Contents

3 Nigeria, Kashmir
    Can journalists remain safe?

7 New York
    Q&A w/Cmte to Protect Journalists

8 Cameroon
    Does PJ make journalists safer?

10 Zimbabwe
    Polarized media challenges PJ

12 South Sudan
    Inflammatory media

13 Washington, DC
    Seminar: Social media and peace

14 Italy
    Spaces of War, War of Spaces

16 U.S.
    Trip for Peace traverses country

18 South Africa
    Leaders gather, analyze PJ

20 Cameroon
    Seminars held amid unrest

22 Lebanon
    MAP celebrates 5th birthday

24 India
    Chennai workshop teaches PJ

What is Peace Journalism?

Peace Journalism is when editors and reporters make choices that improve the prospects for peace. These choices, including how to frame stories and carefully choosing which words are used, create an atmosphere conducive to peace and supportive of peace initiatives and peacemakers, without compromising the basic principles of good journalism. (Adapted from Lynch/McGoldrick, Peace Journalism). Peace Journalism gives peacemakers a voice while making peace initiatives and non-violent solutions more visible and viable.

A number of valuable peace journalism resources, including resource packets and online links, can be found at www.park.edu/peacecenter.

Center for Global Peace Journalism

The Center for Global Peace Journalism works with journalists, academics, and students worldwide to improve reporting about conflicts, societal unrest, reconciliation, solutions, and peace. Through its courses, workshops, lectures, this magazine, blog, and other resources, the Center encourages media to reject sensational and inflammatory reporting, and produce counter-narratives that offer a more nuanced view of those who are marginalized—ethnic/racial/religious minorities, women, youth, and migrants.

Can journalists safely practice their craft?

Boko Haram, Nigerian officials hunt journalists

By Ibagwa Isine and Jacob Udo-Udo Jacob

“My love for Nigeria has been a compelling impetus in charting the course of my life, courageous in the face of adversities, hopeful when confronted with despair and delighted when the society makes appreciable progress,” were the words of Enenche Akogwu, 31, a reporter and video camera operator with independent broadcaster, Channels TV.

Akogwu was posted to Kano State in Nigeria’s North-West region as a correspondent at a time Boko Haram insurgents seized swathes of territories, killed thousands, maimed more, and were spreading terror from community to community.

An ingenious and courageous reporter, Akogwu covered the troubled northern region deftly until January 20, 2012 when Boko Haram arrived and unleashed terror on Kano, Northern Nigeria’s centre of commerce, and sought to take it over.

Mr. Akogwu had just returned from a news conference organised by the police after multiple suicide bombings targeted government buildings in Kano City, when he heard a barrage of gunshots near the office of the state governor.

Instead of waiting for a tainted statement from security agents, as most journalists are wont to do, he cautiously dashed to see what had happened after the sporadic gunfire.

Continued on next page.
Nigeria from Pg 3

By Steven Youngblood

The PEACE JOURNALIST

October 2018

In speaking with journalists in conflict areas, I almost always make it a point to remind journalists that they should ensure their safety first before thinking about their professional responsibilities.

Because of Rising Kashmir’s balanced approach and rejection of sensationalism, I didn’t think I needed to reiterate this point to Bukhari and his staff. Sadly, and tragically, I was wrong.

The number of fatalities incurred by the antagonists becomes headline. Anomalous and disturbing quotations are commonplace in stories and acts of violence are subtly and indirectly justified especially on the side of the Nigerian military. The following headlines were found in some of the country’s newspapers.

“Army neutralises 16 Boko Haram members, recover weapons cache in Borno,” The Punch, July 29, 2018.

Many journalists have come under scrutiny and threats by both security agents and Boko Haram elements for daring to tell stories of the burgeoning conflict and calling for urgent intervention by relevant authorities.

But it can also be said that a majority of Nigerian journalists are yet to understand and apply peace journalism constructs especially in reporting from conflict theatres in the country.

That explains why reports about the war on insurgency focus largely on killings, destruction of property, and displacement of communities without the concomitant supply of detailed information on the contradictions that gave rise to the crises.

The majority of journalists still report crisis as a clash between the military and Boko Haram terrorists.

Continued on next page

Shujaat Bukhari

Shujaat Bukhari

October 2018

Nigeria from Pg 4

He had allegedly published the video on YouTube, showing some of the abducted girls begging the Nigerian Government to secure their freedom. In a statement on his personal website, Salkida said he has worked as a journalist, within the confines of professional ethics and has not violated any known law.

