

Media Coalitions for Change

Assessment of the state of African media coalitions, networks, and programmes in East, West, and Southern Africa in support of media's role in democracy

Consolidated Report

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Executive summary

The overall objective of the assignment was to map out and assess media coalitions in east, west, and southern Africa, to contribute to the IMS Media Coalitions for Change (MC4C) project. The assessment specifically aims to understand the development of innovative coalition approaches, systems and models that can strengthen the role of the media in democratisation in Africa, especially in collaboration with IMS partners and the networks and coalitions they are part of.

The assessment sought to explore how coalition-building can contribute to media freedom through work in three distinct though related areas, defined as:

- **Net freedoms and public interest technology:** This theme explores how coalitions can effectively engage in and influence issues related to the impact on media freedom, democracy and human rights of technology and particularly internet access and inclusion, internet governance, digital rights, artificial intelligence and mis- and disinformation.
- **Media and public interest:** This theme explores issues of how coalitions engage with and influence how the media and social media act as platforms for addressing and solving critical public interest issues such as climate change through formats such as but not limited to investigative journalism, and how journalism can engage relevant audiences and regain trust and purpose in the era of mis- and disinformation.
- **Media and governance:** This theme explores issues related to media capture, media regulation, safety of journalists and the media's function within political processes such as elections, with particular interest on how these issues affect the media's performance.

The assessment focused on the following 15 countries in east, west and southern Africa: Angola, Burkina Faso, Eswatini, Ghana, Kenya, Liberia, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Somalia, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The study was conducted from July to December 2023, with data collection taking place from 25 July to 31 August. Data was collected through interviews and focus group discussions and complemented with a desk review of literature. Three sub-regional consultation meetings and a regional validation workshop were held in Dar es Salaam, Ouagadougou and Cape Town. The meetings were held to discuss preliminary findings emerging from fieldwork in the selected countries and also served as platforms for further data collection.

The findings presented in this report are organised in three main categories in the following order (1) A description of the state of media coalitions; (2) Coalition-building in public interest technology and net freedoms, public interest journalism and media and governance; and (3) Analysis of coalition-building and advocacy strategies. A section on recommendations follows the findings section. The report ends with suggestions for future areas for research in the field of media coalition-building. It

Key findings

State of media coalitions

- The state of media coalitions varies across the three regions covered in this study, that is east, west and southern Africa, and the political and socio-economic conditions of countries determine the nature and longevity of media coalitions in complex and contradictory ways.
- Though some journalists' associations or media advocacy organisations have been considered coalitions, they are not in the conventional sense. A few key media 'coalitions' in the three sub-regions are either groupings of different organisations or registered NGOs with a variety of member organisations. In contrast, several civil society-only groupings are set up as coalitions, which have a more defined structure.
- Well-functioning media coalitions are rare. Many coalitions exist on paper, having a Facebook page or an out-of-date website, but are not engaged in any advocacy work on the ground.

- Most media coalitions do not have a wide actor base, thus are lacking both diversity and inclusivity. There are gender disparities in many of the coalitions, with men leading or having greater influence than women. In many, youth are underrepresented and poorly integrated.
- Traditional and long-standing rights-based coalitions do not advocate for concerns relating to media freedom and freedom of expression. They often view these issues as distinct from other human rights concerns, such as right to health and education.
- Regarding the state of media coalitions in the three sub-regions:
 - East Africa has a strong tradition of **forming active coalitions and associations**. The earliest coalitions and groupings were formed in the 1990s during the continent's second wave of liberation which saw media actors acting alongside civil society actors agitating for multi-party democracies and new constitutions. Additionally, many media coalitions in the sub-region are **multistakeholder and diverse**.
 - Southern African has **a robust and active media advocacy tradition** due to the presence of the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) over the past 30 years. The existence of MISA in the sub-region shapes the status of coalition-building.
 - Media coalition-building in West Africa is **dominated by regional media coalitions and media organisations** such as the West African Journalist Association and the Media Foundation for West Africa. The existence of these regional entities has muted smaller local/national level coalitions in the sub-region.
 - Due to the current volatile and repressive political environment in French-speaking West Africa, notably Burkina Faso and Senegal, journalists **find value in coalition building and networking for their safety** and as a force to fight for their causes. Journalists' associations are getting stronger in the face of the repressive political situation in these two countries.
 - In Nigeria, structures of coalitions are also affected by the **federal political system**. Most media associations and networks in Nigeria are formed at the micro level for maximum effectiveness in their activities, thus national-level media coalitions are few.
 - High levels of political polarisation in English-speaking countries under study - Ghana, Liberia, and Nigeria, has led to **media polarisation**. Political polarisation in these countries affects the structure and forms of coalitions.
 - In the fifteen countries in this assessment, some coalitions are primarily **ad hoc**. As a result, the coalitions are reactive in their activities, as they are formed on an as-needed basis to respond to emerging issues that emerge.

Coalition building in public interest technology and net freedoms, public interest journalism and media and governance.

- A variety of players are actively advocating for media freedom and freedom of expression, but **coalition building is weak**. Effective lobbying efforts on key issues pertaining to media freedom are primarily carried out by well-funded NGOs and think tanks like ARTICLE 19, Media Foundation for West Africa, CIPESA, and MISA and these organisations occasionally collaborate with other local NGOs or operate independently. Local media coalitions often operate in the shadows of these organisations.
- In the areas of net freedoms and public interest journalism, **coalition-building is notably weak**, but, by comparison, it is strong around media and governance. Most media coalitions, networks and journalists' associations are preoccupied with fighting for basic rights such as freedom of expression, access to information and media regulatory independence.

- **Advocacy on digital rights and net freedoms is limited** to a few issues such as misinformation/disinformation and internet shutdowns, but advocacy strategies on these are inadequate. Global coalitions such as AccessNow and #KeepItOn are active in these areas.
- There seems to be a limited understanding by coalitions and advocacy organisations of the complex nature of information disorders and internet shutdowns. Media coalitions address these issues mainly during elections but **do not seem to have a holistic strategy**. There is a need for a proactive and human rights-based approach to addressing the scourge of internet shutdowns and information disorders.
- In terms of public interest journalism, the focus for most media coalitions is on **investigative journalism** and other aspects such as media diversity, inclusive media, media viability and so on are neglected.
- There are **limited multistakeholder and multi-sectoral coalitions** that advocate for media freedom. When media coalitions and CSOs collaborate, the collaboration is frequently spontaneous and transitory.
- In a time when artificial intelligence (AI) and other cutting-edge technologies affect practically every aspect of the media and communications ecosystem, **innovative and impactful coalition-building strategies are needed to respond to this**, but there seems to be no effective strategies of how media coalitions can best establish relationships with **non-traditional partners** (e.g., the business community, actors in the tech space) and regional coalitions.

Analysis of coalition-building and advocacy strategies

- Internal factors that have been useful for coalition-building include shared vision, **cross-sector collaboration**, resources (grant and non-grant) and partnership with regional and global partners.
- **Political opportunities**, such as political threats, which appear to have a strong facilitative effect on media as they offer incentives to collaborate, and the identification of sympathetic political elites who can help advance the coalition's agenda are examples of external factors that promote successful coalition-building.
- **Advocacy seems to be reactive rather proactive**: Advocacy frequently emerges as a reaction to specific events or concerns, or as a response to a perceived need for change. It is rare for media coalitions in the three sub-regions to actively anticipate and address potential issues before they become major problems.
- There are overlapping functions between organisations and coalitions that negatively impact coalition-building.
- Advocacy approaches followed by most media coalitions in the three sub-regions are the **legalistic and policy advocacy approaches**. As such, there has been limited community and public engagement and grassroots mobilisation. The choice of advocacy approach has influenced the selection of specific advocacy strategies.
- Advocacy strategies most used by media coalitions include lobbying, media advocacy, grassroots mobilization, protests, policy research and analysis. Less used strategies include public engagement, fact-finding forums, policy monitoring and accountability, negotiations, public campaigns, and protests.

Recommendations

i. Funders and international NGOs

- *Promote and develop cross-sector and multistakeholder coalitions and networks.* Develop strategies on how to effectively build broad-based, cross-sector and multistakeholder coalitions. Successful models can be identified for learning. Multi-stakeholder partnerships can facilitate innovative solutions to complex issues that are confronting the media ecosystem.

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- *Facilitate exchange of information, skills, experience, materials, and opportunities for collaboration.* Effective media coalitions can serve as role models for learning. In countries where media coalition building is still in its nascent stages, there is a need for capacity building and development among the recently formed coalitions. Mentorships from those with more experience and knowledge provide an opportunity to improve skills development. Funder should deliberately promote cross-country learning.
 - *Support youth-oriented coalitions.* Given the dynamic nature of youth, these coalitions often embrace innovation and creativity. They often leverage technology, social media, and other innovative approaches to connect with and mobilise young people. These youth-oriented coalitions require resources, training, and mentorship programmes to enhance the skills and capacities of young leaders within the coalitions.
 - *Support the development of leadership skills and capacities of media coalitions.* In coalition-building, leadership is crucial in fostering respect for differences, mutual understanding, and shared vision that are required to keep disparate actors working together. Allocation of resources to building leadership capacities within coalitions is key to strengthening them.
 - *Capacitate media coalitions in advocating for digital rights.* While existing media coalitions are lobbying for digital rights, this is done in an ad-hoc way. Advocating for digital rights is not easy owing to the complex nature of the digital realm. It requires a multi-pronged strategy that involves raising awareness, engaging with policymakers, collaborating with various stakeholders, and actively participating in shaping the digital landscape to align with fundamental human rights principles.
 - *Capacitate media coalitions in technology governance.* African voices for media freedom need to be heard more and more in the places where policies are formed, particularly when it comes to digital rights and platform access.
 - *Build a programme for promoting journalism as a public good.* Media coalitions and journalist associations need to understand the different aspects of public interest journalism. Developing a continent-wide programme to advance journalism as a public good requires a multipronged strategy that takes into consideration audience engagement, journalism's many facets and media financial sustainability. This also requires developing partnerships with technology actors to develop and implement innovative approaches to news dissemination and audience engagement.
 - *Capacitate media coalitions to tackle emerging governance issues in the media space.* The media landscape has changed drastically in the past two decades or so. There is need to build the capacity of media coalitions so that they respond to new and emerging threats and opportunities in the digital media ecosystem, with particular emphasis on the capacity to tackle emerging governance issues in the media space through collaborative and strategic efforts involving capacity building, information sharing, tech collaboration and research.
- ii. Media coalitions**
- *Leveraging intellectual resources of regional and global advocacy organisations.* Rather than seeing regional and global advocacy NGOs working on the same issues as national coalitions as threats, media coalitions should join forces with these organisations. This collaborative approach can provide media coalitions with broader visibility, increased outreach and lead to more informed, comprehensive, and effective initiatives to address shared objectives.
 - *Build partnerships with global coalitions* Advocacy issues around net freedoms keep changing. At a global level, international coalitions especially in the global north have developed advocacy strategies that adapt to the changes taking place in the technology sector. African coalitions majoring in these issues can learn from global coalitions to understand how they can further strengthen their advocacy work in a domain that is fast transforming.

- *Building intersectoral collaborations on net freedoms and public interest technology.* Local networks engaged in promoting public interest technologies and net freedoms need to form intersectoral collaborations. Intersectoral networks create enduring relationships between different advocacy groups, which in turn connects them to broader networks. CSOs involved in media freedom work should leverage technology that allows them to strengthen and scale their work. Inclusion of public interest technologists in media freedom coalitions can be highly beneficial for ensuring that technology serves the public good. Collaborating with public interest technologists also brings diversity and innovation in the struggle for digital rights.
- *Promote advocacy journalism.* Media coalitions should form partnerships with NGOs that share the goal of promoting journalism as a public good. CSOs/NGOs should be trained to produce ‘advocacy journalism’ to enhance public interest journalism and social change. Advocacy can serve as a tool within a broader advocacy strategy by helping to shape public opinion and garner support for policy reform or social change. Advocacy journalism aligns with the goal of serving the public interest and contributing to a more informed and empowered society.
- *Work with established continental bodies.* Work with the African Union, which has introduced the AU African Media Fellowship that aims to empower African media professionals, journalists, and content creators to promote development-focused stories using emerging technologies.
- *Promote local journalism.* News deserts are growing larger, with many marginalised and rural communities in Africa lacking a news source that provides meaningful and trustworthy local reporting of issues of concern. It’s a void that hinders people from knowing what’s happening in their world and from being fully engaged as informed citizens. As part of promoting public interest journalism, media coalitions should promote local journalism. Partnerships can be built between local media outlets and media coalitions to promote sustainable models for community-driven journalism.
- *Empower digital start-ups that focus on public interest journalism.* Africa is home to many creative digital start-ups that are producing cutting-edge work. Some of them are focused on public interest journalism. Most of them are not supported and yet they have the capabilities to reach out to millions of people. Coalitions need effective strategies to support these initiatives.
- *Scale up advocacy on the safety of journalists.* Advocacy for the safety of journalists is crucial in ensuring media freedom, freedom of expression and the overall health of democratic societies. Scaling up advocacy on the safety of journalists requires a multi-faceted approach that involves collaboration between governments, media organisations, civil society, and the public. Coalitions and funders working in this area need to come up with programmes to scale up advocacy on the safety of journalists.

iii. IMS

- *Design a coalition-building multi-year resourcing strategy.* To continue the work that it is doing in this area, including the MC4C project, IMS needs to mobilise multi-year funding that is dedicated to improving the performance of media coalitions. This approach will provide opportunities to work with other funders to support the long-term sustainability of proven initiatives in coalition-building. IMS can select a few media coalitions and projects with a potential for impact to fund and support for a few years.
- *Monitoring and Evaluation.* Create an effective and detailed Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) system for coalition-building in the MC4C project. This would aid IMS in articulating its goals, gathering vital data to evaluate its progress toward impact goals, and keeping an eye on the levers of change. However, it is noted that due to the complex and constantly shifting nature of coalition structures, coalition initiatives can be challenging to track and evaluate. Coalition partners frequently come together with different objectives and agendas. Because of this diversity, developing common metrics for evaluation, though worthwhile, may prove difficult.

8 SECTION 1: OVERVIEW OF THE ASSESSMENT

1. Introduction

The purpose of this assessment is to appraise the state of media coalitions and networks, their effectiveness, agendas and opportunities for strengthening such coalitions and identifying new approaches for the work of media and its role in democratisation. The focus is on three sub-regions in Africa – east, southern and west Africa.

This assessment forms part of the IMS Media for Coalitions Change project, which seeks to strengthen media coalitions in Africa with the aim of supporting the role of media in democracy and human rights on the continent. IMS particularly believes that supporting the development of public interest media involves intersected and complex matters beyond normative issues of journalism. The news media now operates in a complex ecosystem shaped by digital technologies and the ever-expanding communication ecology, where non-journalist actors are also playing a part. Digital technologies have accelerated changes in media production and consumption and introduced new actors into the communication ecosystem. These changes are taking place at a time when the continent is experiencing increasing political unrest, still grappling with poverty and faced with climate change. These challenges are accompanied by constrained citizen engagement and free expression, especially among variously marginalised and socially excluded groups. Public interest media however can amplify the voices of marginalised and underrepresented groups, drawing attention to their concerns and fostering social justice. This can contribute to reducing inequality and promoting inclusivity and ultimately strengthening participatory democracy and promoting effective public service delivery.

2. Purpose and objectives

The overall objective of the assignment is to conduct research on media coalitions in east, west, and southern Africa with an emphasis on investigating their formation and application of innovative approaches, systems, and models to strengthen the role of the media in democratisation in Africa. IMS has built knowledge and lessons on coalition-building through past work such as in Bangladesh and Ethiopia, under the Protecting Independent Media for Effective Development (PRIMED) programme alongside BBC Media Action and Free Press Unlimited. In 2021, IMS co-organised a series of workshops called Coalitions for Change, which explored how best to support advocacy coalitions to achieve their goals.

Based on its work with advocacy coalitions in PRIMED and drawing on lessons from its other country programmes, IMS tentatively proposed the following attributes as limiting the effectiveness of media coalitions in supporting democracy and human rights:

- **Diversity** – media coalitions lack diversity of actors and are “groupings of the converted;”
- **Learning:** Media coalitions are not innovating. They often work in the same ways, with the same partners and on the same issues, perhaps because they lack access to information that challenges them to change.
- **Inclusivity:** Engagement and action on issues across the African continent are not inclusive; certain countries are left out of dialogues and initiatives on media development on the continent, despite the fact that they urgently require support and that the state of the media and democracy in these countries has an impact on the neighbouring countries.
- **Relevance:** Media coalitions are not always aware of the emerging issues affecting communities in Africa such as climate change that can be best addressed through public interest journalism.
- **Sustainability:** The media sector is generally struggling to maintain the resource base it had in the past due the changing business models affecting the news media; and
- **Responsiveness:** There is currently not enough being done by media coalitions to tackle emerging challenges such as the influence of technology on media freedom.

This assessment builds on previous IMS and other research on media coalitions and its recommendations. It adopts a **thematic approach** to identify advocacy priorities and strategies in the three areas below and its goal is to recommend appropriate coalition-building and advocacy strategies in these areas, that is:

- **Net freedoms and public interest technology:** This theme explores how coalitions can effectively engage and influence issues related to the impact on media freedom, democracy and human rights of internet governance policies, digital rights, internet access and inclusion, use of artificial intelligence and spread of mis and disinformation.
- **Media and public interest:** This theme explores issues of how coalitions engage with and influence how the media and social media act as platforms for addressing and solving critical public interest issues such as climate change through formats such as investigative journalism, and how journalism can engage relevant audiences and regain trust and purpose in an era of disinformation and fake news.
- **Media and governance:** This theme explores issues related to media capture, media regulation, safety of journalists and the media's function within political processes such as elections, with particular interest on how these issues affect the media's performance.

This assessment also closes gaps in relation to three issues that are missing in previous studies on media coalitions:

- State of media coalitions in countries that receive limited media assistance and have low levels of media development.
- An understanding of media coalition-building experiences in three thematic areas identified by IMS for this assessment: Net freedoms and public interest technology; Media and public interest and Media and governance (detailed later in the report)
- Collaboration between media coalitions and other relevant non-media coalitions in advocating for freedom of expression, freedom of expression and public interest media.

3. Understanding coalitions, networks, alliances and social movements

IMS defines a coalition as a 'temporary alliance of different actors with a variety of interests and affiliations looking to achieve common goals through collective action and advocacy.'¹ Media coalitions 'are generally focused on fostering an enabling environment for independent journalism and freedom of expression.'² The exact make-up of these groups depends primarily on why they exist, but the majority consist of media outlets, journalistic unions, publishing associations, and civil society organisations.³

Collaboration of different groups is now the mainstay of media reform advocacy and lobbying in several countries on the continent. These collaborative structures, involving multiple CSOs include task forces, networks, alliances, and coalitions. In civil society spaces, discussions often use the term coalition interchangeably with networks, alliances, and social movements. Yet the three terms are not synonyms, and for the purpose of this assessment, it is important to distinguish between them. Distinguishing between **coalitions, networks, alliances, and social movements** helps funders understand the dynamics and the funding needs of each category.

Coalitions

Coalitions refer to when two or more actors agree to pursue some common objective(s), pool resources and actively communicate during joint action.⁴ They differ in how they are structured, their duration and degree of formality. Many coalitions involve temporary, informal groups of organisations teaming to organise and take part in a single event.⁵ This form of organising is called **event coalitions**.⁶ Occasionally, groups collaborate on numerous projects throughout time while upholding separate organisational structures and goals. Other times, groups collaborate over a longer period in more formal manner.

Networks

Networks are typically **informal, flexible associations** that share information and ideas.⁷ Networks tend to be loose, flexible associations of people and groups brought together by a common interest or concern to share information and ideas and expressions of solidarity. However, while many networks involve shared goals among their members, they do

¹ Informed by the Protecting Independent Media for Effective Development (PRIMED) learning brief, Coalitions for Change: Collective action, better media ecosystems; page 4.

² Ibid

not necessarily involve joint action. However, networks do not always coordinate their actions or agree on specific joint actions (as suggested by the concept of coalition).

Alliances

Alliances are usually centered on a **single objective** and involve members with **shorter-term relationships**. Alliances are typically less taxing on members because they are time- and goal-limited.

Social movements

Social movement refers to a collective and organised effort by a group of individuals or organisations to bring about social, political, cultural, or economic change. Like coalitions and networks, social movements also involve the participation of a group of people/actors who share common goals and concerns. However, the concept of a social movement suggests a much **higher degree of density** and much more **cohesion** than is involved in coalitions, networks or alliances.⁸

3.1 Why coalitions and networks?

Coalitions and networks in media reform advocacy are strategic options for both NGOs and funders. It has become clear over the years that the capacity to effect more significant social change now largely hinges on NGO connectivity. Coalitions tend to have a louder voice and greater reach than NGOs working in silos, enabling them to make significant gains. Advocacy groups often form coalitions to amplify their voices on issues. By uniting under a common banner, they can better lobby for changes in policy or law. Governments find it easier to engage with a coalition that combines several organisations than deciding which actor to collaborate with or having to work with several different actors on the same issues. Coalitions also provide several benefits to funders, with scaling impact being perhaps the most significant. The combined strength of multiple organisations can lead to broader geographic reach and larger scale impact. Supporting media advocacy coalitions can lead to long-term change by influencing public opinion, policy decisions, and institutional reforms.

4. Assessment approach and methodology

The methodology for this assessment is based on a combination of desk-based research and qualitative events (document analysis, key informant interviews and focus group discussions) with coalition members, media sector professionals and CSOs. The assessment focused on 15 countries in east, southern and west Africa.

4.1 Objectives and key questions of the Assessment

This assessment was not an evaluation of the different media coalitions, but rather a scoping study on the effectiveness of coalition-building in advocating for freedom of expression and of the media. Through this assessment the IMS wants to understand how well functioning media coalitions can develop innovative approaches and strategies that can strengthen the role of the media in democratisation in

Africa, especially in collaboration with like-minded CSOs in three broad areas: net freedoms and public interest technology, media and public interest and media and governance.

The main aim was to map and define what existing media coalitions in east, west and southern Africa look like, how they work, their strengths and weaknesses and how best to support them to promote human rights and democracy. The assessment also proposes high-priority issues for them to work on in the three thematic areas.

The assessment addressed the following overarching research question:

- How can independent media retool and form networks to fend off threats to their ability to function effectively?

In order to:

- Come up with new models that make media successful when it comes to inclusion and participation of marginalised communities and audiences.
- Regain trust and purpose in an era of disinformation and fake news.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Downs, W. (2008). Coalition. In W. Darity (Ed.), *International encyclopaedia of the social sciences*. Detroit, MI: Macmillan Reference.

⁵ Levi, M., & Murphy, G. H. (2006). Coalitions of contention: The case of the WTO protests in Seattle. *Political Studies*, 54(4), 651–670.

⁶ Margaret Levi mlevi@u.washington.edu and Gillian H. Murphy (2016) Coalitions of Contention: The Case of the WTO Protests in Seattle. *Political Studies*. Volume 54, Issue 4

⁷ Pact-Zimbabwe () Building and Maintaining Networks and Coalitions. Retrieved at https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/pnadh526.pdf, accessed 23 September 2023

Based on the overarching and sub-questions above, the assessment team identified the following five core questions to guide them.

- What are the factors that strengthen media coalitions/alliances?
- What are the factors that weaken media coalitions/alliances?
- What forms of media coalitions/networking strategies are the most effective in media reform? and why?
- What forms of media coalition/networking strategies are the least effective in media reform and why?
- How can effective media networking and advocacy be sustained over time?

4.2 Country selection

The three sub-regions targeted by this assessment contain 46 countries in total. Purposive sampling was used to make judgements on which countries to include.

- The first criterion was to select the countries where IMS has a media programme: Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Ethiopia, Somalia, Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso. A decision was made to omit Ethiopia from this list since, at the time this assessment started, a media coalition assessment of Ethiopia had just been completed. Due to coup d'états in Mali and Niger that had just occurred at the outset of this study, these two countries were also excluded.
- The second set of criteria involved identifying countries with the strongest media coalitions and networks (Kenya, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Nigeria) and comparing them to those with weaker coalitions and networks (Somalia, Tanzania, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Senegal) to identify the variables causing the disparities.
- The third criterion was to select coalitions in less researched and supported contexts (Rwanda, Angola, Eswatini, Liberia)

Using the criteria above, we conducted a mapping of media and relevant non-media coalitions.⁹ (This is provided as a separate document). Below are the countries selected. The countries bring geographic diversity to the study.

Table 1: Sampled countries

EAST AFRICA	SOUTHERN AFRICA	WEST AFRICA
Kenya	Angola	Burkina Faso
Rwanda	Eswatini	Ghana
Somalia	Mozambique	Liberia
Tanzania	Zambia	Nigeria
Uganda	Zimbabwe	Senegal

4.3 Research design

The research design was underpinned by the IMS MC4C theory of change (ToC) (see below Figure 1) and the concepts of resource mobilisation and power. Resource Mobilisation Theory (RMT) is a social movement theory that examines the range of resources that need to be mobilised, the links that social movements have with other groups, the need for external support for movements to succeed, and the strategies used by authorities to stifle or capture movements. The RMT highlights the importance of resources (material and non-material) in the life of a social movement. For this assessment, RMT offers a range of insights on media coalition dynamics. The concept of power is also important in this assessment. Power is defined as a set of practices that govern the interactions between social actors and focuses on who gets what, who does what, who decides what, and who sets the agenda.¹⁰ Power has several dimensions, of which three are of particular importance for this assessment. These are: *social power* (access by individuals and groups to resources and control over their allocation), *institutional power* (strategies employed by groups and institutions in coalition building) and *discursive power* (narrative strategies used by coalitions).¹¹

⁸ Jonathan Fox (2009) "Coalitions and Networks," in Helmut Anheier & Stefan Toepler, eds., International Encyclopedia of Civil Society, New York, Springer Publications.

