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### Contributors

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### 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 back issues of The Peace Journalist can be found [at www.park.edu/peacecenter](http://www.park.edu/peacecenter).

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**Editor’s Notebook**

For the record, I’ve made peace journalism trips to: Austria, Cameroon, Rep. of Georgia, Kuwait, Ireland, Colombia, South Sudan, Cyprus, Lebanon, Kashmir/India, United States, Sierra Leone, Azerbaijan, France, Jordan, Ethiopia, Germany, Kenya, Japan, Kyrgyzstan, South Africa, Costa Rica, Turkey, Northern Ireland, Pakistan, Cote D’Ivoire, and Uganda. I’m always asked about my favorite country. This is like asking which flower is most beautiful. There are things I admire about every place I’ve been. I love the historical sites in Jordan, Ireland, Northern Ireland, and Turkey; the scenery in Uganda, Cyprus, South Africa, and Costa Rica; the food everywhere but especially Lebanon, Japan, and France; and the culture in Germany, Azerbaijan, Ireland, and Ethiopia. I deeply admire the indomitable spirit and determination of those in the midst of or recovering from conflict in places like Cameroon, South Sudan, Columbia, and Northern Ireland. I have made friends everywhere.

If the next 10 years of the Center for Global Peace Journalism are anything like the first 10, it’s going to be a busy, engaging, delightful, surprising, and wonderful ride.

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A Park University Publication

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<https://www.park.edu/peacecenter>
**Sahel journalists gather in Ivory Coast**

**Feb. workshop focuses on violent extremism, PJ**

In a groundbreaking effort for the Sahel region of Africa, 21 journalists from nine countries gathered in Abidjan, Ivory Coast beginning Feb. 21 for a workshop titled, “Strengthening the Role of Media in Countering Violent Extremism.”

The project began with eight Zoom sessions. (See sidebar, page 5). The journalists from Mauritania, Mali, Chad, Ivory Coast (Cote D’Ivoire in French), Morocco, Senegal, Burkina Faso, Algeria, and Niger spent five days exploring their responsibilities as journalists. They also made two fascinating reporting trips out into the field.

The first trip was to Al Bayane radio-TV in Abidjan. The participants met with CEO Imam Cisse Guidiba, who shared with the group his vision to make his outlet a “social force” in society. Certainly, Al Bayane’s principles of cooperation across societal divisions with what Imam Guidiba called “a good message” of fraternity and respect that contributes to the development of society. Certainly, Al Bayane’s principles align with those of peace journalism. Workshop participant Mahamat Ali Mouta from Chad enjoyed the visit, and said he appreciated Al Bayane’s commitment to “providing dialogue between communities. Even though they are Islamic, their vision is much bigger.”

The second field trip was even more impactful than the first, according to participants. The group bussed to Grand Bassam, a city of 100,000 that has seen its share of troubles the last six years. First, 19 were killed in a terrorist attack at a beach hotel in 2016. Then, Covid devastated Grand Bassam’s economy because the community, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, depends heavily on tourism. (France24)

In Grand Bassam, the reporters interviewed four survivors of the attack, including Ebirne Rose, the owner of a café where the terrorists struck. Even six years after the attack, she was still emotional as she recalled what happened. The journalists also interviewed survivor Ali Cisse, a small shop owner in Grand Bassam, who detailed how the attack devastated businesses in the city.

Yasmin Laabi, a workshop participant from Morocco, said that interview-sing the survivors was daunting. “I asked myself if I am able to ask the good questions because the situation was so difficult to ask the survivors to repeat the scenario. I felt guilty... because I had to ask questions, to not hurt them. It was challenging for me,” Laabi commented.

The workshop participants were tasked with writing a story that tapped into both the interviews as well as their feelings about interview- ing trauma survivors.

The day after the field trip, the journalists gave their impressions about the Grand Bassam experience. One reporter said “the emotion is still there,” a sentiment echoed by many. Another lamented that the survivors never received any psychological counsel- ing, and that their trauma is as raw as the day of the attack. “The survivors are not psychologically strong,” the journalist observed.

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The workshop also featured valuable classroom sessions. The first day of the workshop began with a discussion about how violent extremism is covered in media in their respective countries. The journalists told stories about the obstacles they faced from governments (propaganda, dearth of information), international media outlets, and social media. We also discussed the importance of reporting about the causes of (why and how youth are radicalized) and solutions for terrorism.

Tuesday, I led a discussion about trauma reporting, offering advice on how to report about traumas while respecting victims’ rights. Trainer/ journalist Tatiana Mossot followed with a presentation on how journalists can deal with the trauma they have experienced, including PTSD, in the conduct of their jobs. Statistically, 13-15% of journalists suffer PTSD, she said, comparable to PTSD in first responders. The Sahel journalists shared words that describe how they’ve felt after covering traumatic events—crimes, disasters, terrorist attacks, etc. These words included: pain, anger, abandonment, weakness, guilt, pow- erlessness, frustration, stress, surprise, justice, compassion, and worry. Par- ticipants shared their experiences in reporting traumatic events, including aftermaths in Burkina Faso, for example) and the lack of resources or training (“competence,” in the words of a participant) as impediments to better, more comprehensive locally-produced coverage about terrorism.

In one of the December sessions, the agenda included a vibrant examination of how journalists in the region navigate a minefield of obstacles while reporting protest movements. The journalists had some fascinating insights about their coverage of civil unrest—protests, riots, and so on. Like their counterparts everywhere, the journalists said their media outlets are prone to showing “violent and shocking” images like burning tires and wounded people because these “attract viewers, and the public loves it.” One journalist commented that their reports often feature sensational language, while another said that the reporting they produce during protests is “far from peace journalism.” A third participant from Mauritania shared information about a troubling law that forbids journalists from showing any images of military or police.

Finally, the reporters discussed how peace journalism can be applied to reporting civic unrest. These guidelines included avoiding sensationalism; using non-inflammatory language, reporting counter-narratives; and reporting with reconciliation in mind.

**Sahel project begins with eight Zoom sessions**

Before the Sahel region journalists and trainers met in Abidjan, they gathered online for eight 90-minute sessions in November and December 2021, and one additional catch-up meeting in January 2022.

