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Editorial

Media reporting on refugees from Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq and other countries that have been trying to reach Western countries through the Balkan region, has been mostly outlined by sensationalism, inaccurate reporting and political based reports. Refugees have even been used by certain media houses to spread out the panic and raise tensions, alarm warnings, introduction of disaster, political clashes and defamations. Another side of these reports included extracting tears, posting photos of children, large motions of exhausted people and posting and publishing private information that have directly been endangering safety of refugees.

Incorrect referring of refugees as migrants, stereotypes, political tools of humanitarian disaster and disrespecting the privacy have appeared on media on daily basis. Drastic violations of rules of journalism and conduct have also appeared and these seemed to have been used by criminals rather than professional journalists.

Petra Laslo, a female reporter from Hungarian TV house physically assaulted refugees while they had been trying to break through the cordon near admittance center in Raska, close to Serbian border. She tripped the male person who at the time was carrying the child in his hands and she also kicked the young girl and young man which was all recorded by surrounding cameras.

At the end, beside all these reports, there was very few of those that managed to provide public with an explanation of the origins of refugee crisis and possible solutions, quality analysis and comments. Can we say that journalists’ ethics vanished from media sources? Is it possible to sustain professional relationship and conduct in performing journalist work under strong and daily pressures by editors and media market that journalists have been exposed to? Where and how to find objective information, analysis and comments?

This edition of E-Journalist shall include issues on refugee crisis written by Ahmed Buric and Mirsad Behrem, Milkica Milojevic, president of the Association of BiH Journalists, political science student Arman Fazlic and the text by Munir Podumljak, director of Partnership for Social Development, a local organization from Zagreb shall be transferred from fairpress.eu internet web site.

Adis Šušnjar, BH Journalists Association

Events

10 Oct 2015

Networking and strengthening of BHJ journalists’ clubs

Representatives of BHJ journalists’ club from Tuzla, Banjaluka, Brcko, Bi-hac, Gorazde, Srebrenica, Zenica and Mostar emphasized the importance of their journalists’ clubs existing as local tools for the protection of journalists and freedom of speech. All participants agreed that they should improve their cooperation and take active part in local communities’ events.

Details

“Portalizing” the refugees:

Media “tripping” oh human destinies

By: *Mirsad Behram*

Years back, in 2005, I had the opportunity to be some kind of an “observer” in the pre – election campaign during the General/Parliamentary Elections in Great Britain. Lovely hosts allowed me to witness the practice commonly known as “the canvassing” – where highly ranked political officials would have literally knocked on the house doors of their potential voters, within their electoral county and talk to them in order to get their trust and vote.

Anyway, in one of the London suburbs, a Labor Party candidate knocked on the house door of an apartment and the door opened by a typical Englishman in his thirties. His body was covered in tattoos; he had no clothes on upwards and was also holding a beer in his hand. When he saw the politician at his door step, he recognized him and started busting him by shouting: “I shall never give my vote to you, Labor Party people, since it was you who brought these people from Eastern Europe and colored people to England”.

This is how we could roughly describe the public opinion (mostly by passive) media throughout Europe towards – as they claim – biggest refugee crisis in the Old Continent ever since the end of the World War II till present day. It



Events

8 Oct 2015

Conference on attaining European Standards on functioning and sustainability of public RTV services in BiH

The conference was aimed to initiate focused discussion on key issues, regarding the functioning of public broadcasting system with responsible and interested parties/participants from governing and non – governing official structures in BiH, including officials from public services and also to discover the solutions of key problems that are directly stated and outlined, including reports on the progress BiH is making at present, regarding the process of EU joining and eventual admittance to EU.

[Details](#)

7 Oct 2015

Journalist's (Emil Karamatic) car burnt down

BiH radio journalist's (Emil Karamatic) car was burnt down. The car was parked in front of his family house in Visica, near the town of Capljina.

According to Dnevnik.hr sources, burning occurred at around 1.30 a.m. on 7th Oct 2015, and the bottle with burning gasoline was found near this place. This information was confirmed to "Avaz" by the MUP of HNC and more details are to follow.

[Details](#)

22 Sep 2015

Alternative report on progress in BiH in 2015 warns about poor media state

European integration monitoring initiative in BiH presented Alternative report on progress made in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2015 on its way towards full membership in European Union. Report, as key challenge for media community in BiH, civil society and local authorities, contained tools for protection of freedom of speech and expression, safety of journalists and also including legal framework for free information flow, as well as diversity of expressions and providing public with quality information through media sources. The report also outlined and warned about the fact that BiH would become the only country in the West Balkan region and Europe with public service broadcasters failing to shift to digital broadcasting, which would eventually disallow other TV houses to receive digital signal as well.

[Details](#)

18 Sep 2015

Arrogant relationship by local politicians towards journalists

Journalists from Konjic, Jablanica and Prozor – Rama held a debate organized by the Association of BiH Journalists regarding the protection of journalists' rights and freedom of expression in local media. Journalists emphasized the problem of receiving actual information from local administrative body officials, disrespecting and ignoring journalists' right to work by local politicians and expressed need for better mutual cooperation and developing solidarity among journalists in this field. Vesna Bektasevic, a long-term journalist stated that holders of political functions in local communities are even more arrogant and display inappropriate conduct towards journalists in local communities.

[Details](#)

seemed as though the refugees had, from some kind of unexplained, wickedness, decided to take a long, several thousand kilometers, journey and as if Europe had no influence on what we have been watching on TV screens and like scattered sack of beans on numerous web sites, starting from the fact that it was Europeans that, some 100 years ago, "roughly" crated the Middle East map and consequently established and developed their communities and societies to perfection and people in the Middle East had been thus left to dictatorships of various colors and beliefs, Middle Age ideologies, societies, communities and similar occurrences.

