

Journalism freedom of expression in South Sudan

A Case study of journalists and press practice

Dr. Iman bellah Yasser Abdel Rehim

Lecturer in journalism Department, institute of
communication Sharouk Academy

iman_bellah_yasser@yahoo.com

● حرية التعبير الاعلامي في جنوب السودان

دراسة حالة للصحفيين والممارسة الصحفية

● د. إيمان بالله ياسر

مدرس الصحافة بالمعهد الدولي للإعلام بالشروق

Abstract

South Sudan is the most recent country to gain independence after separation from Sudan on 9 July 2011 and like other African countries which suffer lack of freedom of expression and oppressive measures applied to media in applying the hierarchy of influences model over journalists' sample, the research found that the journalist is not on the center of journalism circle in the country but the media authority with their pressures influence the information and draw the agenda settings of media the situation in South Sudan is a good example despite the donations offered by developed countries and the legal articles in South Sudan media is controlled and journalists face harsh measures which in turn affects their performance negatively.

Besides the role played by certain ethnic groups which have access and influence media authority in South Sudan, as a media cannot play its role and function as a tool to develop and to disseminate information and ideas among citizens, to develop their knowledge, skills and attitudes.

Based on the assumption that the rules controlling media operation the analysis proves that publishing entities and journalists play the role of a gatekeeper and practice a sort of self-censorship when it comes to covering certain news items especially concerning opposition to the ruling system.

Key words : Press Practice, freedom of expression, journalism in South Sudan

ملخص الدراسة

تعد جنوب السودان من أحدث الدول الناشئة في العالم فقد حصلت على استقلالها في 9 يوليو 2011 وكثيرها من الدول الإفريقية الأخرى تعاني من الفجوة الخاصة بحرية الرأي والتعبير في الممارسات الصحفية وبين القوانين والنصوص الدستورية المنظمة للعمل الصحفي بالدولة ومن خلال تطبيق نموذج التسلسل الهرمي على عينة من الصحفيين العاملين بالمؤسسات الصحفية المختلفة بالدولة ورصد التقارير الدولية الخاصة بالممارسات الصحفية بالدولة توصل البحث إلى أن الصحفي لم يكم هو محور العملية الإعلامية بينما يسعى إلى تطبيق أجندة سياسية توضع من جانب السلطة السياسية وأي تغيير فيها يضعه تحت طائلة التعذيب والاحفاء القسري بل والقتل في بعض الأحيان

بالرغم من أن جنوب السودان كان لديها فرصة كبيرة في تطبيق النصوص الدستورية الخاصة بحرية الرأي والتعبير بإعتبارها دولة نالت استقلالها حديثا وتسعى إلى رسم خريطة طريق مختلفة عن ما عانته من قبل إلا أن التدخلات السلطوية بجانب التدخلات الخاصة بالجماعات الإثنية - ما يقرب من 22 جماعة إثنية بالدولة - كان لها رأي آخر حول المعلومات التي يتم تقديمها للمواطن الجنوب سوداني.

مما دفع دور النشر بل والصحفيين أنفسهم إلى لعب دور رقابي مباشر على أنفسهم فيما يتم تداوله وكتابته حماية لحياتهم وعدم تعرض دورهم للفلق ونفي العاملين بها . حتى أن الكثير من هؤلاء الصحفيين لجئوا إلى تغيير مهنتهم أو الهرب إلى خارج البلاد حتى يتمكنوا من الحفاظ على حياتهم الكلمات الدالة: الممارسات الصحفية، حرية التعبير، الصحافة في جنوب السودان.

Introduction

South Sudan is the most recent country to gain independence after separation from Sudan on 9 July 2011. Endorsing a comprehensive agreement by President Omar Al-Bashir's Sudan government, and Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) led by the late Dr John de Mabior Garang in 2005 at Naivasha, Kenya, concluded one of the longest-running civil wars in the region. Then, the world political map recorded the emergence of a new multi-ethnic country in Africa.¹ South Sudan is considered as one of the multi-ethnic and cultural states in Africa, with more than 60 different ethnic groups. In the media field, many scholars and professionals expected that above-mentioned peace agreement would enforce freedom of expressions and promote mass media growth, but unfortunately the reality disappointed them!!²

In December 2013, two years after gaining independence, South Sudan faced a wide-scale civil war because of eruptions.³ A political struggle between Kiir and Machar, which in turn led to Machar's step down as vice president. Violence erupted between presidential guard soldiers, who represent the two largest ethnic groups in South Sudan. Soldiers of the Dinka ethnicity aligned with Kiir and those of the Nuer ethnicity supported Machar.⁴ Amidst the chaos, Kiir announced that Machar had attempted a coup and that the violence had spread rapidly in the states of Jonglei, Upper Nile and Unity.⁵ Hundreds of thousands of people were killed, while at least 4.5 million civilians were displaced during the war. Armed groups targeted civilians based on ethnic criteria, committed rape and sexual violence, demolished properties and pillaged villages, and recruited children into their ranks. The war resulted in massive destruction and negatively impacted political, economic, social--and all--aspects of life in South Sudan.⁶

During this period, South Sudan has faced serious challenges, such as poor transportation infrastructure, entrenched poverty in the country, etc...⁷ This subsequently had negative effect on the media landscape, in

regard to circulation of newspapers, particularly in states located far from the capital of Juba, and the ability of media outlets to maintain regular coverage of the entire country.⁸

In addition to logistical, technical and financial problems, an increase violence, harassment, arresting and enforce disappearance of journalists made the situation worse to an extent that South Sudan was classified as one of the highest countries with a harsh environment for freedom of expression and independent press.⁹

The National Security Service adopted heavy-handed approach and violent tactics including arrests, torture and punitive laws, to censor journalists and suppress freedom of expression. As a result, some journalists had to get away from the country or keep a low profile and abide by rules of censorship.¹⁰ Along the same line, authorities openly warned journalists and media organizations not to publish the opposition parties' views or to report military news of opposing fighters. Any attempt to attain critical or balanced reporting of the conflict have been met with violent attacks, arrests and shutdowns.¹¹

During this period, the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) Regime has used government eternities to suppress freedom of speech by arresting local journalists and influencers, denying foreign journalists accreditation, shutting down media organizations and blocking access to online media reporting the opposition views.¹²

Despite the law of journalism and the modifications of freedom of expression endorsed in the Transitional Constitution in 2013, up till now freedom of expression is being questioned.¹³

In 2016, the parliament passed a media bill changing the structure of media corporation in regards of establishment means of control and ownership of national Television; South Sudan Broadcasting Corporation (SSBC).¹⁴

After almost five years of civil war in South Sudan, Kiir and Machar participated in negotiations mediated by Uganda and Sudan in June 2018. Later in that month, Kiir and Machar signed the Khartoum Declaration of Agreement that included a cease-fire and a pledge to negotiate a power-sharing agreement to end the war. Despite sporadic violations over the ensuing weeks, Kiir and Machar signed a final cease-fire and power-sharing

agreement in August 2018. This agreement was followed by a peace agreement signed by the government and Machar's opposition party, along with several other rebel factions, to end the civil war. However, this did not change the situation neither on media's procedures, the organizations level, nor journalists who are still fighting for their rights and freedom of expression.¹⁵

Up till 2020, the media, especially the printed press, in South Sudan has been facing a critical situation as parts of South Sudan were controlled by various rebel and opposition factions, in addition to miser transportation and online networks. The situation is aggravated because of coronavirus pandemic which triggered negative economic effect, reflected at all levels throughout South Sudan. Despite new progressive media and broadcast legislation and laws endorsed in 2013, repressive strategies are still applied to control journalists and citizens with opposing views of the government to suppress freedom of speech by applying the oppressive measures mentioned above.¹⁶

