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**EMERGENCY SUPPORT FOR MEDIA AND JOURNALISTS IN UKRAINE IN  
TIMES OF WAR: GFMD EXPERIENCE**

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## **Abstract**

Fact-based and conflict-sensitive public interest journalism is a major factor in the peacebuilding process as it helps to facilitate a dialogue between warring parties in the conflict. But in times of conflict media are much more exposed to intimidation and violence (not to mention various financial and technical obstacles) and therefore require consistent and time-efficient support from international media development organizations. This thesis emerged from a personal experience as a Communications Intern at the Global Forum for Media Development (GFMD), an international network of journalism support and media development organisations. Since the first days of the war in Ukraine in February 2022, GFMD started to coordinate a network of members and partners helping Ukrainian media and journalists. This study aims to explore to what extent the impact of media is crucial for alleviating the conflict and promoting peace, with a specific focus on the current media crisis in Ukraine and the growing need for emergency media support.

Chapter 1 examines the role of communication and media in the process of peace building by analysing peace journalism as a tool that helps to think outside war propaganda and counter-violence. Chapter 2 explores the state of the Ukraine media landscape before and during the war providing the context for Ukrainian journalistic culture transformation and the increasing need for media support. Chapter 3 is devoted to the GFMD media support coordination efforts aimed to assist media and journalists in Ukraine during the ongoing war. Structured in-depth interviews with several media support actors help to identify key needs of media in Ukraine and suggest internationally relevant possible ways of enhancing efforts in providing emergency support.

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I dedicate this work to all Ukrainian journalists who are bravely and selflessly fighting on the informational frontline providing people with essential information and defending the truth and freedom.

## Introduction

When referring to the concept of international peace, the definition of it is quite vague in international law. Legal instruments in the most official international documents do not specify what exactly should be enhanced. The theoretical framework of this thesis was built on Hamelink's concept of peace as "*sheer human togetherness*" described in detail in his work *Communication and Peace. Celebrating Moments of Sheer Human Togetherness*. According to Hamelink's vision, peace should be perceived as the feeling of belonging to humanity and realizing your responsibilities towards other humans who might be different from you. In turn, it opens an opportunity for communication for peace and starting "deep dialogue" aimed at creating process of a unified consonant thinking. The scholar also suggests the definition of peace journalism as a certain format in which media can contribute to the peacebuilding process by depolarizing conflicting parties and promoting a peaceful, non-violent resolution to the conflict.

Most academic studies are focused on analysing communications for peace as a means to prevent wars or restore peaceful relationships in post-conflict environments. But there are surprisingly few academic works dedicated to the pivotal peacebuilding role of communications and media during the ongoing conflict.

In November 2021 I joined **Global Forum for Media Development (GFMD)** as a Communications Intern. I was particularly inspired by their mission to support journalism as a public good as I truly believe that fact-based, independent, and conflict-sensitive public-interest journalism is able to depolarize societies and build bridges between different countries, nations and cultures. I planned to study for my thesis how narrative built by media can affect intercultural communications and analyse its positive peacebuilding impact by applying it to Ukraine-Russia relationships as a case study. Little did I know that when in February 2022 Russia invaded Ukraine my life as well lives of millions of Ukrainians will be changed forever, and my thesis will shift the focus and move in a different direction. As the conflict was exponentially escalating, the need for peace journalism became obvious. But the conditions in which Ukrainian media and journalists are operating are quite complex, especially for local media situated in conflict zones or nearby. They are much more exposed to intimidation and violence, their economic and technical are extremely limited, and most of them lack the personal

protective equipment necessary for reporting from the frontline. Therefore, consistent and time-efficient international media support turned out to be one of the key requirements for the survival of independent peace journalism in Ukraine.

Having previous experience in coordinating emergency media support efforts during conflicts in Syria (2013-2016), Yemen (2016), Sudan (2020) and Lebanon (2020), GFMD started to coordinate a network of members and partners helping Ukrainian media and journalists since the very first days of the war in Ukraine. GFMD weekly media support coordination meetings assist more than 60 media to support organizations and donors to collaborate on providing help to media and journalists in Ukraine with relocation and evacuation, safety equipment, and financial and technical support. Since March 2022 I am responsible for maintaining and updating the resource centre *Ukraine media support coordination* that GFMD has created for Ukrainian journalists and media organisations. This is where all available emergency funding opportunities and emergency resources as well as the list of fundraising and crowdfunding initiatives to support media and journalists in Ukraine are collated, previously translated by me into Ukrainian.

