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Two years ago, around this particular period, public BHRT service broadcaster had to face with, until then, unseen and, as far as their management was concerned, very unpleasant situation, after the discovery that the TV interview (taken with prof. dr. Sebija Izetbegovic, general manager of the University of Sarajevo Clinical Center), had been recorded twice; or more precisely, the announced broadcasting of the full interview was postponed for ten days, so the audience and viewers could additionally be provided with the interview, in most leasuring, casual and above all, unobtrusive way, where two or three answers to questions were additionally recorded and broadcasted.

BHRT officials were cunningly justifying their actions by stating that the reasons for additional interview content had actually been due to, what they referred to, „technical nature problems“. General audience, public and the entire media community were convinced that the recording of the identical interview (two times) had absolutely nothing to do with technical problems; instead, it was merely a political issue, that is, with the ultimate request by prof. dr. Sebija Izetbegovic, to BHRT Public Broadcasting Service to rectify her original answers and to alter the answers she had given during the original and initial interview session. Taking into consideration that the interview concerned the wife of one of the most influential political leaders in BiH, her request was unanimously and non-reluctantly accepted by all means.

Censure has many meanings and definitions, and perhaps the most appropriate definition of censure, as far as journalism discourse is concerned, is that “the censure is an attempt to establish the control over public circulation of unacceptable content that had been determined based on previous quality – based and political estimate and assessment that, according to its own criteria, is conducted and executed by institutional and non-institutional public figures, all with the purpose of shaping narrowed public” (Panic, 2017, 29).



Events

24. October 2019

BH Journalists' Board Demands Urgent and Effective Investigation of Threats to "Zurnal" Journalists

24. October 2019

Regional platform calls for urgent investigation by relevant institutions of threats against journalist of "Zurnal" magazine

17. October 2019

Discount for members: BH Journalists Association establishes cooperation with RS Railways

17. October 2019

Public protest over inappropriate communication with the media and denial to journalists of the HJPC's work

14. October 2019

Hate speech in public space: The danger to the individual, society and democracy

8. October 2019

Media and police in BiH: Balancing the interests of the public and those of the investigation

30. September 2019

More rigorous sanctions requested for journalists attackers in BiH

Media on media

29. October 2019

Federation of Journalists: Google is not above the law

24. October 2019

IPI: At least 57 journalists imprisoned in Egypt

23. October 2019

Institutional support is key to protecting journalists

22. October 2019

FTV fined with 6,000 KM for biased reporting

17. October 2019 22. October 2019

N1 Journalist Support Group: Journalists who professionally do their jobs exposed to insults and attacks

Vacancies

BIRN - Journalist.

Application deadline 1/11/2019

Radio Kameleon - Journalist.

Application deadline 5/11/2019.

The number of journalists in Bosnia and Herzegovina that, during their work in media houses, have not faced certain form of pressure or censure, ranges between 1 and 5. Political elites have always wanted to control media houses mostly so they could weaken their critical function and direct the consumers (audience and viewers) to believe that those political parties, including their programs, decisions, candidates, were in fact the only right way and acceptable path to the prosperity of their country (state), including their citizens. This concept was to some extent hidden from general public, although it has additionally become apparent and obvious. During the political conquest of media space and censorship of rare individuals that dared to express their critical views, there have been no hesitation from absolutely anything; including absolute media control through media financing process and appointing of politically biased figures to managing positions, particularly when it comes to public service broadcasters and all the way to economic blackmailing of journalists, editors and media entrepreneurs by depriving them of "significant and important" advertisers or even by frequent pressing of defamation charges.

It is particularly concerning the ever growing appearance of auto censure in BiH media field. Countless number of editors and journalists, that already know in advance how they should shape certain media content they edit; that is, they are aware of what must and must not be said in their posts, articles, texts or interview< they know who are "those" that must not be "provoked" no matter what, have mostly sacrificed their professional integrity being at the same time imposed with great pressure and fearing for the existence of their own family have soon gotten close to those they genuinely, but in hidden way, despise or whom they fear.