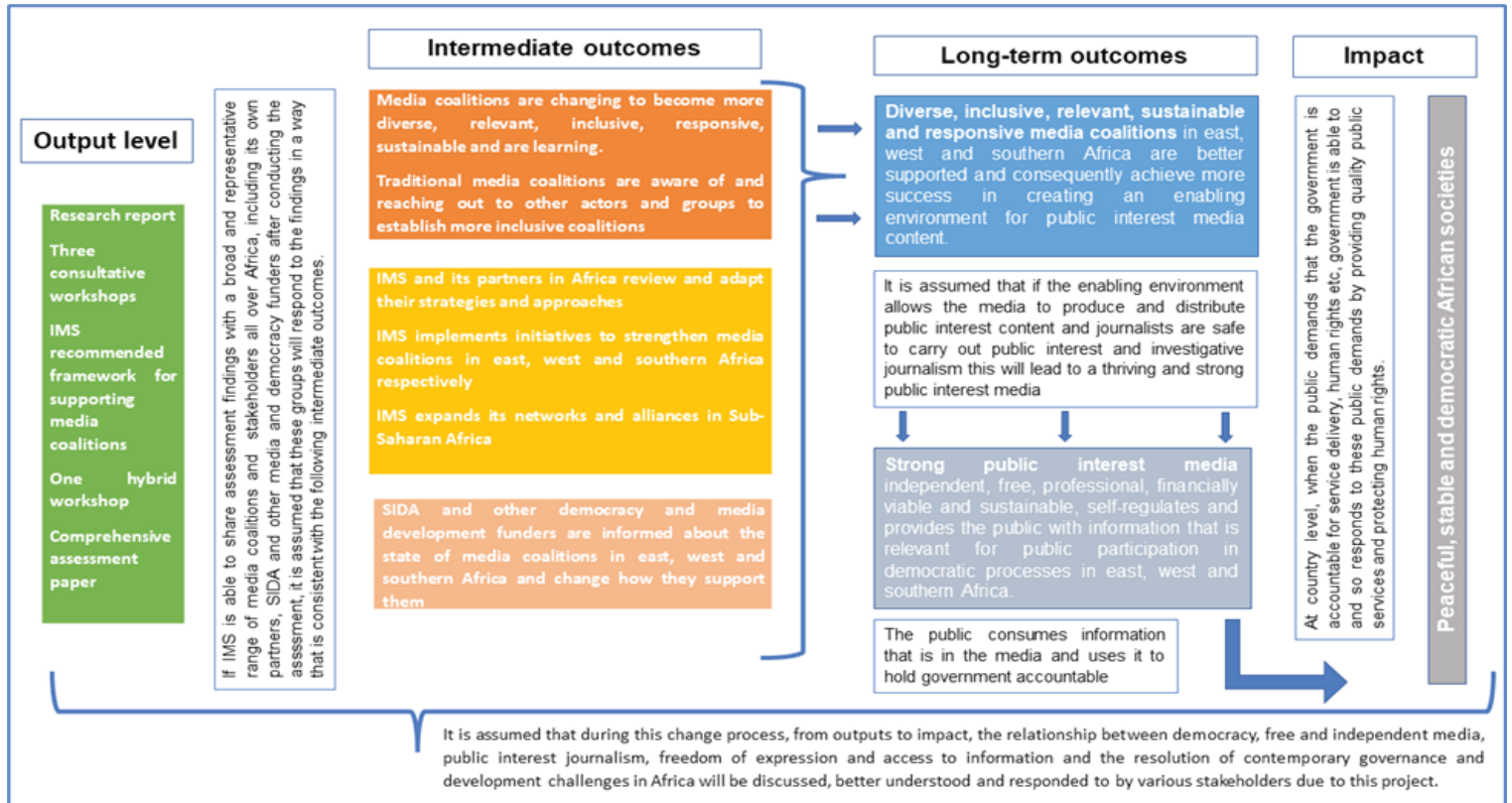
⁹ These are coalitions that focus on human rights, democracy and governance, broadly speaking.

The assessment used the selected concepts as guiding principles in its analysis of findings.

Figure 1: The ToC is translated into the log frame as follows:

4.4. Qualitative data collection

The fieldwork included a desk-based document review, key informant interviews and focus group discussions in 15



selected countries (see above). Fieldwork was conducted during a three-week period. Further detail on how these methodologies were implemented follows below.

Literature review

The assessment commenced with a review of a mixed array of documents and publications. This literature was composed of academic journals, briefs, and reports from research institutions and international development organisations, as well as documents from IMS. Studies done on coalitions on the continent were also consulted and these assisted the assessment team to have an informed entry of inquiry into the research (see. Mwangi 2021, Mwangi and Njiiri, 2021, Randall 2021, Pact-Zimbabwe 2023, Tadesse 2023). These studies also served as a baseline for what is known about NGO coalitions in Africa. To understand and appreciate the operating context of the countries selected for the assessment, a contextual analysis of the political, economic and media environment in the countries was also conducted.

Mapping of coalitions

A scoping and mapping of coalitions (media and human rights/democracy oriented) was done to determine the kinds of coalitions existing on the continent and to describe the current state-of-the-field.

Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)

In total, 164 key respondents took part in this assessment. Respondents included media coalition leaders and

¹² Nyamnjoh, F.B., (2005) *Africa's media, democracy and the politics of belonging*. Zed Books; Bratton, M., (1994) *Civil society and political transition in Africa*. IDR Reports Vol. I I No.6

¹³ See Afrobarometer studies Declining public support for media freedom in Africa: What does it mean for democratic values on the continent? Retrieved at <https://www.afrobarometer.org/articles/declining-public-support-media-freedom-africa-what-does-it-mean-democratic-values-continent/>

Angola, Burkina Faso, Eswatini, Ghana, Kenya, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia. Interview questions were designed for each group of people (see the questions attached- Appendix B).

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

10 FGDs were held across the 15 countries covered by the assessment. FGDs, based on interaction among participants, provided more concrete views on coalition-building and freedom of expression and media in the selected countries.

Consultative meetings

Three sub-regional consultative meetings (in Dar es Salaam, Ouagadougou and Cape Town) and a regional validation workshop (Cape Town) were held to discuss the preliminary findings emerging from fieldwork in the selected countries. The meetings also served as platforms for further data collection.

4.5 Data analysis methods

The assessment team debriefed after a few KIIs and FGDs were conducted to review key themes that had emerged. Most of the data collected were assessed qualitatively utilizing validations, triangulations and interpretations approaches. The transcribed interviews were triangulated with results from document analysis. The assessment also used thematic analysis to draw out themes, statements, or meanings from interview transcripts and the documents examined.

4.6 Limitations and constraints

Although all efforts were made to meet with and talk to as many relevant respondents as possible during this assessment, logistical and practical factors prevented this from being entirely successful. Some of the limitations of this assessment include:

- It was difficult to get access to policymakers and government officials.
- The timeline for the fieldwork was extremely tight for the assessment team.
- Due to time constraints and delays in getting responses from identified informants in many countries in East Africa, FGDs were opted for over individual interviews.

SECTION 2: SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS

5. State of media coalitions

History and context

In post-colonial Africa, coalition formation has taken a myriad of forms. Coalitions have sprouted and permeated almost every sphere of society, and the functions of institutions, especially in civil society and activists' movements. Coalitions for change existed long before the 1990s, when the winds of democracy swept across the continent. They even existed during the long struggle for independence across the region and beyond. Popular movements of the working class, the poor and other oppressed and marginalised sections of African society have played a central role in shaping Africa's long history of struggle in the 1950s, 60s all the way to the early 1990s when Namibia and South Africa gained political independence.

However, though journalists' associations have existed on the continent since the 1960s, media coalitions are a post-1990 phenomenon. They came into existence because of the erosion of democratic gains made in the 1990s and early 2000s. They formed around struggles for media freedom and media law-making and the formation of regulatory bodies which were fraught with self-interest considerations from political actors. Therefore, there was a realist rationale for the formation of coalitions and networks by organisations to counter the self-interest of political actors. Coalitions of highly professionalised media NGOs and journalists' associations together emerged and became more visible and vocal.¹² They brought new ideas into the policy debates, along with new ways of framing issues to attract resources and support. The Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) formed in 1992 and the Media Foundation for West Africa established in 1997 became the springboard for media coalition-building in southern and west Africa respectively and undoubtedly influenced media coalitions on the rest of the continent.

The efforts of media coalitions have yielded numerous benefits over the years. They have amplified concerns such as restrictive media laws, detention of media practitioners, journalists' capacity gaps and media ethics, among others. Despite these gains, threats to Africa's media continue to increase nearly thirty years after governments relaxed control of media during the wave of multipartyism in the 1990s. New laws developed in response to globalisation and technological change are giving rise to the imprisonment of journalists and the closure of media outlets. Taxes on social media and internet shutdowns are becoming popular strategies to restrict the mobilising potential of digital technology. In addition, the traditional business models for media are disappearing, putting the sustainability of public interest journalism at risk. And, as in other parts of the world, Africans' trust in the media appears to be eroding because of concerns about disinformation, bias and hate speech.¹³

Effective media coalitions are needed now more than ever, and **new and innovative approaches are needed for coalition-building**. The state of media coalitions today varies across the three sub-regions (southern, east and west Africa). The assessment found that political and socio-economic conditions of countries determine the nature and longevity of media coalitions in complex and contradictory ways as explained later in the report.

State of media coalitions: Regional overview

There are significant differences in the composition, makeup, and impact of media coalitions in the three sub-regions. In the media sector, organisations that identify themselves as 'coalitions' are not structured as coalitions in the traditional sense. Some key 'coalitions' in the three sub-regions of the several journalists or media associations are either groups of different organisations or registered NGOs with a variety of members. In contrast, many civil society-only groupings are structured as coalitions, adopting a more defined structure. Mwangi also emphasized this point:

Media sector-specific coalitions are rare; and where they exist, they are loosely interconnected, dominated by a few larger players and lacking in solidarity and support for decisions made. Some are very informal and meet only to address specific urgent issues such as legislation inimical to media freedom, threats to journalism, or policy decisions that are likely to constrain journalism space (Mapping Media Coalitions and Networks, 2021).¹⁴

Additionally, the assessment found that **well-functioning media coalitions are particularly rare**. It became evident during the mapping of media coalitions across the continent that many coalitions exist on paper, having a Facebook page or an out-of-date website, but are not engaged in any advocacy work on the ground as coalitions,

¹⁴ Haron Mwangi (2021) *Mapping out coalitions, collaborations, partnerships and networks for media and civil society in sub-Saharan Africa*, CHARM.

though their members may be. Examples include the Citizens Coalition for Independent Media in Uganda, Civil Society Coalition on Access to Information in Zambia, Zimbabwe Online Content Creators Network, CSO Coalition on Internet Freedom in Liberia, Coalition of Nigerian Journalists for Social Change and Media Coalition for Social Change in Ghana.

From its work on coalitions, IMS is concerned that without intervention, media coalitions on the continent tend to continue to be “groupings of the converted,” **lacking a diverse actor base**. The study found that traditional and long-standing rights-based coalitions generally do not advocate for concerns relating to media freedom. They often view media freedom issues as distinct from human rights issues.

The mapping exercise additionally showed that media coalitions are absent from many countries and that in these contexts NGOs’ advocacy efforts for media freedom and freedom of expression are sporadic. Four countries included in this assessment, in comparison to the other countries considered, either do not have media coalitions (Mozambique, Rwanda) or have weak coalition-building on media freedom issues (Angola, Eswatini).

The following are key insights regarding the state of media coalitions from the three sub-regions:

- East Africa has a strong tradition of forming **active coalitions and associations**. The earliest media coalitions and groupings were formed in the 1990s during the second liberation which saw media actors acting alongside civil society actors in agitating for the second liberation in East Africa, ushering in multi-party democracies and new constitutions in countries like Kenya. Additionally, many media coalitions in East Africa are **multistakeholder and diverse** in the sense that they include actors who are outside the media.
- The Southern African region has a **robust and active media advocacy tradition** due to the presence of the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) and its work over the past 30 years. The existence of MISA in the sub-region shapes the status of coalition-building, while the existence of the Media Foundation for West Africa (MFWA) has **muted local coalitions** in West Africa.
- Due to the current volatile and repressive political environment in French-speaking west Africa, notably Burkina Faso and Senegal, **journalists find value in coalition building** and networking for their safety and as a force to fight for their cause. Journalists’ associations are getting stronger in the face of the repressive political situation in these two countries.
- In Nigeria, structures of coalitions are affected by the **federal political system**. Many media associations and networks in Nigeria are formed at the micro level for maximum effectiveness in their activities, thus national-level media coalitions are scarce.
- High levels of **political polarisation** in English-speaking countries in West Africa under this study – that is, Ghana, Liberia and Nigeria - has led to media polarisation. Political polarisation in these countries notably affects the structure and forms of coalitions.

Media coalition-building in East Africa

East Africa has a strong tradition of forming **active coalitions and associations**. The earliest media coalitions and groupings were formed in the 1990s during the second liberation, which saw media actors acting alongside civil society actors in agitating for the second liberation in East Africa, ushering in multi-party democracies and new constitutions in countries like Kenya. The Association of Media Women in Kenya (AMWIK), for example, is one of the earliest journalists’ associations, established in 1982. It is followed by the Tanzania Media Women’s Association (TAMWA), formed in 1987. Somalia also witnessed the formation of coalitions and groupings in the early 1990s, which brought together actors such as clan elders, civil society activists, youth and women groups to foster peace through dialogue.¹⁵

Structure of media coalitions

Many media coalitions in the sub-region are **informal and loose**. They identify as ‘associations.’ Although each member organisation maintains its individual identity, they collaborate jointly on some common issues. Most media coalitions are not registered because the members do not want to forfeit their organisational mandates or lose their individual identities. These loose coalitions are mainly found in Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda. For example,

¹⁵ Maimuna Sheikh Abdulle Mohamud (2020) *Peace Negotiations and Remaking Political Community in Somalia*. Unpublished PhD, University of Cambridge.

key coalitions such as the Uganda Media Sector Working Group (UMSWG) operates through an memorandum of understanding (MOU) which all members have signed; the Kenyan Media Sector Working Group (KMSWG) has also completed an MOU which is waiting to be signed by members at the time of writing this report and the Coalition on the Right to Information (CORI) in Tanzania, also works informally.

Diversity

Coalitions in the selected countries in East Africa are largely **multistakeholder** and draw their membership from a variety of organisations. For example, the Civil Society Coalition of Rwanda combines human rights, media and nonmedia groups such as legal support associations under their umbrella. Coalition on the Right to Information (CoRI) in Tanzania has seventeen members drawn from media and non-media organisations with the goal for advancing freedom of information in Tanzania. The Uganda Media Sector Working Group and the Kenya Media Sector Working Group are multistakeholder platforms that draw their membership from legacy media, media associations, unions, security agencies, women's associations and regulators among others. They were created for the stakeholders to have a uniform voice on issues of media freedom, policy, and development. The Kenya ICT Action Network (KICTANet) is a multi-stakeholder Think Tank for ICT policy and regulation.

In Rwanda, media-specific coalitions seem to be lacking, but the country boasts strong civil society only groupings that are multistakeholder and push for the defense of human rights. Examples are the Civil Society Coalition of Rwanda and the Human Rights First Association. In Somalia media-sector coalitions seem to work in isolation from civil society only groupings, although such groupings as the National Coalition of Human Rights Defenders condemn media freedom violations from time to time.

It is important to take note of the collaboration between media and non-media organisations in these coalitions in East Africa. The advocacy for media freedom benefits from the synergies that have emerged through cross-sectoral ties.

Power dynamics and leadership

KIIs and FDGs noted the issue of power and **leadership dynamics** in coalitions. Certain coalitions appear to control the agenda because they have greater connections and resources. A situation has arisen wherein certain larger organisations are exerting significant influence, causing dissatisfaction among smaller ones. The responsibility for funding coalition operations and providing administrative assistance often rests on the larger organisations. Since coalitions tend to be loosely organised in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda, it can be challenging for them to secure funds, which puts bigger coalition members in a position where they must bear the financial burden of their activities, leading to the **unequal power relations**.

Sustainability of coalitions

There are concerns that the loose nature of coalitions in some of the countries in the sub-region can lead to disintegration. Some coalition members interviewed said that they are mooting the idea of registration and creating a more structured network to avoid breaking up. Additionally, it was pointed out that if they do not create strong bonds, outside forces could divide them. The coalitions would be strengthened and more capable of withstanding internal conflict and external threats if they have an organisational structure that maximises the strengths of each member. But the coalitions are struggling to agree on which form the structure of these loose coalitions should take to ensure sustainability.

Media coalition-building in Southern Africa

The southern Africa region has a **robust and active media advocacy** tradition due to the presence of the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) and its work over the past 30 years. The existence of MISA in the sub-region shapes the status of coalition-building. Currently, the MISA network operates in eight southern African countries with 400 members and is headquartered in Zimbabwe.

Structure of coalitions

Coalitions in the sub-region such as the Media Alliance of Zimbabwe (MAZ), Zambia Media Liaison Committee are **structured** and have **deep connections and interactions**, which are crucial to so many aspects of coalition formation and survival. The SOS: Support Public Broadcasting Coalition in South Africa has acted as a template for successful coalition-building in the region.

Diversity

Unlike the situation in East Africa, there is **little cross-sector collaboration** for media freedom in the countries in the Southern African sub-region studied for assessment. The more established coalitions in the region such as MAZ (Zimbabwe), an alliance of media support organisations and the Zambian Media Liaison Committee, a consortium of media organisations, media associations and media, lack diversity and remain media specific. However, there are some good examples of collaboration between media and civil society - Angola's Forum for Gender Equity—a group that comprises female journalists and other women's groups—and Eswatini's media consortium, which operates under the civil society umbrella organisation, the Coordinating Assembly of Non- Governmental Organisations (CANGO), the Access to Information Coalition of Zambia, the Syndicate of Journalists in Angola, and the Ecological Forum in Angola. However, these **cross-sector coalitions remain ill-defined** in terms of pushing for media freedom and digital rights. Curiously, apart from MISA-Mozambique, **Mozambique does not have any self-evident media coalitions**.

The assessment also noted that various partnerships between media networks in different countries are forming, such as between the Media Alliance of Zimbabwe and Zambia's Media Liaison Committee, the Access to Information Coalition in Zambia, and the Syndicate of Journalists in Angola are among the media coalitions that are forming partnerships with others in the region. **Strategies for effective cross-media coalition-building** are lacking, however. Editors and journalists' associations in the region collaborate through the Southern African Editors Forum, but there are no concrete strategies to do this effectively.¹⁶

Power dynamics and leadership

The assessment found that leadership remains a problem in many media coalitions in the sub-region. There is very **little leadership change and renewal**. The same person remains the leader of a coalition or the same people are rotated to positions. This is especially the case in journalists' associations. Certain members get or claim more recognition than others, causing conflict and resentment. **Women are also less represented in media coalitions**, unless the coalition deals with gender and media issues, such as Gender and Media Connect in Zimbabwe or Forum for Gender Equity in Angola.

Sustainability of coalitions

The duration and sustainability of coalitions are influenced by factors such as specifics of advocacy issues and resources. The specifics of the advocacy issues coalitions address largely determine whether their lifespan is short-term or long-term. This is demonstrated by coalitions like Zambia's ATI (Access to Information) Coalition, which has been campaigning for the same cause for more than 20 years, and the Media Liaison Committee, which started as a flexible coalition before evolving into a well-established organisation. The Eswatini Media Consortium formed in 2017, as a member of a larger civil society coalition pushing for media freedom, has been working for almost six years to push for media law reform. The MAZ (Zimbabwe), which was formed in 2006, is still in operation because of some of the advocacy issues that the coalition was set to address have not been achieved. Additionally, new advocacy issues are emerging, and coalitions decide to continue.

Media coalition-building in West Africa

Like east Africa, West Africa also has **a relatively old tradition of journalism coalitions**. For example, the Gambia Press Union (GPU) was founded in 1979 by a group of journalists in the private media. Union des Journalistes Indépendants du Togo (UJIT) was formed in 1992. In Burkina Faso, the Centre National de Presse – Norbert Zongo (CNP-NZ) was formed in 1998. In Mali, an umbrella organisation, La Maison de la Presse that includes about fifty media groups, was formed in 1996.

Structure of coalitions

Media coalition-building in west Africa is **dominated by regional media coalitions and media organisations** such as The West African Journalists Association (WAJA) established in 1986 to provide a synergy between journalists and media associations in the 16 West African countries, the Platform to Protect Whistleblowers in Africa (PPLAAF) and Media Foundation for West Africa (WAMF) founded in 1997. Due to the hegemony of these organisations, local media coalitions are weak.

High levels of political polarisation in the English-speaking countries under study – that is, Ghana, Liberia and Nigeria - has led to **media polarisation**. For instance, although Ghana is often cited as an example of African democracy due to its history of peaceful elections and regular changes of government since its return to democracy in 1992, the country has high levels of political polarisation between the two dominant parties, New Patriotic Party (NPP) and National

⁵ Interview with Elizabeth Mula – Southern African Editors Forum

Democratic Congress (NDC). This has threatened Ghana's democratic development.¹⁷ Ethno-religious factors in Nigeria have led to political polarisation. The assessment found that political polarisation in these countries affects the structure and forms of coalitions.

Due to the current volatile and repressive political environment in French-speaking west Africa, notably Burkina Faso and Senegal, **journalists find value in coalition building and networking** for their safety and as a force to fight for their cause. Journalists' associations are getting stronger in the face of the repressive political situation in these two countries.

In Nigeria, the structure of coalitions is also affected by the **federal political system**. Many media associations and networks in Nigeria are formed at the micro level for maximum effectiveness in their activities, thus national-level media coalitions are scarce.

Burkina Faso and Senegal do not have many well-established media coalitions. The offices and leadership of the media and journalists' associations are located in the Maison de la Presse and the Norbert Zongo Press Center, respectively. This facilitates the formation of coalitions of media associations in these two nations when necessary. In Liberia, much of the lobbying for press freedom, media regulation, and journalists' rights is done by the Press Union of Liberia. Liberia has a history of having short-term coalitions that are established by donors but disband after a short while. Examples include the Liberia Coalition for Free Expression, the Working Group of the Liberia Media Law Reform Process and The Liberia Freedom of Information Coalition (LFIC).

The assessment found that most media coalitions in the five countries under study are mainly **ad-hoc**. Since media coalitions are formed on an ad-hoc basis to advocate solutions to problems that arise within the democracy initiatives in their respective countries, it has been found that their activities are **reactive**.

Diversity

CSO involvement in media advocacy seems to be stronger in Anglophone countries. Media coalition building is mostly spearheaded by CSOs, who initiate and rally the media associations and networks together for action. This is the situation in Ghana and Liberia where the Centre for Media Studies and Peacebuilding and MFWA respectively lead. In Nigeria, the Voice of Accountability Platform (VoA) champions several coalition building initiatives. The main reason for this is that media associations and networks lack the resources necessary to launch coalition-building initiatives. **In Francophone Africa, CSO advocacy in the media is less prevalent.**

Power dynamics and leadership

Governance of coalitions is often on long term basis in the countries studied. Leadership is either elected or rotates among the leadership of the member organisations. In some cases, there is also consensus that one of the coalition's member organisations, particularly CSOs with expertise in a specific area, should serve as the coalition's leader. There are **few women in leadership positions**.

Sustainability of coalitions

Most coalitions have **ad hoc organisational structures**, which makes it challenging to identify a shared identity for most of their activities. Getting a secretariat for their operations is often a challenge. Hence their duration or sustainability is uncertain.

Conclusion

The assessment's conclusions regarding the state of coalitions show that each country's and region's history, politics, and socioeconomic circumstances have an impact on coalitions-building. Coalitions in the three sub-regions take various forms, ranging from associations, alliances, networks, and collaborations. The structure and formation of coalitions depends on the context, goals, resources, and the organisations involved.

What has also emerged is that few media coalitions in the three sub-regions are diverse and inclusive. Some media coalitions in East Africa have made efforts to promote diversity and inclusivity in their membership and representation, recognising the importance of diverse perspectives and voices in the media landscape. Youth, tech actors and private (that is, business or corporate) actors are insufficiently represented in traditional media

¹⁷ Abena Ramirez Osei-Tutu (2021) A study of manifestations of political polarization as structural violence: A case study of Ghana's 2020 Election. MA Thesis.

coalitions. There is also little collaboration with regional and continental coalitions, both in the media and non-media sectors. Yet, opportunities for collaboration are plentiful. For example, the West Africa Democracy Solidarity Network is a well-oiled coalition that focuses on democracy and good governance, and they have just started to collaborate with media advocacy organisations. In October 2022, they held a convening with MFWA on threats to press freedom in the region.¹⁸

Issues of leadership, power and sustainability are some of the key issues that came up from the interviews and focus group discussions. Power imbalances among coalition members often arise due to differences in resources, influence, or representation. There are gender disparities in many of the coalitions, with men leading or having significant influence. Many KIIs and FGDs noted that traditional hierarchical leadership structures are no longer effective for coalitions. Rather, coalition leadership should be collective and collaborative, but there seem to be no mechanisms in place for innovative and forward-looking leadership. Sustainability is linked to resources. The success and longevity of media coalitions often depend on the availability of various resources.

