



REPORT

HUMANITARIAN JOURNALISM DURING ARMED CONFLICTS AND EMERGENCIES

Two-Day Training Workshop for Editors of Religious Media

16-17 May, 2023 | 25-26 Shawwal, 1444



ICRC

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INTRODUCTION

Islam and its principles are deeply embedded in Pakistan's social fabric. The Pakistani society is known for its religiosity and ideological affiliation. Thousands of religious education institutions (REIs) or madaris (singular: madrassa) can be seen throughout the country; from modern urban vicinities to remote rural areas. These institutions impact the spiritual and social aspects of life, both at individual and collective levels.

By facilitating literacy and religious education of several hundred thousand students, the role and significance of the REIs cannot be overlooked. Major REIs routinely engage their students and faculty in academically productive activities like research, editing, compilation, and authorship. They also reach out to the public through publication of books, magazines, journals and social media outlets. The periodicals (weekly, fortnightly, monthly, quarterly and biannual journals and magazines) published by these institutions are the major medium to promote, propagate, and amplify their socio-religious thoughts and stance on a range of social issues.

Traditionally, these periodicals are not prepared and edited by professionally trained staff. Teachers, students, and affiliates of these institutions contribute to these journalistic and outreach media in production of the content, publishing it, and then distributing it among the public. This helps them develop their skills in a 'learning-by-doing' mode. The audience, who typically subscribe to the worldview of the particular institution and are emotionally attached to it, heavily rely on these mediums in fashioning their lives and developing their approaches.

Apart from religious magazines, national and local daily newspapers also focus on social issues from a religious perspective through their weekly religious editions. Almost all national Urdu dailies specify some place for religious writings in such editions. Many newspapers which publish weekly magazines also include religious content. The role of these religious editions in opinion-making of the general public, particularly women and the elderly, is significant.

Religious magazines, newspapers, newsletters and journals give considerable importance to the day-to-day affairs of the society. Issues facing Muslim countries and societies are a major concern for them. Drawing inspiration from the concept of a universal Muslim brotherhood, Muslim Ummah, they routinely write on natural disasters or human conflicts troubling the Muslim nations across the world, their short-term and long-term impacts and relief and rehabilitation activities in the affected areas. Editorials, reports, special features, and analyses discuss various dimensions of humanitarian problems. One aspect of this kind of journalism involves reporting of the relief activities being carried out by faith-inspired relief organizations. Magazines sharing religious or sectarian identity with these NGOs promote their humanitarian works, publish appeals for funds, and acknowledge their services in areas affected by emergencies.

At times, the comment on humanitarian action may seem inspired by the common suspicion about the foreign organizations and international agencies on how their priorities and work models might ignore the more pressing issues and potentially disturb the local values. This paranoia, when put in its historical context, might create misunderstandings and hamper the rescue, relief, and rehabilitation services of the neutral humanitarian agencies too. In the absence of proper professional training, the orientation and understanding of the specialized area of humanitarian services is more likely to be flawed and even problematic.

Wherever professional training and the right information is missing, neutral or at least a balanced approach can hardly be ensured; more so in the crisis situations when the facts are often overshadowed by rumors, fears, expectations, and misinformation. At the same time, inadequate exposure of the scope and services of global humanitarian networks and issues in their services also poses an obstacle in the way of quality reporting and analysis. This realization has brought the Institute of Policy Studies (IPS), Islamabad, and the ICRC together.

COLLABORATION BETWEEN IPS AND ICRC

The ICRC and IPS have been working together to promote the spirit and message of the humanitarian principles, particularly in the realm of humanitarian action in Pakistan. In 2019, a two-day national seminar explored the coherence between the humanitarian principles and Islamic teachings and practices. Key figures from the religious and legal fraternities participated in the event and its proceedings resulted in an Urdu book titled *Islām aur Takrīm e Insāniyat kay Usūl*. Another two-day national conference took place in Karachi in November 2021 with the title *Islam & Humanitarian Principles: Prospects and Challenges*. Its proceedings have also been published in another Urdu book titled *Islām aur Ghair Janibdarāna Insāni Khidmāt*.

A national workshop for editors of the religious periodicals in October 2022 was another outcome of this mutual collaboration. Editors from across the country represented the cross-section of religious classifications. This workshop gave much-needed orientation to the editors of influential religious journals on various aspects of humanitarian journalism. The lectures and simulations of this workshop generated visible interest among the participants and was reflected in the next issues of their respective periodicals.

Realizing the knowledge vacuum and effectiveness of this exercise, the ICRC and IPS agreed to repeat this workshop with a different set of participants. A two-day regional workshop for editors of religious periodicals, religious sections of Urdu dailies, and multimedia units of prominent religious educational institutions in the provinces of Sindh and Balochistan was organized at Beach Luxury Hotel, Karachi, on 16 and 17 May 2023. The purpose of this regional workshop was to engage those religious media outlets that could not join the first workshop. The workshop was aimed at enhancing the participants' capacity to understand the humanitarian principles, to get basic knowledge of the global network of humanitarian services, and improve their understanding and analyses of natural and man-made crises in a professional manner. Despite the fact that Pakistan has faced several and diverse emergency situations, humanitarian journalism is hardly understood as a distinctive field of reporting and analysis even among the mainstream media organizations. The two workshops on this subject offered an opportunity to the senior media professionals to better understand the concept and its application on ground.

Over 30 participants, including 10 women, from different cities of Sindh and Balochistan represented their respective organizations. The resource persons included renowned humanitarian journalists, seasoned relief workers, academics, and health professionals. The proceedings included lectures, interactive discussions, and practical activities spread in six sessions. The following pages offer glimpses into the proceedings of this interesting event.



SCHEDULE OF THE WORKSHOP

DAY ONE

16 MAY 2023 | 25 SHAWWAL 1444

Inaugural Session		
Topic	Resource Person	Affiliation
Recitation from the Holy Qur'an	Mudassir Ahsan	Sub-editor, Akhuwat, Matiari, Sindh
Na'at of the Holy Prophet SAWW	Hamid Mahmood Qadri	Editor, Al-Madina, Karachi
Introduction and Ice-breaking	Syed Nadeem Farhat	Research Fellow, IPS
RC & RC Movement and Humanitarianism: An Introduction	Dr. Ziaullah Rahmani	Regional Advisor for Islamic Law and Jurisprudence, ICRC
Tea Break 10:30-10:40		
Session II Lectures & Interactive Session		
Topic	Resource Person	Affiliation
Humanitarian Disaster & Human Life	Fawwad Ahmed Khan Sherwani	Emergency Management Professional
Protocols of Humanitarian Journalism	Aamir Latif	Anadolu Agency
Q/A & Discussion		
Lunch & Prayer Break 13:00-14:00		
Session III Lectures & Interactive Session		
Topic	Resource Person	Affiliation
Complex Humanitarian Disaster: An Appraisal	Faizullah Khan	ARY News, Karachi
Q/A & Discussion		
Gathering, Sorting, Handling and Presenting Information during Crisis	Shabbir Soomro	92 News, Karachi
Q/A & Discussion		
Tea		

DAY TWO

17 MAY 2023 | 26 SHAWWAL 1444

Session IV Study Circle & Lectures		
Topic	Resource Person	Affiliation
Study Circle: Humanitarian Organizations and their Basic Principles	Syed Nadeem Farhat	Research Fellow, IPS
Q/A & Discussion		
Law on Protection of Medical Facilities & Personnel	Dr. M. Bilal Siddiqui	SZABIST, Karachi
Q/A & Discussion		
Healing Wounds through Humanitarian Journalism	Muhammad Tahir	Editor, Daily Jurat, Karachi
Q/A & Discussion		
Tea		
Session V Group Activities		
Topic	Resource Person	Affiliation
Personal Diaries on Humanitarian Situations & Hands-on Training of Reporting/Analyzing Humanitarian Situations.	Syed Nadeem Farhat	Research Fellow, IPS
	Naufil Shahrukh	GM Operations, IPS
Lunch & Prayer Break 14:00-15:00		
Concluding Session		
Topic	Speaker	Affiliation
Concluding Remarks	Nicolas Lambert	Head of the ICRC Delegation in Pakistan
Vote of Thanks	Dr. Ziaullah Rahmani	Regional Advisor for Islamic Law & Jurisprudence, ICRC
Distribution of Certificates		

INAUGURAL SESSION

The participants of the workshop from other cities had arrived the previous day while the Karachi residents also reached the venue at the allocated time. After recitation of verses from the Holy Qur'an and poetic tribute to the Prophet of Islam Muhammad (peace be upon him), the workshop began with a brief ice-breaking session. Syed Nadeem Farhat, IPS Research Fellow and lead trainer of the workshop, welcomed the participants and explained the objectives of the workshop. Each participant was requested to introduce himself and apprise the other participants of their periodical and the institution that published it. The brief statements of the participants not only showcased the linguistic, cultural, and sectarian diversity at the event but also indicated the different dimensions and levels of social engagement for each of the participants and their respective institutions.

