

UNESCO INTENSIFIES COOPERATION ON PRESS FREEDOM OVER SUDAN CONFERENCE

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USPA NEWS - Meeting in Paris ahead of the International Conference convened by France to Support the Sudanese Transition, Abdalla Hamdok, Prime Minister of Sudan, and the Organization's Director-General Audrey Azoulay agreed to reinforce ongoing cooperation to support press freedom and media development, key pillars of the democratic transition underway in the country.

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On 25 September 2019, the Prime Minister of Sudan requested UNESCO's support to introduce media reforms as part of the transitional process during the UN General Assembly Event on Media Freedom, when he announced Sudan's signing of the Global Pledge for Media Freedom spearheaded by Canada and the United Kingdom. In response, UNESCO launched a first assessment of the country's media environment using its Media Development Indicators. In September 2020, the outcomes of these consultations were consolidated and published in the form of a Media Reform Roadmap.

The next stage of UNESCO's cooperation with Sudan in this area will consist of implementing the Roadmap over the next three years. The areas to be reinforced in line with the Roadmap concern: legislative reform, institution building, training and employment of media professionals, and investment in technical infrastructure.

Since 2019, Sudan established a National Team for Media Reform, comprised of media experts, media owners and managers, journalists, officials of the Ministry of Culture and Information and civil society representatives who took part in the assessment of the media landscape.

UNESCO is promoting the participation of women in the media and has supported safety training for over 250 women journalists. UNESCO has also trained security officers on freedom of expression and the safety of journalists.

Also in February 2020, UNESCO launched an assessment of internet development in Sudan based on its Internet Universality Indicators, which is scheduled to be completed by the fourth quarter of 2021. This project is funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) through UNESCO's International Programme for the Development of Communication.

Financial support for these activities has been sourced through UNESCO's Multi-Donor Programme on Freedom of Expression and Safety of Journalists. Throughout 2020, UNESCO launched a series of capacity-building sessions for over 300 Sudanese journalists to address disinformation and prevent violent extremism and hate speech. UNESCO is seeking additional support to build capacities of the media and strengthen national institutions such as the Sudanese National Commission on Human Rights. » Source : UNESCO

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