The issues of freedom of speech and expression, censure and auto – censure and their various forms and shapes, including those that control BiH media and ways that journalists must conduct in order to prevail in their fight to work without any pressure and fear shall be covered in this E-Bulletin edition by media figures expressing their views, including Dragica Vukalo, a long – time and former RTRS journalist and editor, Miršada Demirović-Lingo, female journalist of „Nezavisne novine“, Almir Šećkanović editor of „Oslobođenje“, and Nermina Šunj-Kušljugić, chief-in-editor of Megafon.ba, an independent online magazine.

Maja Radević, E-bulletin editor



(Auto) censorship in media: Do not call him, we are no longer in good relationship with his political party

By: Nermina Šunj – Kušljugić

From the perspective of the freedom degree in media field (freedom that incurred based on experiences of our colleagues, including personal experience) this could turn out to be a soft aphorism such as: censure in media filed almost does not exist, we successfully oppose it by implying auto censure. This almost contain certain amount of truth, because looking from the context in which owners/entrepreneurs, editors and journalists, arbitrarily resort to auto censure thus attempting to make “peace” with their financiers or interest based centers to which they eventually rely, there is actually no need for censure at all.

“Undesired” collocutors

Auto censure may also be seen through the case of certain media house whose name I shall not mention; instead I shall refer to auto censure experience accordingly.

I used to write down a serial of articles (texts) about Slovenian factory in BiH, while I was engaged in private media house. The owner of this factory had plans to dislocate the factory outside Bosnia and Herzegovina. Factory manager, a local resourceful person fought hard to keep the factory in our country, since the removal of the factory would shut down the only source of income for local people thus jeopardizing their existence.

Along with other things I had to do whilst working for this particular media house, I contacted factory manager on daily basis. I assumed that he also was “politically biased”, though, at the time, I was not concerned about that because I considered him as very important collocutor and person who could provide me with new and most recent information.

Writing of such stories was one of the most positive side of journalism and unlike political issues and affairs, social issues somehow liberated me from eventual pressure and possible outer control, whether imposed by the editing office or imposed by political factors. However, everything was not “cheese and apples” as it initially seemed.

One morning, after having coffee at the briefing session, the rumor amongst all staff had it that we (the owner/entrepreneur) were no longer in good relationship with certain political party. I thought this was the way it had to be, because I had previously been working for private media house, but there were no explicit demands for auto censure that I was listening about from my colleagues. I was following the situation in the factory, but soon I was called in and told that our owner was no longer in good relationship with factory manager from certain political party to whom I had been speaking almost on daily basis and that I should quit and stop contacting him immediately.

Despite all of that, I was still following the story about this factory. I decided not to quote factory manager nor to mention his name in my articles (texts) and I thought that I had somehow managed to find the solution and “overcome” imposed limits. However, one morning while struggling to find my article in the magazine, I only discovered that it was posted somewhere on the bottom corner. Apart from that, my text was visibly edited and they accordingly posted few lines only, without any photo that I had previously prepared and with very poor text font, so at the end, my article turned out to be a “non-attractive” marginalized news.

In private media house there are mainly two ways to react and respond to limitations regarding your selection and choice of issues, including collocutors that you decide to write about or to talk with. These are two simple ways: you can either obey the media house rules or leave.

Since the case I outlined above comes from private media house, the even-

“The core of censure and pressure on journalists is the fact that they should think three times before they decide to write anything in public media, mostly in media houses that are financed from the public budget sources where their professional, but also, labor and legal status depends directly on governing and parliamentary majority”

Free Media Help Line

Actual cases:

1. Cantonal Television TV SA:

-Political Pressures by the Democratic Action Party - SDA on the appointment process of the management of this media outlet and the chase on director Kristina Ljevak. The BHN Association has issued a press release.

2. Martina Mlinarevic, freelance:

-After announcing that she had been banned from presenting her book "Huzur" at the Citluk festival, Martina Mlinarevic received a series of threatening hate messages. The Free Media Help Line has requested the Federal Police Department, the Ministry of the Interior of the West Herzegovina Canton and the Cantonal Prosecutor's Office to investigate the threat case. The FPD inspector has contacted the line coordinator to assist and they are working together on the case.

