



**Friends or Foes?  
- Peacekeeping Forces, Humanitarian Aid and Media  
Development**

International Media Support Conference • November 2004

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The International Media Support (IMS) Conference, entitled 'Friends or Foes? - Peacekeeping Forces, Humanitarian Aid and Media Development' was held in Copenhagen on 26 and 27 November 2004.

The theme of the Conference was the dilemma facing media development in the wake of peacekeeping and humanitarian aid operations in conflict-affected areas. The need for rapid and effective dissemination of information from aid organisations and peacekeeping forces sometimes collides with the development of an independent media sector. The conference therefore sought to examine cases from post-conflict situations, including amongst others Liberia, Iraq, Kosovo and Afghanistan. The speakers included representative from peacekeeping forces, humanitarian aid agencies, media organisations and freedom of expression organisations.

The Conference sought to build upon the conclusions presented in the Belgrade Declaration from the UNESCO conference on 'Support to Media in Violent Conflict and Countries in Transition' in May 2004. As an outcome, IMS and its partner's intend to publish a booklet reflecting the possibilities and pitfalls for media development in post-conflict scenarios.

The report is structured as per the discussion during the Conference. In this manner, it provides summaries of the main presentations, as well as includes some of the reoccurring themes from each session. The report includes summaries of each presentations and some of the interventions, thereby highlighting some of the salient points raised.

The report is divided into seven sections:

1. Welcome and Keynote Addresses
2. Session 1: Liberia in Transition
3. Session 2: The New Iraqi Media – Lessons Learnt
4. Session 3: Common and Conflicting Media Agendas after Conflict
5. Workshops: How to Ensure Complementarities between Media Development Efforts and Urgent Public Information Efforts?  
The free media perspective  
The public information perspective
6. Session 4: The Local Media and International Community – How to Enable Weak and Conflict Torn Media to Take Control of their own Development?
7. Final Remarks and Conclusions

## 1. Welcome and Keynote Addresses

**Jesper Højberg** (Director of International Media Support) stated that this year the IMS conference would be looking at the dilemmas facing media development in the wake of peacekeeping and humanitarian aid operations. Whilst UNESCO's Belgrade Declaration has presented general policy recommendations on these issues, it was suggested that the conference seek to take a step further and discuss how they might be operationalized.

Each conflict is unique and all general observations and discussions must be adapted to the specifics of the situation. The mandate of peacekeeping forces, humanitarian organizations and media development agencies demands interaction with the local media community and there are general experiences and lessons learnt relating to priorities and challenges that can be shared.

Prior to the political changes, the independent media in Liberia and Iraq were brutalized. However, the political transition in both countries has created completely new situations for the media. The conference should highlight the positive and negative experiences of how media assistance was provided in Iraq. In addition, although the media in Liberia is faced with different challenges, the conference should seek to discuss the trends that are appearing there, which illustrate some of the dilemmas faced in this field.

Despite the unique characteristics of each situation, are there similarities that would allow us to draw up models upon which interventions can be based, or would this only serve to bind organizations to unrealistic and unnecessary courses of action?

In mid and immediate post conflict situations humanitarian information needs to be provided as it is essential for the coordination of humanitarian assistance. However, where is the line between public information and public relations when informing about the activities of the international community? How can it be ensured that we do not overwhelm or undermine local professional media outlets, which are often weakened and few in number? How broad should the information coming from the international community and its peers be? Should it include general news? What happens to the humanitarian information structures after the immediate post conflict transitional period ends?

Peacekeeping forces have also played an increasing role in post-conflict areas during the last decade, raising new challenges for media support and development. To what extent should these forces involve themselves with the local media, both in terms of access to information for local journalists, as well as general media development?

The need to create the foundations for longer-term media development in immediate post-conflict situations or transitional societies also needs to be considered. There are no indications that adequate media development happens by default and it needs particular attention. Both in Liberia and Iraq there have been attempts to address media development as an integral part of the reconstruction programmes, although perhaps not undertaken adequately and with the necessary resources.

Although the questions posed are numerous, it is nevertheless crucial that longer-term perspectives are considered in the short-term efforts of humanitarian organizations and peacekeepers. Such longer-term perspectives can only be adequately addressed if stable and strong local media actors are involved in creating a viable media environment.

**Aidan White** (Secretary General of International Federation of Journalists) opened the keynote address by stating that the current climate for the work of the media was worrying and that the challenges faced were greater than ever. This conference comes at a critical time, as journalism comes under increasing pressure around the world.

The morale amongst the global media community is low. In Africa, community violence is feeding fears of genocide and the HIV/Aids crisis threatens instability and worsening poverty. In South America and the Caribbean the wealth gap continues to expand and the media is increasingly caught in the crossfire of political and commercial interests. Harassment and political interference with the media in Asia continues to worsen, highlighted by the recent tragedy in the Philippines. With 102 media victims documented thus far during 2004, this threatens to be the worst year on record for a decade.

In this regard, with the increasing instability and the growing gap between rich and poor there needs to be a framework for media empowerment to combat ignorance and rumour.

Moreover, violence and commercial/ political pressure on the media threatens increasing passivity and self-censorship.

In the United States self-censorship has grown in the face of a hard-nosed political elite feeding on insecurities resulting from the threat of global terrorism. In Europe the media is failing to tackle some of the hard political issues of the day and challenge counter-democratic popular sentiments, particularly against non-majority groups.

