

# Seychelles

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## INTRODUCTION

The Seychelles is an archipelagic state in the Indian Ocean, consisting of 115 islands, with 80% of the 103,000 people living on the island of Mahe, and the remaining 20% living on Praslin and La Digue. Seychellois are ethnically diverse; over 80% of the population are Seychellois Creole – a mixture of African, European, and Asian backgrounds. Since Seychelles gained independence in 1976 its GDP has grown steadily to \$17,879 per capita in 2023. Seychelles' first president, Sir James Mancham, was overthrown in 1977 by France-Albert René, who introduced a single-party socialist state which lasted until 1993 when the first multi-party elections were held. René was elected 3 times and his party, the Seychelles People's United Party, remained in power till 2020, when opposition leader Wavel Ramkalawa was elected.

The first newspaper was published in 1926 and radio started in the 1940s. A television station was started in 1983, by a state-funded independent broadcaster, which was eventually transformed into the *Seychelles Broadcast Corporation (SBC)*. At the time of WJS data collection, *SBC* radio and TV stations were the largest employer of journalists in the Seychelles. Following the reduction of TV and radio licensing fees in 2012, the first private radio station (*Pure 90.7*) was started, and the first private TV channel (*TéléSesel*) was launched in 2017. Journalism is reported in both English, Creole and French, depending on the news program.

There are two daily newspapers – the publicly owned *Seychelles Nation* and the privately owned *Today in Seychelles*. There are also two weekly partisan papers – *The People* and *The Independent*, which are available in e-copy. There was also the *Seychelles News Agency*, a news website, which was closed in December, 2024.

## BACKGROUNDS OF JOURNALISTS

The average age of Seychellois journalists was 38 years (SD = 12.3, Median = 34.5). When it comes to the education level of Seychellois journalists, 36.5% have completed at least their undergraduate college degrees (27.9% have a bachelor's and 9.8% have a master's degree) and 60.3% have not completed a college degree (21.3% have some university, but no degree, 38.1% completed high school, and 1.6% have not completed school). Additionally, 61.9% of Seychellois journalists have completed some form of formal journalism training, with 25.6% studying journalism in university or college, 33.3% receiving training via apprenticeships or cadetships, and 55.6% completing a short-term journalism training. Among Seychellois journalists 68.3% were female.

## JOURNALISTS IN THE NEWSROOM

In terms of the background of their main employers, television (*SBC* and *TéléSesel*) employs the most journalists in the Seychelles (45.0%) followed by organizations focused on newspaper publishing and radio outlets (21.7% each); others reported no main medium for their employer.

On average, Seychellois journalists had 11.4 years of professional experience (SD = 15.6; Median = 7). Most journalists (79.0%) worked on a variety of beats or subject areas rather than on one and 40.0% reported belonging to a journalism union or professional association.

Among the journalists surveyed, 82.6% had a full-time contract (66.7% reported having a full-time permanent contract and 15.9% had a full-time fixed term contract). Only 9.5% worked as freelancers or were self-employed. About a quarter (25.4%) of journalists reported getting some income from outside of journalism, while 74.6% reported getting all their income from journalism. The average number of hours worked each week by full-time journalists in the Seychelles was reported at 48.1 hours (SD = 14.3; Median = 48).

## SAFETY AND WORK-RELATED CONCERNS

Demeaning or hateful speech was the most common threat experienced by Seychellois journalists (see Table 1). The next most common threats were the public discrediting of their work and surveillance. Arrest, detention, abductions, and other physical attacks are uncommon (96.8% reported never experiencing any of those threats). Around 11.1%, reported having at least 1 instance of sexual assault or sexual harassment. More than half of Seychellois journalists were concerned about their emotional well-being, and 30.6% were concerned about their physical wellbeing (see Table 2). Over 37% of Seychellois journalists strongly agree that they are “concerned that those who harm journalists in the Seychelles go unpunished.” Job security among Seychelles journalists appears relatively strong, as only 3.2% strongly agree that they are worried about losing their job in the next year.

**TABLE 1. EXPERIENCED THREATS**

	N	Very often	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Demeaning or hateful speech directed at you	63	6.3%	15.9%	27.0%	22.2%	28.6%
Public discrediting of your work	63	1.6%	9.5%	22.2%	23.8%	42.9%
Surveillance	63	1.6%	7.9%	17.5%	17.5%	55.6%
Questioning of your personal morality	63	0.0%	4.8%	14.3%	15.9%	65.1%
Other threats or intimidations directed at you	63	1.6%	1.6%	11.1%	14.3%	71.4%
Hacking or blocking of social media accounts or websites	63	1.6%	3.2%	7.9%	14.3%	73.0%
Others using your byline for fabricated or manipulated stories	63	0.0%	3.2%	11.1%	7.9%	77.8%
Others disseminating your personal information	63	0.0%	1.6%	6.3%	11.1%	81.0%
Workplace bullying	63	0.0%	4.8%	6.3%	6.3%	82.5%
Stalking	63	1.6%	0.0%	3.2%	11.1%	84.1%
Coercion	63	0.0%	0.0%	1.6%	11.1%	87.3%
Legal actions against you because of your work	63	0.0%	0.0%	7.9%	4.8%	87.3%
Sexual assault or sexual harassment	63	1.6%	0.0%	6.3%	3.2%	88.9%
Intimidation that targets family	63	0.0%	0.0%	4.8%	6.3%	88.9%
Office raids or seizures or damage to equipment	63	0.0%	0.0%	3.2%	1.6%	95.2%
Abductions	63	1.6%	0.0%	0.0%	1.6%	96.8%
Other physical attacks	63	0.0%	0.0%	1.6%	1.6%	96.8%
Arrests, detentions or imprisonment	63	0.0%	1.6%	0.0%	1.6%	96.8%

