

LIBYA

THE BIRTH OF "FREE MEDIA"
IN EASTERN LIBYA



The Internet has been crucial in the battle against Middle East dictatorships over the past few months. In Libya, cyber-dissidents got around censorship and the regime’s shutdown of the Internet to tell the whole world about the uprising and the authorities’ repression of the population, unaware they were launching the country’s first free media outlets.

The online news work continues as part of the war, but in the east of the country, beyond the control of the regime, a whole “media revolution” has taken place. After 42 years of dictatorship, an energetic “free media” driven by a new generation of “citizen journalists” has emerged through the creation of many newspapers and radio and TV stations.

*Report directed by Servane Viguier
in Benghazi and Tobrouk in April 2011*

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GADDAFI'S LIBYA, ONE OF THE WORLD'S HARSHEST REGIMES

MEDIA UNDER CONTROL DESPITE SMALL OPENING-UP IN 2007

The regime tried to put on a new face to the world after international sanctions against it were lifted in 2004. But despite efforts by Gaddafi's son Seif Al-Islam to open up and modernize it, the media has remained under control of the regime and its Movement of Revolutionary Committees.

Seif Al-Islam's firm Al-Ghad authorized in August 2007 the founding of the first two privately-owned newspapers, *Oea* and *Quryana*, and a new satellite TV station, *Al-Libiya*. The foreign press appeared in newsstands after 25 years of being banned. *Al-Jazeera* could be viewed on cable TV and more people used the Internet in their homes. Three foreign news agencies, including the French *Agence France-Presse*, opened their first offices in Tripoli. But the authorities only grudgingly issue official accreditations and getting entry visas is still very complicated.

The press seems to be a little more outspoken but this is only skin-deep. No newspaper is really independent and state and privately-owned media are still propaganda mouthpieces of the regime and the only permitted political party.

Journalists continue to live in fear of reprisals and censor themselves in the face of laws that threaten them. They risk prison or death if they mention human rights, freedom of expression or corruption and many who have dared to criticize the regime have been punished.

One of the country's earliest cyber-dissidents, Abdel Razak Al-Mansouri, was jailed for 18 months in 2005 after criticising Gaddafi's policies on the website *Akhbar-Libya*. The writer and journalist Daif Al-Ghazal, of the London-based opposition website *Libya Al-Youm* and former member of the Movement of People's Committees, was tortured before being murdered in Benghazi the same year. Others vanished into the country's prisons.

CENSORSHIP BACKED BY REPRES- SIVE LAWS AND FOUR TABOOS

Seif Al-Islam Gaddafi defined media freedom in a speech in 2007, mentioning four topics that were taboo:

- Any talk of applying Islamic law
- The "stability" of Libya (corruption)
- The country's geographical unity (tribalism especially the Berbers)
- Any criticism of The Guide of the Libyan Jamahiriya (Gaddafi) and his associates

But freedom of expression is guaranteed to Libyans in article 13 of the 1969 national constitution, though "within the limits of public interest and the principles of the Revolution." Despite amendments to the penal code in 2003, and other changes to it in 2009, clauses about the media have not changed. The press law, drafted in 1972, is especially harsh. Article 178 of the penal code provides life imprisonment for putting out any news that could "tarnish the country's reputation or undermine confidence in it abroad." Article 207 provides for the death penalty for "anyone who advocates inside Libya, by whatever means, theories or principles aiming to change the basic tenets of the national constitution or the basic structures of the social system, or aiming to overthrow the state's political, social or economic structures."



1995 and 1998 and his warplanes bombed their hideouts in the mountainous Al-Akhdar region that stretches from Benghazi to Tobruk.

A major crackdown followed an attack on the Italian consulate in Benghazi on 17 February 2006, when 10 demonstrators were killed protesting against anti-Islamic remarks by Roberto Calderoli, a leader of Italy's right-wing Northern League party, and against the publication in Europe of cartoons of the prophet Mohamed.

Cyrenaica has also been punished economically for its "dissidence" by being shut off from the oil bonanza, even though eastern towns such as Ras Lanuf and Brega are some of the country's biggest oil centres. Benghazi, the city that has dared to defy Gaddafi, has been cast out by the regime.



