
May 2024

Research Study

A Gender Analysis of the
Media Landscape in Yemen

Dr. Aida Al-Kaisy

IMS MENA 2024**A Gender Analysis of the Media Sector in Yemen**

Published in Denmark by IMS in 2024

Author

Dr. Aida Al-Kaisy

Editorial Support

Muna Bur, Louise Tunbridge, Maha Assabalani and Mehdi Hamzi

Design

Engy Aly

© 2018 IMS


The content of this publication is copyright protected. IMS (International Media Support) is happy to share the text in the publication with you under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License. To view a summary of this license, please visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0>.





Join the global work for press freedom and stay up to date on media issues worldwide


IMSforfreedia

IMSInternationalMediaSupport

 [forfreedia](#)

 [InternationalMediaSupport](#)

 [IMSforfreedia](#)

 [IMS-international-media-support](#)

IMS is a non-profit organisation working to support local media in countries affected by armed conflict, human insecurity and political transition.

www.mediasupport.org

Contents

1. Introduction	6
2. Methodology	8
3. Political context for women and girls	10
4. The Yemeni media landscape	14
5. Challenges to women in the Yemeni media	18
<i>Conservative patriarchal attitudes and social norms</i>	
<i>Safety, security, digital harassment, and trauma</i>	
<i>Structural and infrastructural barriers</i>	
<i>Digital gender gaps</i>	
<i>Gender inclusive journalism</i>	
6. International and local gender and media stakeholders	28
7. Analysis and conclusion	34
8. Recommendations	36
Notes and Bibliography	40

List of Acronyms

ACAPS	Assessment Capacities Project	PTI	Peace Track Initiative
AHJ	Aide Humanitaire et Journalisme	SEMC	Studies and Economic Media Centre
AQAP	Al Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula	SFCG	Search for Common Ground
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation	SGBV	Sexual Gender-Based Violence
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women	STC	Southern Transition Council
CFI	Canal France International	UAE	United Arab Emirates
CSO	Civil society organisations	UK	United Kingdom
DFA	de-facto authority	UN	United Nations
DW	Deutsche Welle	UNDP	United Nations Development Pro- gramme
EU	European Union	UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scien- tific and Cultural Organization
FCDO	Foreign Commonwealth Development Office	UPR	Universal Periodic Review
FGD	Focus Group Discussions	USA	United States of America
GBV	Gender-Based Violence	USAID	U.S. Agency for International Devel- opment
HDI	Human Development Index	VPN	virtual private network
HRD	Human resource development	WCSO	women civil society organisations
IOM	Institute of Migration	WILPF	Women's International League for Peace and Freedom
IRG	Internationally Recognised Government	WPS	Women Peace and Security
LGBTQI+	lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning, intersex, asex- ual, and more	WSM	Women's Solidarity Movement
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding	YJS	Yemeni Journalists Syndicate
NAP	National Action Plan	YMER I	Yemeni Media Emergency Response I
NDC	National Dialogue Conference	YWP	Yemeni Women's Pact
NGOs	non-governmental organisations		
OSESGY	Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen		

1. Introduction

The nine years of war that have devastated Yemen continue to have severe repercussions despite the cessation of fighting on the ground throughout 2023. Poverty, hunger, and disease – from Covid-19 to cholera – are rampant, resulting from disruption to international trade and aid, the internal destruction of transportation and communication systems by war, and widespread corruption which is endemic. Food security is being further exacerbated by a climate crisis that has been aggravated by the prolonged conflict. The United Nations has declared Yemen one of the worst humanitarian crises of our times as years of violent conflict have displaced over four million people across the country. It is estimated that approximately 75% of the 4.5 million displaced Yemenis are women and children, with 26% of those households led by women.¹

Despite mediated peace talks between Saudi Arabia and Houthi officials throughout 2023, there are little signs of progress towards a negotiated and permanent solution. Ceasefire and power-sharing agreements are undermined by violence, including a Houthi-led drone attack against forces in the Saudi coalition which took place in September 2023. The Southern Transition Council (STC), a member of the internationally recognised coalition government in Yemen, continues to call for a separatist state, and attacks by Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) continue to escalate. The Houthis' recent attacks on ships transiting in the Red Sea, allegedly targeting ships that are Israeli owned or bound, have resulted in coordinated airstrikes by the United States and the United Kingdom on Houthi targets in Yemen. Yemen remains politically divided, geographically as well as ideologically, with the Houthis controlling much of northern Yemen and the internationally recognised government controlling the south and east. As a result, the humanitarian crisis continues to escalate, and violations of human rights are ongoing.

It is integral to any chances for peace that more inclusive and locally grown Track 2, 3, 4, and Track 5 diplomatic efforts are embraced. [Multitrack diplomacy is largely considered to be integral to successful peace-building and negotiations. Different tracks include different stakeholders and their resources. Track 2 diplomacy supports the inclusion of CSOs in conflict resolution, Track 3 businesses and track 5 research, training, and education organisations. For further details on the different tracks and importance of multitrack diplomacy in peace efforts see the Institute for Multi-track Diplomacy.] In Yemen, an active civil society is enabling local peace-building efforts and requires the support of the international community. For example, the Peace Track Initiative (PTI), a local women's organisation that has integrated the aims of CEDAW, UNSCR 1325, and Women, Peace and Security resolutions into its work ethic, has developed a feminist peace roadmap that serves as a guiding framework for mediators and negotiators to support the peace process in Yemen. Their work not only recognises the important role that women can play in peace-building but also the disproportionate impact of violence on the life and life chances of women in a context such as Yemen.

Social norms that are conservative and patriarchal dominate Yemeni society. These norms are not only embedded in legislation, but also in customs and traditions. The war and events in Yemen since 2014 have further solidified these norms and entrenched patterns of behaviour towards women as political actors. Additionally, religious and traditional beliefs and attitudes have been weaponised. The increasingly fragmented, polarised, and highly partisan mainstream media landscape reflects these attitudes regarding women, both in terms of organisational treatment and representation in content. Harassment of women on online and social media platforms is rampant and mirrors the rising prevalence of gender-based violence (GBV) and sexual gender-based violence (SGBV) as tactics of war, especially in light of the absence of fair and transparent justice mechanisms.

However, there are pockets of hope amidst this seemingly despairing situation for women in Yemen, such as the PTI. Despite the overwhelming challenges to achieving gender equality, women in Yemen continue to find ways to empower themselves, evoking the strong history of women activists and journalists who have led movements for social change. Their active participation in the 2011 uprising, involvement in the National Dialogue Conference (NDC) in 2014, and contributions to a more inclusive draft constitution in 2015 demonstrate the potential for women to play a more prominent role in shaping Yemen's future. These examples also highlight that the Yemeni public can and will accept women as agents of change. Even during the war, various civil society initiatives focusing on grassroots needs and economic empowerment have worked tirelessly to seek justice and redress, including groups such as the Mothers of Abductees and the Women's Solidarity Network. Moreover, a number of women-led media initiatives have emerged, striving to operate differently within the limited space available to them.

The following report examines the role that the media can play in promoting the role of women in Yemen's future. It provides an assessment of the current conditions for women who are working in the media and the barriers to their inclusion. It includes an overview of the representation of women in media content and audience perceptions of this representation. This report argues that traditional approaches to gender inclusivity and equality - for example legislative reform, support to public media or piecemeal capacity building - will not work in the case of the media in Yemen. Instead, there are opportunities to identify existing pockets of civiness within women's civil society and feminist organisations as agents for ethical change. These can be supported and amplified by women-led and gender-sensitive media. By demonstrating their commitment to the promotion of women in Yemeni society, media and civil society can begin to change perceptions of gender equality in Yemen.

2. Methodology

The research framework guiding this study was centered on the following key questions:

What are the key factors that are undermining gender equality and women's rights in Yemen and that affect women and men's access to and production of information and media content?

What are the main challenges to women journalists in Yemen, focusing on aspects related to the ongoing humanitarian crisis, physical and digital safety and security, as well as existing capacity and resource issues?

How are women and women's issues represented in media content? How does this impact on media consumption habits? What are the realities surrounding digital gender divides in Yemen?

Where are the opportunities for the media to play a role in including and promoting women in public and peace-building processes?

This research study set out to explore these factors, challenges and opportunities in order to provide a contextual assessment which might then inform the development of practical responses and solutions for media and civil society stakeholders alike.

The study used the following combined methods for data collection:

Desk Research:

A thorough analysis and interrogation of existing literature, including an assessment of available quantitative, qualitative, academic, and policy-related research pertaining to the socio-political context of the country, gender-related initiatives, relevant audience studies, and needs assessments was conducted. Particularly relevant to provide contextual analysis and background to this report was the work of the Group of Eminent Experts on Yemen. This report also refers to two gender analyses of the media in Yemen which were produced in 2021: one produced on behalf of the French media development agency, Canal France International (CFI), as part of their Makanati project, and another produced by local NGO Mashakar media.

Semi-structured Interviews:

The researcher identified key stakeholders and women in the Yemeni media and civil society sectors. Interviews were conducted remotely, mainly via Zoom and WhatsApp. Integral to ensuring that the research is practical and relevant was including perspectives from across the country, north and south, recognising that conditions for women differ in different regions. A number of interviews were also conducted with women who are now working on Yemen in exile, as well as with a number of women journalists in Yemen.

The bulk of these interviews were conducted in 2022. However, the researcher updated this report with further interviews to assess any changes to the situation and findings since 2022.

Focus Group Discussions (FGD):

The FGD method was chosen because it brought together audiences to engage in conversations about topics that are relevant to them and their community, and to identify areas where they agree or disagree. This opportunity to observe interactive processes within their particular context is a clear advantage of focus groups over individual interviews. Furthermore, focus groups offered an opportunity to observe a large amount of interaction on the topic of gender and media in a limited period.

FGDs were conducted in April 2022 in four geographical areas across Yemen: Aden, Hadramaut, Sanaa, and Taiz. These regions were chosen to include a diverse range of socio-political views according to divisions that have been amplified by the conflict and modes of governance. Women and men, including representatives from the media and civil society, were included in the FGDs, which focused on understanding what was driving media consumption habits and perceptions of women in the media. The FGDs were conducted by a local media expert, who was also responsible for recruiting participants to the FGDs.

