuine commitment to or interest in the area; in the current fluid and atmosphere a media-related role is not necessarily the result of an appointment by a higher authority, but is sometimes a reflection or recognition of an individual’s voluntary application to the tasks involved.

Nevertheless it is important to note that *all of these opinions and tendencies are present, and all are informing current efforts* to build up media production and transitional institutions with a media role. Given the fluidity of the transition, it may be that the most important features of the current situation are not contained in formal decisions, but rather in what informal arrangements are set up, including temporary administrative structures and lines of authority; the mandates for use of former state-owned broadcast equipment; transitional administration-linked support for independent media, and so on. Most of all, the nature of discussion, debates, and public forums on the role of media and the nature of media laws, ethics, and mandates is perhaps the most important indicator of which direction media development is likely to take in the coming period.

There are positive signs here; for example, the NTC recently issued a press release announcing the intention to establish Libya al Hurra TV as a public service broadcaster along the lines of the BBC.⁴³ Similarly, a media exhibition and series of workshops was recently announced on for June 19 as part of efforts to strengthen the capacity and skills of local media.⁴⁴ But by and large significant debates and clarifications on future directions are yet to take place.

2.2. NTC Communication Strategies

Efforts to communicate the activities and roles of the NTC have evolved rapidly and are crucial for citizens to be able to understand what is taking place. How effective this communication is has implications both for the broader political process, and for the development of the media sector itself.

The NTC's Media and Communications Committee (MCC) is the main body carrying out this work. Its efforts include organising press conferences and providing press releases to international and local media, maintaining online updates, providing initial local media training sessions, and conven-

ing public outreach forums. MCC initiatives to date have been positive and effective; however while they have made several achievements, the expansion of their work is hampered by a lack of resources. Several journalists, while able to communicate with relevant MCC figures, also cite somewhat unclear or ineffective lines of media access to NTC representatives themselves.

The Committee is headed by Mr. Abdul Hafiz Ghoga, the NTC's official spokesperson and its Vice-Chairman. In a strict sense his spokesperson role implies some degree of separation or difference from the Media Ministry, which is part of the Executive Board. However there is clearly an overlap in this area of work; the Media Minister, Mr. Shamam, arrived in Libya only towards the end of the assessment, and was immediately a part of liaison with international journalists, not an unusual dynamic given the fluidity of the transitional period.

Institutional fluidity also has implications for other aspects of the NTC's communications approaches. For example, some of the national-level functions that would appear appropriate for the MCC also overlap with the Benghazi Municipal Council's Media and Culture Department, which despite being a local-level body also supports the nascent national broadcaster Libya al-Hurra TV, as well as hosting many other media initiatives. Several members of the MCC have linked or overlapping roles in the Department's media efforts, once more reflecting the fluidity of current transitional structures. (See the section 'Media Mapping' below for more details on institutional governance structures.)

In addition, the lack of local media capacity means that those resources the MCC does provide are not always sufficiently exploited by media targeting local audiences, because outlets lack the personnel, skills, or equipment to use what is provided. It is clear that far greater information and coverage for local audiences could be generated if these current capacity issues were tackled (see *Production Capacity and Gaps* below for more detail).

While some efforts are moving in the right direction, there is – as with all elements of the transition – a need for urgency. This is because information gaps on the activities of the NTC and local Municipal Councils can potentially lead to a vacuum in citizens' understanding of what is taking place. Particularly in areas isolated from Benghazi – whether that be in Misrata in the west, Tobruk further east, or other areas still contested – this holds risks: a sense of isolation and slow progress in meeting needs on the ground, even if fully justified due to physical or resource limitations, can lead to local perceptions of being neglected if the reasons are not effectively

⁴³ Press Statement No. 32; while welcome this also demonstrates the dilemmas of the transitional administration itself, as it clearly implies decisions regarding the role and shape of a national institution, prior to the formation of a government, and so can most likely be practically taken as a statement of intent by those currently involved in its operations, rather than a final plan.

⁴⁴ This announcement was circulated on email lists but at the time of writing was not posted on the NTC website.

explained and citizens' own views heard. Any communications limitations on the part of the NTC or, locally, Municipal Councils, can therefore hold significant implications for the political transition as a whole.

The role of NTC public communication also has a crucial, though often subtle, effect on the development of free media. Firstly, ready access to official positions is one element that can support fact-based reporting by removing one possible reason for inexperienced journalists' resorting to rumour or unsubstantiated commentary. Beyond that consideration, the NTC's Media and Communications Committee also has a chance to demonstrate a new model of government public communication, which does not rely on state ownership and control of media outlets themselves.

While no one the assessment team spoke to is in favour of anything resembling the Gaddafi regime's oppressive methods of control, the view that government needs to own its own media in order to communicate effectively was frequently a residual perception; in some cases there were localised efforts to set up early structures along these lines. This is by no means a consolidated position, but it is one identifiable trend that could hold future risks. One of the most effective ways of demonstrating that a state-controlled broadcaster tied to governing incumbents is not necessary is to demonstrate that other models also work. In these early days, the MCC's role is crucial in this regard.

2.3. Media for the Revolution

All media outlets met during this assessment identified themselves as 'supporting the revolution.' This incorporated a broad range of self-defined roles and types of production, noted here for purposes of quick reference. They included:

- Explicitly countering Gaddafi regime propaganda
- Urging regime soldiers to desert
- Informing the outside world about events taking place in Libya
- Representing the voice of Libya's youth
- Providing a voice for the people's opinions
- Motivating the public to continue to support the revolution
- Informing the public about the decisions of the NTC and local councils
- Educating audiences about political processes, for example the role of a constitution
- Criticising individual members of transitional governing structures (but not those transitional institutions themselves)
- Recognising and honouring those killed in the fighting, and their families
- Religious material
- Urging former Gaddafi supporters to join the revolution
- Promoting the voice of particular groups in society, including women
- Telling stories of the human impact of the conflict, and human interest stories (typically described as 'humanitarian' coverage)
- Promoting and informing the public about new civil society initiatives

2.4. Media Production Capacity: gaps and needs

Media in rebel-held areas have made extraordinary gains in a very limited period of time. Nevertheless many interlocutors spoke of the need to increase capacity with training and institutional assistance, whether through workshops and classes, mentorships, assistance in institutional development, or via relationships with broadcast and journalism institutions internationally.

Limitations in media capacity take many forms. At the simplest level Gaddafi-regime suppression seriously restricted the chances for journalists, editors, and students to develop critical and in some areas practical skills. While senior or experienced former media workers do have important skills, a number stated the need for further support and training, and the great majority of young journalists have received little to no training at all.

Resources are another limitation on capacity. Libya differs from many other transitional contexts in that in many areas there is a good level of basic resources, including production equipment, studios, broadcast infrastructure, some printers in Benghazi, and so on. However in some areas this infrastructure has been destroyed; in others, although resources exist, they are not sufficient for the level of production required. Part of this is due to the general economic situation – financial liquidity is lim-

ited and imports restricted, creating blockages in procurement of needed equipment. The destruction of infrastructure and the lack of resources are greatest outside of Benghazi. For example all large and medium-scale printers were reportedly destroyed in Misrata, while they never existed in smaller eastern towns; in both cases printed material can only either be produced on small, personal printers, or sent to Benghazi for production.

Damage to or restrictions on Internet and telephone infrastructure itself is another major issue. Libya's Internet access was routed through Tripoli and cut off when the conflict started in earnest; key mobile phone infrastructure was also based in the capital. While efforts to re-establish Internet services are continuing apace, currently isolated VSAT connections are the only option; some towns have only a couple of connections. Mobile phone telephony has been re-established in the east but with restrictions, including no text messaging or international calls, all of which impacts on journalists' ability to work.

The lack of a normal, functioning economy is also limiting capacity in other ways: all participants in media, from journalists to editors and producers to administrators, define themselves as 'volunteers'; they draw no direct salary for their efforts. While in general the commitment and effort displayed is admirable, in at least some important cases this means that attendance can be haphazard, negatively affecting production schedules and consistency of programming. The need for funds to pay staff was often cited as a concern; it is unlikely that this can be solved on any significant scale before the economy itself becomes operational, which means the longer the current situation continues, the greater this challenge will become.

Production systems are another limitation. A notable example is coverage of the NTC itself: while many media outlet staff have personal links with administration figures, systematic production methods to ensure fast, comprehensive coverage is often lacking. This can range from outlets simply lacking telephones with which to call NTC figures, or Internet through which they can receive press releases. However it also often includes a lack of strategy in coverage, for example few daily broadcast slots to give updates on administration decisions, or only one or no journalists assigned to regularly cover transitional administration issues. (In some cases this is countered by close direct involvement of administration representatives in direct production, itself a potential issue for the separation of state and media.) This lack of a systematic approach to production can only result in



Many economic migrants were caught up in fighting in Misrata. These two migrants, from Niger, were seeking shelter in a cramped temporary relocation center before being evacuated on a UN ship to Benghazi.

information gaps for audiences.