“My status as a Nigerian journalist who has reported extensively, painstakingly and consistently on the Boko Haram menace in the country since 2006 is an open book known to Nigerians and the international community,” Salkida indicated in the statement.

“Equally, my total allegiance and sacrifice to the Federal Republic of Nigeria is self-evident. I have stayed within the creed of professional journalism in my work.”

“As a testimony to the credible and professional values of my access, since May 2015, I have been to Nigeria three times on the invitation of Federal Government agencies, I made personal sacrifices for the release of our Chibok daughters.”

Despite his contributions to resolving the conflict that has seen tens of thousands of persons killed and millions displaced, Salkida is being declared wanted, threatened, and molested by the authorities.

Similarly, the Nigerian police on January 19, 2017, invaded the office of Nigeria’s most respected investigative newspaper, Premium Times, and arrested its publisher, Dapo Oluroniyi, alongside the paper’s judiciary correspondent, Evelyn Okakwu.

Plain-clothed officers, who claimed to be acting on a complaint by the Chief of Army Staff Tukur Buratai, conducted a search at the office and disrupted operations for hours.

The action came days after the Pulitzer award-winning newspaper turned down the Army’s demand to retract news stories highlighting the missteps of the Nigerian Army in dealing with IDPs.

Salkida indicated in the statement.

Continued on next page

October 2018

Vol 7, No. 2 www.park.edu/peacecenter

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In Abuja, Nigerian journalists protest the arrest of a colleague earlier in 2018.
For background, there is currently anti-government violence in the Anglophone northwest and southwest regions, where separatists have declared a new country called Ambozonia. Cameroon’s Francophone regions remain peaceful.

One intriguing finding was that reporters from every region said they were safer, or felt safer, if they were practicing peace journalism. This feeling of safety applied whether they considered threats from government or threats from separatists. The safety advantage of peace journalists was especially pronounced in the conflict regions of the northwest and southwest. See chart.

Why do they feel safer practicing peace journalism? Journalists said peace journalism’s characteristics (balance, objectivity, neutrality, non-inflammatory, giving voice to the voiceless) will help insulate them from threatening officials and rebels.

Not surprisingly, journalists in the conflict regions (northwest, southwest) believed they were under more severe threats from both government and separatists fighting the government. In six other regions combined, the average threat level perceived by journalists was much lower from both government and separatists. Journalists from all regions rated the threat level from opposition politicians as very low.

The surveys were administered at three July seminars in Bonaberi, Bafoussam, and Douala.

Journalists share stories of brutality, victimization

Editor’s Note: During three recent seminars in Cameroon, journalists were asked to share their stories about threats, violence, and intimidation they have suffered. For their own safety, names and media outlets have been redacted. These are their stories.

“I have been called up for questioning on information that I might have been an accomplice to spreading propaganda on social media that threatens some journalists and elites in our city, simply because I have very close relations to a person they accused...of publishing the photos.”

“There is a colleague of mine named (redacted) who is presently at the Bamenda Central Prison awaiting trial because he was caught taking images at the scene of an uprising. He risks being jailed because he was doing his job. In this light, we see violence.”

“Several journalists have been arrested, detained, and some later released, while others are tried and jailed for reporting the crisis racking the NW and SW regions. Similarly, some media houses and journalists have received social media threats from separatists. (The journalists) attempted to be balanced in debunking the position of separatists in the crisis.”

“I know of a journalist (redacted) working in a community radio...in an Anglophone area where men have been fighting since February. He was shot in his house by separatist fighter in a village called (redacted). They accused him of biased communication intended to run down their activities. He was shot in the leg but survived because he was rushed to the hospital.”

“I know of a colleague who was severely beaten up by police because he was taking images of the dead streets (city streets emptied out during a general strike) in Bamenda, northwest region. His camera was completely destroyed and he incurred some bruises from the beatings he received. At the end of the day nothing was done to sanction the police officer who carried out that act.”

“It has been a victim of police brutality. It was on (date redacted) when some government officials wanted to do a unity march in Bamenda against the wishes of a majority of the population who felt marginalized and not a part of the unity. As a press person taking images for the news, I was seen as a threat given that security forces were beating those who were arrested. I was also beaten alongside them but was not arrested.”

“Most often when I post peace write ups on Facebook I get a lot of comments that are not comfortable...Separatist messages like, "you have been bought out (bribed).”

“I have experienced threats and intimidation from local leaders whom I questioned their accountability to the public.”

“I broadcast the interview of an opposition activist on the radio and received severe threats from the government officials who threatened to close the radio and even arrest me.”