Points to consider from the FGDs:

- The majority of the participants in the FGDs were from the media and CSOs. They therefore represent a particular section and class of Yemeni society. This has been taken into consideration when analysing the findings. For future work on media consumption habits and needs and possibilities for inclusive journalism, it would be advised to conduct individual focus groups that segregate according to geographical location, as well as gender and socio-economic class, as these seem to be the main dividers in Yemeni society. For the purposes of this report, the findings from the FGDs can be used to understand how to work with media and CSOs to develop more gender transformative journalism and solutions.
 - The FGDs were all mixed according to gender. In some respects, this allowed for interesting discussions and highlighted points of difference in opinion according to gender, particularly with regards to social norms. However, in a society such as Yemen, mixed groups can often result in both genders being less likely to express open and honest views. This was particularly noticeable in the Hadramaut group, where male voices dominated the conversation. This consideration has been taken into account in the analysis.
-

3. Political context for women and girls

In the early days of 2011, following the overthrow of the longstanding regime of Ali Abdullah Saleh and the handover of power to his deputy, Abdrabbuh Mansour Hadi, there was hope that the change in government might bring about greater security and political freedoms in Yemen. Women and young people were leading protests and calling for change, as well as contributing to policy and institutional reform. When fighting broke out in 2014, led by the Houthi armed movement Ansar Allah, emboldened by President Hadi's failings including widespread corruption and food insecurity, the capital Sanaa eventually fell under Houthi control. An international coalition led by Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), with support from the US and UK, began airstrikes in Yemen out of fear of Iran gaining a greater foothold in the region through the Houthi forces. Militia violence escalated, and several non-state actors emerged, including Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and the Southern Transitional Council (STC), a separatist movement supported by the UAE. Although fighting on the ground has been limited since a UN-brokered ceasefire in October 2022, and negotiations between the conflicting parties continue, the situation remains bleak.

Control in Yemen is now divided between the Houthis, officially known as Ansar Allah, in the north, and the internationally recognised government which is backed by the Saudi-led coalition and includes the STC, in the south. Islamic militants AQAP control some parts of Hadhramaut, Yemen's largest province, and it is said that Muslim Brotherhood affiliates receive support from Qatar. As a result, the situation for citizens, including women and girls, is far from homogeneous across the country. However, women and girls continue to face violence and exploitation, and the harsh economic conditions that continue to afflict Yemenis further compromise their safety, protection, and rights.

Abuse and violence against women in areas controlled by Ansar Allah continue to pose a challenge to women's rights. Freedom of movement has been restricted since the start of the conflict following a decree that prohibited women from travelling without a mahram (male relative).³ There is some evidence that these restrictions have eased throughout 2023, and it was suggested by some interviewees that many women were finding informal ways to overcome restrictions imposed by the authorities. That being said, travel restrictions remain officially in place, and women who work for civil society and media, in particular, commented on being 'deprived of access to job or training opportunities in both Yemeni cities and outside of the country.' Restrictions on the use of smartphones have also been recorded.

Businesses have been forced to commit to segregating according to gender or face the threat of being closed down. In September 2023, Sanaa University's Faculty of Mass Communication implemented a gender segregation policy, which meant students were obliged to study separately by gender for three days a week. Other academic departments followed suit, including the Faculties of Medicine and Commerce. Public harassment and abuse of women are also becoming more commonplace, particularly activists and those associated with civil society and international organisations. Patriarchal notions and stigmas of women in the workplace and public spaces are constantly being reinforced and validated. When the Dean of the Department of Journalism, Dr. Samia Al Aghbari, was openly critical of gender separation policies, she was let go from her role, leaving the faculty with no female members on its council.⁴

During the various attempts at government formation in Yemen, the absence of women has been stark. In December 2020, based on a settlement agreement between the STC and the Saudi-backed legitimate government, no women were nominated at any level in the 24-member cabinet. This was despite government formation allegedly being based on the 2014 National Dialogue Conference's agreed outcomes, which included a 30% quota for women. In 2022, a presidential council made up entirely of men formed an all-male government, which continues to make political and military decisions on behalf of Yemeni people, including

women. The political scene and the different stakeholders in the conflict, dominated by men, continue to ignore the rights and needs of women. An OXFAM report published in March 2023 noted that when the UN Special Envoy offered non-transferable seats to support the representation of Yemeni women in committees that had been created out of the peace process, political parties and actors refused to allow women to play a role.⁵

In 2017, the de facto authorities in Sanaa created the *Zeinabiyyat*, an all-women security force given military legitimacy to police and repress women's participation. The women use kidnapping, violence, and torture, as well as enabling sexual assault, particularly against women activists and human rights defenders. They were also used to spy on women in private spheres. Women were tempted into the *Zeinabiyyat* with financial and security incentives. The use of women to control women is primarily to overcome any social stigmas associated with violence against women by men and serves as another form of control over women in Yemen. It also serves to further enforce both patriarchal and structural violence as a means to suppress the voices and presence of women.

The escalation of violence in Yemen since 2014 has served to further entrench existing patriarchal customs, legal, and social norms. The Personal Status Law of 1992⁶ gives men guardianship rights over women, known as *wilaya*, whether it be a father, brother, or husband. The man is the head of the household legally, must be obeyed by his wife, and be allowed full access to her, including sexual access, at any time. Women are only allowed to travel in the company of a mahram in many areas under the authority of Ansar Allah.⁷ Men can marry up to four wives, and child marriage is abundant with no minimum age and sexual intercourse allowed after puberty. Marrying young girls is seen as a source of income for many families as a dowry is paid to the father by the groom who then assumes custody. Divorce rights for women are restricted, abortion is illegal, and men are the legal custodians of their children. According to the Penal Code of Yemen, a woman's testimony is equal to only half of a man's.⁸ Men can receive reduced sentences for murder if it can be proven to be in the name of safeguarding honour or morality.⁹

This combines with violent external conditions brought about by war and conflict to create an environment where **toxic masculinity is dominant, further perpetuating domination, control, aggression, misogyny, and homophobia**. Honour-based societies, with unequal power structures based on gender and age in this case, are more likely to see an increased incidence of GBV, both inside and outside of the family structure. The economic and social pressure on women as heads of households has worsened the situation, with all forms of GBV on the rise.¹⁰ Access to protection and gender justice has all but disappeared, and women are becoming more physically and psychosocially dependent on men at all levels. Cycles of abuse and control continue to be perpetuated. A report on GBV published by ACAPS in November 2023 noted that men and boys who speak out about gender issues and what might be considered societal taboos are also at risk of GBV in Yemen.¹¹

There has been some debate about the changing role of Yemeni women and how war has brought about a number of contestations to traditional gender roles. Women are now more likely to be heads of households and, in many cases, have been forced to enter employment and develop new skills. This tends, however, to be class-based, and women from lower socio-economic backgrounds or marginalised groups such as the Muhamesheen [Yemen's self-titled *Muhamasheen*, known negatively as Akhdam or servants, are an ethnic group considered to be the lowest social class in the country. There are different accounts of their ethnic origin although some believe that they are descendants of African slaves or Ethiopian soldiers.] have reported increased vulnerability and exposure to greater threats. [Ibid] There has also been some discussion around the increase in GBV and domestic violence as entrenched gender roles are subverted in Yemen. It should also be noted that while there might be greater opportunity for women to become involved in business ventures since the war, their inclusion in the political scene in any way, including political reporting, remains very limited.

The black market is thriving, as is the related war economy. Salaries of civil servants, teachers, and other public sector positions remain unpaid, and warfare has become a dominant source for maintaining any kind of viable income. It should be noted that ending the war in Yemen not only means the end of violence and conflict but a return to some kind of normality as access to basic necessities – food, water, electricity – and an improvement in the economic situation is restored.

While gender transformative solutions must address the immediate needs of Yemeni citizens, any approach that does not also consider and recognise the importance of peacebuilding is unlikely to have a medium- to long-term impact. Stakeholders interviewed for this analysis were also keen to point out that Yemeni culture is known for its resilience and a desire to take care of one's family and community. Although this has been tarnished somewhat by years of conflict, it was acknowledged that citizens are aware that change has to happen for Yemen to move on from being a conflict state. While there appears to be limited political will for this change to take place in areas under the control of the de-facto authority (DFA), areas governed by the Internationally Recognised Government (IRG), in particular Aden and Taiz, are showing some more positive signs. However, **with the current crisis in the Red Sea and wider regional issues continuing to escalate, it is difficult to see how work to address patriarchal and exclusionary social attitudes and norms can prevail without simultaneous work to address conflict and peace.**

4. The Yemeni media landscape

The media in Yemen remains polarised as a result of the political divide in the country. There has been an unprecedented crackdown on independent media and civil society since 2015, and the situation has worsened over time. Media operating from Sanaa remains under the jurisdiction of the Houthi authorities, while the situation in areas controlled by the internationally recognised government is equally challenging. Journalists continue to risk their lives, not only covering the fighting but also by exercising their right to freedom of expression. Journalists are arrested, arbitrarily detained, and harassed, while human rights defenders continue to be imprisoned. As a result, self-censorship is rife, and many journalists have left the country or gone into hiding, while local CSOs and NGOs are closed down on a regular basis.

The right to freedom of expression is enshrined in the current constitution, which was agreed upon in 1994. The Yemeni Press and Publications Law of 1990¹⁴, however, contains a number of articles that restrict independent journalism, including outlawing criticism of the head of state. Although there have been some attempts to remove such clauses and, in the case of the newly elected Minister of Information, Nadia Al Sakkaf in 2014, reform existing media legislation, the restrictions are still enforced, and journalists continue to face charges in its name. The Penal Code is also wrongly used to curb media freedoms in the "interests of national security," and, in some cases, disbelief or atheism can be punished with the death penalty. In more recent years, even the role of existing media-related legislation has become a moot point as the country remains divided, and mechanisms for justice are nebulous at best and fatal at worst.

The media landscape in Yemen¹⁵ has historically been politicised and partisan, conditions which have become more deep-rooted since the war. Media platforms which are funded by the different actors and parties in the conflict, including geopolitical players, have created a battlefield in the media. The media is often used as a means of garnering support for political and military actors, public and private media included. The state television channel, Yemen TV, now has two versions of the channel, one which is pro-Houthi and one which is pro-IRG. Saba News, the official news agency, has two websites, one each for the opposing sides. Aden TV operates similarly with two platforms broadcasting content for each side. The Al Masirah channel, closely affiliated with the Al Manar channel of Hezbollah, is known to broadcast propaganda and recruitment messages on behalf of Ansar Allah. Al Masdar is closely associated with the Muslim Brotherhood affiliate, the Al Islah Party, one of the parties in the coalition government. Different sides of the conflict not only use media to promote their aims and narratives but also use physical violence and attacks on media to intimidate and silence. Air attacks on broadcasting organisations by the Saudi-led military coalition have also been recorded with 53 airstrikes recorded between March 2014 and 2023.¹⁶ Of all the attacks by both sides in the conflict as documented by Yemeni Archive, 12 were on television news agencies, 15 on radio, 4 on local newspapers, 1 on a Ministry of Information building.¹⁷

Attacks and crackdowns have also seen internet and telecommunications access cut across most parts of Yemen. Yemen's already fragile internet and electricity systems have taken the hit for many years.¹⁸ In November 2023, internet access across the entire country was down, blamed on 'maintenance work' by officials. YemenNet is controlled by the Houthis, and the main internet cables run into Yemen through the Red Sea. The outage took place following a series of drone and missile attacks in the area by the Houthis targeting Israel in response to the conflict in Gaza.¹⁹ In the first three months of 2023, 12 internet shutdowns were reported; three more were reported in June 2023. The majority of these shutdowns resulted from political intervention and sabotage.²⁰ In September 2023, the Media Freedom

Observatory in Yemen reported that a number of communication platforms, including Zoom, Google Meet, and Signal, had been blocked by the state-owned YemenNet.²¹ Since the start of the conflict in 2015, the Houthis have blocked access to a number of media platforms, including Al Jazeera, Al Arabiya, Al Arabi Al Jadid, in addition to local platforms such as Al Masdar, Mereb Press, Khabar Agency, and others.