A final limitation in capacity is reach. The bulk of media production takes place in Benghazi, although all other locations visited had local radio production (with the exception of Ajdabya). While there is a surfeit of newspapers in the city, few if any are distributed further afield. Other towns in the east have only a handful of new publications – not necessarily a limitation of information access for audiences of itself, as two well-run, widely-circulated newspapers can provide coverage for a large population; but it is a demonstration of the different dynamics



and scales at work across locations. There are some positive efforts to counter limitations in reach (for example material is shared between radio stations in different eastern towns), but limitations on media access outside of Benghazi is striking.

More concerning is that there are few outlets that can cover the whole country, including conflict areas and areas under Gaddafi control. AM stations in Benghazi and Misrata have national coverage – but they have many serious limitations in their own production capacity. Two satellite TV channels can theoretically cover the country; one, however, is on

a satellite not generally accessed by Libyan audiences, and the other is currently limited to two hours of program production. This means that there is little opportunity for Libyans outside rebel-held areas to get information about what is happening, particularly regarding the transitional administration itself. External satellite channels such as Al Jazeera and Al Arabiya are the only available source for such audiences; however while the coverage on these channels is extensive, it is targeted to regional, not national, audiences and so is aiming to fulfil different information needs.

2.4.1. Media Across Generations

The statement that ‘youth made this revolution’ is a frequent one; and media by and for youth is very prominent. This is far more notable in Benghazi, which as of mid-June had around 60 registered newspapers and magazines, a large proportion of those run by young people. Several other efforts – including online production, graffiti, and others – also feature a high proportion of young participants. However while there is still meaningful youth participation outside of Benghazi, including several youth groups in Misrata, it is far less predominant, with apparently a higher proportion of more senior figures involved in and driving media production.

Electronic broadcast media, which relies on greater infrastructure including studios, transmitters, and recording equipment, has proportionally much greater participation by the older generation. Many are former staff of state institutions where the necessary equipment was located, and who have now joined the uprising’s effort. This is not an exclusive division – there are at least two radio initiatives in Benghazi run by youth, and young people participate alongside senior staff in several efforts. Nevertheless the character of different media efforts run ‘by’ or ‘for’ youth, and others in which young people are part of the staff, is distinctive.

2.4.2. Media and Business Investment

Future trends in media are certain to have large involvement of Libyan business interests, both at home and throughout the Diaspora, and from other donors and supporters. Already one private satellite TV station, *Libya Lekol Alahrar*, has been established with assistance from Qatar,⁴⁵ and *Libya al-Hurra* in Benghazi. At the time of the assessment another had begun broadcasting a test-signal, with rumours of a fourth starting soon.

Previous transitions, ranging from the former Soviet Union to Indonesia to Pakistan and others, have been accompanied by large-scale investment and a proliferation of well-funded, but initially under-skilled, media outlets. The wealth, in Libya itself, throughout the Libyan Diaspora, and among other supporters of the rebels, means that it is likely that similar dynamics will emerge. This is perhaps most likely to take place in satellite TV, which is already well established among Libyan audiences. The skill-

levels among Libyan journalists are currently under-prepared for such a change.

2.4.3. Media and Civil Society Debates

New civil society organisations – focusing on relief efforts, on youth, and several other issues – are emerging at a rapid rate in especially Benghazi. Yet this nascent civil society sector is at a very early stage and participants are just beginning to define their areas of focus, mandates, and key issues.

There are as *yet no civil society organisations with a particular focus on media freedom and freedom of expression; no key advocates or ‘media champions’ have so far emerged.* There are a number of civil society organisations who combine media production with relief or social development activities, but none who are explicitly positioned to focus on raising media advocacy issues or promoting discussion of media freedoms and appropriate laws. At least one journalist union is on the way to becoming established, but still has a long way to go to consolidate and develop its program (see the ‘Media Mapping’ section below).

Again, this is understandable given the early stage of developments; and the fact that enthusiasm for the values of free speech is universally proclaimed may create the impression that this is not a crucial priority precisely because at this point it appears to be uncontested. Yet as the observations above make clear, even at this early stage debate would benefit from a greater variety of input and expertise. The MCC is taking some initiatives in this direction, for example organising an exhibition and workshops for local media on June 19; the Executive Board’s recently established Ministry for Culture and Community⁴⁶ is also working on an extensive training and support program for emerging civil society groups.

While the affirmation of the values of free expression and free media are heartening, the potential for some patterns to be established early, and for possible misunderstandings or mis-steps to take place, means that greater informed debate on this key element of the revolution is itself a definite need.

⁴⁶ This has been described also as the Ministry for Culture and Civil Society; however the term ‘Culture and Community’ is the one used on the official website. (The term ‘Ministry’ is not found anywhere on the website position descriptions but is the term invariably used to describe the Executive Board’s different sections.)

⁴⁵ Internews interview, Mohammed Shembish, Head, Libya Lekol Alahrar Benghazi bureau.

3. National Political and Military Issues: Implications for Media

Many core issues that affect the nascent media sector also have impact on the conflict and transition as a whole. While these concerns are extremely broad, it is nevertheless important to note how they may affect the media sector specifically; and in the opposite direction, how the media may well affect the dynamic of the conflict and transition's overall development in turn.

3.1. Tripoli and the conflict end-game

When and how Tripoli falls will have far-reaching implications for all elements of the transition. Although Benghazi is the second-largest city in Libya, the east as a whole comprises only about one-third of the country's population. It is not the centre of political power, infrastructure, or business. The rebels unanimously state that Tripoli will be their capital, yet Tripoli remains under the Gaddafi regime's control and its citizens, including likely opposition leaders, have not been able to play any significant role in the transitional process to date, and will need to be incorporated into future decisions and directions. The NTC is highly aware of the need to remain open to this process. Yet at this stage whatever dynamic that may emerge is an unknown factor.

This is not to question the purpose or of current transitional arrangements; current leaders are highly cognisant of the need to maintain an open process and not attempt to excessively lock in policy directions or structures while leading figures from much of the country are unable to take part. But it would be a mistake to simply assume that the understandings and trajectories currently set will remain unchanged, given the large-scale transformations that are still to come.

Media Implications

Media in rebel-held areas have a potentially powerful role to inform citizens in Tripoli and elsewhere about what is taking place across the country, and communicating the nature of the transitional process. This can be as simple as stating the facts on the ground, which in large part would counter Gaddafi-controlled media propaganda; if done well, it can potentially serve as a strong grass-roots 'confidence-building' measure, not just in the transition itself, but in the media values that it supports. However if the response is with overt propaganda of their own – ignoring the nuances and unknowns of the current situation – that may have an impact on the level of confidence citizens, particularly any grass-roots Gaddafi supporters, have in the transitional process. In either case, the current lack of resources and capacity of media with national reach is a big obstacle to either of these approaches.

At the level of governance and policy, whether a transitional administration that incorporates representatives from all of Libya will agree with every initiative undertaken so far is an unanswered question. For example, the already-stated model for turning Libya *al-Hurra* into a national broadcaster, while a positive step itself, may be up for dispute; others may want a stronger role in running that broadcaster. Other models and ideas of media-related laws and regulation currently not present or may also be placed on the table. Positive debates and examples

of practice, rather than set institutions and pre-defined positions within them, is potentially the best preparation at this stage for what could be a significantly altered transitional process.

3.2. Transition vs. Stasis

As noted above, transitional leaders may be very aware of the political imperative to keep the current process as flexible and adaptable as they can. Yet it is also impossible to keep all decisions on-hold. Communities in rebel-held areas understand that the war is still being fought; nevertheless they will expect to see some progress – and at the very least, are unlikely to welcome any deterioration in basic services and goods. This means that institutional frameworks, previously centralised in Tripoli, will need to be established and consolidated to maintain current stability. The uprising to date has been remarkable, perhaps unprecedented, in the degree to which it has been spontaneous and unstructured. Yet in order to maintain clarity of vision and purpose, levels of security, and common services, an increasingly explicit political leadership with the binding decisions that this entails will become more urgent.

These are steps that international supporters of the NTC are pressing for; however the conflicting demands between transitional openness and institutional consolidation that they require constitutes a real challenge for the NTC. How the Council negotiates its way through and achieves balance between these different imperatives, and especially how long the conflict continues and requires them to do this, will be a significant factor in the political process.

Media Implications

If the transition and its attendant pressures do stretch out and frustrations build, this will be an early test of new media outlets' coverage: how much will this coverage investigate and explain the underlying causes of the issues at hand, and explore solutions; and how much will it potentially amplify – or ignore – the frustrations of specific groups?

Whether outlets have the skills, equipment, or even funds to do this would be tested. Governance issues will also become more challenging, as temporary administrative arrangements almost inevitably become more consolidated, including the positions of those in authority, and the practices that have so far emerged on an ad-hoc basis.





Onboard a multi-agency assessment mission to Misrata by boat, coordinated by the International Organization for Migration.