6. Coalition building in the three thematic areas

6.1 Thematic area 1: Net freedoms and public interest technology

Continental context

Through prolonged advocacy and lobbying, CSOs pushed African governments to commit to ensuring internet freedom and easy access to the internet and to honour digital rights. African Declaration on Internet Rights and Freedoms (AfDec) Coalition came up with the *African Declaration on Internet Rights and Freedoms*, a pan-African initiative that seeks to promote human rights standards and principles of openness in internet policy formulation and implementation on the continent. In 2016, the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) adopted Resolution 362 (LIX) on *the Right to Freedom of Information and Expression on the Internet in Africa*. The resolution acknowledged the value of the African Declaration in its elaboration of the principles necessary to uphold human and people's rights online and in cultivating an internet environment that can best meet Africa's social and economic development needs and goals. In 2020, the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights adopted the revised *Declaration of Principles of Freedom of Expression and Access to Information in Africa* to replace the 2002 Declaration of Principles of Freedom of Expression in Africa. The Declaration was revised in response to developments in the areas of freedom of expression, access to information, and digital rights that made the 2002 Declaration largely outdated. Additionally, African governments through the African Union have also adopted the *Convention on Cyber Security and Personal Data Protection* (the Malabo Convention) in 2014 which aims to provide a uniform legal framework for data protection and cybersecurity for all AU Member States and *The African Union Declaration on Internet Governance* in 2018.

There is no doubt that internet access on the continent is increasing rapidly. But the capabilities and motivations by African governments to suppress and repress internet access rights have also increased. This has given rise to a paradoxical situation where more people are getting connected to internet, yet rights are increasingly being suppressed. There are several tools available to different regimes to suppress the enjoyment of internet rights. These include outright censorship by some regimes, internet filtering, internet blocking and throttling (African Declaration on Internet Rights and Freedoms 2022). Recently, at least in the past four or so years, new strategies like internet shutdowns have become popular weapons in African regimes' arsenal to limit citizens' usage of internet to express dissent and so their enjoyment of internet rights. While some regimes have avoided total internet shutdowns, they have in some instances, and during crucial events like elections when people need the internet, suppressed internet access by degrading the internet.¹⁹ These internet shutdowns are taking place even as the African Declaration on Freedom of Expression prohibits them. The Declaration states that universal, equitable, affordable, and meaningful access to the internet is necessary for the realisation of freedom of expression, access to information and the exercise of other human rights. It further prohibits states, in principle 38(2), from engaging in or condoning any disruption of access to the internet for segments of the public or an entire population.

¹⁸ Interview with Jonah Eledi and Paul Osei-Kuffour, West Africa Democracy Solidarity Network

Issues of state surveillance are also becoming prevalent in Africa. Overall, the civic space in many African countries has been constrained in this way in recent years and this was only made worse by the COVID-19 pandemic, which saw governments adopting different measures to restrict communication flows.

Positive developments in technology are also taking place on the continent, with Kenya, Nigeria, and Rwanda leading in building digital start-ups. These countries have been hubs for innovation and have made a name for themselves in the tech sector through skilled tech talent and homegrown innovative tech products and services. One crucial technology that is becoming more prevalent in these countries is artificial intelligence (AI). To promote creativity, productivity, and future employment, the governments are making investments in AI research and development. Nigeria is the first country in sub-Saharan Africa to establish a National Centre for AI and Robotics (NCAIR). The African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) has also adopted in February 2021 Resolution 473 on the 'need to undertake a study on human and peoples' rights and artificial intelligence (AI), robotics and other new and emerging technologies in Africa.' The Resolution recognizes that AI and other new and emerging technologies present both opportunities and challenges for the promotion and protection of human and people's rights in Africa. The ACHPR has called on state parties to work towards a comprehensive legal and ethical governance framework for AI and related technologies.²⁰

Overview of coalition-building

Advocacy on this theme differs across the sub-region. In east and west Africa, well-resourced regional and continental organisations are leading the way in advocating for digital rights. These organisations have social, institutional and discursive power to influence the media advocacy agenda.

Collaboration on ICT Policy for East and Southern Africa (CIPESA) and Article 19 (East Africa) lead in campaigning for digital rights issues. CIPESA has a strong history of advocating for digital rights mostly through research, stakeholder engagements, and knowledge sharing. Because of the dominance of CIPESA in the sub-region, there seem to be few national coalitions dedicated to promoting digital rights. The Tanzania Digital Rights Coalition was recently formed to work on issues that include data protection and privacy. In West Africa, the dominant actors are the Media Foundation for West Africa and Paradigm Initiative, which have the most capacity for advocacy on this issue. Global ICT coalitions such as #KeepItOn and Access Now also campaign for digital rights in the sub-region, mainly on internet shutdowns. In Southern Africa, national media coalitions advocate for digital rights. **Zambia** and **Zimbabwe** have a strong, empowered, and capacitated civil society sector that advocates for free and independent media, and this has led to the formation of strong media coalitions.

Among the sample for this assessment, **Rwanda** seems not to have discernible coalitions working on promoting digital rights. It is difficult for CSOs and NGOs to serve as oversight groups due to the country's restricted political space for critical voices. As a result, it is difficult to identify any coalitions which advocate internet freedoms and digital rights. This point is buttressed by the 2022 Freedom House *Freedom on the Net* Report:

Digital activism on political and social issues is uncommon, despite the widespread availability of mobilisation tools; no social media campaigns that criticise the government have been noted in recent years. Rampant surveillance and SIM card registration requirements have made users fearful of using digital tools for political activism that challenges the government.²¹

Mozambique also has no media coalitions.²² Digital rights are pushed by global coalitions such as the A4AI Mozambique Multi-stakeholder Forum (which is part of a global platform) and to some extent, MISA-Mozambique.

Advocacy priorities and coalition building in East Africa

Overview: Content restrictions define the assault on digital rights in East Africa.

Like other sub-regions on the continent, East Africa is facing a myriad of challenges related to digital rights. Though governments in the region have made several positive changes in the digital environment promoting human rights and the adoption and use of digital technologies, they have not succeeded in fostering an atmosphere that and promotes the full enjoyment of online rights and freedoms, particularly freedom of expression. Across the

¹⁹ #KeepItOnCoalition has stated the rate of Internet Shutdowns is growing at a staggering rate on the continent and "they're lasting longer, targeting specific populations, and are being wielded when people need a connection the most — including during humanitarian crises, mass protests, and active conflict and war". (<https://www.accessnow.org/internet-shutdowns-2022/>)

²⁰ African union- Resolution on the need to undertake a Study on human and peoples' rights and artificial intelligence (AI), robotics and other new and emerging technologies in Africa - ACHPR/Res. 473 (EXT.OS/ XXXI) 2021. Retrieved at <https://achpr.au.int/en/adopted-resolutions/473-resolution-need-undertake-study-human-and-peoples-rights-and-art>

region, there have been numerous violations of the rights to free expression, access to information, privacy, and data protection through, *inter alia*, covert state surveillance, internet shutdowns, online speech control and social media taxation. Content restrictions have been a particular trend in East Africa. The main advocacy issues identified in the countries under study by the assessment include:

Online content regulation and restrictions

Content restrictions and censorship are becoming an increasingly big challenge in the countries under study in this assessment. In 2018, the government in **Tanzania** signed into law regulations that would govern social media use and blogging - The Electronic and Postal Communications Regulations, which required online content creators – traditional media websites, online TV and radio channels, but also individual bloggers and podcasters to pay registration and licensing fees. In 2020 the regulations were amended and broadened the definition of prohibited online content, have recently been implemented and have reduced the deadline that platforms must delete such content from twelve hours to two hours. The Amended Online Content Regulations change the categories of licences. Mainstream media licensees are exonerated from obtaining licences, Internet café operators have been relieved from certain obligations and licence fees have been reduced.²³ Regarding licencing, the Amendments eliminate the four categories of license included in the old Regulations and replace them with two.²⁴

The 2015 Cybercrime Act, though it protects the citizens against a range of cybercrimes, also oversteps the boundary and is draconian in many respects. The law grants police broad power to search suspects' residences, seize their computer equipment, and demand their data from online service providers. In **Uganda** and **Kenya**, the computer misuse laws have been used to prosecute governments critics. In **Rwanda**, the government restricts the types of online content people can access, especially content that deviates from the government's official narrative. The government announced in 2019 its intention to regulate social media on the grounds of protecting citizens against misinformation.²⁵

Internet shutdowns

Uganda ordered an internet shutdown on the eve of the presidential elections in January 2021. Even today, Facebook is still restricted in the country. The same shutdown happened in the 2016 elections. In **Tanzania** the communications regulatory authority suspended bulk SMS for over two weeks ahead of the national elections in October 2020. Clubhouse and, at one point, Twitter Spaces were also blocked in Tanzania. The regulator also declared in late 2023 that using VPNs was prohibited and that anyone wishing to use one would need to apply or special request for authorisation. **Somalia** has faced many internet shutdowns over the past decade. Authorities often order shutdowns and platform blocks citing concerns about the spread of misinformation and incitement to violence as justification. Despite rampant spread of misinformation online during elections in **Kenya**, the government does not however have a history of shutdowns.

Censorship and surveillance

Covid-19 related censorship and surveillance practices were introduced in **Kenya**, **Tanzania** and **Uganda** and had an impact on digital rights, including the right to freedom of expression, access to information, and privacy. Governments utilised new COVID-19 surveillance laws and practices, including digital contact tracing, to supplement existing methods of surveillance like closed-circuit television (CCTV) and communications surveillance (monitoring of mobile phones using location data). In Uganda, using COVID-19, the government tightened already-existing restrictions on freedom of expression while implementing severe surveillance protocols. The Kenyan government installed an operational mass surveillance system, including CCTV cameras, with real-time facial and movement recognition capabilities, in public places. In **Rwanda**, the government has set up a security and surveillance system that limits freedom of expression. The law governing the interception of communications has widened the scope of the State security services' surveillance capabilities, allowing security agents to listen in on online conversations and keep tabs on those who may pose a threat to "public security".

²¹ Ibid.

²² This point was emphasized at the Regional Validation Workshop in Cape Town in November. Participants from Mozambique stated that they do not consider MISA-Mozambique and FORCOM as coalitions. These are registered NGOs that operate as such.

Information disorder

There is growing trend of state sponsored misinformation and disinformation, mainly in **Kenya, Somalia** and **Uganda**. This is a major concern especially around elections. Governments have used influencers to harass opponents online. Additionally, politicians are utilising social media to launch disinformation operations against their rivals. Below is an example from Kenya.

During the run-up to the 2022 election, we were actually grappling with a lot of misinformation and disinformation on different online platforms, whereby you find this information that is being peddled by a specific candidate, about specific candidates, or even about specific people who are standing for elections, that is not true. And yet, there were no adequate frameworks on how to comprehensively deal with this misinformation. (Kenya Digital Rights Defender)

This trend is evident throughout the region. Human rights activists in Somalia worry about the impact of state-sponsored disinformation on public opinion. As one of them explained:

I'm more concerned of disinformation, misinformation brought by State authorities rather than misinformation, brought by individual persons of the society. This is what makes me more concerned because people tend to believe and consume information brought by State authorities rather than information or disinformation brought by individual persons.

There are insufficient frameworks for dealing with this misinformation and disinformation in a comprehensive manner. Although more fact-checking groups are emerging, much more work will be needed to stop the trend. There are very few attempts to regulate internet content without infringing on the rights to free expression and information. A coalition on content moderation was formed in Kenya recently with the support of UNESCO and Article 19, to help address concerns regarding content regulation. Although content restriction is a problem throughout the region, this initiative is intended to serve as a useful example that can be implemented in other places.

Table: Examples of coalition building

Nationally, the following coalitions and other groupings conduct some advocacy on net freedoms and digital rights:

EAST AFRICA		
Country	Coalitions	Explanation
Kenya	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kenya ICT Action Network (KICTANet) Bloggers Association of Kenya (BAKE) Kenya Editors Guild, Kenya Correspondents Association, Association of Media Women in Kenya (AMWIK) 	<p>KICTANet and BAKE use research, lobbying, and public awareness programmes. KICTANet mainly uses the strategy of submissions and policy briefs to call out digital rights violations and these are sent to engagement partners, policymakers, and policy implementers. There is limited use of strategic litigation as strategies for advocacy. For example, two weeks after the passage of the Computer Misuse and Cyber Crimes Act in 2018, BAKE filed Constitutional Petition No. 206 of 2018 to challenge the constitutionality of the Act on the grounds that it violated, infringed upon, and threatened the fundamental liberties guaranteed by the Bill of Rights in the Constitution of Kenya, 2010.¹</p>
Rwanda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Civil Society Coalition of Rwanda 	<p>Donors and international NGOs seem to be more active in the nation's digital agenda than local CSOs. Civil Society Coalition of Rwanda combines human rights, media and nonmedia groups such as legal support associations under their umbrella but plays a limited role in advocating for digital rights.</p>

Somalia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Somali Media Association (SOMA) • Somali Independent Media Houses Association (SIMHA) • Somali Women Journalists Organisation (SWJO) • Media Association of Puntland (MAP) • Media Women Network (MWN) • Federation of Somali Journalists (FESOJ) • Somali Journalists Syndicate (SJS). 	Coalitions that are formed now include Somalia Mechanism for the Safety of the Journalists (SMSJ), which is the largest and most effective until now. SMSJ was created by seven local organisations - Somali Media Association (SOMA), Somali Independent Media Houses Association (SIMHA), Somali Women Journalists Organisation (SWJO), Media Association of Puntland (MAP), Media Women Network (MWN), Federation of Somali Journalists (FESOJ), and Somali Journalists Syndicate (SJS). Its formation was supported by IMS to facilitate the united voices of media CSOs.
Tanzania	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coalition on Right to Information (CoRI) • Tanzania Digital Rights Coalition. 	CoRI essentially focuses on broad media reforms. It uses knowledge-sharing, engaging Parliament, strategic litigation as advocacy strategies. The coalition does little around digital rights. The Tanzania Digital Rights Coalition is new and was formed in late 2022. It works on issues such as privacy and data protection.
Uganda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women of Uganda Network (WOUGNET) 	Digital activism in Uganda often happens online through hashtags. Citizens and digital activists use social media platforms, especially Twitter, to mobilise people against repressive laws and practices that impinge on digital rights. Some of these online campaigns have been successful. For example, an online campaign against the social media tax was that was partially successful. ⁴ WOUGNET and other NGOs such as Unwanted Witness use knowledge-sharing, engagement with Parliament research & capacity building to advocate for digital rights. Strategic litigation is also used in some cases. ⁵

Advocacy priorities and coalition building in Southern Africa

Overview: Cybercrime and security laws dominate debates on digital rights

Digital rights are far from being fully embraced in southern Africa. Restrictive laws governing media such as cyber security laws in **Zambia, Zimbabwe, Eswatini** and **Angola** often contribute to stifling the media landscape. Most of these laws permit law enforcement and security officials to intercept communications in the execution of their duties. Digital surveillance is also growing, thanks to Chinese supplied technology, especially in Zambia and Zimbabwe. Like in other regions, misinformation, and disinformation, mainly state-sponsored, is rife, especially during elections. Based on this context, the following are the key advocacy priorities being pursued by media coalitions in the sub-region:

²³ FB Attorneys () Legal Update – 6 April 2022: Online Content Regulations Overhauled. Retrieved at <https://fbattorneys.co.tz/online-content-regulations-overhauled/>

²⁴ There were previously four different types of online content licenses: news, education, religious, and entertainment. The categories in the Amendments have been whittled down to just two: Online Media Services Category A, which covers online content services and Online Media Services Category B, which includes content aggregation (<https://fbattorneys.co.tz/online-content-regulations-overhauled/>)

²⁵ Rwanda: Freedom on the Net 2022. Retrieved at <https://freedomhouse.org/country/rwanda/freedom-net/2022>

Interception of communications and cybersecurity

Across the sub-region, governments have introduced cyber-security laws, some have been gazetted, and others are awaiting to be enacted. A MISA-Zimbabwe report on Cybersecurity laws in the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) region points to three problematic areas with these laws. First, some clauses in these laws infringe on the right to privacy and freedom of expression. Second, although most of these laws were modelled after international, regional, and subregional model laws and other human rights agreements, they still contain problematic clauses, especially in relation to interception of communication and data protection. Third is there is deep-seated fear that existing and new legislation are already being used for surveillance.²⁶ Additionally, cybercrime laws are frequently vague and lack the necessary safeguards.

Digital surveillance

Like elsewhere on the continent, digital activists are concerned about the growing trend of state surveillance in the sub-region. Surveillance practices range from SIM registration, interception of communications and biometric data collection to Smart City projects. The growth is aided by the Chinese government, which has advanced both the surveillance technology and “soft loans” for the purchase of surveillance technologies. Chinese telecom companies like Huawei, HikVision and CloudWalk are central in providing states with surveillance technologies like CCTV cameras and facial recognition technologies. For instance, **Angola, Zambia and Zimbabwe** have in recent years unveiled state of the art Chinese-built national data centres. In **Angola**, a law that permits law enforcement to conduct electronic surveillance and location tracking with minimal oversight and in a wide range of circumstances came into force in May 2020. Although it prohibits surveillance on political grounds based on discriminatory motivation, the law has raised concerns that it merely provides legal coverage for existing surveillance practices with little or no oversight.

Surveillance has a chilling effect on the work of journalists. KII in **Angola and Mozambique** noted that journalists and the heads of media organisations in these countries frequently receive threatening text messages on their mobile devices and are the targets of trolling assaults that falsely accuse them of being adulterers and child molesters. Russian trolls are believed to be prevalent in Mozambique, spreading disinformation via social media and television news, and some are known to operate as bloggers. One KII in Mozambique stated:

There is awareness that governments in the region employ spyware to access individuals’ digital data. Though never officially acknowledged, the suspicious usage of these tools, possibly originating from China or Israel, extends beyond any regulatory framework. The Pegasus scandal is a revealing instance of these practices.

In **Zimbabwe**, surveillance is increasingly being driven by the military to monitor activities of opposition politicians, NGOs and citizens. The Zimbabwe Defence Force’s (ZDF) capabilities have grown in both public space and cyber-communication surveillance.²⁷ In **Zambia**, there are fears that the Smart City project implemented in 2015 with Chinese fundings and technical assistance, is used as a cover for surveillance.²⁸

Internet shutdowns

Internet shutdowns are not common in the sub-region. Only two countries have shown tendencies for internet shutdowns, broadly defined – Zambia and Zimbabwe. In **Zambia**, the then government intentionally blocked access to social media platforms — including WhatsApp, Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook — during the country’s presidential election in 2021; a new government is now in place. **Zimbabwe** has responded to protests and major political events with internet shutdowns. To quell public outrage over rising fuel prices, the Zimbabwean government cut off the internet for three days in January 2019. The authorities ordered another shutdown in July 2020. In **Eswatini** during the July 2021 citizens protests, the major mobile phone companies Eswatini Post and Telecommunications, Eswatini MTN and Eswatini Mobile received a directive from the Eswatini Communications Commission to suspend access to social media and online platforms. In **Angola**, perhaps except for the website of Raphael Marques de Morais,²⁹ which has been hacked, slowed down, and subjected to attacks, the government has not yet blocked access to online content. Although the trend of internet shutdowns is not prevalent in the sub-region, KIIs and FDGs pointed out that this as a looming threat that needs adequate collective responses.

²⁶ Promoting best practice among activists for more effective collaboration in digital rights litigation in Kenya: A Case Study of the Bloggers Association of Kenya (BAKE) versus Hon. Attorney General & Three Others: Petition No. 206 of 2018. Retrieved at <https://cipesa.org/wp-content/files/documents/A-Case-Study-of-the-Bloggers-Association-of-Kenya-BAKE-versus-Hon.-Attorney-General-Three-Others.pdf>

²⁷ CIPESA supports these three organisations – Digital Shelter, Somaliland Journalists Association and Women in Media Somalia through the Africa Digital Rights Fund

²⁸ Bareedo Somalia is a non-governmental and non-profit youth-led organization based in Somalia and dedicated for promotion of participatory democracy and digital rights.

SOUTHERN AFRICA		
Country	Coalitions	Explanation
Angola	Sindicato dos Jornalistas Angolanos or Angolan Journalist Union	The Angolan Journalists Union does limited lobbying on digital rights, especially on issues of digital surveillance and cyber-security. Digital rights lobbying and activism are limited in Angola because of the country's oppressive political climate. Citizens have turned to social media to protest rights' abuses. Campaigns and protests are commonly organised through social media and messaging services like Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp. Under the more oppressive rule of the former president, activist groups started using online venues to criticise and organise. An activist group called Central Angola 7311 was established in 2011 by protesters who were active on social media and provided a forum for discussion and documenting human rights abuses. Online campaigns are led by the youth.
Eswatini	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Media Consortium Coordinating Council of NGOs (CANGO) 	Hashtag activism is a powerful mobilisation tool in Eswatini. Digital activism has taken several forms, including emails, social media posts, chain messages, and online petitions. The main coalition, the Media Consortium, is a group of eight media bodies affiliated to the Coordinating Council of NGOs (CANGO) which advocates for media freedom and amplifies the voice of media practitioners. It doesn't appear to have a strategy of action for defending digital rights. For instance, the application to oppose the internet shutdown in the country was filed by Melusi Simelane, with the support of the Southern Africa Litigation Centre ⁶
Mozambique	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A4AI Mozambique Multi-stakeholder Forum (global coalition) MISA-Mozambique 	Mozambique does not appear to have any significant online restrictions on freedom of expression. However, the Cabo Delgado insurgency and the Covid-19 State of Emergency have created fear of possibility of content regulation on digital platforms. In 2019, the government amended the Penal Code that criminalises all types of invasions of privacy via mobile phones, as well as the publication of images or videos without authorisation by the people recorded or photographed. While media organisations have engaged in actions to safeguard freedom of expression and of the media, there are no discernible digital rights advocacy initiatives in the country. This is because Mozambique has no media coalitions.
Zambia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bloggers of Zambia Civil Society Coalition on Digital Rights MISA-Zambia Internet Governance Forum-Zambia Zambia Media Liaison Committee People's Action for Accountability and Good Governance in Zambia Alliance for Community Action 	<p>Media Coalitions have been vocal in raising concerns over broad digital rights issues, such as those related to the cyber security and cybercrimes legislation. In 2017 these organisations came together under #OpenSpaceZM campaign to challenge three deep concerns over the three cybercrime bills; the Cyber Security and Cybercrime Bill, the Data Protection Bill, and the Electronic Commerce and Transaction Bill that aimed to regulate the online/digital space in. These same groups filed a court petition in the High Court of Zambia to challenge the Cybersecurity and Cybercrime who argued that the law's provisions threaten the right to protection of the law and the right to freedom of expression.</p> <p>Coalitions use a mixture of online campaigns, research, engaging Parliament, court petitions as advocacy strategies.</p>
Zimbabwe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Media Alliance of Zimbabwe (MAZ) MISA-Zimbabwe Zimbabwe Online Content Creators Magamba Network Matebeleland Media Coalition 	Traditional media coalitions use research, knowledge-sharing, lobbying parliament, campaigns and online petitions as advocacy strategies. New coalitions such as Magamba Network, Zimbabwe Online Content Creators and Matabeleland Media Coalition use creative forms of activism to open democratic spaces and promote freedom of expression

Advocacy priorities and coalition building in West Africa

Overview: Social media taxation and manipulation of social media by the state are becoming concerns in the sub-region.

The region is facing declining digital freedoms. Nigeria has introduced several laws that limit net freedoms. Social media taxes are also being introduced in the region. Since 2018, several other countries in the region have initiated efforts to tax internet or social media usage. Internet shutdowns are also rife in the region and have been instituted across many countries. State-sponsored misinformation and disinformation is becoming sophisticated and undermining democracy. Independent researchers and fact-checkers are beginning to emerge all throughout the region to monitor and limit disinformation from spreading. Advocacy priorities pursued by media coalitions and NGOs are shaped by this context.

Information disorders

West Africa's use of the internet and social media is growing, and with it the proliferation of misinformation and disinformation. This is made worse by limited regulatory presence of global tech platforms in the sub-region. Platforms are failing to apply their own standards or properly moderate content. The information ecosystem in West Africa is composed of overlaps between traditional media, social media and word of mouth and these reinforce each other in complex ways that breed misinformation and disinformation. Fake news in the sub-region is often centred on ethnic and religious identity.³⁰ KIIls and FDGs also pointed out governments' use of social media to spread disinformation to sway public opinion, especially during elections in **Burkina Faso, Nigeria and Ghana**. The challenging political situations in Burkina Faso, along with the Covid-19 pandemic, have fuelled the spread of hateful conspiracy theories both online and offline. Internet penetration has increased and social media, especially Facebook, is popular. KIIls pointed out that the military government has taken advantage of social media to finance misinformation community hubs to propagate propaganda. Research has shown that Nigeria is active in online manipulation and spreading of misinformation on social media.