3. Ervin Musinovic, klix.ba journalist:

- Investigating the story of three babies, one of whom died, a journalist sent a query to Zlatko Kravic, director of the hospital. Abdulah Nakash, Sarajevo. The director called the police to make a record of the situation. During the interview, the hospital director tried to force the journalist to reveal the source of his information to him. The BH Journalists Association has issued a press release. The Free Media Help Line has sent a request for information to the Ministry of the Interior of KS. The Sarajevo Canton MOI informed us that they had instructed Director Kravic regarding the provision of information by the staff of this hospital. It was established that there was no disturbance of Public order and peace, nor was there any characteristic of the crime.

4. Adi Bebanic, N1 television reporter:

- N1 television reporter was physically assaulted on 08/09/2019. during reporting from a rally in Ciglane, held before the Pride Parade. The Free Media Help Line Press has asked the Sarajevo Canton Ministry of Interior about the incident. We received a response that members of the Second Police Station, through field officers, had received a report of an attack on Adi Bebanic. Subsequently, they received criminal charges from N1 television against the UIP perpetrators.

tual conclusion of readers claiming that auto censure exists only within private media house could not be considered as true.

You must listen and hark three times what your editor says

I would even dare to say that the core of censure and pressure on journalists is the fact that they should think three times before they decide to write anything in public media, mostly in media houses that are financed from the public budget sources where their professional, but also, labor and legal status depends directly on governing and parliamentary majority that controls the budget used to finance their media house. In other words, journalists' work depends on politics that create their views spread amongst "their own people" regarding media they finance through the payment system required for RTV tax fees.



The differences in positions of journalist facing clear or hidden limits may exist in formal sphere, depending on the extent of the protection illustrated through their work contracts and also depending on whether they, in case of labor dispute with their employer (the situation that only the brave ones decide to initiate) the journalist shall not be the victim of eventual payback or revenge imposed by their employer (owner or entrepreneur), without disciplinary procedure. Everything else is a question of self – respect of an individual.

This is why it would not be incorrect to discover the causes that result in the emerging of auto – censure only in terms of the social status of a journalist, because the battle with the auto – censure is, above anything else, the question of respecting and obeying professional journalism. However, due to entire context as far as media houses and their operations are concerned, it would also be incorrect to put a burden of the battle of limitations in writing onto journalists' shoulders, because "lowering journalists' integrity" was followed by (and in fact it is still under way) a brutal campaign imposed by political and interest – based powerful centers who aimed to control financing sources directed to media houses or limit the finances so they could make and force media houses to become subordinate to political powerful centers.

Apart from fear that journalists may get sacked and lose their jobs, fear for the existence of their own family, including themselves, kids, sick persons and family members and because of legal environment where quietly persons end up not being punished for their crimes, including murderers, assaulters or attackers, Journalists chose to down and remain silent in terms of self – imposed limits.

Apart from the battle for dignified and, to some extent, apolitical environment required for work, through passing new set of laws, strengthening and reinforcing syndicate (union) or showing solidarity with journalists colleagues (workmates), another front – line emerges where journalists are left to dissipate their energy. A "competition" turned up and it washed

away all professional principles. These included internet web sites with unknown owners or entrepreneurs that were mainly motivated by profit. Frankly, we have already known that media does represent a profitable income source and the information is valuable merchandise. Therefore, the work conducted by the merchandise manufacturer has its own value and it is only a matter of to what extent we are aware of the value of our own role in this process.

What if we liberate ourselves from the “victimized” role?

It would be really useful to start with signal reading based on our own experience, including frequent attempts of political and financial media enslaving. These attempts should indicate that, despite constant imposing of picture that media has a diminished role, there are reasons why media is important and there are some that try to own them or take control of them.

Additionally, it would be wise to begin with reading between the lines that we write, for instance, we write stories about employers that have been on the edge of sustaining with their businesses, because the number of tradesmen and craftsmen is decreasing on daily basis due to the fact that most of them have decided to leave this country and look for work abroad, since they get much better salaries abroad and their work is more respected and appreciated. We journalists, make the news based on the employers' decision who should, in order to keep their employees in their companies thus being able to sustain and proceed with their businesses, finally realize (employers) that their workers (employees) must get paid adequately and must be provided with all legal rights they are entitled to have.