Question: “In the last five years, how often have you experienced any of the following actions related to your work as a journalist?”

**TABLE 2. WORK-RELATED CONCERNS**

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Concerned about emotional and mental wellbeing	62	53.2%	3.19	1.41
Concerned that those who harm journalists in [country] go unpunished	62	37.1%	2.94	1.30
Concerned about physical well-being	62	30.6%	2.50	1.24
Worried about losing job in journalism within the next 12 months	62	3.2%	1.87	0.90

Question: “Thinking about your work, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements.” (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

## JOURNALISTIC ROLES

Seychellois journalists reported their most important roles were to educate the audience, to let people express their views, and to shine a light on society’s problems. Journalists’ political role was the least valued, as the lowest four journalistic roles were all related to the role of journalism in politics (see Table 3).

**TABLE 3. JOURNALISTIC ROLES**

	N	Very/extremely important	Mean	SD
Educate the audience	63	98.4%	4.78	0.61
Let people express their views	63	92.1%	4.44	0.80
Shine a light on society’s problems	63	87.3%	4.40	0.98
Promote peace and tolerance	63	85.7%	4.38	0.87
Point toward possible solutions to society’s problems	63	87.3%	4.29	0.92
Counteract disinformation	63	82.5%	4.16	1.05
Speak on behalf of the marginalized	63	76.2%	4.08	1.11
Advocate for social change	63	74.6%	4.02	0.99
Provide analysis of current affairs	63	79.4%	4.00	1.02
Support national development	63	73.0%	4.00	0.95
Be a detached observer	63	76.2%	3.89	1.09
Support efforts to protect public health	63	71.4%	3.87	1.17
Provide the kind of news that attracts the largest audience	63	66.7%	3.84	1.19
Monitor and scrutinize those in power	63	69.8%	3.83	1.19
Discuss future implications of current events	63	61.9%	3.75	1.06
Provide information people need to form political opinion	63	61.9%	3.73	1.11
Provide advice, orientation and direction for daily life	63	57.1%	3.62	1.16
Tell stories that emotionally move the audience	63	58.7%	3.59	1.12
Influence public opinion	63	50.8%	3.40	1.31
Provide entertainment and relaxation	63	50.8%	3.33	1.30
Motivate people to participate in politics	63	31.7%	2.97	1.27
Support government policy	63	23.8%	2.78	1.08
Set the political agenda	63	11.1%	2.11	1.17
Convey a positive image of political leaders	63	7.9%	1.76	1.01

Question: “Please tell me how important it is to do each of the following in your daily work.” (Scale: 5 = Extremely important; 4 = Very important; 3 = Moderately important; 2 = Slightly important; 1 = Not at all important.)

## JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES

There was disagreement among Seychellois journalists about the nature of truth and objectivity in reporting (see Table 4). While the highest agreement among journalists was regarding the need for interpreting facts (67.2%), which is aligned with the subjective view of truth, the second highest agreement was that objective reporting was possible (59.0%).

**TABLE 4. JOURNALISTIC EPISTEMOLOGIES**

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
Interpretation is necessary to make sense of facts	61	67.2%	3.69	1.13
It is possible to represent objective reality in reporting	61	59.0%	3.61	0.95
Things are either true or false, there is no in-between	61	34.4%	3.18	1.04
Truth is inevitably shaped by those in power	61	27.9%	2.92	1.05
It is impossible for journalists to withhold their personal beliefs from reporting	61	18.0%	2.57	1.09

Questions: "The following statements deal with beliefs related to how journalists know what they know. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." / "Using the same scale, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following beliefs." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

## JOURNALISTIC ETHICS

Journalists in Seychelles tended to agree that what is ethical should be decided by professional standards rather than personal judgment (see Table 5). When it comes to controversial reporting methods, using a hidden recording device and using confidential documents without authorization was justified on occasion by just over half of journalists (see Table 6). The two least acceptable practices were publishing unverified information (19.0% found it justified on occasion) and accepting money from a source (11.1% said it was justified on occasion or always).