Literature Review

There were a few studies which include the African journalists' situation, the practice of their job and the career's obstacles. The most important objectives were:

- 1- This study discusses the safety of journalists during Uganda's last general elections in 2016 as a case study, supplemented by in-depth interviews with 10 journalists who covered the elections. In addition, the analysis makes reference to the 2016 Uganda Press Freedom Index.¹⁷
- 2- This study focuses on journalists and media outlets that have defended the freedom of expression and spoke out against censorship in the post-Arab Spring era. Methodology: The findings reported here are based on an examination of statements made by winners of the Index on Censorship's 2015 Freedom of Expression Awards and an evaluation of the degree to which cyberspace raises the visibility of reporting exposing government oppression, corruption and restriction of free expression and international awareness of such situations.¹⁸

- 3- This study seeks to understand how a press freedom-related issue, such as governmental controls of government information, affects journalism practice. The study used a survey of 172 practicing Anglophone Cameroonian journalists from private and State media, and in-depth interviews. Interviewees were heads of journalism unions / associations, a media regulatory agency (the National Communication Council), and media owners, publishers, and editors.¹⁹
- 4- This study investigated peace journalism as fundamental as any type of reporting. Thus, it facilitates reporters to disseminate information that would help attune to the development of a nation. The study uses social responsibility theory as a guiding principle. Likewise, Focus Group Discussions (FGD) is applied as a methodological approach in data gathering among some selected members of NTA correspondents' Damaturu, Yobe State in northern Nigeria.²⁰
- 5- This study strives to understand the situation of Kenyan journalism in the 21st century at a period when the media industry in the country has witnessed unprecedented growth in the last decade. The study surveyed 504 Kenyan journalists so as to understand their demographic backgrounds (e.g., age, education, ethnicity, gender, income, marital status, region, and religion). The present research also investigates the professional role conceptions of Kenyan journalists. The level of job satisfaction among journalists, and factors that predict their work satisfaction are also examined.²¹
- 6- The broad purpose of this study is to give close scrutiny to the concepts of BEJ and DR while comparing the professional disposition of Zambian and Ghanaian journalists. The study identifies the current professional portrait of journalists working in Zambia and Ghana, compared to those elsewhere BEJ (Brown Envelope Journalism) and DR (Development Reporting) journalists perceive the similarities and differences in their perceptions and the impact of the two phenomena over their professionalism. The study partially replicated the indexes of McLeod and Hawley (1964), Johnstone et al. (1976), Weaver and Wilhoit (1991), and Carroll and Pitts (2002). Conceptually, however, the study relied on Pollard's (1995) structural-functionalist approach in which he defined the hallmarks of professionalism as intrinsic job characteristics (e.g. autonomy,

authority, and control) and extrinsic factors (e.g. job security and income).²²

- 7- The study investigated the role that women journalists played during the liberation struggle of Namibia. It focused on 13 women, three black and 10 white, who worked in Namibia as reporters between 1985 and just before the country's independence from South African apartheid regime in 1990. The study tried to identify the gender and the race related-constraints, the confrontation of Namibian women journalists in their news organizations during the liberation years, and their journalistic contributions to the liberation struggle of the country.²³

The most important results were:

- 1- This research shows that journalists face more safety and security risks during elections particularly perpetuated by State security agencies. Compared to previous elections, the 2016 elections recorded the highest number of victims who were female journalists. This article highlights key challenges journalists faced during elections, which include: State harassment and intimidation, arrest of those considered critical to the State, and denial of access to important information. Due to concerns of their own safety, journalists have responded to the insecure work environment by engaging in self-censorship, thereby giving biased or limited information to the public. The article identifies gaps that media development agencies can help to bridge if the media are to play their rightful role in a democratic society, especially during the electoral process (Walulya, Gerald; Nassanga, Goretti L, Democracy at Stake).
- 2- Journalists working under conditions that severely impede their ability to practice their profession are increasingly adopting activist stances. The Web has become their primary means of drawing attention to the stories they produce and reaching a broad audience. Television and the Internet play a major role in the dissemination of their work. The questionable quality of some of the information exchanged via social media lowers the potential of these channels to promote constructive civil debate (Sandoval-Martín, Teresa; Nachawati-Rego, Leila, Journalists honored by the Index on Censorship).

- 3- The government uses a combination of legislative and administrative practices, mostly through sanctions from the media regulatory body and police harassment, to effectively enforce and monitor control of information (Pechulano Ngwe Ali, THE IMPACT OF THE GOVERNMENT)
- 4- The study found that the media have in various ways been blamed for its role in the exacerbation of different conflicts in complex and heterogeneous countries like Nigeria. The study concludes that all media organizations should imbibe the appropriate way of reporting peace journalism and development in the country, especially in the Northeast of Nigeria where cases of ethnic, religious, political and other types of conflicts have taken the lead (Aondover, Eric Msughter, PEACE JOURNALISM PRACTICE AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE NORTHEAST OF NIGERIA).
- 5- The research examines how three of the five levels of Pamela Shoemaker and Stephen Reese's (1996) "hierarchy-of-influences" theory (media routines, organizational, and extra-medial) influence or constrain journalistic autonomy in news decisions and journalistic autonomy at workplace. The other two variables under investigation represent Kenyan journalists' professional attitudes toward xi journalistic ethical problems (corruption and bribery), and the standards of journalism training in Kenya (Jackson Kioko Ireri, CONSTRUCTING A PORTRAIT OF KENYAN JOURNALISTS).
- 6- The study extended existing professionalism indices used to study the concept in Africa (which are mostly western in character) to embrace the overlapping concepts of Brown Envelope Journalism (BEJ) and Development Reporting (DR). Although DR has historically been central to conceptions of journalism in African and other developing countries, it has been inadequately addressed in the scarce previous studies on professionalism in Africa thus far. Equally unattended has been BEJ — the practice of accepting monetary incentives from news sources among journalists — which has reached epidemic levels in Zambia and Ghana. The high prevalence of BEJ in both countries has adversely affected DR (TWANGE KASOMA, BROWN ENVELOPE JOURNALISM AND PROFESSIONALISM IN DEVELOPMENT REPORTING).
- 7- The narratives of these women reporters reveal that inequality was blatant at that time and women bore the brunt of the apartheid

system coup that led with a patriarchal environment in which they operated. The study reveals that it took a huge toll for these women to work in such an environment along their male-counterparts, these women exposed atrocities that were inflicted upon the Namibian population by the South African apartheid regime to the outside world (Maria Mboono Nghidinwa, The role of women journalists in Namibia's liberation struggle).

Discussion and comments

- 1- In comparison with the studies conducted and the practice of journalism discussed, there was very little when as African journalism. But for the career as a European and Asian journalist, there was a huge thesis that talked about implementing laws, freedom of expression, training of journalists, practice of journalism, and impact of social media and technology, etc.
- 2- The thesis identified the violence and hazards that affect the career of journalism in South Sudan, particularly in writing about a controversial question related to the government and the opposite in their country.
- 3- Journalism is not secure work for men and women in Africa at all, but the government is using more harassment and violence against women journalists.
- 4- Journalism influences the opinion of any society by spreading information to the public, which threatens the corrupt government in Africa to force journalists' mouths and shut down publishing houses.

