

Press Release



New Journalism for a New Libya

1Libya launches “conflict-sensitive” journalism training program

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TRIPOLI, Libya – For decades, the practice of journalism in Libya was restrained by the censorship and control of an authoritarian state. Following the February 17, 2011 revolution, a nascent public sphere has emerged and freedom of speech is ascendant. Yet now, journalism faces a new challenge: reporting accurately, fairly, and safely in areas experiencing conflict.

In response to this challenge, 1Libya, with support from IREX, launched on September 15th the first of its training workshops on Conflict-Sensitive Reporting. The training is just the first part of a 12-month program that builds the capacity of Libyan journalists and gives them the tools to report accurately, fairly, and with minimal risk to their own safety from, and about, communities stricken by conflict.

“This program is designed specifically to give Libyan journalists the tools they need to solve the most pressing challenges in their field,” says Iman El-Huni, founder and director of 1Libya. “Libyan journalists face two major challenges. First, getting a balanced and accurate story is a huge challenge when the country’s institutions are so new and inexperienced. But second, the work of journalism can be dangerous. We believe this program on Conflict-Sensitive Reporting addresses both those issues.”

The first four-day training workshop will begin in Tripoli, while others are planned for other cities across Libya. One international media consultant and one local journalist will deliver the training in conflict, its roots, how to report on conflict and from a conflict zone in a balanced and accurate way. In addition, the workshops will also offer personal security and safety training

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by specialized staff so that journalists have the tools they need if they find themselves in a dangerous situation.

“I had a chance to train with some of the best journalists from Reuters,” says trainer Omar Al-Mosmary, an experienced journalist from Benghazi who has done reporting on the ground from one of the toughest places for journalists. “Now, this is my opportunity to give my colleagues some of the skills and experience that I have had.”

While some capacity-building workshops in Libya have been one-time events, 1Libya’s Conflict-Sensitive Reporting program will continue after the training workshops. Since many journalists in Libya often need to work a second job to support their reporting, 1Libya’s program offers small grants to those journalists that complete the workshop successfully and apply. These grants will allow journalists to produce informative, timely, and accurate reports on issues of conflict occurring in Libya. This work will then be compiled and, reflecting the diverse backgrounds and locations of journalists in the program, will be used to map out areas and issues of conflict across the country.

“Given how most people get their news in Libya, particularly considering the prevalence and power of rumors, we need a lot more skilled reporters. And we should give them the support they need,” says Hiba Khalil, 1Libya’s program manager. “We are optimistic that this program will go a long way towards addressing not only short-term issues, but that it will also be an important step in strengthening the foundation of a strong, independent, and responsible fourth-estate that will play an invaluable role in rebuilding Libya.”

For more information on the program, contact 1Libya by email at press@1Libya.org or by telephone at +218(0)954801011.