I have also actively participated in writing, editing and translating into several languages GFMD's Perugia Declaration for Ukraine launched on 9 April 2022 at the International Journalism Festival in Perugia. It calls for increased support for media and journalists in Ukraine and was signed by more than 200 international media development organizations. It acts as a foundation of collective advocacy efforts of GFMD, its members and partners over the months ahead.

Based on the overall and specific objectives of the research, the key research questions were identified as follows:

- **To what extent is the role of peace journalism essential for shifting the perception of both policymakers and the audience towards de-escalation of conflict and its peace-oriented resolution?**
- **How the GFMD's experience in the emergency support of media and journalists in Ukraine can be used to improve emergency media support globally?**



The thesis is divided into three chapters. Chapter 1 examines the role of communication and media in the process of peace building and its ability to influence and shape governments' policy responses. This influence when fallen into the wrong hands can sometimes be destructive and lead to conflict escalation (Rwanda genocide case) or generate massive hate of one society towards another which later transforms into aggression and violence (case of Russian propaganda spreading fakes and hate speech aim of which is Ukraine and its inhabitants). Peace journalism is suggested as an alternative to war journalism and one of the possible and effective solutions to counter-violence. Chapter 2 explores the state of the Ukraine media landscape before and during the war providing the necessary context for understanding Ukrainian journalistic culture transformation. It analyses the impact of the conflict on press freedom in the country and demonstrates examples of peace journalism initiatives started by Ukrainian media and journalists during the war highlighting an increasing need for international media support.

Chapter 3 is devoted to specifically analysing GFMD's emergency media support actions dedicated to assisting media and journalists in Ukraine during the ongoing war. A critical approach is used to identify the benefits and drawbacks of GFMD advocacy efforts (launching the Perugia Declaration for Ukraine and organizing a high-level session on the safety of Ukrainian journalists at the UNESCO World Press Freedom Day conference); collaboration with major social media companies (collating the list of the trusted public interest news organization in Ukraine for big tech companies to verify); teamwork with GFMD members and partners on identifying needs and opportunities for Ukrainian media and journalists both in-country and in exile (creating emergency mapping coordination sheet) and setting up dedicated resource centre "Ukraine media support coordination". A comparative analysis of GFMD's previous experience with emergency media support in different countries is used to formulate general recommendations for multi-layered emergency media support in the areas of conflict globally. Its approaches and long-term goals require to be continuously developed and thus closely studied.

Therefore, **10 general recommendations** suggested at the end of this thesis can be implemented by international media development organizations or used by scholars in further academic research. The thesis aims to contribute to the idea of media as a key actor in the peacebuilding process and of peace journalism as a powerful tool to counter

violence and shift the audience's perception toward the search for peaceful solutions and de-escalation of conflicts. It also aspires to foster the discussion of the necessity of emergency media support for national but especially local media reporting from the conflict zones as a way to maintain independent public interest journalism.

## **Chapter 1. Role of communication and media in the process of peacebuilding**

The main aim of this chapter is to define the impact of communication and media on the process of deescalating conflicts and building peace between warring parties. It explores how media can contribute to depolarizing societies and counter-violence not only preventively or as a post-crisis reaction, but also during ongoing conflicts. It then explores particular cases of the media influence when fallen into the wrong hands can lead to conflict escalation (Rwanda genocide case) or generate massive hate of one society towards another and provoke physical conflict (case of Russian propaganda). That leads to the concept of peace journalism as an alternative to violence and one of the major conflict resolution tools. Conflict-sensitive journalism is also explored as the perspective way for media to put the conflict in a perspective and focus on the damaging long-term consequences of violence. The last part identifies the role of local media in the peacebuilding process and highlights the growing need for media support.