According to the above illustrated news that we have made, we realize that regardless whether one shares information for a living, builds houses, all trades comprehend the same principle: employers may be excellent managers, they may have countless contracts for various business, and however none of these can be implemented if managers have no employees to execute them.



Why do journalist tend to become censors of their own work?

By: Mirsada Lingo Demirović

Freedom of opinion and expression has been guaranteed by the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as by the constitutions and laws of both BiH Entities. Nevertheless, its implementation is rather a complex process in a country where everyone tends to keep media sources “on a leash” thus having full control over them.

It seems that those having political and governing power in BiH have been taught and instructed that they may rule by the use of “iron fist” in the first place, whenever they find this appropriate and they have managed to do quite well in their “ruling” so media houses in BiH have consequently been exposed to various types of pressures.

Freedom of expression is too expensive

When journalists write about corruption which indeed is one of the most crucial problems in BiH society, the pressure almost by default, comes from institutions that should protect public interests instead, fight against corruption, fine and sanction those responsible. However, when journalists or media sources discover and dare to post, share or public, that is, to publically release the news that potentially represents a great corruptive affair, like for instance, that there is serious possibility that the first

“It is hard today in Bosnia and Herzegovina to work as professional journalist and write without limits without being at risk of getting punished for that, but not punished by editing office superiors, but instead, getting punished from the society and various politics that impose their rules about absolutely everything, including media reporting”

men of judiciary system is bribed, then they (journalists or media sources) are exposed to pressure even by those that should be the first to react to such affairs; namely judiciary officials. Instead of using legal means and pursuant to existing laws, in and by applying common sense, in order to investigate the crimes and interrogate the perpetrators of such illegal actions (corruptive actions and other illegal operations), the officials of the Prosecutor’s Office of BiH rather chose to talk about those that write about corruption and they even decide to interrogate journalists and check their sources.

Everything that has been happening to our colleagues who managed to discover bribery and write about corruption or similar criminal actions, has not given them any hope nor courage (including other journalists) to cope with “real” stories. We are under the impression that everyone tends to censure media space including, governing and judiciary officials, businessmen, football firms and the public that makes no exception especially when it comes to insulting, offensive and primitive comments in wide world of social media.

Freedom of opinion and speech in BiH therefore does exist, only that we have witnessed that this particular “freedom” bears certain consequences affecting media houses.

Media in BiH do not face typical censure which, one way or another, has always existed throughout this specific region. Nowadays, censure in BiH gets new forms and shapes which include the use of force, blackmailing, threats etc.

Most recent case of this kind of censure which included forcing the change of opinion in public, as a result of public denial of news, happened recently to our colleagues at RadioSarajevo.ba, when two persons, as they introduced themselves – members of local football firm, physically threatened journalists and their family members thus forcing them to delete the article (text) because they did not like the content of it.

This vandal, rather primitive deed, provided censure with new horizons, some kind of new dimensions conceived in some dark minds of those that fight against the truth and those who disliked the genuine truth. It was frightening that this recent assault and, to some extent, a call to all of those that, based on various reasons, did not comprehend what media had to release, to demonstrate in same way their disapproval and through some savage, uncivilized and above all, illegal way, request from journalists to make changes and alterations of their posts, texts or articles or to hide the truth that “hurts” them.

This is just another reason why the censure is on an increase line in media and amongst journalists; not so much because of fear from editing offices or editors; it derives from the fear for their own lives, but also the lives of family members and relatives.

How can we fight under such circumstances? How can we work in accordance with professional rules of journalism? How can we write about discrepancies and irregularities in society if we have to fear for our own lives and lives of our families, relatives and friends because the system would not and shall not protect them?

Besides all of the above listed set of problems, journalists do not oppose censure and auto censure and because of burden they have to face all the time, including monthly-based struggle for decent living existence, making for living etc. Although, some would call this “conformism”, it is indeed the fact that a number of our colleagues have been “forced” to auto censure and also they had to endure imposed censure because media in BiH mostly, particularly public broadcasting services have strong bounds and ties with official politics thus leaving the objective reporting and journalism to fade away. It seems that the amount of censure is more notable in public broadcasting services, that is, in media houses financed by public money, rather than in private media houses.