3.3. Humanitarian Needs: Transition vs. Crisis

There is a major humanitarian crisis in areas where the conflict is taking place; and several crises where citizens and migrant workers have fled across Libya's borders. However international and national humanitarian organisations say rebel-held areas where conflict has ceased are themselves not undergoing a large-scale humanitarian crisis. The high organisational capacity and available resources in these areas mean that as soon as the firing stops, the significant crises in places of conflict rapidly become situations of recovery and political transition. (This is notwithstanding some pressing requirements, such as ongoing medical needs for the wounded and Unexploded Ordnance (UXO) risk awareness and clearance, and protection issues, to name some of the most prominent.)

However this will not necessarily remain the case. Awareness of what is taking place in the country's south is low – those leading the NTC's own relief efforts described it as a 'black box' about which they have little to no information. An extended siege or long, bloody conflict for Tripoli could result in significant degradation and / or damage to infrastructure and supplies in the capital as well as immense suffering. How quickly Gaddafi falls could very likely result in much larger-scale, longer-term urgent humanitarian needs.

Little planning has gone into communications preparation for these scenarios on the part of national and international humanitarian organisations. Preparedness is needed for this possibility; communication capacity to current and potentially affected populations is an essential part of this.

Media Implications

There is no comprehensive humanitarian communication strategy on the part of national or international organisations that targets audiences both within and beyond rebel-held areas. While some media currently have a humanitarian focus, this is usually limited to covering human-interest stories; awareness of the nature and rationale of humanitarian mandates is low. A communication strategy that includes training of media personnel in these issues can potentially enhance understanding of the issues involved. If such programming is carried on outlets with national reach, it can also serve as another form of confidence-building and awareness-raising

at the grass-roots level in Gaddafi-held areas of how to access support to meet humanitarian needs over the short or longer-term.

3.4. Security

The rebellion has been a spontaneous, popular uprising; there was no process of slowly developing and arming established rebel groups. This means there are only relatively limited structures or lines of communication or command for those bearing arms; both the rebel armed forces and its internal security, like everything else, depends to a large degree on informal co-operation.

There are reportedly somewhere between 11 to 40 volunteer armed groups in Benghazi alone, with some accused of abuses and carrying out arbitrary detentions,⁴⁷ and a significant amount of weaponry visible on the streets, including automatic rifles, machine guns mounted on pickup trucks, rocket-propelled grenades and more, seized from regime stockpiles or sourced from elsewhere. Initial efforts are underway to consolidate these groups into a more formalised structure, but this is an unavoidably complex area. Despite these concerns, this situation has not drastically affected Benghazi's safety so far, but the use of weapons to resolve personal disputes is frequently mentioned by residents as a key concern. If divisions between political or social groups, or armed groups themselves, emerge in the future this has the potential to become a serious and destabilising challenge.⁴⁸

Several commentators also point to perceived divisions amongst the transitional leadership, and say this could also become a cause for future instability with potentially serious consequences.⁴⁹ (The assassination of military leader General Abdel Fattah Younes and the speculation surrounding his death is a demonstration of the possibility of violent incidents affecting internal security in rebel areas.)⁵⁰



Media Implications

In any deterioration of security environments, journalists and media outlets are often among the first to feel the increased physical threat and pressure to change coverage; if conditions were to become worse in rebel-held areas, a similar dynamic would emerge. Engaged, accurate, and quality coverage by media of this issue, on the other hand, can be one influence promoting public pressure to resolve these difficulties, including engaging audiences in armed groups themselves.

47 "Libya: Opposition Arbitrarily Detaining Suspected Gaddafi Loyalists", Human Rights Watch, 05 June 2011, at <http://www.hrw.org/en/news/2011/06/05/libya-opposition-arbitrarily-detaining-suspected-gaddafi-loyalists>

48 See "To Ease Allies' Fears, Rebels Attempt to Rein In Militia", Wall Street Journal, 13 June 2011, at http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052702304563104576362820981161198.html?mod=googlenews_wsj for more detail on this issue.

49 See for example <http://english.aljazeera.net/video/africa/2011/07/2011719113014299678.html>, <http://english.aljazeera.net/video/africa/2011/08/2011814154513313837.html>

50 See <http://english.aljazeera.net/programmes/insidestory/2011/07/201173012294885563.html>



Information has played an important role in the conflict for both Gaddafi loyalists and rebels. The Media Center in Benghazi was created in the early stages of the rebellion to provide a variety of services including translation and Internet for local and international journalists.

3.5. Tribal and Religious Identities

The Gaddafi regime from the beginning warned of dire consequences flowing from the rebellion, including tribal civil war, and the rise of religious extremism. Prominent figures in the rebellion dis-

missed this, insisting that they aimed for a liberal rights-based democracy.

There is currently little indication of tribal or religious extremist agendas holding strong influence in the direction of the uprising. However as outlined earlier, analysts familiar with Libya note that Gaddafi himself relied on tribal divisions as one of his strategies for maintaining power; and efforts by rebel leadership to win over significant tribal groups – and other meetings held by Gaddafi in Tripoli –in-



Reporter
at Shabab
Libya FM, in
Benghazi.

An exclusive insistence on a liberal, individualist, democratic identity for the revolution, while not false, appears an over-simplification of the groups involved in the conflict who may not yet have developed or articulated their positions.

dicate that this is an important factor.⁵¹

Islam is extremely important to the identity of Libyan communities, and tends to be more conservative in the east of the country. While much of this is moderate, analysts also point to a history of small-scale extremist Islamic resistance to the regime in the east, with some generated from Libyan participants in the Afghan war against the Soviet Union.⁵²

In the face of this background, an exclusive insistence on a liberal, individualist, democratic identity for the revolution, while not false, appears an over-simplification of the groups involved in the conflict who may not yet have developed or articulated their positions.

Media Implications

There are clearly a number of debates and discussions that need to take place, bringing in different tribal and religious perspectives; this is more challenging and nuanced than voicing demands for rights and providing a platform for the voices of youth, for example; or including significant space for religion in production, which a number of outlets do. Some insist it is too early, and potentially destabilising to do this now.

Arguably they may have a point, depending on *how* it is carried out. The question is, at what moment could it become too late, with its own destabilising potential? This can't be answered yet. However, if media outlets are able to reflect and encompass these issues, they could strengthen the quality of debate; if they are unable to do so, there is a possibility of greater fragmentation along the lines of different interest groups down the track.

⁵¹ See for example: <http://www.mail.com/int/news/europe/494402-italy-to-host-meeting-libyan-tribal-leaders.html> and http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20110505/ap_on_re_mi_ea/ml_libya

⁵² International Crisis Group, *op. cit.*

4. Libya media mapping⁵³

⁵³All contacts details are available upon request.

4.1. Benghazi

As the rebellion's centre and in effect transitional capital, Benghazi includes both local and rebel-national dynamics. These often overlap.

4.1.1. Governance: National

A. Executive Board: Media Ministry

The Media Minister is Mahmoud Shammam. Formerly based in Qatar and the US, Mr. Shammam returned to Libya in the final days of Internews' assessment. He emphatically insists that there will be no Media Ministry and no government media control in the future, saying that the Ministry is only necessary at the moment because it is a transitional period and that people are "used to" such structures. He believes that private media will not be appropriate for Libya and supports a national broadcaster along the lines of the BBC.

Mr. Shammam is well-known as an opponent of the Gaddafi regime who gained asylum in the US in 1976.⁵⁴ He is the former Arabic editor of *Newsweek* and *Foreign Policy*, a former Board member of Al Jazeera, and has been described as having close links with Qatar.⁵⁵ He is the founder of the first opposition-supportive satellite TV station, *Libya Lekol Alahrar*, based in Qatar with a bureau in Benghazi (see below).

On 31 May, the day of his arrival, Mr. Shammam held an informal meeting with international journalists, pledging government openness and facilitation for their coverage. This has some overlap with

work carried out by the NTC's Media and Communications Committee (see below).⁵⁶

B. National Transitional Council: Media and Communications Committee

The Media and Communications Committee (MCC) is headed by Abdul Hafiz Ghoga, who is also the vice-chairman and official spokesman for the NTC, with Mohamed Fannoush as deputy. It has four sections or working groups:

- International Media, headed by Habib Be Ali, responsible for press conferences and other engagement with international journalists.
- Local Media, headed by Zuhair Albarasi, responsible for developing local journalist access to and participation in press conferences, and some training events
- Social Media, headed by Mohamad Bala, manages the online media presence of the NTC, including its website; and media monitoring reports for the NTC
- Public Outreach, headed by Najla El mangoush, runs a number of events to increase public interaction with and understanding of the NTC; it is somewhat of a bridge between the NTC and civil society. Events have included an NGO fair and workshops; public seminars on the political process and constitutional models, with the goal of "bringing the NTC closer to the people", which includes both increasing awareness of NTC roles and activities, and getting public feedback and opinions

The MCC is also supported by a small team of external consultants, provided by Forbes Associates.