Study significance

In recent years, there has been a growing interest and focus on media freedom as it represents one of human rights according to Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.²⁴ Reviewing the studies carried out over the past few years indicates that freedom of media is considered as essential to spreading information and ideas among citizens, to develop their knowledge, skills and attitudes. This, in turn, promotes critical awareness, leading to greater skill among media users. In the long

run, the media can contribute to creating effective channels for effective interaction between citizens and authorities and, consequently, frameworks for welcoming and fostering dialogue and exchange between cultures. Moreover, media freedom entails promoting the rights and interests of citizens, exposing corruption and working for the best of any nation.

It is important to note that security and protection of media professionals, not only in terms of ensuring their physical security, but also in the larger context of liberal media, has always been a vital issue in relation to freedom of expression, disclosure of information, and transparency. To achieve the above goals, it is a must for grantees' safety and professionals' empowerment; especially in the print media to dig up information, gather relevant material through a variety of means and to subject the material to verification and analysis.

Accordingly, to evaluate the media role, practices, and limits of freedom of expression, the researcher opts for studying the media climate in South Sudan, in respect of State-imposed degrees of limitations and media content regulations acts, in addition to analyzing international reports, issued on the measures threatening journalists' safety, and effective performance of their professional tasks.

Statement of the problem

One observer has already drawn attention to the contradiction between the rights and duties set forth in South Sudan press act and practices in regards to access to key information on the presidential, government entities, military and practices of the police.

Debates continue about media and the best strategies to manage and secure media especially in the field of print journalism. Analyzing journalists' testimonies on work environment raises the question of contradiction between media laws set in 2013 and 2016 and the harsh measures and practices enforced on a daily basis on the ground. These practices, which violate freedom of expression and journalists' right to carry out their professional tasks, are documented in international reports.

Research Questions:

1. What were the challenges journalists faced in their jobs specifically in covering a controversial or an authoritarian topic?
2. What are the aspects of contradiction between State-imposed limitations on journalists and media content regulation acts?
3. How does media editorial policies affect positively or negatively the performance of journalists?
4. What is the process of covering a situation related to the opposite party in the country?
5. What is the difference between the media laws set in 2013, 2016 and the Media authority's measures on the ground?

Study Objectives:

- 1- To tackle the question of laws vs. measures and practices on the ground and comparing between the rules set in the constitution, the new law of media and violating them in reality.
- 2- To clarify the role of media entities and its impact on the printing press field.
- 3- To specify threats and problems journalists had to face in South Sudan during the period chosen for the study.
- 4- To explore the media environment in South Sudan and how the political economic problems and access to technology affected media performance in the printing press field.
- 5- To monitor the journalists' knowledge on human rights and press practice international reports.

Hypothesis

Based on proven conclusions of previous studies establishing a relationship between media performance and the environment:

- The study assumes that the precarious situation in South Sudan and the civil wars have negatively affected the performance of the press.
- The study applies the above-mentioned methodological tools to explore the different difficulties aspects of media in South

Sudan has been facing, to highlight the harsh consequences on media performance and the need to consider some reforms to safeguard media and freedom of speech.

- The study assumes that the journalist in South Sudan --like the other dictatorship Africanis country-- must have a self-censorship to protect his life.

Theoretical framework and research questions

Theoretical Framework

The researcher applies in this paper “the hierarchy of influences model” to define the forces shaping the media message²⁵, and what and who sets the media's agenda in South Sudan.

"Hierarchy of influences" model includes at the most basic level the personal views and roles of media workers. At higher levels, it clarifies the impact of daily routine of media practices, media organizations, internal and external forces of power and pressures, and the ideology adopted, on media coverage.²⁶

This model can also explain the role citizens play to make and disseminate within a social and occupational setting. It also reveals the methods applied by media organizations to intimate and force media professionals to stick to a set of rules and measures.²⁷

The model starts from the point of analyzing the role played by editors in the field of printing press as a “Gatekeeper “, in respect of gathering news and stories, highlighting some and ignoring others which, in turn, sets the media agenda and shapes readers’ perception of reality and the world.²⁸ The model also analyzes the behavior of the journalists’ practices and handling the stories, clarifies means of control and unwritten rules they are obliged to abide by. It explains how to cope with problems such as limited publishing spaces and prohibition.²⁹

Gatekeepers justify their choices in terms of national security, or protecting society norms, attitudes and audience from harm.³⁰ Observing that there were quantitative (and qualitative) differences in the very same story, indicates that journalists on several occasions--and for different reasons--played the role of gatekeepers, either to raise the importance of certain news and form public options or to block news.

Ownership is represented in the second circle as the true source of the power to shape news.³¹ Ownership is part of the media environment, in regard to state ideology and regulations, therefore, those in charge of broadcasting or publishing sectors enforce certain measures to avoid closure and revocation of the newspaper's license.³² Under these restrictions, whether they are self or externally imposed, newspapers gave away part of its power to be an echo chamber for its society to shed light on its pressing problems, to reveal corruption and whatever threaten its citizens' interest, and to promote awareness of technology and different fields of science.

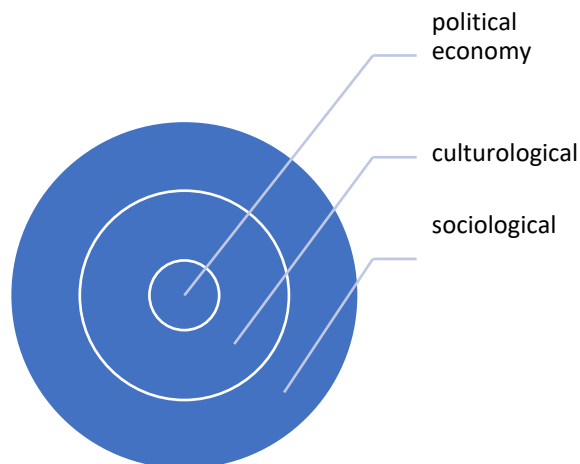
In either case, news selection remains a problem, which needs to be solved within the organization.³³ It should be noted here, that the functionalist paradigm emphasizes the relations among components of a social system, particularly in their normal operation.

The relationship between authority and media in oppressing systems, where the latter operates under the roof of government, triggering questions on media role and operation. The publishers play a bilateral role between the editors and the political system.

At the same time, the model tries to explore the relationship between the media publishers and reporters who face difficulties to perform because of the harsh situation and measures.³⁴ In other words, do they defend them or work with the oppressive system against them?

The society comes as the third circle as it is considered an influential force on publishing or blocking news, and publishers' decisions and journalists' choices, especially in the conservative societies.³⁵

Hierarchy models express three major perspectives, which are political economy, culturological and sociological terms. The political economy approach traces the system-supporting character of the news to the financial control of media organizations; the culturological perspective emphasizes the links between news and the larger culture within which it is produced. The sociological perspective domains the society which the press publishes within organizations as a bureaucratic process.



The Hierarchy Model in South Sudan Journalism

Figure (1)

Methodology

The researcher opts for in-depth interviews with journalists in South Sudan representing different newspapers as a primary tool to gather data on daily work routine in different newspapers and to be acquainted with various perspectives of journalists who engage daily at different levels with authority entities. Key decision-makers in media organizations such as publishers and editors were also interviewed to receive human subjects review approval.

In the same context, the research analyzes the reports of NGOs in the field of human rights like HMR (the human rights watch), the UNESCO and RSF (Reporteurs sans frontière / Reporters Without Borders) to achieve the international opinion about the issue of journalists in South Sudan and the platform of journalism.

Moreover, the study analyzes government laws and decrees that affect journalism practice.

Sample and population

Participants rank into two groups. The first group is made up of English and Arabic speaking journalists, male, from the public (State-owned / controlled). The second groups are in private press and from foreign media correspondents (print and broadcast).

To overcome the difficulty of the face-to-face interviews during Covid-19 pandemic, interviews were held through internet world web facilities (mobile or the messenger calls).