BENGAZI - MEDIA CENTER - CREDITS: ANDREAS STENGER/APS-MEDIAS

ACTIVISTS REPORT THEIR REVOLUTION ONLINE

Ordinary citizens filmed the regime's bloody repression in the streets with their mobile phones. They posted their video and photo reports from the heart of the fighting on the social networking sites, and they were immediately seen around the world and relayed by the main international media.

An online clearing-house for Libyan news was organized as soon as the uprising began, with many activists all over the world, including some from the Libyan diaspora, helping Libyans get around the regime's censorship. Everyone was expecting a sudden cut-off in communications, as three months earlier access to Facebook, Twitter and YouTube and various blogs had been suspended.

As the uprising grew, and more and more damning pictures circulated, the regime predictably cut off the Internet on 18 February and two days later all phone lines out of the country.

DESPITE THE BLACKOUT, NEWS CONTINUES TO CIRCULATE

HOW THE NEW MEDIA GOT AROUND THE BLOCKED INTERNET

Throughout the crisis, the regime has been unsure what to do about access to the Internet and has simply cut it off now and again throughout the country. The Egyptian

authorities cut it off entirely, while Libya allows very narrow access that apparently has the effect of paralysing the system.

This technical flaw was seized upon by Libyan hackers, helped by others abroad, including the Anonymous group.

After working with dissidents in Tunisia and Egypt, Anonymous launched an Operation Libya a few weeks before clashes began to "help the brave people of Libya," sending "care packs" enabling people to get round online censorship, exchange news with the outside world, distribute videos and organize meetings. Anonymous hacktivists set up illegal proxy sites for use by citizen journalists with mobile phone videos and photos to post on YouTube, Facebook and Twitter, including pictures of burned and mutilated bodies from the "slaughterhouse" that one Anonymous member said Tripoli had become.

The regime caused very serious online disruption on 18 February through the country's main Internet server, Libya Telecom and Technology (LTT), owned by Gaddafi's son Mohamed, which imposed an almost complete shutdown on 3 March. But the Internet firm Renesys says a handful of IP addresses still operate inside the country. A few Libyans can still get online but most have been cut off. The Egyptian regime used the simple and brutal method of blocking the BGP (Border Gateway Protocol) and DNS (Domain Name Server), which shut down all service. Libya did not block these key protocols but drastically reduced bandwidth, slowing down all operations. This made perfect sense to the regime, said James Cowie of Renesys.

@FreedomGroupTV: Collective of activists providing rebel fighters with sat-phones and enabling them to film daily the battles in Misrata. Transmits its videos by live streaming. Daily interviews and an audio summary of the situation on the ground while the city is cut off from the outside.

And many others, including: @iyad_elbaghdadi, @NewsIn-Libya, @ChangeInLibya, @Libya_United, @LibyaNewMedia, @Libyan4life, @IbnOmar2005, @libya2p0 and Misrata 17.

The US website smallworldnews.com is also helping Libya's citizen journalists. Founder and director Brian Conley set up Alive in Libya in early March, after earlier founding Alive in Baghdad, Tehran, Mexico, Gaza, Bahrain, Egypt and Afghanistan. The Libyan site enables emerging new media to structure themselves online. Conley and programming expert Louis Abelman went to Benghazi in March to train Libyans at the Media Centre.

MOHAMMED NABBOUS, NEW FACE OF CITIZEN JOURNALISM

Benghazi telecoms engineer Mohammed "Mo" Nabbous, a 28-year-old non-journalist activist, enabled the whole world to follow events daily in Benghazi since the start of the uprising. He set up online Libya's first independent TV station, *Libya Al-Hurra TV* (Free Libya), broadcast in flux streaming through a satellite link, after being inspired by Facebook at the start of the uprising. The site, which include a chat-room, is also run by a team of moderators abroad, drawn from the diaspora. Nabbous's wife said they got around censorship at first by hacking but soon got a satellite link.

Nabbous was in touch with several foreign news organizations, including the French website StreetPress.com, and deplored the thin coverage by foreign media, while he continued to report the regime's abuses. A few hours before NATO's military intervention began on 19 March, Nabbous set off to film events. When the regime's tanks arrived at the entrance to the city, hidden regime snipers opened fire and he was killed in the street.

He is considered a hero and martyr of the revolution and his photo can be seen in the streets of Benghazi and at the Media Centre there. His family continue to run his TV station and others have joined the satellite station *Libya TV*, set up by Mahmoud Shammam and the NTC.

