Forum: 4th Committee (Political)

Issue: The Role of Mass Media in Peacebuilding, Conflict Prevention and Management

Student officers: Irina Belyaeva, Vladislav Alexandrov

Introduction

The media play a huge role in the life of every person. It is not possible for people to visit all places to know the actual state of affairs. Therefore, they follow the media for this. People depend on them for News Feed, GK, Guide and more. Mass media have the right to create or destroy a country. For any country to flourish, the media plays a vital role, and it is very important for the media to be independent and impartial.

But now the media is being radicalized. They are forced to spread information in order to influence people through money and political pressure. Many mass media are now competing with each other to influence people in two different directions. Many of them are aimed at masala news instead of streaming more important news. Not all means are affected. But it is very important that people do not blindly follow any media content and do not use their rational judgment, since many industries, institutions, politicians, etc., use the media as their weapon to attract people on their way.

Definition of key terms

Mass media – a set of public bodies of information transmission using technical means; means of daily practice of collecting, processing and distributing messages to mass audiences.

Peace journalism **-** journalism that offers a more balanced perspective of war and conflict than that provided by the dominant mainstream media.

Background information

In recent decades, the role of the mass media as a factor determining the consciousness and behavior of people has sharply increased. The content, form and dynamics of messages transmitted by the media have a significant impact on the psychological state of the audience, its attitude to the world around it. The media, firstly,

have a powerful influence on the formation of political attitudes that influence people's behavior in conflict situations, secondly, they help to form stereotypes of constructive political behavior of the masses in problematic situations of social interaction, and, thirdly, voluntarily or unwittingly, as practice shows, they are becoming one of the instruments for the birth and development of political conflicts.

Due to the right information, which in most cases is more disinformation, people do not think about the nature of their decisions and actions, being sure that they are based on their own desires and beliefs. That is why the manipulation of public opinion is one of the serious problems of modern political life and the expansion of its scale leads to the degradation of society. It is necessary to distinguish manipulation from purposeful management of social thought, especially in emergency situations, in order to avoid panic. It is journalists who can be both peacekeepers during a conflict, and instigators of a conflict. The media should objectively cover the information, referring to independent experts, carefully study the processes. After all, it is the facts covered by the media that stimulate citizens to a certain reaction.

For example, the 2009 protest against the results of the presidential election in Iran demonstrated new communication and influence opportunities available on the Internet. The Iranian government tried to block coverage of major demonstrations in Tehran and other major cities, imposing severe restrictions on local and foreign reporters, but the opposition was able to send reports of violence against demonstrators through social networks such as YouTube and Twitter.

During the 2010 general election in Côte d'Ivoire, the media landscape was full of partisan controversy and misinformation on the part of the opposing sides and incitement to violence, while media representatives themselves were frequent targets of violence and intimidation (Media Foundation for West Africa, 2011) During the post-election crisis that followed the announcement of the results of the presidential election, both presidential candidates Laurent Gbago and Allassana Ouattara used print media and public television as a tool for propaganda and a means of mobilizing their electorate against their opponents (Electoral Reform (International Services, 2011). The media was central to the post-election crisis and the civil war, which resulted in more than 1 million displaced. Many public services in some parts of the country ceased and the economic downturn continued.

The most recent role of media in conflict escalation is the Arab spring in North Africa and the Middle East. This uprising saw the overthrow of Libyan, Tunisian, Egyptian and Yemeni governments through mass action engineered by social media.

Apart from the negative role of mass media, a lot of cases linked it to peacebuilding and conflict prevention.

For example, the Open Broadcast Network (OBN), a media network established in Bosnia two decades ago, is one of the most ambitious and earliest deliberate attempts by the media to reduce violent conflicts. Today it remains the only television network established to promote peace and reconciliation. This followed the initial assessment of the Bosnian conflict that propaganda through ethnic television stations promoted the dissemination of reports of hatred that inflamed and incited conflict (Sadkovich, 1998).

With the social media monitoring technology developed by iHub in 2013, the Kenyan government was able to foster civic participation transparency and accountability during elections. Non-governmental initiatives contributed to the reporting process, citizens were involved in the proactive dissemination of information and messages of the world via SMS, Twitter and the Internet."51 in Nigeria, one project to support traditional media and social media to influence public awareness and voter education is encouraged to participate in the electoral process and as a proponent of peaceful acceptance of the results. On the eve of the presidential elections, on an unprecedented day of peace in the media, every radio station in the country has allocated air time for peaceful communications.