**TABLE 5. ETHICAL ORIENTATIONS**

	N	Agree/ strongly agree	Mean	SD
What is ethical for journalists should always be determined by professional standards regardless of situation and personal judgment	63	58.7%	3.76	1.15
What is ethical for journalists should be determined by professional standards unless extraordinary circumstances require disregarding them	63	46.0%	3.24	1.07
What is ethical for journalists should depend on each specific situation	63	31.7%	2.87	1.16
What is ethical for journalists should be a matter of personal judgment	63	11.1%	2.38	0.99

Question: "The following statements describe different responses journalists may have to ethical problems. For each of them, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree." (Scale: 5 = Strongly agree; 4 = Agree; 3 = Neither agree nor disagree; 2 = Disagree; 1 = Strongly disagree.)

**TABLE 6. JUSTIFICATION OF CONTROVERSIAL REPORTING METHODS**

	N	Always justified	Justified on occasion
Using hidden recording devices	63	0.0%	52.4%
Using confidential business or government documents without authorization	63	0.0%	50.8%
Using the personal materials of powerful people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	63	3.2%	33.3%
Claiming to be somebody else	63	0.0%	33.3%
Paying people for confidential information	63	0.0%	33.3%
Using the personal materials of ordinary people, such as documents and photos, without their permission	63	1.6%	27.0%
Accepting a free product or service from sources	63	0.0%	23.8%
Producing content that mimics news stories but hides its promotional nature	63	3.2%	17.5%
Publishing or broadcasting stories with information that is not yet verified	63	0.0%	19.0%
Accepting money from sources	63	1.6%	9.5%

Question: "Which of the following, if any, do you think may be always justified, or justified on occasion, and which would you not approve of under any circumstances?"

## EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM

A little less than half of Seychellois journalists reported having a great deal/complete freedom to select which news stories they cover and a little more than half reported they had a great deal/complete freedom to decide which aspects of a story to focus on (see Table 7). About a quarter of Seychellois journalists agreed that journalism in the Seychelles had a great deal/complete freedom.

**TABLE 7. PERCEPTIONS OF EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND MEDIA FREEDOM**

	N	A great deal/ complete freedom	Mean	SD
Freedom in selecting the news stories	60	45.0%	3.45	1.05
Freedom in deciding which aspects of a story should be emphasized	61	54.1%	3.66	1.00
Media freedom in Seychelles	59	25.4%	3.12	0.83

(Scale: 5 = Complete freedom; 4 = A great deal of freedom; 3 = Some freedom; 2 = Little freedom; 1 = No freedom at all.)

## EDITORIAL INFLUENCES

Five of the top six influences for Seychellois journalists were internal to the newsroom (journalism ethics, time limits for reporting, editorial supervisors, resources for news gathering, and editorial policy). The most influential external factor was access to information (see Table 8).

**TABLE 8. EDITORIAL INFLUENCES**

	N	Very/extremely influential	Mean	SD
Journalism ethics	56	75.0%	3.91	1.00
Time limits	55	63.6%	3.67	1.12
Access to information	55	61.8%	3.58	1.05
Editorial supervisors and higher editors	53	60.4%	3.49	1.19
Availability of news-gathering resources	56	46.4%	3.39	1.22
Editorial policy	56	48.2%	3.30	1.26
Media laws and regulation	58	48.3%	3.28	1.17
Feedback from the audience	59	47.5%	3.14	1.21
Personal values and beliefs	57	38.6%	3.02	1.40
The owners of the news organization	52	36.5%	3.02	1.39
The business managers of the news organization	52	38.5%	2.94	1.43
Audience research and data	52	36.5%	2.94	1.38
Relationships with news sources	55	29.1%	2.80	1.18
Peers on the news staff	54	25.9%	2.74	1.19
Competing news organizations	55	30.9%	2.67	1.35
Government censorship	53	30.2%	2.62	1.36
Self-censorship	58	24.1%	2.52	1.31
Government officials	54	25.9%	2.44	1.33
Advertising considerations	53	22.6%	2.42	1.35
Terrorist groups	55	0.0%	2.42	1.30
Profit expectations	51	17.6%	2.31	1.33
Public relations	54	14.8%	2.31	1.11
Colleagues in other media	57	12.3%	2.30	1.09
Business people	54	11.1%	2.22	1.21
Politicians	54	18.5%	2.19	1.29
Issue advocacy groups	52	11.5%	2.19	1.10
Police	53	13.2%	2.13	1.24
Friends, acquaintances and family	55	7.3%	1.89	1.01
Scientists or health experts	51	23.6%	1.75	0.91
Religious groups and institutions	49	5.9%	1.67	0.94
Military	46	6.1%	1.35	0.71
Para-military groups, militias and similar groups	46	2.2%	1.33	0.73
Organized crime and criminal groups	45	2.2%	1.22	0.56

Question: "Here is a list of potential sources of influence. Please tell me how much influence each of the following has on your work as a journalist." (Scale: 5 = Extremely influential; 4 = Very influential; 3 = Moderately influential; 2 = Slightly influential; 1 = Not at all influential.)