And when people in present time of Face book domination realized that, some few thousand of kilometers towards the West, a man, including relatively poor people (in reference to West European standards) lived a life worthy of a human being; had a job, house shelter and a chance for his children (more or less) progress, nothing less could have been expected from them, than to take the journey used by the grandfathers of present – day Europeans in military or corporative colons, when they began arriving to Middle East region, sometimes in the 19th Century. Massive exodus was just a consequence of simple fact that these people had, for the period of last four years, been counting the number of grenades passed over their heads and that this struggle was accordingly nowhere near the end.

This was exactly why the current situation, whose images and recordings have probably been viewed over by more than one million viewers on You Tube, including a female Hungarian reporter tripping the refugee on the ground, also displaying just the peak of an iceberg, represented the common – society attitude and opinion about the refugee issue in general, with members of the right wing political orientation being the loudest of all, while the remaining public (mostly) remained silent from whatever reasons. Therefore, one should not be surprised that media, particularly most internet web sites, in a sensational way on blurred border with personalities of once existing "yellow press", have been making reports on thousands of people, while, at the same time, they would fail to identify and spot "the tree in the wood", confirming the truth that every single refugee actually represented a human being story based on tragic destiny of people that were forced to abandon their homes and head for uncertainty.

Motions, recordings and photos of refugees, tired, exhausted; including faces of struggling mothers with pursed lips carrying their children that are crying, refugee crowd pushing the armed police forces ... I assume that there was a good intention by all authors to use these photos in order to emphasize that the public should be more conscious regarding the scope of these problems, however I was not sure that the same way of highlighting the problems would have been used if there were children trying to escape the "European disaster". Or even, shall we say, the way some regional media houses treated refugee crisis in moments when real "border – crossing war" occurred with Serbia on one side and Croatia on the other. At certain point, one could believe that the refugee crisis was completely forgotten with this incident, including the background and origin of refugees' presence in this particular region, instead; media "bursting" accusing the opposed side, appeared to be more important than the refugee crisis and this particularly referred to Serbian media houses. Rhetoric used here, at the same time, would make the greatest media "gurus" of the nineties of the twentieth century look very much the same.

It turned out that some higher European principles had been in force until greater problem came into existence and appeared. Border – crossings were suddenly closed, followed by common public paranoia, media "polarizing", right – wing excesses, "Schengen decline", as some described - in simple terms, complete system failure, although some decent political officials and analysts outlined several times, prior to this crisis that even maximum number of refugees make up few promils in comparison with the European population figures. But, has anyone ever seen this thesis appearing on TV in some prime time, including TV shows or news or even internet web site "sliders"?

Let's get clear about one thing; admitting tens or even hundreds of refugees is not that simple. There are of course culture based issues here, including those relating to their eventual failure to get integrated into communities they would live in, economic and financial problems etc, but simple solution is indeed based on European principles: equal society for everybody - possibility of vertical social dynamics, state rule of law – protection of individual rights and on media field, sustainable reporting, based on facts and arguments, following the rules of professional reporting and trying not to fall into fire of dark media propaganda, not become subject to number of "likes" and "clicks" on social networks. It would then be much easier for everyone, including refugees, and those that have to deal with finding solutions to this great problem.

Press Releases

13 Oct 2015

Protest against the verbal insult on RTRS and "Glas Srpske" female journalists

The BHJA Board of Directors reminded all officials that their legal rights, in reference to this issue, may include denials in written, complaints directed to Press Council of BiH or Communication Regulatory Agency in BiH or even may include pressing legal charges, if they feel unsatisfied with reports made by any media representative. Insults, offences, accusations and threats to journalists cannot be tolerated and media community will not accept this way of conduct displayed by governing officials.

[Details](#)

7 Oct 2015

Condemning the assault on journalist Emil Karamatic

BHJA strongly condemned assault endangering safety, life and professional integrity of Emil Karamatic; a BiH journalist. This was a clear message, outlining what certain criminals are prepared and willing to commit as ordered by their mentors, in order to assault and attack journalists, especially those that write articles and texts, criticizing events and occurrences of public importance. Therefore, BHJA demanded the police official authorities in Hercegovacko – Neretvanski Canton to launch immediate investigation regarding this case, as well as to take legal actions in order to sanction and punish the criminals and those that gave orders to this assault.

[Details](#)

2 Oct 2015

Hackers attacks on Nezavisne.com must be cleared and fined/assent

BHJA Board of Directors and FMHL expressed their concern due to frequent and powerful hacker attacks on Nezavisne.com local web site from Banjaluka, executed with the purpose of disabling the work of journalists and distribution of information through this particular web site. Association of BiH Journalists Board of Directors issued a public request demanding local police and judiciary officials in Republic of Srpska, as well as special units for the prevention of High – Tech and Cyber criminal to act immediately and identify IP addresses from which the attacks had been launched and directed thus preventing the rights for freedom of expression and safe, secure and free distribution and disposal of information through Nezavisne.com, local web site.

[Details](#)

1 Oct 2015

Banjaluka Journalists' Club condemns response by Milorad Dodik

Banjaluka Journalists' Club strongly condemned the reaction by Milorad Dodik, president of the Republic of Srpska and his response to the question raised by Snezana Mitrovic, N1 TV program female journalists, after the end of the session held by the Presidency of SNSD members in Banjaluka on 30 October 2015.