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Top L- Trainer Tatiana Mossot makes a point about violent extremism. Top R- Abdou Cisse from Senegal and Mahamat Ali Mouta from Chad compare notes. Bottom-Andre Kodmadjingar from Chad presents about extremists groups in the Sahel region.
Among the most comprehensive definitions of ‘peace journalism’ is Professor Steve Youngblood’s 10-point list of Peace Journalism elements (at http://professoryoungblood.blogspot.com). His tenth principle is that peace journalists offer counter-narratives that debunk media-created or perpetuated stereotypes, myths, and misperceptions.

In that context, this book by Paul Reilly, a Senior Lecturer in Social Media and Digital Society at the University of Sheffield, makes a very significant contribution to the peace journalism debate.

The book, “Digital Contention in a Divided Society: Social Media, Parades and Protests in Northern Ireland,” examines how platforms like Facebook and Twitter are used by citizens to frame contentious parades and protests in ‘post-conflict’ Northern Ireland.

Reilly addresses these issues by examining how social media were used during the flag protests in Northern Ireland from 2012 to 2013 and the Ardoyne Parade disputes in North Belfast in July 2014 and 2015. This is no arid academic text. Reilly quotes extensively from many of those engaging in debate, referring to them both by their actual names, where appropriate, and their social media identities. That is immensely helpful; and certainly, drawing attention to these narratives and explorations of contested spaces is a rich and profitable seam for all of us to mine.

As a journalist living and working in Ireland, I have always been aware of these narratives and counter narratives. Often bitter, often vicious and designed to wound – and sometimes bittingly funny – Reilly sets them in their historical perspective and contradictions.

He also catalogues some of the attempts to contest these divide dialogues. The most striking example of this is the ‘flegs’ protests on many Northern Irish streets between 2012 and 2016. He also draws attention to the opposition to them from Loyalists Against Democracy (LAD), ‘a self-styled non-sectarian ‘parody group’ who believed that their counter narrative expressed the views of the ‘silent majority’ in Northern Ireland. Reilly highlights what some have seen as a tendency to dehumanise working class loyalists, but as he traces LAD’s development over the period of his research, he finds in his concluding chapter that ‘LAD’s activism...equality and social issues suggested that they were, in the words of blogger Alan Meban, increasingly focussed on the ‘actions, behaviours and contradictions of the media’.”

Patricia Devlin, for example, has written about the multiple threat to the peace process from violent dissidents on both sides.” Lyra herself was a frequent recipient of vitriol and abuse on social media and her death was marked on social media in some disturbing and contested ways.

A series of incidents outside the period of Reilly’s research concerns the abuse directed against many women journalists on social media. As Shakespeare might have written, Facebook and Twitter bestride the virtual world like a colossus, while we are left to walk under their huge legs and peep about.

Paul Reilly’s book makes an invaluable contribution to the debate on the potential of citizen activity on online platforms to contribute to peacebuilding in Northern Ireland. It deserves attention.

--Kathryn Johnston
New study: Media ignore missing women in Canada

Indigenous women underrepresented and demeaned

A lack of coverage perpetuates the idea that indigenous women are not as important...
Symposium marks PJ Center's 10th birthday

Event features presentations from 5 continents

The Center for Global Peace Journalism at Park University held an online symposium March 2, 2022 to mark its 10th anniversary. The agenda was to look back on the center's accomplishments and forward to the future of peace journalism. Leading experts from around the world attended.

Park University President Shane Smeed welcomed several dozen attendees. He spoke of the university’s tradition of transforming lives over its 150-year history, with reference to some core values of peace journalism itself, including civil respect, global citizenship, and integrity.

Steven Youngblood explained his role as a founding director of the Center for Global Peace Journalism, which he described as working with academics, students, and journalists worldwide, through workshops, lectures, and a blog and printed magazine publication, The Peace Journalist. Its 20th edition was recently published.

The center’s mission includes producing counter narratives of those who are marginalized. Over the past decade, the center has operated in 27 countries, with hundreds of journalists and students, collaborating with dozens of “outstanding organizations” on numerous projects. For example, in Cameroon the work was to inform about responsible reporting about conflict, in Northern Ireland, about reporting trauma; in northern Uganda, about journalism as a tool for reconciliation; and in India and Pakistan, about coming together as journalists to tell stories of common interest.

Youngblood outlined ongoing and future projects, including work in India, Pakistan, Kosovo, Nigeria, and the US.

Professor Jake Lynch from the University of Sydney gave a keynote address, “25 years of peace journalism,” which originated with Annabel McGoldrick and him communicating with Johan Galtung, known as the founder of peace and conflict studies. Lynch described a paradox of peace journalism, whereby the structure of news landscape was planted in 2016, establishing the CCMN that has changed the media landscape and shifted the narrative in 8 out of 10 regions (including French-speaking). Akah said that civil society organizations see the network as part of crisis solutions, increasing the capacity of CSOs work. One way this is achieved is by maximizing the voices of those who are bearing the brunt of the crisis. The network is developing a peace journalism manual, which will go into all media newsrooms so as to change the whole country’s media landscape.

Christina Avila Zesatti, creator of the online platform Corresponsal de Paz in Mexico, addressed the cynicism that “violence is fact and peace is only an ideal,” saying there are journalist who don’t want to “reinforce the violence by only telling the violence in our work.” The objective, she argued, is to have space to report more about peaceful solutions from all around the world, “a good dose of good efforts that exist in every conflict everywhere.”

The final panelist was Una Murphy, who co-founded VIEW digital magazine in Northern Ireland. She shared her personal experience of what it was like to report on the violence in Northern Ireland during “the Troubles,” while working in mainstream media in her 20s. She described the accumulation of covering riots, funerals, and recurring violence as traumatic. After some time outside Northern Ireland, she returned for an opportunity to cover more social issue stories. She co-founded VIEW digital “to amplify the voices of people who are making really good contributions but whose stories are not told.” Murphy held up an issue of their magazine that covered the topics of dealing with trauma and looking at legacy issues.