The lead trainer explained the house rules and briefly responded to the questions on the scope and schedule of the event. He gave a background of the workshop and shared the collaborative initiatives of the ICRC and IPS. It was a matter of satisfaction for the audience that the senior leadership of every Muslim faction remained part of the previous events in the series of collaborative events and had also contributed to them. While the proceedings of the two previous events were reflected in the two books on humanitarian principles and humanitarian action, the participants were particularly curious about the first workshop on humanitarian journalism for the editors of religious media.

As a keynote speaker and co-organizer of the workshop, Dr. Ziaullah Rahmani of the ICRC also welcomed the editors and thanked them for their presence. In the presence of seasoned editors, each of whom was a religious scholar, and in the company of prominent journalists and humanitarian workers, he shared his anticipation for active engagement and focused discussion on the topics of the workshop.

In his keynote address, Dr. Rahmani gave a detailed review of the history, structure, functioning and services of the ICRC. He also touched upon the engagement of the ICRC with world religions, particularly Islam and Islamic scholars. The next section covers the key points of his presentation.



RC & RC MOVEMENT AND HUMANITARIANISM: AN INTRODUCTION

Dr. Ziaullah Rahmani

Regional Advisor for Islamic Law & Jurisprudence, ICRC

The essence of humanitarianism is to serve human beings with respect and dignity. History and the holy scriptures narrate that empathy and affection have always motivated humans to look after the needs of each other. The ICRC is a major initiative that has institutionalized and channelized this inherent human value as a global movement. The ICRC was founded in 1863 in Switzerland by a kind merchant Henry Dunant. Its aim is preserving human life and dignity during the most testing times of wars and emergencies. This specialized humanitarian agency has the mandate to attempt healing the wounds of the affected and alleviating the intensity of their sufferings through its humanitarian services.



The first Geneva Convention was signed in 1864 by 12 European countries. As other states continued joining the initiative, the need for national humanitarian societies was felt and now almost every country has its own national society with the name of Red Cross or Red Crescent. The ICRC, 192 national Red Cross and Red Crescent societies, and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) jointly constitute the Red Cross and Red Crescent (RC & RC) Movement. The common feature which connects them and binds them together is the commitment to the fundamental humanitarian principles that are found in all religions, civilizations, and regions of the world.

Muslim states too joined the RC & RC Movement in its early years. The Ottoman Empire established its national society in June 1868. The Swiss founders of the ICRC derived its emblem from the Swiss flag to have red cross over white background. People from other cultures, particularly Muslims, considered it to signify the Christian origin of the Committee. To address the concern, the Ottoman Empire was allowed to opt for another distinctive emblem. They reversed their own flag to derive the red crescent with a white background. More recently, the Movement has opted for Red Crystal as a neutral distinctive emblem.

The humanitarian principles evolved out of the humanitarian work in armed conflicts. The seven fundamental principles, each of which has a background, were adopted through a process of evolution. They now include i) humanity; ii) neutrality; iii) impartiality; iv) voluntary service; v) universality; vi) independence; and vii) unity. These universally accepted principles apply to all situations and help relief agencies and groups to work together keeping their differences aside.

The ICRC serves in humanitarian disasters caused by wars, widespread violence, and natural disasters. It, therefore, particularly focuses on skills related to war which include physical rehabilitation, health, management of the dead bodies, training of the first emergency responders, etc. The IFRC works as a coordinating force between respective national societies during natural disasters like earthquakes, floods, famines, etc. The universal logo (be it cross, crescent or crystal) and flag of the Movement is equally respectable for all states, governments and non-government bodies. The logos of the Movement provide protection during wars and other situations of violence and identification during peace time, while the fundamental principles help the Movement workers to win confidence of various factions and allow them to carry out relief and rehabilitation.

In broader term, there are three components of the services carried out by the ICRC. These include i) protection; ii) assistance; and iii) prevention. One aspect of the first component, for example, is protection and well-being of the prisoners of war. Ensuring their legal rights, informing the bodies concerned in case they are being mistreated or tortured and making sure of safe return to their home countries when the war is over comes under the first component. A similar example of protection is ensuring the basic rights of internally displaced persons.

The second component is assistance which is extended, for example, in the form of providing first aid to those wounded in an area where armed conflict has happened, ensuring the availability of full medical treatment to them, and providing basic necessities like shelter and water to the displaced people. The ICRC's Rapid Deployment Force is specialized in ensuring the availability of first-hand needs including water, shelter and first aid to the victims of any conflict.

The third component of the ICRC's working is prevention. Since its early days, the ICRC has propagated and

campaigns for the formulation of some agreed upon legal processes in order to bring armed conflicts in certain limits. Islam gave this concept more than 1,400 years ago which is called Adāb al-Qitāl in the terminology of the Islamic jurisprudence. The ICRC promoted this idea to urge states to enter such mutual agreements in order to prevent unnecessary human sufferings in an armed conflict.

The first Geneva Convention of 1864 set a historical example in this regard in which 12 states reached an agreement to introduce a law according to which wounded soldiers were entitled to medical care. This convention paved the way for further discussions in the next four Geneva Conventions, resulting in the current regime of International Humanitarian Law (IHL). The IHL covers the basic rights of not only the combatants but also the non-combatants and civilians. The IHL is generally in alignment with the Islamic Law of War which also directs its believers to only target the combatants in an armed conflict. Moreover, the IHL also restricts the use of weapons in a war. It, therefore, prohibits the use of WMDs, chemical weapons, and other disastrous ammunitions. Propagation of the IHL and educating all stakeholder about it is one of the fundamental responsibilities of the ICRC. However, it does not have any legal authority to implement the law, something that is the responsibility of the states. This is the moral duty of each state to abide by it and all states have a collective duty to ensure its implementation.

In 1998, the ICRC started engaging with Muslim scholars and institutions. This engagement was aimed at finding the common features between the Islamic Law of War and the IHL to spread awareness in Muslim states and societies. It was in 2004 that the ICRC, in collaboration with the International Islamic University Islamabad, convened the first international conference of Muslim religious scholars and intellectuals in Islamabad. This international conference was graced by globally recognized Islamic scholars including Sheikh Wahbah al-Zuhayli from Syria, Dr. Mahmood Ahmad Ghazi from Pakistan, Dr. Sulaiman Abalkhail from Saudi Arabia, and many others from all parts of the Muslim world. After detailed discussion, the scholars agreed on the compatibility between IHL and Islamic Law and Jurisprudence. Many other such conferences were subsequently held in Iran, Afghanistan, Uganda, Morocco, Bangladesh, and the Arab world.

Apart from the IHL, the ICRC has also been collaborating with different institutions in the Islamic world to spread knowledge regarding the humanitarian principles. In Pakistan too, the ICRC collaborates with universities, research organizations and such other academic bodies.

The ICRC invites Islamic scholars and religious leaders for discussion and debate on the common topics of humanitarian concern, to learn from them, and to educate the common citizens who listen to them. The Communication Department of the ICRC has conducted several workshops and training programs on IHL and humanitarian journalism for general media persons. This became an inspiration for us to organize similar media workshops for the representatives of religious media which has its readership in every corner of the country. This is our second milestone in this journey and we hope to continue the same in the coming months and years.

DISCUSSION

Open discussion followed the proceedings in which participants made valuable additions to the conversation through their questions and comments. These questions and comments are given below.