⁵⁴'The birth of "free media" in eastern Libya', Reporters Without Borders (RSF), 20 June 2011 at <http://en.rsf.org/libya-birth-of-free-media-in-eastern-20-06-2011,40487.html>

⁵⁵'How Democratic is Libya's Opposition?', The Guardian, 25 May 2011 at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2011/may/25/libya-opposition-transitional-national-council-ntc>

⁵⁶Even before Mr. Shammam's arrival in Libya, this mix of roles has caused some confusion; see 'Divisions, gaffes sap credibility of Libyan rebels', Reuters, 11 May 2011 at <http://af.reuters.com/article/libyaNews/idAFLDE7491Q620110511>

C. 'Policy Working Group': Media Committee

The 'Policy Working Group' discusses and formulates policy recommendations that are submitted to the NTC. NTC representatives have reportedly occasionally asked the Group's members to develop recommendations on political and financial fields. The Group has eight Committees,⁵⁷ with Media one of them.

The Media Committee to date has had little influence on media policy and process, but is hoping to increase its role. It is led by Khalid Saad, meets twice a week, and has approximately 12 participants; seven were present at the meeting attended by Internews, with one having media experience in the former Benghazi state broadcaster. The Committee leans towards supporting a government-owned broadcaster, possibly along a BBC-type model. Committee recommendations developed so far emphasise use and government management of current media efforts for greater impact in the conflict, including countering Gaddafi-regime propaganda.

D. Benghazi Municipal Council

Under the Transitional Administration, every district or administrative area has a municipal council, also operating on a transitional mandate. Benghazi's is currently the largest; due to proximity, institutional fluidity, and availability of personnel, many individuals and functions overlap between the Municipal and the National levels.

Media and Culture Department

Mohammed Fannoush, also deputy to Mr. Ghoga of the NTC's Media and Communications Committee, heads the Media and Culture Department.⁵⁸

The Media functions of the Department include: registering newspapers⁵⁹; overseeing *Libya al-Hurra TV*, *Voice of Libya al-Hurra* (AM radio), *Voice of Benghazi al-Hurra* (FM radio), and hosting several other media. The role of licensing radio and TV stations was also mentioned; however stations outside those mentioned above, which are currently producing and broadcasting in Benghazi, either received permission (whether a formal license or not) from

another source, or are operating without official imprimatur.⁶⁰

Mr. Fannoush described the managers of *Libya al-Hurra TV* and the radio stations as his 'delegates.' This could well turn out to be a transitional arrangement given the express statement of the station that it is editorially independent of government figures, and aims to be structurally independent along the lines of the BBC.

Mr. Fannoush emphasises the need for training capacity to be developed, but that it should take place through the Department, which would identify training candidates and selected programs, and avoid "expensive foreigners being used to train simple ABCs." He supports a mix of State and private media, including in print, but notes that this will be decided by a future Parliament in public debate.

He says Libyans "are not used to freedom", noting several people have called him angry about critical coverage of particular issues, but that he welcomes adversarial and critical debate, including about his own role. Nevertheless he is also in favour of "self-censorship", stating some issues are too sensitive given the current state of the conflict;⁶¹ including attacking the revolution or the Quran. However he adds that "after the revolution is completed, and Libya is liberated, then in my view, even those who are going to praise Gaddafi or his theory will be allowed to do so."

The Department building also hosts a variety of online youth media efforts, and around ten print publications run by youth, including *Sowt Post*, *Benrenici Post*, *Panorama*, and others.⁶² The Culture functions of the Department include the establishment and support of libraries, museums, theatre and similar institutions; however this work hadn't started at the time of the assessment.

See sections on *Libya al-Hurra TV* and Radio below for more information and contact details.

E. Gayounis University

Gayounis University includes a Media College or Institute,⁶³ which prior to the uprising taught both theoretical and technical skills, including radio and video production. The University is currently closed and according to staff the buildings, while safe, are

⁵⁷ They were listed to Internews as: Politics; Transitional Period; Law; Army and Defense; Social; Finance and Economics; Media; Environment

⁵⁸ Mr. Fannoush was Director of the National Library until 1984, and subsequently held senior roles in establishing Benghazi's Municipal Archives, among other efforts.

⁵⁹ Mr. Fannoush describes the registration process as a formality, with only name and contact details required. A member of the MCC described 'registration' more as an 'accreditation' process as a means to assist journalists, for example by providing managed access to press conferences of visiting international representatives or national office-bearers where, for security or practical reasons, 'open-door' public access is undesirable.

⁶⁰ This may not include all radio frequencies re-broadcasting TV signals; see 'Radio' below

⁶¹ Mr. Fannoush is cited as providing a more concise list of taboo topics by RSF; RSF, op. cit.

⁶² In late May, the Committee told youth print publications to leave their building so that it could be used by an expanding *Libya al-Hurra TV*. Following a protest outside the downtown Tibesty Hotel where much of the transitional administration's work takes place, the Committee granted them another space in the same building.

⁶³ In several other universities, media is a department within a University's arts faculty

technically off-limits after being hit during Gaddafi forces' advance on the town.

Some University staff are responding to the upsurge in media by holding month-long training courses, with each course including one representative each from a number of media outlets on a first-come, first-serve basis. The first course began during the assessment period, with the goal of continuing courses on rotation, revising material as required, until all new outlets have received at least some training. Staff involved in running the course have requested assistance including access to better materials and links with international institutions.

4.1.2. Print

Before the uprising, Benghazi had two print publications, *Benghazi Akhbar* and *Al-Qurnya*, this second established during the limited reform period led by Gaddafi's son Saif Al-Islam. Both are now reportedly publishing with *Al-Qurnya* re-launched and re-named *Brnieq*.

Since the uprising, around 60 new print publications had been registered with the Benghazi Municipal Council with another seven pending by late May. They are produced on external printers. They are all run by volunteers; given the current suspension of Benghazi's normal economy, none are commercially viable operations at present, so they are universally funded by donations or funds accessed personally by their volunteer staff. A great proportion of them are run by and for youth.

The number and rapid growth of print publications makes a comprehensive overview impractical. Instead, Internews approached publications hosted in a range of different locations to gain illustrative input of different groups.⁶⁴

Sowt Post, as mentioned, is located in the Municipal Council's Media and Culture Department building. It gathers most of its material from public contributions submitted through the post-box at the Benghazi Courthouse square; an editorial committee assesses the contributions and selects which ones to print. Around 25 people work on the paper, ranging from 15 to 25 years old. Volunteer staff also write their own commentary and articles. They aim to change old models and "do something that reflects the youth."

Editor Mohamad Shembish describes media as "our weapon of the revolution", and that "if someone is doing something wrong", the paper aims to criticise it. This has included criticism of some of the NTC's in-

dividual office-bearers, and of rumoured plans to recruit former police officers to re-establish the police force. Coverage is restricted by two criteria: it must be current, and must not incite violence.

Sowt Post has run for 10 issues and is beginning advertising to raise money; it aimed to distribute CDs of an Al Jazeera documentary about Libya in the next issue. Future goals include expanding activities beyond media into an 'association' with broader social roles. After the current transition many participants intend to return to school or their businesses and run the paper part-time.

Intifahat Alahrar is one of several media and social development activities undertaken by Attawasul Foundation (see below). It is located in the English language school owned by the husband of Attawasul co-founder and Director Amina Megheirbi.

Coverage is in both English and Arabic, and includes voices of youth; interviews with NTC and other figures of responsibility; stories of those who have escaped to Benghazi from conflict zones; and historical material – for example, a timeline of the revolution so far; or a summary of the Belgian health workers' AIDS scandal in the 1990s (reflecting the fact that coverage of this issue was extremely restricted at the time and as a result awareness of it remains very low).

Intifahat al-Ahrar has a print run of two to three thousand and is produced once a week.

Note on Attawasul Association

As outlined on its website <http://www.tawasul-libya.org>, the Association was started by a group of women active in and around the Courthouse in the early days of the protest; several of the same women are still involved. Its goals, broadly, are to promote social development of women, children, and youth.

A number of young people joined the Association; its various activities were decided simply by participants discussing what they wanted to do, and then forming teams around these ideas. As well as generating the print publication *Intifahat Alahrar*, *Attawasul* activities also include:

- A radio production studio which was scheduled to begin broadcasting a series of 30-minute programs on *Shabab Libya* (see the section on 'Radio', below);
- Video and photography documentation of the revolution, for online distribution and other exhibitions
- Handicraft fundraising activities;
- Charity food and other material distributions for those affected by the conflict;
- Social development activities for women and children

⁶⁴ For an earlier review conducted in April of these and some other print publications, see RSF, op. cit.

The Association aims to move to a larger building, both to gain more space and also to allow language classes to re-commence in the school. A separate location has already been identified for women’s program activities.

Attawasul is one demonstration of an important dynamic involving much of the new media, which combines broader civil-society or social-movement activities with more conventional media production; there are other similar examples of this including beyond Benghazi. The evolution of this space will have important implications for the dynamics and quality of both media production itself; and the involvement of civil society in debates surrounding rights-based systems of media freedom and freedom of expression.