Although only 27% of the Yemeni population has access to the internet,²² internet blackouts and shutdowns mean that economic, humanitarian, health, education, and social networks are all inaccessible. Less than half of the population is connected to mobile networks, and only 2% have fixed broadband access. Mobile coverage is mostly limited to 2G and 3G technology. Although 4G has been introduced since 2022, it is still restricted, meaning that many are unable to easily access internet services. The digital divide affects women (and those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds) more than men. In 2022, only 13% of Facebook users in Yemen were women.²³ While the emergence of independent media platforms online provides some hope for the media, there is still work to be done in terms of reaching wider audiences, particularly those who are most vulnerable.

Safety and security for journalists have become paramount issues among the media community in Yemen. Over 50 journalists have been killed since the outbreak of the war, according to Yemen-based Media Freedoms Observatory, Marsadak, and the Yemeni Journalists Syndicate (YJS) has documented over 1,400 violations since 2015. Harassment, kidnapping, torture, and killing are all becoming ubiquitous across the country. Journalists are at risk of violence and abuse at the hands of the many different parties to the conflict: Houthis, AQAP, or the internationally recognised government. In 2023, the YJS documented 82 violations against press freedom, which included trials and summons, threats and incitement, banning coverage, closing outlets, attacks, and raids - 43 committed by the IRG and 31 by the Houthis.²⁴

This has extended to include women journalists and media practitioners, which was less common before the war. This is demonstrated in the recent indiscriminate arrest of journalist Hala Fouad Badawi in Hadramaut by local security authorities. She was arrested in December 2021 following posts on her social media account, which called out corruption and demanded better living conditions. Badawi was released in April 2022, following beating and torture while held in custody. In 2021, four journalists were killed in Yemen, including Rasha Abdullah Al Harazi, who was killed in a targeted car explosion in Aden while nine months pregnant. Al Harazi worked for Emirati channels, Al Ain and Al Sharq, and had been receiving threats for months prior to her death. Online violence towards journalists and activists is now rife in Yemen, and many record patterns of threats and abuse that begin online and result in offline harm and real-world patterns of violence. Disinformation is also widespread, with false accusations against journalists ranging from political association, i.e., Houthi versus Muslim Brotherhood, through to religious beliefs and terrorism.

The highly polarised nature of the media landscape in Yemen makes it difficult for independent media to be critical of political events without being associated with different sides in the conflict. The widely regarded woman-founded human rights platform, Mwatana, which has been publishing reportage critical of the Saudi government and its military operation in Yemen, has been accused of having ties with the Houthis despite a strong adherence to ethical and professional journalism standards. Many independent media platforms rely on support, particularly financial, from the international community, but even this has become problematic as they too are accused of having politicised agendas. The economic situation has worsened significantly in the face of a fractured country, ongoing conflict and war, and a permanent interruption to both trade and aid. This has had a huge impact on the medium and long-term future of many media platforms and start-ups, with a paucity of funding and finances to cover salaries.

5. Challenges to women in the Yemeni media

The media scene reflects gender divides and gaps across the Yemeni political and social spheres. When the UNDP Human Development Index³⁵ is disaggregated by gender, it reveals the starkest differences between women and men than anywhere else globally and that the effect of war on life expectancy, standard of living, and education is nearly twice as high on women than on men. Yemen has consistently been at the bottom of the Global Gender Gap²⁶ rankings and was followed only by Syria and Afghanistan in the 2021/22 Global Women Peace and Security index. The state is failing with no legislative processes to protect or govern. The current government has no women in senior positions, and women are largely absent from the peace-building process. These issues are all present in the media scene in Yemen, which is showing limited possibility to address inequality or shape social attitudes.

The following section is informed by data collected through interviews conducted with journalists, activists, women civil society organisations (WCSOs), and international organisations between March and May 2022, as well as a series of FGDs held in March and April 2022 across Yemen. An additional 3 interviews were conducted in January 2024 to update the data. The findings demonstrate that **the situation is not only unwelcoming for women journalists in Yemen but highly dangerous and threatening**. Safety and security fears are paramount as women are increasingly coming under attack both on- and offline. Patriarchal and conservative attitudes are deeply ingrained both structurally and socially, and there is a lack of political will to address systemic issues or challenge social norms. Representations of women and coverage of women's rights and issues are stereotypical and damaging. However, there is some hope to be found amongst WCSOs and a number of emerging women-led media outlets as well as women's and feminist movements based outside of the country. It is important for these initiatives to be supported and connected to a wider Yemeni public to address the limited possibilities for change in Yemen.

Conservative patriarchal attitudes and social norms

At a political level, Yemen is a society dominated by men who are concerned with preserving power among elites rather than allowing provision for inclusivity and diversity at a national and community level. This is underpinned by patriarchal customs and legislations such as the rights of guardianship over women and traditional roles of men as heads of households, and women as domestic workers and as mothers. These stereotypical views of women are predominant in the media, which continually reinforces patriarchal social norms, unsurprising when one considers that the media is predominantly funded or allied to political actors. It is true that there has been some subversion of these roles in recent years, but social norms and attitudes remain predominantly traditional. As noted previously in this report, the change in the nature of responsibilities of some women has resulted in an increase in GBV and domestic violence, as men feel disempowered and emasculated through a lack of economic opportunity

“The war has changed our situation. Before the war, the situation was catastrophic, but it is now 100 times more catastrophic. Women now are worried about survival and making ends meet for a living.”

Woman FGD participant, Taiz

“The problems facing female journalists in Yemen have not changed and their conditions have not improved as the problems are mainly related to several legal factors or related to the patriarchal culture of society.”

Woman journalist, exile, January 2024

Patriarchal attitudes and harmful gender stereotypes have been further intensified as they are perpetuated by elites, and the vulnerability of women has worsened. Restrictions on women's ability to travel, particularly in the Houthi-controlled areas, limit their possibilities for employment. These measures, which are both political

and customary, make it difficult for media organisations to work with women journalists due to the cumbersome and bureaucratic restrictions around travel. Even in cities such as Taiz and Aden, where conditions are said to be more favorable for women and the media, field reporting remains challenging for women.

“In the Internationally recognised government areas, where it is better for journalistic work, there is repression and restrictions on the freedom of journalists. It makes female journalists, and male journalists, practice self-censorship and become more cautious.”

Woman journalist, exile, January 2024

Child marriage is also widespread, which means that women and girls marry young, limiting their ability to complete their education and leading to larger families. Home duties take priority in such situations. Socio-economic class plays a significant role in determining the women who are able to enter the media profession. Those who can afford to continue their education and have families that are economically and socially supportive of women in the workplace are more likely to pursue careers in media. However, many women interviewed for this research noted that their families were less likely to approve of their work in the media industry. There is greater support for women who choose professions such as teaching or medicine, as these roles are seen as more beneficial to society. The higher education system in Yemen requires lower grades to enter media college, so many women who study media at university end up doing so due to lack of other options.

“Women who are of high status and are active on social media and Twitter have a strong political voice and come from strong family backgrounds. This grants them some protection unlike other women... it grants them protection and courage.”

Woman civil society activist and journalist, exile

Negative perceptions of women who work in the media are inherent across Yemeni society. The media scene is perceived to be heavily politicised, and journalists who work for specific media outlets are associated with the political stance and narratives of those outlets. This not only poses safety and security threats to women but also to their families (discussed in more detail in the next section).

“If you want to be a journalist in Yemen, you have to support the ideology of the media outlet you work for.”

Yemeni woman journalist

“Her private life, appearance, and clothing are among the tools that some use to silence the voice of female journalists.”

Woman journalist, exile

There are negative associations with the appearance of women on screen and the publishing of images, which cloud views of the chances for women in the media. A report produced by CFI, which looked at the representation of women in the media in Yemen, found that women occupy less than 20% of all positions and are mainly present in radio and digital platforms, confirming overall concerns about the appearance of women on screen.²⁷ When women appear without a hijab, for example, accusations of dishonour, shame, and disloyalty to Yemen are common. Many of the women interviewed for this report discussed how considerations of their physical appearance, hair, and clothes informed much of their success and decisions made on how to report on certain topics, and a form of self-censorship prevails.

“A lot of girls in Hadramaut wear the niqab, which is hard for her even if she’s an excellent journalist/media graduate. The face is the one key thing when it comes to TV.”

Woman FGD participant, Hadramaut

“It is important to be relevant therefore I never wear anything that could be deemed to be inappropriate when I post on social media or appear in an interview.”

Woman civil society activist, exile

“The women who broke the barrier to get into journalism before the war ended up working in radio as people like hearing a woman’s voice. On television, there was whole debate about hijab versus no hijab.”

Woman journalist, exile

“From the perspective of the Hadhrami public, they see that women journalists and women in media have a bad reputation. A lot of the changes and openness in society led to society being more fearful for women. Progress needs to happen in stages. Sudden impulsive changes will not be accepted.”

Woman FGD participant, Hadramaut

The CFI report also found that half of all women in the media were early career professionals with less than five years' experience, indicating that women were less likely to be seen in decision-making or senior positions. The report suggests that this is due to a range of factors, which include the gender pay gap, limited opportunities for promotion, and unrepresentative recruitment and retention policies for women. Social expectations that women should take dominant roles in the household mean that many are limited in the hours they can commit, which can hinder chances for career progression and options for capacity building. Women interviewed discussed stereotypical perceptions of women as unable to manage finances or administrative roles. There were also some negative perceptions of women being outside of the household and interacting with men. Working late hours was also seen as unacceptable for women.

“One of the women journalists (in our training) said that her father asked if the training was mixed gender and then he said he didn’t want a picture of her on Facebook with a man.”

Yemen woman journalist now working for international NGO.

“My father’s family is not accepting of me. They have cut me off to a large extent because I’m a journalist. To them, I’m on the wrong track.”

Woman FGD participant, Taiz

It is interesting to note that a number of experts and key stakeholders interviewed for this report commented that in some cases gender played a role in affording women journalists greater access and privilege when reporting. Women are more likely to be allowed access into people's homes. It is more acceptable for women to approach citizens on the street and ask questions; politicians and ministers are more likely to take a question from a woman journalist at a conference, 'especially if she is pretty,' according to one interviewee. This is in juxtaposition to the challenges brought about by limiting women's travel without a male guardian, which were also raised by interviewees. Women are being detained and subjected to ill treatment, torture, and sexual violence for their work and also for travelling alone with limited protection from their media organisations, outlined in further detail in the next two sections. These confusing messages serve to further entrench vulnerability and control over women in the public sphere.