[Details](#)

22 Sep 2015.

Mario Karamatic political oppression on public service

BHJA and FMHL sent a strong protest letter to Mr. Mario Karamatic, Croatian Club delegate with the Parliamentary Assembly of BiH, due to political assault on FTV and BHT, including verbal insults against Darjan Babic, an FTV journalist.

[Details](#)

"Reporting" on refugees



How, why and who?

By: Ahmed Buric

While some of us, the elderly generation representatives, recall some toponyms while listening to the news about refugee migrations, images of people abandoning their homes, seeking some better (un)certainly appear on the other hand. One of these toponyms may for instance, be Gevgelija, southern border crossing town between Macedonia and Greece, a place, which in terms of collective reference point had been well known as the southern furthest distance point of "passed away/deceased" creation that was once upon a time called Yugoslavia. Another point was certainly Triglav, a mountain in the Southern Alps region; border crossing point between Slovenia and Austria. Another point of dissolved country which, in comparison with present day countries, may as well appear as heaven by all means, which refugees must cross over in order to reach their final destination, is the town of Horgos.

Points on Serbian – Hungarian border crossings have become famous during the seventies in the last century, when a capsicum processing factory was opened and begun manufacturing and revived interest of this food industry reappeared at the end of eighties, when a synonym for an absolute power displayed by Slobodan Milosevic was reflected through the people's saying: "all the way from Horgos to Dragas". In the meantime, all those points somehow disappeared in our lives and the world has, going from locally based world, nearly reached a global disaster point, where the number of dead people has been measured by seven digit figures. The number of those being forced to leave their homes throughout the Middle East is, on the other hand, beyond our comprehension. Once we shall be able to discover these figures as well and they shall remain disgracefully attain marks on world's consciousness.

A biblical exodus, a history of modern world has not seen yet, is definitely under way.

Another wall after wall

Refuges should, in order to reach the final destination points (Germany in most cases, or Sweden (less likely), pass the way in which they would have to through "well trained and skillful mechanisms" trained to take the money away from refugees that had carried it with themselves in case they need it during their long way journey. Refugees also have to go through double lane row: common people's mood in countries they pass through and media representatives as well. Crazy and mad principles in terms of viewer or reader, imposed by fast going way of modern –day living and "reporting" of nineties, with few exceptions, would not have a sensible approach to any issue and pre – gained knowledge on certain topic which all in all does not seem simple at all.

This is why, everything that has been written her; to a person writing this article, seems senseless, when at the same time, in some of the Balkan border crossing points he watches live "reporting" of refugees pathways. Most of the time, one or the other government is encouraged and given credit for actions taken (mostly Serbian or Croatian government) by live reporters, for admitting refugees and placing them into a so called "transitional facilities". The question why on earth they decided to take such a long and exhausting journey and how they have been treated on the way, never arises by either side.

Entire fake concern between political correctness and infotainment program, collapsed on Hungarian border crossing where Hungarian turbo – capitalism (with neo – fascism being a constituent part of it) displayed the true face of the European Union; through Hungary which, in order to have control over access to their own country, was prepared to build a wall; same size or even bigger wall than the one that once stood in Berlin and which was symbolically destroyed so Europe could finally become united!

The very first thing that must be outlined here is that Europe, no matter what this could mean, at this moment, has neither unique attitude on refugee issues, nor have unique opinion and attitude on any other important and present issue and that it is completely unprepared for any mutual and joint operation that may include a minimum of consensus. Europe as such could therefore be considered as inefficient and incapable of handling and managing problems.

This of course, is not to be stated publically, otherwise how could we expect to receive "peanuts" that, at least by media reports, we should receive from Bruxelles' EU funds. How could we then in our reports write that we stand firm

Media on Media

13 Oct 2015

OHR and EU Delegation condemn Mektić's verbal insult

Office of the High Representative (OHR) in Bosnia and Herzegovina [condemned](#) the insulting comments directed against two female journalists working for Radio – Television of the Republic of Srpska (RTRS), highlighting these insults as most recent samples of common practice conducted by many political party officials at present.

Journalists' safety represents a pre-condition for the existence of freedom of speech and freedom of media and it is therefore necessary to take any threat directed against journalists' liberties, into serious consideration, including the possibility of allowing journalists to work independently, [stated](#) Andy McGuffie, spokesperson of EU Delegation to BiH and Office of Special EU Representative in BiH, pursuant to discriminatory statements directed against the two RTRS female journalist.

8 Oct 2015

Mijatović demands immediate investigation regarding assaults and attacks on journalists in BiH

Mijatović demands immediate investigation regarding assaults and attacks on journalists in BiH Dunja Mijatovic, OSCE representative condemned fire set under the car of Emil Karamtic, reporter of BH Radio 1 from Mostar. Even last year, Mijatovic warned the local governing officials in Bosnia and Herzegovina on increasing number of assaults and attacks on internet pages of certain media and required governing authorities to investigate these attacks and protect journalists' web sites in order to allow journalists to do their work in free and safe environment.

[Details](#)

2 Oct 2015

OSCE condemns hacker attack on Nezavisne.com, local web site

Dunja Mijatović, OSCE representative for media liberties, condemned hacker attack on Nezavisne novine official web site and demanded local official bodies in Republic of Srpska and Bosnia and Herzegovina to take immediate actions and investigate incident in order to prevent further endangering of media liberties.