“(After broadcasting a story originally sent to our radio station about parents sending their children back to school), a mixed team of uniformed officers and local and state officials stormed the radio station and sealed its doors.

My colleague who played the program and me that anchored it went on the run out of (city). For over three months I was in hiding. The radio was only reopened the month after. In addition to hosting the program, I was wanted for propagation of false information.”


October 2018

Does practicing PJ enhance safety of reporters?

By Steven Youngblood

As part of three peace journalism workshops in Cameroon in July (see page 20 for details), participating journalists filled out a survey that asked them to rank the threats they face from 1 to 5, with 5 being the highest threat level. 66 journalists completed the survey—31 from the northwest region, 15 from the southwest region, and 20 combined from seven other regions.

Safety—Traditional journalists vs. peace journalists

Based on survey of journalists in violent regions (northwest, southwest Cameroon). Survey used 1-5 scale, with 5 being the most severe threat.

Risks from Officials/Police

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Risks from Separatists/Rebels

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The Peace Journalist

Polarized media challenge PJ in Zimbabwe

By Allen Munoriyarwa

October 2018

Zimbabwe, a southern African country, has had seven national elections and one constitutional referendum in a space of 18 years since the turn of the century. This translates to a major election about every three years. What stands out in the election is that they have been judged by many observers as violent, unfree, and unfair. Even the most recent elections of July 2018 were visited by post-election violence that claimed about seven people.

There is not much literature about peace journalism in Zimbabwe, at a time when the practice should assume legendary importance considering the prevalence of election violence. Bud- ding research (Chari 2014 and Munoriyarwa in progress) has found that the mainstream is too ideologically polarised to be conduits of peace.

Firstly, it should be noted that the country has about 6 radio stations, of which 4 are public-owned, and 8 major newspapers which are tightly controlled by the ruling party ZANU PF, a party that is generally recognised as the main instigator and perpetrator of electoral violence. The country has one television station, which is public-owned and equally reflects ruling ZANU PF ideology.

Chari noted that the world should be different, as most of these newspapers are very biased and controlled completely by the political party, who read the newspaper, and a will- ingness to engage with the problems that are raised by this community. The result adopted a village and wrote weekly stories about issues and concerns raised by this community. The result was a heightened awareness of that community’s problems by residents who read the newspaper, and a will- ingness to engage with the problems at communal levels. By harnessing the power of the community press, the intention is to focus on election violence within specific communities. More focused community reporting can focus on specific communities involved in election violence. In the process, the community press can highlight the unique experiences of particular communities vis-a-vis election violence. In this model, Zimbabwe’s community press will be utilised for the purpose of peace journalism so that it reflects the unique experiences of particular communities vis-a-vis election violence. In the process, the community press can highlight the unique experiences of that community as well as its pecu- liar past failures and accomplishments in relation to combating election violence.

However, the Zimbabwean community press, like its mainstream public-owned cousins, still reflect ZANU PF ideology. They are still vulnerable content-wise, to covering events happen- ing outside their communities. This compromises what I call their “community-ness.”

Secondly, local communities in Zimbabwe have no control over these newspapers. The community press are not the same content, heighten the prominence of the issue, seek the opin- ions of influential community leaders, adopt advocacy strategies tailor-made to curtailing the undesired behaviour. Af- ter all, community newspapers should reflect the content related to the community’s conditions.

In this model, Zimbabwe’s community press will be utilised for the purpose of peace journalism so that it reflects the unique experiences of particular communities vis-a-vis election violence. In the process, the community press can highlight the unique experiences of that community as well as its pecu- liar past failures and accomplishments in relation to combating election violence.

However, the Zimbabwean community press, like its mainstream public-owned cousins, still reflect ZANU PF ideology. They are still vulnerable content-wise, to covering events happening outside their communities. This compromises what I call their reports on conflicts and violence in community newspapers can contrib- ute immensely to the creation and maintenance of the community’s promi- nence and its adjustment to change in the large social environment.” Community newspaper can be influential in intervening against issues that the particular community view negatively. In their study of a rural Kentucky community newspaper, Hahn et al find out that the newspaper was able to advocate against high levels of adult smoking, which was the highest in the USA, standing at 31.8%. They note that a community newspaper can increase the frequency of coverage of the issue, heighten the prominence of the issue in the news, seek the opin- ions of influential community leaders, adopt advocacy strategies tailor-made to curtailing the undesired behaviour. After all, community newspapers should reflect the content related to the community’s conditions.

