



**PROVISION FOR POST PROJECT EVALUATIONS FOR THE UNITED NATIONS  
DEMOCRACY FUND  
Contract NO.PD:C0110/10**

**EVALUATION REPORT**



**UDF-SOM-07-168 Strengthening Somali Media Capacity for Democracy and  
Human Rights**

**Date: 28 October 2011**



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**Disclaimer:** The views expressed in this report are those of the evaluators. They do not represent those of UNDEF or of any of the institutions referred to in the report.

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**Map of Somalia ©UN**



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## I. Executive Summary

### (i) Project Data

7KLV UHSRUW LV WKH HYDOXDWLRQ RI WKH Pacific MIFW 36WUH  
GHPRFUFD\ DQG KXPdq ULJKWV' LPSOHPHQWHG E\ WKH 1DWLF  
(NUSOJ), from September 2008 to August 2010. The project budget was US\$180,000.  
7KH SURMHFW DLPHG DW VWUHQJWKHQLQJ WKH RDSDFLW\ RI





FRQWH[WV VXFK ~~The project has laid~~ **Valuable groundwork for future action** in support of media freedom. This conclusion stems from findings (iv), (v) and (vi).

*f* **This is a project, and a situation, in which the implementer would have benefited from close strategic advice.** )RU DOO LWV OHDGHUV¶ FRPPL activism, NUSOJ lacked project management capacity and above all lacked the time and WKH LQFOLQDWLRQ WR FRQVLGHU <sup>3</sup>ELJ SLFWXUH´ SROLF\ DQG anticipated its own weakness by suggesting in the project document that an Advisory





XQS UHGLFWDEOH FRQWH[WV VXFK DV 6RPDOLD¶V 7KH HYDOXD

extent possible, taking into account the information that was available at the time to project implementers, thus mitigating elements that may appear misjudged in hindsight.

Finally, attention is drawn to the political context. The civil war in Somalia has multiple dimensions: ethnicity and clans, religion, ideology, economy, geopolitics, to name but a few. These affect everyone in the country, including journalists and other project stakeholders. The evaluation tried to remain as impartial as possible in relation to the fault lines dividing Somalis, although it constantly bore in mind the democratic values and international human rights principles embodied by the United Nations.

***(iii) Development context***

Somalia has been plagued by armed conflict throughout the period of the UNDEF-funded project. Indeed, most Somalis have known only armed conflict in their country all their adult life ±except to some extent for those living in Somaliland, northwest of the country, which has achieved a degree of stability since declaring unilateral independence in 1991 (Puntland in the north and some parts of central Somalia have also been relatively stable in recent years, while armed violence was strongest in the south of the country).

The humanitarian impact of the conflict includes, according to UN estimates, the internal displacement of 1.5 million Somalis as of late 2010. Also according to UN estimates, the



### III. Project strategy

*(i) Project approach and strategy*

7KH SURMHFW GHYHORSHG E\ 1862- ZDV EDVHG RQ WKH YLHZ V  
of media outlets in Somalia has corresponded with the arrival on the labor market of a  
generation of journalists unskilled in either the basics of the profession or in its ethical  
UHTXLUHPHQWV\ 1862- DOVR QRWHG WKDW WKH LQFUHDVH LC

As foreseen in the project document, the timing of activities was heavily influenced by the context of hostilities. This meant that NUSOJ had to make flexible use of opportunities to implement workshops at times when conflict was subsiding. In the same way, there were delays in the establishment of the media center ± which was inaccessible to most journalists for a period because of fighting.

The project document originally anticipated that an Advisory Committee would contribute to the management of the project







- f On the gender side, while the ratio of women participants was satisfactory, the information given by NUSOJ about the contents of the training suggests that Z R P H Q ¶ V U L J K W addressed in a significant way. This is a concern, particularly in the Somali context, as women have been major victims of war-related violence.

Overall, however, NUSOJ deserves credit for implementing the project against very significant odds. That it has done so is evidence of the organizational skills and dedication of its core leadership, and of the commitment of some of its members in towns where activities took place.

**(iii) Efficiency**

The project activities took place within budget and within the planned period. It may be argued that the cost of the activities (about US\$500 per participant, plus the cost of the media center) was relatively high, but this is largely justified by the conflict context. Somalia is an expensive country because the civil war leads to multiple shortages in goods and services and increases to the cost of transportation. These factors increased logistical costs. With this caveat, there is no particular concern about the cost of activities.