Syed Muhammad Abbas: Ensuring neutrality and impartiality in relief and rehabilitation is an uphill task keeping in view such a vast variety of religious, lingual, racial, ethnic, ideological and political differences. Many groups also promote their own agendas under the garb of humanitarian services. How does the ICRC tackle such challenges while keeping its principles intact?

Dr. Rahmani: The ICRC has an experience of around 160 years of humanitarian work which has taught the organization so many lessons regarding its functioning in a world full of different shades and colors. Therefore, it first maintains diversity and balance in its own team. People from diverse ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds work together under its umbrella. The organization has a strict system of training for its staff, the primary component of this system is to train its employees to keep their biases of every kind aside as long as they are part of the ICRC team. Moreover, the organization also has a strict code of conduct for its volunteers, violation of which is not tolerated. In such a scenario, one rarely expects any mistreatment on part of the ICRC and it strengthens trust of the states, governments, groups and individuals in the ICRC.

Muhammad Humayun Zafar: What has the ICRC been doing for the training and preparedness of the common people in time of an emergency?

Dr. Rahmani: The problems facing the world are so immense that a single organization cannot address them on its own, no matter how well-equipped and full of resources. Therefore, the ICRC has some set targets and it focuses only on the targeted areas for which the donors support them. Training and education of the civilian population of a country regarding first aid is essentially the responsibility of the national society which in this case is Pakistan Red Crescent Society. The ICRC extends financial support to it to conduct first aid training and spread awareness on disaster preparedness.

Abdur Rahman Sani: What has the ICRC done and achieved so far to get those laws implemented which came into being due to the organization's efforts?

Dr. Rahmani: Like any other legal arrangement, there are flaws and obstacles in the implementation of IHL and other relevant laws. However, something in hand is better than nothing. Primarily, lawmaking itself is the duty of states, not the ICRC or any other non-government organization. The ICRC only persuades states and global institutions for the formulation as well as implementation of laws in the greater interest of humanity. The ICRC has many achievements to its credit as its work is not limited to only the promotion of IHL but also many other spheres like health, physical rehabilitation, management of the dead, taking care of prisoners of war (PoWs) and highlighting different issues of humanitarian concern. However, as is the human nature, the achievements are seldom acknowledged and failures make headlines.

Zehra Amir: How the local humanitarian groups can contact the ICRC to coordinate in the field during emergencies in Pakistan?

Dr. Rahmani: As mentioned earlier, the ICRC carries out its field operations in coordination with the Pakistan Red Crescent Society. However, if there is a disaster of great volume and intensity, like the earthquake of 2005, the ICRC then starts its direct field operations in coordination with the Movement partners. Local NGOs can contact the Society for better coordination in humanitarian services.

SESSION II

LECTURES & INTERACTIVE SESSION

This session comprised two lectures followed by an interactive session. Mr. Fawwad Ahmed Khan Sherwani was the first to deliver his talk on “Humanitarian Disaster & Human Life”. Through the use of a multimedia presentation and flipcharts, this resource person garnered sufficient interest to engage the participants in a debate over different forms and shapes of humanitarian disasters and their immediate and long-term effects. Afterwards, seasoned journalist Aamir Latif delivered his talk on “Protocols of Humanitarian Journalism”.

He displayed several news items on humanitarian issues and played videos from his coverage of disaster situations. The real-life examples too proved helpful in conveying the right message and generating the required interest.

Key themes of this session are presented below.

HUMANITARIAN DISASTERS & HUMAN LIFE

Fawwad Ahmed Khan Sherwani

Emergency Management Professional

Disasters are serious disruptions to the functioning of a community that exceed its capacity to cope using its own resources. The WHO defines disaster as an occurrence disrupting the normal conditions of existence and causing a level of suffering that exceeds the capacity of adjustment of the affected community.

Disasters can be caused by natural, man-made or technological hazards, including various factors that influence the exposure and vulnerability of a community. Mainly they are divided under two broader categories: those caused by nature, like earthquakes, floods, and epidemic diseases; and those produced due to human activity, including wars, armed conflicts, deforestation leading to severe climate issues, etc.

Pakistan has gone through both forms of disasters. It has faced earthquakes, floods, epidemic diseases, and climate change. A large portion of the country remained disturbed by armed violence in which people were displaced, they faced the worst economic setbacks and were deprived of many basic rights.

A disaster situation overwhelms the resources and disrupts life. The community and its social, political, and administrative structure have to look for assistance from other groups, agencies, and organizations to address the impact of the situation. A disaster may harm individuals physically – in form of deaths and injuries; psychologically – in the form of fear leading to sheer disappointment, depression, frustration and mental diseases; and economically – in form of loss of properties, goods, eatables, crops, businesses, etc.

Humanitarian work is a set of pre- and post-disaster activities. Preparedness and mitigation are the two components of pre-disaster planning. Whether a journalist, or a humanitarian worker, the person planning to visit a disaster-hit area must be prepared for this job. This includes narrowing down the scope of work and focusing on the task for which the journalist has prepared. For instance, a journalist should not normally act as a humanitarian field worker as it might cause complications both for the journalist and members of the affected population. The reporter or the commentator should have necessary geographic and demographic details of the area which is in focus. A fair idea of the landscape always helps. A humanitarian worker or reporter should have a list of the people or groups who may potentially offer assistance in case of need.

Rescue is always the first step of humanitarian work. For that, humanitarian groups must make coordinated efforts, preferably with support of relevant government agencies. Personal and collective safety of the humanitarian workers must also be ensured.

Rescue operations are followed by relief activities. While carrying out relief work, it is important for the



humanitarian workers to positively engage with victims, individually and collectively. The situation which the victims are going through disappoints them and often they suffer from psychological and mental problems. To overcome periods of disappointment and depression, they need a ray of hope. They need someone who could show them normal life at the end of their miseries. No one can fulfil this job better than a humanitarian worker. This is because he is closer to the victims than anyone else and he has already won their respect and sympathies with his dedicated relief work.

Disaster, when it befalls upon an area or community, does not spare any class and segment. But some segments of the affected community are more vulnerable than others. They can be vulnerable due to their social or financial situation and physical condition. They may include people with disabilities; people with chronic illness; frail elderly people; children, especially unaccompanied children; pregnant women; people with pharmaceutical dependencies; people with limited access to transportation; people with limited local education skills; and people with different cultural values, religious beliefs or nationalities. The needs and requirements of these vulnerable segments in an affected area must be given particular consideration while designing, planning and executing rescue, relief and rehabilitation operations. Their particular health, food, sanitary and safety needs should be addressed along with general requirements of the victim community.

Lastly, humanitarian work includes rehabilitation process. Rehabilitation is a comprehensive process which includes, for example, victims returning home, reconstruction of their homes, reopening of educational institutions, reestablishing economic activity, etc. It is a long-term process which generally takes years and requires huge resources. Due to its longitudinal dimension and financial costs, it cannot be completed on individual basis. It is mostly done by the relevant governments with assistance and support from the international community and big humanitarian organizations.

To sum it up, humanitarian work requires dedication, motivation, hard work, with professional training on top of all. Humanitarian groups and individuals have to develop excellent coordination at all stages in order to multiply the outcomes of their efforts.

DISCUSSION

Syed Muhammad Abbas: Pakistan has faced almost all kinds of disasters mentioned in this lecture. This has, perhaps, developed a spirit of cooperation, voluntary work and mutual support among Pakistani citizens which we observe during emergencies. It is, however, noticed that Pakistani people, in general, lack professional skills required for rescue and relief which ultimately becomes a hindrance in the way of organized humanitarian work.

Fawwad Sherwani: I totally agree with you. The importance of training for general public cannot be underestimated. Trained people take action while the untrained only react which, sometimes, adds to the gravity of a certain emergency. A general rule should always remain part of our life, which is, whenever any of us comes across a sudden emergency situation, staying calm and prioritizing the things to be done in the given scenario is often the key to success. We must try to get help without panic.

PROTOCOLS OF HUMANITARIAN JOURNALISM

Aamir Latif

Journalist, Anadolu Agency

Impressions are often stronger than the reality. The images we present from our reporting create impressions which, sometimes, benefit humanity and at other times, might go against the collective good. Reporting and writing about the humanitarian aspect of life is no exception. Journalists record disasters, the miseries, the options, and present them to the world. This effort mostly draws public attention to the issue and paves way for humanitarian operations.