[Details](#)

1 Oct 2015

Digitalization in BiH: test signal in Sarajevo, Mostar and Banjaluka by end of this year

Slavko Matanovic, minister of communication and transport of BiH, signed a contract with representatives of public broadcasters in BiH on rights and duties regarding the distribution and ownership handover of equipment purchased during the First Stage of the digitalization process and emission network of Public RTV service providers in BiH, valued BAM 6.7 million.

[Details](#)

29 Sep 2015

BHRT: Public service staff opposes the reducing of monthly salaries/wages

Administrative Board of the Union of Independent Workers of BHRT expressed their concerns due to poor financial state and accordingly rejected the allegations by the Board of directors of BHRT on eventual reducing of monthly salaries/wages, because they believe that workers/staff bear no responsibility and hence cannot be held responsible regarding the state and situation this house is facing at present.

[Details](#)

in our way to European integration processes, while the walls are being built around us? No, we couldn't bloody write that, could we? In that sense, one should try to make a nice photo shot in front of some refugee



– packed train or a steel wire with Syrian family appearing behind it (in this photo) and try to exclaim open agreement with what his/her editor wants them

to proclaim. It may as well be something like this: "It's getting tough here in refugee camp, it's getting dark and cold and the destiny of these people remains uncertain, however it appears that everything is well under control". These are semi-affirmative truths and the problem appears when reporters ease down and relax to that extent so they accordingly decide to create sensational stories, driven by a virus of sensational - biased reporting. This is when the following questions appear: "How much money did you bring on you", "do you support the regime by Assad" and similar make - up pointless stories which somehow terminate with tripping a refugee boy that runs across the border and chasing of the refugees while they kneel and wait to be registered by official authority representatives.

The business should not stop – no matter what!

Journalism, in its professional shape, besides the "how" approach, also requires raising another question, perhaps the most crucial question in our work and that is – why? Consequently we might as well proceed with: "Turkey has so far faced biggest problems". It is estimated that the number of refugees passing through Turkey exceeded 3 million and it also seems that Turkey officials have no time to think about the monitoring of reporting, non-sensibility or violation of refugees' rights. Only a person who had fled the war zone and reached the safe territory could discuss these issues and when he/she reaches Turkey, as relatively safe territory, he/she is then transported by UN transporters or trucks ready to transport them further away. This process also often included entrepreneurs that would charge refugees with US\$ 1.000.00 to US\$ 1.500.00 per person for an improvised boat transport to Greece. The price has lately slightly decreased, considering that passing by sea passage used to be charged up to US\$ 4.000.00 per person. However, according to pressure declining and pursuant to market rules demands, the price has indeed decreased. The point is that the business should not stop – no matter where: Turkey, further in Greece or Macedonia ...

Working on his on her journalism story, one could hardly encounter a citizen or an official that would, not to take this issue any further, condemn the price of human liberty. The news that the United Nations had ceased humanitarian operations in Syria perhaps best illustrated most recent situation because of the, according to official statement released, complicated situation in this country. Yea, right!?! While being asked a question whether the decision on suspension on humanitarian operations had been passed after most recent air strikes on the Islamic state frontlines, the official answer included the reason for such decision which was the current political situation on the field, which again, prevented the UN operations from taking place.

This is where we reach the second issue that should be outlined; and it could only be traced in opinions of rare but brave journalists and intellectuals. **Buried in corporation - based rules of self – censorship (which was once upon a time called the editing policy) journalists have most of the time been limited to openly state WHO IN FACT DICTATES THE WAR IN SYRIA and determines its pace. In this moment, the answer is possible from a single and particular place only.** And before we get the answer from this particular place how ISIS had been created in the first place, how did Assad turn from most desired Western partner into greatest Western enemy, why Middle East people cannot cope with pressure they have been imposed with and why they decide to leave their country and travel to the (un)known, we could only then speak of better, more practical, truthful and more democratic reporting.

Before and if this happens, media representatives shall, stand in the dark of quibbling and deal with consequences instead. On the other hand, there are many organizations for human rights that oppose such media actions, including some other institutions that seek balance in the world that has for a long time been misbalanced to the benefit of strictly one side only.



Journalists' contribution to information, protection and promotion of children's rights in BiH

UNICEF issued a prize award competition covering the issue of journalists' contribution to information, protection and promotion of children's rights in BiH. Prizes shall be awarded to best journalists' works, pursuant to ethical guidelines on reporting about children.

Competition shall remain open for all works submitted from 1st January till 1 November 2015. Any work published through any BiH media house and also posted on the internet, may be submitted / sent accordingly.

Deadline for submission is **5 November 2015**.

[Details](#)

Balkan Investigative Reporting Network (BIRN BiH) posts a vacancy notice for male and/or female journalists

All candidates are encouraged to apply to send their CV's, including motivation letter and minimum two references of past employees. Applications must be sent through "PRIJAVI SE NA OGLAS" option, by no later than **30 October 2015**.

[Details](#)

Internship at Deutsche Welle for journalists and editors

Internship program is available at all DW (Deutsche Welle) sectors including: television, internet department, radio, communications and Deutsche Welle Academy.

Internship duration is scheduled for 6 months including a minimum money scholarship amount starting from EUR 310.00 per month.

Applications remain open for all students and journalists with previous experience in media houses.

Applications shall be accepted during **October and April**.

[Details](#)

Fictitious terrorists and nameless child kidnapers

Piše: Milkica Milojević

"Do not stop refugees, stop the war". This marvelous message has been circulating throughout various social networks and also distracted most amazing comments witnessing confusing ignorance and lack of information by vast populous masses trapped in stereotype casts.