In the Arab world, the explosion in Arabic language media presents a potentially hopeful and optimistic setting, which is reducing censorship and giving exposure to issues from an Arab perspective never before so widely discussed in the region. Above all, they give voice to Arab public opinion challenging the assumption that democracy is in some manner not applicable for the region. On the other hand, at a time when the Western media should be reaching out to build bridges between communities, they are instead contracting comprehension in the Western world and portraying Islam as a threat.

Due to this context it is important that the media seek to build common cause around fundamental values. This situation provides clues for what the priorities are for providing support in conflict zones, these being:

- Safety, security and protection for media practitioners and institutions must be improved. The recently created International News Safety Institute (INSI) was established to address these issues.
- Conditions of work need to be addressed, including the standards and rights for media practitioners, in particular in conflict zones.
- Obstacles to press freedoms should be removed and conditions for independent media created. There needs to be pressure on governments to promote free expression, reduced controls on the media market and introduction of freedom of information laws.

Regrettably many media continue to work in conditions of interference from the authorities. There is a need to support media in conflict to secure much needed protection and enhancement of media rights. These priorities include:

- Supporting local media and journalists;
- Promoting editorial independence;
- Assisting civil society and marginalised groups to gain access to media and create their own outlets;
- Ensuring fair competition and promoting public service values and public broadcasting;
- Supporting independent organisations and unions to improve local conditions;
- Bringing safety into the mainstream and ending impunity over killing of journalists;
- Fighting hate speech, intolerance and incitement;
- Creating structures for dialogue with governments that focus on their responsibilities and duties to respect human rights and democratic processes.

These priorities are crucial for peaceful development and securing media independence.

## 2. Liberia in Transition

### 2.1. Summary of Presentations

**Margaret Novicki** (former Chief of Public Information and Spokesperson for the United Nations Mission in Liberia) began her presentation by refuting that peacekeeping and humanitarian operations were the foes of media development. Rather, UN activities in Liberia have provided a training ground for the local media community. In addition, peacekeeping missions provide secure environments in which the media can work. Furthermore, peacekeeping missions realise that the media is a crucial partner for achieving their goals.

In Liberia, Charles Taylor persecuted the media and at the time of his departure the media was in a poor state, with only a few functioning print and broadcast outlets. Today, one year on from the start of the UN mission, there are 10 radio stations in Monrovia, 30 newspapers and two TV stations.

The public information role of UNMIL is to build public support for the mission and not to simply promote a positive image for the UN agencies in the country. UNMIL should be able to impart timely and accurate information, as well as correct false information. In this regard, the mission needs to have the ability to communicate directly with the general population, thereby preventing misinformation and stopping any spiral of violence.

Media development as a task unto itself has not yet been authorised in any UN peacekeeping missions and tight budgets makes such activities unrealistic. Nevertheless, the UN missions in Sierra Leone and Liberia have tried to engage in media support activities where possible. Moreover, the media unit at UNMIL is not a public relations office, but does media productions, monitoring and other forms of information activities. The fact that UNMIL has a 'Media Monitoring and Development Unit' is somewhat ground breaking. UNMIL also engages in community outreach activities at the grassroots level using theatre groups and local networks. These activities are effective in addressing illiterate groups and, in particular, former combatants.

The UNMIL radio in Liberia has not removed resources from the local stations. The UN station does not compete for commercial income and therefore does not significantly affect the commercial marketplace. In addition, UNMIL radio has not removed staff from the other stations and no radio has folded since the UN radio was established. Rather, the local radio stations have all benefits from paid airtime by the UN. Furthermore, UNMIL radio has trained its local staff and promoted the use of new forms of professional programming. Since June 2003, UNMIL has also undertaken training geared towards a number of different skill levels. Approximately USD 70,000 has been used for training.

**Christina Dahlman** (Consultant at Division for Freedom of Expression, Democracy and Peace, UNESCO) underlined that in unstable countries, the lack of sources of credible information can seriously increase people's insecurity, exacerbate fear and frustration, and escalate violence and trigger conflict, whilst in emergency situations access to information can be decisive in life threatening situations. Furthermore, sustainable peace is built on democracy, adherence to the rule of law and respect for human rights and there is little dispute over the key role independent media plays in advancing this. The key question is how we can bridge the gap between the immediate objectives of the rapid provision of humanitarian information and the longer-term goals of promoting freedom of expression and the development of a free and pluralistic media.

In order to get timely and reliable information out to people even in remote areas direct information interventions may be needed and new channels set up. So between disseminating targeted information and building independent media there seems to be an almost inherent linkage between the humanitarian imperative and long-term objectives of stability, democratisation and development. However, the need for a neutral, non partisan environment in which media can rebuild into independent, professional and far reaching sources of information is not created overnight.

I've been asked to describe how a UN agency such as UNESCO attempts to practically deal with the challenges of the transition processes and tailoring media assistance that build local capacity conducive to sustainable transition to democracy and peace. As the UN systems consist of a number of different bodies, programs and agencies, coordination between them is essential. In humanitarian situations, OCHA is the main coordinating body and is also largely responsible for the dissemination of UN humanitarian information. Other agencies may have a foot in humanitarian assistance and one in development, and their media related activities often have a "media for development" approach. UNESCO's mandate entails a slightly different approach and the rational is "development of media".