Major countries and organizations involved

This problem affects all countries in one way or another, but particularly those in which the situation is unstable, as well as those involved in any conflict.

Having a considerable weight, as well as being the people at the hearing, the UN and affiliated organizations are the most involved. They also have sufficient capacity to change the situation with regard to this issue in any of the parties. Now the UN news is an examole of a mass medium that lead peacekeeping policy

Relevant treaties and UN resolutions

Declaration on Fundamental Principles concerning the Contribution of the Mass Media to Strengthening Peace and International Understanding, to the Promotion of Human Rights and to Countering Racialism, apartheid and incitement to war, UNESCO 1978

Previous attempts to solve the issue

Both the international and the global media reach audiences worldwide, but the international media present news and commentary from the perspective of a particular state, while the global media have no such official allegiance. In fact, several states such

as China, Russia, France, and Iran established international news networks in English because they were dissatisfied with coverage of more established global networks such as CNN International and BBC World News, and have accused those networks of having a Western bias.

There are now a lot of organizations such as the American non-governmental organization ''Search for common ground'' (SFCG), which deals with conflict resolution, launched Studio Ijambo in 1995 at the height of ethnic and political violence in Burundi and neighboring Rwanda. The Studio was created with the purpose of promoting reconciliation, understanding and promoting non-violent conflict resolution (SFCG, 2004). Since its inception, Studio Ijambo has had a significant positive impact on conflict mitigation through high-quality radio programs that have contributed to reconciliation, dialogue and collaboration, in addition to its credible, unbiased programs that included news, special features, round-table discussions, phone calls, music, and a popular series of TV series.

Bosnia and Herzegovina has carefully considered the success story of regulation. Two years after the Office of the High representative formed the Independent media Commission, there were 200 licensed television and radio broadcasters, a functioning market, virtually no hate speech, public broadcasters and local ownership of regulation. On the contrary, the group of experts analyzed the failed attempts made in Iraq to do something similar and the problem of introducing regulation in an unstable environment.

Conflict prevention and peacebuilding programs use a number of approaches, from facilitating dialogue and negotiations between conflicted groups to using peacekeeping forces to separate armed factions.

Recognizing the crucial role played by the media in conflict situations, many NGOs have begun training journalists for so-called "peaceful journalism", which seeks to promote reconciliation through careful reporting that gives voice to all parties to the conflict and opposes explanations of violence in terms of innate hostility or ancient hatred. Peaceful journalism avoids focusing too much on violence, instead focusing on the impact of war on communities on both sides of the divide and their efforts to bridge differences.

Peaceful journalism is encouraged through the training of journalists covering conflicts, including journalists representing various religious or ethnic groups currently at war. Various NGOs regularly offer courses on peaceful journalism.

International Radio for Peace (RFPI or Radio Paz Internacional), based in Costa Rica, promotes peaceful journalism globally through shortwave radio and the Internet. RFPI receives its programs from independent producers and media activists from around the world. An independent radio station, it aims to improve understanding by providing a

range of voices for multimedia users who are tuned to 24-hour shortwave broadcast from RFPI transmitters in El Rodeo, Costa Rica. RFPI also tracks and documents hatred of the radio and the use of media by extremist groups.

Innovative approaches include the efforts of the Alliance of independent journalists (AJI) in Indonesia, which founded a media center in 2001 in the rebel-torn city of Ambon in the Moluccas, where both Muslim and Christian journalists could gather, learn from each other and share resources.

Possible solutions

- government officials to be more open with their information on the homefront
- to provide financial aid to independent media
- to develop infrastructure for media
- to build relationships with local governments and organizations at all levels
- to provide accurate information, an alternative view, a voice for the voiceless
- to translate highly political or technical information into a common language
- to contribute to the building of a culture of peace and advocate it

Useful links and materials

Adam, Gordon. 1997. Media: peacebuilding through the media. Crosslines Global Report. Geneva: Crosslines Communications Ltd.

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Curtis, Devon E.A. 2000. Broadcasting peace: An analysis of local media post-conflict peacebuilding projects in Rwanda and Bosnia. Canadian Journal of Development Studies 11: 141-55.

Durch, William J., ed. 1993. The evolution of UN peacekeeping: Case studies and comparative analysis. New York: St. Martin's Press.

http://www.globalpeace.org/blog/role-media-peace-building

https://www.undp.org/content/dam/norway/undp-ogc/documents/UNDPOGC_Media_conflict%20roundtable%20background%20paper.pdf