Social media taxes

Social media taxes are also being introduced in the region. Since 2018, several other countries in the region have initiated efforts to tax internet or social media usage. Countries outside this assessment, Benin³¹ and Cameroon,³² along with **Nigeria**, have gone this route. Nigeria reintroduced the Communication Service Tax Bill in 2019, which had previously failed to pass the National Assembly due to opposition from stakeholders, but which has now successfully passed the first reading. The Bill would require consumers to pay a nine percent tax on voice calls, data consumption, SMS, MMS, and Pay-TV, with serious consequences for internet access throughout the country.

Internet shutdowns

Internet shutdowns are increasing in West Africa.³³ The government in **Burkina Faso** repeatedly shut down mobile internet between November 2021 and the January 2022 coup to address what it called "misinformation" and suppress escalating dissent. It was a very unpopular attempt to stop this widely used weapon for mobilising the masses. In 2021, the governments of **Nigeria** acted in what was clearly retaliation against social media platforms that had deleted posts by officials or their supporters. Following the platforms' removal of these posts due to their violation of the terms of service, government officials completely barred Twitter for a whole seven months. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Court of Justice declared the shutdown to be 'unlawful and inconsistent with the country's international obligations' and ordered the government 'to ensure the unlawful suspension would not reoccur.'³⁴ Between January and June 2023, **Senegal** experienced three internet disruptions on the grounds that people were spreading 'hateful and subversive' messages on social media platforms. In 2019, following anti-corruption protests the government, authorities in **Liberia** restricted access to popular social media platforms including X (formerly Twitter), Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, and WhatsApp across the country.

Regulation of Big Tech

Technology corporations are making significant investments in Africa, but many digital rights advocates and governments in the subregion are concerned about their inadequate record on disinformation and privacy. Additionally, they are accused of undermining democracy. Those interviewed for this assessment noted that out that this is a

²⁹ Digital rights activists mounted an online campaign against the social media tax requiring users of WhatsApp, Twitter, and Facebook, among other sites, to pay a daily fee of 200 Ugandan Shillings (US\$0.05) that had been in force since 2018 caused the government to scrap it but replaced it with a 12 percent tax on internet data.

³⁰ In January 2023, the constitutional court nullified section 25 of the Computer Misuse (Amendment) Act which imposed prison terms of up to a year for anyone using electronic communication to disturb the peace. This followed the Uganda Law Society and activists petitioning the court (see <https://cipesa.org/2023/01/a-section-of-ugandas-computer-misuse-act-outlawed-but-the-greater-part-of-the-law-remains-thorny/>)

contentious topic in West Africa, and this was pointed out as a fertile issue for advocacy.

WEST AFRICA		
Country	Coalitions	
Burkina Faso	No coalitions dedicated to digital rights.	Since the coup in 2021, Burkina Faso's civic space has been severely constrained. Little is done in the area of digital rights activism because of the closed space.
Ghana	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ghana Journalists Association • The Association of Women in the Media 	Digital activism is prevalent in Ghana, but there is little coordinated activism and lobbying around digital rights. The Media Foundation for West Africa sometimes works with local media associations to advocate for digital rights, and media associations join in these efforts. For instance, to deal with disinformation and misinformation FactCheck Ghana, a project of the Media Foundation for West Africa, is working with media associations.
Liberia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Voices Liberia • Press Union of Liberia • Liberia Women Media Action Committee • Female Journalists Association of Liberia, the Center for Media Studies and Peace Building (CEMESP) 	<p>Local Voices Liberia is a network of Liberian journalists established in 2015 and it was set up to counter the spread of dis/misinformation during the Ebola pandemic and encourage responsible health journalism, but it has expanded to deal with disinformation in other areas as well through the iVerify platform.</p> <p>The Press Union of Liberia has worked on data protection law. The Union and its partners have been holding consultations for the drafting of a data protection The process has been joined by a diverse group and interests. expected to be tabled in parliament in January 2024.</p> <p>The other media associations and other rights-based coalitions such Liberia Coalition for Human Rights Defenders and the Liberia Civil Society Activity don't appear to be involved in digital rights advocacy initiatives.</p>
Nigeria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nigerian Fact-Checkers' Coalition • A4AI-Nigeria (global) 	<p>National organisations and coalitions such as the Media Rights Agenda and Nigerian Fact-Checkers' Coalition have been effective at raising awareness on digital rights issues, but most of the lobbying and advocacy on digital rights is conducted by external or regional actors such as Media Foundation for West Africa, Paradigm Initiative, #KeepItOn and Credibility Coalition.</p> <p>Media Rights Agenda has lobbied against the problematic aspects of the Protection from Internet Falsehood and Manipulation Bill, 2019; the Prohibition of, Hate Speech Bill and the Data Protection Bill, which restrict freedom of speech online.</p> <p>Hashtag activism is also prevalent in Nigeria. Campaigns such as #BringBackOurGirls, #NotTooYoungToRun and #EndSars signify some of the most notable citizen advocacy campaigns. The surge in internet usage in Nigeria has boosted civic participation, advocacy, and mobilisation online.</p>

Senegal	□ Jonction	The main advocacy group, JONCTION, has focused its efforts on fighting misinformation and disinformation. There is little comprehensive and organised advocacy on digital rights. There are also no known media coalitions fighting for net freedoms.
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1.2 Thematic area 2: Public interest journalism

Continental context

Across the continent, public interest journalism is steadily declining. This reduction can be attributed to several factors, but the primary one is lack of resources. Donor funding in this sector has decreased along with the organisations that promote public interest journalism. Newsrooms across the world but also in Sub-Saharan Africa are feeling the ripple effect of inadequate funding. The majority no longer allocate resources for public interest journalism, opting instead to focus on less expensive newsbeats. External disruptions have also impacted public interest journalism. For instance, legacy media now compete with social media platforms for news production and distribution. Artificially driven technologies are also disrupting traditional public interest journalism. Research on AI and the opportunities it offers in newsrooms is still very nascent.³⁵ What exists are scoping studies that attempt to understand the degree to which AI has been appropriated in newsrooms. And there is evidence³⁶ that newsrooms are fast adopting AI and utilising it in news production. However, there is a need for more research on whether this adoption of AI technologies in news production is equally balanced across geographical regions and mediums (i.e. radio, television and newspapers). Of course, AI technologies allow for quicker dissemination, and more focused and customised news. But its potential for promoting democracy in the African context is not yet well understood.

In recent years, several digital platforms that practice public interest journalism have emerged across the continent to complement the existing efforts of mainstream journalism institutions. For example, Econai+ (Nigeria) and Oxpecker in Southern Africa are known for coverage of the environment. Other digital platforms that have become mainstream as public interest journalism platforms include HumAngle in West Africa, OpenParly Nigeria and OpenParly (Zimbabwe).

Digital start-ups are becoming essential in promoting public interest journalism. Digital start-ups are emerging as innovative solutions to the challenges that legacy media is confronting, such as changing consumption patterns and decreasing advertising revenues. They contribute to public interest journalism in several ways. For example, they can cover issues that the mainstream media might miss by specializing in a particular area. They can also use digital technology to engage audiences in novel ways and make complex subjects accessible. Finally, they may leverage technology to enhance investigative reporting by using tools like artificial intelligence, data analysis, and other tools. There is limited coalition-building in this important area. The IMS has worked with youth content producers and linked youth groups such as Magamba Network in Zimbabwe with like-minded groups in Somalia, Nigeria and Zambia, but arguably, given the extensive benefits associated with public interest journalism, much more needs to be done in this area.

Overview of coalition-building

The existing efforts in the three sub-regions across the continent are insufficient to protect public interest journalism. These efforts can be categorised into three groups. The first efforts to defend public interest journalism are led by journalists' unions and associations. The drawback here is that these unions focus on almost everything else, leaving public interest journalism fighting for attention in the maze of other issues to be addressed. The second effort to protect public interest journalism is newsroom-centric. This is an uncoordinated approach to defend public interest journalism by individuals or a coalition of newsrooms. This often happens when a specific issue is under investigation. Therefore, it is not a long-term effort nor a sustainable one. The third approach has been an attempt to help defend public interest journalism in Africa by global coalitions. The three regions are home to multiple investigative journalism projects. Although there are a few journalist unions collaborating with international journalistic coalitions like the International Consortium for Investigative Journalism (ICIJ), the Global Investigative Journalism Network (GIJN), the International

³¹ MISA-Zimbabwe (2021) *Cybersecurity and Cybercrime Laws in the SADC Region: Implications on Human Rights*. Retrieved at <https://data.misa.org/api/files/1634498575242w6kap89lsf8.pdf>

³² Allen Munoriyarwa (2021) *The growth of military-driven surveillance in post-2000 Zimbabwe*. Johannesburg: University of Johannesburg & UNISA

³³ Sarah Chiumbu (2021) *Chinese Digital Infrastructure, Smart Cities and Surveillance in Zambia*. Johannesburg: University of Johannesburg & UNISA

Federation of Journalists (IFJ), and the International Investigative Journalism Hub (IJHUB), there aren't many cross-border investigative journalism collaborations on the continent. There are also regional and continental efforts to improve public interest journalism that focus on female journalists. For example, Africa Women Journalism Project (AWJP), a network of female journalists and data analysts that has teamed up to produce data-driven coverage of underreported health, gender, and economic issues.

Public interest journalism is reduced to emphasis on investigative journalism at the expense of other issues, such as digital content creation, the impact of AI on public interest journalism, the profound changes in news distribution and consumption and erosion of local journalism. These issues are not on the top agenda of coalitions.

UNESCO has in 2022 added 'information' to the list of public goods following the adoption of the *Windhoek+30 Declaration: Information as a Public Good* adopted in 2021. Since journalism is vital to the development of informed and engaged citizenry, which is necessary for the proper functioning of a democratic society, it is seen as a public good. There is no sense that media coalitions are using this declaration to organise collective action to respond to issues that threaten independent journalism and public interest media.

The difficulties of coalition-building around public interest journalism could be due to the fact there seems to be no single framework and definition of what would constitute public interest journalism. A coalition on public interest journalism would be constituted by many actors acting in the interest of the public such as journalists, freedom of expression/media freedom organisations, public interest organisations and researchers.

Advocacy priorities and coalition building in East Africa

Overview: The state of public interest journalism is declining as media struggle financially

Media sustainability and viability

Traditional media institutions have been known to be the central conduits of public interest journalism. The push in the African Charter on Broadcasting to reform state broadcasters into public broadcasters was because of the opportunity this presented to provide public interest content to a broad selection of the population on the continent.

In most countries in East Africa, the question of the sustainability of legacy media is an urgent advocacy priority. The media is under pressure, and this is manifested in declining advertising, which has led to declining revenues. Big tech platforms now draw much advertising revenue away from mainstream journalism institutions that traditionally support public interest journalism. One KII stated:

The market cannot really support journalism the way it used to do. Partly because now the advertising money is spread thin [so] that everybody [is] scrambling for a small piece of the pie. So legacy media suffers because it's so heavily invested in infrastructure and personnel, so you find that media is suffering all across the board. (Media Development Executive, Uganda)

A FDG participant from **Tanzania** explained, "You know, you are in a position where advertising revenue is declining every year, maybe at the annual rate of 20%, losing ads every day to Google and Facebook and you are not investing on alternative sourcing of income."

Declining revenues have impacted on the already poor working conditions for journalists. This issue cuts across the five East African countries in this study. These conditions undermine journalism and expose journalists to the "brown envelope" phenomenon. The newsrooms are youthful because seasoned journalists have been let go since the media cannot afford to keep them and frequently does not replace them. Many of these young journalists, often engaged as interns, are not experienced, and do not have skills to conduct quality public interest journalism.

Self-censorship and media concentration

FDGs also pointed to self-censorship and concentration of ownership as threats to public interest journalism. In **Rwanda, Somalia, Tanzania** and **Uganda**, particularly, self-censorship is prevalent. Political harassment, and concentrated ownership contribute to self-censorship. Examples of concentrated ownership include the Nation Media Group which owns several media entities in East Africa. Many political figures have shares in media houses and the media find it prudent to align with government views.

Repressive laws

Restrictive media laws are crippling public interest journalism in several countries in the sub-region. In **Rwanda**, the revised penal code of 2018 criminalises defamation against the president and imposes a 5–7-year jail sentence for this offence. The country also has a law that criminalises publication of edited statements and images. In **Uganda**, the anti-gay law passed in 2022, restricts how journalists can report in the public interest around LGBTQ+1 people. Additionally, a plethora of legislations that carry ‘anti-media clauses’ have shrunk the media space for journalists to practice public interest journalism. Cybercrime laws in Tanzania are misapplied to restrict journalistic freedom as noted by one FDG in Tanzania:

If you use counterfeit software and you’re doing investigative journalism, they won’t say, okay, your story was bad. They would come and take your machine because the cybercrimes act allows that, they’ll take your desktop if they find that you’re using cracked software for editing your videos and your podcast.

East Africa		
Country	Coalitions and other groupings	Explanation
Kenya	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kenya Union of Journalists Kenyan Media Sector Working Group Association of Media Women in Kenya Kenya Editors’ Guild Kenya Environment & Science Journalists Association Kenya Parliamentary Journalists’ Association 	Media associations limit their focus on the working conditions of journalists and media sustainability. International organisations such as Freedom House, IJHUB, IFJ and GIJN are involved in projects that support public interest journalism.
Rwanda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rwanda Journalists Association Association of Rwandese Female Journalists [ARFEM] Rwanda Association of Science Journalists (RASJ) 	The Rwanda Journalists Association (ARJ) often collaborates with International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) to promote public interest journalism through capacity building activities. Fojo Media Institute is also implementing a programme to strengthen independent and public interest journalism in the country
Somalia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federation of Somali Journalists Somali Women Journalists Organisation Media Women Network Somali Coalition for Freedom of Expression Media Association Puntland Somaliland Journalists Association Somali Journalists Syndicate Somali Mechanism for Safety of Journalists 	<p>Somalia has a plethora of media and journalists’ associations, some of which are well supported by funders. As a result, they have been able to engage with pressing issues affecting journalism practice, but more could be done on public interest journalism.</p> <p>SMSJ and its member organisations SOMA, SIMHA, MAP, SWJO, SJS, MWN and FESOJ lead efforts to defend press freedom and public interest journalism in Somalia. SMSJ has been attempting to engage with authorities to defend the independence of the media. IMS has been supporting SMSJ coalition to support media freedom and promote public interest journalism.</p> <p>The Somali Media Association promotes collaborative content sharing of public interest radio content by its members.</p>
Tanzania	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Union of Tanzania Press Clubs Tanzania Media Women Association Journalist Workers Union of Tanzania (JOWUTA) TADIO, (the community radio network) Tanzania Editors Forum, Tanzania Media Foundation Media Council of Tanzania. 	<p>NGOs such as MISA-Tanzania and Tanzania Media Foundation (TMF)⁷ run programmes on promoting quality journalism. TMF runs a programme on Media For Public Good, promoting public interest journalism that includes voices from rural and marginalized communities.</p> <p>Emerging issues affecting public interest journalism such as media capture, viability and sustainability due to a steep decline in advertising and the impact of Big Tech are not adequately addressed by media coalitions.</p>

Uganda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Uganda Journalists Union (UJU) • Uganda Media Sector Working Group (UMSWG) • African Centre for Media Excellence • Human Rights Journalists Network • Citizens Coalition for Independent Media 	<p>The media in Uganda has come under stress from different angles. Journalists' coalitions are doing some good around promoting journalistic freedom and integrity. Public interest journalism is thriving in some quarters and the African Centre for Media Excellence and Centre for Investigative Journalism in Uganda (CIJU) has contributed to some good investigative journalism. However, coalition building on public interest journalism is still weak.</p>
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Advocacy priorities and coalition building in Southern Africa

Overview: Media in the region has been captured by political interests.

Media sustainability and viability

Despite being brought up during the assessment, there aren't many media coalitions in the sub-region that consistently address the topic of media sustainability. Key media institutions are struggling to remain viable in southern Africa. The impact of big tech in news production processes and the attrition of advertisers has been keenly felt in the region. For example, in **Zimbabwe**, key privately owned media institutions have started to lay off long serving journalists. This is also true in **Eswatini** where most newspapers have migrated online. Regional newspapers are concerned that the tech giants are using their information for free at a time when they are trying to figure out how to charge for its use. Editors believe that to address the issue, government involvement and multi-stakeholder activities are necessary. One editor from Zimbabwe stated:

With the rapid increase in technology and the social media platforms creeping into funding media, I think the landscape for journalists would need to be redefined not only to redefine what journalism is, but who's putting money into journalism and how independent newsrooms can survive in a world where big tech companies are now essentially cannibals.

Journalists in the region are also generally poorly remunerated and their working conditions are poor. There is a correlation between a lack of media sustainability and a deterioration in journalistic standards and ethical application. Financial challenges are forcing media houses to cut down costs, which may have an adverse effect on the quality of journalism. Fact-checking, investigative reporting, and general editorial oversight may suffer because of cost-cutting. In the region, audience trust in the media is eroding due to perceived poor standards of journalism. Media polarisation exacerbates already low levels of trust by creating contradictions and confusion.

Newspapers in the region have tried to implement paywalls to sustain their newsrooms, but they haven't really succeeded in nations like Zimbabwe and **Zambia** since people there aren't ready to pay for information online yet. However, in **Mozambique** and **Angola**, these efforts have had some success.

Information disorder

Linked to the above is the issue of mis/disinformation. Declining standards of reporting is believed to be one of the key drivers of disinformation and misinformation from the citizens. But like in the other regions, there is also an increase in state-sponsored disinformation, especially during elections. Fact-checking organisations are proliferating in the sub-region. Zambia has several fact-checking initiatives such as iVerify, FactCheck Zambia and the Alliance for Community Action Fact Checking Unit.

Investigative journalism

Public interest journalism has been confined to investigative journalism, to the neglect of other aspects. The sub-region has seen a proliferation of investigative journalism organisations such as Newshawk in **Zimbabwe**, Centre for Public and Centre for Investigative Journalism in **Mozambique**, Free Press Initiative in **Zambia**, and Inhlase Centre for Investigative Journalism in Eswatini. Outside the assessment countries, there is Amabhungane in South Africa; Centre for Investigative Journalism Malawi (CIJM), the Namibian Investigative Unit and the MNN Centre for Investigative Journalism in Lesotho.

Climate change reporting is prioritised by the journalists' investigative centres in the region and emerging youth-based coalitions such as Ecological Youth Forum of Angola and Tertiary Hub of Eswatini. In Mozambique, the Centre for Public Integrity has revolutionised the way environmental issues and corruption in the sector are reported.

Alternative content creation

There is a growth of digital start-ups and content creators who are contributing to the formation of public opinion in the region; amongst the countries in the study, this has mainly been seen in Zambia and Zimbabwe. Magamba Network, Matebeleland Media Coalition and Zimbabwe Content Creators Association in Zimbabwe and Zambia Bloggers Association in Zambia are promoting a variety of online content creators. These digital start-ups bring fresh perspectives and innovative storytelling techniques to journalism. Some media coalitions refer to online content creation platforms, as "investigative centres." One KII in Zimbabwe noted *'They are conducting deep investigations and breaking news that would not have been reported by the mainstream media.'* For example, the story of COVID funds abuse in Zimbabwe was broken by one of these online information platforms. Journalists in the mainstream media in Eswatini state that they forward stories they are not permitted to report to bloggers and journalists in the online media not residing in the country, who they characterise as courageous. However, there are concerns in certain nations, including Zambia, that some of the best content creators are being used by governments to write false stories. It noted in interviews with Zimbabwean members of MAZ that to prevent these content creation platforms from being captured by state or commercial interests, media coalitions should be discussing how to create a business model for them.

SOUTHERN AFRICA		
Country	Coalitions	Explanation
Angola	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Angolan Journalists' Syndicate 	The Angolan Journalists' Syndicate seems to be an all-rounder coalition fighting for media freedom rights across the board. It is also active in fighting for journalists' rights and working conditions, but it doesn't have an organised programme to directly promote public interest journalism.
Eswatini	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Media Consortium CANGO Eswatini Editors' Forum Tertiary Hub 	There are no significant discernible coalition-building efforts to directly promote public interest journalism. There are ad-hoc activities here and there. The Media Consortium (under CANGO) fights for media freedom and journalistic integrity on different occasions. There are embryonic efforts by the Tertiary Hub, a youth-focused network to promote reporting on neglected issues affecting young tertiary students.
Mozambique	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MISA-Mozambique Forcom Public Integrity Centre Luis Nhachote Centre of Investigative Journalism 	There are no coalitions advocating for public interest journalism. This is done indirectly through MISA-Mozambique, its partners and investigative units such as Centre for Public Integrity and Luis Nhachote Centre for Investigative Journalism. Forcom supports local journalism through its networks of community radio, focusing on gender and child marriages.
Zambia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Media Liaison Committee Bloggers Association of Zambia Zambia Independent Media Association (ZIMA) Zambia Union of Journalists 	ZIMA, its partners and the Media Liaison Committee have several programmes that indirectly push for public interest journalism, but there are no discernible advocacy efforts by coalitions. Bloggers Association of Zambia supports independent online information curation.
Zimbabwe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Media Alliance of Zimbabwe MISA-Zimbabwe Matebeleland Media Coalition Zimbabwe Content Creators Association Zimbabwe Investigative Journalists Network (ZIIN) Zimbabwe Young Journalists Association 	The Matabeleland Media Coalition use public interest technology to push for regional and relevant news for Matebeland. MAZ though its several programmes support public interest journalism, but not in a systematic way. There are new coalitions such as the Zimbabwe Content Creators Association

Advocacy priorities and coalition building in West Africa

Overview: Pursuit of public interest journalism is on a decline due to the hostile government-media relationship and the fragile democracies in the sub-region

Threats to public interest journalists

The sub-region's fragile democracies and the antagonistic relationship between the government and media have led to a decline in the pursuit of public interest journalism in most of the countries in the sub-region. Several journalists have been killed or arrested in the region. For instance, Nigeria is one of the most dangerous and challenging countries in West Africa to work as a journalist, according to a 2023 Reporters Without Borders research.³⁷ In the coup countries of Burkina Faso, Togo and Mali, the persecution of journalists has increased significantly as coup leaders consolidate their grip on power.³⁸

Investigative journalism

There is much interest in investigative journalism in most of the countries in the sub-region, but because of the threats to journalists discussed above, most whistleblower protection organisations and public interest journalists frequently publish their work and exposés through foreign media, but seldom through local media. Cross-border collaborative journalism is increasing in West Africa. For instance, the CENOZO and the Centre for Investigative Journalism have partnered to enhance investigative journalism in the region. Public interest journalists feel protected by collaborative journalism since they can publish hard-hitting investigative stories with international media partners.

Fact checking

Media coalitions and advocacy organisations are pushing fact checking as a way of promoting and sustaining public interest journalism. Organisations such as Africa Check, FactCheck Ghana, The Stage Media (TSM) in Liberia, Dubawa, a fact-checking organisations with presence in Ghana, Nigeria, Liberia and Senegal, FasoCheck, a network of Fact Checkers in Burkina Faso have come up. The Nigerian Fact Checkers Coalition, a collaboration of 31 dedicated fact-checkers from more than 12 media platforms and civil society organizations in Nigeria is one of the first coalitions on fact checking in the region.

Media sustainability

Advocacy on media sustainability in the sub-region mainly focuses on working conditions of journalists. Journalists in the region are among the worst paid and this negatively impacts the development of quality journalism and in the long run affects public interest journalists. Many journalists rely on inducements like “soli,” which is industry jargon for a “solidarity”, payment news sources give to journalists in exchange for publicity. The poor working conditions have led to high turnover in newsrooms across region, threatening the sustainability of the media. Media and journalists' associations have been active in this area.

WEST AFRICA		
Country	Coalitions	Explanation
Burkina Faso	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CENOZO 	<p>CENOZO and the Centre for Investigative Journalism have partnered to enhance investigative journalism in Burkina Faso and also in the Sahel region.</p> <p>CENOZO has also supported its members in producing investigative articles about the effects of climate change.</p>
Ghana	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ghana Journalists Association Media Coalition against illegal Mining Editors Forum Ghana Dubawa 	<p>Media Foundation for West Africa carries most of the advocacy work around media sustainability and viability. Journalists' associations and the Editors Forum Ghana also engage with activities in this area. But largely there is little coalition-building on public interest journalism in Ghana. The Media Coalition Against Illegal Mining is an interesting case study for promoting socially responsive extractive practices.</p>
Liberia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Press Union of Liberia Female Journalists Association of Liberia Dubawa The Stage Media 	<p>The Press Union of Liberia is involved in all areas relating to working conditions of journalists, media sustainability and promoting ethical standards in journalism. But there is little coalition-building related directly to promoting public interest journalism.</p>

³⁴ Rafael Marques de Morais is a journalist and human rights defender in Angola. In 2009, he founded the watchdog website “Maka Angola,” dedicated to exposing corruption and human rights abuses in his country.