NEW MEDIA FORM AROUND THE NTC

EDITORIAL LINE AND STAFF

The new generation of journalists is still battling to get out the news online but since 17 February they have also been energetically setting up newspapers and TV and radio stations in "free" Libya.

The new media outlets in the east lack equipment and infrastructure but are growing very fast. The constant presence of Gaddafi and his doctrines had long put Libyans off the media but now people snatch up newspapers in the street. The confusing mass of new publications is proof of people's great need to speak out and exchange opinions after years of repression and surveillance by the regime's Movement of People's Committees.

Student volunteers (aged between 20 and 30) left the university (closed because of the civil war) and joined the new media, most of them with no experience at all. They started out by posting news online for the rest of the world. Now they are working to build solid structures and are bubbling over with ideas. Amid a certain disorganization due to both novelty and the context of the fighting, they are eager to get their point of view heard and working actively to create one of the pillars of democracy.

Writers, filmmakers, lawyers, doctors, intellectuals (including from the diaspora) have enthusiastically supported the new media after 42 years of government propaganda. Many have left their jobs and sometimes their adopted country to join young people running new publications. Some say they have found a new vocation it would be hard to abandon after peace is restored.

Journalists too are also freeing themselves from decades of frustration. But those considered too close to the old regime have been pushed off the air.

Teams have come from Qatar, Britain, the United States and elsewhere to give technical help, including one from the US website smallworldnews.com (Alive in Libya).

Women have joined this media revolution in force as editorial staff and sources of ideas. Some have abandoned the veil, some have not, but few women have senior

positions as editors or directors. They are still up against a very conservative society and region and it is sometimes hard for a man to interview a woman and vice-versa.

The presence of the diaspora alongside the new pro-democracy generation is also a plus in the battle against tradition and Libyan women seem to be well aware of this. Both online and in newsrooms, the recent advent of Western-style thinking has caused a “culture shock” among the more hesitant. Editorial clashes between liberals and conservatives are sometimes sharp as everyone tries to defend their ideas or customs.

The shape and content of the media is changing. Great importance is given to illustration, colour and modernity whenever materially possible. The first designs by artistic directors have turned the page on the boring look of the press, which reflected the ageing Gaddafi regime.

Dialogue has clearly started in a society that is little used to it and whose habits are still very conservative, which means the opening-up of the media is relative and fragile.

A DEGREE OF CENSORSHIP

The media’s political representatives are clearly imposing a degree of censorship and the notion of “solidarity” justified by wartime conditions. The image of a “united Libya” standing together with the revolutionaries and their political leaders is reflected in all the new media.

The NTC thus forbids mention of some topics and reports on the fighting are still limited by the communications strategy of the new political leaders. Discussing morals, religion, tribalism, Gaddafi supporters and his former henchmen who have defected to the NTC is a delicate matter in a society taking its first steps towards democracy.

But unemployment, oil, education, healthcare and the distribution of the country’s wealth can be freely discussed. Benghazi radio stations are playing once-banned music and regional dialects are heard on the air again. Urban culture, that used to be underground (artists would meet secretly to create or to sing) is all over the magazines and street artists and rappers are active. The media gives prominence to criticism of Gaddafi’s regime. Cartoonists, hitherto unable to work, now enjoy poking fun at the dictator and his family. But no cartoons have appeared of NTC chairman Mustafa Abdul Jalil or other rebel leaders. The media also seems to

have been told to stress that the new leaders are not members of Al-Qaeda and not to talk about any possibility of partitioning the country. The media is marching in step with the NTC about the future status of Libya.

One weekly that wanted to do a double-page spread in March about installing a constitutional monarchy and allowing the return of Crown Prince Mohamed Al-Senussi, exiled in London since 1988, was forced to drop the plan in early April after political pressure. An anonymous source at the paper said it was told that such a topic was “premature” and would be “destabilizing” for the NTC and its work.

So the NTC is clearly trying to control the new media. Young journalists who step over the line are systematically reassigned by the media’s political representatives and sometimes even dismissed, according to one local source. This difference in freedom of expression between the revolution’s early online media and the newspapers in the east shocks the new generation of journalists.

The fear that the new media could become another propaganda tool makes young people wary of the authorities. They have publicly defied political representatives of the media, including at one heated meeting at the Media Centre in mid-May.

