

Press Freedom in Israel

In Israel's open and diverse society, a free press has always been crucial to the existence of its flourishing democracy.

To this end, the Israeli Press Council enforces a strict code of ethics, which includes guidelines on professionalism, integrity, accuracy and conflict of interest issues.

Israel is smaller than the state of New Jersey, yet the country's diverse media represent many political, religious and social viewpoints.

Israelis favour news programming that emphasizes vigorous debate, a variety of opinions and aggressive questioning of authority. Therefore, news media provide a forum for polemics and debate, and round-table discussions have become a popular television format. Such shows typically feature various public and private individuals vigorously expressing a spectrum of viewpoints on many issues.

While foreign press and journalists reporting from Israel are protected by the Israeli government, journalists in Palestinian-controlled areas and Gaza routinely face restrictions, intimidation, censorship and threats from the Palestinian Authority as well as from various militant groups.

Most Arab states surrounding Israel, do not tolerate a free press. Israel provides an open and vibrant environment that encourages the media to flourish.

Surveys by respected foreign journalism and research organizations have repeatedly confirmed that Israel is the only country in the Middle East whose press standards are comparable to those of Western countries.

In 2006, Freedom House conducted a study which reaffirmed that Israel is the only country in the Middle Eastern/North African region that maintains press freedom.

>> For additional reading:

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Facts+About+Israel/Culture/The+Printed+Media-+Israel-s+Newspapers.htm

BBC

news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/4969714.stm

PBS

www.pbs.org/frontlineworld/stories/israel.palestine/press.html