Journalists working at public broadcasting services have daily been imposed with pressures by people ordering them what they must and must not post, public or release. They are ordered which politics to defend support and back up on one hand, and, on the other hand, which politics they must offend, insult and criticize.

Consequently, apart from journalists, the general public have also been imposed to certain level of terror, because they are forced to listen to identical statements and announcements in radio news program and TV news programs and shows broadcasted by public service broadcasters, including watch at the same faces for years and often public have no alternative but to watch TV reports that are obviously unprofessional and apparently censored.



There are of course, private media sources that are often biased in their writing or they simply tend to overcome certain venue or event only because their “bosses” do not find personal interests in posting, writing or sharing such venues or events

Despite everything that has been happening in BiH, as far as media field is concerned, there is a number of media houses that desperately try to oppose and fight the censorship. On the other hand, the number of those that favor “all sides and parties” in their stories. Problem of current reporting for media and journalists in BiH represents the fact that they seem to have forgotten the fundamental principles that professional journalism is based on; they seem to have forgotten what news was and how it should be written and shared all because of some sort of exclusivity and “race” to be the first to release the information.

Politics is ruthless and so is society

It is hard today in Bosnia and Herzegovina to work as professional journalist and write without limits without being at risk of getting punished for that, but not punished by editing office superiors, but instead, getting punished from the society and various politics that impose their rules about absolutely everything, including media reporting. This is the situation caused by a complete absence of legal solution that would provide protection for professional journalism from verbal and non-verbal assaults and attacks that they have been exposed to continually.

Accordingly, journalists are often forced to censure their own work – even if they write about most simple topic or issue or when they deal with serious investigative work discovering cases of bribery and corruption, including other criminal deeds.

Additional encouraging thing is the fact that countless stories that manage to discover criminal activities, particularly those that included highly ranked politicians as main stars, instead of being posted on front pages, these stories often end up in manager’s desk drawers and they never get published or posted, while their authors, at the same time, are imposed with pressure and often have to back down and withdraw, or even leave their own country.

Censure and auto censure in media in BiH is more frequent and present today than ever before, because Bosna and Herzegovina is a “small swamp full of crocodiles” and working in such environment is very complex and difficult to attain and at the same, it is also difficult for journalists not to become their own censors as a result.



Story of one Voice: How to keep liberty and freedom but also how to preserve rules of professional journalism

By: Almir Šećkanović

On 1st October 2007, the AP Agency released the following news: *Austrian Police arrested Bosnian citizen today after his attempt to enter the premises of American Embassy in Vienna. He was carrying a bag loaded and packed with explosive. The man tried to run away immediately after the metal detector, set up at the Embassy entrance gate, detected metal in his bag, said Mihaela Raz Police spokesperson and she added that he was arrested and handed over to official authorities for further interrogation. According to AP Agency sources, his bag contained two hand grenades, steel nails and Islamic books. Nobody was injured or hurt, but the police decided to block the surrounding area around the Embassy for safety reasons and also decided to close or re-direct bus and tram lines as well. The suspect was described as Bosnian citizen, aged 42 and presently living in Lower Austria region.*

First and last sentence, by which the potential suicide bomber had been described as, marked the alarm in editing offices of almost all local media houses, including “Oslobodjenje”, media houses where I have been working. Quick response with the female chief-in-editor meant that I was to be assigned with this particular story. It was 6 p.m. and our media houses was closing around 8 p.m. (it still has same trading hours). The clock began with its countdown.

Encounter in front of “Oslobodjenje” building

That is how I began to settle the story – for the beginning I decided to go for thorough reading of agency news, followed by contacts with our colleagues from Vienna and at the end, search for people living in Bosnia and Herzegovina that may have known the suspect. At this particular time, Google could have not provided me with sufficient and required information, so journalists had to look for collocutors over the phone, which was exactly what happened. First call to the person with the same surname living in Sarajevo was a complete failure. Second call was even worse than the first one and the third phone call was with the person that showed no interest in this talk whatsoever after I had introduced myself as local journalist. This call was followed by a call with certain and very nervous lady and after that I spoke with a person with very deep voice. This deep voice was actually a winner or maybe not?