In this model, Zimbabwe’s community press will be utilised for the purpose of peace journalism so that it reflects the unique experiences of particular communities vis-a-vis election violence. In the process, the community press can highlight the unique experiences of that community as well as its peculiar past failures and accomplishments in relation to combating election violence.

However, the Zimbabwean community press, like its mainstream public-owned cousins, still reflect ZANU PF ideology. They are still vulnerable content-wise, to covering events happening outside their communities. This compromises what I call their community-ness.

Thus, integrating Zimbabwe’s community newspapers into the service of peace journalism as proposed here would mean altering their long-en- trenched habits of covering broader national politics at the expense of community issues, and redefine their focus to a community orientation. This should be their role anyway!

Other attendant dangers or road- blocks include the limited financial muscle of the community press, small staff, and also the fact that few highly qualified journalists would want to work for a community newspaper in Zimbabwe in their pres- ent state. These factors may stand in the way of harnessing the power of the community press for peace journalism. But if well-resourced and tilted away from dominant ruling party politics, the dormant potential of the community press can be useful in implementing peace journalism.
Inflammatory media fuels South Sudan violence
By Ochan Hannington, Peace News Network

Inflammatory media online have been blamed for contributing to South Sudan’s civil war, which has been ongoing for five years now and has claimed up to 300,000 lives. Now several organizations have banded together to host workshops on the ground to teach local journalists about the importance of reporting objectively.

The Network of South Sudanese Civil Society Organizations recently completed a training session in Kampala, Uganda, where many South Sudanese journalists have fled.

“The conflict in South Sudan began as a political conflict,” said Tito Anthony from the Network of South Sudanese Civil Society Organizations.

“It went beyond a political crisis, it went beyond a crisis of personality, which is Riek Machar and Salva Kiir, it has gone to a bigger...tribal issue between the Nuer and the Dinka.”

“If journalists remain, in South Sudanese especially, if they remain in that ideology it will influence whatever they do, even their writing. We feel like because they are the messengers, they are the people who spread the message, we should also remind them to keep focus, focus on their work, the accuracy, the non-partisanship and not allow other factors to influence their work.”

Sharlotte Ainebyoona Kigezo from Platform Africa was one of the facilitators at the training and said online media has played a big part in the conflict. “From my view, and the trainings I do as a facilitator, social media that has been juiced up by prejudice and hate has elevated the current crisis that’s going on in South Sudan,” she said.

“And that’s why as an organization we picked that direction, to see healing in South Sudan.”

Twenty-five participants attended the training in May, where they learned about prejudice and hate speech mitigation. Ms Kigezo said part of training involved clearly defining hate speech as communication that “denigrates, intimidating and fueling distrust and violence. Peace News Network aims to present the other side – stories from conflict zones we often don’t hear. Our stories are about people taking risks for peace. We highlight the opinions of ordinary people who want non-violent solutions to their political differences. Our stories aren’t always about shootings and explosions, but they do tell you stories from war zones that hope fully go some way towards building trust and reconciliation.

For more, see: https://www.peacenews.com/

Can social media, online tech build peace?
By Mahnoz Jonmahmadova, Peace News Network

Can online technology and social media help build peace? Experts gathered in Washington DC earlier this year for a summit by PeaceTech Lab (created by the United States Institute for Peace) to investigate how tech is being used, and can be developed, to advance peace.

“This conference, powering peace tech, is really meant to first celebrate the power of technology for helping to prevent conflict and save lives,” said PeaceTech Lab CEO Sheldon Himefarb.

Leaders from tech giants such as Facebook and Google attended, as well as founders of online technology, to share their insights on the impact of technology in conflict regions and in the peacebuilding field.

Google’s chief Internet evangelist Vinton G. Cerf, known as the ‘father of the internet’ said that while the internet has turned out to be an “extraordinary and global phenomenon”, not everyone online has everyone else’s “best interests at heart.”

“So we’re seeing this essentially neutral platform being abused in the form of fake news, and other kinds of abuse that takes place, whether it’s fraud or bullying or all the other kinds of things that happen, distribution of malware, hacking - I mean, there’s long list here,” Cerf said.

Social media platforms, gaming, and online technology have also been blamed for causing or fueling violence but IBM veteran and chairman of PeaceTech Lab Nicholas Donofrio advised participants not to despair. “We can do it right, as we go forward,” Donofrio said. “I absolutely believe in us, collectively, and I believe it will be a much better future.”

According to their research, Facebook’s VP of Global Public Policy Joel Kaplan said people’s well-being depends more on what people do online, rather than how much time they spend at a computer. “So, how you spend your time on Facebook is more important that exactly how much time you spend, so we’ve committed to trying to make the time spent on Facebook as positive for people and their communities and society.”