The journalists' sample

Journalists\ Publishers	Participants
State-owned	3
Private journals	9
Foreign media correspondents	3

Table (2)

Data collection (materials/instruments and period)

There were two instruments used in the data collection process. First is an interview with journalists and publishers, which was conducted by the researcher in person, in English and Arabic language, in March and April 2021. Each of them took from 60 to 90 minutes.

The use of the in-depth interview is one of the qualitative tools the researcher uses to collect information without putting a framework for the survey and the questions. It's called "Conversation with a purpose" which multiplies the interaction between the researcher and the sample.³⁶

The research interview is a tool with an objective and a framework includes previous preparation for the questions with careful listening to the sample.³⁷ In terms of choosing, the study age ranged from 27 and 50. As to the professional journalism experience, the minimum was more than three years and ranged up to 10 years.

Data analysis

For the interviews, the researcher used qualitative data analysis for answers. Each interview represented a unit of analysis. For preliminary exploration of frequently, the researcher used terms in texts and the pattern of their usage. The second part of data analysis identified recurring themes from RSF, UNESCO, HRW reports of the freedom of expression, the laws of Media in South Sudan, the verses of freedom and human rights in the constitution.

The freedom of expression and violence against journalists

The right to freedom of information is generally accepted as necessary to participatory democracy around the world. Media theorists claim their rationale for this right based on the concept of open and transparent government, whose values are applied in democratic political systems.³⁸

Nevertheless, the practice of free media varies from country to another. Even though the media in democratic societies enjoy freedom, they are in fact in all countries subject to a number of laws and regulations. Most press laws tend to be restrictive rather than granting rights to journalists 'Press freedom' and 'Press regulation' are two fundamental contradictory principles in modern democracies.³⁹

Every 3rd of May in the year, the world celebrates the freedom of the press as a clear sign about the effect of journalism in the collective life of a community or nation.⁴⁰ Hence, there can be no real public space and no opportunity to participate in processes of self-government without journalism.⁴¹ Journalists also have their own system of checks and balances through so-called "self-regulation". This self-regulation is found in numerous codes of ethics or practices that journalists have to accept as a part of their own professional guidelines. Some of the important features of those codes are truthfulness, honesty, accuracy of information; correction of errors; prohibition of discrimination on the basis of race/ethnicity/religion; respect for privacy; fair means in information collection, etc.⁴² But There are several challenges that the journalism profession encounters. As journalists play a particularly prominent role in society so when they are threatened, attacked or killed, information flows shrink and entire communities are cowed.⁴³

Violence against media professionals represents one of the greatest challenges for any government's treatment and one of the threats to the freedom of expression.⁴⁴ Today's crisis of freedom and democracy is the war on words waged by displeased governments and other belligerents who generate unreasonable fears simply by choosing journalists as their primary targets.⁴⁵

The role played by journalists in any country is vital in ensuring that the space for freedom of expression is kept open in order to build democratic societies, which are just and participatory. Therefore, a safe working environment should be guaranteed.⁴⁶ Attempts by State and non-

State representatives to suppress or restrict journalists, not only deny journalists their rights, but also jeopardize the fundamental right of society at large to be kept informed.⁴⁷ Freedom of expression is an individual right, for which no one should be killed. It is rather a public right, which empowers populations through facilitating dialogue, participation and democracy, and thereby, making autonomous and sustainable development possible.⁴⁸

Every aggression against a journalist is an attack on people's most fundamental freedoms because press freedom and freedom of expression cannot be enjoyed without basic security.⁴⁹ Many journalists have been attacked and killed with impunity. This has resulted in an arousal of fear and uncertainty through self-censorship, which has resulted in superficial journalism and subsequent weakening of the freedom of press and the watchdog role of the media.⁵⁰

During armed conflict, where other civil society representatives are either absent or muted, journalists are among a precious few remaining actors capable of exposing illegality.⁵¹ The importance of both the safety of journalists and the fight against impunity were addressed in 1997 by the adoption of resolution 29 by UNESCO's general conference, which condemns violence against journalists and calls on its member states to uphold their obligations to prevent, investigate, and punish crimes against journalists.⁵²

In July 2011, article 19 was the subject of the General Comment 34 by the Human Rights Committee, which stated that States parties should put in place effective measures to protect against attacks aimed at silencing those exercising their right to freedom of expression. Paragraph 3 may never be invoked as a justification for the muzzling of any advocacy of multi-party democracy, democratic tenets and human rights. Nor, under any circumstance, can an attack on a person, because of the exercise of his or her freedom of opinion or expression, including such forms of attack as arbitrary arrest, torture, threats to life and killing, be compatible with article 19. Journalists are frequently subjected to such threats, intimidation and attacks because of their activities. So too are persons who engage in the gathering and analysis of information on the human rights situation and who publish human rights-related reports, including judges and lawyers. All such attacks should be vigorously investigated in a timely fashion, and the perpetrators prosecuted, and the victims, or, in the case of killings, their representatives, be in receipt of appropriate forms of redress.⁵³

Also, Resolution 29 condemns violence against journalists and calls upon its Member States to uphold their obligation to prevent, investigate, prosecute and sentence those which are committing crimes against journalists.⁵⁴

More to the point, the legislation must provide that the persons responsible for offences against journalists discharging their professional duties or the media must be judged by civil and/or ordinary courts and that there should be no statute of limitations for crimes against persons when these are perpetrated to prevent the exercise of freedom of information and expression or when their purpose is the obstruction of justice.⁵⁵

Moreover, the Human Rights Council condemned in the strongest terms all attacks and violence against journalists and expressed its concern that there was a growing threat to the safety of journalists posed by non-State actors.⁵⁶

While recognizing that investigating crimes against journalists remains the responsibility of Member States, the acts of violence and intimidation (including murder, abduction, hostage taking, harassment, intimidation and illegal arrest and detention) are becoming ever more frequent in a variety of contexts. Notably, the threat posed by non-State representatives such as terrorist organizations and criminal enterprises is growing. This merits a careful, context sensitive consideration of the differing needs of journalists in conflict and non-conflict zones, as well as of the different legal instruments available to ensure their protection.⁵⁷

Impunity has remained the predominant trend, with few perpetrators of killings or attacks against journalists being brought to justice. Impunity refers to the effect of exemption from punishment of those who commit a crime. It thus points to a potential failure of judicial systems as well as the creation of an environment in which crimes against freedom of expression go unpunished, posing a serious threat to freedom of expression. The practice and expectation of impunity may further encourage violations of numerous human rights besides freedom of expression and press freedom, while also encouraging other forms of criminality. Physically silencing criticism, arbitrary arrests and detention, enforced disappearance, harassment and intimidation have often been aimed at silencing not only journalists, but also intimidating a population towards self-censorship.⁵⁸

Results

Freedom of the press is a fundamental tool to ensure a democracy practice in regard to identifying issues, finding solutions, informing and enforcing citizens participation in the future of their society.⁵⁹ On the other hand, to make governments and institutions aware of the needs of ordinary people, respond to them and to protect people's human rights. Within this new vision, and in spite of the minimal space for expression, media institutions grabbed the chance and increased in number.

After independence, South Sudan's government made fundamental changes such as considering English as the official language instead of Arabic, under taking new measures in telecoms platform; which was established in Khartoum in the north, with the view of achieving freedom of media and creating an appropriate environment for the media industry.⁶⁰

To analysis the statement of journalists' sample about their opinion in the changes taking by the government in the media platform specially the influence of media authority on the journalism and to monitoring the measures of media authority the journalists have been divided to: -

A- The journalists sample

1- The classify of journalists:

The sample includes 15 journalists all of them are male because it was not easy to reach female journalists according to the issue which was alarming for them to speak about. On the other hand, the journalism career is very dangerous so they didn't prefer to have it as a job.