- “Good evening. My name is Almir and I am a journalist. I am checking the accident in Austria about this Bosnia fellow who tried to enter the premises of American Embassy in Vienna. You two have the same surname. Are you related at all”?

- “Good evening. Where are you at the moment?” replied the voice?

- “I am in my office in “Oslobodjenje”, I answered.

- Good. Wait for me there”, the voice ordered and hung up the phone.

In the meantime I had to complete and finish my text. We started auctioning with headlines and titles and some of them included the following:” Bosnian bomber in Vienna”, “Wahhabi (Salafi) (there were speculations that he had a member of this group) attacked the USA Embassy in Vienna”, “Terrorism in Vienna” Etc. At the end I concluded with “Bosnian male person attempted attack on the USA Embassy in Vienna”? The paper was forwarded for publishing and I was on my way to exit door of “Oslobodjenje” building where attackers cousin had already been waiting for me. It was the same person whom I had previously referred to as the Voice.

Old red color Golf, white undershirt covering some muscles and a notable belly. It was indeed the Voice. He approached me. He was coming

“There is not a single journalists, female or male, who had been working at least one year in any editing office, who had not been imposed with censure one way or another. Censure usually emerges as the view expressed by the editors and based on a very simple formula: “I as editor – in – chief am much more aware and familiar why this issue should not be discussed”. The real question is how can we cope and handle the situations where we become victims of censure”

to me. I wanted easy interaction and I said that I was lucky that he came after the sunset, otherwise if he had decided to come during the broad daylight, his shadow would have covered my entire body. I was laughing to this remark but he was not. I decided to be more serious and he seemed somehow angry. He asked me to read the text I had written about his first relative, which I refused. He pulled the gun from the back of his trousers and said that he would kill me if he sees a single word published in newspaper about his bellowed cousin describing him as a member of Wahhabi (Salafi) movement. He added that I was American spy getting paid for what I did. I remained calm and silent completely unaware of the situation.

The Voice walked away towards his Golf and I was thinking about my article (text). Did I use the term “Wahhabi” (Salafi)? I know I didn’t use it in my title. Perhaps I did use it in my article somewhere but I also knew I had a professional dilemma about this issue. Was I to comply and back down in front of my colleagues and their appeals; abate in front of some editor and thus insert the term “Wahhabi” (Salafi) because it appeared more “sexy” for the title itself? My view and stance were clear, at least they were firm in my fear in this specific situation. And then suddenly the question emerged itself: “Should I call the police and inform someone about this threat”? Perhaps I shouldn’t, because journalists were under threat all the time anyway.

My article (text) was released the next day exactly as I had planned. The term “Wahhabi” was not in the title or article (text). I never referred to the man as to a terrorist anywhere in my article (text). There was not a single word or term that would incriminate professional standards of journalism.

You most probably wonder why this particular story would be considered important as far as censure and auto censure are concerned. The answer to this question, the one I often refer to during the training sessions for junior journalists is rather simple: obeying professional standards represents the only reason for emerging of auto censure. I often amplify my answer by stating that a journalist should focus on auto censure only when her/his freedom may jeopardize the rules of professional journalism and endanger someone else’s freedom.

In this case, the man from Vienna who wanted to enter the USA Embassy in Vienna carrying a bag full with bombs and grenades, the only form of auto censure was to prevent ourselves from having a word game or using unfounded claims in order to get a better headline or title, because by applying this we would certainly violate the rules of professional journalism.

In other case, the journalist should not accept auto censure and censure as matrix based on which she/he should do this job. Whether she/he would eventually become subject to auto censure still remains unanswered, although many believe that she/he would probably become subjects. They would also most probably eventually become victims of censure / most probably!