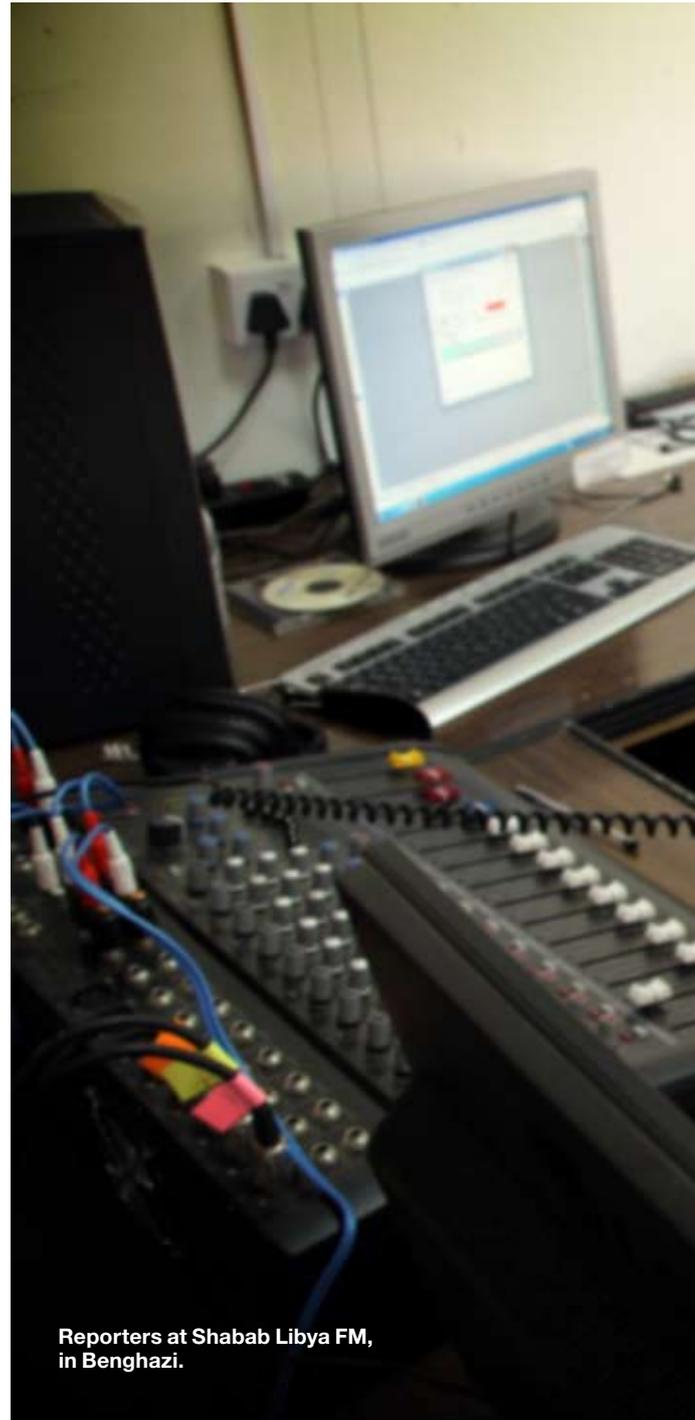
Libya Post is located in an English language school and publishes in English and Arabic. According to its editor its founder and chief editor Tawfik Mansurey it aims to provide both Libyan news and link to an international perspective, reproducing international stories with the aim of “bringing the Western view to a Libyan audience.” It generally runs weekly.

17th of February produces from the Media Centre located behind the Benghazi Courthouse, and is one of a range of media activities taking place there (see below). A large proportion of its coverage is provided by the public who submit stories or arrive to tell them in person. They have four or five journalists in Benghazi, five photographers, and are connected to Media Centres in other locations, including the Nafusa mountains, Misrata, and elsewhere; they also share material with other operations in the Media Centre, for example material from correspondents in Misrata who file for online efforts. The paper runs three times a week.

4.1.3. Radio: broadcast

All radio broadcasts before the uprising were state-run. Programming was a mix of local production – with broadcast often extensively delayed after production while it was vetted by censors in Tripoli – and programs relayed from the capital.

There was a high level of redundancy of both AM and FM transmitters in almost all locations visited by Internews, with several extra – often older – transmitters unused in broadcast facilities. Many of these are now being utilised by a variety of actors as part of an expanded radio sector.



Reporters at Shabab Libya FM, in Benghazi.

Voice of Libya al-Hurra,⁶⁵ 675 AM, is within the management structures of Benghazi Municipal Council’s Media and Culture Department, with an oversight or coordination role provided by Abdalla Ibrahim Alhaneid, a former communications engineer. Its transmitter strength reportedly covers the whole country, giving it great practical importance in providing information to those in Gaddafi-held areas. The station has around 25 staff in total; how-

⁶⁵ Various names have been provided for this and some other ‘al-Hurra’ stations, which is reflected in many news reports. English-Arabic translations differ; the names used here were given by English-speaking staff at the stations.



ever that includes no journalists gathering news outside the station premises and no staff on news 'beats', including the National Transitional Council. NTC updates are instead gathered from established personal contacts via telephone. While these contacts may well be close, this is nevertheless inevitably an obstacle to systematic, up-to-date coverage. The station also has no Internet connection, precluding it from receiving NTC press releases or accessing other news services, and no satellite phone to contact sources outside the east's mobile phone network.

Programming runs from 09:00 to 00:00, and is produced live by staff in a makeshift studio on-location with the AM transmitter (the original studios in town were destroyed during the uprising), and includes:

- 3 news bulletins per day
- Cultural programs
- Social programs (e.g. information on health)
- Weekly updates on the NTC
- Prayer, poems, and religious programming

Voice of Benghazi al-Hurra, 98.9 FM is also within the structure of the Media and Culture Department. Again it operates with around 25 staff; despite being one of the few Benghazi-focused media outlets with ongoing production – and therefore one of the main channels through which residents could find out about local issues – the station has only one or two journalists; as with the AM station, none of them have a ‘beat’, including for NTC developments; nor does the station have any Internet connection or satellite phones.

The station is located on the city outskirts, in the former government transmitter repair and storage depot for the eastern region. Upcoming plans include both a technical upgrade and relocation to the centre of town, funds and equipment permitting; it is unclear whether this can be achieved in the near term.

Programming is produced in a renovated studio; it broadcasts from 10:00 to 00:00 and covers similar themes to the AM station, although it is a completely different program schedule.

Shabab Libya (101.1 FM) is produced by a group of high-school alumni, with production taking place in their old school. There is no live link between studio and transmitter; production is pre-recorded and broadcast 48 hours later.

Broadcast began in early May after permission was granted by the NTC. Programming includes: newspaper headlines; voices of youth; introduction to new civil society organisations (a thoroughly new phenomenon in Libya); discussion of civil society issues and activities; interviews on political developments, and more. It also focuses on refuting rumours; for example, stories on regime plans to poison the water supply. The station identifies with humanitarian or social-development issues more than the direct progress of the conflict itself and focuses on “how to build the state after the revolution.” Lack of Internet and phone facilities limits audience feedback channels but this is a goal for the future.

Between 15 to 20 people regularly work at the station; they are assisted by a lecturer in Media from Gayounis University, Mr. Nezar Al Zubir. Program guidelines have been drawn up and include the reflection of Arabic and Islamic culture; respect for all regardless of political, religious, or other general creeds; avoiding didacticism and avoiding “humiliating” former Gaddafi supporters, among others. A management structure is being further developed.

Tribute FM (92.4 FM) is an English-language radio station, located in the Media and Culture Committee’s building. Originally broadcast only online, it was scheduled to begin terrestrial broadcast on

its frequency in early June. See <http://tributefm.com/>⁶⁶

There are several other signals re-broadcast in Benghazi, but not produced there. They include:

- 98.4 FM: Libya FM (satellite TV, see below)
- 93.4 FM: Libya Lekol Alahrar (satellite TV, see below)
- 99.9 FM: Al Jazeera (Arabic feed)

Further stations were reported as beginning broadcasts, after the assessment team departed Libya; they are noted here for reference and future documentation, but were not directly researched or confirmed:

- 88.5 FM: Shabab (different from Shabab Libya, above)
- 105.1 FM: Qoran Qarem (not visited)
- 98.0 FM: Aljabel Aladger
- 1125 AM: Aljabel Aladger

4.1.4. Television: Satellite Broadcast

Prior to the uprising, satellite TV had become the most popular medium, particularly due to outlets like Al Jazeera gaining significant profile (the regime blocked its signal in February although it is accessible now in the east⁶⁷). Libyan state TV also broadcast on satellite, reportedly starting from 1997.

There are currently two satellite TV stations associated with the rebels, with another broadcasting test signals before the end of the assessment period, and launch of a fourth rumoured in upcoming weeks or months.

*Libya Lekol Alahrar*⁶⁸ is the first Libyan satellite channel established in support of the transitional process, and began broadcasting from Qatar from 30 March where it receives support from the *Al Rayyan* TV station. Current Media Minister Mahmoud Shammam is the station’s founder and CEO. The station has a bureau in Benghazi, currently located in the Ouzu Hotel. Staff in Benghazi number around 18, including six journalists and four cameramen. According to bureau director Mohamed

⁶⁶ See RSF, op. cit., for more details.