<p>Nigeria</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coalition for whistleblower protection and press freedom (CWPPF) • Coalition of Nigerian Journalists for Social Change • Nigerian Fact-Checkers' Coalition • The Nigeria Union of Journalist • Dubawa • Nigeria Association of Women Journalists 	<p>A lot of activities by coalitions in Nigeria on public interest journalism focus on investigative reporting on corruption and human rights abuses and protection of whistleblowers. The CWPPF also run Leaks.NG, a secure whistleblowing platform which allows citizens to share confidential information of public interest.</p> <p>Journalist associations are preoccupied with advocating for improved working conditions for journalists and media sustainability.</p>
<p>Senegal</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senegal Journalists Association • Senegal's Coordination of Press Association • The Network of Journalists on Climate Change • Dubawa 	<p>Media ownership in Senegal is highly concentrated and the media is politicised. Generally, the media promotes interactivity between citizens and authorities and tries to cover issues of public interest. The situation is rapidly changing due to recent political instability. There is no discernible coalition-building on public interest journalism.</p>

1.3 Thematic area 3: Media and governance

Continental context

Many constitutions on the continent defend media freedom and freedom of expression, but there are worrying trends in some other countries towards the consolidation of illiberal measures that harm free speech and media freedom. For instance, in East Africa, every country included in this assessment has a multitude of media regulations that seem to overly restrict the media. Some of these laws are rushed and poorly written by lawmakers for political expediency. West Africa has seen a decline in freedom of expression and of the media over the past few years. Various countries in the sub-region have experienced instances of government restrictions, censorship, and attacks on journalists. The recent coups and political instability in the Sahel region have further contributed to the decline.

Another emerging threat to media freedom is media capture, a growing trend where media is covertly or openly owned by political elites sympathetic to the ruling government or controlled by business interests. While state ownership of media is nothing new on the continent, there is a new trend where politicians aligned to ruling parties are buying shares in private media organisations and this ownership is often shrouded in secrecy. In Zimbabwe, the military are now players in the media ecosystem. Through ownership, the military is extending its reach into independent media spaces. In East Africa, media capture is complex. The capture of media by the state and political elites takes place against the backdrop of a highly commercialised media controlled by conglomerates such as the Nation Group. Media capture is equally rooted in West Africa.

While many gains have been made over the last years in the areas of media freedom, there have also been significant legislative setbacks in the media landscape. A slew of negative laws impacting the media exist, with some of them introduced to ostensibly deal with the digital reality but contain clauses that threaten freedom of expression. There has been a flurry of laws and regulations meant to govern digital space. For instance, social media taxes and cybercrime and security laws.

Safety of journalists is another continuing thorny issue. The situation has been exacerbated by digital technologies. There is increasing concern over state surveillance, which frequently targets journalists and undermines their safety and privacy. Additionally, online trolls are increasingly used to discredit or intimidate journalists. In some cases, these trolls are financed and coordinated by the state.³⁹ Female journalists face unique online harassment and violence. They receive threats and targeted attacks that typically contain threats of physical or sexual harm.⁴⁰

The regulatory environment has also become complex with the emergence of advanced artificially driven technologies. This complexity arises from the unique freedom of expression challenges and ethical considerations posed by these technologies. This is new territory for media freedom advocates in Africa.

³⁵ Statement: Internet shutdown in Eswatini challenged in the High Court. Retrieved at <https://www.southernafricaitigationcentre.org/2021/07/05/statement-internet-shutdown-in-eswatini-challenged-in-the-high-court/>

Overview of coalition- building

The area of media and governance is perhaps where media coalitions have been most active and scored several successes. Media coalitions across the three sub-regions have successfully lobbied for the repeal or amendment to several repressive laws. There has also been strategic litigation against unjust laws that affect the media.

There have also been several collaborative projects on journalists' safety over the years. Media women associations such as TAMWA and Gender and Media Connect have also run successful programmes on safety of women journalists. International organisations such as Article 19, the Committee to Protect Journalists, Free Press Unlimited and Reporters Without Borders have also worked with local organisations during crisis moments to defend the work of journalists and journalism. For example, ARTICLE19 and Gender and Media Connect Zimbabwe joined Free Press Unlimited to spread the message on #SafetyforWomenJournalists. Coalition-building on journalists' safety and well-being seem to be stronger in West Africa, especially in Francophone regions than in East and Southern Africa.

Advocacy priorities and coalition-building in East Africa

Overview: The region suffers from over -regulation of the media and communication systems

Heavy-handed media regulatory bodies

The regulatory bodies in **Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda, and Uganda** are overly heavy-handed. For example, the actions of the Uganda Communications Commission (UCC), the Communications Commission of Kenya (CCK) and the Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority (TCRA) are perceived as being excessively intrusive and authoritarian in their oversight of media activities. They have on several occasions shut down broadcast stations, blocked broadcast transmissions and banned some publications. Media freedom organisations and coalitions see these bodies as heavy-handed and advocate for regulatory reform. A Tanzanian participant observed, *“we have seen the sector is heavily regulated, so much so that each major media house now has to have someone who is working on compliance, because once you are not aware of these laws, you can find yourself in trouble.”*

Repressive laws

Except for Somalia, every East African nation included in this study has several restrictive media laws that give the impression that the media is overly controlled. Here is one area where media freedom groups have been active in pushing for the repeal of confusing laws. As an online content producer from Kenya explains,

this is where again we're seeing entities coming in small and big, to put a voice to help create the path that these laws could take to help push back against problematic clauses and issues like that, but also creating general public awareness and bringing more people into the fold when it comes to addressing some of these gaps and putting pressure on the state and its policies.

There have also been several court petitions and strategic litigation of repressive laws in **Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda** done through both national and regional courts.

Fragmented media regulatory space

The legal and regulatory media landscape in the sub-region is typically fragmented. In addition to specific statutes, the laws pertaining to the media are also scattered throughout various legislative bodies. As a result, sections of media law can be found in the penal code, security legislation, financial fraud laws, anti-terrorism laws, etc. For example, the Media Council of Kenya undertook an analysis of legislation pertaining to the media and discovered 19 laws that contained laws restricting media freedom in several statutes such as the National Police Act, the Kenya Defense Forces Act, and the Prevention of Terrorism Act, among many others. The Media Council of Tanzania (MCT) also did an analysis focussed on laws relating to the media, under the Boresha Habari project.⁴¹

³⁶ Idayat Hassan (2022) Disinformation Is Undermining Democracy in West Africa. Retrieved at <https://www.cigionline.org/articles/disinformation-is-undermining-democracy-in-west-africa/>

EAST AFRICA		
Country	Coalitions	Explanation
Kenya	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kenya media sector working group Kenya Journalists' Association Association of Media Women in Kenya Bloggers Association of Kenya Kenya Editors' Guild 	Media coalitions are active in supporting media freedom, freedom of expression and independent regulation. They have done well in many respects to achieve success, but better coordination is required. Some of the strategies used have included research, knowledge-sharing, submissions to parliament, lobbying policymakers and strategic litigation
Rwanda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rwanda Journalists Association Association of Rwandese Female Journalists [ARFEM] 	Coalition-building on media freedom and freedom of expression issues in Rwanda is woefully inadequate.
Tanzania	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Coalition on the Right to Information (CoRI) Tanzanian Human Rights Defenders Coalition (THRDC) Tanzania Media Women Association (TAMWA) MISA-Tanzania The Union of Tanzania Press Clubs (UTPC) Tanzania Editors Forum East African Civil Society Organisations' Forum 	CoRI and its members are active in defending media freedom and advocating for the repeal of unjust media laws and practice. But issues of media capture, safety of journalists and governance of the digital space are not engaged with strategically. CoRI has successfully used strategic litigation and court petitions. THRDC and East African Civil Society Organisations have taken up media causes.
Somalia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Somalia Media Association (SOMA) Federation of Somali Journalists Somali Women Journalists Organisation Media Women Network Somali Coalition for Freedom of Expression Media Association Puntland Somaliland Journalists Association Somali Journalists Syndicate Somali Mechanism for Safety of Journalists 	An embryonic coalition-building on media freedom, freedom of expression and media governance issues is emerging in Somalia, but a lot still needs to be done. SOMA has led lobbying for the review of the Media Law. Media associations have mainly used knowledge-sharing and research and submission to Parliament.
Uganda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uganda Media Sector Working Group Human Rights Network for Journalists-Uganda Media Freedom Coalition 	UMSWG & HRNJ have done considerably well to address several issues bedeviling the media space, including diminishing professionalism, media freedom ineffective regulation and out-of-date legal framework and journalism safety.

Advocacy priorities and coalition building in Southern Africa

Overview: The region still faces a restrictive legal and normative environment

Media capture

Media ownership largely remains under government regulatory control in most countries in the region, creating a restrictive environment for journalists. This leads to media capture, struggling independent media, sensationalist reporting, low levels of public trust, and high rates of corruption. There is also hidden media capture where so-called independent media are owned by business elites aligned to the ruling party or government. For instance, a prosecutor in **Eswatini** owns a media organisation, some radio stations in **Zimbabwe** are owned by the army, private newspapers like the Mast in **Zambia**, and one radio station in Angola are owned by an opposition political party. In **Angola** and Eswatini private ownership doesn't necessarily guarantee complete editorial independence. Political influence and regulatory frameworks, including economic pressures impact the independence of private media. The king of Eswatini, who controls all media channels both directly and indirectly, owns the country's only private television. Since they are the main sources of advertising revenue in most of the sub-region's countries, governments also use advertising to influence the media. Media coalitions in Zimbabwe are also concerned about the private media owners being coerced into serving as advisors to the president.

Access to information

Zambia and **Eswatini** have no access to information laws, although Zambian media reform advocacy actors have been actively campaigning for access to information law for years and the recently elected administration has committed to working on this. While **Angola**, **Zimbabwe**, and **Mozambique** have laws facilitating access to information, the media in these nations still face considerable obstacles when trying to obtain vital data from both public and private institutions. In Mozambique, there are still widespread restrictions on journalists' coverage of the rebellion in the north of the country and journalists struggle to access information in this regard. Efforts are being made to establish a regulatory framework that will guarantee the implementation of the 2014 Access to Information Act. Angola has a freedom of information law in place, but it has no constitutional guarantee of this right. Access to information is also hampered by other pieces of legislation and media coalitions have also focused on this aspect. Zambia and Eswatini have seen a great deal of lobbying in this area. There is no access to information law in Eswatini and so, media coalitions in the country see it as an urgent advocacy priority.

Journalists' safety

There are many journalists in the region who have been arrested, jailed, threatened, or fined. In **Eswatini** many journalists have fled the country and report from South Africa. The Terrorism Act has been used to silence journalists in the country. **Angola** journalists say they feel they are under constant digital surveillance. Increasingly journalists are also becoming targets of people's anger because of the perceived bias toward the government and ruling party. They are seen as sellouts. In **Zimbabwe**, the government has used the Interception of Communication Act to surveil journalists and as a result they don't feel safe. The arbitrary arrest of journalists is also common in the country. Journalists in Zambia are often attacked during elections. Media coalitions are active in this area, though there is no clear advocacy strategy. Media coalitions in Zambia and Zimbabwe regularly hold dialogues with security agencies and other stake holders to address journalists' safety. In Mozambique, MISA-Mozambique has made great strides in lobbying for a safe environment for journalists. One participant from Mozambique noted:

"I think they (MISA) have done a lot in terms of protection of journalists...because there was a time when government was serious about becoming repressive...but MISA stood its ground. The government realised how powerful MISA is, even though it's a small organisation".

However, the conflict in the north of Mozambique confronts journalists with safety concerns, especially after the disappearance of Ibraimo Mbaruco in April 2020. An IMS media assessment of Mozambique conducted in 2022 states that "Mozambique media cannot cover some regions freely, especially northern Mozambique, as they face

³⁷ The government in Benin passed a directive in 2018 to tax its citizens on the use of Internet and social media applications.

³⁸ Cameroon also introduced a tax of 19,25% on any advertising on Facebook under the 2020 Finance Law, which is expected to be expanded soon to other platforms like Google and Amazon.

³⁹ Benin, Burkina Faso, Gabon, Mali, Nigeria, Sierra Leon

⁴⁰ AccessNow - Open letter: the government of Nigeria must keep the internet and social media platforms open and secure during the 2023 general elections and beyond. Retrieved at <https://www.accessnow.org/press-release/keepiton-nigeria-elections-open-letter/>

arrest by the police, harassment by the military and the threat of attacks and physical harm by terrorists.” Some journalists have received threatening calls from government and security officials, and journalists are sometimes publicly rebuked by party spokespersons.⁴²

SOUTHERN AFRICA		
Country	Coalitions	Explanation
Angola	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sindicato dos Jornalistas Angolanos 	The Sindicato de Jornalistas or Angolan Journalists' Union is the main network fighting for media freedom and freedom of expression. The Union normally uses press statements, knowledge-sharing, social media and some lobbying as an advocacy strategy.
Eswatini	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Media Consortium CANGO 	The Media Consortium is the main vehicle for media advocacy in the country, but its effectiveness is limited. The constrained and restricted environment prohibits effective lobbying and advocacy. Decreased access to donor funding also impacts advocacy. Social media and lobbying Parliament are mainly used as advocacy tools.
Mozambique	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MISA-Mozambique The National Journalists Union (SNJ) 	The media operates in an uncertain and unclear legal and regulatory environment. The country's constitution, 1991 Press Law, and 2014 freedom of information law protect media freedom and freedom of expression, but in practice the media environment is constrained. MISA-Mozambique and SNJ, with other CSOs have been the main alliances that advocate for media freedom through several strategies: knowledge-sharing, lobbying Parliament and research.
Zambia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ZIMA Media Liaison Committee Bloggers of Zambia Media Freedom Committee for Zambia 	Media coalitions in Zambia are active in media advocacy through different strategies (lobbying, knowledge-sharing, research, court petitions) but the sustainability of the advocacy and a lack of coordination of activities is a concern.
Zimbabwe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Media Alliance of Zimbabwe MISA-Zimbabwe 	MISA-Zimbabwe and MAZ have been the main coalitions lobbying for media freedom. That the government has embarked on some media reform can be attributed to the proactive efforts of coalition-building. The organisations have used alerts, social media, court challenges and lobbying parliament.

³⁷ The government in Benin passed a directive in 2018 to tax its citizens on the use of Internet and social media applications.

³⁸ Cameroon also introduced a tax of 19,25% on any advertising on Facebook under the 2020 Finance Law, which is expected to be expanded soon to other platforms like Google and Amazon.

³⁹ Benin, Burkina Faso, Gabon, Mali, Nigeria, Sierra Leon

⁴⁰ AccessNow - Open letter: the government of Nigeria must keep the internet and social media platforms open and secure during the 2023 general elections and beyond. Retrieved at <https://www.accessnow.org/press-release/keepit-on-nigeria-elections-open-letter/>

Advocacy priorities and coalition building in West Africa

Overview:

Safety of Journalists

Safety of journalists is undoubtedly the main advocacy priority in the sub-region and has been a pressing issue for some time. It has been made worse by political upheavals bedevilling some countries in the sub-region. For example, Senegal, once a beacon of democracy, has recently recorded nineteen attacks on journalists, with three of them being jailed. Attacks on journalists are also becoming more widespread on social media in Burkina Faso by “influencers” who back the military regime there. These individuals act as law enforcement officers and sometimes threaten the lives of journalists and opinion leaders they believe to be too independent.

There has been a rise in advocacy efforts for West African journalists’ safety. The WAJA, in partnership with other international media alliances, particularly Reporters Without Borders (RSF), has spearheaded this lobbying effort on a regional level. The Press Centre in Ouagadougou, which houses three media networks – the Society of Private Press Publishers or Société des Editeurs de la Presse Privée (SEP), the Autonomous Union of Information and Culture Workers or *Syndicat Autonome des Travailleurs de l’Information et de la Culture* (SYNATIC), and the Cell Norbert Zongo for Investigative Journalism in West Africa or *Cellule Norbert Zongo pour le journalisme d’investigation en Afrique de l’Ouest* (CENOZO) - has been leading a lot of advocacy and pro-media and journalist initiatives in the fight for safety of journalists.

Repressive laws and impunity

While most countries in the sub-region had in recent years adopted progressive laws that created a conducive operating environment for the media, this is changing. The adoption of new, repressive laws is causing civic space to shrink. According to CIVIC Monitor, except for Cape Verde, all West African countries have restricted or obstructed civic spaces.⁴³ Despite laws protecting freedom of the press and of expression in countries like Ghana and Nigeria, the media sector is witnessing an increasing crackdown on citizens and journalists who voice critical opinions. In April 2023, the Media Foundation for West Africa, in conjunction with the Ghana Journalists Association (GJA), the Ghana Independent Broadcasters Association (GIBA) and the Private Newspaper Publishers Association of Ghana (PRINPAG) formed the Media Coalition for the Repeal of False Publication Laws, to demand the repeal of these new repressive laws.

West Africa		
Country	Coalitions	Explanation
Burkina Faso	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CENOZO • Press Centre of Ouagadougou • Burkina Faso Journalists Association • Réseau d’Initiatives de Journalistes (RIJ) • The Burkina Faso Movement for Human and People’s Rights 	Burkina Faso’s military government is enacting laws and practices that drastically restrict freedom of expression and media freedom, including the suspension of radio stations. Advocacy on media freedom by coalitions is piecemeal. More strategic advocacy, led by CENOZO, is taking place in journalists’ safety.

⁴¹ See for example George Ogola (2023) *AI, Journalism, and Public Interest Media in Africa: Scoping study to map the current state of Artificial Intelligence use in public interest media in Africa*. IMS

⁴² Follow this evidence here: <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2023/oct/30/a-goldmine-at-our-fingertips-the-promise-and-perils-of-ai-in-africa>

Ghana	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ghana Journalists Association (GJA) • Ghana Independent Broadcasters Association • Coalition on the Right to Information • Media Coalition for the Repeal of False Publication Laws • Coalition of journalists against electoral violence 	The Media Foundation for West Africa has rallied local coalitions and associations to lobby for media freedom. Coalition-building on media freedom advocacy is weak and not coordinated. While MFWA and GJA actively advance media freedom, media lobby groups are generally not very consistent in their advocacy efforts.
Liberia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Press Union of Liberia • Local Voices Liberia • Female Journalists Association of Liberia • Liberia Coalition for Human Rights Defenders (LICHDR) and the 	The Press Union of Liberia conducts most of the lobbying for journalists' rights, press freedom and media regulation. Liberia has a history of having short-term coalitions that are established by donors but disband after a short while. Examples include the Liberia Coalition for Free Expression, the Working Group of the Liberia Media Law Reform Process and The Liberia Freedom of Information Coalition (LFIC)
Nigeria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nigerian Union of Journalists, • Nigerian Guild of Editors, • Newspaper Proprietors' Association of Nigeria • Coalition for whistleblower protection and press freedom (CWPPF) • Voice and Accountability Platform 	Nigeria has a vibrant civic space but CSOs tend to work individually. Media Rights Agenda sometimes works with different media associations to lobby for media freedom. Some of the media advocacy work happens at the federal level. Social media activism is often used to raise awareness for rights-based causes. Nigerian parliamentary procedures allow citizens to directly initiate new laws by sponsoring a public bill.
Senegal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senegal journalist associations • Senegal's Coordination of Press Association • JONCTION 	The associations advocate for media professionalism and conducive legal and regulatory framework for the media

1.4 Cross-cutting advocacy priorities

The table below is an overview of the **key** current advocacy priorities in the three thematic areas. The advocacy priorities outlined in this report are based on the interviews and desk-top research conducted on the selected 15 countries selected but may not necessarily represent the entire picture in the three sub-regions. They do, nevertheless, offer a basis for comprehending the advocacy activities of media coalitions.

Net Freedoms and Public Interest Technology			
East Africa	Southern Africa	West Africa	Cross-cutting priorities
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Online content restrictions 2. Internet shutdowns 3. Censorship and surveillance 4. Information Disorder 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Interception of communication and cybersecurity 2. Digital surveillance 3. Internet shutdowns 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Information Disorder 2. Social media taxes 3. Internet Shutdowns 4. Regulation of Big Tech 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Information Disorder 2. Internet Shutdowns

Public Interest Journalism			
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Media sustainability 2. Media concentration 3. Repressive laws 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Media sustainability 2. Fact-Checking 3. Investigative journalism 4. Alternative content creation 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Media sustainability 2. Investigative journalism 3. Fact-checking 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Media sustainability 2. Fact-checking 3. Investigative journalism
Media and Governance			
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Heavy-handed media regulation 2. Repressive laws 3. Fragmented media regulatory space 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Media capture 2. Access to Information 3. Safety of Journalists 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Safety of Journalists 2. Repressive laws 3. Media regulation 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Safety of journalists 2. Repressive laws 3. Media regulation

As the table above shows, on net freedoms and public interest technology, the cross-cutting issues are **(1) Information Disorder** and **(2) Internet shutdowns**. Fake news and state-sponsored manipulation of information are polluting the information ecosystem. The drivers of the information disorder in Africa include loss of trust in media institutions, lack of digital literacy, limited access to information and populist politics. Yet the advocacy on this issue is narrowed to promoting fact-checking. There is consequently a proliferation of fact-checking organisations and initiatives. This is because of a limited understanding by coalitions and advocacy organisations of the complex nature of information disorders. Meanwhile, African governments are increasingly adopting internet shutdowns as strategies to address the spread of misinformation, especially during elections. Media coalitions address this issue mainly during elections because this is when it is most critical, but they do not have a holistic strategy towards its complete resolution, which must look at the roots causes and driving forces behind the phenomenon. There is however a need for a **proactive and human rights-based approach** to addressing the scourge of internet shutdowns.

There is a need for well-coordinated coalition building related to protecting digital rights. As a member of a media coalition and head of a media advocacy organisation in Zimbabwe stated:

Digital rights are the next frontier where the major assaults on expression rights will be playing out. As MISA, through solidarity spaces, we have identified digital rights and online expression as significant challenges that we will be grappling with in the next five to ten years.

In the area of public interest journalism, the cross-cutting priorities are **(1) Media sustainability**, **(2) Investigative journalism** and **(3) Fact-checking**. Media sustainability refers to the ability of media organisations to operate effectively, while generating revenue and maintain financial viability over the long term. The assessment found that media coalitions, most specifically journalist associations, are focusing on working conditions of journalists and the threats to business models faced by newsrooms. Other aspects of media sustainability such as media consolidation, influence of dominance of social media as news distributors and Generative AI in journalism are not dwelt upon. This point is also supported by findings from Mwangi (2021) who found that “media owners feel left out and not engaged [by media coalitions] ...they argue that coalitions do not discuss media strategies for building funding models, industry standards, and public policies that support the resilience and professional capacities of media outlets to survive and thrive sustainably in the coming decades”. Public interest journalism is also narrowly focused on strengthening investigative journalism and as such there are several investigative journalism initiatives supported by media coalitions and media advocacy organisations. In the same way it comes up under the public interest technologies and net freedoms, the issue of fact-checking is also a priority in this thematic area, especially in Southern and West Africa where several fact-checking organisations have been set up to curb fake news, but also improve journalism.

A lot of media coalitions are concentrating on initiatives related to the media and governance theme. The cross-cutting issues are **(1) Safety of Journalists, (2) Repressive laws and (3) Media regulation**. Media advocacy groups have made significant progress and achieved success in these three areas, which have been the cornerstones of media activism on the continent for many years. New threats in these areas are emerging and media coalitions have advocacy programmes to address them.

1.5 Advocacy gaps and opportunities

The assessment has identified key advocacy gaps and opportunities.

Thematic area 1: Net freedoms and public interest technology

Advocacy Issue	Explanation
Digital Surveillance	Use of facial recognition technology (FRT) and surveillance cameras is becoming prevalent across the continent, posing a new threat to free expression and data privacy and protection.
AI and Freedom of Expression	The basic right to freedom of expression is one area where AI has the potential to make a significant impact on our lives. But it can also be misused, which has terrible consequences. Media coalitions need to engage with African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights Resolution 473 on the "need to undertake a study on human and peoples' rights and artificial intelligence (AI), robotics and other new and emerging technologies in Africa".
Social Media Monitoring	Advocacy on mis/disinformation has focused on fact-checking to combat misinformation, disinformation and hate speech and promote a healthy information ecosystem. What is not highlighted in advocacy activities is the matter of the proliferation of 'social media bills' and their implication on freedom of expression and privacy.
Social media taxes	The tax unjustly restricts users' freedom of expression by making it more difficult for citizens to access the internet at an affordable price, thus threatening their right to access and receive information. Media coalitions should recall the 2016 resolution acknowledging the internet access as a human right and that "measures to intentionally prevent or disrupt access to or dissemination of information online (is) in violation of international human rights law." As this was a non-binding resolution, there are renewed efforts to adopt a binding resolution that places responsibility on government to make internet access a human right
Public Interest Technology	Public interest technology or infrastructure refers to digital tools and digital spaces that function according to rules and provisions based on a set of public interest values. They are specifically made to inform the public about issues that influence their lives. ⁸ There is a need for CSOs to prioritise and support this form of technology. This involves lobbying big tech as well.

Thematic area 2: Public interest journalism

Advocacy Issue	Explanation
Platforms and Journalism	The impact of big tech platforms in the news production processes, on the professionalism of journalists and the attrition of advertisers has been keenly felt in the region. New issues are also emerging such as the rise of artificial intelligence and the Internet of Things that are challenging notions of media freedom and disrupting traditional business models.