S. Sudan from Pg 12
people on the basis of their membership of a particular group. This may include a form of expression such as image, play, or songs as well as speech,” she said.

“When you notice hate speech on social media we have three ways to [approach] it. Number one you can either ignore, or number two you can engage in conversation, and then number three, which is the final [approach]: You report. All social media platforms give us the ability to be able to report anything we consider hate speech, anything we consider offensive, anything we consider insulting.”

Freelance journalist Daniel Paul participated in the training and said he will be putting his new skills to good use. “The knowledge I’ve gained here, I’ll be using it in mitigating hate speech on social media by digging deep - whenever I get information I have to dig deep to know the source of that information. And also I have to see that this information, will it really bring change in my community, in my country, in my society? Or it will bring division in the community.”

Continued on next page
Spaces of War, War of Spaces teaches valuable lessons

By Giuliana Tiripelli

Last May I attended the conference Spaces of War, War of Spaces, organised in occasion of the 10th Anniversary of the journal's Media War & Conflict (http://www.warandmedia.org/spacesofwar/). This conference was a rare opportunity for experts and practitioners working with media and conflict to meet and discuss how media spaces affect the context of conflicts, and how actors involved in conflicts try shaping media spaces to meet and discuss how and practitioners working with media and conflict transformation more cogent and mainstream.

As in any good conference, the best ideas about progressing research were inspired by engagement and exchange with other disciplines. Of particular importance for advancing journalism as a tool for social change is the concept of “strategic narratives,” which was widely mentioned at the conference and is abundantly used in the field of international relations and Political Studies. Strategic narratives are the tools for political actors to make an impact and “extend their influence, manage expectations, and change the discursive environment in which they operate” (Miskimmon et al 2013: 2).

Although Peace Journalism is not interest linked and does not advocate for influencing citizens’ beliefs for specific political interests, it is principle linked and as such it still aims to change the discursive environment by offering deeper and wider representations of the societies involved in political, social, or economic conflicts. In the digital age, it has become very important for Peace Journalism scholarship to explore the strategic dimensions of communication. This is because Peace Journalism should be equipped to counter the current strategic approaches to communication that many of the papers presented in the conference and is abundantly used in the field of international relations and Political Studies. Strategic narratives are the tools for political actors to make an impact and “extend their influence, manage expectations, and change the discursive environment in which they operate” (Miskimmon et al 2013: 2).

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Trip for peace changes dialogue from war to peace

By Susan Beaver Thompson

Since 2013, I’ve called myself a mobile peace journalist. Back then, I had reached the point of no return. I was tired of sitting around thinking about how to help bring peace building to the forefront of public discussion. I knew I needed to get up and make it happen through my ideas, writing and actions.

I’d like to share a bit about what I’ve learned about peace and peace journalism over the last five years on this amazing, super-challenging inner and outer journey.

Peace Is An Inside Job

In my 2014 piece “Confessions of a Peace Journalist,” I admitted that in 2013 after taking to the road to host Peace Conferences of the People across America, I was not yet embodying what I was espousing. I feared that peace is an inside job. As A.J. Muste writes, “There is no way to change the outside without changing the inside.”

If I wasn’t being real, wasn’t being respectful in the words I chose – in person, in my writing, and on social media – I was a hypocrite. Only by modeling true collaboration and employing nonviolent communication principles in my daily interactions and my writing can I say that the deep reservoir from which I wrote then – and write now – brings forth all the best that lies within me.

I discovered that to be a peace journalist means to be peace, to live it and write from that perspective. No more “us” vs. “them”. No more name calling or labeling. No more judgments, inwardly or out loud. No more thinking that those who believe that waging war is the best way to prevent war are my enemies. Rather than succumbing to the words and ideas of some polarized back and forth partisan debate (with many of the words already chosen for us), I learned we can simply listen and remain open. In this way, we begin to change the dialogue.

Modeling True Civil Dialogue

What I feel we’re missing in the U.S. is true civil discourse. We can recover it on the way to peace. You know, by having those conversations with people with whom we disagree, yet respect enough to find even one common area on which we can move forward together. Famed psychologist Carl Rogers taught this, instructing us to always view the “other” as an ally. As a teacher, I encouraged my students along the same lines. In writing, it’s unrealistic to expect that those who oppose ideas within my articles will do a 180 degree turn once they’ve read them. In the end, if even a few readers are moved in their thinking because I’ve been real with them, I’ve succeeded. The goal is not winning, it’s opening minds, it’s collaborating on paper, online and in person. It’s acknowledging that we’ve all seeds and that incremental change is okay.