Kathryn Johnston, also of VIEW digital, gave the concluding address, speaking of the importance of global citizenship and inclusivity as a core principles of peace journalism, “especially in regards to gender and LGBT+ issues.” She described challenges of reporting on the past, with obstacles such as the Official Secrets Act, which stop the revelation of truth. A member of the Irish Executive Council of the National Union of Journalists, Johnston suggested adding a principle of “do no harm” to the NUJ’s code of conduct for its members; she referenced Irish poet W.B. Yates, who wrote in 1938, “Did that play of mine send out certain men and then get shot?”

In closing remarks, Lynch suggested an evolution of peace journalism, with an emergence of an independent, community media sector, and affordances with digital technology. He said that we should consider a consequentialist ethic (such as “do no harm”), as well as look for terrain for peace journalism to move onto, with more access and enhancement through training. Youngblood finished by saying how inspirational the symposium’s testimonies were. He said, “Your work makes tremendous impact and inspiration, and is invaluable to those in the field. I am re-energized.”

-Allan Leonard/SharedFutureNews
Timeline: Center for Global Peace Journalism

2012
- PJ Center launched
- published
- Washington, DC
- Mexico
- Brooklyn, NY
- Kansas City area, KS/ MO
- Kenya

2014
- Cyprus
- Washington, DC
- Germany
- Austria
- Washington, DC
- Peace Journalism Principles and Practices published
- Sierra Leone

2016
- South Sudan
- Kansas City area, KS/ MO
- Germany
- Cameroon
- Catskills, NY
- Pakistan

2018
- Kansas City area
- Ethiopia
- Washington, DC
- New York
- Kansas City area
- Santa Fe, NM

2020
- Ontario, Canada
- Northern Ireland
- Luxembourg (virtual)
- Kansas City area (virtual)
- Cambridge, MA-Harvard Univ. (virtual)
- Yemen (virtual)
- Washington, DC (virtual)
Project seeks to unite Turks, Syrians

Goal: Increase social cohesion through collective storytelling

Heightened anti-refugee sentiment fueled by disinformation on social media and weaponized by political propagandists has led to increased violence against refugees and migrants in Turkey. Nowhere was this made more apparent than in the Altındağ district of Ankara last August when tensions boiled over following the stabbing of two Turkish citizens by two Syrians. The subsequent riots and vandalizing of Syrians’ homes, cars, and businesses in the neighborhood are just one of the more visible outbursts in a string of violent incidents targeting refugees in the country.

The recent wave of refugees from Afghanistan has also exacerbated these tensions, with one mayor even suggesting a ten-fold increase in urban water prices for refugees. As the Turkish economy grapples with record high inflation, a plummeting lira, and soaring prices, locals’ perception that they are on the losing side of an inequitable economic playing field could mean that volatile, anti-migrant sentiments quickly erupt into acts of violence and vandalism against migrant communities.

In an effort to combat the spread of racist and xenophobic narratives against migrant communities within the media in Turkey, HasNa partnered with Kirkakay Kültür Sanat ve Doğa Derneği in Gaziantep, Turkey and the Center for Global Peace Journalism at Park University, Missouri to pilot a capacity building project titled Media in Tandem: Social Cohesion through Storytelling. Targeting young journalists from migrant and host communities in Gaziantep, the project strives to:

1. Promote social cohesion between migrant and host community journalists by encouraging them to collaborate and learn with one another
2. Enhance the professional capacities of journalists through targeted skills trainings thereby better preparing them for the labor force
3. Raise awareness of the issues of xenophobia and hate speech relating to refugees in Turkey, fostering empathy with forcibly displaced communities.

The first phase of the project comprised a series of 12 training sessions on various aspects of peace journalism. Cross-cultural collaboration is a core value of HasNa, which is why the project was designed to facilitate collaboration not only among Turkish and migrant journalists, but also among Turkish and American experts who came together to share knowledge and best practices on a variety of topics. The 12-week training curriculum included weekly sessions under such headings as New Media and Social Transformation, Rights-Based Journalism, Visual Media Ethics, Citizen Journalism, Communication Law, Gender Equality in the Media, and Representation of Refugees in the Media.

During the second phase of the project trainees were divided into four multicultural groups, each receiving a small stipend to produce an audio-visual digital story on the overarching theme “migrants.” Several of the project participants were already professional or student journalists, no additional training was provided on videography or documentary filmmaking, and the stories that emerged from the project serve as important testaments to the lives, struggles, and most importantly, humanity of immigrant communities living in Turkey.

For example, one of the short films titled “Chess” tells the story of a Syrian-led chess club in Turkey that brings together both Turkish and Syrian chess enthusiasts. At the center of the story is a young Syrian boy who dreams of representing Turkey in international chess tournaments but is unable to do so as he does not have Turkish citizenship. Another film titled “Youth” tells the story of a Syrian dentistry student adapting to life in a Turkish university as he encounters myriad prejudices and misconceptions but also heart-warming acts of kindness and empathy. In a particularly poignant scene from the clip, the interviewer asks if he faced any difficulties after moving to Turkey, to which he responds, “...Of course there were difficulties...When I came to the 12th grade and when I finished high school they were constantly saying, ‘You will enter the university without an exam’...But this was completely wrong, and the trouble was not with the person, but because people did not want to understand the truth...We took the exam for the university [...] It does vary a bit, but that doesn’t mean it’s easy either.” Rights-based journalism governed by the overarching principles of peace journalism seeks to disseminate such truths to the public.

The third phase of the project culminated in a virtual peace journalism workshop, which aimed to explore global and local opportunities for building solidarity between Turkish and migrant journalists. This was also the premier screening event for the digital stories created by the project participants. The keynote lectures were delivered by Professor Steven Youngblood, director of the Center for Global Peace Journalism, and Professor Tülay Atay, associate professor of media and communications at Mustafa Kemal University. The screening was followed by breakout sessions and moderated discussions on the challenges faced within the practice of peace journalism in Turkey, as well as opportunities for collaboration and bringing about positive change.