⁶⁷ ‘Al Jazeera says signal jammed, Libya blocks website’, Reuters, 18 February 2011, at <http://af.reuters.com/article/libyaNews/idAFLDE71H2A120110218>

⁶⁸ The station has also been called simply ‘Libya TV’, also the name of its URL, and in Benghazi is commonly referred to as ‘Libya Alahrar.’ The name used here was provided by the head of the station’s bureau in Benghazi.

Shembish around 10 further sub-offices with two or three staff each have been established in locations throughout the east.

The station currently broadcasts around 12 hours a day, up from three in the early stages, and aims to reach 24 hours by late June. Programming includes regular news bulletins and half-hourly updates, talkshows, and panel discussions. According to its website it is carried on ArabSat and NourSat; Mr. Shimbesh expressed hope that space on NileSat would be possible in the future.

Libya al-Hurra TV has evolved from the web-cast established in the earliest days of the protest by Mohammad Nabboush; since then it has re-located from the Media Centre by the Courthouse to the Municipal Media and Culture Department building. After extensive efforts, the station announced it had secured space both on ArabSat and NileSat.

Starting from 30 May, the station has been broadcasting from 8pm to midnight every night, with two hours of promotional material followed by two hours' live telecast from the square outside the Benghazi Courthouse, where events, including speeches and performances are held regularly. Station management is currently seeking to consolidate structures, recruit further production staff, and secure professional and technical support from overseas and possibly among the Libyan Diaspora.⁶⁹

Libya FM is an upcoming satellite channel, reportedly based in Egypt, which was running a test signal in the final days of the assessment period, in preparation for a full launch. The station also broadcasts its signal on FM frequencies in Benghazi and Derna.

4.1.5. Television: Terrestrial Broadcast

Libya Channel broadcasts on UHF (no channel or frequency given), with most of the staff made up of former employees of the state Benghazi TV station who joined the revolution. Equipment includes transmitter, cameras, and three outside broadcaster vans, the most equipped of which can manage simultaneous feeds from six cameras but is currently used as a control room. The station produces four hours' new daily programming, played twice a day, and daily live telecasts of events at the Courthouse Square.

There are links and sharing of programming between the station and the online video and stream-

ing of the Media Centre by the Courthouse (see below); this is clearly indicated by the fact that they share the same logo and watermark. The station, including transmitter, is located in a military base in town; staff state there are no editorial implications from this co-location.

The station also broadcasts on 89.3 FM, and expressed a goal of eventually gaining satellite broadcast as well.

4.1.6. Online Television

Alive in Libya (<http://alive.in/libya/>)

Online of course includes all formats, text, sound, and image; however *Alive in Libya* identifies specifically as an online video portal. Established with the support of *Small World News* (smallworldnews.tv) in early March, it aimed to provide material to an international audience to show what was taking place on the ground. It uploaded its first video on 15 March, and produces around six stories a week. It currently operates with around 12 young male and female volunteers; the coordinator and editor is Seraj El Alem, and the operation is located in the English language school where he worked as a teacher previously (the same location as *Libya Post*, above). *Alive in Libya* only has access to one MacBook for editing and five cameras, and lack of an Internet connection forces the Mr. El Alem to travel elsewhere to upload.

Alive in Libya is currently debating its future direction, with a clear desire to build on its current base; the most promising model appears to be increasing participants' skills, and working to establish itself as a production house, perhaps providing material to upcoming satellite TV stations. There are also plans to establish a second bureau in Misrata.

4.1.7. Online

A range of social media and other online platforms have been frequently cited as playing a key role in the uprising. There are a large number of sites and accounts in English; as their information is by definition accessible anywhere there is a net connection, Internews did not focus on these portals. Some of the most commonly referenced links and Twitter accounts are provided below:

- <http://libyafeb17.com/>
- <http://feb17.info/>
- <http://shabablibya.org/>

⁶⁹ Station head Mr. Saleh El Majdoub stated that he hoped to move to four hours' complete broadcast, with fully-produced reports and program segments, by approximately early July.

→ <https://twitter.com/#!/Libyamap> gives regular updated maps of events on the ground.

Tawassil, located in Ouzu hotel (not related to *Attawasul*, above), gathers and disseminates large amounts of online material across several portals, including that provided by sources in Tripoli and elsewhere.

Reporters Without Borders gives a rundown of several Twitter feeds⁷⁰ including: @feb17voices; @sultanalqassem; @freedomGroupTV; @iyad_elbaghdadi, @newsin-Libya, @ChangeinLibya, @Libya_United, @Libyanewmedia, @Libyan4life, @ibnomar2005, @libya2po and misrata 17.

Global Voices Online is another forum that aggregates online production from Libya; see <http://globalvoicesonline.org/?s=libya> for more resources.

4.1.8. Multi-Platform

Media Centre

The Media Centre by the Benghazi Courthouse was the most high profile, organic, and dynamic media space in the early days of the uprising. Started at the same time as the initial efforts of the Coalition (the loose network of lawyers and other individuals who came together in the early days of the protest before the establishment of the NTC), it is the location where Mr. Nabbous began his web-streaming efforts that have since evolved into *Libya al-Hurra TV*. Several other media efforts also began there, with some since relocating, while others still remain.

Meetings between participants within the Centre are held every two weeks. There is a great deal of autonomy between the different operations, with somewhat of an 'anarchic' feel. The Centre has links with sources and / or other producers in Misrata, Al Baida, and Tripoli (as noted for *17th of February* newspaper, above).

Current production includes: *17th of February*; youth-based cartoons and posters; theatre and music; and online efforts including Facebook pages and livestream video; as noted, this is shared with *Libya Channel* for UHF broadcast. Production fluctuates due to the voluntary nature of participation.

The Centre continues to provide Internet access to journalists who need it; in the early days it also

provided interpreter services for international journalists, although informal networks of interpreters and fixers shared among international media now appears to have made this redundant. The Centre also provided registration for international journalists. Originally the entire Centre was located in a building in the block adjacent to the Courthouse; subsequently most of the functions, with the exception of press registration, relocated to a second building behind the Courthouse.⁷¹

4.1.9. Journalist Associations and Unions

Essential to the development of a healthy media sector, Libya is currently lacking established journalist associations or unions that can advocate or campaign for the professional and industrial needs of journalists and other media workers.

Newly established in March, the *Libyan Journalists Union* hopes to change this. Headed by senior journalist Ahmed Alfaitouri, its goals include promotion of laws to protect journalists, and solidarity throughout the media sector. This includes current campaigns for journalists kidnapped by the Gaddafi regime.

The Union claims 40 currently active members; however it is still discussing internally how to manage applications of inexperienced journalists and is considering the idea of 'temporary' membership, to become permanent after the transition when it is clearer how many new journalists will remain in the field.

The Union has had little opportunity to reach out to international and regional journalist union or association bodies, although some initial contacts exist.

4.1.10. Telecommunications

Landline connections including Internet were run by state company Libya Telecom and Technology (LTT) with infrastructure centred in Tripoli (the undersea cables connecting Libya globally run into the capital); this made it possible for the regime to cut these links to the outside world in the early days of the uprising. In addition the two mobile phone networks, Libyana and Al-Mardar were centralised in Tripoli; their services were also cut.

Key infrastructure necessary for mobile telephony is a Home Location Register, which stores data

on subscribers' numbers. This was based in Tripoli for both Libyana and Al-Mardar; however some subscriber data for Libyana was backed up in Benghazi. Using this, telecommunications engineers were able to keep the Libyana network functioning.⁷² However infrastructure necessary for billing phone usage was in Tripoli and unavailable. As a result, phone calls were uncharged, a situation which continued during the assessment period. SMS is not available; nor are international calls out of the country (foreign numbers can call in to eastern Libyana mobile phones by adding an extra '9' after the country code). This is not because equipment is lacking for those functions – SMS was trialled for a period of a few hours in mid-May, with the system quickly overwhelmed by the number of messages, and some VIPs have international calling capacity. Rather, some sources put these restrictions down to the lack of ability to charge for the services and the impracticality of subsidising them.⁷³

Within Benghazi the network capacity is frequently over-stretched, particularly in the evenings, a situation attributed to many users taking advantage of limitless free calls, rather than any lack of capacity compared to pre-uprising days. The head of Communications and Transport in Benghazi's transitional administration, Mr. Faisal Safi, told Internews necessary equipment to enable billing was being installed and that billing would commence by approximately early July.

SIM cards often cost over USD 150; some individuals have reportedly paid as high as USD 300. The high cost is because the ability to generate new SIM cards is in Tripoli; any attempt to replace this for the east would require invalidating and replacing every current functioning SIM with a new number. Only already-existing SIMs are therefore on the market, with reports of a resultant increase in theft (several SIMs are believed to have been left behind or sold by migrant workers for cash when fleeing the violence; others may have been confiscated from them en route).