One minor concern, however, relates to the media center: although the evaluators did not visit it, the description of the center given by NUSOJ representatives indicate that the FHQWHU LV ORFDWHG LQ WKH SUHPLVHV WKDW DOVR VHUYH D This means that the project is, in effect, subsidizing the NUSOJ office.

TKH HYDOXDWRU¶V YLVLVW WR 1DLUREL FRLQFLGHG ZLWK SUHV ZHUH FULWLFDO RI WKH RUJDQL]DWLRQ¶V FXUUHQW OHDGHUV and mismanagement. The evaluator discussed the background to these accusations with NUSOJ members and international NGO representatives who have worked with NUSOJ. He also attempted, unsuccessfully, to talk to NUSOJ members making the allegations. The evaluator concluded from the feedback received that the accusations were essentially reflective of internal dissent within NUSOJ. The allegations were of a general nature and there was no indication that they were related to the UNDEF-funded project. NUSOJ Secretary General Omar Faruk Osman told the evaluator that the allegations were withdrawn during a NUSOJ annual general meeting in June 2011.

**(iv) Impact**

Conditions prevailing in Somalia, as well as the impossibility for the evaluators to visit Somalia, have made assessment of impact difficult. Three of the four participants in training and workshops who responded to the email questionnaire<sup>3</sup> stated that they understood human rights better as a result of the sessions ±as did five of the seven

It is not realistic to expect the project to have a catalytic or multiplier effect in Somalia. The disruption caused by continuing political violence means, on the contrary, that professionally experienced Somali journalists have a strong incentive to go into exile, at least temporarily. The huge constraints under which more junior journalists discharge their duties (physical danger, lack of regular pay, food insecurity for themselves and their families) reduce the scope for them to engage into effective investigative reporting or into any in-depth reporting of human rights issues.

In this context, the very fact that the project took place has to be seen as an achievement in its own right. Its impact lies primarily in the positive signal it sends to the journalistic community in Somalia, that the international community is supportive of ethical journalism based on human rights values and principles of good governance.

**(v) Sustainability**

This aspect is a relative weakness. The project has probably built the capacity of individual journalists, but there were no plans to help with follow up and continued capacity building. Conditions in Somalia would in any case have made it difficult to implement any follow-up support, but existing communications platforms (NUSOJ website, social networks) could have been used to reinforce liaison among journalists.

There is scope for future projects to harness new technologies to enhance mutual support among journalists, thus maximizing the benefits from the activities carried out.

**(vi) UNDEF added value**

This project is illustrative of UNDEF added value in that it was the only one addressing the needs of journalists in Somalia.<sup>4</sup> Other organisations had recognised that need for years, and some steps had been taken to meet it through training outside the country, but this is the first (and so far only) project that took the training to journalists across Somalia (where accessible) and that managed to implement a complete schedule of sessions despite the on-going civil war. It is also noteworthy that it did so while taking gender balance among participants into account, ensuring that about one third of training participants were women journalists.

Nevertheless the project would have benefitted significantly from additional strategic advice. Conditions in Somalia are obvious3(un)oaliomalialia are obS t



particularly important in a conflict context such as Somalia. This conclusion stems from findings (i) and (iii).

(vi) The sheer implementation of the project is sending **an important positive** message about the role of women and girls in governance in Somalia. Although sustainability is always a challenge in troubled contexts **the project has laid valuable groundwork for future action** in support of media freedom. This conclusion stems from findings (iv), (v) and (vi).

(vii) **This is a project, and a situation, in which the implementer would have benefited from close strategic advice.** NUSOJ lacked project management capacity and above all lacked the time and resources to do so. NUSOJ anticipated its own weakness by suggesting in the project document that an Advisory Committee including UN representatives would be appointed to help it implement the project. It is regrettable that this committee did not get established, partly because NUSOJ did not follow up on the idea (UN agencies in Kenya would in any case have been hard-pressed to devote the human resources needed to provide the kind of guidance NUSOJ needed).

**VI. Recommendations**

(i) **NUSOJ should consider seeking funding for a follow-up project taking account of the lessons learned** on this one. In particular, any follow-up project should include an advocacy dimension directed at government and local authorities, and should consider ways in which training sessions can be followed-up to further support participating journalists, for example through the use of social networks. See conclusions (i), (ii) and (iii).