Local media	News deserts are also growing larger, with many marginalised and rural communities in Africa lacking a news source that provides meaningful and trustworthy local reporting of issues of concern. Efforts to promote local media has narrowly focused on community radio. Local newspapers, local journalism and the communication ecology in marginalised and rural areas are aspects that also need attention.
Strengthening investigative journalism	Investigative journalism is expensive. There is a need for greater collaboration to promote public interest journalism and media need to find ways to work together. There is also a need to diversify support for investigative journalism beyond 'exposing corruption.' Investigative journalism should also focus on critical social issues (e.g. climate change, health, food security etc).
Innovative approaches to journalism & establishing guardrails on the use of AI in newsrooms	Media coalitions should also focus on interventions concerning how the media can leverage technology (AI, social media etc) to enhance public interest journalism. Newsrooms should establish guidelines and principles on the deployment of generative AI to be monitored by Media Councils. Human oversight over the deployment of generative AI should be strengthened, such as through additional editing and fact-checking of outputs before publication.

Thematic area 3: Media and governance

Advocacy Issue	Explanation
Media capture	The regulatory environment for public interest media has become increasingly oppressive. Media in the three sub-regions has been captured by political and business interests. In some countries, private media is no longer viable and has resorted to self-censorship. This is a complex development that needs well thought-out advocacy strategies that are informed by research.
Regulation of AI in the information & communication space	Generative AI tools such as ChatGPT, image or video creation tools, enable anyone to become a creator of content. This prevalence of AI is raising new challenges. Media coalitions should engage with current policy frameworks and guidelines (e.g. the UNESCO's Global Guidance on AI Ethics; African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights Resolution 473 etc).
Policy on Audiovisual Content Services	The digital, multichannel, and multiplatform audio and video content services (AAVCS) ecosystem emerging in Africa has implications on plurality and diversity. There is a need to understand how video streaming services and how it's affecting the local audio-visual sector. Over-the-top (OTT) policymaking is a complex and rapidly evolving field.

7 Analysis of coalition building and advocacy strategies

The two previous sections examined the state of media coalitions in the three sub-regions and coalition building and advocacy priorities and gaps in three thematic areas: net freedoms and public interest technology; public interest journalism and media and governance.

The assessment found that in general, there is **modest** but active media coalition-building around key media advocacy initiatives in the three sub-regions. We say modest because though a lot of work has been done, there have been no discernible '**media movements**' in the three sub-regions. The term media movement is used here to refer to media reform focussed social movements; that is, **grassroots initiatives** that aim to achieve media reform through collective action, while media coalitions are structured as formal alliances among media entities and other relevant stakeholders. Media movements are therefore more visible and exert substantial influence in society and can affect public opinion, policy debates, and political discourse in a much more pronounced way than media coalitions. They become a possibility when broad-based media coalitions join forces. An example of a

⁴³ <https://www.tmf.or.tz/>

media movement would be the Right2Know Campaign in South Africa. Globally, the Communication Rights in the Information Society (CRIS) is another good example of a media movement. The CRIS campaign was launched late in 2001 in London by a consortium of media reform organisations and concerned individuals in response to the International Telecommunications Union's (ITU) announcement of a World Summit on the Information Society Rights in the Information Society.⁴⁴ In India, the right to information movement is one of the most significant social (media) movement success stories in India. It is essentially a movement that supports the right to know and to be informed and it has been essential in elevating the status of information as a public benefit.⁴⁵

7.1 Factors impacting media coalitions.

As stated earlier, the conceptual basis of the assessment is the resource-mobilisation theory (RMT) which is concerned with questions about how social movements form and engage in collective action. RMT focuses on how interest groups and social movements acquire and employ resources to achieve their objectives. It examines the range of resources that need to be mobilized, the links that social movements have with other groups and the need for external support for movements to succeed. For this assessment, RMT is used to explain the relationship dynamics between funding agencies and media coalitions. This approach focuses on the **meso-level**, which describes the favourable or unfavourable circumstances that help or impede certain social movement organisations or coalitions in their aspirations to pursue their goals. Based on the interviews and FGDs conducted and secondary sources, the assessment identified the following internal and external factors that affect coalition-building.

Internal factors

Shared purpose and vision

Successful coalition building critically depends on the sharing of ideas, goals, and viewpoints. Coalitions with a well-defined purpose are more likely to succeed. The Advocacy Coalition Framework states that advocacy coalitions are made up of individuals and groups who share similar policy belief systems and prioritise common perceptions and values and engage in coordinated activities to promote a position.⁴⁶ Coalition leaders and members interviewed pointed to this aspect as one of the conditions for successful coalitions. In media-only coalitions, it is easy to establish shared goals and vision and develop advocacy strategies that are readily supported by coalition members. Media Alliance of Zimbabwe, Media Liaison Committee in Zambia, the Media Consortium in Eswatini and Media Coalition Against Galamsey (MCAG) in Ghana,⁴⁷ are some coalitions of this nature and tend to share closer interaction and engagement since they work in the same sector and are pursuing the same objectives. The ACF posits that advocacy coalitions are bound by a belief system comprising common perceptions and value priorities where individuals and organisations with similar policy belief systems engage in coordinated activities to promote a position.

But there is a downside to these 'media-only' coalitions. Their impact tends to be limited as there is little buy-in and support from other organisations advocating for broader human rights (the value of cross-sector collaboration is discussed below). Nevertheless, there is no guarantee that collaborating with other broad-based organisations will provide positive outcomes. Substantial differences may significantly impede effective coalition-building, especially when narrow advocacy concerns are on the table. When groups with different priorities and strategies come together, priorities don't always align. In this case, coalition leadership needs to be able to foster understanding amongst all parties and serve as a bridge between them. The SOS: Support Public Broadcasting Coalition in South Africa, a member-based public broadcasting network that campaigns for democratic media and broadcasting, has members from all cross-sections of society. The coordinator of SOS said in interviews that it has not always been easy working with an array of organisations, but leadership has helped in maintaining momentum.⁴⁸ The same happened with the Right2Know Campaign, which for years successfully campaigned on a broad range of freedom of expression issues, but leadership problems is threatening to rapture the organisation. Lessons can be learnt from both coalitions.

Cross-sector collaboration

By joining forces with other relevant non-media organisations and coalitions in the human rights sector, media coalitions can boost their power base, and substantially raise the volume of their message to policymakers. This has been the case with East African **multistakeholder media coalitions** such as the Kenya ICT Action Network (KICTAnet) and the Coalition on Right to Information (CoRI) in Tanzania who have made great strides in mobilising political will and influencing policy (see Box below.)

⁴⁴ See <https://rsf.org/en/country/nigeria>

⁴⁵ Follow this story here: <https://www.france24.com/en/africa/20230503-african-international-news-outlets-appeal-for-press-freedom-in-mali-and-burkina-faso>

Case 1: Kenya ICT Action Network (KICTANet)

KICTANet has over the years contributed to the lobbying and drafting of several ICT regulations, including the Kenya Information & Communications Act of 2013; the 2019 Kenya Data Protection Act 2019; Kenya Cybercrimes and Computer Misuse Act of 2018; Kenya Data Protection Policy, the Kenya ICT Policy 2006 and 2019. It also, for instance, participated in discussions that led to the drafting and passing of the National Cybersecurity Strategy (2014) and coordinated public participation in consultations of the 2014 African Union Convention on Cybersecurity.⁹

Case 2: Coalition on Right to information: Enforcing regional judiciary decisions

CoRI was established in 2006 by the Media Council of Tanzania (MCT), the Media Institute of Southern Africa – Tanzania Chapter (MISA-Tan) and the Tanzania Media Women's Association (TAMWA), with other human rights and non-media organisations joining later. As a coalition, these organisations lobbied the relevant legislative and executive branches to adopt a new access to information law and to replace the outdated Newspaper Act No. 3 of 1976. CoRI, led by MCT, published alternative drafts of both the Right to Information law and the Media Services law, based on the collected opinions. These efforts led to the adoption in 2016 of the Media Services Act (replacing the Newspaper Act) and the Access to Information Act. The passing of these laws was a victory as well as a setback. Many media and human rights advocates voiced their dissatisfaction with the Media Services Act, arguing that it negatively affected the media environment and restricted press freedom.

The MCT took the case of the Media Services Act to the East African Court of Justice (EAC) together with other CoRI members, the Legal and Human Rights Centre (LHRC), and the Tanzania Human Rights Defenders Coalition (THRDC), arguing that the law's provisions infringed upon press freedom and contravened the East African Community Treaty. The court agreed with the applicants on 16 out of 18 of the clauses they complained about, requiring the Tanzanian government to take action to remedy the situation.¹⁰ Though to date, the government has not acted on the ruling, its existence and government reluctance to act on it is meaningful.

Three important lessons can be drawn from these two examples: Media coalitions are effective when they build broad coalitions, combine advocacy and legal actions, and find receptive allies in key government positions.

Resources: material, human and informational resources

Effective coalition-building often involves the **strategic use of resources**. There is fierce competition for donor funds because of the small number of agencies supporting media reform and organisations dedicated to media and communication rights. Most of the respondents interviewed for this assessment highlighted the limited number of resources for coalition building and the intense **competition over donor funds**. Coalitions, because of their higher levels of coordination and joint action, require significant resources to sustain themselves.

Small and emerging coalitions are the hardest hit. Herman Wasserman in the report *“The Untapped Potential of Regional Cooperation for Media Reform in Southern Africa”* argues for cross-country collaboration for small countries like Malawi or countries that are less developed or less resourced like Mozambique and Angola that can benefit from more coalitions with other countries.

Resources also include **technical expertise** and **intellectual resources**. Coalition staff, leaders, and members need training to promote coalition building and maintenance as well as ongoing technical assistance. It is clear from this assessment that well-resourced coalitions, financially and technically, are effective at fighting for the purposes for which they are set up. They are also in a better position to make an impact using social, institutional and discursive power. Examples include the KICTANet (Kenya), WOUINET (Uganda), Digital Shelter (Somalia) and MAZ (Zimbabwe). These coalitions are able to set the agenda, lead in coalition-building and control the narrative or discourses around advocacy priorities.

Partnerships with global and regional partners

Partnerships between local media coalitions and international and regional advocacy organisations can maximize their **collaborative impact**. International and regional partners such as Alliance for Affordable Internet, Internews, International Press Institute, WAN-IFRA Women in News, CIPESA and Paradigm Initiative have contributed technical and intellectual resources to different media advocacy interventions on the continent. In some cases, these partnerships have acted as a **platform** for focusing efforts and resources in a meaningful and coordinated manner. These regional and global groups are either members of local coalitions like KICTANet, Digital Shelter, and Charm Africa, or they have collaborated with them on advocacy efforts. However, there are some drawbacks to these

⁴⁶ CIPESA (2022) *The State of Media Freedom and Journalists' Safety in Africa 2022*. Retrieved at [https://cipesa.org/wp-content/files/The State of Media Freedom and Safety of Journalists in Africa Report.pdf](https://cipesa.org/wp-content/files/The%20State%20of%20Media%20Freedom%20and%20Safety%20of%20Journalists%20in%20Africa%20Report.pdf)

⁴⁷ UNESCO (2020) *Online violence Against Women Journalists: A Global Snapshot of Incidence and Impacts*. Retrieved at <https://www.icfj.org/sites/default/files/2020-12/UNESCO%20Online%20Violence%20Against%20Women%20Journalists%20-%20A%20Global%20Snapshot%20Dec9pm.pdf>

partnerships. KII's expressed the opinion that local media coalitions feel in competition with these organisations for space. This point of competition was also raised by the Communication and Digital Platforms Officer of the West African Democracy Network who stated that some local organisations feel threatened by their network:

Then, there is the threat of some members perceiving the Network as competitors instead of collaborators. This was one of the highly anticipated risks; hence, the Network spends time building trust and partnership by recognising the space and strength of existing organisations in our programming. For instance, we created many opportunities and spaces to promote inclusion and ownership by members.⁴⁹

An excellent example of effective North-South collaboration of this nature that media coalitions can learn from is the Coalition to build Momentum, Power, Activism, Strategy & Solidarity (COMPASS) Africa. It uses innovative, **data-driven advocacy campaigns** to influence HIV policy decisions, programmes and funding in Malawi, Tanzania and Zimbabwe and at the global level. COMPASS uses “bold, well-resourced, coalition-based, data informed advocacy and activism...[it] combines country-based coalitions of civil society groups in Malawi, Tanzania and Zimbabwe with seasoned advocacy partners in the global North. Connected through a unique structure of strategic planning, real-time support and coordinated advocacy and activism, COMPASS partners work together to gather, analyse and use evidence and data to drive strategic advocacy campaigns and change policy in the coalition focus countries and beyond”.⁵⁰

External factors

Coalition-building also depends on external factors, mainly in the political and regulatory contexts. In social movements, **political opportunities** are instances or circumstances that increase the likelihood that a movement will succeed in its objectives. These possibilities, which can come from a variety of situations, are crucial to the success and effectiveness of social movements. In this assessment, there were a few political opportunities noted that impacted media coalitions in a variety of ways.

Political threats

Literature on social movements and coalitions shows that political opportunities and threats facilitate coalition formation. Indeed, the assessment noted that political threats seem to have a strong **facilitative effect** for media as they provide incentives to collaborate. The journalists' associations in French-speaking West Africa for instance, have banded together in the face of threats from the political regimes. The recent political instability in Burkina Faso and Senegal have pushed media associations to establish **a united front to fight for media freedom** and freedom of expression. In these countries, the government-media relations are hostile, and the media find comfort and safety in working jointly rather than separately. There are few media coalition initiatives by media networks and associations in the Anglophone nations of Ghana, Nigeria, and Liberia since the media environments there are considered not oppressive. The success of the Media Alliance of Zimbabwe is also because of the political threats that have bedevilled Zimbabwe for years. In Zambia, political instability and threats also led to the formation of vibrant media coalition activities. It is important to note that a decrease in opportunities and threats sometimes play a role in coalition dissolution.

Political threats have had an opposite effect on countries such as Eswatini, Angola and Mozambique. Angola has been ruled by the same party since independence, and authorities have systematically repressed political dissent. While Angola and Mozambique both are multi-party democracies, they have **strong imprints of authoritarianism**. Persistent post-independence conflict, political instability, and authoritarian rule have impeded successful media coalition-building. Eswatini is a **monarchical authoritarian regime**, and the political repression is significantly entrenched there. The Tinkundla system⁵¹ has severe repercussions for democratic participation and has silenced voices that challenge the status quo. Consequently, coalition-building in the country is thwarted.⁵²

Creating coalitions in semi-authoritarian environments is challenging. Perhaps the following actions could help in coalition formation in these regimes:

Cross-industry coalition building

Media coalitions can be formed by bringing together actors from other fields who share the same objective - for a free independent media that is accessible. These may include specific communities of practice like lawyers, women movements and any other movements that require a free media for their survival. For instance, in Zimbabwe, the Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights has worked together with the Zimbabwe Union of Journalists, especially

⁴⁹ IMS (2023) Reimagining the role of media in Mozambique in the era of terrorism and natural disasters.

Retrieved at <https://www.mediasupport.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Reimagining-the-role-of-media-in-Mozambique.pdf>

during the 2000-2008 period to fight for a free media. They were later joined by MISA Zimbabwe and the Women in Zimbabwe Arise (WOZA) organisation. With this strategy, coalitions can combine their resources, skills, and “passions” to create a single vision for coalition formation. Confronting authoritarianism requires a united front.

Potential allies in political elites

Media coalitions may benefit from the support of **sympathetic politicians**, government officials, or other influential figures who can help advance their agenda within the political system. A good example of this is the Media Foundation for West Africa, which has managed to engage with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), an inter-governmental body in the region on several media freedom issues. In Zimbabwe, the period between the coup in November 2017 and the General Elections in July 2018, when political temperatures were cool, MAZ and its members identified political actors they could work with. It was this period that saw major reforms in repressive laws, for example the repealing of the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA) and the Public Order and Security Act (POSA) and the gazetting of the Freedom of Information Act. It is important for media coalitions to note that progressive media reforms are not universally supported or opposed by a homogenous state. The state comprises an assortment of interests, such as sympathetic actors who are receptive to the influence from civil society and this opens opportunity for effective lobbying.

Table 2: Success factors for coalition-building

Internal Factors	Examples	External factors	Examples
Shared vision/ purpose	Coalitions such as MAZ and Media Liaison Committee comprise of organisations who share the same vision and purpose, and this worked in their favour.	Political threats	Political threats seem to have a strong facilitative effect as they provide incentives to collaborate. The journalists' associations in French-speaking West Africa for instance, have banded together in the face of threats from the political regimes. The recent political instability in Burkina Faso and Senegal have pushed media associations to establish a united front to fight for media freedom and freedom of expression.
Cross-sector collaboration	This has been the case with the East African multistakeholder media coalitions such as the Kenya ICT Action Network and the Coalition on Right to Information (CoRI) in Tanzania who have made great strides in mobilising political will and influencing policy	Political allies	Media coalitions may benefit from the support of sympathetic politicians, government officials, or other influential figures who can help advance their agenda within the political system. A good example of this is MAZ. In Zimbabwe, the period between the coup in November 2017 and the General Elections in July 2018, when political temperatures were cool, MAZ and its members identified political actors they could work with. It was this period that saw major reforms in repressive laws, for example the repealing of AIPPA and POSA and the gazetting of the Freedom of Information Act.
Resources	Well-resourced coalitions, financially and also technically, are effective. They are also in a better position to make an impact. Examples include the KICTANet in Kenya WOUNET in Uganda, Digital Shelter in Somalia, Media Alliance of Zimbabwe		
Coordinated funding			

Partnerships	Partnerships between local media coalitions and international and regional advocacy organisations can maximize their collaborative impact. International and regional partners such as Alliance for Affordable Internet, Internews, International Press Institute, APC, WAN-IFRA Women in News, CIPESA, Research ICT Africa, and Paradigm Initiative have contributed technical and intellectual resources to different media advocacy interventions on the continent.	
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7.2 Bottlenecks to media coalitions advocacy

Advocacy seems to be reactive rather than proactive: Advocacy frequently emerges as a reaction to specific events or concerns, or as a response to a perceived need for change. It is rare for media coalitions in the three sub-regions to actively anticipate and address potential issues before they become major problems. However, it was noted in PRIMED research findings on coalitions that they frequently needed to be reactive, adjusting to opportunities and challenges brought about by changes in the environment. Though the short-term responses were still made as steps towards the long-term objective, this responsiveness became a strength if it was done with the long-term vision and purpose in mind.

Overlapping functions between organisations and coalitions: Because organisations and coalitions operate in proximity, there are often overlapping functions and responsibilities. This overlap occurs for various reasons mainly because of complementary activities. Overlapping functions also occur because members within the same coalition seek financial support from similar donors, foundations, or governmental agencies.

Colonisation of media reform space: KIIIs in Southern Africa pointed out that local media coalitions compete for space with international organisations such as Internews, International Press Institute, Association for Progressive Communication (APC), WAN-IFRA Women in News. This perceived threat from global north organisations can weaken coalition-building. This is an emerging problem, and coalitions are still grappling with it. It requires broader conversations and dialogue to agree on areas of engagement. What is clear is that the two groups need each other for meaningful change to take place.

7.3 Assessment of advocacy strategies

Media coalitions in the three sub-regions use a variety of advocacy approaches and strategies to raise awareness of their causes and effect change. **Advocacy approaches** and **advocacy strategies** are related concepts within the broader field of advocacy, but they refer to different aspects of the advocacy process. Approach refers to the overarching framework or philosophy guiding the advocacy efforts and strategy refers to the specific actions and plans employed to achieve the desired goals within that framework. Advocacy approaches can be collaborative, legalistic, policy advocacy and community based. Advocacy strategies include lobbying, media advocacy, grassroots mobilisation, protests, policy research and analysis. Based on this assessment, the advocacy approaches followed by most media coalitions in the three sub-regions are the **legalistic and policy advocacy approaches**. These approaches are used mainly because the main issues that need to be addressed relate to policies and laws. Collaborative and community advocacy approaches are rare. The choice of advocacy approach has to some extent influenced the selection of specific strategies as outlined below.

Main advocacy strategies

The assessment noted that media coalitions mainly use the following advocacy strategies across the three sub-regions. They are not presented in any order of importance.

Advocacy strategy	Explanation/Strengths	Limitations
Lobbying	<p>Lobbying is used to influence decision-makers, legislators, and policymakers in various levels of government, and it may use some of the strategies below. There are two types of lobbying – direct and indirect. The former involves direct communication with lawmakers or government officials to influence their opinions or decisions and indirect focuses on influencing the public, which in turn may influence policymakers. Media coalitions have mainly used direct lobbying and have not been effective at using the indirect approach.</p>	<p>Lobbying often requires financial resources, and well-funded coalitions have better access to decision-makers than smaller or less well-funded coalitions.</p>
Submission to parliament	<p>This advocacy strategy allows media organisations to engage with the legislative process and influence policy decisions that can have a lasting impact. This strategy is normally used by more well-resourced coalitions such as KICTANet, MAZ who can afford to hire legal experts to analyse media laws.</p> <p>Regional media advocacy organisations such as CIPESA, Paradigm Initiative and Media Foundation for West Africa and national media coalitions such as KICTANet use this method effectively.</p>	<p>The same as above. Additionally, long-term systemic issues may not be addressed by submission to parliament activities, which frequently focus on short-term legislative objectives. This may lead to short-term remedies or solutions that ignore the underlying causes of problems.</p> <p>Context also matters with respect to this approach. In a context with a vibrant Parliament, it makes sense and can lead to impact more easily than in a context where a single party dominates, like Tanzania</p>
Research and policy analysis	<p>Research has been effectively used to support lobbying efforts and advocacy campaigns by several media coalitions in the three sub-regions. For example, MAZ member MISA-Zimbabwe has conducted thorough research on different media laws and this research has formed a basis for lobbying by MAZ. In east Africa, KICTANet, WOUGNET and CORI frequently use research.</p> <p>CIPESA, Media Foundation for West Africa and Paradigm Initiative have also been adept at using research as an advocacy strategy. Their research is used by many coalitions in the sub-regions.</p>	<p>Research findings and policy analyses may not always resonate with the public as they might be found too technical.</p> <p>The strength of an argument or the availability of evidence are not the only factors that influence policy adoption. Policy making in many African countries is frequently influenced by political factors and ideological beliefs, which can reduce the effectiveness of research-based advocacy. In semi-authoritarian contexts such as Eswatini, Somalia, Uganda and Zimbabwe, this form of advocacy strategy might not produce fruits.</p>
Knowledge-sharing	<p>This one is of the most common advocacy strategies used and examples include dialogues, workshops, and media releases.</p>	<p>The downside of these platforms is that they do not include ordinary people from marginalised communities and hardly any from rural areas. Their concerns and desires are not solicited or known, and they are also not involved in ensuing conversations around particular issues.</p>
Hashtag activism	<p>Several media coalitions use hashtags on social media platforms to raise awareness about media policy issues. For example, CSOs in Nigeria used social media to lobby against the Protection from Internet Falsehood and Manipulation Bill, 2019 (“Social Media Bill”); the Prohibition of Hate Speech Bill (“Hate Speech Bill”) and Data Protection Bill, which forced the government to shelve these bills.</p> <p>By using popular social media platforms like Twitter, Instagram, or Facebook, media coalitions have been able to engage a broad audience through popular social media platforms like X (formerly Twitter), Instagram and Facebook. This form of activism can also bring out the interest of the media, especially when an issue goes viral.</p>	<p>Online activism can also have limited impact. While it can raise awareness, it often lacks the depth and long-term commitment required to address complex issues effectively. It is necessary to break down media reform issues since most ordinary citizens do not understand them. Also, this strategy has limitations: digital media remain a preserve of a few urban and peri-urban citizens.</p>

Strategic litigation	There have been limitations to this strategy across the three sub-regions. Media coalitions and/or organisations often collaborate with legal experts, to litigate cases effectively.	This strategy can be time-consuming and expensive.
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Advocacy strategies less used by media coalitions.

While media coalitions do use the following strategies, the assessment found that these strategies are less used. This could be due to limited knowledge and skills in effectively using these strategies. These strategies also depend on coalitions being broad-based and grassroots as they mainly involve engaging with communities. As stated earlier, many of the coalitions in the selected countries lack this broad-based engagement.