Even though the medium and long-term impact of Media in Tandem is yet to be measured, the need to strengthen solidarity networks between Turkish and migrant journalists was unanimously emphasized during the concluding session of the workshop. To this end, four important recommendations were identified:

1. Academics noted that students of journalism are not familiar with the vocabulary of peace journalism; therefore, rights-based reporting needs to be integrated into the mainstream curriculum of media and communications departments at Turkish universities;
2. Universities should establish partnerships with civil society organizations and local media agencies to create media cooperatives that will promote the principles of peace journalism;
3. Since Turkish journalists are more familiar with communication laws and limitations than their migrant counterparts, mentorship groups may be created through social media and other digital platforms to facilitate an exchange of information and best practices;
4. The economic limitations associated with the field of journalism need to be addressed at a more systemic level; one of the Syrian participants pointed out that for financial reasons, many journalists are compelled to pursue other professions because journalists’ wages are often unsustainable, particularly at local media agencies.

HasNa’s Media in Tandem project is a small but significant step toward starting a larger conversation about widespread xenophobia and anti-migrant sentiment not only in Turkey but across the globe. By building networks between students and experts and by facilitating the creation of peer groups to share skills and information, the project aims to enhance the quality of inclusive journalism in the largest refugee-hosting country in the world. Considering the critical role of media in shaping public opinion, conflict sensitivity and a focus on truth-telling should be at the center of all media narratives, especially in light of recent geopolitical turmoil.

--Rukmini Banerjee
Coming to terms with a troubled past in Kosovo

Media play crucial role in shaping narratives

Depending on who you ask, two decades ago there was either a war for freedom or a conflict between a state and a guerrilla group in Kosovo. This is how two different ethnic communities: the Albanians and the Serbs begin to talk about their bloody past. Over the years, both sides have tried to develop a more neutral language, when referring to this period. Especially after the war, media from both sides have played a crucial role in shaping the narrative about the past, albeit mostly a one-sided reflection on the events of 1998-99.

To this date, a large portion of the Serbian media use a derogatory name for ethnic Albanians from Kosovo. The local Albanians in Serbia have sued the Interior Minister for using hate speech in public, only to be disappointed by the court ruling that effectively allows for hate language to be used. Serbian tabloids knowingly use the term to appeal for more readers and viewership. Kosovo Albanians have an equally hurtful derogatory name for Serbs that is broadly used but usually not in mainstream media. However, this is not because the media is sensitive to this issue but rather due to the severe sanctions by the Independent Media Commission, the Kosovo media regulatory body.

As the Serbian media continue to portray Kosovo as a dangerous place which was taken from Serbia by force, the language media largely use in their reporting the word “Serbs” when talking about war crimes, thus not making a distinction between the state-organized campaign back then and the general public.

The Kosovo Albanian media used a photo of the Kosovo Army vehicles driving in the local highways, claiming it was heading to Albania after the deadly earthquake. It served to raise the national sentiment among the local population. On the other hand, Serbian media publish photos of tanks heading towards the border with Kosovo, whenever there are tensions in the North of Kosovo.

As much as the media can do, in the modern era of technology is it the governments that drive the fake news in Kosovo by publishing articles that distort the past. They invest in different platforms, and often lead online campaigns which at best are disinformation that challenge well-established historical facts.

In 2004, at least 19 people from both communities were killed in two-day long riots that ensued the unprofessional reporting of Kosovo’s Public Broadcaster about 3 ethnic Albanians kids who drowned in Ibar River in the North of the country, inhabited mostly by Serbs. Such reporting led to people going into the streets attacking and demolishing Orthodox churches. To date, it remains a topic that divides both sides when reporting.

Missing persons

The topic of missing persons is the only one that really resonates equally to both sides. For many years, Special Commissions helped each other find the missing bodies, but the reporting is mostly one-sided. An attempt by the peacebuilding NGO forumZFD to have Serb victims tell their story too was shunned by the public broadcaster, RTK, but was eventually picked up by private media.

The majority of Kosovo Albanian journalists are at best in their 30s, and even though they have not really lived through much of the war, there is still a strong attachment to the past because of the way how they were raised. The same goes for Serbian journalists and their strong attachment towards Serbia. However, explaining and understanding each other’s points of view and putting professionalism before nationality might begin to change attitudes.

In addition, media reporting in Kosovo still relies heavily on the overwhelming use of political elites as sources of information. Despite the animosities and deeply rooted ethnic divisions, Peace Journalism and Conflict Prevention are not among the pillars of Kosovo’s curricula of relevant journalism and communication courses.

Remzije Shahini-Hoxhaj a professor of the Faculty of Journalism at the public University of Prishtina, pointed out that for countries like Kosovo, it is important to prepare young journalists for peace journalism, transitional justice, and dealing with the past.

“As a part of my courses Ethics and Media and Media and Politics, I am trying to include two elements: it’s necessary for post-conflict societies like Kosovo to deal with those topics to properly educate young journalists,” Shahini-Hoxhaj said.

The media in Kosovo struggle to report on the past as they have been stuck for years between ethnic-centred narratives and political influence, driven to expose the crimes of the “other” while ignoring their own. In addition, state building, post-war conditions, and inter-ethnic tensions are contributing factors to the deficiencies in reporting on the past.

Alexander Vojvoda, project manager of forumZFD in Kosovo, pointed out that the current developments around validation and verification of information and the spreading of “fake news” are worrying. “ForumZFD continuously works with media and journalists in Kosovo to establish dealing with the past and conflict-sensitive reporting as a relevant topic in the editorial rooms and provide training on these topics,” Vojvoda noted.

The Kosovo media market is not completely regulated, and it finds itself in a situation of deep ethnic and political division, where every community has developed “its own” media. As in other countries of former Yugoslavia, when it comes to nationality, the main journalistic values of impartiality in portraying victims and perpetrators are not always embraced by Kosovo media either.

Nora Ahmetaj, a researcher in peace and dealing with the past, says that with a few exceptions, the media narrative has been consistent with the political elites. “As a result, the Kosovo media did not always understand the disparities, nor were they bothered to initiate serious discussion and debate about the past,” Ahmetaj said.

The current situation which still carries the scars of a post-war society points to the research to help deepen the understanding whether peace journalism can be considered a tool in the field of media development in Kosovo.

Abib Hoxha, a Kosovo-born lecturer and media researcher at the Universiti of Agder in Norway, said that training and doing proper peace journalism is very difficult for media in a highly polarized society like Kosovo. “Narratives of conflict in Kosovo are not brewing from within and what media can do is to interact more with the other side. Not for a fake balance but for the purposes of bringing in new perspectives on the conflict reporting.”