Maintaining that perspective is also how I remain hopeful as a peace journalist in a world that sometimes seems hellbent on war.

I believe we need to get back to the basics, refraining from writing the easy piece with the pat answers. Us-versus-them. No more name calling or labels. No more judgments, inwardly or out loud. No more thinking that those who believe that waging war is the best way to prevent war are my enemies. Rather than succumbing to the words and ideas of some polarized back and forth partisan debate (with many of the words already chosen for us), I learned we can simply listen and remain open. In this way, we begin to change the dialogue.

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Maintaining that perspective is also how I remain hopeful as a peace journalist in a world that sometimes seems hellbent on war.

In my travels and attempts to fund my efforts, I saw firsthand that while so many important peace journalism projects are happening in developing, war-torn counties around the world, it’s short sighted to forget the war of words going on in the U.S., the violence in our own cities, and the enormous U.S. arsenal that sits ready, outnumbering the fire power of many other countries combined.

Whether it be national Peace Journalism fellowships by prestigious U.S. journalism organizations or opportunities to practice peace journalism in the field, it’s just as important to support and fund peace journalism within the United States as it is to venture abroad. Likewise, there’s also a real need for peacebuilders and peace journalists to collaborate more. We are working toward the same goals.

By practicing non judgment and peace principles in life and in our writing we can initiate changes in our shared consciousness. As peace journalists, you and I have the grand pleasure and responsibility to make a real difference, transforming ourselves in the process. Onward!

USA Today published an article about Susan’s 2018 peace journalism journey earlier this year. See: https://www.usatoday.com/story/sponsor-story/moonlighting/2018/05/14/rocking-and-rolling-peace/34887627/
African leaders analyze PJ in Joburg, Cape Town

By Gloria Laker

Decades after the end of white rule, South Africans are still desirously holding onto peace.

This follows series of colorful peace events in its major cities, Johannesburg, Pretoria, and Cape Town, focused on achieving peace in a lifetime. This year, South Africans celebrated in memories of the centenaries of two icons who dedicated their lives to peace and freedom, Tata Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela and Mama Albertina Nontokwelo Sisulu. One recent initiative built upon their legacies in hopes of ensuring that their efforts will remain etched in citizen’s collective memory.

Commemorative events in August kicked off with a peace journalism fellowship for African journalists titled, “African Leaders of Peace Summit.” It focused on promoting peace through balanced reporting. This fellowship, co-sponsored by the International Peace Youth Group (IPYG), was held in both Johannesburg and Cape Town in August.

My presentation on peace reporting with reference to the evolution of peace journalism in Uganda focused on media strategies in ending the Lord’s Resistance Army conflict LRA and peace journalism tools and styles which can be used in reporting violence and conflicts in Africa and looking beyond news by engaging communities to dialogue.

In a statement, International Peace Youth Group (IPYG) said, “As the media, we have the potential to play a significant role in the establishment of peace in our societies. Therefore, we must take up the responsibility as messengers of peace above conflict.”

Other co-sponsors included Heavenly Culture, World Peace, Restoration of Light (HWPL), and an international NGO under the United Nations Department of Public Information (UN DPI).

I had an exciting experience witnessing hundreds of young and old brave the early morning cold in a very colorful event at Oliver Tambo International Airport to receive Man Hee Lee, celebrated Korean peace messenger and chairman of Heavenly Culture, World Peace, and Restoration of Light (HWPL).

Addressing the high level African Leaders of Peace Summit, Chairman Lee strongly underscored the important roles of women and youth in achieving peace. “When women and women’s priorities are placed at the center of peace processes and decision making, the results are more likely to be equitable and sustainable, so let us support and work closely with women and youth to realize peace in Africa,” Lee said.

He recognized former Mozambican president Joaquim Chissano Alberto for championing peace in Africa. The summit brought together Southern Africans, government ministries, civil society, youth and media including journalists.

Continued on next page
PJ seminars held amid unrest in Cameroon

by Alexander Vojvoda

On 7 October 2018, Presidential Elections will be held in Cameroon. The election is prepared under challenging conditions as violent conflicts between anglophone separatists and security forces in the North-West and South-West regions continue to escalate. Media houses and journalists find themselves caught between separatists and security forces in the North-West and South-West regions against the political, economic, linguistic and social marginalisation of the francophone-dominated Cameroon national government in Yaoundé have escalated to a violent conflict between armed anglophone secessionist groups and Cameroonian security forces in the last weeks and months.