### **1.1 Conceptualization of communication for peace**

The theoretical framework of this thesis was built on Hamelink's concept of *communication for peace*. He rightfully stresses that media studies have paid surprisingly little attention to the peace issue mostly focusing on the impact of war propaganda in media, how media cover wars and conflicts and how it can prevent conflict (Hamelink 2021: 15). It could also be added that most literature concentrates on media as a tool to prevent the conflict or restore peace after the conflict is resolved. But there is remarkably little research dedicated to the pivotal peacebuilding role of media during the ongoing conflict. There are also certain gaps in the academic literature when it comes to differentiating efforts aimed at preventing war and promoting peace. This work is intending to explore the latter as the media strategy to promote peace in the process of peacebuilding has more long-term goals: instead of simply advocating for the ceasefire it is seeking the cause of the collision and changing the attitude to it to make peace more long-lasting. According to Hamelink, one of the reasons for the neglect of peace issues in the studies is a quite vague understanding of the concept of peace itself.

The idea of peaceful coexistence was always one of the key points of the Soviet Union's foreign policy and was widely promoted in the internal media (Karpov 1964). But Soviet Union's understanding of the concept of peace was very specific and was manipulated to be used for propaganda purposes. Therefore, it is essential both for media and journalists to thoroughly understand and clearly specify for the public their understanding of peace when advocating for it. Hamelink suggests the conceptualization of peace which will be used as a working definition of peace in this research. The scholar considers peace as a shared feeling of responsibility for fighting evil, acknowledging the vulnerability of humans, and developing strong and resistant communities (Hamelink 2021: 30). It contains within itself humanity's desire of living through oneness and could be identified as "*the moment in which we celebrate cosmopolitan togetherness*" (2021:31).

Unfortunately, conflict is a defining element of modern history. Only in this century there have already been 42 wars, and almost half of them are still ongoing (History Guy). And during such challenging times collaborative nature of communication which Hamelink calls "*deep dialogue*" becomes the key condition for the existence of peacebuilding (2021: 30).

Galtung rightfully noted that promoting a peaceful culture and reaching peace is possible primarily through means of communication and mediation tools. It requires profound changes in the mass conscience as "*while violence can be caused by a few people, the presence of peace requires the cooperation of many*" (1985:6). Communication owns a soft power – the capacity to shape people's minds, influence through attraction and persuasion. In our network society, the one who can shift or reshape the discourse is the one having an actual influence on the situation. This communicative power is the core means of policymaking and society.

The very idea of communication techniques to promote peace goes way back to the beginning of the last century. In 1927 Laswell (whose model of communication is still used by media professionals worldwide) when suggested using propaganda tools to promote peace wrote "*Let us, therefore, reason together ... and find the good, and when we have found it, let us find out how to make up the public mind to accept it*" (Lasswell 1927:5).

Significant development of communication technologies allowed media to reach and connect with the global audience. Their report *Search for Common Ground* (2011) highlights the shift from the traditional, vertical approach based on the hierarchy of communication between various institutions to the modern communication space defined by horizontal interactive networks of communication which include a large number of actors and channels for the transmitting and broadcasting of information. The growing popularity of social media and different communication tools online led to the new format of communication which Castells (1996) calls "*mass self-communication*".

By thinking "*outside war propaganda*" (Lynch) independent media facilitate a lot to the preservation and establishment of peace in the war or conflict zones. Turning from a passive observer into a more engaged actor, media can influence and shape governments' policy responses. Puddephatt provides an example of how TV reports of the UK channel Independent Television News (ITN) proving that Serb detention camps at Omarska and Trnopolj do exist, became a base and boosted the adoption of United Nations Security Council resolution 770 in 1992 (Puddephatt 2006). The resolution was justifying the need for provision of the humanitarian aid as one of the key elements to restoring international peace (UN 1992).

UNESCO Mass Media Declaration of 1978 states very clearly that the role of the mass media is crucial in strengthening peace and countering incitement to war. Among the main contributions that mass media are making to counter the war UNESCO highlights the following:

- Media ensure the respect of the rights and needs of every individual trying to fix misunderstandings between nations by countering ignorance, prejudices and most importantly dehumanization that war entails
- Media give voices to discriminated and oppressed making their thoughts and opinions matter (the case of citizens in the occupied territories)
- Media draw the world's attention to the most atrocious villainies which affect humanity and broadcast governmental policy decisions to fight them promote the decrement of the tension on the international level and peaceful settlement of the conflict influencing this way both high-level politicians and civilians