We must remember that humanitarian reporting does not bear commercial purposes. Its aim is to create a social impact in order to help the affectees of a disaster. Therefore, a reporter, while dedicating time and effort to humanitarian reporting, first needs to gauge the likely social impact of the work produced. The approach to different dimensions of a situation to better serve humanity constitutes the crux of humanitarian journalism.

Reporting creates sensitivity and awareness regarding disasters and conflict occurring in an area where public access is restricted or reduced. A good reporter is one who attracts the attention of the humanitarian agencies and helps them in gauging the intensity of the situation and strategize their work plan as per requirement. The coverage done with a humanitarian angle propels donors and relief workers to play their role and helps them identify the what, where, and how of the humanitarian work.

A professional reporter keeps an eye on human causes of a disaster and identifies it constructively. This helps governments, international bodies, NGOs, civil society and individuals to understand the shortcomings which need to be addressed in order to prevent a disaster in future.

The reporter must not forget that he/she is not an expert on disaster management. It is beyond the scope and mandate of a journalist to offer expert opinion on how to overcome a disaster. They should consult the professional experts on the subject and knit their views to make the message meaningful and credible.

Coming to the question of what stories do we need to report, there are two general types of humanitarian stories. First, those which contain general information regarding a particular disaster. Being full of statistical data, they are short-lived and suit generally the dailies and weeklies. They are of no use for the readers of monthly periodicals because general information and statistical data rarely remains relevant after some time. Second category is of exclusive stories reflecting different shades of life in a disaster-hit area.

For exclusive stories, we can focus on particular communities to explain how the disaster has changed their lives. Or we can focus an individual and stay with him to understand the disastrous effects on his life. For instance, school children can be focused to study how has education been affected in a flood-hit area. Such stories attract massive global attention towards a specific issue and urge relevant groups to mobilize their resources for restoration of normalcy in that particular area.

Another model is to dig up the situation in order to deeply explore what people have been suffering upon return to their homes, for example. This model is helpful in revealing what these people need to restart their life from zero. A reporter who follows this model needs to observe the actual situation by staying with the community to eat, sleep and travel with them.

Reporting in a disastrous area is the depiction of miseries, wounds and helplessness of the affected communities. At the same time, however, it can also capture and narrate the stories of courage, commitment, hope, self-reliance, and determination of the native community. Such stories provide a positive image of not only that community, but the country itself. A very recent example of such determination is from Juhi, a small town of District Dadu in Sindh Province, where the locals were directed by the government to evacuate their houses in the face of rising floods. They, however, decided not to give in and raised a 10 feet ring dyke to save their homes from devastating floods.

Reporters must have geographical knowledge of their targeted area and should know which parts of that area are most affected by a disaster. Secondly, they should also be aware of the local cultural norms and respect cultural sensitivities while reporting. Victims of a disaster are psychologically disturbed and a little

mistreatment can offend them enough to create big trouble. In most of the eastern cultures direct communication with women is not encouraged. Therefore, male reporters should not directly talk to women unless they are granted permission for that. Similarly, pictures and videos should also be taken with consent only. It is better to arrange a local guide during field reporting. The guide should be vigilantly and carefully selected and verified in case of conflict reporting.

Taking relief goods to the disaster-hit areas and their distribution among the needy is not a humanitarian reporter's job. He should only focus on his professional duty which, if performed well, may multiply the relief action and services.

In short, humanitarian journalism is not an easy task at all. A humanitarian reporter has to be aware of his scope, responsibilities and protocols of humanitarian journalism.

DISCUSSION

Shafiqullah Ismail: What are the basic protocols for reporting violence?

Aamir Latif: While doing live reporting of a violent situation, it is the first and foremost duty of reporters, cameramen and, on top of that, their institutions, to ensure their safety and protection.

Reporters should try their best to avoid the 'my channel first' or breaking news culture by risking their own lives. Undue pressures from media channels and the society create risks for field reporters and journalists which mostly result in disastrous physical, mental, psychological and financial losses for the field staff.

SESSION III

LECTURES & INTERACTIVE DISCUSSION

The third session was the last for day one. Like the previous one, it also comprised two lectures followed by discussion and Q/A. Mr. Faizullah Khan, a reputed field reporter, delivered his talk on 'Complex Humanitarian Disaster: An Appraisal'. His speech was followed by a discussion unfolding practical dimensions of the topic. Afterwards, Mr. Shabbir Soomro, from Daily 92 News, delivered his lecture on the topic 'Gathering, Sorting, Handling and Presenting Information during Crisis'. Towards the end of this session, lead trainer Syed Nadeem Farhat briefly interacted with the audience to reinforce some general principles of professional journalism.

COMPLEX HUMANITARIAN DISASTER: AN APPRAISAL

Faizullah Khan
Senior Reporter, ARY News

Complex humanitarian disaster is a humanitarian crisis that aggravates to the level that there is a breakdown of authority. The confusion and uncertainty leaves the individuals or groups in a situation where they have no institution to look up to for their security and basic requirements. In this situation of chaos, the economic divisions may become brutal and socio-political fault lines may become lethal. A complex humanitarian crisis lies at the intersection of layered causes, multiple stakeholders, and widespread disaster. It can be an armed conflict arising out of a weak law and order situation which ultimately leads to civil war badly affecting the whole society. Such a scenario paves the way for external forces, neighboring states and bodies like UNO, to intervene in order to reduce the miseries, deescalate the combatants and restore law and order. Neighboring countries cannot ignore the disaster in their backyard which may also have implications for them. Their overt or covert intervention, therefore, becomes inevitable.



Such a disaster can damage human life to a great extent. It may cause human casualties including civilian bloodshed. It may also compel local communities to migrate in quest for peaceful shelter. Migration on a collective scale not only disturbs the migrating community, but it can also disturb the social fabric and economic conditions of the host communities.

In order to avoid long-term implications of a complex humanitarian disaster, international bodies and neutral states have to come forward to mediate and facilitate negotiations between the conflicting parties.

Humanitarian workers as well as reporters have multiple obstacles in the way of their professional duties in an area hit by complex humanitarian disaster. These obstacles can be of political or military nature. The lives of humanitarian workers and reporters are, therefore, at constant risk. They may be killed, kidnapped, humiliated, bribed, and looted.

In reporting from the areas hit by complex humanitarian crisis, it is often found useful to start from a case study and then broaden it to help leaders understand the issue being reported. One may like to take an individual as a starting point to paint the larger picture of disaster. This strategy helps us to highlight the actual situation and the difficulties which people are facing.

Reporting should never be a bunch of statistical data. It must have a human touch and depict emotional dimensions of the issue. While going to a disaster-hit area, a reporter should be aware of the socio-political situation, ideological context, and clear details of the combating or otherwise interested parties.

The most important thing which a reporter has to ensure while covering a conflict zone is his neutral position. He should keep his personal biases and ideological views aside while on professional duty. This is as difficult a job as important because combating parties mostly want you to report only their side of the story and fulfil their agenda. Otherwise, you may have to face the consequences. Similarly, media groups often have their own

agenda based on their ideological positions. This leaves little margin for a reporter to maintain a neutral position.

Whether you are in a conflict zone or an area hit by natural disaster, you should try to maintain a safe distance from mobs. Mob mentality is active in such circumstances and mobs may harm anyone going against their will. Therefore, it is better to avoid interaction with mobs. Selection of diction and wording should also be careful. Any loose wording in reporting may create trouble not only for the reporter, but for the media as a whole.

As a reporter, you should never blame victims for the disaster befalling them. It may add to their despair and anger. In reporting, you can try to highlight different dimensions of a misery coming out of a conflict. This sometimes pushes conflicting parties to rethink their position and go into ceasefire for the larger public interest.

To sum it up, journalists and reporters are not party to a conflict and they should not openly stand with one group against the other. They must also be vigilant to avoid being used for the interest of one party or the other.

DISCUSSION

Omar Anwar: Contrary to the textbook emphasis on objectivity and neutrality, we find large, reputed, multinational media groups reflecting their ideological and political biases in their conflict reporting. What may be their excuse or point of view?