Over the years little has been done to bring together Kosovo and Serbia journalists to talk to one another. Moreover, what is needed is an internal dialogue between local journalists from both communities in Kosovo. Facing each other and talking about the hurtful language to the other community would be a good start.

—Serbeze Haxhijaj, Xhemaji Rexha

From 20 October to 17 November 2021, over 20 young journalists from Kosovo took part in a 5-week online training on Dealing with the Past and Conflict-Sensitive Journalism. Project trainers included Serbeze Haxhijaj, Xhemaji Rexha, and Steven Youngblood.

The training focused on Peace Journalism, Reporting on Dealing with the Past in Kosovo, the Role of Media in Reconciliation, mis-, dis- and malinformation (“Fake News”). The participants received support in producing relevant articles, blogs, video reportages, and podcasts which have been published on forumZFD’s “Dealing with the Past” blog at www.dwp-balkan.org.

On Dec. 8, the organizers handed out the certificates to participants and continued the exchange on reporting on Conflict-Sensitive Reporting and Dealing with the Past in Kosovo and the region. (Pictured) The workshops were organised by forumZFD - Kosovo Program in cooperation with Asociacioni I Gazetarive të Kosovës-AGK.
Many conversations about peace journalism focus on peace-journalism content, and for good reason. After all, new stories are the final product of numerous journalistic processes, including editorial meetings, field reporting, copyediting, as well as organizational opportunities and constraints.

For this reason, however, a content-centered approach may at times overshadow the perceptions of individuals who are practicing peace journalism. These perceptions matter to the extent that their attitudes shape content production, which in turn frame how communities understand and respond to conflict. By this logic, our understanding of peace journalism is limited if we do not understand the individuals engaged in this work. In other words, what does peace journalism mean to peace journalists?

**Interview Study**

This was the central question behind a 2021 interview study involving journalists in Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, and Uganda. More specifically, I wanted to learn more about how the organizational and professional dynamics described above, among others, shaped the ways that media professionals who are practicing peace journalism perceived their work in peace journalism. For example, a Kenyan television journalist I spoke to reported: “My biggest thing about journalism is our responsibility to community. We pick the graphic images, but then how does that affect whoever is consuming this content?”

On the other hand, some professionals I spoke to interpreted peace journalism as geared toward more elite, often urban audiences with a goal of policy intervention or change. A Ugandan communication professional I spoke to presented this “policy-oriented” perspective when recounting a successful peace-journalism story. He shared, “When [the story] ran on the station, it forced government officials to come and cool the situation. So, I consider an intervention of the world, particularly interesting to me. The journalists I spoke to had attended at least one peace-journalism training. They worked at rural and urban, public, and private outlets as well as held diverse positions, from freelance reporters to station managers. Over our conversations, I invited them to reflect on how they defined peace journalism as well as if or how they practiced peace journalism principles integrating into their day-to-day practice. Journalists I spoke to often described peace journalism in terms of the audience they were writing for, the goal(s) they had when writing, and specific techniques they use to achieve their goals. I found that these journalists tended to fall into one of two groups. In a first group, journalists understood peace journalism as produced for communities directly experience conflict with the goal of promoting unity and reconciliation—which I call an “orientation” to peace journalism. For example, a Kenyan television journalist I spoke to reported: “My biggest thing about journalism is our responsibility to community. We pick the graphic images, but then how does that affect whoever is consuming this content?”

By far, the most common and seemingly prevalent of these peace-journalism practices may be closer to the communities they cover, with respect to both physical proximity and interpersonal ties. This practice aligns with the heightened interest in victim experiences. In addition, increased resource uncertainty in precarious positions also means that reporting interventions may need to be more explicit or direct in order to have the intended impact, prompting professionals to assert appeals for peace more blatantly. These pressures are ostensibly alleviated to some extent for journalists in less precarious positions. Journalists in this category are more likely to work in managerial or editorial desk positions, pulling them farther away from conflict reporting happening in the field. As such, they may influence over the written reports they review and may be more likely focus their attention on text or word choice.

The same senior Kenyan journalist quoted above illustrated this when she confirmed, “I was always the last person to read the story before it would go; I was the last gatekeeper which meant I always had an opportunity to change and edit.”

What are the implications of these findings? First, they suggest certain peace-journalism practices may be more prevalent in particular positions. For instance, the most suitable peace journalism trainings might tailor educational content to include specialized peace-journalism editing workshops for supervisors, who primarily oversee the work of others. In contrast, journalists in the field may need other types of tools, such as interview guides or safety training. Discussion and future research My findings indicate that journalists find some interpretations more salient than others. I suggest that one way perceptions are differentiated is by degree of professional precarity and that while journalists may agree to peace journalism’s main principles in the abstract, the extent to which they can approximate such goals varies according to how they perceive their professional situation. These findings contribute to existing work on journalism professionalization processes by examining how individual perceptions of models are shaped by social conditions. More specifically, this work suggests that professional-structural dynamics, such as professional precarity, may correspond with particular ways of processing new information. Such insights extend discussions regarding how models like peace journalism are transposed across contexts and the ways that media practitioners negotiate familiar and new situations.

**Conclusion**

Beyond peace journalism in East Africa, a hierarchy-of-influences approach toward understanding individual perceptions can inform journalism research writ large. Many efforts to study journalism professionalization focus on institutional-level changes or conditions, such as press system norms or organizational environments. While it is clear that interventions on these levels matter, this project advances the argument that these institutional conditions must be examined alongside perceptions—and the antecedents of such perceptions—of individuals.

Curing institutional pressures to attend peace-journalism trainings or gain related skills represents only partial progress toward model adoption if individual interpretations of such model principles continue to be stratified by the same or similar institutional influences. A closer look at how knowledge may not translate into comparable uses or interpretations of that same information.

More broadly, this research reflects the many ways that peace journalism is adopted across diverse contexts. It also suggests that professional situations may correspond to particular ways of processing new information, with possible implications for peace journalism practice and ultimately the progress toward more peaceful societies.

—Meagan Doll

Innovative project apologizes to KC’s Black community

The truth can be painful. Just ask the Kansas City Star’s Mara Rose Williams, who “many times sat at my desk and cried because I knew these things happened. It made me so sad that I just cried.”