There was also widespread debate amongst the interviewees and in the Hadramaut FGD about whether there was a lack of collegiality and solidarity amongst women. Women were more likely to refute such accusations, whereas men in the FGD were vocal on the matter suggesting that women were 'their own enemies' and 'there is a struggle between women and women.' This stance is indicative of the patriarchal attitudes which prevail in Yemen, even within civil society. It has become ingrained that women should be in competition with each other, which ultimately reinforces existing power structures and hierarchies. If women

are fighting amongst themselves, they will have less time to overcome the obstacles and barriers to gender equality, women's rights, and are even less likely to propose solutions which are gender transformative. Supporting mechanisms of solidarity amongst women is imperative.

Safety, security, digital harassment, and trauma

“There were ways that the patriarchy helped us: if there was one seat at a conference then the woman got it; if there was danger, then a man would support and protect the woman; women journalists were chosen to ask questions at political briefings. This has now gone. Women journalists were never detained but now they are. This situation was political but it has become a social issue too. Violence and an aggressive culture have become so embedded that a woman’s dignity and respect for women has disappeared.”

Woman journalist, exile

Violence against women has become endemic at all levels in Yemen. It is political, structural, domestic, virtual. Prior to 2014, women were actively leading demonstrations and demands for social change. The newly elected Minister of Information was a woman. This was all in keeping with Yemen's solid history and tradition of women as activists. Since 2019, women have been increasingly marginalised from the public sphere. War and decreasing security have seen many journalists, women in particular, leave the profession and even the country for fear of their safety and security. They are not only faced with the security challenges that the Yemeni population all face - shelling, snipers, airstrikes, landmines - but also the increased harassment, threats, abduction, and sexual assault that is becoming a predominant weapon used by security forces.

“The ongoing conflict is affecting women’s roles. Because of poverty, the crime rate has increased - not just against women – but aggression has increased towards women as a result.”

Woman activist and journalist, exile

“Aden has become such a violent place and we (women journalists) started getting challenges to talking about poverty and security issues.”

Yemeni woman journalist, exile

According to the Euro-Med Monitor, 10% of journalists arrested between 2021-2023 in Yemen were women. The aforementioned cases of Hala Badwai and Rasha Al Harazi are two high-profile examples of the increased security risk to women in the media. Hafsa Aupal has also recorded incidents of harassment in Houthi-controlled areas as well as being arrested at Aden airport in 2020.

Women journalists who travel alone also reported being more susceptible to harassment and intimidation, in particular at checkpoints or when coming into contact with security forces or forces associated with different authorities.

Violent attitudes towards women are now being replicated online, and the culture of defamation, smear campaigns, and online abuse of women activists and those in the media is rampant. All types of gender-based online violence against women are being recorded. Threats from online accounts and actors associated with political groups are common. Deep fakes, or doctored videos, of women in compromising positions or alluding to immoral behaviour are also becoming everyday forms of abuse. Bullying and harassment following personal posts of pictures or comments can come from multiple sources, from the general public to high-profile figures. Amal Ali, a television presenter now based in Turkey, received online abuse when she decided to remove her hijab. The abuse was spurred on by attacks from the YouTube and Facebook accounts of a religious figure from Hodeida who uses his social media accounts to

attack women journalists on a regular basis. Smear campaigns that begin online have, in some cases, led to the detention of women who, in turn, are subjected to ill treatment, torture, and sexual violence because of their work.

CASE STUDY

I had always loved the media and moved to Aden to find work. I began working for the Al Yawm Al Thamin newspaper and then Sowt Al Ganoob. I did some activism on health and religion in the rural areas and then began posting videos on my personal Facebook page. After the war, the context changed, and it became difficult for women to speak. I was posting advocacy campaigns and videos, and the online violence began. It came from social media accounts of men who are known in Aden to have political links to the elites. They began with harassment and threats online accusing me of being immoral. Then in 2017, they killed Amjad Abdul Rahman (founder of Al Nasieh Cultural Club which provided secular and women’s rights support) and we got scared. Armed men came to my house wearing face coverings and threatened me by saying ‘you are next’. My family became very afraid and told me to stop posting on Facebook at which point we decided to it was best for me to leave. I went first to Jordan, then India and now Cairo where I have been more active again on social media as well as appearing on Yemeni media platforms which are based here or in the Gulf. I began working on gender project, then there was a kidnapping of girls in Aden, and I posted linking the kidnapping to militias. The authorities came and arrested my father and brother and would only release them after I posted a live video promising to never attack the Aden authorities again.

The relationship between online and offline violence is strong in Yemen. A culture of blame is dominant in Yemen, and women who speak out against harassment and violence are accused of disloyalty and immorality. Women are unlikely to report or discuss online violence and abuse ‘due to societal norms and pressures, particularly in cases involving so-called honour.’²⁸

“Social networking sites have allowed everyone to be targeted. Whenever a woman journalist expresses a different opinion or criticizes groups, parties, or even the government, she is subjected to threats, and her reputation is damaged through slander campaigns, defamation, and interference.”

Woman journalist, exile, January 2024

As a result, due to the lack of any legal redress and a culture of impunity, many women choose to self-censor, close their online accounts, or leave their public roles. Women’s voices, often critical, are being silenced. Women interviewed also noted that the essence of the Zeinabiyat were being mimicked online. Fake accounts were known to be created in women’s names and used to infiltrate private groups on WhatsApp and other seemingly closed networks. These accounts are then used to threaten and harass women in closed group environments. It was noted that Clubhouse was viewed as a safer place to hold conversations around gender and women’s rights, as well as the ongoing political and security crisis.

Structural and infrastructural barriers

Patriarchal and conservative social norms combine with a culture of intimidation and fear to make women less likely to enter and remain in the media profession. The fact that the media in Yemen reflects these social norms rather than challenging them is demonstrated by the lack of representation of women in senior and middle management positions. As with the political sphere, there is a dearth of women in decision-making positions in the media. The media and related organisations such as the Syndicate are predominantly led by men, with only one woman in a position on the syndicate’s executive board of 12 members. According to Ashraf Alrifay, secretary of the Yemeni Journalists Syndicate, there are 300 women journalists out of the 1,700 members in the Syndicate.²⁹ Nadia Al Sakkaf has been the only woman to hold a senior media position in government when she was Minister of Information in 2014. This lasted a short while and is regarded as exceptional.

Women are marginalised with little in the way of organisational or recruitment policies to encourage gender representation. Women comprise 20% of media practitioners in Yemen despite making up over half of the media student graduates per year.³⁰ Partisanship also sees men promoted to senior positions according to their political allegiance to different politicians and actors in the political sphere in Yemen. When men are in power, they are more likely to select other men for powerful positions. CFI’s research showed that 3%

of women journalists have held positions at the level of General Manager or Deputy General Manager, and 6% as Managing Editors or Editors-in-Chief in 2021. There is little legislation to protect the employment rights of women in Yemen, a country where fair and transparent legislative processes are rarely enforced. Maternity policies and leave are administered according to national labour law rather than at an organisational level. While they offer minimal provisions which fall short of the 14 weeks considered statutory according to the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the law is not always enforced equally. Women who return from maternity leave are not guaranteed an equal role when they return to work, and there is no obligation or provision for childcare services, which is reflected in the maternity provisions in the media industry. There is no law that prohibits sexual harassment in the workplace, nor is it criminalised or penalised in any way.³¹ The fact that management of ministries of information is now split between Aden and Sanaa makes a unified national approach to developing legislative or industry processes more challenging, if not impossible.

Salaries for media professionals are low, and the gender pay gap is significant in the media industry. Since the war, many journalists lost their jobs and media outlets closed down. A large number also stopped receiving pay or saw their salaries reduced even further. This is further exacerbated by the additional costs that women in the profession incur through their work. Women are limited in their options to take public transportation, particularly at night, so they must cover the costs of taxis for themselves and their male guardian, which becomes difficult in the face of economic challenges. There are also additional costs related to child support which need to be considered if women are to progress in the media industry. Again, opportunities for women are defined according to class as much as gender. This means that any approaches to gender equality in the media need to be intersectional and consider the needs of different women in Yemen. Less educated women from lower socio-economic backgrounds need support related to access to education and finance. Middle-class women are more likely to require support that will foster the retention and promotion of women in the industry.

Logistical constraints brought about by the anaemic infrastructure in Yemen, which sees limited availability of telecoms, internet, and electricity, also restrict options to work in the media for many women. In a culture that relies on mobile phones and 3G for connectivity, very few women have access to laptops, a necessity for a journalist, and media organisations have limited resources to provide hardware. Batteries cost money, as do phone and internet cards. The travel restrictions imposed by the guardianship system are further compounded by the lack of access to facilities and consideration of women outside of the home.

“If you have a training for women you need to arrange for her to have internet or give her money for internet.”

Yemeni woman journalist, exile

“One woman told me that she doesn’t drink when she is working as there is no bathroom for her to use at work.”

Yemeni woman journalist, exile

The CFI study found that women journalists and expert sources are rarely seen covering political, economic, or security topics, with only 12% of news content including a woman as a journalist, source, or subject. Conversations around the glass ceiling should also therefore include a consideration of the glass walls that women face in the media industry, covering issues related to barriers to entry, disbursement across different roles, retention, as well as promotion to decision-making positions across the sector.

“I was in a media institution, without mentioning its name, during a time in which I could have become a field reporter. I was told that you’re a girl and my role was marginalized. Why use the excuse that “you’re a girl?” Workers and crew who are men are preferred over women.”

Woman FGD participant, Hadramout

It is clear that within this environment, women who forge careers in the media are driven by passion rather than economic or reputational rewards. This type of strength needs to be recognised, and building resilience is key. Women who are driven by a personal desire to seek change in their society will undoubtedly produce stronger and more impactful work. This is evident from the women who are active in the media scene in Yemen, who face daily incursions into their personal and professional lives for little compensation. Their commitment, loyalty, and creativity deserve to be recognised. Women should be presented in the media industry as a strength rather than as a drain on resources or as less able than their male counterparts.

Digital gender gaps

“I brought together women from political parties over Zoom, with a centre in Sweden, for a consultation. When we started on Zoom, I was present in the first and second meeting, and when I didn’t attend in the third and fourth, it disappeared. We tried to work towards an agenda that the UN adopted. Internet issues were very bad. This was one of the first nationwide projects that brought together women from all parties through the UN and through the research centre in Sweden. But there is no way to improve this with the situation we’re in.”

Woman FGD participant, Hadramout

As noted previously in this report, Yemen’s internet and telecommunications infrastructures have been cruelly damaged by years of conflict. Access to the internet is also curtailed due to severe restrictions on electricity, ongoing power cuts and outages, plus escalating costs. Only 26% of Yemenis had access to the internet in 2023, and they pay the highest rate in the MENA region at approximately \$16 per gigabyte, compared to \$2 in some other countries in the region.³² Access to the internet is also curtailed due to severe restrictions on electricity, ongoing power cuts and outages, plus escalating costs. Only 26% of Yemenis had access to the internet in 2023, and they pay the highest rate in the MENA region at approximately \$16 per gigabyte, compared to \$2 in some other countries in the region.