UNESCO therefore has an important role to play in developing a cohesive thought process and *modus operandi* in areas of the Organisation's mandate. In this regard, the Belgrade Declaration sets out to establish a constructive link between humanitarian mechanisms and development programs. The Declaration emphasizes both the responsibility the international community has in making reliable information available during times of crisis, as well as the necessity in strengthening local media and ensuring its independence throughout transition processes. For UNESCO the Declaration serves as a framework for action. Concrete implementation of activities and programs in line with the Declaration include:

- Coordination – the establishment of the Partnership for Conflict Prevention in West Africa and concrete activities undertaken in Liberia.
- Program development in line with the framework is undertaken together with UNDP in Iraq and Liberia. UNESCO serves as an interface between the different stakeholders such as civil society partners, UN system and donors to promote the holistic approach.
- Policy development and awareness raising – UNESCO is continuously lifting up the discussion on the international stage.

**Malcolm Joseph** (Vice President of the Press Union of Liberia) stated that previous year has provided an opportunity for the development of the media in Liberia. How well the media in Liberia is strengthened will determine how well democracy is fostered. In this regard, technological advancements have begun, together with the development of a better understanding of the concepts of free press and expression.

Charles Taylor controlled the local media and imposed harsh censorship. His regime persecuted both the national and international media. Prior to the conflict there was only one media set-up that had a network across the entire country, which was owned and run by Taylor. Information was therefore tightly controlled and only news that Taylor approved was given to the public.

The media must now continue working for development. However, the media cannot be useful in developing society when it is not developed itself. Under the Partnership for Media and Conflict in West Africa the international community has helped start the media development process. There has been an international conference on media policy reform, which the Government supported.

Moreover, the Partnership is working to put together a 'state of the art' media centre. In addition, higher priority is being given to supporting the promotion of gender issues.

The media in Liberia has come together in agreeing that securing democracy is the way towards greater productivity and peace in the country. Even during 2003 the media has faced harassment through the courts and has to resist pressure on its freedoms. In this regard, it is thus crucial that Liberia continues to work towards securing a strong freedom of expression environment for the future.

**Dr. William Allen** (Minister of Information, Culture and Tourism in Liberia) began by stressing that Liberia was grateful for the assistance being provided by the international community in the areas of peacekeeping, humanitarian aid, and more specially, media development. The mass media in Liberia plays a crucial role in securing the democratic process and the preparation of the upcoming elections. In order for the media to play the role of a watchdog during and after the transitional process it is crucial that it is strengthened and its capacity is built.

The Liberian Constitution guarantees freedom of speech and freedom of the press and is arguably one of the best in Africa. However, many of the laws are out of date and in some instances could be described as draconian. The Press Union of Liberia (PUL) and the Ministry of Information recently held a conference on media policy reform, the outcomes of which will form the bedrock for forging the structures of tomorrow's media. In this regard, the future of the media in Liberia should be bright and the transitional period offers the best opportunity for change as the Ministry and PUL agree on a common agenda for change.

One of the critical needs is training, particularly for the print media. Many observers state that the print media is both poor in professional standards and production quality. The degree level education at the University of Liberia needs to continue. UNMIL has also started training courses and a media resource centre has been opened at the Ministry of Information.

The manner in which the media is regulated needs to be overhauled. Presently the PUL has sole authority for accrediting local journalists, which should be continued, although the laws actually give these powers to the Ministry of Information. The Ministry also has authority to grant publication and broadcast clearances to all media institutions, whilst the Ministry of Post and Telecommunications assigns frequencies. In addition, the National Communications Commission, which was established in a punitive manner to control licences, must be restructured in a manner that ensures impunity if it is to stay in place.

The Liberia News Agency also needs to be revitalised to ensure there is a two-way flow of information at all levels in urban and rural areas. The Liberia Broadcasting System should also be transformed into a public service broadcaster. In addition, attention also needs to be paid to non-traditional forms of media.

## 2.2. Common Themes from Discussions

Below are some of the reoccurring themes raised in the discussions, both relating to the specific circumstances in Liberia and on a thematic media and conflict level.

### *Media and Elections*

The urgent need for there to be a concerted effort to support the media vis-à-vis the upcoming elections in 2005 was repeatedly stressed. In this regard, Dr. Allen highlighted that the interim government would not interfere with the media during the election process, but would lend its support to all training activities.

In addition, Dr. Allen asked all the conference participants to lobby their respective governments so that funds pledged for Liberia might be earmarked specifically for media development.

#### *Funds for Public Information verse Media Development*

Numerous questions were raised about the use of considerable funding for public information activities by the international community in comparison to those earmarked for media development. It was explained that the use of these funds was normally not an 'either or' situation and that funds for public information were not at the expense of media development and could not be transferred. Moreover, the assessment at the start of the mission in Liberia concluded that the UN needed its own media capacity and could not dependent on the local media, which at the time was in a poor condition. Furthermore, there was an urgent need for immediate public information campaigns following the end of the conflict. Nevertheless, UNMIL has tried to use available funds to support the media.