Cameroonian journalists, especially in the anglophone regions, face difficulties in covering the upcoming Presidential elections in October 2018 as fears of harassment, threats and violence against media houses rise. Especially civilians are fleeing the two English-speaking regions (around 160,000 IDPs according to Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), but also civil society activists and journalists find themselves caught between the lines of the military and the anglophone separatists because of the way they cover and report on the conflict and the elections. Since 2015 the Cameroon Community Media Network (CCMN) has built capacities in peace journalism and reconciliation journalism within the Cameroonian media. Since June 2018, we’ve been working on how community media can address the situation of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) of the anglophone conflict.

After last year’s cooperation with the Center for Global Peace Journalism and the Friedrich Ebert Foundation in Yaoundé, during which over 120 journalists were sensitised on issues of election reporting and conflict-sensitive journalism in 4 workshops and 7 in-house trainings, the CCMN has initiated further joint activities on peace journalism and election reporting.

The CCMN decided to hold three training-of-trainer workshops for the members of the peace journalism network in Douala, Bafoussam and Yaoundé from 4 July to 4 August 2018.

“This workshop was a necessity given that the concept of peace journalism is still new in Cameroon with limited or no resource persons on site. Prof. Steven Youngblood’s visit was a great relief as we had first-hand knowledge on peace journalism and election reporting. [The trainings were] height-ened with his bank of experience, sharing of success stories around Africa and the world like Ethiopia and South Sudan.”

Rosalice Akah Obah, CCMN president of the NW and West chapter, comments on the importance of the 3-day training-of-trainer workshop on peace journalism and election reporting for CCMN NW and West members with Prof Steven Youngblood, Director of the Centre for Global Peace Journalism (CGPJ), held in Bafoussam/West region. “Journalists of the network have come to see the difference between conventional journalism and peace journalism, that in any case does not take away any tenets of journalism. Rather it emphasises that good journalism is peaceful journalism,” she said.

The results of a risk analysis which

In Bonaberi, seminar participants test stories for PJ content.

has been conducted during the workshop series with members from the NW, SW, West, Littoral and other Cameroonian regions produced interesting findings. The self-assessment from Cameroon journalists shows that those practicing peace journalism believe that they are at lower risk of becoming victims of violence, harassment or threats from government or separatists in the current conflict. (See page 8 for details).

Rev. Geraldine Fobang, CCMN president SW/Littoral chapter explained at the second workshop held in Douala, “At a time when Cameroon faces multifaceted crisis, further compounded by the uncertain outcome of the Presidential elections on 7 October 2018, Prof. Youngblood’s visit was very apt to strengthen the fragile media landscape. Journalists of the SW, Littoral and other regions gained peace journalism skills to be proactive in reporting in order not to ‘exacerbate an already dire situation’ and minimise media induced violence before, during and after the up-coming elections.”

The final 4-day workshop was held at the Friedrich Ebert Foundation in Yaoundé and concluded the month-long project with a training-of-trainer workshop with participants from all ten Cameroonian regions. The main discussion evolved around how to build trainings for colleagues at home media house, reporting on IDPs, peace and reconciliation journalism and the use of social media as a tool for peace journalists.

In addition, the CCMN was welcomed to expand its work to other Cameroonian regions. Especially colleagues from the Grand North region (Extreme-North, North and Adamawa) expressed their interest to build capacities in peace journalism in their sub-region and to form a peace journalism network in the face of the violent conflict with Boko Haram.
MAP marks five years of boosting PJ in Lebanon

By Vanessa Bassil

The Media Association for Peace (MAP) is the first NGO in Lebanon, the Middle East, and North Africa region working on training, advocating, and applying Peace Journalism, while advancing the role of media development field in peacebuilding.

In June 2018 MAP celebrated its 5th anniversary. It is hard to believe that already five years have passed. We are incredibly proud of the work that has been done and the achievements made so far. We are most grateful for our team, volunteers, friends and partners, without whom none of this would have happened.

For us, Peace Journalism is not only about how to deal with and report about conflict, even if that is one of our core tasks, but we also believe that knowing and acting in accordance to human rights, to respect the environment, to not only aim for negative peace (the absence of violence), but positive peace, and to offer training to young Lebanese and international audience are crucial pillars in promoting the spread the concept of peace journalism in the MENA region. This is why we operate with five programs:

First, the Media, Peace and Conflict Program: In 2018 for the seventh time, we organize an annual Peace Journalism Workshop which explores, expands and teaches the links between journalism and peace and gives young journalists from Lebanon the knowledge, skills and tools to understand and practice peace journalism. This is year, we offered a 10-day training of trainers on Conflict Sensitive Reporting and created a training manual in Arabic for the ones interested in offering training on this topic.