Faizullah Khan: It is a fact that almost all major media groups train their reporters and editors on the best practices of journalism but simultaneously have their specific policies, which might be motivated by their corporate interests or the political interests of the official or non-official sponsors. Still, however, the large media groups are more resourceful and their reporters may go the extra mile to uncover the less obvious dimensions of a complex issue. This means that the presentations of these media groups are better in content and quality. As audience or editors, you may always find substance in their news and analysis. But knowing the inclinations and biases of different media persons and groups is always helpful, and an editor should have that capacity and insight.

Following the brief discussion, the resource person offered a hypothetical scenario to the audience to reflect and suggest their likely course of action.

Faizullah Khan: This is a question for mental exercise. Imagine a scenario where one party blames its opponents of using women as human shields and children as warriors in a conflict. The other party to the conflict brings this to your notice and urges you to report it for your media group in order to expose them to the world. What should be your response?

Humaira Qureshi: I shall not make any commitment, nor shall I reveal my plan to them. I shall verify and carefully analyze the given information first and will report it per my honest understanding.

Syed Muhammad Abbas: As a professional reporter, I shall do my own research first. In this case, I shall also interact with the opponent party.

Abdul Wahid Chachar: If the danger to the welfare of innocent lives is imminent, it will be better to approach law enforcing agencies and update them regarding the information.

Mahmood Kharani: After some basic verification, we can make this information part of our reporting, but without putting the lives of the vulnerable at further risk.

Commenting on these responses, the resource person said that the approaches and strategies may be different in a given situation but it is important that the responses indicate the principles of independence, neutrality, and humanity, which are at the core of humanitarian journalism.

GATHERING, SORTING, HANDLING AND PRESENTING INFORMATION DURING CRISIS

Shabbir Soomro

Magazine Editor, 92 News

Journalism in a crisis situation is very sensitive and tricky. The fear and anticipations among the people often take the form of rumors, which are readily believed and quickly transmitted. To add to the complexity of the situation, misinformation is spread by the interest groups who want to exploit the situation to their benefit. The quest for breaking the news and exclusivity of content may urge the journalists to forego some of the precautions that help them investigate the truth. The sensitivity and risk multiply with internal and external pressures on reporters, writers, and editors to prefer one set of facts over the other. This is where a reporter, a writer, and an editor is tested for professionalism and integrity. The pains that have to be taken to unearth the truth during crisis situations are much more than the normal circumstances.



The first and foremost task of an editor at the desk is to validate and verify the reported information from various credible and authentic sources. The editor has to realize that a reporter in a disaster-hit area has to rely on one or more common individuals who are local and are willing to cooperate. Some of them might have deliberately misguided the reporter or was misinformed due to his sketchy understanding. Despite the need for local guides, total reliance on one or a couple of individuals may be problematic for reporting and may invite trouble as well. A local person, even a grassroots journalist, may have personal biases and limitations. This means that a reporter should not enter a crisis-hit area without knowing about the context of the problem, different stakeholders and their respective stakes.

In selection of the content to be collected, reported or published, a key consideration has to remain the cultural sensitivities of the affected population. Lack of understanding of the local cultural norms, ethnic and religious sensitivities, as well as emotional attachments and sensitivities may offend the locals or harm them in physical and psychological terms.

The name and reputation of a periodical or channel also matters as far as the collection of information is concerned. You can be facilitated or denied in this process based on credibility of your affiliation. This means that a journalist or a media organization cannot be selectively objective. It has to maintain its integrity in all times and circumstances.

In some cases, an editor or a writer may have sufficient information to uncover the truth, but writing and publishing something is a decision that has to be made. A journalist has to consider the broader canvas of things where he does not compromise personal security or put the employer media organization in an avoidable awkward situation, or more importantly, cause potential harm to a stakeholder. Even in ordinary circumstances, reporters and editors receive threatening or humiliating responses. In such cases, it is advised that a reporter or editor should submit complete information including the sensitivity involved to the editor or owner to let them decide the publishability of the content.

If you are an editor, you have the liberty to sort out and publish information from field reporter after due scrutiny. The real test of an editor lies in those reports which are true but potentially problematic. To ensure protection of the reporter, remain committed to the truth, safeguard the vulnerable, and keep the team encouraged and motivated to keep on digging out the facts, may require very careful handling of the information.

In short, the protection of reporters as well as credibility and survival of the periodicals lies mainly on the shoulders of the editor.

DAY TWO

The second day of the workshop was a combination of lectures and practical activities. There were two operational sessions, followed by the concluding ceremony. A study circle and two lectures were on the agenda for Session IV. Session V comprised two group activities in which the participants were supposed to practically exercise what they learnt in the workshop. The concluding ceremony was graced by Mr. Nicolas Lambert, ICRC's head of delegation for Pakistan. Session-wise details of the day's proceedings follow.



SESSION IV

The fourth session started with a study circle on humanitarian organizations and their basic principles. Based on a joint Urdu publication of the ICRC and IPS, *Islām aur Takrīm e Insāniyat kay Usūl* (Islam and the fundamental humanitarian principles), this interactive discussion was moderated by lead trainer Syed Nadeem Farhat. The participants were provided with copies of the book a few days earlier and had gone through the content. This helped generate an interactive environment in which the understanding of the participants was assessed and further explained through recourse to a specific chapter of the book.

Two lectures followed the study circle, first of which was delivered by Dr. Muhammad Bilal Siddiqui, a healthcare professional. He discussed the recently enacted law on protection of medical facilities and personnel in the province of Sindh. The second speaker of the session was Muhammad Tahir, Editor-in-Chief Daily Jurat Karachi, who talked about the humanitarian dimension of journalism and how the journalists should remain committed to healing wounds through humanitarian journalism.

Key themes that emerged from these interactions are presented below.

STUDY CIRCLE: HUMANITARIAN ORGANIZATIONS AND THEIR BASIC PRINCIPLES

Moderator: Syed Nadeem Farhat
Research Fellow, IPS

Editors and reporters who frequently observe, write, report, edit, and publish on humanitarian issues must be aware of all stakeholders of a natural as well as man-made disaster. Among others, humanitarian groups are a very important part of a disaster-hit area and anyone reporting the issue can never ignore their role. But unfortunately, due to lack of interaction, false information, and paranoid understanding, this role is often undermined, if not seen and reported negatively. To bridge this gap, we must know the basic principles, protocols, and priorities of the humanitarian agencies. This does not mean, however, that all persons and institutions claiming to be humanitarian should not be subjected to accountability and questions. It only means that the commentators should be in a position to step into their shoes and realize the conditions that they are often confronted with.



In conflict situations, humanitarian organizations have to face challenging scenarios during their rescue and relief activities. These organizations have to play an active role in a conflict zone when the involved parties have neither the ability nor the interest to take care of the basic humanitarian needs of a population. The workers affiliated with such organizations cannot access the affected people without consent of the groups which control the passage and the affected area. They have to win trust of the combatants before undertaking the urgently required humanitarian services. In the case of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, for instance, the ICRC had to negotiate with around 40 conflicting parties.

In recent decades, the acts of extreme violence by non-state actors and the aggressive handling of them by the states has resulted in severe violations of human rights. Since each of these sides was not ready to recognize the legitimacy of the other, there were hardly any common grounds between them, even on the fundamental human issues. The states were often not allowed to let any assistance into the areas captured by the violent groups while the non-state groups were skeptical about any movement from the 'enemy' area into the land under their control. In such situations of distrust, the neutral and impartial humanitarian groups were disallowed and even harmed in their quest for humanitarian service.

The RC & RC Movement has strictly followed seven basic principles since its early days. It has not compromised on these principles despite all odds. The first of these principles is humanity. This entails humanitarian work on the basis of common human interest. Sympathy, universal brotherhood, and the quest to liberate humanity from sufferings are the basis of this principle.

The second principle, impartiality, entails that the movement does not discriminate among individuals, communities or nations on the basis of nationality, race, creed, class, or political affiliation. It focuses on human needs and prioritizes its services on the basis of real-time urgency. In this course, it aligns non-discrimination with proportionate assistance.