#### *Media Rights and Standards*

The lack of awareness amongst the media about their rights and poor working standards were highlighted as significant obstacles to the development of the media. In this regard, it is often seen in post conflict settings that there are very few provisions for the safety of media practitioners and no insurance.

#### *Media Policy Reform*

The media policy reform process was seen an important benchmark for creating a stable and accountable system within which the media could function. In Liberia, the necessity of getting this structure in place as soon as possible (and preferably before the elections in 2005) was stressed. Moreover, the role of the Ministry of Information and its powers over the media need to be clearly defined within international norms and standards.

#### *Humanitarian Information Media*

The creation of media structures to fill information vacuums and disseminate humanitarian information sometimes takes place when the local media is in a poor condition in terms of professional standards and resources or is controlled by the hostile or biased parties. However, these media often have a life-span that outlast the immediate emergency stage and consideration is therefore required about their place and impact on the media landscape in the longer-term.

### **3. The New Iraqi Media – Lessons Learnt**

#### **3.1. Summary of Presentations**

**Simon Haselock** (former Head of Media Development and Regulation for the Coalition Provisional Authority in Iraq) stated that freedom of expression was a basic prerequisite for democracy building, but that the situation in Iraq was not as advanced as it should be, thus preventing the creation of an adequate environment for the development of a professional media.

In April 2003, the Athens Strategy Document was prepared by Internews in order to layout a practical programme for a free media in Iraq. This was then endorsed by Paul Bremer (former Administrator of the Coalition Provisional Authority) in June 2003. However, efforts to establish a regulatory and licensing body, as well as public service media, prior to the interim Iraqi government taking office were delayed.

In addition, the subsequent actions of the interim Iraqi government have not proved conducive for furthering independence and professionalism in the media sector.

Professional training for the media was a focus area for the Athens Strategy Document, but this has proven problematic to implement and requires a proper systematic approach amongst actors. This is particularly relevant with the upcoming elections.

Lessons learnt from elsewhere have not been adequately applied in Iraq and there is a disparity between the aspiration of the international community, resources available and situation on the ground in Iraq. In this regard, there are a number of key lessons that can be derived thus far in Iraq:

- Professional and safety training is central for the development of the media and needs to start early on in any post-conflict intervention.
- Coordination on the ground between donors and NGO's needs to be improved to address the 'business style' culture of competing for contracts.
- Local environments need to be properly understood and actors cannot afford to be naive.
- Lessons learnt from elsewhere must be applied in interventions and not disregarded as irrelevant or ineffective.

**Rohan Jayasekera** (Associate Editor and Iraq Project Manager at Index on Censorship) stated that Iraq presents a competitive semi-commercial media environment. The print media is developing and UNESCO is in the process of preparing a media strategy, to be based on a comprehensive assessment of the situation.

However, poor security conditions make it hard for the media to connect with the interim government and security forces.

A number of organisations have tried to undertake training, but the security situation has made this difficult. As a result, there has been a focus on taking media practitioners out of the country for training, but this equally poses security concerns for those selected. Furthermore, the alternative option of 'remote training' presents less than ideal circumstances for this type of work. Efforts are also underway on training-of-trainers to try to circumvent some of these obstacles.

**Ahmad Al-Rikaby** (Founder and Director at Radio Dijla, Baghdad) indicated that recommendations made during initial consultations in 2002 with Iraqi media professionals hosted at the US State Department have not been put into practice subsequent to the conflict.

The majority of the Iraqi media are politically connected, with only a few truly independent outlets. In this regard, most are mouthpieces for political parties or religious groups. In addition, after 35 years of dictatorial rule, many Iraqi journalists lack the necessary basic professional skills and there is a real need for training, particularly in relation to the upcoming elections. However, the presence of satellite channels has given the media examples of 'best practice' to copy.

The freedom of expression situation is also restrictive. Whilst media can criticise the interim government without fear of undue repercussions, attacks by insurgent groups have intimidated media practitioners thereby forcing severe self-censorship. In this regard, the security situation in the country remains one of the major obstacles to progress.

At Radio Dijla the staff carry arms in order to defend the station if attacked and there is also a large contingent of security guards employed to defend the station. On one occasion a running gun battle ensued whilst the station was in the middle of a live broadcast.

Although a good system for media regulation exists on paper, this is not being implemented in practice, with confused roles between the National Media and Communication Commission and the Higher Media Commission.

Media practitioners are still to overcome the serious obstacles of acquiring and practising professional skills and working in poor security circumstances, both of which hamper the development of a professional media.

**Zuhair Al-Jezairy** (Editor of Al-Mada daily newspaper) informed that his newspaper was started two months after the fall of Saddam Hussein by a group of academics. New press freedoms in the country have allowed the population to freely discuss and read about issues.

However, the security threat posed to the media seriously restricts their work and inhibits freedom of expression. The media are forced to accommodate the views of insurgent groups to avoid being targeted, although this often provokes criticism from the authorities.

It is also difficult for Iraqi media practitioners to cover events as they are targeted by US and UK forces as being potentially hostile when they travel to trouble areas to report the news. In this manner, a number of Iraqi media practitioners have been harassed and killed, thus undermining the confidence of journalist to report in the field.

The safety situation in the country remains deplorable and the media feels that neither the US forces nor interim government take the issue of safety seriously. The independent media are also not permitted to enter the Green Zone in Baghdad as they are considered a potential threat.