The sample insisted on no tagging or nomination to save their life because they said the issue was very critical and five of them are considered like opposite journalists and two of them are fugitives abroad and they send their materials to their journals under an assumed name.

- Job title:
 - Thirteen journalists: four chief-editors, three foreign correspondents, two fugitive journalists abroad, two journalists in State-owned newspapers in Arabic editions and two journalists in the private sector in English editions.
 - 2 publishers.

- Work experience:
 - 7 with 10 years of experience
 - 3 with 3 years of experience
 - 3 with more than 5 years of experience
 - 2 with 6 years of experience
- Education:
 - 11 graduated from journalism sector
 - 3 graduated from language sector
 - 2 didn't finish their education yet

They graduated from universities of Khartoum, Kenya, and Cairo.

- Training courses:

They didn't take any training in editing either. Photographers expect that journalist of State-owned journals hasn't finished his education yet. He took the training in Egypt with his colleague in Cairo University.

2- The depth- interviews:

Regarding to Covid-19 pandemic, the closure of airports and the cancellation of flights, the researcher used the internet world web facilities (mobile or the messenger calls) to collect the information from the journalists' sample.

These calls took from 1 hour to 1 hour and half. Also, there was an advance preparation for questions:

- Do you need a license to be a journalist?
- How long do you work as a journalist?
- Do you face any problems or obstacles in doing your job?
- What is the role of the Media Authority?
- What is your procedure to cover any controversial story?
- How do you balance your story?

- Have you heard about the Media Authority's treatment over the journalists in your country?
- Do you read the international reports of the Human Rights of your country?
- How do you get these reports?
- Have you heard about the harassment cases against journalists in South Sudan?
- Do you know the international rank of freedom of expression in South Sudan?
- What is the most violence incident towards a journalist you hear about?
- Do you face any problem with the Media Authority in doing your job?
- Are you married? Do you have children?
- Do you face any financial problems? Does your salary meet your needs?
- How do you use the internet in your job? Do you have any technical problems with South Sudan internet connection?
- How many printers do you have in South Sudan to print journals?
- Are there any transportation problems in the country?
- From your point of view, what is the rank of freedom of expression in South Sudan?

3- Reasons of choosing the sample:

There was a friendly relationship between the researcher and some of the South Sudanese writers, lawyers and journalists, which helped to contact the journalists. Facebook was used as a tool to tend the journalists in seeing their profile to identify their career. There are a lot of people who pretend their job in journalism but they are not journalists, just writers of articles.

B- The points of discussion

1- The constitution and the freedom of expression's laws:

Regarding legislation and constitutional articles to protect journalism performance and freedom of expression, the researcher spots a great contradiction between mentioned objectives and real practice on the ground. For example, in the constitution of 2011 rev. 2013 of South Sudan, especially in the second part under the title Bill of Rights, it clarifies this bill as following:⁶¹

1. *The Bill of Rights is a covenant among the people of South Sudan and between them and their government at every level and a commitment to respect and promote human rights and fundamental freedoms enshrined in this Constitution; it is the cornerstone of social justice, equality and democracy.*
2. *The rights and freedoms of individuals and groups enshrined in this Bill shall be respected, upheld and promoted by all organs and agencies of Government and by all persons.*
3. *All rights and freedoms enshrined in international human rights treaties, covenants and instruments ratified or acceded to by the Republic of South Sudan shall be an integral part of this Bill.*
4. *This Bill of Rights shall be upheld by the Supreme Court and other competent courts and monitored by the Human Rights Commission.*

In addition, in Article number 24 under the title (Freedom of Expression and Media) states that:⁶²

1. *Every citizen shall have the right to the freedom of expression, reception and dissemination of information, publication, and access to the press without prejudice to public order, safety or morals as prescribed by law.*
2. *All levels of government shall guarantee freedom of the press and other media as shall be regulated by law in a democratic society.*
3. *All media shall abide by professional ethics.*

The constitution states that the government is to ensure journalists and citizens' right to access and exchange information and that the National

Security Services or Media Authority is responsible for: to protect and secure this right.⁶³

The journalists' real practice:

Nine of the samples (60%) confirmed that the media authority always tries to create obstacles in their way, and any attempt to attain critical or balanced reporting of the conflict have been met with violent attacks, arrests and shutdowns. On the other hand, any new decision takes a long process before it is implemented on the ground.⁶⁴

The chief-editors said there is an increase violence, harassment, arresting and enforce disappearance of journalists made the situation worse, even South Sudan was ranked as one of the high countries with a bitter climate for freedom of expression and free press.

There were oscillated speeches of the journalists' sample, two of them (13.3%) who work in governmental associations, said that harassment and arrest of journalists happened without the knowledge of President Kiir. It was violence against journalists practiced by the media authority. And they try to give a figure about the hierarchy of policy decisions in the State.

Also, the two journalists gave the researcher the example of Being Deitayok's⁶⁵ case. He was arrested in November 2011 after publishing an article criticizing President Kiir as he accepted the marriage of his daughter with an Ethiopian businessman, and was arrested in Juba's Jebel Marra prison. Also, he attempted to be killed from the ethnic groups in 2012 without the knowledge of Salva Kiir himself.

One of these journalists said with independence, the newly-born State had brought daunting challenges. For instance, it includes over 110 ethnic groups, many living in the worst socio-economic conditions, which is reflected in increase of violence, threat of renewed conflict at any moment, not only between both Sudan and their ex-south, but also an intra- and inter-tribal conflict within South Sudan. After two years of its independence, South Sudan plunged into civil war, killed hundreds of thousands, and displaced at least 4.5 million civilians, which influenced the procedures of journalism practice to control the policy making in the country and to maintain the citizens' life.

Seven of the sample journalists, 46.6%, affirmed that the media authority doesn't have a clear vision in treating the journalists; it doesn't

give a clear definition about the arrest reason and the journalists' place after the despair.

One of the publishers affirmed that South Sudan started the new era of media with two daily newspapers, The Citizen and The Juba Monitor. Both are produced and printed in the capital, Juba. In addition to that, several other titles appeared weekly or twice a week. Nearly all of them are published in English, and very few in Arabic. Most South Sudanese newspapers were printed abroad in Kampala or Nairobi to turn back to Juba for distribution, which means a variety of publications with two languages printed in many countries with many rules of publishing which need a clear legislative vision.

Six of the sample journalists, 40%, affirmed there were serious attempts on their life and physical integrity to force them to keep silent.

Going over the circumstances of murder and arrested incidents, four of the journalists, 26.6%, (two fugitives and two foreign correspondents) can notice that it was not confined to a specific city, for a clear reason, nor implementing a special policy. It appeared random. Also, it is noted that there were clear threatening notes to journalists who were considered to oppose the ruling authority.

Seven of the samples, 46.6%, (the chief-editors and the foreign correspondents) affirmed that the constitution of South Sudan was established with separation of power system, but this is not applicable in real life.⁶⁶ The military power is interspersed with political power. From day one of declaration of independence, it was not clear in which capacity State officials were acting: in their military, security forces function, or in the civil function such as local public servant or members of the parliament. These dynamics have intensified.

Due to the combination of political and military powers concentrated in the SPLM/A, the armed forces can use their powers for political purposes.⁶⁷ In addition, military personnel cannot be judged in civilian courts, which in turn influence the environment of the press in the state and confuse journalists in doing their job as the speech of the publishers.