Neutrality is the third principle, which helps the Movement stay away from politics and focus merely on human service. This gives confidence to all parties and stakeholders. As an organization, it strictly distances itself from political, racial, religious or ideological divisions. It should be acknowledged that an individual humanitarian worker might, and does, have certain affiliations and inclinations but the Movement does not allow its workers to let their biases reflect in their work. The workers are trained and monitored to abstain from their personal affiliations even in the toughest of circumstances and height of emotions. They remain focused on their mission.

According to the fourth principle of independence, the Movement makes its decisions itself. It does not allow any individual, party, state or organization to influence its agenda through the stick and carrot approach. Signatory states of the Geneva Convention contribute to meet a large part of the ICRC's budget and some of them might expect the Movement to protect their internal and external interests. Yet the Movement has been maintaining its independence for the last 160 years despite immense pressures. National movements have to assist their respective governments in handling humanitarian issues and obey local laws. They make sure that

even when they are working with the respective governments, the fundamental principles are not compromised.

Humanitarian work, either in a conflict zone or in an area hit by a natural disaster, requires dedication, motivation and devotion for voluntary service, which is the fifth principle of the movement. One cannot risk life for humanity without voluntary spirit. The RC & RC Movement is mainly based on voluntary services provided by its workers spread across more than 100 countries of the world.

The Movement's sixth principle is unity, which emphasizes that only one society in a country can be a direct part of the Movement. Any person or group, willing to come under the flag of the Movement, will have to join that organization through the national society. In this way, only the society shall have access to all parts of the country with a mandate from the global RC & RC Movement.

The final humanitarian principle is universalism, which entails the all communities, societies and nations are equally important for the Movement. It will provide its services to all people in need in all parts of the world, and will employ individuals from all backgrounds.

DISCUSSION

Omar Anwar: What services has the ICRC been providing in Pakistan?

Dr. Rahmani: The ICRC has been working in the fields of physical rehabilitation, healthcare, awareness on mines in border areas of Pakistan, spreading awareness of the International Humanitarian Law, making efforts to connect Pakistanis held in foreign prisons with their families back home, etc. In this course, the ICRC frequently engages with government agencies, military forces, police departments, academia, healthcare practitioners, religious circles and law enforcing agencies.

LAW ON PROTECTION OF MEDICAL FACILITATION AND PERSONNEL

Dr. Muhammad Bilal Siddiqui
SZABIST, Karachi

Pakistan's health system is generally divided into three broad categories. These are: i) primary healthcare; ii) secondary healthcare; and iii) tertiary healthcare. Violence against healthcare staff is common at all these levels. Victims of this violence may include all cadres of healthcare workers, i.e. doctors, nurses, technical staff, ambulance drivers, and even cleaners. Most incidents of violence occur in emergency cases where doctors, nurses, or ambulance drivers are tortured for not meeting the expectations of patients and their attendants. Ambulance drivers are most vulnerable to violence. They are not only prone to physical torture but their vehicles are also damaged by violent groups. Similarly, damaging property and machinery of hospitals is also common.



In 2017, the ICRC launched a public awareness campaign regarding the movement of ambulances on the roads. This was launched to educate people about the importance of giving way to ambulances, which almost always need to reach a patient or a healthcare facility in a life-saving effort. The popular slogan of this campaign was 'Ambulance Ko Raasta Do' (Give way to the ambulance).

More recently, researchers and practitioners of law were urged by the ICRC to draft a law suggesting legal measures to prevent violence in the healthcare sector. The bill was approved by the Provincial Assembly of Sindh in 2021.

This Act is called the The Sindh Healthcare Service Providers and Facilities (Prevention of Violence and Damage to Property) Act, 2021, and has two components. The first component deals with prevention of violence against healthcare staff, while the second component ensures the right of way to ambulances.

In general, the law covers healthcare service providers including healthcare professionals and/or individuals. According to this law, definition of violence not only covers verbal/physical force, but threatened, actual or intended force against medical transport, property, facility or provider. The Act prohibits violence against healthcare service facility or provider at any location while on duty, discharged in connection to or incidental to their activities.

Along with these rights, the Act also imposes several responsibilities on the healthcare service providers. It compels them to ensure that patients are aware and have understanding of the procedures of treatments. Healthcare service providers, as per law, are duty-bound to furnish complete information of the patients in writing. Confidentiality of patients must be safeguarded and they should not be discriminated against. Healthcare providers have to ensure that they are adhering to these responsibilities.

The law prohibits violence, damage to property, and carrying arms into healthcare facilities. Non-compliance can result in nonbailable imprisonment up to three years and/or a financial penalty of PKR 50,000 to PKR 300,000.

The implementation of this law can only be materialized with full support from healthcare providers and general public on one hand, and law-enforcing agencies, on the other. Keeping this in view, campaigns through print, digital and mass media have been launched. These public campaigns aim to raise awareness regarding the legal rights and responsibilities of patients, their attendants and healthcare workers under this Act; raise awareness among motorists and relevant stakeholders of the right of way for ambulances in traffic; and promote the sentiment of trust and empathy among the general audience on the work undertaken by healthcare workers and connect it with the significance of the new law.

In a nutshell, this development may prove to be a revolution not only in the healthcare sector, but also in taking the nation to a more disciplined, civil and socially responsible position.

DISCUSSION

Muhammad Humayun Zafar: Government health facilities are often in a deplorable condition regarding cleanliness and sanitation. Similarly, the facilities like equipment and subsidized medication which the government provides in its hospitals are made unavailable through corrupt practices. These problems need to be addressed first because they lead to violent reactions from the patients or their attendants.

Bilal Siddiqui: This is true. There are a number of factors which contribute to the violent incidents and they should be eliminated. There is room for improvement in new legal arrangements. We should hope that the issues raised by you are also addressed at some later stage.

Zain Feroze Hasan: While this law and the subsequent campaign is focused on raising awareness among general public, it should be acknowledged that healthcare providers, including officers, physicians, paramedical, and non-medical staff in the healthcare facilities too need training and awareness.

Bilal Siddiqui: Things will gradually improve and we shall address core issues. Even the current effort is not restricted to general public. We are also educating healthcare staff working in government facilities and law enforcement agencies.

HEALING WOUNDS THROUGH HUMANITARIAN JOURNALISM

Muhammad Tahir

Editor, Daily Jurat, Karachi

Differences, opposition, conflict, and war are permanent and inseparable parts of human life. With the gradual experience of many centuries, human society has learnt to adjust and live with conflict. This is the reason that we see efforts to resolve conflicts or at least regularize them under some laws and mitigate their effects, but no serious efforts are made to turn this world into a no-conflict place. Journalists operate in a world which is full of conflicts, clashes and violence. They have to fulfil their official responsibilities while risking their lives.



There are a number of questions that vex particularly those reporters and journalists who operate in conflict zones. What is their core duty as field journalists? Does it suffice if they capture photos or dispatch news reports regarding the people affected by a conflict or a natural disaster? Can they help the people on humanitarian grounds or is it beyond their professional role? How can a journalist handle a situation in which his credibility is compromised if he helps one party of the conflict out of human empathy? These are only a few out of a large number of questions that have no clear answers.

It is a fact that honest and truthful reporting harms and enrages many interest groups. This may result in violent reactions in the form of threats, torture, financial boycott, kidnapping, assassination, and threats to family members.

Despite these perils, there is hardly any other job which is more fulfilling for the people who want to live a life that makes a positive difference around them. The first and foremost duty in journalism is to maintain neutrality and an unbiased approach. The words and sentences we form, the story and analysis we write and the article we edit to publish must not be targeting a certain group of people. Our words and sentences should be structured in a way that they do not cause harm to any particular community. Neither it should provoke its opponents to become reactionary for revenge. Our reporting should fulfil the basic purpose of educating the masses and conveying information to them without spreading terror. In short, it should not be agenda-driven reporting.

We, the people in journalism, need to always remember one fact: taking up journalism as a profession might be our choice, but once we enter this profession, we have no choice but to be professional and honest. Now it becomes our core obligation to operate with honesty and become a torch-bearer of truthfulness, no matter what the consequences might be.