The FGDs demonstrated that, despite restrictions and limitations on both internet and electricity, both women and men in Yemen rely heavily on social media and the internet for information and news about their local, regional, and international contexts. YouTube and Facebook are the most popular platforms, although Instagram and Twitter are also seen as integral to the news consumption cycle. These findings were confirmed quantitatively, with social media users in Yemen having grown to 3.05 million in 2023. Facebook users stand at 2.5 million, Twitter at 858.1k, and Instagram and LinkedIn at 619.2k and 380k, respectively.³³

Television played a role in the analysis of breaking news on social media, with most participants channel hopping for a range of views and information. However, across the board in all areas of Yemen, transnational channels such as *Al Jazeera* and *Al Arabiya*, and with that *Al Hadath*, were seen as the most reliable sources of news on Yemen. This is hardly surprising given that the country is divided between Saudi Arabia or Qatar-funded narratives. When events happen in Aden and Taiz, they are reported in *Al Arabiya*. *Al Jazeera* is one of the only international media outlets to report from Sanaa. The BBC and DW Arabic were also popular among the FGD participants, although, as outlined in the methodology section, this is unlikely to be representative of the Yemeni population at large. Local media was seen as highly politicised due to funding structures, although channels such as *Al Belqees* and *Al Saeeda* fared better than most. Both of the channels are based outside of Yemen.

Al Belqees TV was founded by the Nobel Peace Laureate, Tawakkol Karman (also the founder of Women Journalists without Chains) and is managed from Turkey. Although there has been speculation about the origins of its funding, it is considered to include a diverse range of opinions and give status to women journalists through better salaries, programming, and having a woman as the chair of the Executive Board. Karman herself is seen as a prominent activist who is critical of all parties in the conflict. Karman delivered the keynote address at the Women’s Forum Global Meeting in Paris at the end of November 2023, where she highlighted the importance of inclusive education.³⁴

Al Saeeda is one of the few privately owned television channels in Yemen and was considered to be one of the most important channels in the country before the conflict broke out in 2015. Drama, music, and entertainment programming made in Hadramaut and Taiz were popular and widely broadcast. However, the channel’s overt avoidance of political issues in order to maintain relations with politicians from all factions led to the loss of a number of high-profile journalists (who moved to *Al Belqees*) at the height of the conflict. Since then, they have incorporated a greater focus on programming that deals with social issues, and their popularity has returned, allegedly as Yemeni audiences tire of news about the conflict and war.

Radio also plays a role in news consumption cycles, particularly among those who travel to work. However, the majority of participants follow activist and local accounts on social media to ensure they have access to local news from across their area. According to some stakeholders, there has been a growth of young women content creators on platforms such as YouTube and podcast platforms, where entry costs are low. It was also suggested that these new platforms and forms of content are less likely to address political issues than social and humanitarian topics, for fear of persecution.

Verification processes for content produced on social media include checking with local activist WhatsApp groups, which play a significant role in the information cycle both within private groups and as a means of sharing information. These groups are seen as safe spaces by women. WhatsApp is often seen as addressing lower literacy rates, as it is easy to share pictures and voice messages with those who are less able to read and write.

“There are some very active women on WhatsApp. I just wonder why if a demonstration happens, there are no women. But I do see that there are women who document information on WhatsApp.”

Woman FGD participant, Aden

“There are WhatsApp groups with only women so that men cannot interject and give their opinion!”

Woman FGD participant, Sanaa

Social media platforms are all accessed via mobile phones, which require lower bandwidth, less electricity, and less battery power to charge compared to laptops. Mobile phones also allow access to sites through a VPN (virtual private network), which is seen as more secure by some users. Many of the participants in the study did not have internet access at home and relied on internet cards from external providers, particularly the women in the groups in Hadramout and Sanaa. On the other hand, men were more likely to use internet centres for a stronger internet connection. None of the women discussed facing any pushback from their families in terms of accessing the internet. In households where multiple occupants use the internet, they discussed having separate accounts with different passwords for each person. In all of the groups, except for Aden, there was a thorough discussion about the lack of reliability of internet and electricity. Blackouts and disruptions to both were common, with little explanation or warning. Peak usage hours were from mid-afternoon until midnight, with many participants having to work into the early hours of the morning to complete their work. Many participants were unable to join online forums or training sessions due to poor connectivity and slow speed. In many cases, the costs of accessing the internet were also seen as prohibitive and a source of despair for many.

Issues related to travel and prevailing social norms mean that more women are working from home, making them more vulnerable to weak internet connections and electricity cuts compared to their male colleagues. It is also considered socially less acceptable for women to work during later hours when the internet is more accessible, according to the research groups.

This impacts inclusivity and equal access to professional support and opportunities.

A significant finding from the FGDs was that none of the women mentioned conservative or patriarchal norms as a challenge to digital access and access to information. The overarching issue was the lack of connectivity and outages, which affect the whole country. It is likely that it is difficult for participants to see beyond these constraints. However, interviews with women journalists in Yemen revealed that family pressures and expectations can be a serious impediment to women, which likely has an impact on access to information and opportunities. The interviews also made it clear that women are withdrawing from the public sphere and social media platforms due to digital harassment and online violence. This context needs to be fully addressed in order to define and address the digital divide in Yemen.

Gender inclusive journalism

The CFI study, Mashaker Media's report, and the FGDs all point out a number of problems with the representation of women and women's issues in the Yemeni media. Women continue to be depicted as mothers, housewives, or victims and are rarely seen as experts or professionals unless they are doctors or teachers. Women are rarely included in political or economic reporting: the CFI report revealed that women are completely absent from 84% of news programming, which suggests that a woman's perspective or rights are not included in the majority of news reporting. Although women working in peacebuilding have become a recognisable authority in civilian life and more acceptable to the Yemeni public, there is still limited coverage of their important role. It was noted that the 5th Feminist Summit held in December 2022 in Aden, which emphasised women's role in conflict resolution, was covered by some local media platforms at the time.

“In Hadramaut, when I've presented programs and profiled women lawyers and others, I see that we have a huge lack of awareness when it comes to women's issues within the family and as standalone issues.”

Woman FGD participant, Hadramaut

The media's representation of violence, and in particular GBV and sexual violence, is also problematic, with little accountability for aggressors or any ethical considerations around protecting the identities of victims, women, or children. Violent images and scenes are shared with little respect for victims or audiences. The FGD participants noted that the interests of the citizens have been lost and that the needs of women have been ignored. As a result, women audiences are turning away from the media. Women FGD participants were keen to point out that when women's issues were addressed, women were more likely to engage with the content.

“If there are programmes for people to raise questions and consult with others, most people who call are women, not men. For example, Al Fatat Programme (Girl Programme) has mostly female callers. What I mean is that if we address legal aspects, we will get an audience who are women. When it comes to personal status and custody and such, women will call.”

Woman FGD participant, Taiz

6. International and local gender and media stakeholders

As stated previously in this report, the lack of political will to support gender equality and independent media in Yemen means that there are limited to no active initiatives at a national governmental level. Any chance of change is coming from CSOs and NGOs, who in turn rely mainly on international support. For example, an ongoing programme to support gender justice for women and children in Aden and Mukalla includes focusing on building the skills of women leaders in the Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour, and the Ministry of Public Health and Population. This programme is funded by UNDP and the Republic of Korea.³⁵

These WCSOs and NGOs, including a number of emerging independent media platforms and initiatives, are showing exceptional fortitude and resilience against the backdrop of what can only be described as catastrophic events, including a worsening humanitarian situation as well as ongoing, relentless conflict and violence. All of these factors serve to place increasing constraints on gender freedom, freedom of expression, as well as possibilities for truly transformative change.

Yemen's strong tradition of feminism and a feminist movement, which was particularly active in the period before the current escalation in conflict (2011-2014), saw a number of women-led organisations thrive. Even during the conflict, domestic women-led CSOs have continued to operate, although at times covertly. These include the Women's Solidarity Network (est. 2013), Women's Pact for Peace and Security Network (est. 2015), and Wugood Foundation (est. 2012). A number of higher-profile organisations, such as the Peace Track Initiative (PTI), have been focusing their work on finding innovative ways to support the Women Peace and Security (WPS) agenda. Their efforts are more top-level interventions supported by global political will and the presence of UN resolutions, such as 1325, which provide international funds for women working in peace. For many of the CSOs, international support through projects and funding is the most important contributing factor to the success of their work.

1325 and the WPS Agenda

UN Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security (WPS), adopted by the UN Security Council in 2000, acknowledges the importance of women's participation in peacebuilding and conflict resolution. It also supports the protection of women and girls in conflict and the prevention of violence towards them. Yemen, as a member state of the United Nations, has an obligation to implement Resolution 1325 and some of the outcomes of the National Dialogue Conference (NDC) in 2014. For example, quotas for women's political participation are associated with it. In 2014, a series of workshops were held, bringing together CSOs, the media, and formal institutions such as the Women's National Committee and Ministry of Interior. However, these activities have been deferred since 2016 due to the escalation of conflict and fragmentation in state institutions. In 2019, through collaborative efforts between CSOs and the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour of the internationally recognised government, a National Action Plan (NAP) was approved by the Ministerial Cabinet. Some women-led CSOs involved in drafting the NAP objected that many of their recommendations were not taken into consideration in the final plan. Despite these challenges, organisations such as the Wugood Foundation and the Peace Track Initiative (PTI) continue to work on programmes supporting the implementation of Resolution 1325.

The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) has been active in supporting WCSOs to ensure that the work being done goes beyond NAPs and women's participation in a narrow sense. They have reservations about NAPs that reduce WPS to a checklist rather than bringing about actual change. WILPF takes a bottom-up approach, partnering with local organisations, particularly PTI and Wugood, to create more spaces for women. This includes providing media capacity building to improve writing and speaking skills on the subject, working directly with women journalists instead of media organisations themselves. They are also prioritising the attacks on women human rights defenders and journalists, assessing the risks for their partners as they engage in high-profile work regarding WPS.

The role that media can play in 1325 and WPS is multifaceted. Often, media is mentioned in NAPS but merely as a communications channel for the government or an information channel. However, media can play an important role in holding decision makers accountable to the agenda and for sexual and gender-based crimes. Work to support journalists and their sources to increase women's participation in the public debate should be considered. PTI produced a gender analysis of the conflict in Yemen, which focused on issues related to human rights and the impact of war on women. This is a key area where media coverage can be more sensitive and provide deeper, more nuanced analysis. There is also scope for advocacy and sensitisation work with the media to reimagine the process of peacebuilding and women's input to that process.

