

Media Freedom

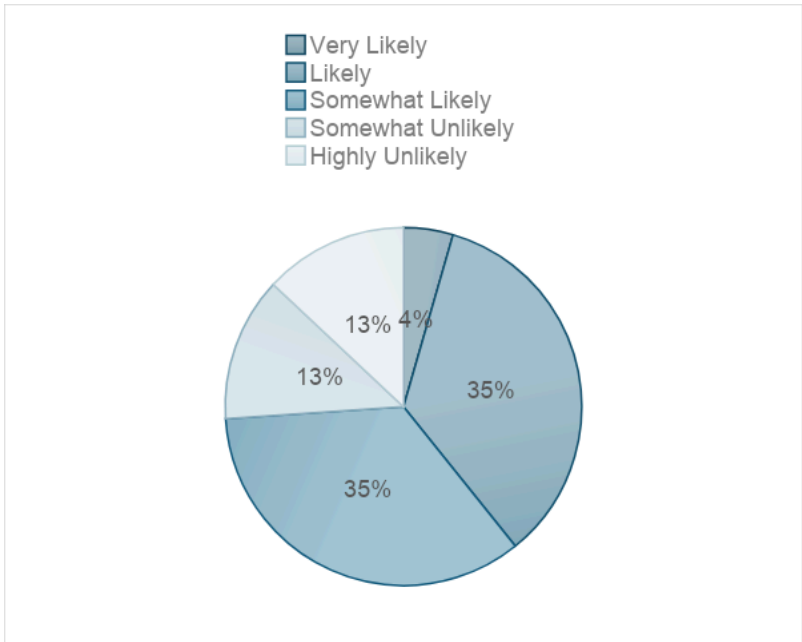
As a means of examining perceptions of media freedom, participants were asked to rate the extent to which they thought *international media outlets* and *domestic media outlets* have a positive role in upholding government transparency (please see Table 8). Overall, participants agreed that international media outlets are more likely to have at least a somewhat positive role in upholding transparency, as they are less likely to be “directly influenced by [any one] government”, be “politically affiliated”, have “conflicts of interest” which may impede their reporting, be subject to “nepotism”, or be “ beholden to corporate actors, who have interests that go beyond those of the public”.

Table 8 *Media’s Role in Upholding Government Transparency*

	Have a Very Positive Role	Have a Positive Role	Have a Somewhat Positive Role	Rarely Have a Positive Role	Almost Never Have a Positive Role	Not Sure
International Media Outlets...	8.3%	33.3%	54.2%	0%	0%	4.2%
Domestic Media Outlets...	0%	33.3%	45.8%	12.5%	4.2%	0%

When asked about the likelihood that domestic media outlets hold the government’s decisions and actions to account (please see Figure 2), a third of respondents agreed that this is *likely*, another third deemed it to be *somewhat likely*, 12.5% noted that it is *somewhat unlikely*, another 12.5% deemed it to be *highly unlikely*, and 4.3% found it *very likely*. Domestic media was seen as often being “paid [by the government] to do journalism”, lack adequate “security/protection of journalist sources” and access to credible “information by government sources”, all of which severely impede its ability to uphold governmental accountability.

Figure 2 *Likelihood that Domestic Media Hold the Government’s Decisions and Actions to Account*



Irrespective of their responses to the previous question, participants were then asked about the extent to which they thought that domestic media outlets are able to critique the state without negative consequences. Their responses, presented in Table 9 below, show that three quarters of participants deem that the media enjoy some degree of freedom to critique the state, with 25% of respondents noting that the media enjoy full freedom to critique the state.

Table 9 *Domestic Media’s Ability to Critique the State*

	Percent
The media enjoy full freedom to critique the state.	25.0
The media enjoy some freedom to critique the state.	50.0
The media are not generally free to critique the state.	16.7
The media almost never free to critique the state.	4.2
Total	95.8
No Response	4.2

Participants note that “media sometimes superficially covers more problematic issues but rarely points out obvious mistakes or problems by the government or the disapproval of the public, likely due to some fear of censorship” and loss of funding, which is often reinforced by “previous records [which] show the government does not take kindly to official media outlets outright questioning their decisions”. Respondents also acknowledged that the media

may be reluctant to critique the state when “there is political uncertainty - ie [sic] a potential change of government which the media outlet may not be wish to happen”.

In upholding the media’s role of reinforcing governmental transparency and accountability, participants called for:

- “stronger protective legislative frameworks” for both journalists and sources, including “laws protecting freedom of speech” and a legal “framework against censorship”;
- transparency surrounding media ownership and the placement of restrictions on state’s ability to fund media sources;
- an encouragement of independent media;
- the widening of, and “stronger international collaborations”;
- an encouragement for “wider diversity” in media; and
- “better education for the general public” in issues of information literacy and critical thinking so as to enable individuals to grasp poor quality reporting and disinformation.

When asked about the extent to which media ownership is transparent in their country (please see Table 10), 45.8% of participants agreed that this is “often transparent”, 16.7% deemed it “fully transparent”, 20.8% noted it is “rarely transparent”, and 4.2% regarded is “almost never transparent”.

Table 10 Media Ownership Transparency

	Percent
Media ownership is fully transparent	16.7%
Media ownership is often transparent	45.8%
Media ownership is rarely transparent	20.8%
Media ownership is almost never transparent	4.2%
Don’t know/Not sure	8.3%
No response	4.2%

Participants were then asked to rate the extent to which they thought that the *executive power, legislative power, judicial power, private individuals, businesses, and organised criminal groups (OCGs)* have an influence on the media (please see Table 11). The judicial power and organised criminal groups are regarded as more likely to have no to little influence on the media, whilst the executive power and businesses are generally considered to be most influential.

Table 11 *Influences on Media*

	No influence	Little influence	Some influence	Considerable influence	Total Influence	Not Sure
Executive Power	0%	8.7%	43.5%	34.8%	8.7%	4.3%
Legislative Power	4.3%	21.7%	43.5%	21.7%	4.3%	4.3%
Judicial Power	17.4%	26.1%	21.7%	21.7%	8.7%	4.3%
Private Individuals	8.7%	34.8%	21.7%	21.7%	8.7%	4.3%
Businesses	4.3%	17.4%	26.1%	39.1%	8.7%	4.3%
OCGs	21.7%	39.1%	0%	21.7%	0%	17.4%