Daily agenda in editing offices usually imposes daily issues, affairs, events and venues that are, mostly due to the policy of such media house, but also because of ever-growing commercial marketing interests, in certain conflict with journalists’ freedoms. Every journalist is aware of this, however, the question is whether she/he should accept this type of conduct matrix? In my opinion, she/he should definitely not. Journalists and editors should obey the game rules and company interests they work for, but also, they should, every time when they think about auto censure, open this issue as the question that must be spread and shared around; explain the situation to wide audience and demand and require clear guideline. In this way, journalists may preserve their liberty, but also be provided with yet another opportunity where more professional journalists, including more experienced ones, take over this issue and provide necessary help required to overcome related problems as far as gaining necessary liberty and freedom is concerned respectively. In conclusion, this means that any time when you think you need auto censure, share your opinion to wider audience so that your problem should thus present your colleagues with concerns as well.

Why should this issue concern us?

On the other hand, there is not a single journalists, female or male, who had been working at least one year in any editing office, who had not been imposed with censure one way or another. Censure usually emerges as the view expressed by the editors and based on a very simple formula: "I as editor – in – chief am much more aware and familiar why this issue should not be discussed". The real question is how can we cope and handle the situations where we become victims of censure. According to my personal experience, it is clear and rather obvious that we should raise the following question instead: "Why should this issue concern us?"

Who shall we direct this question to? First of all, we should direct this question to the column editor and then other editors accordingly. As far as the issue of censure is concerned, that is, its attempts, it is important to express our view openly because our freedom and liberty would thus remain protected and censure would be placed in an inconvenient position. Perhaps, our question may lead to gaining new liberties for the entire editing office.

I feel obliged to conclude the story of the Voice until the end. I told my editors what happened in front of our building three days after the accident. They criticized me for not taking the threat into serious consideration and for not calling the police officials immediately. I always thought that such reaction would be a nonsense because I was convinced that journalists should demonstrate courage regardless to situation they were in and that they should only become subject to headlines in exceptional situations instead.

The Voice has never shown up although I was very cautious the next week and would react to any whispers and leaves whir. I searched for his phone number and managed to find it in the memory of the phone I used when I had first phoned him. However, that number became unavailable within two days so this whole case has become just one of many good journalists' stories at the end.



Public broadcasters benevolent to the authorities, the private ones respect the will of the bosses

By: Dragica Vukalo

The era of common globalization has, among other things, lead the society in Bosnia and Herzegovina, into the state where anyone invited and sufficiently competent to present analysis, make qualifications and forward critics towards absolutely everyone and against everything, but without clear guidelines and programs required for removing and eventual improving of current situation, has its fundamentals somewhere along the line. The democracy principles have made notable contribution to such situation, and furthermore, they even advanced the development of this kind of situation, taking into consideration that there were common declarative consensus as far as democracy principles were concerned. According to the above mentioned, freedom of expression and opinion emerged as common and frequent issues in public discourse. Censure and auto – censure have become part of daily routine.

The right or protection from the governments impact

“Unfortunately, the number of such examples is very narrowed and limited where journalists are being aware of the risk they take, while doing investigative reporting in brave and uncompromised manner and release and post those information they consider important to general public openly. They along with family members have consequently been labelled as a result, and often exposed to verbal assaults and physical attacks”

Freedom of speech, that is, freedom of expression includes the right of expressing personal views and opinions without any fear of eventually being deceived, or even worse, fear of being punished. This kind of freedom makes a fundament to democratic governance, that is, a democracy based society. In this context, it is important to outline the phenomena which is insufficiently represented throughout common public, although it is about the definition that first appeared in the first half of 19th century. Alexis de Tocqueville, famous French political theoretician and historian highlighted that people were afraid to speak out openly not because they were frightened of being punished; instead they were scared of being “imposed with pressure by local community members”. Releasing unpopular ideas that the governing authorities were deliberately ignoring and postponed, the individual would have to face despise imposed by community members and was often excommunicated and even harassed by the same community members. According to Tocqueville, this type of ban of free expression was more difficult to control than the ban forced by the governing officials. As far as time distance is concerned, we are closer to Danilo Kis’s view with particular sense for thorough thinking, where he claimed that “censure, regardless to what extent it considered itself as historical necessity and institution and also aimed to provide protection to public peace and order, reluctantly admitted its own existence”. Censure is therefore a temporary measure which shall be momentarily cancelled out when all “those writers and journalists that are considered politically grown and mature and when the state and governing guidance over their citizens and general public becomes unnecessary”.