Based on the study sample, 80% of journalists (journalists, correspondents and publishers) confirmed that the military authority played an essential role in the State; it has the upper hand in confessional decisions

and in the media platform. The other 20%, who represent the government's journalists, insisted that the State has a huge problem concerning the ethnic groups who try to control. They said that the ethnic groups played the essential role in some cases, despite the government, which means the confused situation of the journalists' rights who struggled to achieve the balance of their story and doing their job.

In spite of the fact that the State fought to have its autonomy, it clenched the freedom of expression channels. The two publishers confirmed the government has become more suspicious of the media, even more restrictive than before independence. South Sudanese officials tightened their belts on media freedom of speech in the fledgling country since the beginning of independence until now.

Also, the foreign correspondents said the diminishing media freedom, especially for the independent/private media is punctuated by acts of torture, harassment, intimidation, and detention. South Sudan media also faces steep challenges due to poor infrastructure, low investment, poor payment, and lack of training programs for journalists.

The two journalist fugitives, 13.3%, said even before the outbreak of internal conflict in 2013, South Sudan ranked high among countries with a harsh environment for journalists, curtailing freedom of expression and free press. The country's authorities, mainly the National Security Service, employed heavy-handed approach, violent tactics including arrests, torture and punitive laws. The authority views the media as endangering the sovereignty of the country in a critical time.

Moreover, the contradiction between implementation of expression laws and the real practices of the authority dominating the media platform is a pressing question. The continued sporadic fighting among various warring factions hindered access and a sharp drop in circulation in many regions of the country. The access of news and information to a large segment of the population of South Sudan is obstructed. Arrest and detention of journalists is very common in South Sudan, and the reasons are never clear. For years, media legislation stayed in a grey zone. Law did not define issues like libel and defamation.

The lack of a legal framework for media practice is also an obstacle to media growth and freedom of speech. Security entities banned publishing articles several times without explanation. Meanwhile, government

authorities publicly warned journalists from reporting the views of the opposition. Harassment, arbitrary detention, torture or execution-style murder are the price that journalists pay for not keeping their lips tight. Lack of professionalism among journalists was a ready-made excuse for the successive governments to justify censorship. It is worth mentioning that South Sudan lacks rules and measures for practicing journalism except for major events. In other words, in spite of the suffocating environment of freedom of speech, unprofessional journalism is common over there. The government has continued to censor the media, even comments reflecting opposing views from radio listeners usually end up with arrests and shutdowns of media houses. The National Security Services of South Sudan placed agents in printing houses to review and pull out critical newspaper placements before they go to press. The government has threatened and detained journalists over reports it did not like, and the security services have stopped printing blacklisted newspapers.

2- The freedom of expression's international reports and the journalists' knowledge:

The United Nations, international ceasefire monitors, human rights organizations, and media outlets reported that the government, or its agents, committed numerous arbitrary or unlawful killings. Security forces, opposition forces, armed militias affiliated with the government and the opposition, and ethnically based groups were also responsible for widespread extrajudicial killings in conflict zones.⁶⁸

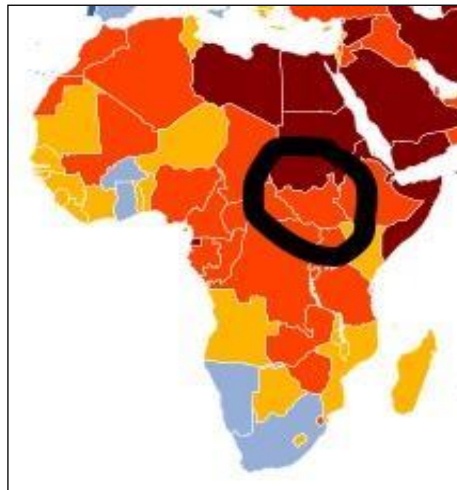
On the other hand, the report of the United States Department of State for 2019⁶⁹ (the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor) affirmed that the security and opposition forces, armed militias affiliated to the government or the opposition, and ethnically based groups, abducted an unknown number of persons, including women and children. The UN Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan issued a report in February that alleged a continuing practice of unlawful or arbitrary detention, followed by extrajudicial killings in secret, but the report did not publish details on specific cases.

There were multiple reports of abuses similar to the following example: In January the Arabic language Al-Watan newspaper published a series of editorials by its editor-in-chief Michael Rial Christopher describing the al-Bashir regime in Sudan as a 'dictatorship' and predicted its downfall.

Subsequently, Christopher began to experience a pattern of anonymous harassment and government restrictions. Christopher and many other journalists were warned not to report on the situation in Sudan. A series of threatening, anonymous telephone calls, forced Christopher into hiding, and he left the country for Egypt.⁷⁰

The transitional constitution prohibits such practices, but security forces mutilated, tortured, beat, and harassed political opponents, journalists, and human rights workers. Government and opposition forces, armed militia groups affiliated with both, and warring ethnic groups committed torture and abuses in conflict zones.

Reporteur sans frontières (RSF) published in its annual report the freedom degree of press in the world; it ranked South Sudan as one of the states with difficult situation in the press freedom.



- Good situation
- Satisfactory situation
- Noticeable problems
- Difficult situation
- Very serious situation

The Freedom Degree of Press in Africa

Figure (5)⁷¹

On the other hand, South Sudan's media authority accused the foreign journalists of writing unsubstantiated and unrealistic stories that insulted or degraded South Sudan and its people, and portrayed the country negatively,⁷² despite the fact that JHR has been implementing the project "Strengthening Media in South Sudan" in 2016 as a response to the needs of development and peace process in the country, and to ensure human rights issues, it did not change or stop deterioration in media nor had any promising future for it.

Even the transitional constitution provides for freedom of expression, including for the press, but the government and its agents frequently violated these rights in the name of national security, however, and the downward trend in respect for these freedoms since 2011 continued.

The non-governmental organization "Reporteurs sans frontière" (RSF) recently published an index which ranked South Sudan 139 out of 180 countries in press freedom.⁷³ According to human rights organizations, South Sudan had a record of murdered journalists compounded by arbitrary arrests, torture and threatening politicians' right of freedom of speeches in recent years.

"Reporteur sans frontière" (RSF) and the Human Rights Watch published a table about the journalists killed and arrested in South Sudan from 2012 till 2020⁷⁴ to give an overview about the treatment of the South Sudan media authority over the journalists.

The victims of journalism career in South Sudan from 2012 till 2020

Date	Name	Employer	Location (All South Sudan)	Notes
1 September 2020	Jackson Ochaya	<i>the Number 1 Citizen newspaper</i>	<u>Juba</u>	Was detained a week ago after he contacted the spokesman for the rebel National Salvation Front (NAS) ⁷⁵
16 October, 2020	Bullen Alexander Bala	<i>Juba Monitor newspaper</i>	<u>Juba</u>	He worked to report on student protests at the University of Juba. The authority accused him of

Date	Name	Employer	Location (All South Sudan)	Notes
				entering the university without permission and showed him a charge sheet that he could not read because it was in Arabic ⁷⁶
18 April, 2020	Maror	<i>freelance reporting to various privately owned newspapers in South Sudan</i>	<u>Juba</u>	The police held him after his criticize reporting about the South Sudan's finance minister and his policy decision making and he was sentenced by a Juba County court to one year in prison and a fine of 5,000 South Sudanese pounds (\$38) after being convicted of criminal defamation ⁷⁷
2020	5 journalists	<i>Equator Broadcasting Corporation, Radio Miraya, Juba Monitor, Al-Mougif newspaper, and the South Sudan Broadcasting</i>	<u>Juba</u>	Corporation for six hours before released them the same day ⁷⁸
26 august 2017	Christopher Allen (American) ⁷⁹	<i>International reporter</i>	<u>Juba</u>	No Information Received So Far
-----	Adil Faris Mayat	<i>the head of South Sudan's state-owned national TV broadcaster, SSBC</i>	<u>Juba</u>	Held in detention for a week after SSBC failed to provide live coverage of a speech that President Salva Kiir gave to mark the sixth anniversary of the country's independence
11 July 2016	John Gatluak Manguet	<i>The Radio Community Internews South</i>	<u>Juba</u>	Journalist killed by government forces in Terrain Hotel during the outbreak of