(ii) **Any new project should include a significant dimension concerning gender rights awareness.** This is particularly relevant in the Somali context, in which women are particularly vulnerable to human rights violations and abuses due to civil war. See conclusion (v).

(iii) **Any new project should include an element of strategic support to NUSOJ,** to complement its efforts (partnership with another organization, use of the Advisory Committee model foreseen in this project but not implemented). However the need for strategic support is clear, and meeting this need could significantly enhance the impact of a future project. See conclusions (ii) and (iii).

(iv) **Any new project should take account of the low level of journalistic skills of the more junior Somali journalists** and include basic journalistic skills training.

Other forms of training, such as mentoring of junior journalists by more senior one, should also be considered. See conclusions (i) and (ii).

## VII. Overall assessment and closing thoughts

It is probably clear to the reader that this evaluation took a more constructive and less unstable contexts. It is indeed easy, when applying standard evaluation criteria, to doubt the value of engaging in a rights-related project in an environment such as

The initial stance of the evaluators was similarly skeptical. However, contacts with NUSOJ members brought to light their high level of commitment and activism, and also highlighted the high level of physical risks (to them and to relatives) that some of them were taking to implement activities. Interviews with other observers also brought home the fact that implementing a project in Somalia (any project) is so fraught with difficulties and dangers that the mere implementation of a schedule of training session had to be seen as a success.

Overall, the uniqueness of this project in the Somali context also highlighted its value: while many humanitarian projects take place in that country, the UNDEF-supported project by NUSOJ was virtually the only one that highlights issues of human rights and good governance. To that extent, it was an important and valuable investment.

## VIII. ANNEXES

### Annex 1: Evaluation questions:

DAC criterion	Evaluation Question	Related sub-questions
Relevance	To what extent was the project, as designed and implemented, suited to context and needs at the beneficiary, local, and national levels?	<p><i>f</i> Were the objectives of the project in line with the needs and priorities for democratic development, given the context?</p> <p><i>f</i> Should another project strategy have been preferred rather than the one implemented to better reflect those needs, priorities, and context? Why?</p> <p><i>f</i> Were risks appropriately identified by the projects? How appropriate are/were the strategies developed to deal with identified risks? Was the project overly risk-averse?</p>
Effectiveness	To what extent was the project, as implemented, able to achieve objectives and goals?	<p><i>f</i> To what extent was the project implemented as envisaged by the project document? If not, why not?</p> <p><i>f</i></p>

## Annex 2: Documents Reviewed:

### **Documents by NGOs and intergovernmental organisations (in chronological order):**

World Bank, 2005, Conflict in Somalia: Drivers and Dynamics, World Bank Publications, Washington DC

Jamal Abdi Ismail, 2006, Somalia: Research Findings and Conclusions, African Media Development Initiative, BBC World Service Trust, London

Thomas Ansorg, 2006, Strengthening Dialogue between Non-State Actors and the EC on the new EU Assistance Strategy to Somalia, Saferworld et al, London

United Nations, 2007, United Nations Transition Plan for Somalia 2008-2009, UN Office for



### Annex 3: Persons Interviewed

\* Denotes people interviewed by phone

\*\* Denotes people questioned by email

Name
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## Annex 4 : Acronyms

AfDB	African Development Bank
AMISOM	African Union Mission in Somalia
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
ICU	Islamic Courts Union
IDP	Internally Displaced People
IMS	International Media Support
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NUSOJ	National Union of Somali Journalists
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights (UN)
TFG	Transitional Federal Government
TNG	Transitional National Government
UNDEF	United Nations Fund for Democracy
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNOSOM	United Nations Operation in Somalia

## Annex 5: Overview of the conflict in Somalia

### **Key stages of the conflict**

There are no reliable statistics on the death toll related to the conflict. However the Somalia Online news website compiled estimates of 350,000 to 1 million fatalities in the 20 years since the overthrow of Siad Barre in January 1991. The broad phases of the conflict are the following (see sources listed in bibliography in Annex 2):

**1986-1991:** Insurrections against the Siad

While an assessment of the causes and state of the conflict is beyond the scope of the present evaluation, some pointers are useful because they offer some indication of the conflict dynamics that the project had to take into account.

- f The conflict is complex and multi-layered; it cannot be reduced to a simple set of causes. Like many other African conflicts that began in the 1980s and 1990s, its origins are linked to the end of the bipolarisation caused by the Cold War, although it was also related to long-standing tensions (for example, externally with Ethiopia, and internally among clans with regional bases).