It is another unfortunate truth that the media industry, mainly driven by commercial interests, might not always go for the truth or stand by you when you are trying to be honest to your obligations. It is quite possible that their agenda does not match the priorities of an honest professional reporter or editor. For example, dozens of people might lose their lives in different street crimes in a major city, but this might not qualify as a major concern for a media house but the death of one famous and influential person may be grieved for two weeks.

Despite all odds, a journalist or any person who has access to and influence on the people must always remain committed to humanity and remain true to the highest standards of integrity. Our voices and writings have the power to change; let us use them to improve the lives of our fellow beings.

Journalists educate people and keep them updated through their reports, news stories, analyses and articles. This makes them a towering figure in the society. You have heard it time and again here, that this responsibility increases manifold in times of violence and natural calamities. If they do not prove their integrity, media persons and media houses lose their respect and position among the public and we have seen this happening recently, when citizen journalism has become more popular with the people than some established news outlets.

DISCUSSION

Ehsan Elahi: We agree and have witnessed that the media may serve particular interests and can seemingly be biased. In such a state of affairs, what reliable options do the common people have to understand the facts and explore fair analyses?

Muhammad Tahir: In recent years, social media has emerged as a reaction to the inefficiency and agenda-driven journalism of mainstream media. The so-called mainstream media is getting irrelevant and there are hardly any corrective measures from the government or the media itself. Part of this phenomenon is the unaccountable nature of social media. Since camera, mic, and streaming option is available to everyone, fake news is in abundance. The mainstream media may be biased but it is subject to a system of institutional and social accountability. So, there is no simple answer to your question. Unfortunately, most of the audience goes after that version of news that conforms to their personal likes and dislikes. If, however, a regular listener values impartiality and truth, such a person may soon identify those resources which are more reliable.

SESSION V

The last working session before the conclusion aimed at a quick recap of collective understanding of the themes discussed during the preceding sessions and offered an opportunity to practice it in some hypothetical situations. There were two parts of this session. In the first part, Syed Nadeem Farhat interacted with the participants to reemphasize what they learnt in the previous sessions. The scenario of an earthquake was also presented to the participants to put their analytical skills to work. The second part was moderated by Mr. Naufil Shahrukh, who conducted a writing exercise with the participants. Key details follow.

APPROACHING A HUMANITARIAN SITUATION AS A JOURNALIST

Syed Nadeem Farhat
Research Fellow, IPS

The first part of this activity was based on an interactive discussion regarding the basic humanitarian principles of the RC & RC Movement. This was aimed at evaluating the participants' understanding of the fundamental principles. Several participants explained what they understood of the principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality, independence, voluntary service, unity, and universalism. Participants were of the view that these principles of the Movement generally go along with the teachings and traditions of Islam and that Muslims are required to place humanity as a major priority in anything they do. They also agreed that with these principles, humanitarian work can be more efficient, professional and long-lasting.



The second part was based on a scenario in which the editor received the news that a distant area with a hard terrain and strategic installations was hit by a disastrous earthquake. The editors were asked to list the information they needed to fully make sense of the situation and inform their readers. The participants collectively helped develop a list of things that they needed to know not merely for sharing the reports with their audience but also educating them about an appropriate response. The discussion engaged almost everybody and a rather detailed list of required information was prepared. It included:

- Magnitude of the earthquake;
- Its epicenter and radius;
- The areas affected;
- Geographical nature of the affected cities and towns;
- The nature of infrastructure in the affected area;
- Quick response mechanisms, rescue and healthcare facilities in adjoining areas;
- History of earthquakes and their impacts in that area;
- Any factors that could aggravate the situation like dams or other huge water reservoirs, ordnance depots, sea, rocks, or other factors that may add to the intensity of this disaster;
- Modes of communication and transportation;
- Estimates of physical and financial losses; and
- Special needs in the affected areas that require urgent attention.

The participants were then asked to make an outline of their report for their respective periodicals. Salient features of the report, as suggested by the participants, are mentioned below:

- Basic information as listed above;
- What are the urgent requirements there?
- What was and is the response from relevant government agencies?
- How could local and national humanitarian groups be urged and encouraged to carry out humanitarian services?
- How to set priorities in the rescue and relief activities?

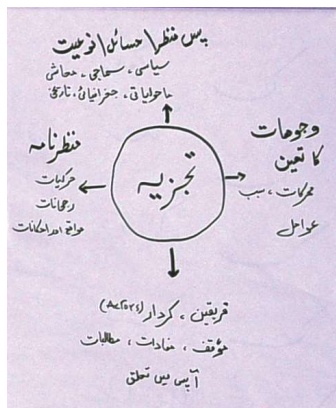
HANDS-ON TRAINING OF REPORTING/ANALYZING HUMANITARIAN SITUATIONS

Naufil Shahrukh
GM Operations, IPS

Mr. Naufil Shahrukh started with further explanation of the general definition of humanitarian journalism and discussed its application in recent times by citing different situations. He classified journalism in the times of conflict and emergency into two types; the first is based on traditional journalism and the second is not entirely non-traditional but requires a distinct vision, approach, and treatment. Traditional journalism includes simple reporting of events and incidents and analysis of the possible strategies, outcomes, and impacts of a humanitarian situation. The other one – humanitarian journalism – is solution-oriented and can often contribute to averting a humanitarian situation, reducing the sufferings, mobilizing public support, and even contributing to resolution of a conflict.



Going further, he discussed with the audience the diverse sources of motivations and inspirations for humanitarianism, and help the participants realize the significance of putting their respective jobs into the humanitarian perspective. It strongly emerged that religious teachings and beliefs are always a powerful push for humanitarian workers.



Coming to the practical part of his session, Naufil Shahrukh reinforced the importance of 5 Ws+1 H (What, Who, When, Where, Why and How) in the field of journalism. Like any other form of journalism, an investigative mind and techniques are always the key to success in humanitarian journalism.

The speaker emphasized that any analytical piece of writing should have some vital components. It should carry the background of the topic as to what is the nature of an issue and how is it being problematic. The second component relates to causes – the push and pull factors which are igniting this issue. Thirdly, the parties to the situation, their nature and approach in broader terms, their viewpoint on the particular situation, their role and interest in the conflict, demands, if any, and the correlation between all these factors. Finally, the analysis and even the understanding requires an overall context and scenario in which this issue has popped up, the trends, opportunities, prospects and challenges.

In view of this orientation, the participants were given an exercise to write a journalistic write-up of their choice (column, editorial, news, feature, story, etc.) about a perceived scenario of civil war in a country that has impacted large areas and population.

The participation in the exercise was avid and focused. In less than half an hour, most participants had prepared their three-page write-up around the given situation. These writings in different genres took up various dimensions of conflict but with the common factor of humanitarian approach. Their response was encouraging insofar that it showed the participants' determination and will to work on the humanitarian front of religious journalism.

CONCLUDING SESSION

After two interactive and happening days, the workshop came to an end with the concluding session. Mr. Nicolas Lambert, ICRC head of delegation in Pakistan, had already joined the event along with his colleagues. He attended the proceedings of the second day for several hours, informally interacted with participants and organizers, and delivered a brief talk towards the end of the workshop. His talk was followed by a vote of thanks by Dr. Ziaullah Rahmani. Afterwards, participation certificates and gift packs were distributed among the participants. The event closed with group photos, best wishes and promises to keep in touch and make positive contributions in the field of humanitarian journalism. Key points of the two talks are given in the following pages.

CONCLUDING SPEECH

Mr. Nicolas Lambert

Head of Delegation, ICRC in Pakistan

Thank you very much for hosting me today. It is a great honor to be here with you. I arrived in Pakistan a few months back. But I have already worked in Peshawar in 2011 and right after that, I remained in Afghanistan for years so I know the region very well. I am honored to have worked almost throughout the world, in Africa and Latin America, and it is a great pleasure for me to be back in Pakistan. You must know by now that the aim of the ICRC is to protect the victims of armed conflicts and other situations.



It is true that now, unfortunately, due to the geopolitical tensions, most of the conflicts are taking place in Muslim countries. We are working in Africa, Middle East, Syria, and Sudan. It means that most of our staff is also Muslim and we have strong coordination with national societies there. Our theme is always purely humanitarian and we always focus on supporting the most vulnerable communities without any discrimination. We are engaged in Afghanistan, although the regime there has no international recognition yet. Our aim is to support humanitarian activity and action in order to help people of Afghanistan. And that is why, in many areas we also engage with non-state armed groups in our quest to reach the most vulnerable communities.