Women-led CSOs: 1325 and WPS Agenda

The **Peace Track Initiative (PTI)** is leading the way in developing both Track 1 and Track 2 level consultations and projects to ensure that local women's needs and voices are included at all levels and stages of the peace process. PTI is a partner of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), which aims to work on achieving the objectives of 1325 in Yemen by establishing a bottom-up approach with a local partner. A project funded by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs aims to create more spaces for women, including a yearly convening of feminist organisations and officials to achieve increased feminist women's participation in peace processes. PTI produced the **Feminist Roadmap for Peace in Yemen** in 2021 and provides media capacity building for women activists and leaders to support better writing and public speaking skills.

The **Awam Foundation for Culture and Development** is active in the north of Yemen and holds workshops on CEDAW, as well as contributing to international UN-led work on gender equality in Yemen. Awam has been known to partner with media production agencies to produce advocacy films and documentaries.

The Yemeni Women's Pact (YWP) for Peace and Security (in Arabic "Tawafuq") is an inclusive platform for Yemeni women to organise, debate, find common ground, and leverage their collective voices to call for

women's continued engagement in public decision-making. Its goals are threefold: end violence, improve living conditions, and amplify women's inclusion in the peace process. YWP's 60 members include women leaders representing different political parties, civil society, activists, and social activists from inside and outside of Yemen. The group is considered a consultative body for the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen (OSESFY).

The **Hodeida Girls Foundation**, aims to elevate the role of women and increase their participation in social, cultural, educational, and professional aspects of society in the governorate of Hodeida. They have been active in the Yemen Peace Forum Initiative, a Track 2 youth and civil society platform enabled by the Sanaa Centre, which aims to engage youth and CSO activists in national peace issues.

Women-led CSOs with media-related programmes and initiatives

Mothers of Abductees is a grassroots Yemen-based CSO formed by mothers, wives, and women relatives of abductees and forcibly disappeared detainees, as well as women's human rights activists. The association's main focus is to advocate for and raise the profile of the cases of abductees and victims of enforced disappearance, arbitrary arrest and detention. They are the only group to have made a difference in releasing the forcibly detained since the UN Stockholm Agreement in 2018.

Bilqis Granddaughters is a peacebuilding platform that connects young women to build leadership and advocacy, funded by Oxfam. The project has recruited and trained 60 girls to work on grassroots peace and advocate for women's protection and security, using outreach to ensure local buy-in. Women are trained in protection and participation with lawyers to understand which legislation can be leveraged to support women's participation in the women, peace, and security (WPS) agenda. They also work with mass media, including radio, to advocate for and raise awareness of the WPS agenda in Yemen.

Women's Solidarity Network started in 2013 as a group on Facebook, which includes members who are women leaders in Yemen, to support women's rights in the draft constitution. In 2016, they were revived by the PTI, and the name was changed to WSN. The network now includes over 270 women members, including a number of feminist organisations both in and outside of Yemen.

WSN has created a comprehensive database of women experts in Yemen, which can act as an excellent source for media and journalists both domestically and internationally.

Women4Yemen Network is a network of women working in media, human rights, and civil society who aim to make peace and achieve stability for Yemen by mobilising and empowering women. They are also active in raising awareness of GBV and other forms of violence towards women and children.

It is worth noting that UN Women created a body called the Group of Nine in March 2019, which brought together nine women's organisations at a conference in Amman called "Mediators for Peace". The Group of Nine includes the Yemeni Women's Pact for Peace and Security, the Feminist Summit, the Peace Partners Alliance, the Marib Girls' Foundation (currently represented by Peace Makers), the Youth Leadership Foundation (represented by the Youth Consultative Council), Southern Women for Peace, Women's Voices for Peace, the Women for Yemen Network, and the Women's Solidarity Network (which withdrew in April 2020 to be replaced by the Youth Awareness Platform).

Amnesty International submitted their assessment of human rights in Yemen to the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of Yemen in April-May 2024.³⁶ Their recommendations include legal reform, such as the adoption of a law on online violence against women, ending discriminatory practices, developing mechanisms to minimise harassment (including against journalists), and legislative reform to support greater freedom of expression in Yemen.³⁷

Media Development and Internationally Funded Projects

Canal France International (CFI) has worked on a varied portfolio of projects in Yemen since 2017, with funding from the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the European Union. The content produced under the **YMERI** and **YMER+** projects (2017-2020) was published on **Sawt Insan**.

Their *Makanati* project in Yemen and Iraq (2020-2022) promoted greater participation of women in Yemeni society through the production and dissemination of content about women's issues and rights, funded by the French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs. The content produced by Yemeni journalists under the project is disseminated on the **Hodaj.net** platform. Since the end of the project, the beneficiaries continue to disseminate the content on the platform, according to a charter developed by the editorial committee within the project. Several Yemeni beneficiaries have created their own platforms, according to CFI.

In Yemen, three radio programmes dedicated to women were produced by Radio Lana and Radio Yemen Times, with a total of 85 episodes. Additionally, 13 broadcasting agreements (MoUs) were signed with Yemeni media outlets to strengthen the dissemination of content produced by project beneficiaries. CFI partnered with the local Yemeni organisation Studies and Economic Media Centre (SEMC) and the French NGO Aide Humanitaire et Journalisme (AHJ) for this project.

Internews has been working with local media partners in Yemen to support sustainability in citizen-led initiatives. They claim to have a gender-transformative approach in Yemen, empowering women to raise their voices and awareness of human rights. They have projects that focus on women and train newsrooms on gender-sensitive reporting. Funders range from the US State Department, Foreign Commonwealth Development Office (FCDO), and Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

One such project is part of a global initiative supported by Internews and Defend Defenders called '**Safe Sisters**' which seeks to address the growing epidemic of online violence against women. Internews has partnered with local NGO **Culture Media Centre** to provide capacity building in digital security and created a closed WhatsApp group called Safe Diwan, where Yemeni women journalists are encouraged to share their experiences and ideas in a safe space. Topics have ranged from SGBV and women in the media. Internews's **Gendered Newsroom project**, in collaboration with local CSO Media Sac Foundation, aims to support the creation of content that supports inclusivity and women's rights.

Search for Common Ground (SFCG) has a number of projects in Yemen, which are funded by a range of donors including the Canadian Government, EU, USAID, UNDP, Institute of Migration (IOM), and the FCDO. Two of these projects focus on gender:

1. Promoting Women Inclusion in Peacebuilding in Yemen (funded by Global Affairs Canada), which aims to bring together women engaged in Track 1 and Track 2 peacebuilding processes. The project included developing and implementing media campaigns and training media practitioners across Yemen.
2. Lifting Women's Voices in Yemen (EU) aims to promote women's rights to freedom from violence and countering the acceptability of GBV in Yemen through, amongst other things, local-level media engagement.

Their **2021 annual report** claims that they have developed a gender mainstreaming approach in Yemen to identify and address gender inequalities and achieve gender equality at both institutional and programmatic levels.

DT Global has been active in Yemen for a number of years on US-funded programmes to support independent media and journalists in their efforts to amplify Yemeni voices, focusing on disinformation and news verification.

They have produced a number of research reports, which are available on request, including research into the audience and public opinion of media and politics in Yemen with some focus on women and young people.

UNESCO and Radio Netherlands Worldwide media have worked with the SEMC to support media organisations in Yemen with the objective of coordination and collaboration between media development actors and projects. They recently produced a **Roadmap for Media in Yemen**, which included a large focus on gender. The project falls under UNESCO's multi-donor programme for freedom of expression and safety of journalists.

Other media development organisations that have been active in Yemen, but not focused on gender, include Deutsche Welle Akademie, MICT, BBC Media Action, and Arab Reporters for Investigative Journalism.

This report would also like to highlight some of the work by local media initiatives, not all women-led, but who are striving to change the gender status quo. These organisations receive international funding, although they are locally driven, and are committed to incorporating gender elements into their activities and platform development. **Al Khuyut**, Yemen Times Radio, and **Mashaker Media** are all producing work that aims to address both short and long term change in the country. Al Khuyut was referenced by many stakeholders for their focus on women's issues and integration of women's perspectives and rights across much of their content. Mashaker Media includes the participation and representation of women in its content and organisation as one of the main objectives of the platform. It has published **gender analysis of media content in Yemen** alongside **infographics** which it promotes on social media to highlight women's rights and challenges. Yemen Times Radio has dedicated 3 regular programmes to focus on women's rights and empowerment. Radio Lana has also been broadcasting

programming which aims to raise awareness of gender equality as well as change attitudes. Nadia Al Saqqaf is also clear that organizationally they prioritise the recruitment of women journalists, with 70% of staff now women. These examples demonstrate the importance of both organisational and representational (content) approaches to women's rights and inclusion.

This study would also like to highlight the growing presence of what might be seen as more radical feminist solutions to entrenched patriarchal issues and violent practices. **Yemeni Feminist Voice** has an active social media presence in Yemen, although they are based in Lebanon and Turkey. They are challenging inherent systemic issues **media representations and stereotypes of women**. Their co-founder is a member of the **Women's Solidarity Network** and actively describes herself as a feminist, using data and media to agitate for change.

Yemen's **underground feminist movement** has also made strides in providing protection to women human rights defenders, particularly in what they describe as a non-traditional, non-CSO approach. They have identified loopholes and understand the available protections for women escaping violence and abuse. They claim to work at the 'intersection of law, human rights, and economic empowerment' (personal interview with report author). Being low-key and anonymous is a key factor in their success, as well as the formal and informal networks of women they have created. They use TikTok and Clubhouse to share their activism, as well as emails to document abuse and harassment both online and offline. Social media plays a crucial role in their communication strategy.

7. Analysis and conclusions

This report presents a context riddled with security risks and challenges for women journalists in Yemen. Years of ongoing war and conflict among geopolitical, state, and non-state actors have weaponised conservative and patriarchal norms to silence critical voices and those seeking change. Harassment and abuse of women activists, human rights defenders, and journalists have become acceptable, and innovative coping strategies are necessary for alternative and diverse voices to be heard. The media is seen as non-representative of the needs of Yemeni society, with women and minorities, in particular, excluded from debates and narratives. Traditional avenues and options to improve gender parity and inclusion in Yemen are limited. Large-scale activism and truly gender transformative change appear distant possibilities.

However, amidst this bleak scene, there are some pockets of hope and civiness emerging from civil society and the media. These initiatives exist at higher levels, involved in Track 1 peace negotiations, as well as grassroots levels, addressing endemic issues such as abduction, violence, and poverty in Yemeni society. Although transformative civil society prospects may seem slim, the work of civil society organisations (CSOs) reveals possibilities for wider impact and influence on society and social norms. If locally grown initiatives can be sustained and further developed, they may contribute to a more informed public and more diverse engagement.

