



Independent Evaluation of the Media Freedom Coalition



Summary of findings and recommendations

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This is an independent evaluation of the [Media Freedom Coalition](#) (MFC), conducted by [Aleph Strategies](#) between October 2024 and March 2025. The evaluation assessed the MFC's performance over its first five years, from its formation in July 2019 to late 2024.

About the MFC

The Media Freedom Coalition (MFC) is a global network of 51 Member States which works with civil society organisations (CSOs), legal experts, and international bodies committed to advancing media freedom and the safety of journalists. It is anchored in the Global Pledge on Media Freedom, signed by all members. The MFC works to strengthen conditions for media freedom, influence government action, protect journalists, and coordinate advocacy among its members.

Evaluation Objectives & Methodological Approach

This evaluation aimed to:

- Assess the MFC's contribution to media freedom and journalist safety;
- Examine coordination and collaboration among stakeholders and related initiatives;
- Evaluate the sustainability of the MFC's outcomes;
- Offer recommendations to enhance its impact and operational effectiveness.

The evaluation adopted a **rights-based approach** aligned with OECD-DAC criteria and integrated cross-cutting human rights principles such as accountability, participation, and equality.

Key Findings and Conclusions

The evaluation found that the MFC has made **notable contributions** to media freedom and journalist safety over the past five years. It has played a role in encouraging some Member States to strengthen their media freedom policies and legislation. The MFC has also influenced state actors through diplomatic and advocacy efforts, maintaining high-level political attention on media freedom. Direct interventions, legal guidance, and engagement with embassy networks have contributed to journalist protection efforts at the local level. Furthermore, the MFC has strengthened multi-stakeholder coordination, bringing together governments, civil society, and legal experts.

However, the evaluation also identified several areas for improvement. While the MFC provides a platform for dialogue and cooperation, its engagement with members on domestic media freedom policies is voluntary and lacks a structured approach for supporting and tracking commitments. Joint advocacy statements have a greater impact locally than internationally and are often perceived as lacking boldness and clear outcomes. While the MFC has addressed high-profile cases, its focus has sometimes overshadowed broader, systemic media freedom challenges. Engagement with Rights-Holders and organisations working on the ground has been limited, impacting the relevance and sustainability of its strategies.

Coordination and collaboration within the MFC are foundational, particularly through diplomatic networks and the development of emergency visa schemes. However, decision-making is often reactive, affecting stakeholder trust. The MFC's membership is perceived as predominantly Northern-led, and there is potential to leverage its diverse membership more effectively.

Knowledge management and information-sharing need strengthening to ensure a deeper understanding of media freedom issues among Member States. The high-level legal expertise of the



HLP is underutilised. Clarity around decision-making processes among Member States varies, influencing trust-based collaboration. While engagement at the local level through embassies is effective, it requires more structured guidance and support. Coordination between Member States, the CN, and the HLP remains limited in some areas.

In terms of **sustainability**, the current governance model, particularly the annual rotation of Executive Group co-chairs, can present challenges for knowledge retention and continuity. Funding modalities are complex, leading to perceptions of uneven distribution and impacting trust and coordination. While the MFC has developed working relationships with similar coalitions, more formalised collaboration could maximise resource efficiency. The limited engagement with Rights-Holders influences the visibility and perceived effectiveness of the MFC's work.

Recommendations

The evaluation's recommendations are not intended to be prescriptive, but rather to support the MFC's internal reflections and inform its next stages of development:

Strategic Direction & Governance

1. **Reaffirm the MFC's mandate and shared purpose**, potentially by convening a dedicated space for all stakeholder groups to come together.
2. **Increase direct engagement with Rights-Holders (journalists and media workers)**, e.g. through a dedicated mechanism to incorporate their voices into its strategic and operational work.
3. **Ensure transparency of processes and decision-making** by establishing clear protocols for decision-making and regularly sharing relevant information with stakeholders.

Political Engagement & Accountability

4. **Strengthen Member State understanding and accountability around the Global Pledge**, including through exploratory discussions with member states.
5. **Strengthen localisation through embassy networks**, including by establishing new embassy networks where demand is high or existing structures can be leveraged.

Visibility, Influence & External Engagement

6. **Enhance the MFC's visibility and strategic communications** to reach stakeholders at national, regional, and global levels.
7. **Leverage the HLP and CN to support local action** through a proactive approach to engagement at country level.

Operational Capacity & Sustainability

8. **Improve knowledge-sharing and resource accessibility across the MFC** by expanding its internal resource hub and proactively disseminating existing tools.
9. **Explore basket funding as a sustainable financial modality**, to ensure core functions and initiatives are adequately resourced over time.
10. **Expand the role and capacity of the MFC Secretariat**, based on an inclusive internal review process drawing on the perspectives of Member States, CN and HLP members.

More detailed findings and recommendations are provided in the full evaluation report.