Internet so far relies upon individual locations having expensive VSAT connections. Efforts are underway to negotiate access to international connections via Egypt. According to Mr. Safi, these are close to being finalised, with no technical obstacles existing, and only administrative procedures to be completed. He expected this to be resolved soon and international landline connections available by ap-

proximately early July, with Internet connections also possible around the same time using a combination of landline and VSAT.

According to Mr. Safi, plans are also underway to re-establish the Al-Mardar mobile phone network, although this will require setting up all central infrastructure, with only the phone towers already in place. Equipment for all of these steps were expected soon, although funding is also an issue. Efforts were also underway to establish mobile phone connections with Misrata (see below); this would involve providing select mobile phone towers with links to call Benghazi, in effect meaning residents could call out of Misrata from some locations where they were within these specific towers' footprints, but not outside those areas. No deadline was suggested for completion of this process.

4.2. Misrata

Internews travelled to Misrata as part of a combined humanitarian assessment team, spending one day in the city on 22 May.

4.2.1. Radio

*Radio Free Libya Misrata*⁷⁴ is broadcast on both 1449 AM and 99.9 FM, with each frequency carrying the same programming. The FM broadcast is commonly reported to cover the entire city and reaching as far as Zlitan; AM is reported to cover the bulk of the country, reaching well into Tunisia. Programming includes four daily news bulletins, and daily input and involvement from the Municipal Council's spokesman. Schedules vary week by week due to fluctuations in staff, who are entirely voluntary. Beyond news bulletins, material includes interviews with politicians and council leaders, rebel fighters, and some religious programs. The lack of a telephone network means there is no significant input or feedback from the population. While three broadcast engineers provide technical support, spare parts are a problem. The link from the studios to the transmitter, approximately five kilometres distant, was broken on the day of the assessment visit due to equipment failure.

Reporters travel daily to different parts of the city to gather news; the station has access to two cars for this purpose. Mr. Mohamed Darrat, head of

⁷² For more detail on this process, see 'How 'rebel' phone network evaded shutdown', Al Jazeera, 22 April 2011, at <http://english.aljazeera.net/indepth/features/2011/04/20114233530919767.html>

⁷³ Libyana relies on Huawei technology, with an office from that company reportedly established in Benghazi in early May.

⁷⁴ Again, different names are given for these stations, including on official sources. This name is confirmed from station management.



TV Misurata, not broadcasting at the time of the assessment team visit, because of a broken UHF transmitter.

both radio and TV, said reporters gather news “according to their own system”, with some recording on mobile phone handsets with this facility, others taking notes, and others committing facts to memory. *Radio Free Libya Misrata* also has some correspondents stationed in other cities, including one in Benghazi, and at least one in Tripoli. The focus is on daily programming; there has been little time to develop plans for the station’s future. One goal is to differentiate programming between FM and AM for local and national audiences respectively, at which stage different names may be adopted for the AM and FM stations.

There appears to be no specialist programming for humanitarian announcements, warnings, advice and son on (for example in approaching UXO) beyond the activities of the Misrata Municipal Council and its Committees, such as in food distribution and the like.

4.2.2. Television

TV Misrata: Located in the same building under the same interim management as Radio Misrata, TV Misrata is currently not broadcasting, but rather is training new young journalists in TV production, and hopes to source a UHF transmitter, as well as eventually secure satellite space.

Misrata audiences also have regular access to satellite TV, depending on power supply.

4.2.3. Telecommunications

Telecommunications efforts rest predominantly on the alumni from the College of Industrial Technology. A lack of spare parts is a major obstacle, as

these were stored in Tripoli.⁷⁵

Landline services are reportedly restored to 60% of the city; this is only for local calls, as the national and international exchanges are in Tripoli. While the building housing the main city exchange was severely damaged, the exchange itself was not. Landline infrastructure in the central business area has been very seriously damaged and will have to be rebuilt. Fluctuating electricity supply is the biggest problem, as this can damage exchanges. Currently generator backup is being used extensively, but this has technical risks.

Internews was told that, after engineers evaluated Misrata-based infrastructure, the decision was taken to rebuild on the former Al-Mardar network, not Libyana.⁷⁶ Neither network has a Mobile Switching Exchange (MSE, a core part of mobile telephony infrastructure) in Misrata; however Al-Mardar installed a Base Station Controller (BSC) a few months before the uprising. Mobile coverage therefore needs to establish an MSE, and rebuild the capacity to manage subscriber data and other key processes. Surveys of phone towers were to be completed in two or three days. Overseas donors and expertise⁷⁷ have been secured to re-establish the necessary infrastructure. It is expected the mobile phone system will be restored in around four weeks across the bulk of the city.⁷⁸

Plans to restore Internet access are at an early stage. The loss of undersea cable connections means those responsible for deciding what system to use are leaning towards re-establishing connectivity via high-bandwidth satellite connections, linked to the landline system for broad public access.

Note on ICT: *The most qualified and skilled ICT engineers and programmers have formed an ICT support group of 25 members, which has been providing software services to all entities who need it, particularly Municipal Council committees. This support includes developing the database and tracking systems for food distribution, among other services. This team will likely be expanded in coming days.*

⁷⁵ Misrata representatives requested assistance in sourcing spare parts from Alcatel, necessary for Al-Mardar. They indicated that the Gaddafi regime has significant investments in Alcatel, which has stymied efforts to source necessary equipment. Maybe cut this.

⁷⁶ Differences, and different opinions, between Misrata and Benghazi telecommunications plans deserve more investigation. One source (met in Benghazi) involved in procuring telecommunications equipment for Misrata was highly-critical of the NTC's treatment of this issue, blaming them for delays of over a month in procuring equipment due to insistence that telecommunications coverage could be achieved cheaply via linking with Benghazi's Libyana network. This could not be confirmed elsewhere. Telecommunications engineers in Benghazi, not directly involved with restoring the network but close to the process, simply refused to believe that Misrata had decided to re-establish the al-Mardar when told the information; they insisted that 'Benghazi engineers' were more skilled and that this must be some kind of mistake. This is one area where tensions and lack of communication between the two cities was apparent, though the facts are hard to trace.

⁷⁷ From Etisalat, in UAE

⁷⁸ The return of conflict to some parts of Misrata through missile bombardment and the like may be one factor affecting predicted timelines as expressed to Internews at the time.

4.2.4. Print

All large-scale printing facilities were reportedly located in central Misrata and have been destroyed; printing of any significant scale can only take place via laborious transport by boat to and from Benghazi.

4.2.5. Online

Around four youth groups are reportedly engaged in citizen media production, along with a range of other activities.

Ashahed ('Witness') produces videos with generally an explicitly humanitarian focus uploaded to YouTube, and has a Facebook page and Twitter accounts. They are currently located in office space lent by a local businessman that has VSAT connection. They have engaged in a variety of production initiatives, depending on circumstances; for example, by producing pamphlets to be distributed to cars at checkpoints, which took place until printing facilities in the city were destroyed. They have also designed the first edition of a newspaper, although printing is only possible in Benghazi.

As well as media activities, *Ashahed* is involved in charity efforts, sourcing donations either from local businessmen or contacts in the Libyan Diaspora for those in need.

They strongly express a desire to maintain independence from any political structure, and to focus on humanitarian issues. They occasionally link with Misrata's radio station, for example in a round table planned on the same day as the assessment.

Around four other youth groups are reportedly active in Misrata; however time limitations didn't allow Internews to visit. They include the group *Freedom*, made of up former *Ashahed* members.

The *Misrata Media Centre* provides online resources for journalists and some access to Misrata Council spokespeople, and hosts some correspondents providing material for media operations in Benghazi and others. For example two correspondents provide updates to the Media Centre in Benghazi; material is shared via Facebook and Skype among other platforms.

4.3. Ajdabya

The Assessment Team spent half a day in Ajdabya on 29 May 2011. As well as being smaller, the town is also relatively quiet compared to Benghazi follow-

ing the flight of residents during the conflict. Some have returned and there was an observable low level of activity, including some sales of goods and food available.

4.3.1. Radio and Television

The radio station studios on the eastern outskirts of Ajdabya were destroyed, including an old outside broadcast van. The location of radio and television transmitters was undamaged, and at least three radio transmitters remain functional at the site, overseen by former state-employed broadcast engineer Abdo Mograbi and colleagues.

Ajdabya currently has no local radio production; however there are local relays of Benghazi-based broadcasts. They are:

- 92.4 FM: Al Jazeera Arabic (from TV channel)
- 103 FM: Libya Alahrar (from TV channel)
- A third, older radio transmitter of 100.2 FM is currently unused.
- A UHF transmitter is also functional but unused, with an estimated 40km radius.

Mr. Mograbi and his colleagues have renovated part of the transmitter building as a studio, including soundproofing. However they have no equipment, and hope to receive support from Benghazi to establish a local Ajdabya radio and TV station.⁷⁹

Separately, a group of young people has approached the Ajdabya Municipal Council for permission to start a local broadcast along the model of Benghazi's *Shabab Libya* (but also aiming to reach Gaddafi loyalist soldiers towards Brega to persuade them to stop fighting). Group member Ahmed Geith al Senussi says he received written confirmation of permission for broadcast from Ajdabya's Municipal Council but no specific frequency has been assigned; 100.2 FM would appear to be the only frequency available.