Second, the Media, Peace and Human Rights Program explores the relationship between peace journalism and human rights. As peace journalists, it is our duty to know and defend those rights for an equal, stable and harmonious society. At MAP, we have a special focus on women’s rights and gender equality, as well as we give considerable attention to the role of media in raising awareness and defending the rights of minorities, refugees, LGBTQI persons and persons with disabilities.

This is why we have cooperated with other regional women’s rights NGOs and published a Women’s Right Media Toolkit. It provides tools for media actors who want to contribute to and support the implementation of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325: Women, Peace and Security.

We have furthermore initiated a 3-phase project revolving around the media’s ability to reduce violence and to build bridges of peace and understanding between Syrian refugees and the Lebanese host community. The project included a training workshop, an online magazine, and video stories about Syrian refugees.

Lebanon as country with just over 4 million inhabitants. Per capita, it’s taken in more refugees than any other country during the 2015 refugee crisis. As there are already a considerable number of Palestinian refugees living in Lebanon, there has been some resentment against refugees.

The project aspires to reduce prejudice, stereotypes, and stigma when it comes to the way one views another through the media– in this case how some Lebanese citizen view Syrian refugees and vice-versa.

Also, this year for the third consecutive time, we are organizing a regional Media, Peace and Human Rights Conference (MPHR) bringing together speakers from the MENA region discussing pressing topics, like the freedom of expression, women’s rights, access to information, and digital media.

The third program, Media, Peace and Conflict Transformation, which included among other activities a National Conference on Media, Peace & the Environment in cooperation with UNDP and the European Union, a four day long Environmental Peace Journalism Training Retreat and a public discussion.

This is why we have aimed at increasing the awareness for environmental issues focusing on the emerging concept of “environmental peacebuilding.”

After all, how are we supposed to build peace, if we are not even at peace with our environment?

In June, MAP members celebrate the organization’s fifth birthday in Beirut.

Vanessa Bassil is the Media Association for Peace founder and president. MAP is based in Beirut, Lebanon.

Continued on next page
India is going through a time of tremendous political churning, and the media industry itself has become a battleground for conflicting ideologies. What is worrisome at this moment is the trust deficit I hear in the voices of readers and viewers because a lot of journalism is beginning to sound incendiary, propagandist and utterly crass.

Imagine journalists broadcasting fake news about activists, instigating violence against minority groups, and covering up acts of murder. We have all of it happening in 2018. This scenario is discouraging for journalism students who have gravitated toward this field because they see it as a place for exposing malpractice, highlighting social justice efforts, and speaking truth to power. It is important for advocates of peace journalism like myself to go out there and interact with these students so that they do not lose hope.

On June 25, 2018, the MOP Vaishnav College for Women and the Prajnya Trust in Chennai, India, invited me to deliver a talk on peace journalism with a large auditorium full of media students in attendance. They had been briefed about my work focusing on India-Pakistan dialogue, and were keen that I share some anecdotes from the field. I tend to prefer the workshop mode over the lecture method, so I found ways to make the experience more participatory.

We began with a theatre activity that got the students to examine their perceptions about Pakistanis, and the influence of media narratives in shaping these views. It was followed by an exercise wherein students had to imagine that they were part of a delegation of Indian journalists invited to Pakistan who had the freedom to travel anywhere in the country, and pursue any story ideas they wanted. They had to work in pairs, and come up with pitches for newspaper, television and digital media editors.

They came up with a variety of interesting pitches for beats such as politics, sports, travel, arts and culture, gender, fashion, entertainment, crime, education, and more. Their teachers seemed really proud of them.

After this, I shared with them the war journalism versus peace journalism framework created by Johan Galtung, discussed some of the articles I have worked on as a freelance journalist, and also answered their questions about challenges faced by journalists who prefer to highlight non-violent responses to conflict in a media-saturated world that thrives on sensationalism.

I loved their energy, and their openness to what I offered: the premise that journalists can play a constructive role in their societies by amplifying the voices of the marginalized instead of serving as mouthpieces of the powerful, showcasing efforts at conflict resolution and reconciliation, and exposing lies and cover-ups from all regardless of political affiliation.

They wanted to know about the challenges faced by journalists who prioritize peace journalism over war journalism. I gladly shared my experience of not being taken seriously by colleagues at times, and being turned down by editors who think of me as a peacenik floating in la-la land. If you want to work for peace, a sense of humour is incredibly useful to have.