Date	Name	Employer	Location (All South Sudan)	Notes
		<i>Sudan</i>		violence in Juba between forces loyal to former First Vice President Dr. Riek Machar and forces Loyal to President Salva Kiir.
19 August 2015	Peter Julius Moi	<i>South Sudan Corporate Weekly</i>	<u>Juba</u>	Journalist killed days after president Salva Kiir threatened journalists in South Sudan
20 May 2015	Pow James Raeth	Radio Tamazuj	<u>Akobo</u>	Journalist caught in gunfire between warring groups after leaving a NGO
25 January 2015	Musa Mohammed	South Sudan Radio Wau	<u>Western Bahr el Ghazal</u>	One of five journalists killed in by gunman in a single attack
25 January 2015	Boutros Martin	South Sudan Television	<u>Western Bahr el Ghazal</u>	One of five journalists killed in by gunman in a single attack
25 January 2015	Dalia Marko	Raja Station Radio	<u>Western Bahr el Ghazal</u>	One of five journalists killed in by gunman in a single attack
25 January 2015	Randa George	Raja Station Radio	<u>Western Bahr el Ghazal</u>	One of five journalists killed in by gunman in a single attack
25 January 2015	Adam Juma	Raja Station Radio	<u>Western Bahr el Ghazal</u>	One of five journalists killed in by gunman in a single attack
5 December 2012	Isaiah Diing Abraham Chan Awuol	<i>Sudan Tribune</i>	<u>Gudele</u>	Former major in the Sudan People's Liberation Army turned journalist who was murdered in front of his home

table (4)⁸⁰

However, revision of the report of the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan, published on 20 March 2020⁸¹ confirmed violation of human rights in the country especially in respect of the freedom of expression. The report documents incidents of attack on journalists and being followed by an oppressive regime to prevent them from publishing opposing points of views or information. Repressive actions include, closing media houses, provoking license and unreasonable requirement to practice journalism and cover events, despite all the verses of freedom and the maintained of journalist's role by the constitution.

The reports of the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan, spoke about the absence of a sound legal system and national and international legal frameworks to guarantee those rights.⁸² It is worth mentioning that in the State of South Sudan has not yet finalized accession to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), to protect freedom of expression.

The contradiction between constitutional articles and real practices on the ground implies that South Sudan is not a safe country for the foreign journalists: a fact which is reported in the statistics of the NGOs.⁸³

Security forces commonly intimidated or detained journalists whose reporting they perceived as unfavorable to the military or government. Security forces confiscated or damaged journalists' equipment and restricted their movements. During the year journalists were interrogated, harassed, detained, and imprisoned. South Sudan's National Security Service (NSS) representatives frequently harassed journalists by detaining them at NSS headquarters or local police stations without formal charges.⁸⁴

- **The journalists' knowledge:**

Concerning journalists' knowledge of the international reports on freedom of expression in their country, they confirmed that their associations don't provide them with any international reports and that a lot of international websites are closed in the country. They added that they try to open in using the hack links or to travel abroad to open it like; The Human Rights Watch and Reporteurs sans frontières. The two governmental journalists, 13.3%, affirmed that South Sudan is not far from any other African country, which suffers the restricted freedom of expression, in addition to new unclear measures.

The samples of journalists, 100%, confirmed that their job is not an easy one as it plays a tremendous role in the citizen's life, and they try to afford the information. However, they face a lot of obstacles in doing their work, especially in South Sudan which is listed as one of the highest rate countries with a limited freedom of expression. 70% of the samples said they practice self-censorship to protect their life. Two of them, 13.3%, said they worked from abroad: Kenya, Egypt and Tanzania, to save their life after the harassment they went through in the country in 2014. All sample journalists in the national publishing house, except the two who work for Al-Arabya broadcast and the UN publisher, 86.6%, said they got low salaries which can't help to meet their needs.

The four chief-editors, 26.6%, confirmed that the international reports did not appear from the media authority, and didn't have the ability to give to the journalists who know for sure the situation of their country, especially that they are living the same problems of harassment or struggle in doing balance of stories.

Also, the three foreign correspondents, 20%, said being a journalist in an international association doesn't secure you. The hand of media authority and the superior control of ethnic groups drove the South Sudan journalism path. Even the two journalists' State-owned newspapers, 13.3%, agreed with the media authority's violent treatment in some cases even with the foreign journalists in affirming that they are not neutral in all their stories. Sometimes they tended to tarnish the image of South Sudan in the international community.

The two publishers and the three foreign correspondents, 33.3%, said the government regularly attempted to impede criticism by monitoring, intimidating, harassing, arresting, or detaining members of civil society who publicly criticized the government, even if they are not journalists. Most organizations practiced self-censorship to ensure their safety, and authorities regularly censored newspapers, directly reprimanded publishers, and removed articles deemed critical of the government. Many print media outlets reported NSS officers forcing the removal of articles at the printing company. One of the chief-editors affirmed that often leaving a blank spot, where the article was originally meant to appear, is regular for private journals in South Sudan. For example, on January 24, the NSS removed an article about the new governor of Tonj State from the Dawn. On April 8, the NSS removed an opinion article in the Arabic daily newspaper al-Mougif

written by a former government minister; there were a number of other similar cases of censorship during the year.⁸⁵

The two fugitive journalists, 13,3%, said that media agencies--and journalists--which reported on news of the opposition could expect questioning and possibly closure. Journalists in Juba experienced threats and intimidation and routinely practiced self-censorship.

3- The role of the Journalists' Union:

The Union of Journalists of South Sudan (UJOSS) was established in 2004 and is the key association representing journalists in the engagements with the government and other organizations in the country.

The association holds a database of both journalists working in media organizations and freelancers. UJOSS, which was registered and legally accredited in 2008, claims to advocate for a better working environment for journalists.

The association has also represented journalists during harassment and arrests by government authorities⁸⁶, but without any real implementation in the journalism platform of the country. The reporter Patrick Oyet had been elected in May 2021 as the new chairperson.⁸⁷

In identifying the role of the institute, which can maintain journalists in doing their jobs, it was the Union of journalists. But it was not effective at all, as it is the only company that can help or protect the press in the country.⁸⁸

The new South Sudan Media Authority has required membership from UJOSS for South Sudanese journalists seeking accreditation to practice the profession. According to Oliver Modi, the ex-chairperson, speaking during the 2018 First National Media Symposium, the capacity for the association to advocate and represent journalists has been effectively frustrated by the lack of sufficient sources of revenue to cover its operations.

● The journalists' opinion:

In taking the opinion of journalists' samples in the role of the union, six of them, 40 %, said that its role is very weak and does not do any clear actions over the harassment or arrest of journalists, except the announcement of their names and the requests of their freedom. They gave

the example of 2015, when UJOSS condemned the murder of a journalist, Peter Moi, who was killed in Juba near The Corporate Weekly newspaper's office where he worked, without doing any effective action. Despite the speech of the ex-chairperson Modi, who said they have negotiated disputes between journalists and the government or employers.⁸⁹

Two of the samples of journalists, 13.3 %, said the union of journalists is considered a censorship agent of the media authority over the journalists themselves, and it is just a tool created by the government to say that they have freedom of expression.