Where did ignorance and lack of information come from when regional media sources have been flooded over with refugee stories on the Balkan route? Most of the time they were actually simplified, summarized and tabloid – based, spiced with "garnish" and also inaccurate numbers, pictures and photos of anguished and exhausted children taken without permission of their parents and "apocalyptic" quasi – intelligence rumors on terrorists arrival masked as refugees, heading for enlightened and good – minded mother Europe. In best case, journalist's engagement was narrowed to pathetic "war human stories", with no respect of privacy and dignity of both male and female heroes of these stories and with absolutely no serious merging into the core and investigating of problem roots. Of course, there are stereotype and politically biased points on transitional countries, stories on "evil" Hungarians, "good" Serbians and "artificial – hearted" Croatians...

Refugee crisis or colloquially referred to as the dramatic immigration of millions of disempowered people from Asia and Africa towards Europe, clearly indicated the problems the journalists have been dealing with.

Because, what do we actually know about the war and killings in Syria; state terror in Eritrea; on hunger and abyss in Somalia; on millions of refugees in refugee camps in Lebanon? How familiar our public is with the fact that refugees from these places have been rushing to Europe for years and that it was only a matter of time when this refugee wave would splash the Balkan region? And still, "transitional countries" were surprised with this splashing wave just as travelers in the winter. We don't know who should be held responsible for this, but we do know from A to Z what Zoran Milanovic the "eagle" of refugee crisis told Aleksandar Vucic, the "bee" and how the "bee" responded to Zoran's words.

Of course, it's neither easy nor professional and responsible to report on such complex phenomenon, but there are rules of this professional though that help us have journalists' stories justly and crated in such a way so they wouldn't crate even greater problems. Journalists associations from the region reminded us of these rules so media finally stopped with referring to refugees as to immigrants, because that's not what they were. Still they never "got" that far in terms of referring to every field or tent where refugees stay as their private properties and temporary homes where a decent person would never enter "without knocking" < or to even every story on either good or bad samples refer to persons using their full names and to base their stories on clear and reliable sources. Consequently, we had an opportunity to read a "shocking" story about the boy from refugee colon that was kidnapped by an "unscrupulous refugee" so this kidnapper could get the place on the bus and thus left the child alone. We never found out who this "unscrupulous refugee kidnapper" was, but he journalist tried to release publically how "similar horrible events" indeed occurred in the past. And all this occurred and was released just by referring to a "single policeman" testimony.



Media on Refugees



They are running away from death, destruction and suffering and the last thing on their mind is starting another war from which they have just fled.

By: Munir Podumljak

It's nauseating for me to write about these things. Appealing with reason to prevailing madness never made any sense. It probably has little or none today too. However, silence is not an option. In the previous story on the Hungarian anti-hero Petra Laszlo whose opposite is the Hungarian media hero Gygyory Kakuk, I tried to warn that uncontrolled nationalist propaganda in certain societies (Hungary isn't an exception) results in explicit acts, i.e. acts against humanity. Stomping refugees demonstrated by journalist Petra Laszlo is just one of the maniacal manifestations of xenophobia and hatred that we have witnessed. Media stomping and stomping refugees in public discourse has become an everyday occurrence, frequent, almost massive.

One of the prevailing myths in media headlines in Croatia is that terrorists are hiding among the refugees and that terrorist groups such as ISIL are sending them to Europe so that they could wage war there on their behalf against the nations, i.e. countries involved in the military intervention in the areas from which they come from. Among over 200,000 refugees who've come to Greek soil and further in Europe this year alone, theoretically it is possible that there is someone who could, in some circumstances, also be a trained terrorist. However, do we have any evidence suggesting this? What is the everyday reality of the refugees? They are torn from their society and setting off into the unknown. During that trip, regardless of what their final destination is, they are repeatedly accommodated in collective centres, legitimated and registered, with an uncertain outcome of where and how they will end up. Any kind of terrorist strategy that would be based on such a tactic would be completely ineffective, costly; it would require sacrifice from a large number of people with uncertain outcome, and usually missed targets. So, even though it is possible that one in a hundred, two or three hundred thousand people has such intentions, the probability that that person will succeed and fulfil his/her goal is minor and certainly doesn't deserve a headline in media articles on refugees and their stories. Because it is also equally statistically possible that among our families, acquaintances and friends there is a psychopath with hidden weapons who wants to kill us all. However, when we write about the situations regarding our closest friends and family, we don't write in the headline the possibility of them being psychopaths.

The second myth: among the refugees there are terrorists that are recruiting single people to join them. Again, in theory it is possible that someone from the refugees, after saving his/her head from the grenades, mines, bullets, swords, knives that were being thrown from all sides, will feel like a great warrior and start a new war in a country that gave him/her safety and sanctuary. But in theory it is also possible that we are already capable of travelling through time and space and in reality we haven't even managed to settle on a nearby moon. Regarding these types of situations we have examples from a time not so long ago that offer certain answers. After 1945 Germany received hundreds of thousands and millions of refugees from countries which were under German occupation before their arrival. A good portion of them was adept at handling weapons (ex-soldiers), angry at the new system established in the countries from where they came and also angry at the new German system created after World War II. And out of a million of them, there is no record that any of them committed a terrorist act of demolishing Germany or of killing German citizens. Basically, as a product of their distinguishing features (among them were really war criminals and all sorts of members of the underworld mixed with refugees), killings and assassinations were carried out mostly among themselves. Today, we have ongoing trials about those events. Not even during the turbulent times of the 1970s, when Baader Meinhof ravaged through Germany, the thought of joining them didn't cross the minds of such "migrants and refugees". They were taken aback by that occurrence and were scared that it doesn't jeopardize the safety they found in the new country. The ultimate effect of the aforementioned

was that Germany today is an economic and political world power. So, let's go back to the media, even though in the theory of big numbers there really is a possibility that terrorists succeed in recruiting an occasional refugee in host countries, statistical probability does not imply that in the texts on refugees the "threat" should be in the headline.