Auto censure, unlike censure, outlines limited freedom of expression and releasing (announcing) that, by its very nature, is broadcasted by media, regardless to whether we refer to editing policy of certain media house or mere journalists’ interpretation of particular events and venues to whom they witness and according to which they express their own attitude and views (sympathy or aversion). Not to mention comments that only exist in printed media sources, whereas they have completely being forgotten in electronic media sources, because even if they do appear in electronic media sources, they are mostly notably biased and they are definitely better off staying completely ignored or forgotten. In this kind of situation, the institutional or state censure is required and necessary because social groups, or media in this particular case, shall overtake this specific function.

Where are the causes of censorship

How and why got ourselves into the situation where media houses tend to avoid releasing information that may irritate certain social groups, media house entrepreneurs, commercial advertisers, business acquaintances, supporters of governing authorities and leading political parties?

Let us start from the beginning...

Media ownership structure, in its most notable way, defines which information and in what form and manner shall be presented, released and announced to general public. It is common opinion that public broadcasting services in BiH are biased towards current official authorities at all governing levels. Private media houses must obey the will of entrepreneurs strictly, taking into account their business partners and their points of view, that is, they are careful as far their commercial advertisers are concerned in this sense. Being completely familiar and aware of the above listed situations, these media houses consequently define their editing policies that shall enable their companies with positive business functioning and provide their employees with regular salaries and wages.

Editors, journalists and technical staff, faced with everyday living challenges and their struggle to survive, are at the end left with very limited space to do work on their own. In fact, they are presented with a challenge: whether they should favor and fight for standards as far as their

professional occupation is concerned, thus accepting the possibility of losing their jobs on one hand; or, on the other hand, to obey editing policy imposed by media houses that provide them with monthly salaries and wages, regardless to amounts they receive in that respect. According to the situation in reality, most of them would definitely go for option two, although their material status outlines that they are far away from having comfortable and decent lives, as far the money they receive on monthly basis is concerned.

We have reached yet another phenomenon in journalists' community. It is about absolute absence of solidarity in journalists' community, although this particular issue is rather present throughout media field, but of course, mostly it is shared within the borders of other social groups!!!



This situation comes as a result of actions taken by many journalists that, regardless to their abilities and competences, take high positions in media houses and that, apart from being highly paid, having significant careers and professional rather than manifest - based career. Unfortunately, the number if such examples is very narrowed and limited where journalists are being aware of the risk they take, while doing investigative reporting in brave and uncompromised manner and release and post those information they consider important to general public openly. They along with family members have consequently been labelled as a result, and often exposed to verbal assaults and physical attacks. There are very few of those that, despite this, prevailed in their mission. Most of them were, one way or another, disabled to continue with professional journalism, so they were forced to seek fortune in other professions and occupation and in many cases, outside their country, in order to secure survival and decent living existence. Apart from these cases of Don Quixote manner, following the lesser resistance line, most journalists accept this kind of stance and views and joint eh majority just as defined by Alexis de Tocqueville.

In every respect of principles of historical development, new energy introduced by the youth may warm up concerned hearts around. However, taking into consideration a small number of employed media staff, more apparent and obvious lethargy amongst the youth in BiH, it is hard to believe in the improvement of media scene in this region. It is well know that minority easily accepts the rules imposed by majority, regardless to energy and knowledge it brings along. The time shall undoubtedly prove whether we should rely on Kis's words about growing and political adulthood of all of those that write and publically express their opinions.

What about the citizens?

At the end of this magic circle we should all ask ourselves the question of all questions: „What about the citizens and consumers whose need for information must be fulfilled”?

During the time of polarized society and opposed information provided by the media, citizens are, according to their own opinion, completely confused, or rather, disorientated. They are divided amongst “theirs and ours”, and this division is based on ethnic and political background. Additionally, they are exposed to different interpretations of identical events and hardly outline the real picture of their environment. In this chain of responsibilities, their effect is on one hand smallest of all and, on the other hand, they suffer severely.

Impressum

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