In addition, salaries remain low, whilst the international media have the ability to pay more and thus recruit amongst the more professional journalist cadre.

There is also an urgent need for election reporting training, as well as voter education, for the upcoming elections. Moreover, it is not easy for the media community to adjust from an era of restricted freedoms and the new generation of media practitioners need to receive training in the field.

**Ibrahim Nawar** (Head of Arab Press Freedom Watch) stressed the point that if safety equipment and training has been provided to the Iraqi media, this might have prevented a number of deaths amongst journalists over the past year.

**Aidan White** (Secretary General of the International Federation of Journalists) highlighted that there has been almost no safety training activities in Iraq, which is in stark contrast to the significant threats posed to media practitioners in the country. In addition, international media should bear more responsibility for providing adequate safety equipment and training for their local stringers.

### 3.2. Common Themes from Discussions

Although numerous concerns were raised during the discussion on Iraq, three main issues were prevalent, these being:

### *Professional Training*

The need for professional training for the Iraqi media was repeatedly highlighted, particularly in light of the upcoming elections. However, the security situation on the ground has significantly prevented this from being undertaken. In this regard, there needs to be a coordinated training strategy from the outset, but inadequate funds have not been provided and activities have been left too late. Without the necessary professionals, the media institutions that have been created cannot function as desired and any failings in addressing the short-term training situation needs to be rectified as organisations look towards the elections and longer-term.

### *Media Regulation*

Despite efforts to establish a transparent and accountable media regulatory structure in Iraq, this process has proven problematic. In the current situation media regulation remains confused and politically manipulated. Without proper and accountable regulatory mechanisms, there is little recourse for aggrieved parties to complain and this, combined with the security situation, leads individuals to take matters into their own hands, including through violence means.

### *Security and Safety Issues*

Arguably the main obstacle for the development of a professional media remains the uncertain security situation. This impacts on all areas of media development, from the provision of international assistance, to the everyday practice of balanced and objective reporting in the field. With 46 journalists and media assistants having been reported killed since the start of fighting in Iraq in March 2003<sup>1</sup>, the safety situation for Iraqi journalists remains dire. This situation restricts the freedom of expression environment and discourages the practice of proper professional skills. This is further compounded by the lack of safety training in the country over the past year to assist media practitioners in handling dangerous situations and avoiding injury.

## **4. Common and Conflicting Media Agendas after Conflict**

**Florian Westphal** (International Committee of the Red Cross - ICRC) began by stressing that ICRC was a humanitarian organisation and therefore not engaged in media development. Nevertheless, ICRC does have close contacts with local media and journalists in the conflict areas in which they work.

ICRC works with the local media, firstly in order to raise awareness about what assistance they can provide, secondly, to win trust and enhance security for the staff and the chance of success in their work, and thirdly, to raise awareness about international humanitarian law.

Local media play a crucial role in providing information about where to get assistance, as well as help reunite relatives or inform local populations about the effects of the conflict on their local areas. The media also offers ICRC the opportunity to gain trust and support, particularly as it cannot be taken for granted that local populations automatically believe that 'foreign' organisations are coming to help without preset agendas. In situations where atrocities are being committed, it may be hard for local populations to believe and understand that a humanitarian organisation is neutral.

Combatant parties can only treat local populations and captured opposing combatants properly if they know about what the law stipulates.

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<sup>1</sup> Reporters sans Frontières ([http://www.rsf.org/special\\_iraq\\_en.php3](http://www.rsf.org/special_iraq_en.php3))

In this regard, the media serves a vital purpose in disseminating such information. If violations are nevertheless committed, then the parties can be held accountable in the knowledge that they are informed about humanitarian law.

In order to achieve these goals, the presence of a free and independent media is therefore of crucial importance for ICRC. However, for ICRC public information is a means to an end and only undertaken as long as it does not directly affect the ability to provide assistance to those in need.

Communication is a key requirement for all humanitarian information and giving out the right information at the right time may be as important as handing out relief goods.

**Col. Dr. Horst Pieper** (Former Chief Public Information Officer, KFOR) outlined that from the viewpoint of a peacekeeping force it is necessary to have an information and communication component to win the hearts and minds of the local population. If the peacekeepers have the trust of the local community then it not only makes it easier to achieve the goals of the mission, but requires fewer resources to do so.

Furthermore, if a peacekeeping force has a strong media monitoring component and network of journalists this not only helps to provide information about the missions activities, but also allows the peacekeepers to gain a better understanding and information about what is happening on the ground.

Peacekeeping forces provide securer environments for journalists working in areas under their control. In addition, they can strengthen journalist organisations, thereby enabling them to protect the interests and rights of the media community.

A further benefit is to provide access and information to the media in situations where the community might be divided along ethnic lines. In this manner, peacekeepers can facilitate links between journalists and communities that have been divided because of conflict.

However, the use of public information campaigns by the international community can serve to decrease the independence of the local media, making it dependent on the international community for information and funding for advertisement space.

**Mark Thompson** (Media Consultant and Author of 'Forging War') used his presentation to outline a number of critical points relating to media and conflict.