The third myth, which is common on news covers, is regarding the war of the worlds, i.e. religious war of Muslims and Christians, which will be transferred to host countries with this arrival of refugees. Along with this thesis, covers also include the thesis that they will jeopardize our religious and related identities as well as "contaminate" us with their influence. This threat is also possible in theory, as is a passage through space-time. Seeing how we have had a number of similar examples, shifting of one nation, religion and world view through the wastelands of Europe, let's see what we've learned. Back in the year 1492 by edict (by Decree from Alhambra) of the catholic monarchs Isabel I and Ferdinand II, all Jews were expelled from the Iberian Peninsula. Throughout history later known as Sephardim, they dispersed into Europe, often forcefully converted to Christianity and Islam and

settled for the most part in today's eastern European countries, i.e. countries under Ottoman rule. Sephardim then characterised everything that the refugees from Syria characterise to the far-right members today. They were also members of an unwelcome and persecuted faith, "suspicious nation", questionable skin colour, with myths about their culture which arrived into communities significantly before them. To get close to them in those years was the same as invoking the devil. And in 500 and something years, not even a single case was noted where even one Sephardim or his descendant committed a terrorist act towards a host country or nation. They brought changes in business, multilingualism and international trade and relations, which helped some marginal cities then, such as Sarajevo, become regional trade centres. We rewarded their contribution and aversion to violence towards hosts with mass killings and persecutions in World War II. Even so, part of them still stayed; and once again showed how huge our shame is. Although it was believed by conspiracy theorists then that Jews can only survive under capitalism, they also built socialism with equal attention. And so, after 9,000 compatriots killed in Sarajevo, Emerik Blum responded by founding Energoinvest, and as Mayor from 1981 to 1983 prepared Sarajevo for the Olympics. So, in those 500 years in our parts of the globe, it is hard to find evidence that someone was killed by Jews. And as far as the myth about them is concerned, which is also true for refugees today, various dubious things were stated. Perhaps it is worth mentioning that formally and legally Albert Einstein was also a refugee and it took him 10 years to get US citizenship.

So, if we were to seriously deal with this phenomenon, we would understand that the mass movement of refugees brings misfortune and suffering only to the countries from which those people came from. Such countries and such societies typically end up, if nothing else, at least temporarily in hell, darkness and lack of development. To the host countries they bring culture, multilingualism, diversity and progress of every kind; both short and long-term. And because of this, dear colleagues, next time you forcefully statistically place them in crime news headlines, remember that refugees don't kill anyone. They are running away from death, destruction and suffering and the last thing on their mind is starting another war from which they have just fled. The possibility for a refugee to commit a crime is the same as is for that same crime to be committed by your brother, sister, mother. Think for a second what kind of life situation forced a person to leave his/her home. To start an unknown journey through the rain, mud, storms, heat and drought and walk for months, sometimes even years, looking for a country where he/she will manage to escape from the evil. To be continued... (Originally published at fairpress.eu)

Journalists' responsibility and depreciation of refugee waves



By: Arman Fazlić

Refugee crisis represents a syntagm that is often heard in speeches made by officials and can also be found in media reports. In state context, crisis represents a special situation threatening state, national or international security or has already endangered the total safety and stability. Displacement of large number of people (exodus) from states on southern and south – west side looking from European continent, is justly reason for caution by institutions of official state security system, particularly within transitional and final destination countries.

Refugees as security challenge

Most significant reason for additional caution is indeed real global threat of terrorism aimed against modern countries. Namely, devastated, weak and unstable countries, including the countries of origin of most refugees, significant part of political theory and practice are considered as very fertile lands for establishment and operational actions taken by many terrorist organizations. Established refugees corridors have in such situations been considered as potential paths (for passing through) by individuals that belong to such organizations and that eventually may endanger the safety system of any country.

Crisis situations leave an open space for both, official and unofficial state of emergency in affected countries. Used as an excuse with state of emergency being announced, due to apparent threats for the security and safety system in their own countries, these states may take special actions, including the cases of additional security levels of interstate countries.

Despite real potential threats to state security systems, caused by any refugee wave, we cannot neglect the fact that refugee wave is actually the people; civilians seeking safety, security and certain future.

Considering that current refugee crisis actually represents, among other things, the issue of fundamental rights of certain people, the journalists and media world are thus facing the challenges that require particular attention and responsibility taken. If journalism, as profession, approaches this issue on a single- dimension basis, then generalizing and radical (political) attitudes and opinions (within public) towards the refugees are inevitable. Irrationalities, such as making national security policies appear sacral or demonizing the refugees presenting their

Upcoming Events

- **Workshop** on protection of labor rights of journalists in BaH
- **Media Circle** project research
- **Assembly** of the BH Journalists Association
- **Conference on defamation** in Banja Luka

presence as potential threats on national security, may be eased if approaches on media and journalists' reports on refugee crisis are made on fair basis, are objective, balanced and sensible as well.

In order to apply ethical standards and more human based reports on biggest crisis victims, accesses to refugees statuses based on provisions used in international public laws, may be very useful.

