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Reporters Without Borders
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Contribution of Reporters Without Borders (a non-governmental organisation in special consultative status) about press freedom in MAURITIUS

Introduction: Overview of press freedom situation

A stable democracy since 1968, Mauritius benefits from a real press freedom. The development of private radio stations, initiated in 2002, is keeping its promises, although no private TV stations exist yet. Television is the most-popular medium. Multichannel TV is available in Port Louis. Internet access is widely available, especially in urban areas.

With a population of 1.2 million people from different ethnic backgrounds, the media in Mauritius is pluralistic and multi-lingual. Daily newspapers and weeklies offer balanced coverage in several languages. They are often critical of both the government and the opposition parties. Two media groups - Le Mauricien Ltd and La Sentinelle Ltd - dominate the press scene.

International radios (BBC and RFI) are available on medium-wave and FM.

1. Online freedom

Reporters Without Borders has not observed any special problems with the free flow of news online in Mauritius.

2. Government steps to improve the situation

The Prime Minister announced in 2008 a law creating a Media Council, a regulation tool for the press, but without elaborating further. This announcement triggered a debate in the private press, some fearing that it might be an attempt to muzzle the private media outlets. Up until now, no text has been presented to the Parliament.

3. Working with non-governmental organisations (NGO)

Reporters Without Borders has not observed any special problems.

4. Recommendations

- The government of Mauritius should establish an original and peaceful dialogue with the independent press, to list the demands of the private sector and make proposals to improve the standards of the publications.

The data in this report has been gathered and verified by Reporters Without Borders, which has a network of correspondents in 130 countries and partner organisations in a score of countries.

In some countries, a journalist can be imprisoned for several years just for a word or a photo someone does not like. Reporters Without Borders, founded in 1985, works daily to support press freedom because imprisoning or killing a journalist removes a key witness and threatens the right of all of us to be kept informed of the news.

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