As part of the ICRC, we only believe in the international humanitarian law and Geneva Conventions. These are the only basis of our working.

I think, being part of this exercise, you must be aware by now that basic humanitarian principles can be found in all human societies. Personally, I don't have any capability to talk about Islamic law and I don't have the expertise to say anything, but thankfully, I have colleagues from the ICRC and the IPS who support us. This quality is interesting that we are not about imposing, it's about discussions, and an open dialogue to reach out and extract a common ground together.

The ICRC never had any intention of changing the society or changing the way how people live. This is the reality that every society is right in its own way, but the purpose is to help and support the people. For example, it is interesting that we depend on acceptance of the community where we work. We do not protect ourselves through weapons. It is the society and the people who protect us.

I remember when I was in Kunduz, Afghanistan, the war was very tough but I felt safe because my colleagues and community knew the ICRC, they knew we were there for them and I felt secure because I knew that the community will protect me.

So, I hope that in these two days you managed to get to know us better, to understand us, international law and Islamic perspective on it. And that is how together we can continue our relationship.

Thank you very much for your time, for coming here, particularly those who came from Balochistan and interior parts of Sindh. We don't take your presence for granted. Therefore, I really want to thank you from the bottom of my heart.

VOTE OF THANKS

Dr. Ziaullah Rahmani

Regional Advisor for Islamic Law & Jurisprudence, ICRC

I thank Allah Almighty, with Whose will and support we have been able to organize such a fruitful and successful workshop. I am also thankful to all of you for honoring our invitation and for your dedicated presence here for two full days. I must acknowledge that your interest and active participation has made this event successful.

In its essence, this workshop was an exposure for both sides – not only for you who came here to learn but also for those who wished to deliver. I believe that each of you feels enlightened not only on the subject of humanitarian journalism but also on the contribution that each of us is making toward the betterment of society in our different capacities. My understanding of your scholarship, topics, concerns, and contributions has increased through formal and informal interactions during these two days.

Religious periodicals have their own strong and significant constituency. They have substantial influence in their respective circles. This constituency and its influence needs to be utilized more productively for the welfare of humanity. I do not claim that we have introduced you to humanitarianism, serving humanity, neutrality, impartiality, independence, volunteerism, and other values of humanitarian sector. In fact, you all belong to a tradition that has humanitarianism at its core. Through this workshop, we have only tried to expose you to the current frameworks of humanitarian situations and action, and the approach towards them as a member of the journalistic fraternity.

After two days of exposure, if you agree that humanitarianism is something considerable, and that it is compatible with Islam, which we believe it is, then I urge you to promote it in your circles through writing and speaking. This will be a great service to humanity. Humanity is passing through hard times of divisions, conflicts, and polarization, and each of us needs to be more sensitive to the agonies of others and support to mitigate them. Journalism has the key role to play in this regard. Identifying human issues in a conflict and emergency, drawing attention towards them, and bridging the gaps is the role of humanitarian journalists.

One parameter for us to gauge the success and productivity of this workshop is what you produce about it. I expect you to pen down your experience here. Whether you find the event and the approach conveyed to you through it as an accomplishment or a concern, something positive in your context or detrimental in certain ways, your expression will be helpful, and trust me, we look forward to be corrected wherever we are wrong or explain ourselves better, if our message is not clear. But you should write at least one article for the next issue of your periodical.

A lasting impact of this workshop will, however, emerge if you start picking up humanitarian issues for your editorials and articles, and incorporate the message of this workshop in them.

Finally, I want to emphasize something. Some discussions during these two days might have debated the perils and dangers of humanitarian work in some detail. They should not affect you negatively. If you have decided that your commitment to safety and dignity of human life is the demand of your Lord, Allah, of your faith in Him, and of your humanity, then no dangers or apprehensions should stop you from going an extra mile to help the people in distress. One person can bring about a positive change in the lives of many. Value your conscience, the pen that you have in your hand, and the medium that is available to you to spread the message of peace, love, and cooperation. I once again thank you all.

LIST OF THE PARTICIPANTS

Sr.	Name	Designation	Magazine	City
1	M. Owais Shahid	Asst. Editor	Monthly Tameer e Afkar	Karachi
2	Mudassir Ahsan	Asst. Editor	Monthly Akhuwat	Matiari
3	M. Faisal Shahzad	Editor	Monthly Khawateen ka Islam	Karachi
4	Rashid Ali	Editor	Monthly Faizan e Madinah	Karachi
5	M. Khurram Shahzad	Editor	Monthly Fehm e Din	Karachi
6	M. Ilyas Wali	Editor	Monthly Nida e Hasanain	Panjgur
7	Syed Azhar Ali Shah	Editor	Monthly Qamar Ul Islam	Karachi
8	Mujahid Channa	Editor	Weenjhar	Hyderabad
9	Ehsan Elahi	Editor	Razn Kech	Kech
10	Iftikhar Ahmad Al Azhari	Editor	Bahrul Uloom	Mirpurkhas
11	Abdul Wahid Chachar	Editor	Shariat	Rohri
12	Munir Aqeel Ansari	Correspondent	Daily Jasarat	Karachi
13	Mahmood Kharani	Editor	Qirtas	Kharan
14	Inayat Shamsi	Correspondent	Daily Islam	Karachi
15	Abdur Rahman Sani	Asst. Editor	Fiqh e Islami	Karachi
16	Maulana Umar Anwar	Asst. Editor	Bayyinat	Karachi
17	Qari Hamid Mahmood	Editor	Al Madinah	Karachi
18	Aisha Khalid	Editor	Haya Magazine	Karachi
19	Humaira Qureshi	Correspondent	Weekly Friday Special	Karachi
20	Humayun Zafar	Section In-charge	Daily Jang, Magazine	Karachi
21	Muhammad Abdullah	Asst. Editor	Islah e Muashra	Tump (Kech)
22	Abdul Qayyum Linjo	Editor	Dawat e Islam	Tharparkar
23	Aziz Fatima	Correspondent	Pasban	Karachi
24	Saima Kanwal	Writer	Jamia Binoria	Karachi
25	Mehreen Fatima	Asst. Editor	Tahera Magazine	Karachi
26	Farzana Jauhar	Asst. Editor	Tahera Magazine	Karachi
27	Zain Feroze Hassan	Correspondent	Binoria Media	Karachi
28	Zehra Siddiqua	Correspondent	Jasarat	Karachi
29	Hafiz Muhammad Yunus	Asst. Editor	Al Bayan	Karachi
30	Syed Muhammad Abbas	Asst. In charge	Jafar Tayyar Library	Karachi
31	Asma Batool	Volunteer	Karachi University	Karachi
32	Anwar Ul Haq	Volunteer	Karachi University	Karachi

GLIMPSES OF THE PROCEEDINGS



About the ICRC

Established in 1863, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) operates worldwide, helping people affected by conflict and armed violence, and promoting the laws that protect victims of war. An independent and neutral organization, its mandate stems essentially from the Geneva Conventions of 1949. The ICRC is based in Geneva, Switzerland, and employs some 16,000 people in more than 80 countries. The ICRC is funded mainly by voluntary donations from governments and the national Red Cross and Red Crescent societies.

Building on its core principle of humanity, the ICRC in Pakistan has been serving the needs of the vulnerable since 1947. From direct relief operations to an approach that promises sustainability, it works to improve the lives of people through innovative solutions. It strives to bring lasting changes in the fields of health, physical rehabilitation, community-based risk education, restoring family links, promotion of International Humanitarian Law, and management of the dead in emergencies.

About IPS

Institute of Policy Studies Islamabad is an autonomous, not-for-profit, civil society organization, dedicated to promoting policy-oriented research, dialogue, human and technological development for better governance. IPS provides a forum for informed discussion and dialogue on national and international issues. The contributions spanning over forty years and the overall impact signifies the importance of pragmatic research on policy issues. The Institute highlights the role of think tanks in modern democratic polity.