Refugees and international law

Emigration comes as a result of forced power that these people had no influence on. Their unstable countries fail to provide them with fundamental existential living conditions. It's a fact that civilians acquire their rights primarily through their own countries. However, international law provides more details regarding the human rights issues, and, above other things, provides details about the protection of particular categories, including children, women, refugees, ill people and other war casualties.

Official warnings by regional and world's professional media organizations insist on using the term refugees, which is officially used by UNHCR, reflecting thus the actual and present refugee crisis. The refugee status (displaced persons, muhadjeers, and expatriated persons) is governed by international acts, particularly the [Convention on Refugee Status](#) (Geneva, 28 July 1951), and also including the [Protocol of refugee status](#) (New York, 31 January 1967).

International Law defines refugees as persons that unintentionally or organized abandon or leave their countries, due to war/military conflicts or operations in their own country, causing them to fear and feel unsafe because of political, ideological, national, ethnic, religious or other reasons or they move from their own countries fearing that they may be executed or being imprisoned. Any state accepting them must not conduct any kind of discrimination against them and must provide them with all rights granted to foreigners living in these countries. Refugees are fully entitled to acquire property/estate and get legal aid, just like citizens of that country and, according to admitting country's capacities, refugees are also entitled to get employed and consequently, acquire rights to social security, health care funds, including rights to live in home and get educated in this country as well.

Journalists and media representatives, making reports on refugee crisis have the potential for depreciating "refugee waves", primarily for refugees as the biggest victims of the story, but also for security matters of affected states. This is possible through a custom application of ethical standards, humanized reporting and a balanced approach. Journalists are facing challenges regarding many endangered people. Critical approach to states decisions made under special circumstances is recommended, as well as promotion of rights of the refugees, primarily respecting them as human beings, in reference to international rights applicable.



DO NO HARM PLEASE!

Public appeal to journalists, editors and all others who report or speak publicly about refugees today

By: Media Circle (Fairpress.eu)

The politicisation of the issue of the humanitarian catastrophe and the arrival of refugees to the Western Balkans from the area stretching from South Africa to Western Asia has created significant public divisions and tensions in countries of this region which have also been negatively reflected through media content. The media, old-fashioned as well as new ones, including internet platforms, contribute significantly to the escalation of the conventions, that not only go against journalistic ethics, common decency and civilisation itself, but are also contrary to international law and protocols ratified by most European countries. In reporting, a significant number of media are violating the rights of refugees, which makes their situation even harder, their rights and lives put in jeopardy; because of this we – members of the regional project MEDIA CIRCLE, are appealing to all of those who make write about the refugee crisis of report for the media, to pay attention to the following:

- The term "migrants" is not allowed in public speech and is absolutely incorrect in situations where there is reasonable doubt that the person who illegally crossed a certain border, was saving his/her life from collective violence and repression. Correct term is asylum seeker in reports with a deviation towards the assessment of the situation in the country of origin, i.e. refugee in everyday speech or upon the approval of the status of the country in question or international organisation. Since UNHCR already qualified displaced persons from Syria as refugees, it is justifiable and accurate to call them exclusively refugees in all reports.
- We must be careful never to address refugees who cross a certain country border in whatever means possible, "illegal migrants", because in accordance with international legal acts, persons with refugee status have the right to cross any border without being punished by the country which they have entered.
- Do not promote the construction of physical, administrative or any other kinds of obstacles in border crossings, because such obstacles are contrary to the laws of all European countries, i.e. international acts signed and ratified by those

countries.

The situation in the countries of origin of the refugees – Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq and Iran is unstable; the refugees passing through Western Balkan countries and the region of South Eastern Europe and their arrival to Western Europe countries, their entering into countries of Western Europe, could last for months and years to come. In view of that, we can expect waves of refugees, somewhat smaller or bigger, to which we should, as responsible journalists and editors and in accordance to professional and ethical standards of journalism, civilizational achievements and international legal acts, respond to in a way that respects the needs of the persons who are crossing the borders of European countries. Therefore, while reporting on the refugees and the circumstances surrounding them, we hereby appeal to all our colleagues in the media to take into account the following:



Avoid politicisation

Avoid stereotyping, collective hysteria (whether negative or positive) and in any case avoid any kind of politicisation of the refugee issue in countries of transit and destination countries.

Do not qualify by ethnicity or religion

It is inaccurate to use any kind of ethnical or religious epithet such as Arabs, Muslims, Asians, Syrians, Afghans, etc., next to the names of refugees from the previously mentioned regions. Collectively, any such statement is incorrect. As it is in countries of the Western Balkans, in all European countries, also in the countries of origin of the refugees the composition of the population is multi-ethnic and multi-religious. For example, in the total population of Syria, more Christians are represented than are all the minorities put together of the Republic of Croatia in relation to the ethnic majority of Croats. So, by calling every refugee that is coming from those areas Arabs and Muslims, without an exception, besides being incorrect, you will also probably offend a members of a minority by using such a term, not to mention the spreading of domestic xenophobia and negative profiling of one nation and one religion whose members are also represented among the refugees. Therefore, we recommend that in the public media space you speak about refugees from certain regions (more countries), since it is unprofessional, inaccurate, wrong and contrary to law to qualify them according to single ethnicity or religion.