With this in mind, the study concludes with a consideration of the following consecutive theoretical frameworks, which could indeed constitute part of a theory of change, for developing media, gender policy in Yemen:

1. **It is clear from existing strategies of CSOs, which have shown some success, that building resilience is key to strengthening both public and CSO abilities to overcome challenges and threats to their security.** Strengthening resilience can include resilience against violence and conflict, patriarchal customs and social norms, or even financial resilience and sustainability. Any intervention should consider how it can create better processes and spaces for safety and trust to thrive within communities, moving attitudes away from the current mode of survival and encouraging more collective responses to change. Despite the worst odds, Yemeni women-led organisations continue to work, and this needs to be recognised, harnessed, and supported.
2. **Patriarchal and conservative social norms have been usurped by elites in Yemen and underpin the challenges that women face both professionally and personally.** A social norms approach to change can be utilised to promote more positive attitudes and behaviours that relate to existing social norms. Yemen's history demonstrates that women have previously been more included and more prominent in the public, social, and political spheres. Working on challenging misperceptions of gendered social norms and demonstrating the positive consequences of change could be integral to the success of media development initiatives, particularly with content-led interventions and programming.
3. In a landmark paper on international politics, 'International Norm Dynamics and Political Change', Finnemore and Sikkink (1998) provide insight into how norms whose origins may be primarily domestic can be transformed into international norms (Finnemore and Sikkink, 1998). Finnemore and Sikkink are primarily concerned with how international norms that originate in a handful of countries can, through the actions of both domestic and international 'norm entrepreneurs', eventually come to influence the behaviour of a much wider range of states. A key example they offer is that of women's suffrage, the origins of which were largely Anglo-American but now have almost universal purchase. Finnemore and Sikkink outline a three-stage norm 'life cycle': norm emergence; norm cascade; and internalisation. The move from

the first stage to the next two stages requires what Finnemore and Sikkink call a 'tipping point', or a 'threshold of normative change'. Key to reaching this point are the actions of 'norm entrepreneurs', i.e. 'Agents having strong notions about appropriate or desirable behaviour in their community'. Such agents create new cognitive frameworks that 'if successful ... resonate with broader public understandings and are adopted as new ways of talking about and understanding issues.' This is a challenging process, not least because norm entrepreneurs confront 'firmly embedded alternative norms and frames that create alternative perceptions of both appropriateness and interest'.

There is an opportunity to identify potential local norms entrepreneurs, some of whom have already internalised norms of professional journalism and of gender equality and women's rights which are resonating albeit on a small scale in Yemen. The possibilities for medium to long-term change will become all the more realistic and achievable if these norms entrepreneurs are provided with financial and institutional support over time. One also needs to consider the role of norms entrepreneurs both in and outside of Yemen.

4. Finally, it should be noted that Yemen remains donor dependent for almost all activities related to the support of independent media, freedom of expression, and human rights. This will prove challenging to negotiate in the current context for several reasons, not least if the airstrikes campaign against targets in Yemen which began in January 2024 continues for the medium to long-term. It is also clear that local actors in the conflict are familiar with funding cycles and donor requirements and have been known to interfere with women's organisations' attempts to secure international funding. In many areas, women's work with international and media organisations is stigmatised and, in some cases, banned. Financial sustainability targets should therefore be modest and take into consideration the overriding context. Interventions should also consider supporting the institutional sustainability of local initiatives and platforms as well as their ability to access funding.

8. Recommendations

The following recommendations have been made based on the findings of this report. These should be viewed alongside ongoing capacity-building programmes to support professional and ethical journalism as well as programmes to support more gender-inclusive and sensitive reporting. It also goes without saying that support for more women-led media and initiatives is imperative. Where possible, options for short-, medium-, and long-term recommendations have been considered. Intersectional approaches are highlighted in bold italics.

Improved digital and telecoms access:

The urgent concern of lack of access to the internet and electricity as a result of destroyed infrastructure, increased demand, and costs needs to be addressed in the short-term in order to encourage women to safely communicate online, attend trainings and meetings, as well as network with their peers. The immediate provision of internet and electricity cards, as well as access to 3G, VPNs, and other soft and hardware, to all partners and beneficiaries in projects would ensure a greater inclusion of diverse participants in activities. ***It addresses the needs of women from lower socio-economic backgrounds as well as those who are located in geographical areas where the internet and electricity are scarcer and therefore those women who are less able to participate.***

In the medium to long-term, there are opportunities to invest in building local data centres and mobile networks (as has been seen in Ukraine, a much more recent example of communication disruption as a result of war). This requires planning and larger scale investment and advocacy on behalf of the international community. However, working with local internet centres and CSOs to create greater provision for women, including women-only sessions, could be considered in the meantime.

Leadership:

Further work at an organisational level to incentivise media managers to recruit and promote women to management positions and report on a wider range of topics is essential to complement existing capacity building programmes. If the career progress of men is predicated on the inclusion of women in leadership roles – and indeed in content – then they are more likely to concede. In the short-term, recruitment, retention, and training gender quotas could be discussed. A long-term strategy for the involvement of men should be considered and developed, in cooperation with civil society and policymakers.

It is possible to apply an intersectional lens to recruitment, retention, and training policies which include race, class, age, disability status amongst others. Larger organisations can begin by examining their own employment data and by gathering feedback during recruitment and training processes. Recruitment policies and strategies can be tailored to attract more diverse applicant pools. Longer-term work to demonstrate how the inclusion of diverse groups of women can improve audience engagement could also be considered.

Networks of support:

The success of the networks that have been created in the CSO space such as the Women's Solidarity Movement (WSM) and others needs to be replicated for women in the media space. The provision of networking opportunities and the development of groups of women journalists and HRDs from across the country. These contacts could be formalised, and a database could be made available to other women and interested parties and could complement the existing women experts database of the WSM. Media organisations would then have access to women journalists who could produce content for their platforms.

Women in Peace Building:

The success, according to the FGD findings, of Maya Al Absi's programme Al Nisa'a Wa Al Salam should be considered in more detail. As women are more prominent in peacebuilding initiatives in Yemen, content and programming that focus on their important role should be supported. Including more women experts, identified via the comprehensive and usable WSM database, in news content should be a priority for media partners and organisations, who could then start to promote the database amongst their peers.

The media also need to think more carefully about how they might play a more nuanced role in contributing to Track 1-5 level peace processes. Social media, in particular, can play a large role in peace mediation, and organisations such as the UN have developed frameworks for the use of digital tools by mediators and their teams. With organisations such as the PTI and WSN providing media training that focuses on capacity building for women at all levels of mediation, traditional media can also integrate the teachings of peace journalism into its programmes, activities, and training.

A wider industry conversation, which brings WCSOs together with the media to develop practical measures on how the media can address and support all levels of the peace track process, is recommended. This could also include a dialogue that defines violence and GBV in the Yemeni context for use by the media to address such entrenched issues.

Online harassment and violence:

Digital safety and security workshops are essential for the safety and well-being of women journalists, and Yemeni women clearly need more of them. In the short term, training on how to protect online and social media accounts, as well as hostile environment training, should include training on how to combat online harassment, trauma counselling, and psychosocial support. This can be accompanied by increased reporting and awareness of online violations against women and the development of a mechanism to track and identify early warning signs that can trigger further violence and abuse. There are possibilities to partner with domestic organisations in Yemen to localise solutions. ***An intersectional approach to assessing the level of threat should be considered, as global figures suggest that women of colour and LGBTIQ+ women receive additional layers of harassment and threat.***

Reporting mechanisms and networks of solidarity should be established in newsrooms. These should provide women journalists with safe spaces and support to report any incidents of online abuse. Organisational policies to support women's safety and gender equality are key to the long-term success of independent media, and senior management level engagement to support women who experience online abuse is paramount.

Organisational policies that deal with harassment and online abuse need to be developed within media houses. These should address head-on the issues of this report, particularly gendered disinformation and online abuse, and provide adequate responses to the challenges. They should include support policies and mental health services for employees where required. These should cover contributors and freelancers as well as permanent staff so that a culture where women and men feel safe to speak about their experiences is established.

Reporting on online violence and gendered disinformation is one way to draw public attention to the problem. Reporting on the lack of official responses to the situation, as well as the culture of impunity that exists, might encourage a more robust reaction from women and men across a number of different spheres.

Research and monitoring:

There is little by way of audience research or data to support an understanding of the needs of all women audiences from their media. We work on the assumption that women want to see more content that addresses their rights and immediate priorities, and yet the most common form of entertainment is musalsals and Ramadan soaps. ***Commissioning audience research – which includes different groups of women and does not assume all women are the same - and findings way for media platforms to engage with their audiences, women included, is integral to the success of independent media and gender transformative work.*** Creating content that sees women exchange their views and opinions on platforms will also encourage change.

A wider piece of research which can begin to address the question of intersectionality and approaches should also be considered. Studies of women in the media and civil society should apply race, class, sexuality, and disability status lenses to their data collection techniques. This will provide a more nuanced assessment of needs and gaps across all groups of women.

Author Biography

Dr Aida Al-Kaisy is a media development consultant and academic researcher who has worked extensively on media and human rights projects across the MENA region. She is currently working on projects which focus on issues related to the development of independent media, media and journalism in conflict and in countries where freedom of expression is challenged. She teaches at SOAS and is a keen promoter of ethical values in journalistic practice and media governance. Aida is a co-founder of the Iraqi independent media platform, [Jummar](#).