Entrenching the principles of media freedom in a new national constitution and protecting themselves with trade unions is a priority for the new journalists. “We have to think about how to protect the media and build it up from scratch,” said one journalist, “because under Gaddafi, there were only laws to terrorize and imprison journalists.”

MEDIA CENTRE - ANARCHY AND LACK OF RESOURCES

The Media Centre was installed in the former Benghazi courthouse, which suffered damage in a fire after it was taken by the rebels. It occupies rooms that were once used to try anti-Gaddafi dissidents. Qatar provided equipment in March. The centre is mainly run by women. Members of the local and foreign media are received warmly by NTC women activists. Rebels stand guard at the entrance with Kalashnikovs slung across their shoulders. A big banner on the facade proclaims solidarity with journalists killed since the start of the war.

Brimming with energy, the new press uses the Media Centre as the hub of its activities. Not a week goes by without a new radio station, TV station, newspaper or website being launched. Both new journalists and old ones newly freed from the regime's oppressive grip come to the Media Centre to gather news and find the material they sorely lack.

MEDIA THAT LACK EVERYTHING, EVEN BASIC RESOURCES

Scattered around the city, the local media usually have no Internet connection. Dozens of journalists can be found online at any one time at the Media Centre, using the satellite dish on its roof. The password for logging on is "We win or die" (a quote from Omar Al-Mokhtar). The connection is slow and often goes down. Local radio stations with no recording studio can come and use the Qatari studio at the Media Centre to record their programmes, but it is in constant demand. The power supply is irregular, and when there is power, people scramble to plug their laptops into the available sockets. Daily and weekly newspapers are printed on person printers. Everyone lends a hand.

Phones, Internet, paper, printers, cameras, video cameras, microphones, computers, TV sets, satellite dishes, recording studios and editorial offices – the list of needs is long. Aside from a few media (such as the *Berenice Post*, *Libya Al-Hurra TV* and *Al-Sawt*) that are funded by private sponsors or donations by the Libyan diaspora, the new media work with minimal resources.

On the Media Centre's soot-blackened walls, there is a photo of Mohammed Nabbous, alongside one of the hero of the struggle against Italian colonialism, Omar Al-Mokhtar, one of Che Guevara and many cartoons of the Gaddafi family. After years of censorship, the press cartoonists are going all out with the colonel. He is transformed into a rat or a dog, fighting vainly to hold on to power from his tattered tent. Alluding to a rumour that his mother was from Israel, some cartoons show him leafing through a Green Book with a yellow star and swastika on the cover.

LETTERBOX REPLACING INTERNET

In the absence of Internet service, a big letterbox has been installed in the facade of the Media Centre where passers-by deposit hundreds letters for the various media containing information gathered by would-be journalists. Most of the sources are unverifiable and the information

often contradictory. The inability to verify sources and stories is extremely dangerous and facilitates the circulation of rumours in the new media. It goes without saying that none of these media has a news agency subscription.

There were all kinds of speculation about Misrata, which was blacked out before the first ship with World Food Programme supplies and satellite equipment arrived on 7 April. The first news of the city's population was brought to the Media Centre by a man who fled the besieged city in a boat in the middle of a storm at the end of May. In an improvised press conference that was immediately post online, he described atrocities by pro-Gaddafi troops and mercenaries. He also told his listeners that the population was starving and that the disconnection of power and water supplies had caused a public health disaster. As the inhabitants of Misrata could not be reached, it was impossible to verify his claims. What he said was taken as gospel and, indeed, his information subsequently proved to have been correct. The first issues contained articles with improbable accounts based on letters delivered to the Media Centre letterbox.

RANDOM NEWS CONFERENCES

The NTC advises journalists to register and obtain accreditation "as a safety measure." A "Free Libya" press card in the revolution's colours is available to registered journalists. By the start of April, 1,300 accreditations had been issued. But the end of the month, the number had risen to 2,100. News conferences are often improvised at the last moment and the media are rarely notified of the times. Journalists come across them by chance. This was the case, for example, with a news conference by former prisoners to call for the inclusion of prisoner rights in the new constitution. The NTC has been holding a news conference at the Uzu Hotel every evening since April. None of the three hotels where foreign journalists stay (Uzu, Tibesti and El Fadeel) has a satellite connection. The Uzu had one for a while, but its equipment was stolen. Foreign journalist fight over the Tibesti's duplex apartments, where they can install their own equipment.

battered after 42 years of authoritarianism. The awakening must be gentle and everyone will have to draw on their strengths in order to face the future with serenity. And for this there is just one solution – dialogue.”