It is important for public relations officers in peacekeeping and humanitarian operations to engage with the local media and not remain aloof, particularly when being attacked. In 1995, UNPROFOR choose not to respond to criticism from the Croats, thereby resulting in the missions reputation being undermined. In addition, sometimes it is necessary for peacekeeping missions to use coercion to prevent hate speech in the media.

Lessons learnt are also not always properly gathered and used in subsequent missions. As an example, RTK (Kosovo's public radio and television broadcaster) was not ready for the editorial independence it received after the reporting it produced from the north of the province, showing that international oversight was still required. Efforts to build public service broadcasters in post-conflict settings have proven problematic and often failed, highlighting the need for best practices and lessons learnt to be used more effectively.

#### 4.1. Common Themes from Discussions

The discussions highlighted the point that peacekeeping missions and humanitarian organisations have specific aims and goals that they seek to achieve and the local media is often used as a means to an end for doing so. In this regard, both seek to develop positive relations in order to build trust and disseminate information about the services they offer and benefits of their presence. However, although the media is often more of a tool than a target group for support, this nevertheless does not exclude that activities cannot benefit the media and contribute to strengthening professionalism, providing secure environments and safer working conditions, and expanding access to resources. In this regard, the activities of peacekeeping missions and humanitarian organisations can be closely aligned with media development activities, thereby allowing the local media to develop its professionalism and setting in place a secure foundation on which development can take place.

However, in undertaking media development activities it is crucial that lessons learnt from elsewhere be applied, as mistakes are often duplicated from one area to the another. In addition, the more robust mandate of peacekeeping missions should sometimes be utilised to ensure that media development takes the 'right' course. In this regard, some participants advocated that it cannot be expected that the local media will be instantly transformed and act in a professional and responsible manner. Freedom of expression therefore needs to be overseen and whilst in a mature environment this might be controlled through self-regulation, in immediate post conflict situations, this will most likely need international supervision and, when necessary, the use of coercive measure.

### 5. How to ensure Complementarities between Media Development and Public Information?

Two working groups discussed the issue of how to ensure complementarities between media development efforts and the urgent public information efforts. Each looked at the issue from different viewpoints, these being the free media perspective and public information perspective. The two groups concluded upon a number of points, as outlined below.

#### 5.1. The Free Media Perspective

The particulars for media development in post-conflict situations:

- 1) Build consensus among donors that they need to support media development *per se* (as a core issue, not an afterthought);
  - Media development as a necessary factor in economic development which is often prioritized (promotion of markets, anti-corruption).
  - Media development as a necessary element of civil society which is a prerequisite of institutionalized democracy.
  - Media assistance as a separate development (and funding) priority, distinct from media as a campaigning tool.
- 2) Raise awareness among journalists about their professional rights and their ethical responsibilities to not incite violence; create mechanisms to fight hate speech; create structures for media and government to dialogue;
- 3) Inculcate public service ethic among media;

- 4) Train journalists how to deal with the conflict environment; create mechanisms for challenging freedom of expression violations;
- 5) Ensure existence of a body that defends journalists' rights and promotes professionalism (union/ association), possibly as a counterweight to an omnipresent Ministry of Information;
- 6) Need for strategic approach, which includes media as an element of a holistic approach;
- 7) Strategic approach within the media field, including skills of media workers; equipment; independent media regulatory environment; sustainable mechanism for funding media (public and private) which is independent of government;
- 8) Importance of training journalists (not just skills but the culture of freedom of expression), in addition to developing media as institutions;
- 9) Need for capital investment in media, as well as developing existing media and consideration for infrastructure investments (like a shared printing press) which benefits all;
- 10) If independent media are lacking, build new ones to be examples;
- 11) Although an emphasis is often on supporting public service broadcasting, commercial broadcasting should not be omitted;
- 12) Moderate expectations and have realistic timeframes, as 6-month to 1-year projects are unlikely to provide visible successes;
- 13) Avoid one-size-fits-all solutions. Each action should be customise, considering the specific experience of the situation.

The possibilities and pitfalls of cooperation with powerful public relations offices of the aid organizations and peacekeeping forces:

- 1) Convey importance of media development *per se* as opposed to media as tool in public relations arsenal (i.e. the need to support local media and journalists);
- 2) Urge that public information offices deal with local media from the outset;
- 3) Immediately raise the visibility of safety for journalists, including providing information about their rights (or lack thereof) under national and international law, as well as confidence that there are institutions which will back them up if they are targeted for their work;
- 4) If and when peacekeepers consider building their own media, they need to think longer-term as well as have a strategy for disengagement;
- 5) Before expanding surrogate broadcasting (especially news), the effects on local media need to be considered, particularly to avoid out competing them and stunting opportunities to provide domestic solutions;
- 6) Early on in an intervention, mechanism(s) whereby peacekeepers and media development professionals can think strategically about their joint interests need to be established (possibly under the auspices of UNESCO);
- 7) Urge consistency of action and even-handedness on the part of donors and government, perhaps through indicators that measure freedom of expression.