Advocacy strategy	Explanation/strengths	Limitations
Public Engagement	This strategy involves actively involving the public in discussions, decision-making processes, and actions related to media reforms and freedom of expression. Engaging the public helps in creating a community of supporters and advocates who share a common interest or concerns. Public engagement can enhance the legitimacy and credibility of advocacy efforts, as it demonstrates that the advocacy is not limited to a small, self-interested group but is supported by a broader community. Public engagement is a powerful tool for advocacy because it taps into the collective power of the public to drive change. In South Africa, the Right2Know Campaign and SOS Support Public Broadcasting Coalition provide a good example of using this strategy.	This method may not work in politically restricted countries where engaging with the public is difficult. Examples include Angola, Eswatini, Somalia, Zimbabwe.
Fact Finding Forums	These forums provide a structured environment for gathering information, data, and evidence related to a specific issue. This information can be crucial in advocating for policy changes, raising awareness, or mobilizing support. The data and information collected during these forums can be used to support evidence-based advocacy. This can be particularly effective in persuading policymakers, legislators, and other stakeholders to take action. The MISA Regional used this strategy in the early 2000s effectively.	Fact-finding forums or missions can be time-consuming and expensive to organise.
Policy monitoring and public accountability	These strategies help hold decision-makers and institutions accountable for their actions, ensuring that they act in the best interests of the public.	This requires effective public oversight mechanisms which depends on the public understanding the media policy and regulatory environment, which is not always the case.
Negotiations	This strategy can be a valuable tool for advancing media coalitions causes. By approaching negotiations strategically, building relationships, and staying persistent, coalitions can work towards mutually beneficial solutions and achieve their advocacy goals.	This method requires skills of negotiation that many media coalitions do not possess.
Public demonstrations and protests	This strategy is effective at pressuring decision-makers to act on a particular issue. When used strategically and peacefully, demonstrations can help bring attention to important issues and drive positive change.	This method may not work in politically restricted countries where public protests and demonstrations are met with resistance from the state security apparatus.
Public campaigns	Public campaigns are an effective lobbying strategy that can be used to influence public opinion, garner support, and raise awareness of a particular issue. These campaigns use a variety of media and communication channels to reach many people. MISA used this strategy in the 1990s and early 2000s to campaign for opening of the airwaves, safety of journalists and for independent broadcasting regulation and these campaigns used in combination with other strategies produced positive results.	Campaigns are resource intense. They require a lot of financial resources and technical expertise to be effective.
Symbolic acts	Symbolic acts are an effective way to give a policy, practice, or issue the exposure it deserves. Journalists in Southern Africa have used the tapping of their mouths as a way of expressing the gagging of freedom of expression and this act gained traction of the public.	These acts may be difficult for some sections of society to decode.

The approaches used by most media coalitions are framed within the legalistic, policy and research-oriented approaches and as such, there has been limited community and public engagement and grassroots mobilisation.

Media advocacy organisations and media coalitions are therefore often perceived to be elitist and urban-based. To counteract this, media coalitions need to increase public and community engagement through outreach programmes, town hall meetings, and collaborations with community-based organisations. Using a combination of strategies within a collaborative and multistakeholder approach can yield positive results as the examples of KICTANet and CoRI discussed above illustrate.

Successful advocacy often involves a multifaceted approach and diverse strategies. Combining different tools with strategic communication, public engagement and grassroots mobilisation can enhance the overall impact of advocacy efforts of media coalitions. A good example of this multifaceted approach is the 2011 campaign for the *African Platform on Access to Information*, a continental approach to promote access to information in Africa. As part of its efforts, 28 September was declared International Day of Universal Access to Information by the UN General Assembly (UNGA) and a host of countries adopted Access to Information laws subsequent years to the campaign. The campaign's success was the use of a mix of advocacy approaches and strategies. It used a rights-based discourse to frame demands for access to information and broadened the justification for the right to information by presenting information as linked to inalienable rights.

8. Recommendations for strengthening media coalitions

The findings from the three sub-regions demonstrate that a variety of players are actively advocating for media freedom and freedom of expression, but coalition building is weak. Effective lobbying efforts on key issues pertaining to media freedom are primarily carried out by well-funded NGOs and think tanks like ARTICLE 19, Media Foundation for West Africa, CIPESA, and MISA. These organisations collaborate with local NGOs or operate independently. National level media coalitions often operate in the shadows of these organisations. The assessment also found limited multistakeholder and multi-sectoral coalitions that advocate for media freedom. When media coalitions and CSOs collaborate, the collaboration is frequently spontaneous and transitory. Most collaborations between the media and civil society lack the vision necessary to bring about long-lasting policy and social change⁵³. Furthermore, even though media and freedom of expression are fundamental human rights, there is little indication that non-media coalitions support these causes in the same way as they do the right to education, health or equality. This has been a growing concern in media advocacy campaigns for a very long time, but solutions to address this matter seem to still be lacking. Many rights-based NGOs and CSOs continue to see media freedom concerns as separate from human rights issues.

There also seems to be no effective strategies on how media coalitions can best establish relationships with non-traditional partners (e.g., the business community, actors in the tech space) and regional coalitions. In a time when artificial intelligence (AI) and other cutting-edge technologies affect practically every aspect of the media and communications ecosystem, innovative and impactful coalition-building strategies are needed. As a result, tech and business organisations can serve as valuable coalition partners. Although the continent is home to several regional and continental coalitions operating in the media and human rights fields, there is a dearth of collaboration between these groups and national media coalitions. While studies on media coalitions in Africa have been dedicated to understanding how coalition building works nationally, we know little about how regional/continental and national collaboration on media freedom works in our context.

There is also little diversity in many media coalitions and networks, with limited leadership from women and participation from youth. Many coalitions also remain urban-centered and elitist.

Coalition-building in the three thematic areas – net freedoms and public interest technology, public interest journalism and media and governance – varies across the three sub-regions and across the different media coalitions. While there are some media coalitions that are performing better than others, the assessment clearly shows that across the three sub-regions, there is little effective advocacy and joint actions on key issues concerning net freedoms and public interest journalism. Most media coalitions, networks and journalists' associations are preoccupied with fighting for full legal recognition of freedom of expression and access to information and for media self-regulation. Although the African continent has made great strides in promoting freedom of expression, the media operating environment is still fraught with repressive laws. And while the new digital environment has brought a myriad of positive developments, it has also come with new challenges and threats to media freedom. Advocacy on digital rights and net freedoms is limited to a few issues such as misinformation/disinformation and internet shutdowns. In the area of public interest journalism, the focus for most media coalitions is on investigative journalism and other aspects such as media diversity, inclusive media and media viability are neglected.

From these insights, we put forward the following recommendations:⁵⁴

⁵⁰ MFWA (2021) *Impact of shrinking civic space on media and citizens in West Africa: Trends and Actions Required*. Retrieved at <https://www.mfwa.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Revised-Final-The-Shrinking-Civic-Space-in-West-Africa-final.pdf>

Strengthening media coalitions

Promote and develop cross-sector and multistakeholder coalitions and networks.

It is recommended that funders and NGOs in this work develop strategies on how to effectively build broad-based, cross-sector and multistakeholder coalitions. Successful models can be identified for learning. Multi-stakeholder partnerships can facilitate innovative solutions to complex issues that are confronting the media ecosystem.

Funders should facilitate exchange of information, skills, experience, materials, and opportunities for collaboration.

Effective media coalitions can serve as role models for learning. In countries where media coalition building is still in its nascent stages, there is a need for capacity building and development among the recently formed coalitions. Mentorships from those with more experience and knowledge provide an opportunity to improve skills development. Funders should deliberately promote cross-country learning.

Leveraging intellectual resources of regional and global advocacy organisations.

Rather than seeing regional and global advocacy NGOs working on the same issues as national coalitions as threats, media coalitions can join forces with these organisations. It is recommended that donors support collaborative approaches which can provide national level media coalitions with broader visibility, increased outreach and lead to more informed, comprehensive, and effective initiatives to address shared objectives.

Support youth-oriented coalitions.

Given the dynamic nature of youth, coalitions that are youth-oriented often embrace innovation and creativity. They often leverage technology, social media, and other innovative approaches to connect with and mobilise young people. It is recommended that funders provide resources, training, and mentorship programmes to enhance the skills and capacities of young leaders within the coalitions.

Develop leadership skills and capacities of media coalitions.

In coalition-building, leadership is crucial in fostering the respect for differences, mutual understanding, and shared vision that are required to keep disparate actors working together. Funders and coalitions should devote resources to building leadership capacities within coalitions. Capacitated coalitions can easily partner with non-traditional players in lobbying for policy changes. One possible approach to building good leadership in coalitions is applying the system leadership which refers to a collection of skills and capacities that any person or group can use to promote, encourage, and support in the process of bringing about systems-level change. The Systems Leadership approach “is well-suited to complex challenges that require collective action, where no single entity is in control. It involves building and mobilising alliances of diverse stakeholders around a shared vision for systemic change, empowering widespread collaboration, innovation, and action; and enabling mutual accountability for progress to shift systems.”⁵⁵

Multi-year resourcing strategy

IMS should design a multi-year funding strategy focussed on improving the performance of media coalitions by facilitating learning, capacity building and collaboration. This approach will provide opportunities to work with other funders to support the long-term sustainability of proven initiatives in coalition-building. IMS can select a few media coalitions and projects with a potential for impact to fund and support for a specific time period.

Monitoring and Evaluation

It is recommended that IMS create an effective Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) system for its Media Coalitions for Change project. This MEL would aid the IMS in articulating its goals, gathering vital data to evaluate its progress toward impact goals, and keeping an eye on the levers of change. However, it is noted that due to the complex and constantly shifting nature of coalition structures, coalition initiatives can be challenging to track and evaluate. Coalition partners frequently come together with different objectives and agendas. Because of this diversity, developing common metrics for evaluation may prove difficult.

⁵¹ Magnus Ag, Nynne Storm Refsing and Emilie Lehmann-Jacobsen(eds) (2023) *Public interest Infrastructure Digital alternatives in our data-driven world and journalism's role getting there*. Retrieved at <https://www.mediasupport.org/public-interest-infrastructure/>

Thematic Area 1: Net freedoms and public interest technology

Facilitate international partnerships between African and global coalitions.

Advocacy issues around net freedoms keep changing. At a global level, international coalitions especially in the global north have developed advocacy strategies that adapt to the changes taking place in the technology sector. African coalitions working on these issues can learn from global coalitions to understand how they can further strengthen their advocacy work in a domain that keeps changing.

Building intersectoral collaborations on net freedoms and public interest technology

Encourage and support local networks engaged in work on public interest technologies and net freedoms to form intersectoral collaborations. Intersectoral networks create enduring relationships between different advocacy groups, which in turn connects them to broader networks. CSOs involved in media freedom work should leverage technology that allows them to strengthen and scale their work. Collaboration between public interest technology actors and media coalitions can be highly beneficial for ensuring that technology serves the public good. It can also bring diversity and innovation to the struggle for digital rights.

Capacitate media coalitions to advocate for digital rights.

While existing media coalitions are lobbying for digital rights, this is done in an ad-hoc way. Advocating for digital rights is not easy owing to the complex nature of the digital realm. It requires a multi-faceted strategy that involves raising awareness, engaging with policymakers, collaborating with various stakeholders, and actively participating in shaping the digital landscape to align with fundamental human rights principles, all while keeping up with new developments and their implications.

Capacitate media coalitions in technology governance.

African voices need to be heard more and more in the places where policies are formed, particularly when it comes to digital rights and platform access.

Support the formation of regional coalitions that focus on digital rights.

Regulation of digital concerns like AI and big tech is a pan-continental issue rather than a national one. Therefore, to advocate for regulation of these issues in the public interest, it is necessary to support a regional coalition of relevant stakeholders.

Thematic area 2: Public interest journalism

Build a programme for promoting journalism as a public good.

Media coalitions and journalist associations need to understand the different aspects of public interest journalism. Developing a programme to advance journalism as a public good requires a multipronged strategy that takes into consideration audience engagement, journalism's many facets, and media financial sustainability. This requires developing partnerships with tech actors to develop and implement innovative approaches to news dissemination and audience engagement.

Promote local journalism.

News deserts are also growing larger, with many marginalised and rural communities in Africa lacking a news source that provides meaningful and trustworthy local reporting of issues of concern. It's a void that hinders people from knowing what's happening in their world and from being fully engaged as informed citizens. As part of promoting public interest journalism, media coalitions should promote local journalism. Partnerships should be built between local media outlets and media coalitions to promote sustainable models for community-driven journalism.

Promote advocacy journalism.

Media coalitions should form partnerships with NGOs that share the goal of promoting journalism as a public good. CSOs/NGOs should be trained to produce 'advocacy journalism' to enhance public interest journalism and social change. Advocacy journalism can serve as a tool within a broader advocacy strategy by helping to shape public opinion and garner support for policy reform or social change. Advocacy journalism aligns with the goal of serving the public interest and contributing to a more informed and empowered society.

⁵² Girard, B & O'Siochru, S. Eds. (2003), *Communicating in the Information Society*, United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, Geneva

⁵³ Mander, H & Joshi, A (1999) 'The Movement for Right to Information in India: People's Power for the Control of Corruption' (pp. 1-46). Retrieved at

<https://www.humanrightsinitiative.org/programs/ai/rti/india/articles/The%20Movement%20for%20RTI%20in%20India.pdf>

Work with established continental bodies.

Coalitions and funders should work with the African Union which has introduced the AU African Media Fellowship that aims to empower African media professionals, journalists, and content creators to promote development- focused stories using emerging technologies.

Empower digital start-ups that focus on public interest journalism.

Africa is home to many creative digital start-ups that are producing cutting-edge work. Some of them are focused on public interest journalism. Most of them are not supported and yet they have the capabilities to reach out to millions of people. Coalitions must have an effective strategy to support these initiatives.

Thematic area 3: Media and governance**Capacitate media coalitions to tackle emerging governance issues in the media space.**

The media landscape has changed drastically in the past two decades. There is a need to build the capacity of media coalitions so that they respond to new and emerging threats and opportunities in the digital media ecosystem. Funders should resource media coalitions to enhance their capacity to tackle emerging governance issues in the media space through collaborative and strategic efforts involving capacity building, information sharing, tech collaboration and research.

Scale up advocacy on the safety of journalists.

Advocacy for the safety of journalists is crucial in ensuring media freedom, freedom of expression and the overall health of democratic societies. Scaling up advocacy on the safety of journalists requires a multi-faceted approach that involves collaboration between governments, media organisations, civil society, and the public. Coalitions and funders need to come up with to scale up advocacy on the safety of journalist.

9. Future areas for research

The findings and assessment in this report provide a bird's eye view of the state of media coalitions in east, southern and west Africa and coalition building in key media freedom issues. The assessments identified factors, approaches and strategies that make media coalitions effective. The findings of this assessment provide a starting point for additional research in the areas as listed below:

- There is a need for a comparative approach that explicitly compares media coalitions nationally, regionally, and continentally.
- Much of the literature on coalitions building in Africa has focused on their formation and factors that make them successful – and much less on the question of under what conditions coalitions reach their goals (i.e. influencing change).
- There is also a need for impact assessment studies of a selected media coalitions to determine the factors of their success or areas that have contributed to failure.

⁵⁴ Cisneros P (2021) *The Advocacy Coalition Framework Research Program: An Overview*. Oxford: Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics.

⁵⁵ Coalition carries out public education on the ills of illegal mining activities, advocacy with stakeholders to ensure the eradication of galamsey and to promote sustainable mining.

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⁵⁶ Interview with SOS Coordinator, Uyanda Siyotula

⁵⁷ KICTNET: <https://www.kictanet.or.ke/>

⁵⁸ <https://acme-ug.org/2023/05/15/enforcing-regional-judiciary-decisions-the-case-of-tanzanias-media-services-act/>

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⁵⁹ Interview with Jonah Eledi, West African Democracy Network

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APPENDIX A: INTERVIEWS AND FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

EAST AFRICA

East Africa digital rights, internet freedoms FGD	
Martin Mavenjina	Senior Program Advisor - Transitional Justice Kenya Human Rights Commission
Daniel Waitere	National Gender and Equality Commission - NGEC
Juliet Namfuka	Research and Communications Officer- CIPESA
Collins Liko	Program Coordinator for Economic Policy and Human Rights (ESCR-Net)
KENYA (FGDs)	
David Indeje	Kenya Union of Journalists (KUJ)
Christine Nguku	Media Council of Kenya (MCK)
Eric Oduor	Kenya Union of Journalists (KUJ)
Ibrahim Oduor	Kenya Union of Journalists (KUJ)
William Oloo Janak	Kenya Correspondents Association (KCA)
Judie Kaberia	Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom
Kennedy Kachwanya	Bloggers Association of Kenya (BAKE)
Macharia Gaithe	Independent Journalist. Editorial Consultant. Content Developer
Patience Nyange	Association of Media Women in Kenya (AMWIK)
Racheal Nakitare	Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC) Ruth Nesoba – BBC, East Africa
RWANDA (FGDs)	
Peace (Tumwesigire) Hillary	Managing Director, Family Magazine & Chairperson, Women Media Owners for Change in Rwanda
Adv. Jean Paul Ibambe	Senior Counsel - media and freedoms Legal Aid Forum Rwanda
Placide Ngirinshuti	Legal Representative/Executive Director - Rwanda Journalists for Sustainable Development (RJSD)
Emmanuel Hitimana Nkubito	Program Manager - Rwanda Environmental Journalists
John Mudakikwa	Center for Rule of Law Rwanda (CERULAR)
Honnête Isimbi	Programs Manager Association Rwandese Des Femmes Des Medias (ARFEM)
Nzovu Job Ruzage	ED - Human Rights First Rwanda Association (HRFRA)

⁶⁰ <https://www.archive.avac.org/compass>

⁶¹ The Tinkhundla system refers to the decentralisation or devolution of power from the state to local entities. In practice, the Tinkhundla system has severe ramifications for democratic engagement and has silenced dissenting opinions that contradict with the established quo. Consequently, despite being guaranteed by the Constitution, the freedoms of the press, of association, and of assembly continue to be restricted.

⁶² It would be interesting to find out why political threats have failed to galvanise media CSOs to form media coalitions in these countries.

Albert Baudouin	National Coordinator Pax Press
INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS	
Saidati Mukakibibi	Independent Journalist – Montjali News
Janat Umumarashavu	Association Rwandese Des Femmes Des Medias (ARFEM)
INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS	
Sandra Aceng	Executive Director, Women of Uganda Network (WOUGNET)
Dr. Waiswa Abudu Sallam	Head of Legal Affairs, Uganda Communications Commission
Dr. George Lugalambi	Executive Director, African Centre for Media Excellence (ACME); Coordinator, Uganda Media Sector Working Group (UMSWG)
Jeff Wokulira Ssebagala	Country Director, Witness radio
Somalia (FDGs)	
Fartuun Adan	Executive Director, Elman Peace and Human Rights Centre
Abdalle Ahmed Mumin	Secretary General, Somali Journalists Syndicate (SJS)
Mohamed Mohamud Adde,	Senior media consultant, Federation of Somali Journalists (FESOJ)
Hassan Ali Gesey	Chairman, Somali Independent Media Houses Association (SIMHA)
Kafia Abdullahi	Media Women Network (MWN)
Dr. Mohamed Hussein Isse (Liibaan)	Deputy Chair, Center for Democracy and Human Rights (CDHR)
Nasro-Kin Hashi Nurre	Deputy Chair, Somali Women Journalists Organization (SWJO)
Mohamed Bishaar	Program Officer, Somali Mechanism for Safety of Journalists (SMSJ)
INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS	
Maryan Seylac	Executive Director, (Somali Media Women Association) SOMWA (One on One interview)
Abukar Albadri	IMS Programme Coordinator
TANZANIA (FDGs)	
Nuzulack J. Dausen	Nukta Africa
Salome Kitomari	Media Institute of Southern Africa -Tanzania Chapter (MISA -TAN)
Deogratius Chambi	Tanzania Human Rights Defenders Coalition (THRDC)
Nuru Maro	Tanzania Human Rights Defenders Coalition (THRDC)
Dr Rose Reuben	Tanzania Media Women's Association (TAMWA)
Mwinyimvua Abdi Nzukwi	Zanzibar Sports Writers Association (ZASWA)
Dastan Kamanzi	Tanzania Media Foundation (TMF)
Gladness Munuo	Gender and Media in Southern Africa-Tanzania Network (GEMSAT)
Kenneth Simbaya	Union of Tanzania Press Clubs (UTPC)
Uganda (FDGs)	
Dr Patricia Litho	Chairperson, Uganda Media Women's Association (UMWA)
Esther Nakkazi	Founder, Health Journalists Network in Uganda (HEJNU)

Ben Musanje	Member - Health Journalists Network in Uganda (HEJNU)
Jan Ajwang	Programmes Manager, Media Focus on Africa Uganda
Kabuye Ronald	Spokesperson, Uganda Journalists Association (UJA)
John Musenze	Journalist, New Vision
Innocent Nahabwe	Vice-Chairman, National Association of Broadcasters (NAB)
Emmanuel Kirunda	Secretary General, Uganda Journalists Association (UJA)
Charles Odoobo Bichachi –	Founding Member- Uganda Media Sector Working Group Managing Editor - Monitor Publications Ltd Uganda
Moses Mulindwa	Programme Associate - Policy, Governance and Civic Engagement - Programme Associate - Policy, Governance and Civic Engagement - Uganda National NGO Forum

SOUTHERN AFRICA

ANGOLA	
Armindo Laureano	Director, Novo Jornal
Milena Costa	Coordinator of Forum of Women Journalists for Gender Equality and TPA public media television producer
Teixeira Candido	Secretary general, Syndicate of Angolan Journalists and media lecturer
Jose Silva	Radio LAC and president of ecological youth in Angola
Paulo Faria	Parliamentary Committee Chair of matters dealing with Arts, Sports and Culture which encompasses media
Andre Sibi, chairman	Chairman, Angola Union of Journalists
ESWATINI	
Patience Magagula	Swazi Women Media Association and Editor, Swazi TV
Mfanasibili Sihlongonyane	Publisher, Independent News
Bheki Dlamini	President of Media Workers Union
Chester Maphalala	Editor, Tertiary Hub News
Ndimphiwe Shabangu	Coordinator of Media Consortium, CANGO
Vusi Sibisi	Former editor, Columnist, Blogger
Qalakaliboli Dlamini	Citizen Journalist
Jabu Matsebula	Swaziland Editors Forum
MOZAMBIQUE	
Eddy Lumasai	Senior manager for Operational programs, Media Lab
Ferosa Zacarias	Executive Director, National Forum of Community radios (FORCOM)
Ernesto Nanhale	Director, MISA Mozambique and media lecturer
Edson Cortez, Mais Integrade	Centre for Public Integrity
Luis Nhachote	Journalist and Centre for Investigative Journalism
Fernandos Goncalves	Editorial Director, Savana Media Coop
Bayano Valy	Managing Partner, Mozambique Insights
ZAMBIA	
Richard Mulonga	Editor, Bloggers of Zambia

Joan Chirwa	Founder, Free Press Initiative
Vusimuzi Sifile	Director PANOS Southern Africa
Ernest Chanda	President, Media Liaison Committee
Austin Kayanda	Director, MISA Zambia
Melesiana Phiri	Legislator
Miyoka Nankayoa and Kondwani Thiandwa, Brian Simpahnde	Verify, fact check organisation
ZIMBABWE	
Zenzele Ndebele	Director Cite ZW and online journalist. Matebeleland Media Coalition
William Chikoto	Managing Editor, Zimpapers
Nigel Nyamukutu	Director, Media Alliance of Zimbabwe
Tabani Moyo	Director, MISA- Zimbabwe
Patience Zirima	Director, Gender and Media Connect
Sandra Mazunga	Director, Zimbabwe Community Radio Association
Nhau Mangirazi	Station Manager, Hurungwe Community Radio Initiative
Farai Chadima	Director, Media Monitoring Zimbabwe

INTERVIEWS WITH REGIONAL/CONTINENTAL STAKEHOLDERS

Name	Organisation
Jonah Eledi	West African Democracy Network
Paul Osei-Kuffour	West African Democracy Network
Yemisi Akinbobola	African Women in Media
Uyanda Siyotula	SOS: Public Service Broadcasting Coalition
Elizabeth Mula	Southern African Editors Forum
Troye Lund	IJ-Hub
Michael Markovitz	Gordon Business School Media Leadership Think Tank
Anya Schiffrin	Director of the Technology, Media, and Communications specialization at Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs
Lytton Ncube	Senior Lecturer, University of Botswana

GHANA	
Edward Akani	Associate Manager, Ghanatech Lab, Ghana Digital Centre, Accra.
Kwame Okyere Jnr.	News Anchor, Class FM
Pearl Cindi Ollenu	Producer, Reporter, Class FM
Lawra Lawson	Producer, Class FM
Elizabeth Aidoo	News Anchor, Class FM
Christopher Atitso	News Anchor, Class FM
Maxwell Kojo Nyagamago	News Anchor, Class FM
Eugenia Atsu-Koni	Broadcast Journalist, Class FM
Valentina Ofiri-Afriyie	News Editor/Broadcast Journalist, Class FM
Samuel Abogobon Azuma	Social media activist/content creator
Boakye Patrick	Content creator on Instagram – itzehard123
Victoria Abugri	Content creator on wordpress – Vandahotel Victoria. Wordpress.com
Galley Benard	Content creator for Opera News
Sarah Queitu	Content creator for places
Michael Mfum Sarpong	Citi FM Bono Region
Norvan Acquah Hayford	Content Producer, Norvan Report
Evans Aziamor-Mensah	Reporter/Fact Checker FactCheck Ghana

