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Freedom of the Press 2012 - Cape Verde

2012 Scores

Press Status: Free

Press Freedom Score: 27

Legal Environment: 6

Political Environment: 9

Economic Environment: 12

Cape Verde has historically been among the freest media environments in both Africa and the broader Lusophone world, a trend that continued in 2011. The constitution directly provides for freedom of the press as well as confidentiality of sources, access to information, and freedom from arbitrary arrest. A 1999 constitutional amendment still excludes the use of freedom of expression as a defense in defamation cases; however, there have been no such libel cases since 2002. The law requires broadcasters to obtain operating licenses, and government approval is needed to establish new newspapers and other publications. However, there were no reports that the government denied or revoked licenses for political reasons in 2011.

The government of Cape Verde has consistently demonstrated its commitment to respect and protect media freedom. Prime Minister José Maria Neves proclaimed in 2011, with no visible dissent, that when it comes to freedom of the press, "Cape Verde is a first-world country." The government does not generally restrict access to or content on the media that it controls. Self-censorship, a somewhat underdeveloped journalistic

cadre, and an incomplete incorporation of local Creole dialects into media working in the country prevent Cape Verde from blossoming into an even freer media environment.

Intimidation of journalists in Cape Verde is rare, though 2011 did see one instance in which the national police detained a reporter from state-run *Televisão Nacional de Cabo Verde*, or TCV, for several hours after he refused to stop filming an interview in San Miguel. The Association of Cape Verdean Journalists condemned the act as an "attempt to curtail press freedom." During the campaign for the August presidential election, *Visão Global*, the country's only political debate program, was suspended after actions by commentators allegedly violated an electoral law that prohibits media organizations from making any comments about the stakeholders in the election after a certain date in the electoral process.

Many media outlets are state-operated, although there are a growing number of private publications and broadcast outlets. The state runs TCV and a radio station, *Radio Nacional de Cabo Verde*. In addition to the state-run outlets, about a dozen independent and community-run FM radio stations broadcast regularly. Print media include a government publication appearing twice weekly and a handful of independent weeklies (including *A Semana*, the largest paper, as well as *Expresso das Ilhas* and *A Nação*) and monthlies, such as *Artiletra*. Portuguese and Brazilian newspapers are also readily available. Geographic barriers and harsh terrain in a country made up of several islands also constitute impediments to the distribution of newspapers and other media products. This has contributed to a growth in the importance of the community radio sector. Difficulties raising funds and a lack of specific regulations governing community radio have been identified as major issues for the sustainability of this sector, and community radio advocates have called for government help with operating costs and new legislation.

Internet usage has risen dramatically over the last few years, from 8 percent in 2007 to 32 percent in 2011. The cities have numerous cybercafés, giving residents regular access to the internet. There were no reports that the government restricted internet access or monitored e-mail messages.