## 5.2. The Public Information and Peacekeeping Perspective

- 1) The differences between hostile, unprofessional and simply critical media must be understood and relations and activities developed taken accordingly;
- 2) The key response to a lack of professionalism should be media development rather than bypassing local media. However, by whom should this be done and is it reasonable that peacekeepers engage in such activities?
- 3) Reliable, solid and timely information should be provided to the media and time invested in building relationships with local media;
- 4) Peacekeeping forces should work with local media and not put their focus or time solely into working with the international media;
- 5) Consideration must be given about how to deal with the financial side of getting good coverage and the potential negative effectives of perpetuating and/or encouraging envelope journalism;
- 6) A key issues is how to deal with hostile media? This may include setting up alternative media structures; setting up legislative/ regulatory structures (which the mission may not have the knowledge or resources to do); punishing media (withdraw advertising; taking directly coercive measures against offending media), which may contradict the idea of press freedom a mission is purporting to support?

## 6. The Local Media and International Community – How to Enable Weak and Conflict Torn Media to Take Control of their own Development?

### 6.1. Summary of Presentations

**Barry Salaam** (Managing Editor of the Radio Programme 'Good Morning Afghanistan') outlined that although Afghanistan was in post-conflict transitional phase, there still needed to be international attention so that the situation does not regress.

The situation in the country provides for a better freedom of expression environment than in Iraq, but nevertheless has the same problems concerning security, commercial markets, and so forth. However, the country has a serious lack of trained media practitioners. Often journalists serve only the view of one person or group, although there are some exceptions with a few newspapers observing professional standards. In addition, many of the radio stations still have old fashioned news reporting in a dull style with heavy coverage of the information disseminated by the authorities. Moreover, there is no local mechanisms in place for protecting journalists, who are regularly harassed and threatened.

The financial resources available to the international media means that there is not a level playing field between them and the local media. In this regard, local radio stations find it hard to compete against their international counterparts, such as BBC, VOA and others. Journalists who receive training are often attracted away from the local to international media.

International assistance provided to the local media was often as problematic as it was beneficial and was described by the speaker as 'not funding, but punishment with money'. Funds often come late and in a piecemeal fashion attached to unrealistic objectives that can hinder the work of the beneficiary.

The Provincial Recon Teams (PRT) are peacekeepers that go into the regions to undertake humanitarian work and reconstruction. This has blurred the line between the military and humanitarian organisations. The media is therefore trying to distance itself from the military, although some media are embedded in order to safely get into the regional areas. However, the military should not interfere with the media and the best assistance would be to ensure that the media is seen as independent.

The substantial difference between the media in the rural areas and Kabul was highlighted. Although each province has a community radio station, unless the power of the central authorities is expanded the rural areas cannot achieve an independent media landscape. Moreover, the lack of training facilities and resources makes it extremely difficult for the media to progress.

**Ahmed Abdisalam Adan** (Programme Manager of HornAfrik Media, Somalia) recounted that in 1994 the only radio station in Somalia was destroyed. In 1999, HornAfrik Media was established with the aim of setting up a radio and TV station. In October 2004, there was a negotiated settlement to the conflict and a transitional government was established.

Unlike in other countries, in Somalia there is not the challenge of competition against international media, as none are present on the ground. The local private media have slowly emerged, countering rumours and propaganda and giving a voice to the public. In this manner, it is the commercial media that provide public service information to the population. However, the media is constantly faced by insecurity and safety issues.

International assistance is not directed to the local media, but to international organisations. Nevertheless, international and local media should aim to work together to strengthen local capacities, particularly relating to professional, safety, management and technical training. In addition, international assistance is also required for developing ethical guidelines and a code of conduct for the media community. However, more needs to be done than just capacity building. Rather, the media needs proper financial capital investment to improve and professionalize their situation.

**Salvadore J. Xiemenes Soares** (Publisher and Editor in Chief of Suara Timor Timur, East Timor) stated that in 1993 the first independent newspaper, Suara Timor Timur, was started in East Timor, thus paving the way for other private independent media. However, the publication was accused by both the pro-Indonesia and pro-independence groups as being in favour of the other. The staff of the paper received threats and editorial decisions about how much coverage to provide to issues had to be carefully weighted. Nevertheless, during this period journalism standards were upheld.

Running the publication was difficult, particularly as regulations at that time prohibited media from receiving international funds. However, the paper did manage to secure international funds to assist it in establishing a printing press, obtaining equipment and undertaking training. The paper also cooperated with UN Mission to East Timor to disseminate information concerning the independence referendum.

Following independence a number of international organisations established a printing consortium, although this subsequently faced serious management problems and collapsed a few years later. Furthermore, although a number of papers emerged in the immediate post independence phase, only two proved viable and still run today, these being the Timor Post and Suara Timor Timur. Broadcast media were also established, with a TV station, TVLT, and the UN radio, which later became Radio Leste. There are also plans to develop community radio across the country, although the key challenge remains sustainability.

During the crisis period, Suara Timor Timur tried to play the role of providing reliable and accurate information, including to refugees in camps in West Timor. Subsequently, Suara Timor Timur sought to provide information about UN activities and promote reconciliation amongst the population of East Timor.

Despite the assistance of the international community with developing the media, there was a failure to properly consider the potential for longer-term sustainability and as a result many of the media remained open for only a few years. The need for sustainability is therefore a key lesson. In addition, the role the media played in countering rumours and inaccurate information has been of significant importance. In this regard, in future missions the international community should seek ways to disseminate media in rural areas for free. Lastly, decisions about assistance should not be based on a person's political background, but on their commitment and dedication for the future.