“These things” are a century of neglect of and racism directed at Kansas City’s African American community by the Kansas City Star newspaper. In 2020, Williams decided that the newspaper needed to expose “these things.” She developed, pitched, and led a project at the Star called “The Truth in Black and White” that offered an examination of and apology for the Star’s mistreatment of African Americans. This project is exemplary, textbook peace journalism.

Williams’ presentation at Park University in Parkville, Missouri was part of the 2021 Greater Kansas City Peacebuilding Conference that centered on the theme “Healing Our Polarized Societies.” The conference was co-sponsored by Park’s Center for Global Peace Journalism and Johnson County Community College, and was held both in person and on Zoom in September and October.

Williams, a reporter and editorial board member for the Kansas City Star, spoke on the Star’s project “The Truth in Black and White.” This project acknowledged and apologized for the newspaper’s role in perpetuating racism in Kansas City.

Williams saw in 2020 the newspaper had misrepresented Kansas City’s Black Lives Matter protests by portraying the protestors as the antagonizers rather than the police. She also saw “that Kansas City had come together in one place” to fight racism. As a peace journalist, she wanted to be part of that effort.

While researching the Star’s previous reporting on the black community, Williams realized that the newspaper had “covered it inadequately, inaccurately, or ignored it completely.” This flawed reporting had “perpetuated racism” in Kansas City by giving its (mostly white) readers a skewed perception of what the black community was like.

Williams persuaded the Star’s editorial board to apologize for 100 years of flawed reporting and to make amends. On 20 December 2020, the Star’s president and publisher printed a front-page apology to the black community along with six stories illustrating the flawed reporting. These stories examined reporting on black culture, the Civil Rights Movement, education, housing, Kansas City’s 1977 flood, and the general portrayal of black people.

Common themes were that the Star only used white sources (e.g., the police or the school board) while ignoring black perspectives. It only covered the impact of policies and tragedies on whites while ignoring the impact — even the deaths — of blacks. The only blacks mentioned in print were criminals with all others — including cultural icons — completely ignored. When elected officials or the police broke the law to harm the black community (as the school board did multiple times), the Star was silent.

Since the apology, the Star has formed a black advisory committee, has hired more reporters of color, and has added a race and equity editor. Reporters now go into minority communities in search of stories to give a voice to those who were previously ignored.

Williams said that these measures are enabling the Star to gain trust in the black community. She noted, “If the newspaper can polarize, it can also unite.”

Williams told the audience she considers herself a peace journalist. She is not alone in this assessment. Center for Global Peace Journalism Director Steven Youngblood said, “Williams’ groundbreaking work provides a blueprint for media of all kinds to reach out to marginalized communities, to give a voice to those communities, and to give agency to those voices as solutions to societal problems are discussed and decided.”

“I wanted to be a part of peace journalism, as a journalist who perpetuated peace,” Williams told the gathering at Park University. “It’s why I got into this business. I’m happy to be a peace journalist.”

Two other speakers rounded out the peacebuilding conference. Michael Collins (see pg. 18), Executive Director for the Americas at the Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP), explored IEP’s work in defining eight pillars of positive peace which all peaceful societies have in common (https://www.economicsandpeace.org/). The Rev. Dr. Donna J. Simon, pastor of St. Mark Hope and Peace Lutheran Church in Kansas City, discussed Stand Up KC’s efforts to ensure that community members are offered a livable wage.

The conference’s sessions were moderated by educator Lewis Diuguid. All session recordings are available at: www.jccc.edu/peacebuilding/

--Janette Jaspers
Media often hostile in covering Arabs, refugees

Systematized coverage fuels Islamophobia

Media often hostile in covering Arabs, refugees

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The importance of the press (the only kind of media before the invention of cinema, radio, television, and the internet) in shaping international relations and public opinion was recognized by the pre-World War I peace movement. The Viennese writer, editor, and peace researcher Alfred H. Fried (1864-1921) referred to himself as a peace journalist.

Islamophobia

commonly used as political strategy by some members of the extreme right wing. The idea is propagated based on the discourse that every Muslim would be a potential terrorist found fertile ground in the last months of 2015, the year in which the migratory flow in Europe reached its peak. According the International Organization for Migration (IOM), more than one million people arrived in Europe via Mediterranean Sea. The war was worse and longer, completing 10 years of ongoing conflict also in 2021, and the living conditions in refugee camps in the nearby countries deteriorated, particularly in in Turkey and Lebanon. Added to this already complex situation, the Par attacks perpetrated in 2015 – against Charlie Hebdo in January and the Baracelna series in November – constituted a crucial point for the erroneously established connection between, mainly, Syrian refugees and terrorism, fostering the feeling of the non-Muslim population. Paradoxically, these same migrants generally labeled as terrorists are, for the most part, fleeing war and terrorist attacks that occur in their own countries in a recurrent and lethal way.

Studies conducted in the social psychology field have shown that the media are capable of deconstructing the moral panic atmosphere created by the association between terrorism and Islam. The message disseminated by the media directly influences individuals and social perceptions. Psychosocial theorists corroborate that changing the terrorism coverage approach could reduce fear and fight Islamophobia.

To face this challenging scenario, humanitarian and peace journalism concepts and practice are glimpsed as alternatives to deconstruct the crystallized media representation of terrorism and its perpetrators. One of the main confirmations to point out is the encouragement to avoid the normalization of promoting voice plurality in journalistic coverages. The humanitarian journalism theorized by Martin Scott, Mel Bunce, and Kate Wright defends the principles such as media independence while it reinforces a more active role to equalize conflicts, giving space to discussions about possible solutions and a voice for those who are typically silenced. It is impossible to study and think about these concepts without connecting these principles with the peace journalism postulate established by Dr. Johan Galtung, one of the main references in the field, as well as Dr. Jake Lynch and Annabel McGoldrick. Their principles revolve around the promotion of plurality in providing a diverse and specialized mode of responsible and conscious media coverage.

The premises presented go beyond just inserting disparate voices in journalistic texts, which would already represent an advance compared to the current coverage. Despite the challenges faced, centered on the technical and economic systematics of news production, initiatives have been observed both in academia and in the journalistic market worldwide. Projects of this nature aim to contribute to the modification of solidified narratives reporting more responsibly not only on terrorism and conflict situations, but also various social interest agendas.