REPORTERS WITHOUT BORDERS RECOMMENDATIONS

Reporters Without Borders supports the Libyan media that are trying to work freely. Libya has never previously enjoyed so much freedom of expression. This freedom needs to be consolidated in order to ensure that regression is impossible. The organization undertakes to provide its full support to media that inform the Libyan population without political or economic constraints.

Reporters Without Borders calls on international organizations and the entire international community to support a free and independent press as an essential vehicle of a process of democratization.

International donors are urged to provide Libya’s free media with support and not leave this role to a single country, Qatar. Investigations into abuses against journalists and bloggers should begin at once. Reporters Without Borders has already provided the International Criminal Court with information about the deaths of several journalists in Libya.

Reporters Without Borders urges Muammar Gaddafi to put an immediate stop to all abuses against journalists working in Tripoli and other cities under his authority. He should also order the immediate release of journalists who are still detained and allow the foreign media to cover the war freely.

Reporters Without Borders urges the NTC to ensure that local and foreign journalists are free to work without obstruction or harassment in the area under its control.

The NTC should also undertake not to introduce censorship measures. The press should be able to exercise the right to criticize.



OVERVIEW OF THE NEW LIBYAN MEDIA

Aside from the already mentioned news websites and Web TVs that stream video, many "free" news media have emerged in eastern Libya since the start of the revolution. In a chaotic war-time fashion and using whatever resources are available, their journalists work at the Media Centre or in various improvised newsrooms, continuing their fight against oppression. Some newspapers are publishing online but in most cases websites are not operating for lack of a satellite connection. The journalists are very careful about exchanging information in emails, fearing infiltration by supporters of the Gaddafi regime. The jobs they do change quickly, as hierarchies are still taking shape.

Most of these media carry a lot of coverage of the war and the international intervention, tributes to war heroes, stories about east Libyan society, the history of Cyrenaica, the emerging urban culture, poems, and cartoons of Muammar Gaddafi and his son, Seif Al-Islam. The "free media" that have some financial support are beginning to use colour and to display creative touches.

PRINT MEDIA

The print media are experiencing a major renaissance with dozens of new publications such as *Al-Sawt*, *Libya Al-Hurriya*, *Al-Burniq*, *Berenice Post*, *Omar Al-Mukhtar Magazine*, *Libya Post*, *Al-Haqiqa*, *Panorama*, *Ashab* and *Intefathat Al-Ahrrar*. The dailies usually have four pages and the weeklies have 20 pages. The average retail price is 0.20 euros. They are sold on the street and at various strategic locations by the staff themselves.

AL-BURNIQ

This Arabic-language weekly emerged during the first days of the revolution from the ashes of *Al-Quryana* (Arabic for Cyrene), a newspaper founded by Seif Al-Islam Gaddafi. It gets its name from the Arabic version of the Greek name for Benghazi. But it has minimal resources. "Before, it was impossible to criticize Gaddafi," says editor Fateh Al-Kashmi. "He was above the law, above everything, as

if he were God. That is over now." The newspaper recently found a financial backer in the shape of an oil company allied with the opposition.

Site : <http://www.brneiq.com>
Contact : info@yosberides.com

AL-HAQIQA

Created by the Elhouni family, this former daily was one of Libya's biggest newspapers in the 1970s with a print-run of 15,000 copies. Before his coup, Muammar Gaddafi met one of its owners, Rashad Elhouni, with a view to having it print a "military newspaper." After being turned down, the Guide later heaped abuse on the newspaper in a speech, accusing it of delaying his revolution by two years. *Al-Haqiqa's* owners left the country in 1980. In London, Haj Ahmed Salihine Elhouni founded the leading pan-Arab daily *Al-Arab*. The two military officers in charge of the Libyan media at the time, Mabrook Al-Gweil and Hamed Salih, turned *Al-Haqiqa* into a "world press and financial management company" that was partly state-owned. The sign is still in the office, along with documents printed for the "Great Man-Made River Authority" and military manuals.