The role that the media plays in conflict resolution became more noticeable in the 1990s when conflict-sensitive and constructive journalism was first recognized as an influential tool in the field of media for peacebuilding (Betz 2012). According to Bratic (2016), media has various functions when it comes to conflict prevention and peacebuilding. First of all, media provide their audience with important information and helps to interpret it in a way that is easier to comprehend. During the conflict, the events are unfolding quite quickly, and people rely on the media whose responsibility is to rapidly provide relevant and reliable information such as officially agreed places for shelter or evacuation trains timetables, the latest news from the frontline etc. Being a watchdog, the media also bring to the attention of the public and higher authorities pivotal social issues which remain unnoticed or require an immediate solution. This way media can influence policymakers to actions or interventions. Usually, it is mutually useful cooperation as media can also be used by policymakers as a platform to spread an important message. It is especially relevant for peacebuilding organizations which, however, should clearly imagine their specific goals and target audience to use media wisely and efficiently. (Bratic 2016)

Uneven media coverage of the conflicts is an important issue in the modern media space. Many recent conflicts in Africa remained almost unnoticed by the international community and this neglect and palpable feeling of inequality helps little with promoting peace and establishing democracy. Modern conflicts, both internal and international, follow different patterns (Puddephatt 2006). Some of them are evolving quickly and some of them are too complicated and prolonged in a time but it shouldn't affect in any way the amount of media attention. By keeping an eye on the unfolding of the conflicts, journalists contribute largely to the international concern and increasing efforts of peacebuilders in that region. Journalists also make sure that humanity doesn't forget about people from the areas affected by conflict and lets those people know about international support, both from governments and civil society.

Consequently, one of the key missions of the media in the peacebuilding process is helping to build bridges between parties of the conflict. Reduction of polarization should become the main concern of the media outlets during the war or conflict as this is one of the conditions to create a climate for future negotiations. Promoting peace should ensure the growth of public support for the peace agreements between belligerents and peaceful

resolution of the conflict in general. Covering the news stories in a certain way to build empathy and find a common ground between warring parties is an essential part of the media activities in the process of promoting peace. The importance of peace journalism and conflict-sensitive journalism for this peacebuilding process will be discussed further in this chapter.

The free flow of information led to unlimited possibilities to influence other information consumers. And when it comes to conflict this influence can be applied both for good (mediation, peace journalism) and bad (disinformation, bullying) purposes.

## **1.2 Truth-telling as a key element of the successful peace promoting**

Media in the hands of propagandists and spin doctors is a dangerous tool. In Resolution 11 0(11) adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1947, it is stated that the UN condemns "*all forms of propaganda which are designed or likely to provoke or encourage any threat to the peace, breach of the peace, or act of aggression*" and encourages all member states to use all their means of propaganda for good by promoting peaceful relations amongst nations (UN 1947). The destructive power of propaganda has been widely studied but what interests us is how the same means of communication that distribute propaganda could contribute to peace as surprisingly little amount of literature focuses on the connection between communication and peace.

One of the crucial flaws of propaganda is that it segregates the news in media into politically "acceptable" and "not acceptable" eliminating the latter although having absolutely no moral and legal right to do so. IFJ Declaration of Principles on the Conduct of Journalists (also known as the Bordeaux Declaration) first adopted in 1954 highlights in its first principle that "*respect for truth and for the right of the public to truth is the first duty of the journalist*" (IFJ 1954). By depriving the citizens of the truth or misinterpreting it creators of propaganda use communication to exercise their power within the network and in their hands, communication could be as dangerous and harmful as a physical weapon and could provoke actual warfare (Bojesen,2013). The danger of calling the opponents fascists or Nazis and transmitting this message via media channels

is nurturing the strong feeling of hate and anger inside people which will inevitably lead to physical violence. The danger alert will provoke the danger itself. Or, as Hamelink (2021) puts it, "*When words are used as weapons, a spiral of violence is used that can end in the use of weapons as words*". Therefore, truth-telling is one of the key elements of the successful peacebuilding process.