As stated in “What makes news humanitarian,” Scott sums up humanitarian journalism as “news which conforms to a broader understanding of humanitarianism: as an ethic of kindness, benevolence and sympathy extended universally and impartially to all human beings.” And, we journalists owe to society to do just that.

–Lillian Sanchez
Press freedoms critical to building peace

IEP’s Collins: Free flow of information is positive peace pillar

In a hyper-connected and increasingly digital world, constant access to information has the potential to increase levels of Positive Peace.

Positive Peace, as defined by IEP, is the attitudes, institutions, and structures that create and sustain peaceful societies.

According to research from the Institute for Economics & Peace (IEP), the average score for individuals using the Internet indicator has improved by 29.5% since 2009, indicating a rapid increase in access to information. This brings good outcomes for the global Positive Peace score, which has improved by 3.3% since 2009. However, on closer inspection, IEP’s findings show that disinformation is undermining these gains.

A 2020 analysis of Positive Peace around the world showed that two indicators for IEP’s measure for the Free Flow of Information are deteriorating—press freedoms and the quality of information. Free Flow of Information, as measured in the 2020 Positive Peace Index (PPI), is one of the eight pillars of Positive Peace. It measures the degree to which citizens can easily access and exchange information while being free from restrictions or censorship. It considers the economic, legal, and political context that journalists operate within, informal constraints such as self-censorship as well as diversity of context.

The quality of information—the use of disinformation by governments—has deteriorated with the access to technology, and as such the Positive Peace Index score for this indicator has shown a deterioration of 9.8% over the period. In the United States, the biggest deterioration reported on the PPI was the quality of information indicator. This contributed to the Free Flow of Information Pillar deteriorating in the country by 18.4% over the past decade.

According to the Oxford Internet Institute, a recent report found that organized social media manipulation campaigns operate in 81 countries, up from 70 in 2019. More governments are hiring professional, private agencies to harness the power of social media to spread propaganda, suppress freedom of speech and freedom of the press.

In addition, the 2021 World Press Freedom Index finds that journalism—an important antidote to disinformation—has deteriorated in 56% of the 180 countries assessed. According to the index, the pandemic has blocked access for journalists working in the field, making it extremely difficult for reporters to research and report stories.

The Free Flow of Information Pillar forms an integral part of IEP’s Positive Peace framework. Journalists play an important role in producing and sharing this information, while also tackling misinformation and other harmful content. Free and independent media disseminates information in a way that leads to greater knowledge and helps individuals, businesses, and civil society make better decisions, leading to better outcomes and more rational responses in times of crisis.

Building Positive Peace requires systems change. In addition to the Free Flow of Information Pillar, IEP’s Positive Peace framework includes other inter-related pillars that work together to build and sustain stable, long-lasting peace: Well-Functioning Government; Equitable Distribution of Resources; Good Relations with Neighbors; High Levels of Human Capital; Acceptance of the Rights of Others; Low Levels of Corruption; Sound Business Environment.

---Michael Collins

---End---

### Percentage change in PPI indicators, 2009–2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Percentage Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level of education</td>
<td>Decrease</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health expenditure</td>
<td>Improvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corruption</td>
<td>Improvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freedom of the press</td>
<td>Decrease</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government effectiveness</td>
<td>Decrease</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political democracy</td>
<td>Improvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freedom of the press</td>
<td>Decrease</td>
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<tr>
<td>Freedom of the press</td>
<td>Decrease</td>
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Source: IEP
Research shows Pakistani youth prefer PJ

Work needed to promote ‘neutralizing’ approach

Introduction

Pakistan is a country where its youth is shrouded in the security dilemma due to a prevalent sense of insecurity and aggressive style of reporting by its media. The youth are exposed to negative stimuli daily through elements of war journalism approach in reporting conflicts. It becomes even more necessary to report events responsibly where a nation has not fully recovered from a wave of terrorist activities and border disturbances. Peace journalism can be the right tool for reporting conflict-sensitive areas; hence it is important to know if young minds find it relevant.

According to its pioneer Johan Galtung, Peace Journalism is a branch of journalism that is defined as a set of choices that can be made of what and how to report something which allows peace to be communicated and valued by societies to consider and value nonviolent responses towards conflict.

The Study

The study is primarily based on the works of Dr. Jake Lynch and Annabel McGoldrick regarding the idea of responses towards peace journalism and how people respond towards a peace journalistic stimulus. Despite having a lot of research and works regarding peace journalism in Pakistan, a review of the literature revealed that minimal work has been done on the participation of youth and their responses to a conflict. Keeping in view, the study seeks to examine youth responses towards PJ.

The research is an experimental study conducted in a quantitative manner using survey based quasi-experimental design to investigate the cognitive perception and response towards peace journalism among participants both male and female aged between 18 and 25 years and was taken from the Media Studies department of a public university in Islamabad. Questionnaires were distributed individually in person to minimize any chance of plagiarism or casual form filling.

Findings

The primary research hypothesis for this research was “audiences like the peace journalism approach more than the war journalism approach.” To test the hypothesis and deduce answers regarding the approach towards PJ over WJ, SPSS has been used and the variables measured through Likert scale while mean values were calculated using SPSS software. The variables of peace journalism and war journalism are compared below in a paired t-test table.

Nine attributes of peace journalism and war journalism were examined and compared which include: (1) Proactive vs reactive; (2) Post Conflict vs No Post Conflict; (3) Socio-Cultural Damages vs Casualties Count; (4) Psychological Damage vs Material Damage; (5) Non-Elite Focus vs Elite Focus; (6) Similarities vs Differences; (7) Past Explanations vs Zero-Sum game; (8) Future Projection vs Dichotomies; and (9) Diversity vs Status Quo.