Ending a long exile in London, the founder's descendants, Issam, Nabil and Samir Elhouni, returned to Benghazi after the insurrection and, although their father always told them to "stay away from the media," they hope the family newspaper will resume publishing in "Free Libya" in the next few months. The Soviet-era printing press still works, although the regime sold off some its parts. In the digital age, 1980s offset technology survives here. At the moment, it is printing NTC flags, slogans and communiqués free of charge.

AL-SAWT (THE VOICE)

This Arabic-language newspaper targets young people. It has a print-run of a few thousand copies. It recently moved its office to the Benghazi Cultural Centre, where it pays no rent. "At first we printed the newspaper on our own printers and worked from home," said Abdelaziz, 22. "With no way to have an Internet connection, we got our information

as best we could, like everyone else, going every day to get mail from the big letterbox at the Media Centre. On the basis of that information, we wrote the articles that we published in our first issues. Now, thanks to the Internet, reporting has changed and information is finally circulating. We are not improvising in complete isolation any more. We have made progress, even if we still lack everything."

To contact : **Mohamed Shembesh & Ahmed Zada**

BERENICE POST

This eight-page business news weekly is the first newspaper to have been published in both English and Arabic. Created by a breakaway group after a difference of opinion at *Intefathat Al-Ahrar*, it is financed by a privately-owned local bank and has a new, well-equipped office at the Benghazi Cultural Centre with satellite connections. It is one of the most successful new publications. With a glossy cover and colourful artwork, it is breaking new ground in creativity in Libya. It tries to combat stereotypes and offer "signs of change." Its reporters and editors are aged from 18 to 25 and most are women. Some wear a Muslim headscarf, others dress in a western style. Its first front cover carried the headline "Towards a better tomorrow." Below that, it had "Al-Qaida exists not in Libya." The inside pages hailed the free press's hero – Mohammed Nabbous.

To contact : **Farah Gtat**

INTEFATHAT AL-AHRAR

This weekly has a modest office in a former English-language academy that houses several civil society organizations. The staff have no resources and still use the Media Centre letterbox as their main source of information. They produce their weekly print-run of 3,000 copies on a printer that is beginning to give up, and complain of having no paper for the next issue. The first issue was distributed free of charge. Now the newspaper is sold for 0.50 dinars (0.30 euros) a copy. As is the case with most publications, no one is a real media specialist.

"Here we do reports and opinion pieces." One of the editors uses a verse from the Koran as a headline: "Every tyrant comes to an end." A young female editor writes a column paying tribute to Kais, a graffiti artist who was shot on the street by a sniper. It is accompanied by a reproduction of one of his street graffiti, a caricature of Gaddafi, but the printer makes a mess of it. "We make do with what we have," says Maetiga, one of the women journalists. The latest lead

story takes another look at claims that Al-Qaeda members are fighting alongside the rebels. "There are no members of organizations, no infiltrators in our troops," says Wahil. "That is just a spectre used by Gaddafi to frighten the west."

NEFUSA MOUNTAIN MEDIA GROUP

This is the first magazine to be published in the Tamazight (Berber) language, whose use in books, universities and schools was banned by the regime. It is being produced in the Nafusa Mountains, a range that stretches from the Tunisian border to Gharyan (a city to the south of Tripoli), and it is being published online using the Libya TV satellite link. It is also translated into Arabic.

Site : <http://libyatadreft.com>

PANORAMA

This is a weekly produced by about 20 students with articles translated into four languages – Arabic, English, French and Italian. It contains a lot of analysis of society, covering such subjects as unemployment, the role of women and education. "When we first interviewed people, they did not dare to speak freely," said Ahmed Al-Jahmy, who covers politics. "Fear lingers in people's minds and will take time to fade away after 42 years of bad practices. We hope that society will liberate itself and that women will allow themselves to be photographed without fearing reactions, even if we must respect their choices." The journalists financed the first issue themselves. With a print run of 2,000 copies, it cost 575 dinars (336 euros) to produce.

To contact : **Ahmed Al-Jahmy**

ASHAB (FRIENDS)

Written in "the language of street," this 32-page colour magazine is produced by a team of 16 people and covers a range of subjects from serious to frivolous, with an emphasis on culture. "Readers need to identify quickly with the language of their daily lives, because people were sick of the regime's official language," the team said.