Notes and Bibliography

Notes and References

- From 'Women in Yemen: Aspiring to a life free from violence as conflict enters 9th year' by UNFPA. (2023, March 26). European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations. https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu/news-stories/stories/women-yemen-aspiring-life-free-violence-conflict-enters-9th-year_en
- Multitrack diplomacy is largely considered to be integral to successful peacebuilding and negotiations. Different tracks include different stakeholders and their resources. Track 2 diplomacy supports the inclusion of CSOs in conflict resolution, Track 3 businesses and track 5 research, training, and education organisations. For further details on the different tracks and important of multitrack diplomacy in peace efforts see the Institute for Multi-track Diplomacy.
- From 'A new year added to the age of bloody conflict: Press briefing on the situation of human rights in Yemen, 2021.' By Mwatana for Human Rights. (2022, January 7). ReliefWeb. <https://reliefweb.int/report/yemen/new-year-added-age-bloody-conflict-press-briefing-situation-human-rights-yemen-2021>
- <https://aawsat.com/-العالم-العربي-4450131-فصل-الجنسين-في-جامعة-الحوثيين-صنعاء-يفجّر-موجة-غضب-في-وجه-الحوثيين> (bit.ly/3QYtoHb)
- From 'Speaking up: The role of women in building peace in Yemen.' By Jaffar, F. (2023, March 8), Oxfam International. <https://policy-practice.oxfam.org/resources/speaking-up-the-role-of-women-in-building-peace-in-yemen-621481/>
- From 'Yemen. Overview of Muslim Family Laws and Practices' by Musawah. (Updated as at 31 May 2017) <https://www.musawah.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Yemen-Overview-Table.pdf>
- From 'Dynamics and effects of the Mahram practice in Yemen' by ACAPS. (2023, December 14). https://www.acaps.org/fileadmin/Data_Product/Main_media/20231214_ACAPS_Yemen_Analysis_Hub_Dynamics_and_effects_of_the_Mahram_practice_in_Yemen_01.pdf
- From 'Yemen: Ongoing violations amid conflict'. Amnesty International – Submission to the 46th session of the UPR Working Group, April-May 2024 by Amnesty International (2023, October 19). MDE 31/7025/202329. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/MDE3170252023ENGLISH.pdf>)
- Ibid
- From 'Understanding the cycle of gender-based violence' by ACAPS. (2023, November 23). https://www.acaps.org/fileadmin/Data_Product/Main_media/20231123_ACAPS_Yemen_analysis_hub_understanding_the_cycle_of_gender-based_violence.pdf
- From 'Understanding the cycle of gender-based violence' by ACAPS. (2023, November 23). https://www.acaps.org/fileadmin/Data_Product/Main_media/20231123_ACAPS_Yemen_analysis_hub_understanding_the_cycle_of_gender-based_violence.pdf
- Yemen's self-titled Muhamasheen, known negatively as *Akhdam* or servants, are an ethnic group considered to be the lowest social class in the country. There are different accounts of their ethnic origin although some believe that they are descendants of African slaves or Ethiopian soldiers.
- Ibid
- From 'Memorandum on the draft law on press and publications of the Republic of Yemen' by ARTICLE 19. (2007, August 15). p30. <https://www.article19.org/data/files/pdfs/analysis/draft-yemen-press-and-publications-law.pdf>
- From 'Yemen: Unsettled Media for an Unsettled Country' by Abdulrahman M. Al-Shami (2021, March 3) In C. Richter & C. Kozman (Eds.), Arab Media Systems (pp. 197-214). Open Book Publishers. <https://books.openbookpublishers.com/10.11647/obp.0238/ch12.xhtml>
- From 'Yemeni Archive' by Endangering the Media <https://attacks-on-media.yemeniarchive.org/findings>
- Ibid
- Examples include an airstrike on a telecoms hub of TeleYemen in Hodeida in January 2022 which saw a national breakdown in internet connectivity over 4 days, according to digital rights organisation, Netblocks. An attack in Sanaa in February 2022 caused similar outages.
- From 'Internet collapses in war-torn Yemen over 'maintenance' involving undersea line' by Gambrell, J. (2023, November 10). AP News. <https://apnews.com/article/yemen-internet-outage-israel-hamas-war-houthis-4255eccf371e558b7912ddcd94d706d7>
- From 'Yemen: Human rights groups condemn internet blocking and censorship' by ARTICLE 19. (2023, October 19). <https://www.article19.org/resources/yemen-human-rights-groups-condemn-internet-blocking-and-censorship/>
- From 'Violation List – Monitor Human Rights Violations and Defend Freedom of Expression in Yemen' by Media Freedom Observatory (2021). <https://marsadak.org/en/>
- From 'Digital 2023: Yemen' by Kemp, S. (2023, February 14). DataReportal. <https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2023-yemen>
- From 'Using big data for insights into the gender digital divide for girls: A discussion paper, UNICEF Gender and Innovation Evidence Briefs Series, June 2021' by Tyers-Chowdhury, A., G. Binder, R. Kashyap, M. De Araujo Cunha, R. Al Tamine & I. Weber. (2023, December 8) , p19. uni.cf/4c71Qb1f
- From 'Press Freedom Report in Yemen' by Yemen Journalist Syndicate. (2023) (p8) https://www.ifj.org/fileadmin/media_freedom_report-2023-Yemen.pdf
- <https://hdr.undp.org/data-center/country-insights#/ranks>
- From 'Global Gender Gap Report' by World Economic Forum (2019, December 16) https://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2020.pdf
- <https://cfi.fr/en/projeKoreact/makanati>
- From 'The cybercrime epidemic targeting Yemeni women' by Al-Yousifi, M. (2023, January 27). FairPlanet. <https://www.fairplanet.org/story/the-cybercrime-epidemic-targeting-yemeni-women/>
- Interview conducted January 29 2024
- From "Not your profession": Violations and harassment facing female journalists in Yemen, Tunisia, oPt. by Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor. (2023, March 7) euromedmonitor.org
- From 'Women's Workplace Equality Index' by Council on Foreign Relations. (2024) <https://www.cfr.org/legal-barriers/country-rankings/>
- From 'Moving Towards Digitalization: Unveiling Challenges and Prospects of E-Marketing in Least Developed Economies – The Case of Yemen' by Sanad, S. N. T., AL-Shameri, N. A. S., and Al-Radai, S. S. M. (2023). International Journal of Research - GRANTHAALAYAH, 11(8), 49–61.
- Ibid
- From 'Tawakkol Karman – Description' by Women's Forum for the Economic & Society (2023) <https://events.womens-forum.com/women-s-forum-global-meeting-2023/speaker/4de3febe-ba5e-ee11-9937-000d3a4cc0c5/tawakkol-karman>
- From 'UNDP and KOICA support women's leadership in ensuring access to justice in Yemen' by UNDP Yemen. (2023, November 28) <https://www.undp.org/yemen/press-releases/undp-and-koica-support-womens-leadership-ensuring-access-justice-yemen>
- From 'Basic Facts about the UPR' by United Nations Human Rights Council (2024). <https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/upr/basic-facts>
- From 'Yemen: Ongoing violations amid conflict. Amnesty International – Submission to the 46th session of the UPR Working Group, April-May 2024' by Amnesty International (2023, October 19) MDE 31/7025/202329. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/wpcontent/uploads/2023/10/MDE3170252023ENGLISH.pdf>)

Bibliography

- ACAPS, Yemen. Dynamics and effects of the Mahram practice in Yemen, December 2023, 5p. (available at: https://www.acaps.org/fileadmin/Data_Product/Main_media/20231214_ACAPS_Yemen_Analysis_Hub_Dynamics_and_effects_of_the_Mahram_practice_in_Yemen_01.pdf)
- ACAPS, Yemen. Understanding the cycle of gender-based violence, November 2023, 16 p. (available at: https://www.acaps.org/fileadmin/Data_Product/Main_media/20231117_ACAPS_Yemen_analysis_hub_understanding_the_cycle_of_gender-based_violence.pdf)
- Al-Shami, A., "Yemen: Unsettled Media for an Unsettled Country," in, Richter C. & C. Kozman (Eds), Arab Media Systems, Open Book Publishers, 2021, pp.197-214 (available at: <https://doi.org/10.11647/OBP.0238>)
- Amnesty International, Yemen: Ongoing violations amid conflict. Amnesty International – Submission to the 46th session of the UPR Working Group, April-May 2024, 2023, 29 p. (available at: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/MDE3170252023ENGLISH.pdf>)
- Article 19, "Yemen: Human rights groups condemn internet blocking and censorship", Article 19, October 19, 2023
- Article 19, Memorandum on the draft Law on Press and Publications of the Republic of Yemen, 2005, 30p. (available at: <https://www.article19.org/data/files/pdfs/analysis/draft-yemen-press-and-publications-law.pdf>)
- DataReportal, Digital 2023: Yemen – Report, 2024 (available at: <https://data-reportal.com/reports/digital-2023-yemen>)
- Euro-Med Human Rights Monitor, "Not your profession": Violations and harassment facing female journalists in Yemen, Tunisia, oPt, euromed-monitor.org, March 07, 2023
- European Commission's Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations department (DG ECHO), Women in Yemen: aspiring to a life free from violence as conflict enters 9th year, March 2023 (available at: https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu/news-stories/stories/women-yemen-aspiring-life-free-violence-conflict-enters-9th-year_en)
- Fair Planet, "The cybercrime epidemic targeting Yemeni women", Fair Planet, January 27, 2023
- Gambrell, J. "Internet collapses in war-torn Yemen over 'maintenance' involving undersea line", APnews, November 10, 2023
- Matwana for Human Rights, A New Year Added to the Age of Bloody Conflict - Press Briefing on the Situation of Human Rights in Yemen, 2021, January 2022, 11p. (available at: <https://reliefweb.int/attachments/19557f66-a464-3d00-8e8f-124575492928/Annual-Briefing-En-2021.pdf>)
- Musawah, Yemen. Overview of Muslim Family Laws and Practices, 2017 (available at: <https://www.musawah.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Yemen-Overview-Table.pdf>)
- Oxfam, Speaking Up: The role of women in building peace in Yemen, DOI: 10.21201/2023.621481 March 2023, 20p. (available at: <https://reliefweb.int/attachments/cbcd246b-edc2-4edd-bf54-a269927b6883/bp-speaking-up-the-role-of-women-in-building-peace-in-Yemen-080323-en.pdf>)
- ReliefWeb, A New Year Added to the Age of Bloody Conflict: Press Briefing on the Situation of Human Rights in Yemen, 2021, January 2022 (available at: <https://reliefweb.int/report/yemen/new-year-added-age-bloody-conflict-press-briefing-situation-human-rights-yemen-2021>)
- ReliefWeb, Speaking Up: The role of women in building peace in Yemen, March 2023 (available at: <https://reliefweb.int/report/yemen/speaking-role-women-building-peace-yemen>)
- Sanad, S. N. T., AL-Shameri, N. A. S., and Al-Radai, S. S. M. "Moving Towards Digitalization: Unveiling Challenges and Prospects of E-Marketing in Least Developed Economies – The Case of Yemen", International Journal of Research - GRANTHAALAYAH, 11(8), 2023, pp. 49–61.
- Tyers-Chowdhury, A., G. Binder, R. Kashyap, M. De Araujo Cunha, R. Al Tamine & I. Weber, Using big data for insights into the gender digital divide for girls: A discussion paper, UNICEF Gender and Innovation Evidence briefs Series, June 2021, 19 p. (available at: <https://www.unicef.org/eap/media/8326/file/%20Using%20big%20data%20for%20insights%20into%20the%20gender%20digital%20divide%20for%20girls:%20A%20discussion%20paper%20%20%20.pdf>)
- UNDP, "UNDP and KOICA support women's leadership in ensuring access to justice in Yemen", UNDP, November 28, 2023
- World Economic Forum, Global Gender Gap Report 2020, ISBN-13: 978-2-940631-03-2 (available at: https://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2020.pdf)
- Yemen Journalist Syndicate, Press Freedom Report in Yemen- 2023, 8p. (available at: https://www.ifj.org/fileadmin/media_freedom_report-2023-Yemen.pdf)

Websites

- <https://aawsat.com>
- <https://attacksonmedia.yemeniarchive.org/>
- <https://marsadak.org/en/>
- <https://www.ohchr.org>
- <https://yemeniarchive.org/>
- <https://www.cfr.org/>

*IMS is a non-profit organisation
working to strengthen the capacity of
media to reduce conflict, strengthen
democracy and facilitate dialogue*



paving the way for good journalism

CONTACT
info@mediasupport.org

VISIT
www.mediasupport.org