A table comparing these attributes indicates that youth generally preferred peace journalism more than war journalism. The mean value for collective summation of peace journalism attributes is 27.3, while 23.8 for war journalism attributes. This is significant at a 5% level of significance. It’s worth noting however that the numbers are close, indicating a need for more work on the youth around the world should be done in order to promote this neutralizing approach especially when more and more conflicts are emerging with every passing instance. Pakistan is itself a country struck with a lot of ongoing and previous conflicts in itself which makes it an ideal location to determine what sort of approach the youth around the world should be adopting. Pakistan is itself a country shrouded in the security dilemma with a mushroom cloud with a headline asking if NATO is planning for a nuclear war. Pictures like this and photos of stern, lecturing Russian officials (half of all Russian photos in the survey) combined with propaganda positioning Russia as a victim have worked, since 60% of Russians blame the U.S. for the war. (New York, March 14)

While images can be messages of peace, it is also unfortunately true that they can powerfully convey propaganda, or distorted reality. To analyze this, a new study compared Ukrainian war images in Russian and Western media.

Study

The study examined three Russian media outlets (Russia Today, Tass, and Pravda) and three Western media outlets (Reuters, AP, and Le Monde). On March 16, 60 from Russian media; 60 from Western media. The first 10 photos encountered on their websites were categorized. Most were on home/landing pages, others were found on “Live Update” pages or in the first Ukraine story encountered.

A total of 20 photos from each outlet (10 on March 16, 10 on March 18) were categorized. 120 photos total were analyzed compared to 60 Russian media; 60 from Western media. Some were double listed if they were “hits” in more than one category (“Suffering” and “Bloody,” for example). The most brilliant example of this is a photo spread by the AP titled, “Why, Why, Why,” Ukraine’s Mariupol descends into despair.

It’s vital that peace photojournalists continue showing us rays of humanity and hope through the dark clouds of conflict. If enough shafts of light and truth can shine through to the Russian people, perhaps this awful war can be over sooner than we think possible.

Review

For Russian media, the images are noteworthy for what they omit—victims, destruction, and brutality. As for demonizing the West, there is one scary image from Pravda (below) that shows a mushroom cloud, its size being surprisingly large. It’s even more strange when it’s combined with a headline asking if NATO is planning for a nuclear war. Pictures like this and photos of stern, lecturing Russian officials (half of all Russian photos in the survey) combined with propaganda positioning Russia as a victim have worked, since 60% of Russians blame the U.S. for the war. (New York, March 14)

Western media could sometimes do a better job providing context. We see a destroyed apartment building, but it this the exception, or are all the surrounding blocks destroyed as well? Also, many victims are photographed, but only three were identified as IDP’s or refugees. Are the rest of the survivors huddled in shelters refugees, IDP’s, or locals? This context matters. Despite these minor blemishes, Western photojournalism of the war has been exemplary, putting a human face on the suffering inflicted by the Russians, while in the process compiling photographic evidence of Russian war crimes. The most brilliant example of this is a photo spread by the AP titled, “Why, Why, Why,” Ukraine’s Mariupol descends into despair.

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Nigeria

Do media contribute to terror, conflict?

While much attention seemed to have been diverted from the security challenges facing Nigeria to the Covid-19 pandemic, recent developments bring fresh concerns both to the government and the citizens. Nigeria’s mass abduction of school students across the northwestern region, the incessant farmers-herdsmen conflicts, and most recently the ethno-religious crisis in Benue and Plateau states adds to a growing list of challenges.

The mass abductions clearly show a erosion of human security in the country with serious implications for the nation’s education system. By virtue of the fact that Boko Haram’s strategy of kidnapping hundreds of school children to extract ransoms has become a money-making avenue, criminal groups in northern Nigeria have equally followed suit. In previous years, bandits have stolen children off the roadway, but today they exploit the terror and political pressure created by school kidnappings to obtain higher ransoms.

A study conducted by SB Morgen, a Lagos-based risk analysis company, found that Nigerian citizens paid over $18 million in ransom money between 2011 and 2020, with over two-thirds of that amount going to kidnappers during the last four years of the period. Apart from the economic implications, an estimated figure of over 40,000 people have lost their lives, over 2 million people have been displaced and 240,000 Nigerians forced to flee as refugees to other countries, according to the Global Terrorism Index Report (2020).

This leads to an examination of how the media, through its actions or inactions, have contributed to Nigeria’s current situation. First, the media is supposed to be the watch dog of the society but unfortunately, the media has allowed itself to either be used as a lapdog or attack dog in the hands of its owners. The fundamental principles of objectivity, accuracy, balance, editorial independence and other ethical standards which the media is built on has now largely become theoretical principles rather than practice.

Furthermore, hate speech, fake news, news commercialization has now become a norm rather than a taboo. According to Prof. Pate, the desire to survive in the midst of competition has compounded our problems in terms of distribution of hatred which we now term as news. This view was corroborated by ace Nigerian broadcast journalist Eugenia Abu, who argued that we (Nigerians) are as a people highly emotional. Hence, rather than looking at the real issues, we spend time looking at the emotions, ethnicity, religion, etc.

There is a need for the media industry in Nigeria to take a self-audit and ask: Are media personnel able to deal with conflict? Do they have a proper understanding of the situation? Are they able to identify the main players as well as the shadow parties and their interests? Are these interests beneficial to the society? Media practitioners also have a responsibility of balancing their stories. In some other climes of the world, there are certain stories that are withheld for weeks for proper fact-finding before being released for public consumption. In Nigeria, most journalists are only interested in making the headlines, making the money, and moving on to the next story. The danger in this is that when facts are wrong or misrepresented, those affected will respond either in words or by retaliation.

Finally, scholars have affirmed that there is also a collapse of the radio system in Nigeria. There are over 400 radio stations in the country, and 90% of them are FM transmitters. The over-abundance of local radio means that happenings and developments are only known within an isolated local area. Large portions of the country, especially in the northern region, are not covered by any indigenous media stations. Hence there is need to re-vitalise the national broadcasting system in Nigeria for our strategic and security interest. This will strengthen national unity and combat fake news and hate speech.

If necessity is the mother of invention, it is safe to posit that reality is the mother of necessity, the nature of conflict is changing, and journalists also need to keep evolving in order to meet the demands of these realities. I must admit that arriving at a suitable title for this write up was quite a dilemma. Based on the foregoing however, it is safe to conclude that the media should strive to be the lubricant that will keep Nigeria as a sovereign nation together, not the dynamite that rips it apart.

--Phillip Teniola David