To contact : **Yussef Lamin**

LIBYA POST

This current affairs and culture weekly has an English-language edition. Tawfik Mansurey edits it and Hossam Abdulbagi is responsible for public relations.

Contact : libya.post@hotmail.com

SATELLITE TELEVISION

LIBYA TV FOR THE FREE – “FACE OF THE REVOLUTION”

Hastily set up under the NTC's aegis and headed by Mahmoud Shammam, this station is called *Libya TV for the Free*, or just *Libya TV*, in English and *Libya Al-Hurra* in Arabic after the Web TV created by the hero of citizen journalism, Mohammed Nabbous. Intended to represent the “Face of the Revolution,” it has been broadcasting from Doha since late April with additional studios in Benghazi and London. Zuhair Albarasi, who learned citizen journalism alongside Nabbous, hosted the live broadcast that launched the Benghazi studio on 30 May.

With correspondents in various parts of the country, it is envisaged that *Libya TV*'s headquarters will eventually move from Doha to Tripoli. During the first few months, the plan is for four hours of original programming a day, including a 20-minute news bulletin and a half-hour talk-show. This will later be extended.

The main source of funding for Libya's first free satellite TV station has been donations from Libyan diaspora businessmen including \$250,000 from a wealthy donor based in London. As well as offering *Libya TV* a temporary home, Qatar is helping it to develop. *Al-Rayyan*, a Qatari TV station specializing in cultural programming, is providing equipment and support by its technical staff.

Mohamed Hawas abandoned his job as a journalist with the state TV station *Al-Jamahiriyah* on 19 February and joined the *Libya TV* team in Doha, where he is now a presenter. He said he could not stand the way the government tried to use him after the riots. “The regime wanted to use me to crush the uprising in the east by broadcasting lies,” he said in the brand-new studios in Qatar. “But I'd had enough of censorship. I wanted to finally do my job and tell the truth.”

Waleed Al-Senegri, a filmmaker who used to make documentaries for the government, once designed to attract tourists to Libya, has also joined *Libya TV*. He spent six months in prison after doing a report about an Abu Salim prison inmate. Ahmed Ben Khayal, the editor in chief in Benghazi, is training his staff in *Al-Jazeera*-style debates. They include a score of volunteer journalists aged 18 to 25 from the Benghazi bourgeoisie.

Shammam, who heads *Libya TV*, was a member of the *Al-Jazeera* board for four years and has often appeared on *Al-Jazeera*. When he announced on his Facebook personal page that he was looking for journalists, he received 200 applications in a few days. One of the applicants, who has joined the team in Doha, is from the ghost town of Ajdabiya. Shammam says he wants young people who are at the forefront of the uprising to have a leading voice at *Libya TV*. “The youth who liberate Libya can run it. If we don't let them take responsibility now, we're going to be in trouble.”

His biggest hope is to overcome the years of indoctrination by the Gaddafi regime. “We need a heavy dosage of dialogue,” he said. He wants the station to hold debates on constitutional reform, policies, NTC elections, education and many subjects that were taboo or censored until now. He regrets the fact that at the moment “all the media images are concentrated on the front.”

Libya TV by satellite: Arabsat Badr 26 East 10730 Horizontal and Noursat 11585 Vertical and NourSat.

Site : <http://www.libya.tv>.
 Site in English: <http://english.libya.tv>.
 Contact : Editor Reem Maghribi: r.maghribi@libya.com.
 In Benghazi: editor in chief Ahmed Ben Khayal.
 Journalist Zuhair Albarasi.

TELEVISION STREAMED ONLINE

FREEDOMGROUPTV

Site : <http://www.youtube.com/user/miusrata17miusrata>

LIBYA AL-HURRA TV (WEB TV CREATED BY MOHAMED NABBOUS)

Site : <http://www.livestream.com/libya17feb>

NTC on Facebook since May, press service
 Contact : info@ntc.net



BENGAZI - MEDIA CENTER - CREDITS: ANDREAS STENGER/APS-MEDIAS

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REPORTERS WITHOUT BORDERS is an international press freedom organisation. It monitors and reports violations of media freedom throughout the world. Reporters Without Borders analyses the information it obtains and uses press releases, letters, investigative reports and recommendations to alert public opinion to abuses against journalists and violations of free expression, and to put pressure on politicians and government officials.

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