Mendeloff (2004) categorizes the following peace-promoting effects of truth-telling:

1. assuring justice
2. fostering social and psychological healing and reconciliation by promoting individual over collective responsibility
3. establishing an official historical record
4. serving a public education function
5. promoting democracy by forming respect for human rights and the rule of law
6. pre-empting and deterring future crimes

Truth-telling fosters peace by providing justice for victims and families of war atrocities. It is argued that exposing the truth, assigning responsibility to war or conflict criminals, and either punishing them or compelling them to publicly recognize their misdeeds contribute to achieving justice. In addition to helping the psychological healing of individual traumas, speaking the truth also promotes social healing and reconciliation by emphasizing individual rather than communal accountability. As for the official historical record, providing an impartial account of the past may serve as the foundation for building a shared history, which in turn helps serve as the basis for reconciliation. If the historical truth is known, demagogues will not be that successful in abetting hatred by appealing to historical distortions and myths (Huyse 2003:30) Public education function of truth-telling shouldn't be underestimated as well. By educating the nation about its true past and teaching to learn from history future resurgence of violence could be potentially prevented. The positive impact of truth-telling can be also tracked in strengthening democracy and promoting reforms for those institutions that acted as a catalyst for starting the conflict or contributed to its unfolding.

Additional peace-promoting effects of truth-telling which Mendeloff highlights are pre-emption and deterrence (2004:360). When the truth is revealed by criminal inquiry and



prosecution, war criminals are apprehended and incarcerated. By physically removing them from society, further criminal activity can be prevented. Penalizing warmongers also conveys the message that such actions will not be tolerated by society.

In its report on the free and responsible press in 1947, the Hutchins Commission emphasized the importance of taking into consideration society's interests and representing it responsibly in media. Every day journalists throughout the world make conscious or unconscious choices to move as close or as far as possible from the truth their audience has a right to know. With more up-to-date tools available for influencing while reporting, journalists are able to build up the narrative by moving in the different directions of the spectrum eventually reaching extremes: helping society evolve or throwing it back to the past, cultivating certain values or devaluing them completely, building peace or destroying it.

Although the media may be used to purposefully incite conflict, they can also contribute to it inadvertently. This kind of truth omission and passive encouragement to violence happens most often where journalists lack professional competence, the media culture is weak, or there is little or no tradition of an independent press. As a result of the way in which they report, journalists might inflame frustrations and spread prejudices in these conditions, despite the fact that their goals are not necessarily evil, and they are not being controlled by an outside organization.

In civilizations emerging from the violent war that are divided, the truth might pose a threat. Frequently, valid realities become fuel for dangerous hypernationalism, particularly in the case of crime victims. Self-victimization myths are among the most harmful types of nationalism ideology (Van Evera 1994) The case of Russian propaganda can be studied as a perfect modern example of the poisonous effect disinformation has on society.

### **1.3 Importance of debunking disinformation for war prevention: Russian propaganda**

One of the key conditions for remaining objective and unbiased is the diversity of information sources and their suppliers. Diversity in media ownership is crucial since, eventually, owners have the greatest influence on content. A society is more susceptible to media abuse when all or a significant fraction of media organizations are controlled by one or a group of individuals, especially if these individuals share the same ethnicity, religion, political party, or location (Thomson 2007)

Nevertheless, it is usually not achievable in authoritarian or totalitarian regimes where propaganda rules. Propaganda decides for the citizens what is good for them providing them only with a decision, not the possible options. That makes people the passive consumers of the information and the feeling of not influencing important decisions eventually lead to citizens' political apathy and worsening of the political situation in the state.

Propaganda is nothing new. Certain techniques are used by propagandists in both peace and wartime to shift perceptions and opinions for centuries. Casey (1942) outlines three primary propaganda tactics. The first one is stimulation. The propagandist attempts to convince people to embrace without questioning his arguments or to behave as he desires. The purpose of employing suggestion or stimulation as a kind of propaganda is to convince the public to embrace a claim for which there are no logical grounds. In order to circumvent the audience's critical responses, the suggestion is one of the propagandist's most crucial methods. In advertising, the suggestion is a rapidly developing technique used to generate in the consumer's mind a fake demand for a certain product.

The second sort of propaganda is merely a more sophisticated form of suggestion. This technique is the use of clues, innuendoes, or indirect assertions, and it is used when it is necessary to generate a favourable or unfavourable image of a particular notion in the minds of individuals who will subconsciously remember this impression as a given.