Mr. George Kingson	PRO, Private News Paper Publishers of Ghana (PRINPAG)
Mr. Kofi Yeboah	Executive Secretary, Ghana Journalists Association (GJA)
Muheeb Saeed	Programme Manager, Freedom of Expression, Media Foundation for West Africa (MFWA)
NIGERIA	
Mr. Isiyaku Ahmed	Executive Director, Voice of Accountability Platform
Kolawole Omoniyi	Station Manager, Cool FM, Wazobia FM and Arewa FM
Abdul Ozumi	Journalist, PR Nigeria
Oyiza Bello	Reporter, Radio Nigeria
Madam Siju Alabi	General Manager, Lagos TV
Mr. Abbas Ibrahim	Chairman, Nigeria Union of Journalists, Kano Branch/News Editor, Kano State Radio Corporation
Mr. Yakubu Salisu	President, Online Journalists Association of Kano/Kano
Jide Oyekunle	Chairman, Nigeria Union of Journalists, Abuja Branch/Journalist, Daily Independent Newspaper
Prince Achoja	Founder and CEO, StemLab Hub
Stephen Enoch	Investigative Journalist, Stallion Times
SENEGAL	
Ibrahima Lissa Faye	President, Association des Éditeurs et professionnels de la presse en ligne (APPEAL)/Journalist
Tofik Abdul Nasir	Producer/ Reporter, West Africa Democracy Radio
Mamadou Thior	Journalist and Président, Conseil pour l'observation des Regles D'éthique et de deontologie dans les medias (President, Council for the Observation of Ethical Rules and Professional Conduct in the Media) (CORED))
Migui Marame Ndiaye	Président de la convention des jeunes reporters du Sénégal (CJRS)/Journalist
Imoh Edet	Journalist/Producer/Assistant Partnership Officer, West Africa Democratic Radio (WADR)
Mame Abdou Gaye Casset	Journalist and Head of International and Economy Desk, IRadio and ITV.
Jimmy Kande	Francophone West Africa Director, Platform to Protect Whistleblowers in Africa (PPLAAF)
Maxime Domegni	Francophone Africa Editor, Global Investigative Journalists Network (GIJN)
Alfred Nkuru Bulakali	Regional Director, Article 19
Maateuw Mbaye	Program Officer Working on Protection and Civic Space, Article 19
Abdoulaye Ndiaye	Program Officer working on Transparency and Access to Information, Article 19
Bamba Kassé	Journalist and Président, Syndicat Professionnels Information Communication Sénégal (SYN-PICS).
LIBERIA	
Peter Quaqua	President, West Africa Journalists Association/Journalist
Malcolm Joseph	Executive Director, Centre for Media Studies and Peacebuilding (CEMESP)
Mr. Daniel Nyakonah Jnr.	President, Press Union of Liberia
BURKINA FASO	
Sriki Dramé	President du Comité de Pilotage du Centre National de Press Norbert Zongo (President of the leading committee of the National Norbert Zongo Press Centre).
Tao Abouloulaye	Secrétaire Général de Société des Editeurs de la Presse (SEP) (General Secretary of the Society of Press Editors).
P. M. Arnaud Ouedrago	Coordinator for Cellule Norbet Zongo pour le Journalisme d'investigation en Afrique de l'ouest (CENOZO)
Martin Kaba	Journalist and reporter of Studio YAFA and Correspondent for West Africa Democracy Radio (Senegal)
Sanfo Aboubakar	Secrétaire Général Adjoint du Syndicat Autonome des Trouvailleues de d'Information et de la Culture (SYNATIC)
Inoussa Ouédraogo	Directeur de publication Journal eu lingue et Bebdounadaire (BENDRE) and President of Société des Editeurs de la Presse (SEP).
Albert Nagreogo	Director and Manager, Libreinfo.net
Abdou Zoure	Director and Manager, Faso 7

APPENDIX B: DRAFT INTERVIEW GUIDE

Interview guide for media coalition leaders

Name of Interviewee	
Category of Interviewee	Media coalition leaders
Date of Interview	
Was this interview recorded?	
Organisation-level	
Question:	Response:
Please tell me about yourself and the coalition you lead. <i>Probe: What is the history and background of your media coalition—when was it founded, how many members does it have? What motivated its formation?</i> <i>Probe: What is its mission and vision of the coalition? What is its main role/remit?</i>	
Recruitment	
Question:	Response:
How do you recruit members to the coalition? <i>Probe: What are the criteria? And how do members leave coalitions?</i> <i>Probe: what issues should be considered when assembling a coalition?</i> <i>Probe: Do you have a limit to the number of members in the coalition?</i>	
Apart from your coalition, which other local groups/actors are engaged in working on media freedom issues? <i>Probe: To what extent have you worked with any/all of these groups?</i> <i>Probe: Is there someone at group X (civil society, university, other advocacy-related group) that you recommend that I talk to?</i>	
Media ecosystem: Net freedoms, public interest journalism and media and governance	
Question:	Response:
Can you tell me about the current situation with regards to media freedom, access to information and digital rights in your country?	
What is your opinion about the ability of the media to serve as a “watchdog” and fulfil its “Fourth Estate” functions? <i>Probe: To what extent do you think media and news media have the capacity to frame political issues and serve as a kind of advocate of key public interest issues of the day?</i> <i>Probe: Do you think that news media accurately report, verify, and question matters of governance and public matters as well as commercial and corporate or business matters?</i>	
To what extent does government or political parties (including the ruling party and the main opposition) influence or control editorial content and reporting?	
How would you characterise the public’s level of trust of journalists and news coverage in general? <i>Probe: Is journalism a trusted institution in your country?</i> <i>Probe: How do trust levels of media compare to other institutions (i.e., government, business, etc.)</i>	
To what extent do you think disinformation or misinformation is a problem in your country? <i>Probe: Do you think media perpetuates this problem?</i> <i>Probe: How can journalism regain trust and purpose in an era of disinformation and fake news?</i>	

What are some examples of disinformation, misinformation or malinformation that you can think of that give context to the problem of “information disorder” in your country?	
What about the role of Big Tech? Do Google, Twitter, Facebook, WhatsApp, and other such companies have any influence in the media space? If so, what role do they play? <i>Probe: Which new actors are playing a big role in the media ecosystem as a result of digital transformation?</i> <i>Probe: Are local citizens able to influence and advocate for their interests in terms of the role that Big Tech plays in media space the?</i>	
Why do you think public interest technology is important in promoting democracy and good governance?	
What is the nature of public interest journalism in your country? <i>Probe: How strong is investigative journalism?</i>	
To what extent is platformisation of news a factor in your country? <i>Probe: How have traditional revenue models for news media, such as print advertising and subscriptions, been disrupted by the rise of digital platforms?</i> <i>Probe: What is the impact of platformisation of news on the trust and credibility of news sources, as platforms often prioritise engagement and user preferences over quality and accuracy?</i> <i>Probe: What is the impact of platformisation of news on public interest journalism?</i>	
How media coalitions can effectively engage, and influence issues related internet governance policies, digital rights, internet access and inclusion, use of artificial intelligence?	
What types of support is needed to improve advocacy for media freedom and digital rights and an improved legal environment?	
Are current laws, policies, and regulations adequate to deal with the new digital reality?	
Advocacy Issues	
Question:	Response:
Based on the media context issues discussed above, what advocacy issues do you focus on? <i>Probe: How do you decide what to focus on?</i> <i>Probe: How do you select the issues?</i> <i>Probe: What have you done in the last 6 months or year that you would consider?</i>	
Besides media coalitions, are there bloggers, citizen journalists, or social media influencers whom you feel shape public opinion and push for media reforms in your country? <i>Probe: How do they compare to the kind of work that coalitions do?</i>	
What advocacy approaches do you use mostly? <i>Probe: How effective are these strategies?</i> <i>Probe: What are your advocacy strengths and limitations?</i>	
Do you collaborate with other non-media coalitions in your advocacy work?	
Coalition building: Resources, mobilisation and power	
Question:	Response:
What value do you think coalitions bring to media reform and advocacy work? <i>Probe: What are some of the advantages?</i> <i>Probe: What issues should be considered when assembling a coalition?</i>	
Since you were formed, what impact do you think your coalition has brought to your country? <i>Probe: give some examples of successful interventions</i> <i>Probe: what policies have been changed or adopted since you were formed?</i>	
Apart from the government, which other groups do you lobby for policy change and reform? <i>Probe: Do you lobby tech actors in the area of digital rights? Or public interest technology?</i>	

<p>Coalitions, by their very nature, involve power dynamics among the participating members. What are some of these dynamics that you have observed in your coalitions?</p> <p><i>Probe: do you think that those members with resources and capital influence decisions in the coalition?</i></p> <p><i>Probe: How do the power imbalances shape the dynamics within the coalition?</i></p> <p><i>Probe: How do you foster inclusive decision-making in your coalition?</i></p> <p><i>Probe: How many times do you meet?</i></p>	
<p>Gender dynamics within coalitions can also play a crucial role in shaping power dynamics, decision-making processes, and outcomes.</p> <p><i>Probe: are there gender imbalances that you have noted in coalitions in your country?</i></p> <p><i>Probe: what other intersection factors (race, ethnicity, language, sexuality) contribute to power dynamics?</i></p>	
<p>Leadership plays a crucial role in coalitions. Do you have a designated leader?</p> <p><i>Probe: Do you rotate leadership?</i></p> <p><i>Probe: What are some of the dynamics of leadership in your coalition do you want to share with us.</i></p>	
<p>How do you mobilise resources for your short- and long-term goals?</p> <p><i>Probe: do you rely only on international funders, or do you have local resources?</i></p> <p><i>Probe: what is the level of competition for resources with other coalitions?</i></p>	
<p>Coalition work is not the main job of coalition members. How do you maintain momentum and interest of members?</p>	
<p>What is your coalition's life expectancy?</p>	
<p>What are the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats to coalition building in your country?</p> <p><i>Probe: What are the factors that strengthen effective media coalitions/alliances?</i></p> <p><i>Probe: What are the factors that weaken effective media coalitions/alliances?</i></p> <p><i>Probe: Is there any particular impediment placed by political actors, the political environment; powerful elites; parliament/legislature/ powerful commercial interests in styming the works of coalitions in your country?</i></p>	
Looking ahead: Strategies and new ways of doing things	
Question:	Response:
How have digital platforms (e.g. social media) transformed strategies of coalition?	
Do you think Africa needs different approaches to collective action that are different from the ones in the global north?	
<p>We are living in what is being called a post-pandemic world. The pandemic disproportionately affected marginalized communities, exacerbating existing inequalities. What key issues should coalitions focus on?</p> <p><i>Probe: what new strategies are needed?</i></p> <p><i>Probe: what resources needed?</i></p>	
How can media coalitions become more diverse, relevant, inclusive, and sustainable over time?	
<p>What is the best way to support and encourage a more open, diverse, and capable media coalitions?</p> <p><i>Probe: What are the priorities?</i></p> <p><i>Probe: What resources will be needed to do this?</i></p>	
<p>To what extent are there strategic gaps in donor-funded media assistance that are essential to promote effective media coalitions?</p> <p><i>Probe: Can you give an example?</i></p>	
What would you describe as being innovative features or best practices of donor activity in the area of media coalitions?	
<p>Where do you see your countries state of media coalitions in the next five to ten years?</p> <p><i>Probe: In your opinion, what stands out as the most important factors in your country that are likely to support coalitions going forward?</i></p> <p><i>Probe: and what are the most serious impediments to coalitions building` in your context?</i></p> <p><i>Probe: what do you think needs to be reformed, internally and externally for the survival of coalitions in your country?</i></p>	

Wrap-up	
Question:	Response:
Is there anything else you would like to discuss that we have not talked about?	
Thank you very much. Please feel free to email me if you have anything else to add or would like to clarify any of your remarks.	

Interview guide for media coalition member organisations

Name of interviewee:	Name of Interviewee:
Category of interviewee:	Media coalition member organisations
Date of interview	
Was this interview recorded?	
Organisation-level	
Question:	Response:
Please tell me about you and your organisation.	
Membership in coalitions	
Question:	Response:
How many coalitions are you involved in?	
What value does being a member of a coalition bring to your work? <i>Probe: why did you join the coalitions you are part of?</i>	
Media ecosystem: Net freedoms, public interest journalism and media and governance	
Question:	Response:
Can you tell me about the current situation with regards to media freedom, access to information and digital rights in your country?	
What is your opinion about the ability of the media to serve as a “watchdog” and fulfil its “Fourth Estate” functions? <i>Probe: to what extent do you think media and news media have the capacity to frame political issues and serve as a kind of advocate of key public interest issues of the day?</i> <i>Probe: do you think that news media accurately report, verify, and question matters of governance and public matters as well as commercial and corporate or business matters?</i>	
To what extent does government or political parties influence or control editorial content and reporting?	
How would you characterize the public’s level of trust of journalists and news coverage in general? <i>Probe: is journalism a trusted institution in your country?</i> <i>Probe: how do trust levels of media compare to other institutions (i.e., government, business, etc.)</i> <i>Probe: do you think trust in the media has increased/decreased over the past few years? What are the signs of rising/decreasing levels of this trust?</i>	
To what extent do you think disinformation or misinformation is a problem in your country? <i>Probe: do you think media perpetuates this problem? Or is it mainly perpetuated by social media?</i> <i>Probe: how can journalism regain trust and purpose in an era of disinformation and fake news?</i>	
What are some examples of disinformation, misinformation or malinformation that you can think of that give context to the problem of “information disorder” in your country?	
What about the role of Big Tech? Do Google, Twitter, Facebook, WhatsApp, and other such companies have any influence in the media space? If so, what role do they play? <i>Probe: are local citizens able to influence and advocate for their interests in terms of the role that Big Tech plays in media space the?</i>	

<p>Do you think public interest technology is important in promoting democracy and good governance? a. <i>Probe: if so, in what ways?</i></p>	
<p>What is the nature of public interest journalism in your country? <i>Probe: how strong is investigative journalism?</i> <i>Probe: what topical issues is public interest journalism tackling, currently, in your country?</i></p>	
<p>To what extent is platformisation of news a factor in your country? <i>Probe: how have traditional revenue models for news media, such as print advertising and subscriptions, been disrupted by the rise of digital platforms?</i> <i>Probe: what is the impact of platformisation of news on the trust and credibility of news, as platforms often prioritize engagement and user preferences over quality and accuracy?</i> <i>Probe: is the impact of platformisation of news on public interest journalism?</i> <i>Probe: what kind of model would you want, that balances the existential reality of platforms and platformisation of news ecosystem, and the interests of mainstream public/private media?</i></p>	
<p>How media coalitions can effectively engage, and influence issues related to internet governance policies, digital rights, internet access and inclusion, use of artificial intelligence?</p>	
<p>What types of support is needed to improve advocacy for media freedom and digital rights and an improved legal environment? <i>Probe: where can this support come from? In other words, which institutions can help build this support?</i></p>	
<p>Are current laws, policies, and regulations adequate to deal with the new digital reality?</p>	
<p>Coalition building: Resources, mobilisation and power</p>	
<p>Question:</p>	<p>Response:</p>
<p>What value do you think coalitions bring to media reform and advocacy work? <i>Probe: what are some of the advantages?</i> <i>Probe: what issues should be considered when assembling a coalition?</i></p>	
<p>Since you were formed, what impact do you think the coalitions you are part of have brought to your country? And your organisation? <i>Probe: give some examples of successful interventions</i> <i>Probe: do you value local, regional or continental coalitions more? Which ones do you value more?</i> <i>Probe: what policies have been changed or adopted since you were formed?</i></p>	
<p>Apart from the government, which other groups do you lobby for policy change and reform? <i>Do you lobby tech actors in the area of digital rights? Or public interest technology?</i></p>	
<p>Coalitions, by their very nature, involve power dynamics among the participating members. What are some of these dynamics that you have observed in your coalitions? <i>Probe: do you think that those members with resources and capital influence decisions in the coalition?</i> <i>Probe: how do the power imbalances shape the dynamics within the coalition?</i> <i>Probe: how do you foster inclusive decision-making in your coalition?</i> <i>Probe: How many times do you meet?</i> <i>Probe: How do you navigate these power dynamics?</i></p>	
<p>Gender dynamics within coalitions can also play a crucial role in shaping power dynamics, decision-making processes, and outcomes. <i>Probe: are there gender imbalances that you have noted in coalitions in your country?</i> <i>Probe: what other intersection factors (race, ethnicity, language, sexuality) contribute to power dynamics?</i></p>	
<p>Leadership plays a crucial role in coalitions. Do you have a designated leader? <i>Probe: Do you rotate leadership?</i> <i>Probe: What are some of the dynamics of leadership in your coalition do you want to share with us.</i></p>	

How do you mobilise resources for your short- and long-term goals? <i>Probe: do you rely only on international funders, or do you have local resources?</i> <i>Probe: what is the level of competition for resources with other coalitions?</i>	
What are the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats to coalition building in your country? <i>Probe: What are the factors that strengthen effective media coalitions/alliances?</i> <i>Probe: What are the factors that weaken effective media coalitions/alliances?</i>	
Looking ahead: Strategies and new ways of doing things	
Question:	Response:
How have digital platforms (e.g. social media) transformed strategies of coalition?	
Do you think Africa needs different approaches to collective action that are different from the traditional ones, often adopted from the ones in the global north?	
We are living in what is being called a post-pandemic world. The pandemic disproportionately affected marginalized communities, exacerbating existing inequalities. What key issues should coalitions focus on? <i>Probe: what new strategies are needed? (for effective engagement)</i> <i>Probe: what resources needed?</i>	
How can media coalitions become more diverse, relevant, inclusive, and sustainable over time?	
What is the best way to support and encourage a more open, diverse, and capable media coalitions? <i>Probe: What are the priorities?</i> <i>Probe: What resources will be needed to do this?</i> <i>Probe: How will these resources be channelled?</i>	
To what extent are there strategic gaps in donor-funded media assistance that are essential to promote effective media coalitions? <i>Probe: Can you give an example?</i> <i>Probe: In your view, are there any local resources that can be mobilised to sustain local and regional coalitions? `which ones are these?</i>	
What would you describe as being innovative features or best practices of donor activity in the area of media coalitions?	
Where do you see your countries state of media coalitions in the next five to ten years?	
Wrap-up	
Question:	Response:
Is there anything else you would like to discuss that we have not talked about?	
Thank you very much. Please feel free to email me if you have anything else to add or would like to clarify any of your remarks.	

Interview guide for policy-makers

Name of interviewee:	
Category of interviewee:	Policy-makers
Date of interview:	
Was this interview recorded?	
Organisation-level	
Question:	Response:
Tell us about yourself. Which policy -making realm do you belong to- (parliament/ legislature: in that regard; ruling party/opposition/independent etc). Or government bureaucrat? (Director/ permanent secretary etc	
Media ecosystem: Net freedoms, public interest journalism and media and governance	
Question:	Response:

Can you tell me about the current situation with regards to media freedom and access to information in your country? <i>Probe: are you happy with the current state of media freedoms, digital rights, and access to information in your country. If yes, tell us what makes you happy in this current situation. If no, what do you think is still lacking, and how can this be overcome?</i>	
How do you see the media? Do you see it as a democracy-supporting institution or as something different from this?	
How do you use your position as a policymaker to support the media? <i>Probe: take us through the practical ways you have supported the media?</i>	
Investigative journalism is one of the most important roles of the media, as a policymaker, are you in support of this role? And what have you done to fence off this territory from the encroachment of the state?	
What do you think about media accuracy in your country, media polarisation, and trust in the media in your country?	
As a policymaker, have you supported regulations/laws that seek to minimise/eliminate disinformation, misinformation and hate speech on the media ecosystem?	
Journalism/Media institutions have complained consistently that platforms are taking their jobs and causing revenue decline within their organisations. At the level of policymaking, are you aware of this issue, and how are you responding?	
There is the new phenomenon of Ai invading the media ecosystem. How are you responding as policymakers to this new phenomenon.	
What do you think about the role of social media in our media ecosystem? At policymaking levels, do you envisage its regulation? Why? Why not?	
Do you think it is necessary for platforms and big techs to be regulated?	
Coalition building	
Question:	Response:
What value do you think coalitions bring to media reform and advocacy work? <i>Probe: What are some of the advantages?</i> <i>Probe: What issues should be considered when assembling a coalition?</i>	
How do you use your position to support media coalitions/internet freedoms/media freedom/governance?	
What kind of coalitions- CSOs coalitions; media etc, would you want to see in your country? Which issues should they tackle in your view? And how can the state support these coalitions?	
Wrap-up	
Question:	Response:
Is there anything else you would like to discuss that we have not talked about?	
Thank you very much. Please feel free to email me if you have anything else to add or would like to clarify any of your remarks.	

Interview guide for tech actors

Name of interviewee:	
Category of interviewee:	Tech actors
Date of interview:	
Was this interview recorded?	
Organisation-level	
Question:	Response:
Please tell me about yourself. <i>What kind of work in tech space are you involved in do?</i>	
Media ecosystem: Net freedoms, public interest journalism and media and governance	
Question:	Response:

What are your thoughts on the state of media freedom, access to information and digital rights in your country?	
What role do you think tech actors have to play in promoting human rights, democracy and good governance? <i>Probe: what ways can big techs support media freedom/internet freedoms/ and media governance efforts and media sustainability efforts?</i> <i>Probe: What role for example should internet intermediaries and social media platforms play r as providers of infrastructure, content creators and distributors.</i>	
What do you think about the relationship between big techs and journalism institutions? <i>Probe: Big techs have you been accused of killing journalism. What is your take on this?</i>	
To what extent do you think disinformation or misinformation is a problem in your country? <i>Probe: Do you think digital platforms perpetuates this problem?</i>	
Can you tell us how tech actors in the region are either contributing to or supporting efforts to mitigate: mis/dis -information, hate speech and uncivil behaviour on platforms.	
What options exist for telecommunications, internet and other digital platform operators who are instructed by digital authoritarians to implement internet shutdowns and restrictions on social media?	
Why do you think public interest technology is important in promoting democracy and good governance?	
There is a global inequality in terms of access to technology. How are you contributing to tech justice? Take us through instances you have contributed to tech justice.	
Coalitions, alliances and networks	
Question:	Response:
Are you a member of any advocacy coalition? <i>If yes, why did you join this advocacy?</i>	
Do you collaborate with media coalitions in your work? <i>Probe: what value do you think coalitions bring to media reform and advocacy work?</i> <i>Probe: How/In what ways can tech actors support media and various media coalitions?</i>	
What value do you think coalitions bring to media reform and digital rights? <i>Probe: What are some of the advantages?</i> <i>Probe: What issues should be considered when assembling a coalition?</i>	
Looking ahead: Strategies and new ways of doing things	
Question:	Response:
What strategies can tech actors use to fight digital?	
How can tech actors align with civil society organisations in the region to campaign digital rights?	
Wrap-up	
Question:	Response:
Is there anything else you would like to discuss that we have not talked about?	
Thank you very much. Please feel free to email me if you have anything else to add or would like to clarify any of your remarks.	

Interview guide for content creators

Name of interviewee:	
Category of Interviewee:	Content creators
Date of interview:	
Was this interview recorded?	

Organisation-level	
Question:	Response:
<p>Please tell me about yourself. <i>What kind of work in content creation space are you involved in?</i></p>	
Media ecosystem: Net freedoms, public interest journalism and media and governance	
Question:	Response:
<p>What are your thoughts on the state of media freedom, access to information and digital rights in your country?</p>	
<p>What role do you think start-ups and content creators have to play in promoting human rights, democracy and good governance?</p> <p><i>Probe: what ways can start ups and content creators support media freedom/internet freedoms/ and media governance efforts and media sustainability efforts?</i></p>	
<p>What do you think about the relationship between content creators and journalism institutions?</p> <p><i>Probe: What is your view on what has been called 'satire journalism'?</i> <i>Probe: what are the limitations and possibilities of satirical communication as a journalistic resource?</i></p>	
<p>To what extent do you think disinformation or misinformation is a problem in your country?</p> <p><i>Probe: Do you think digital platforms perpetuates this problem?</i></p>	
<p>Can you tell us how tech actors in the region are either contributing to or supporting efforts to mitigate: mis/dis -information, hate speech and uncivil behaviour on platforms.</p>	
Coalitions, alliances and networks	
Question:	Response:
<p>Are you a member of any advocacy coalition? <i>If yes, why did you join this advocacy?</i></p>	
<p>Do you collaborate with media coalitions in your work? <i>Probe: what value do you think coalitions bring to media reform and advocacy work?</i> <i>Probe: How/In what ways can tech actors support media and various media coalitions?</i></p>	
<p>What value do you think coalitions bring to media reform and digital rights? <i>Probe: What are some of the advantages?</i></p>	
Looking ahead: Strategies and new ways of doing things	
Question:	Response:
<p>What strategies can start-ups/ content creators use to fight digital authoritarianism?</p>	
Wrap-up	
Question:	Response:
<p>Is there anything else you would like to discuss that we have not talked about?</p>	
<p>Thank you very much. Please feel free to email me if you have anything else to add or would like to clarify any of your remarks.</p>	

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION POINTS/GUIDE

Date of FGD:

Members of the FGD:

Was this interview recorded:

1. Introduce yourselves.
2. Share your experiences of coalition-building over the years.
3. What have been some of your successes and challenges?
 - a. What do you think led to these achievements?
 - b. What were some of the weaknesses?
 - c. What have you learnt from these experiences?
4. Let's talk about issues of diversity, inclusivity, leadership, and power dynamics in coalitions.
5. The world is changing rapidly, and digital technologies are transforming the media and communication ecosystem. In this new environment, what new challenges for media, democracy and human rights have arisen?
 - a. Do you think the media coalitions as currently constituted are able to address the challenges?
 - b. What needs to change to deal with the current digital reality?
6. What new strategies are needed for media coalitions going forward?
 - a. To promote public interest journalism
 - b. Enhance Digital rights.
 - c. Push for data and tech justice.
7. Where do you see your country's state of media coalitions in the next five to ten years?
8. What stands out as the most important factors in your country that are likely to support coalitions going forward? And what are the most serious impediments to coalitions building` in the country?
9. What do you think needs to be reformed, internally and externally for the survival of coalitions in the country?