**Edetaen Ojo** (Executive Director of Media Rights Agenda, Nigeria) described the partnership that has been formed by media development and freedom of expression organisations in West Africa, as well as the approach this group has taken to working in Liberia. At the end of the crisis, the media in the country was in a very poor condition, with inadequate media policy, few resources, scant revenue generation potential and a drain of some of the best media practitioners to international media and organisations working in the country.

In order to address immediate issues, rapid interventions are required, however, for the medium and longer-term activities have to be coordinated and sustainable, based upon a proper assessment and strategy. In this regard, general principles can be drawn, although they need to be individually applied to each situation.

- The legal and regulatory framework needs to be assessed and the necessary reforms set in motion to provide a secure media environment;
- The provision of equipment and resources need to be maintainable and relevant to the local context;
- Professional training needs to be provided for the media to improve its skills base, also including business and management training.

It should also be kept in mind that the media can often develop their own strategy for development and should be closely integrated into any process for producing an broad assistance package.

## 6.2. Common Themes from Discussions

### *Professional Training*

The issue of the effectiveness of professional training was raised, with the case of Côte d'Ivoire being highlighted where despite training, there was considerable hate-speech in the media during the crisis in late 2004. In this regard, it was seen that short-term training activities often had only limited impact, thereby necessitating multi-level long-term projects, with opportunities for media practitioners to practice the skills that have been taught.

### *Media Marketplaces and Financial Sustainability*

The issue of providing assistance to local media was raised, as well as establishing new media outlets, when the marketplace did not present the necessary sustainability. In this regard, it is often seen that media support in the short to medium term, does not have the potential to be financial sustainable in the longer-term when external funding dries up.

Assistance should therefore be comparable to the size of the marketplace and potential for sustainability and in cases where it is considered that 'too many' local media exist, options for consolidation should be suggested to the local media, including merging outlets, establishing printing consortiums and so forth.

#### *Media Development Funds*

The utility of media development funds, such as the Southern Africa Development Funds run by the Media Institute of Southern Africa, was discussed. In this regard, such a facility, if based upon a demonstrated serious commitment by the media outlet itself, can have significant benefits. Such funds can be established in a number of ways through local sources, such as donations from larger international commercial media institutions or through telecoms licences.

## 7. Final Remarks and Conclusions

In summing up some of the conclusions reached, **Andrew Puddephatt** (Director of Global Partners, visiting fellow at the London School of Economics) noted that there was not an inherent contradiction between media development, humanitarian information and peacekeeping missions. However, in order that interaction between these parties has beneficial results for the local media, proper collaborative partnerships need to be formed. Moreover, although local media may be unprofessional or hostile, if the actions of the international community are to have legitimacy they have to be engaged. In addition, there is a need for transparency in the handling of local media, particularly if the international community is mandated with a powerful role.

This raises a number of challenges for donors concerning how best to approach this field. Likewise, the manner in which NGOs and INGOs conduct themselves and address the issue of competitiveness in obtaining funding needs to be addressed. Lessons learnt from elsewhere should also be more thoroughly applied when engaging in new missions.

**Col. Horst Pieper** reiterated that media development was a civilian and not a military task. It is often the case that military personnel deployed to conduct public information do not have any specific background or experience in this field. The role peacekeepers play and their areas of expertise are therefore not suited to media development. **Margaret Novicki** added that peacekeepers nevertheless needed to be more aware of the needs of media whilst undertaken their missions. **Simon Holmberg** (Director of Baltic Media Centre) added that peacekeepers have an important role to play in providing safe environments for media to work in, although it was noted that peacekeepers have also accidentally caused the deaths of media practitioners on a number of occasions. **Ahmad Al-Rikaby** suggested that peacekeepers actually be responsible for the protection of media facilities and infrastructure.

The need for longer-term perspectives amongst donors was repeatedly raised. However, short-term funding cycles and the culture of wanting to see 'instant' change do not lend themselves to securing long-term support. In this regard, the donor community must be engaged to broaden understanding of what the needs are.

**Eran Fraenkel** (Director, Southeast and East Europe Regional Office - Search for Common Ground) stressed the need for interventions to engage the local media on the ground. The situation in Macedonia was mentioned, whereby the international community sought to recreate the Kosovo media when the Albanian language local media was already established in the country. This alienated the refugee community from the public and antagonised the local media.

The need for a focus on public service broadcasting was also highlighted by **Eran Fraenkel**, particularly based upon the successful models established in northern Europe. **Andrew Puddephatt** added that to establish a public service broadcaster required more than just the infrastructure and legislation alone. Rather an ethos needed to be ingrained about what this means and how it should be utilized. **Simon Holmberg** cautioned that in most cases existing structures were state broadcasters and the only viable option was therefore to engage with these institutions to try to transform them into public service broadcasters. In addition, other models, such as that in the Netherlands, should be considered, whereby there is a public service media fund that all outlets can access.

In the closing remarks, **Torben Krogh** (Chairman of the Board of International Media Support) stated that there appeared to be some repeated patterns in post-conflict transitional periods from which lessons and best practices could be deduced.

Media development is not a task for peacekeeping missions, but close cooperation can ensure that where there are overlaps they can be capitalised upon and that there is smooth interaction. Safety for media practitioners is also an important issue that needs further attention during post conflict missions, and the rights and employment conditions for journalists requires closer attention.