

# Conference Report

**THE ROLE OF ACADEMICIANS AND MEDIA IN MOBILIZING AND IMPROVING  
CITIZENS' AWARENESS.**



## **A concerned citizen**

**The Role of Academicians and  
Media in Mobilizing and Improving  
Citizens' Awareness**



**On Sunday, 19 of April**



**Venue: Afrik Hotel**

## Table of Contents

<b>Executive Summary</b> .....	3
<b>1. Introduction</b> .....	3
<b>2. Event Overview</b> .....	3
<b>3. Opening Session</b> .....	4
<b>4. Panel One</b> .....	4
<b>The Role of Academicians in Mobilizing the Public Towards the Greater Good: Performing Civic Duty</b> .....	4
<b>The Role of Media in Awareness Creation and Reporting During Critical Times</b> .....	5
<b>6. Audience Engagement</b> .....	5
<b>7. Key Takeaways</b> .....	6
<b>8. Recommendations</b> .....	6
<b>9. Conclusion</b> .....	7

## Executive Summary

This conference brought together **academicians, media professionals, researchers, and members of the public** to discuss the critical role of knowledge institutions and media organizations in strengthening **citizens' awareness and civic engagement**.

Through two panel discussions, participants explored how **academia and media can contribute to informing the public**, particularly during times of political uncertainty and social challenges. Key topics discussed included the importance of **public education, responsible journalism, media freedom, and the need to address misinformation on social media platforms**.

Participants emphasized the urgency of improving public awareness regarding **national developments such as the disputed upcoming election, security concerns, and the emerging humanitarian challenges affecting several regions of the country**.

The conference concluded with strong consensus on the need for **greater collaboration between academicians and media professionals**, increased public engagement by scholars, and the promotion of **ethical and responsible journalism**.

## 1. Introduction

The conference titled **"The Role of Academicians and Media in Mobilizing and Improving Citizens' Awareness"** was organized to examine how academic institutions and media professionals can work together to strengthen civic awareness and public understanding of national issues.

In times of political, social, and humanitarian challenges, **accurate information and informed public dialogue become essential for societal stability and development**. This event aimed to create a platform where scholars, journalists, and citizens could exchange ideas and explore strategies for improving public awareness and civic responsibility.

## 2. Event Overview

The conference gathered **more than 40 participants** representing diverse professional and social backgrounds. Attendees included:

- University professors and academicians
- Veteran journalists and media practitioners
- Researchers and policy analysts
- Members of the wider community

The event was **co-hosted by Muwaadin Platform** and structured around **two thematic panel discussions** focusing on the role of academicians and the media in shaping informed and engaged societies.

The event was co-hosted by the **East African Institute for Peace and Governance and Muwaadin Platform** and structured around two thematic panel discussions focusing on the role of academicians and the media in shaping informed and engaged societies. It was jointly organized to foster dialogue on strengthening public discourse and civic engagement through academia and journalism.

Discussions highlighted several pressing issues currently affecting the country, including:

- The **disputed upcoming election**
- **Security challenges**
- The **looming humanitarian crisis in several regions**

### 3. Opening Session

The opening session introduced the objectives of the conference and welcomed participants to the event.

Speakers emphasized that **academia and media serve as two essential pillars of public awareness**. Universities produce knowledge and analysis, while media institutions disseminate information to the public. When both sectors collaborate effectively, they can significantly contribute to **an informed and engaged citizenry**.

The organizers also stressed the importance of **creating platforms for open dialogue**, particularly during critical national moments when citizens require accurate information and constructive discussion.

### 4. Panel One

#### **The Role of Academicians in Mobilizing the Public Towards the Greater Good: Performing Civic Duty**

The first panel explored how academicians can contribute to **mobilizing the public toward civic engagement and social responsibility**.

Panelists highlighted that universities and scholars should play an active role in **educating citizens about issues affecting their daily lives**. Academic knowledge should not remain confined to classrooms and research publications but should be communicated to the public through outreach activities, community discussions, and accessible publications.

Some panellists noted that citizens often place high expectations on governments to solve societal problems. However, sustainable development requires **mutual cooperation between governments, institutions, and citizens**.

Participants also expressed concern that academicians sometimes remain **silent on critical public issues**. They encouraged scholars to engage more actively in public discourse and contribute their expertise to discussions about political, social, and economic challenges.

## 5. Panel Two

### The Role of Media in Awareness Creation and Reporting During Critical Times

The second panel focused on the responsibilities and challenges faced by media professionals when reporting during critical periods.

The panel featured **experienced journalists and directors from several media outlets**, who shared insights into the realities of the media environment.

Panelists discussed challenges including:

- Limited access to information
- Pressure on media institutions
- Risks faced by journalists when reporting on sensitive issues

Several panelists expressed concern that **journalists have been arrested or intimidated for reporting on national developments**. Despite these challenges, media professionals reaffirmed their commitment to **continue informing the public and reporting the truth**.

The discussion also examined the growing influence of **social media platforms**. While social media enables faster information sharing, participants warned that it also facilitates the spread of **misinformation and disinformation**, particularly where no editorial policies exist.

Panelists emphasized the need for **professional responsibility, ethical reporting, and self-regulation**, especially in digital spaces.

## 6. Audience Engagement

Participants actively engaged with both panels through questions, comments, and observations.

Many attendees stressed the importance of **organizing more conferences and dialogue forums** similar to this event. They noted that such gatherings help bridge the gap between scholars, journalists, and the broader public.

Audience members also emphasized the need to **accelerate public awareness efforts**, particularly regarding:

- Electoral developments
- National security concerns
- Humanitarian challenges affecting vulnerable populations

Participants further encouraged academicians to become **more active in public communication**, while urging media professionals to uphold **ethical responsibility when reporting**, especially on social media platforms.

## 7. Key Takeaways

The conference generated several important insights:

- Collaboration between **academia and media** is essential for strengthening public awareness.
- Academicians should take a **more active role in engaging with communities and public discourse**.
- Responsible and independent journalism remains critical for **transparent and informed societies**.
- The spread of **misinformation and disinformation on social media** poses a growing challenge.
- Public dialogue forums are essential for addressing **national challenges and informing citizens**.

## 8. Recommendations

Participants proposed several recommendations:

1. Strengthen **collaboration between academic institutions and media organizations**.
2. Encourage academicians to increase **public outreach and civic education efforts**.
3. Promote **ethical journalism and responsible reporting**, particularly online.
4. Develop initiatives to **combat misinformation and disinformation** on digital platforms.
5. Organize **regular conferences and public forums** to sustain dialogue on national issues.

6. Support efforts to **protect journalists and ensure safe working conditions for media professionals.**

## 9. Conclusion

The conference demonstrated the **critical role of academicians and media professionals in promoting public awareness and civic engagement.**

Participants agreed that informed citizens are essential for addressing the country's political, social, and humanitarian challenges. Strengthening cooperation between scholars, journalists, and communities will help ensure that the public remains **well-informed, engaged, and prepared to contribute to national development.**

The success of the event highlighted the importance of **continuing such dialogues in the future** to sustain efforts aimed at improving citizens' awareness and participation.