The last six of the sample, 40 %, said the low potential of the union and its swinging situation due to its weak role, the intervention of the media authority, and the ethnic groups, in its executive selection affects its direction.

4- The journalism career's qualification and the issues:

The journalism career in the State doesn't have a clear definition. Having a license doesn't imply practicing journalism professionally, as anyone can get the title of a journalist even if he/she doesn't finish his/her study!⁹⁰ In the laws of South Sudan, the Media Authority Act, 2013, NO.64, there is three chapters of the license conditions, procedures and fees for the broadcasting, the programs, even the advertisement and the technical code without any word about the journalist career and the procedures must be taken to be a South Sudanese journalist.

According to the samples of journalists, to have a license, a journalist must finish his / her study in an approved faculty of communication, which is not easy in their country, so the most of these licenses came from Khartoum or other African universities.

This point underlines the quality of the job in the State. One of the samples of journalists works as an international correspondent in Al-Arabya channel, NE. He said that he was a journalist before independence, and completed his education in Khartoum University. But to take the same procedures nowadays is not approved because the media authority doesn't give the licenses for the students of Khartoum University, and also the students themselves don't think about this university to finish their study as they believe it's not safe to them, while it's very costly for the other countries to live in the north. Also, this license is not necessary if the journalist works in a national media broadcasting house.

The two journalists who worked on the State-owned newspaper, 13.3%, said that the license was not important except going to the conflict zone or covering the news of the opposite groups. The most important part is to write your name in the media authority and the union of journalists to let you know if you need their help in any case.

The journalists also raised the issue of working on finding financial supply to pursue training, searching scholarships, or international certificates as the government doesn't support these activities. Despite the funded scholarships from some international institutes like the Canadian Embassy in South Sudan⁹¹, journalists gain nothing from this because of corruption of the media authority, which chooses unqualified participants. Moreover, in addition to logistical, technical and financial problems.

Three of the samples said that the government restricted cultural activities and academic workshops. The NSS authorization is required for public events, including academic workshops, which particularly affected NGOs and other civic organizations. To obtain permission, the NSS sometimes requests a list of national and international staff members employed by the organizations and names of participants. Permission was often predicated upon the expectation that the NSS would be able to monitor the events.

70% of the samples of journalists confirmed that South Sudan can be one of the most developed countries in journalism, as it has quite a number of journalists who had a wide experience in covering news during the civil war, under precarious situations the international community donations, and programs could be an asset in this field.

5- The South Sudan's online press:

The online press tries to take a different approach to overcome the problem to guarantee journalists' rights and secure tackling current issues anonymously on the internet. In the first chapter of laws of Media 2013, ACT. NO.64, there is a subtitle which spoke about using of internet and the New Media:⁹² It shall include

(a). *Promotion of freedom of expression, open standards and access to such Internet and New Media;*

(b). *Registration should comply with guideline principles, not to impede competition and not be used as a means of restricting market entry;*

(c). *Information and content that is transmitted and made available over the Internet, or any data network in the form of text, software, music, images, and video, shall be protected by copyright and may have specific conditions attached to the reproduction, transmission and distribution of any of such multimedia means.*

(d). *Information and content publishers on the Internet or suppliers thereof shall not be licensed solely for the reason that they reside on the Internet;*

(e). *Internet service providers to be able to offer internet services without prior approval;*

(f). *Registration requirements to be kept at absolute minimum necessary for essential operation, and service providers shall be treated equally with regard to establishing a business;*

(g). *Internet service providers shall be regarded as providing carriage for information and that function shall incur no legal liability imposed by the content that is carried;*

(h). *Internet service providers may also be suppliers of content, and that content shall be subject to the policy regarding such content;*

(i). *Internet service providers shall not be liable for any aspect of the content which they transmit in their function of providing data carriage;*

(j). *There shall be no barriers to entry to set up Internet exchange points beyond technical competence, existence of the interface equipment, and the costs associated with providing the service;*

(k). *To the extent that filtering of pornographic content or material is needed, Internet service providers shall provide, upon request by the end user, filtering software for terminals, or equivalent filtering services applied by the service provider before reaching end user' terminals.*

- **The journalists' reply:**

Nevertheless, online journalism did not secure journalists from being accused of publishing crimes or repetitive warning or imprisonment, which forced some of them to leave the country⁹³ or quit journalism practice.

During the period of the study, statistics show that there were 2.2 million internet users by December 2018, around 17 % of the population.

Access to online media that report opposition views has been blocked.⁹⁴ New media legislation, which meets international standards, has been passed, but is mostly not adhered to. Yet, freedom of expression is still not guaranteed as provided by the Transitional Constitution. In short, political changes have influenced the media function in South Sudan. The media landscape has shrunk and expanded according to the regime in power.

On the other hand, the media authority tries to promote its policy through controlling online media. Reports indicate closing down a lot of online press and attempting to arrest their journalists.

Four of the reporters in the sample, who work in an online website press next to their job in printed papers, 26.6 %, said they hide their names, especially that they live in the capital, Juba, and they are registered another closed Arab journal, El-Masir, in the media authority's papers so the government follow them already.

Also, the four publishers confirmed that there are a lot of media websites which try to do self-censorship, in opting to close of their own accord before the authorities closes them down. Rather than the verses of Media Laws identifying the conditions of the use of internet and the form of new media, there is not a clear vision about the online journalist and the practice of its career.

Conclusion

South Sudan which has recently gained independence lack freedom of expression and oppressive measures applied to the media. With this in mind, the study answers the essential question:

- RQ1: The situation in South Sudan is a good example in spite of the donations offered by developed countries and the legal articles in South Sudan media is controlled and journalists face harsh measures which in turn affects their performance negatively in covering a controversial topic or an authoritarian topic.
- RQ2: The National Security Service adopted heavy-handed approach and violent tactics including arrests, torture and punitive laws, to censor journalists and suppress freedom of expression. As a result, some journalists had to get away from the country or keep a low profile and abide by rules of

editorial censorship. Two journalists from the sample escaped to Kenya and Tanzania to protect their life.

- RQ3: The role played by certain ethnic groups, which have access and influence media authority in South Sudan, as a media cannot play its own role and function as a tool to develop and to disseminate information and ideas among citizens, to develop their knowledge, skills and attitudes. The current situation is characterized by restriction of freedom of expression and oppressive measures against media is reported internationally and media men expressed--in this study-- their dissatisfaction about media environment in South Sudan.
- RQ4: Based on the assumption that the rules controlling media operation the analysis proves that publishing entities and journalists play the role of a gatekeeper and practice a sort of self-censorship when it comes to covering certain news items especially concerning opposition to the ruling system. For fear of being harshly sentenced by media law, its personnel opt for covering light and entertainment material.

Media coverage in South Sudan lacks objectivity, balance, and media figures are forced to practice self-censorship, speaking only in the name of the ruling authority to avoid harassment and imprisonment.

By identifying the hierarchical model, the researcher found out that the political circle dominated the practice of journalism in South Sudan, placing the main framework of the stories and the article. This influenced the society, the information of citizens in drawing the agenda settings. The culture of the country has been influenced by the policy of the Media Authority.

In a State that calls itself new democratic one, journalists are harassed by authorities and powerful ethnic groups. The technological problems, the transportation difficulties, and the miserable media environment resulted in listing South Sudan as one of the high countries with a bitter environment for freedom of expression and free press.

Also, the waves of corruption in choosing the leadership of the institute which protects the rights of journalists, the union of journalists of South Sudan, draw the worst-case scenario of the journalism environment.

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