4.3.2. Print

Akhbar Ajdabya existed before the uprising and is now continuing with many of the same staff, but a different editorial position, focusing on the revolution and events or issues specific to Ajdabya; for



example, urging local police to come to work; covering activities of the Municipal Council; or publishing responses of Ajdabya citizens to the NTC (one key criticism is that the NTC should provide funds to open local banks and pay local government workers). 10 people work on the paper, including a small office in Benghazi, with funding sourced from the local Council and sales. Prior to the uprising the paper printed 3,000 copies weekly (published on Tuesdays); now it prints 1,000 copies.

Asrar Ashamiya is a new paper set to start publishing the week after Internews' assessment visit, with an initial run of 2,000 copies every two weeks. Its goals are similar to those of *Akhbar Ajdabya*. The

⁷⁹ Mr. Mograbi says they have also approached Voice of Libya al-Hurra AM, and the AM station in Al Baida, for permission to broadcast 2 hours' programming relevant to Ajdabya audiences, including community members displaced from Ajdabya to those towns, but have received negative responses.



founder is Saad Mohamed Altreke, a former Arabic teacher; he is establishing the paper with his own funds and some donations, and has seven or eight people working on production.

There was word of a further youth-focused paper but little information on its progress.

4.4. Al Baida

Internews spent half a day in Al Baida on 4 June.

4.4.1. Governance

Internews' main interlocutors were Dr. Mabrouk M. Masaud, from the Al Baida Municipal Council's Media Committee, and Council member Taib Saleh. Members of the Council stated their support for free media and free speech, and added they hoped

**Tripoli Street
in downtown
Misrata.**

to establish local media coordination administrative office similar to Benghazi's Media and Culture Department which would cover coordination of radio, television, newspapers and training. Currently a full-time coordinator is being sought for this role, after which Council members aim to call a meeting of media producers to "tell them about our vision, and what we want and expect", with an emphasis on legal issues and media responsibility.

Dr. Masaud expressed opposition to the idea of a Media Ministry, given previous experience under Gaddafi, saying the Council's role should be limited to regulations dealing for example with issues such as liability and defamation. He also expressed support for media belonging to the government but 'free of propaganda', possibly along a BBC-type model.

Al Baida has no 'Media Centre' but the Council would like to establish one.

4.4.2. Print

According to Dr. Masaud and Mr. Saleh, five newspapers are accredited; others, not accredited, are also publishing, with an estimated total of around 15-20. Printing takes place in Benghazi, or on personal printers. Publications are housed in different locations throughout the town, not gathered collectively as has happened in some Benghazi examples.

4.4.3. Radio

Three radio stations produce and broadcast in Al Baida.

Radio Free Libya Al Baida, 1125 AM

Internews was unable to visit the AM station due to time restrictions; the information gained here is from Council members. However the Council is not directly involved with or linked to the AM station, unlike the FM station.

The AM station reportedly broadcasts around four hours a day, from 10.00am to 14.00, with participants including students and others from the local University. The majority of participants have little prior broadcasting experience. Broadcast footprint is understood to reach to the Egyptian border.

Radio Free Al Baida, 98.1 FM

The FM station has around 30 staff with around six editors and 12 journalists, all of whom worked at the same facility under Gaddafi; staff proudly claim it was the first local station to publicly defect to the revolution. Programming is broadcast between

10.00 and 01.00. The great majority of programming is live from the studio, with phone-in talkback. "70%" of programming is political discussion, with the goal of "improving the people's culture" and to "deal with the crisis", according to staff. Some programming is shared with *Voice of Libya al-Hurra* in Benghazi. The station has an informal network of correspondents it can draw on reporting from the frontline; many of these relationships developed in the early days of the uprising, when conditions in Benghazi forced many to fall back to Al Baida.

Staff note that equipment is old and the link from studio to transmitter is weak and unreliable and needs replacing. Reel-to-reel archives of the past 14 years' programming are kept on-site.

105.1 FM carries a new religious channel (Internews was unable to confirm its name before departure) that began broadcasting about ten days earlier. It produces from the same location as *Radio Free Al Baida* FM, but no production staff were

present at the time of Internews' visit, and no other details available.

4.4.4. Television

Al Baida TV, based at the same location as *Radio Free Al Baida* FM, began broadcasting using a UHF transmitter a week before Internews' visit. Broadcasts last four hours a day, and include programs on local issues and debates, with an emphasis on "improving the mentality" of people.

Staff are shared with the FM station, ie. from a pool of 30 people, including four cameramen. A sizeable studio is on-location; however editing and production equipment is out-dated and in some cases incompatible (sometimes for example requiring re-formatting of footage). The station was originally designed only to be a studio, rather than for broadcast; however staff aim to develop it as a local TV station and eventually hope to gain satellite broadcast capabilities.

Al Baida audiences also have regular access to satellite TV.

4.4.5. Online

Two or three online sites producing material from Al Baida are reported to be operating, but there are only two locations with VSAT connections available to upload or view online material. (Information provided by the Municipal Council, no links available.)

4.5. Derna

Internews spent half a day in Derna on 4 June. The main interlocutors were representatives from the Municipal Council and the local FM station.

4.5.1. Governance

Council representatives expressed support for independent private media, saying they provide resources as needed even if there is disagreement on coverage; however they also stated the belief that government also needs its own official station. Equipment, training, and development support were all seen as needs. The town has no Media Centre, at least in part because an appropriate location is not available.

4.5.2. Radio

Radio Free Derna on 89.3 FM is defined by local Council members as independent of the local government; however some Council members are also closely involved in program production. Staff relate the station was initially burned by Gaddafi supporters and much of the equipment stolen; however the transmitter, in another location, was untouched. Studios have been voluntarily repaired and repainted by participating staff. Broadcasting restarted three days after the uprising.

Those involved in the station include both experienced technical staff and many novices, with experienced staff appointed to management positions. Around 20 people participate with some fluctuations; any volunteers are able to arrive at the station with a program idea, which is then assessed by management. One car is available for use by volunteer journalists to cover events around town.

Programming runs from 09:00 to 02:00, and has a general schedule with three daily news bulletins, international news, and some social programming; however there is also flexibility in this. There is programming cooperation with *Radio Free Tobruk*,⁸⁰ and *Radio Free Al Baida*. A network of correspondents is able to send material from Benghazi and there is some communication with Misrata via Thuraya satellite phone. Staff say programming aims to “educate and enlighten” listeners. Future

goals include increasing broadcast strength to cover the whole country (with an aspiration voiced that “all local stations should be Libya-wide – we can hear everyone, and everyone can hear us”).

Libya TV, a new satellite station produced in Egypt, is relayed on local radio, with plans to begin relays of Al Jazeera in a week’s time. (A total of five transmitters remain in Derna, with three in need of some repairs or improvements.)

Derna audiences also have regular access to satellite TV.

4.5.3. Print

Prior to the uprising two publications existed in Derna, *Waterfall* and *Chamber* (from the Chamber of Commerce). Four publications are now available; all of them are printed in Benghazi. Time restrictions allowed Internews to visit only one.

Loyal People / Loyalists (both terms were given as English translations of the name) is produced by Nadia Ibrahim El Henaid, a former correspondent for different papers under the Gaddafi regime and previously employed in the Derna radio station. It functions with seven voluntary staff and is published every fortnight, with maximum 1,000 copies, at a production cost of 500 dinars and sold at half a dinar each. Coverage includes public opinion, statements by local and national officials, and recognition of martyrs and their families. Future goals include increasing the print run and sourcing more experienced staff; the need for a printing press in Derna was highlighted.

4.5.4. Other

The Council runs information and performance events in the evening in the local square. These include screening live broadcasts of *Libya Lekol Alah-rar*, taking place at the time of Internews’ visits; lectures from visitors especially from Benghazi (if the speaker is high-profile these are also broadcast live on the radio station; if not, they are recorded for re-broadcast later). Lectures may cover political issues such as the role of a constitution; updates from the NTC; or updates on NATO and other areas. An email connection is also available in the Square.

⁸⁰ This name has not been confirmed with staff. See ‘Radio Free Tobruk is on the air – but what’s the frequency?’, Media Network, 26 February 2011, at <http://blogs.rnw.nl/medianetwork/radio-free-tobruk-is-on-the-air-but-whats-the-frequency>



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Formed in 1982, Internews is a 501(c)(3) organization headquartered in California. Internews has worked in more than 70 countries, and currently has offices in Africa, Asia, Europe, the Middle East, and North America.

20-year old Ibtisam Omar, producing a show focused on issues for Libyan girls at Shabab Libya FM, a radio station started in Benghazi after the uprising. A medical student before the uprising began, she spent her days shuttling between the station, volunteering around town with her nursing skills, or working at a newly-formed newspaper.