Individual approach

During massive refugee migrations it is not desirable in public speech to stereotype the “behaviour and culture” of the refugees, negatively or positively. Long-term, every such action does harm to refugees in the countries they find themselves in. Refugees, i.e. persons in need, by their personality traits are no different than us and our societies. We thereby warn that, although a huge number of persons fall into the category of respecting norms and ethical values, it is possible that incidents of behaviour which differ from such values are possible, as are in all societies. While depicting a hugely positive picture of refugees, we create a “collective stereotype” which functions while all the reports are “positive and about decent people”. However, very swiftly during that first incident, that same collective image can change and endanger completely innocent people. Considering the fear every person goes through in a state where he/she is running to save his/her life, the pressure, suffering, threats and repression that he/she feels every day, the uncertainty and the lack of understanding of the language, i.e. events around him/her, it is easily possible that an incident could occur in the sense of raised voices and violence among refugees or during interaction with the outside world. However, none of this defines the collective identity of all refugees and in reporting on such incidents it is necessary to relate the individual story without giving any kind of collective traits. We appeal that you approach every refugee story in public space individually, with a name and a surname, taking into account the diversity of each family and person that you report on. Only by following that principle will you protect a big majority of refugees from violence, insults, discrimination and everything that follows them on their journey and socialisation in the countries where their journey ends.

Avoid stereotyping

Avoid stereotyping people, especially officials in transit countries and destination countries, who interact with the refugees. From recent reports it is evident that pictures of “brutal conduct of the Hungarian police” and “angelic conduct of Croatian police” or police and officials in other countries of the Western Balkans are being broadcasted. Neither are all police officers in Hungary “inhumane”, nor are all police officers in Croatia “humane”. In most cases, officers and other employees of state agencies are just following orders from their superiors and the official government policy. Every good deed (every humane gesture of a state employee in any country) has a name and a surname, which deserves public praise and it is important to individualise good deeds in public speech, i.e. to name those that are making an effort to help. Only by following that example we motivate a great majority to do the same, to distinguish themselves with a gesture of humanity.

Only if the “humane gesture” is part of the official policy and that policy has a name and a surname, document or a verbal instruction then it should be emphasised. Although it is necessary to still remain vary of making any permanent stereotypes regarding such a policy, since policy can change at any moment. Equally, every negative gesture, every incident done by official persons or state policies, has a name and a surname and it is important to report about it the same way as it is about positive trends. Only in this way through media content is it possible to condemn negative practices and limit the damage that is being done to the refugees who are on their journey, most frequently without any physical protection, left at the mercy of the countries that are their hosts at that particular moment.

Respect the privacy of refugees

The refugees do not have a home while they are on the territory of your country. Therefore, every meadow, every road, every

Free Media Help Line

Actual Cases:

Darjan Babic - Mario Karamatic, a delegate of the Croat's People Club in the PA of BiH, stated, during his interview for "Oslobodjenje" the following: "I never mentioned Babic's name in terms of his professional skills; instead I did mention his name due to fascist policies he has been conducting for years on FTV. I always considered Babic a very good professional and hopefully, I believe that he would make up a solid cables carrier" on Radio Television of "Herceg - Bosna" sometimes in the future.

Association of BiH Journalists and Free Media Help Line issued a press release regarding this case and sent most severe protesting notice to Mr. Mario Karamatic because of insults and offences addressed by him against Mr. Babic, their colleague.

Emil Karamatic - During the night, between 6 and 7 October 2015, an unidentified criminal burnt the personal car, type Peugeot 207, the ownership of Mr. Karamatic; our colleague. The investigation has so far discovered that the fire was deliberately set on. Association of BiH Journalists and Free Media Help Line sent a note / letter to the Police Official authorities in Capljina, demanding the identification of the criminal that had committed this crime and also to provide police protection, including surveillance to Mr. Karamatic along with his family members.

tent or bus station where they find themselves is their private space. To not photograph them without their permission when it is possible, and if you are taking photos of them take into consideration that their identity cannot be established on those photos. At this moment we do not know the individual story of every person and from what or who they are running from. By taking photos of the faces and identities of the refugees who are on our territory, we can endanger their lives, i.e. the lives of their loved ones who weren't lucky enough to avoid the disaster of war. The refugee crisis isn't a photo safari and the refugees are not just objects of your video and photo cameras, they are live people. Do not forget that the whole story isn't an advertisement on commercial TV. Refugees on the move have the same rights as the citizens of the countries they are passing through have, and if you cannot help them, don't make it worse for them either. Keep in mind that the photos and footage you take will follow these people their whole lives in countries they manage to socialise themselves in and that a portion of them, after they go on with their lives, do not want a lifelong "refugee identity". Once again we appeal to you: Take photos of them and publish the photos in the way you would with your dearest and loved ones. Ask for permission!

Use official statistics

In reports on numbers, statistics or other indicators that are used to follow the refugee wave, select only official reports that have been previously verified by competent state bodies and international organisations (e.g. UNHCR). For all other statements of politicians and other public actors seek confirmation from at least two independent sources. Numbers and indicators regarding the refugee wave are being manipulated and the majority of indicators published so far have nothing to do with reality. Do not allow, as a presenter of news, to be in the service of daily politics or hidden interests. If you find it difficult to follow the previous instructions due to limitations of the profession, the editorial concept or other laws and professional standards of planned restrictions, please do not do harm to refugees.

We remind you once again that professional and ethical standards of journalism bind all of you – journalists and editors alike – to report in an objective, comprehensive, balanced and humane way on refugees, without the use of hate speech, discrimination or incitement and call to violence.

In the name of the MEDIA CIRCLE project,

Association Partnership for Social Development (Croatia)

Organisation Vesta (Bosnia and Herzegovina)

Association of BH Journalists (Bosnia and Herzegovina)

Yucom — Lawyers' Committee for Human Rights (Serbia)

Independent Journalists' of Vojvodina (Serbia)

Public Policy Institute (Montenegro)

Association for research, communications and development "Public" (Macedonia)

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