The third form of propaganda is appealing to the audience's recognized wants. According to psychologists, desire is a crucial component of believing. The self-serving

propagandist will analyse popular opinion to determine what people are "for" and "against" in order to choose the labels he will employ to elicit the right responses. He is aware of which phrases elicit good sentiments and provide a favourable backdrop for his message, therefore he employs them. On the other side, he may use other phrases to persuade his audience to oppose a goal or concept that he considers to be detrimental to his own goals.

The use of media as a platform for spreading disinformation, brainwashing and persuasion is a normal practice for authoritarian and totalitarian states during every phase of the conflict. As Mercier (2015:651) wonderfully formulates it: "*Before the bullets fly, the media serve to convince and mobilize; during the hostilities, they help conceal, intoxicate and galvanize; and afterwards they help legitimize what has happened, to shape perceptions of the victory and to silence any criticism*".

The modern military strategy incorporates media as one of its goals. Military activities are supported by media strategies, media relations are managed by experts, and the military services invest in staff training to teach their commanders the necessity to grasp the media process and cultivate strong relationships with journalists. The military has gained the competence to offer journalists "products" that fit their requirements (reports, press kits etc) (Mercier 2015). Regarding war disinformation, one of the modern examples of the media being utilized to mask the military goal to transmit information to the adversary is when the US government revealed to journalists its intentions for a seaborne invasion of Kuwait City in 1991. The Iraqi army started mobilizing soldiers there promptly. Yet, the manoeuvre was meant to shift the focus away from the Americans' true intentions, which were to surround Kuwait and the Iraqi army by invading Iraqi territory directly – the infamous Daguet operation (Mercier 2015:652)

In his book *This Is Not Propaganda. Adventures in the War Against Reality* Pomerantsev explicitly describes how in the nineties and the first years of the twenty-first century, a subset of Russian geopolitical analysts with connections to security agencies became fixated on the concept of information warfare while striving to comprehend the history and the downfall of the Soviet Union specifically. Secret service agents made scholars believe that the Soviet Union fell not because of its terrible economic policies, human rights violations, or propaganda, but because of "*information viruses*" introduced by

Western security services via Trojan-horse concepts like free speech and financial reform (Pomerantsev 2019:93) As the Kremlin sought explanations for the protest movements and the growing dissatisfaction at home, which broke into hundreds of thousands of protests against Vladimir Putin's leadership in 2011 and 2012, TV spokesmen and spin doctors amplified this omnipresent information war concept.

Jānis Bērziņš (2014) of the Latvian Military Academy, in a summary of the goals of Russian "*next-generation warfare*," defines a transition from direct extermination of the enemy to its inner deterioration; from a war with military assets to irregular groups; from direct collision to contactless conflict; from the physical surroundings to the individual consciousness; and from the war in a certain period of time to the permanent war state as the normal form of nation's life. This next-generation information warfare was actively applied by Russia to Ukraine which led to Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 and the consequent war. Despite the fact that the Russian government continues to reject it, Russian media have been in an information war mode since the autumn of 2013.

As Pomerantsev puts it "*If there was one aim to the Kremlin storytelling, it was this: to show that the desire for 'freedom', that hangover of Cold War logic, didn't lead to peace and prosperity but war and devastation [...]To make this narrative real meant ensuring Ukraine could never achieve peace. The country had to bleed*". (2019,101)

Such significant restriction of media freedom not only jeopardises the Russian information environment but creates a dangerous precedent. In her Regular Report to the Permanent Council (for the period from 25 November 2021 to 19 May 2022) Teresa Ribeiro, the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media emphasized that threats against and mistreatment of journalists and media in the Russian Federation pose a danger for the whole shared information environment in the OSCE region and, by extension, its security. Some may exploit the precedent set by the Russian government as an excuse to tighten their grip on media freedom and further reduce the field for an independent press. It might even raise the possibility that shared norms surrounding media freedom could be considered flexible or susceptible to interpretation by authoritarian regimes.

#### 1.4 Narrative battle against hate speech in media

Information battlefield is as dangerous as a real one, and the victories won there are as important for the course of the war as military achievements. When describing the media environment in Rwanda shortly before and during the genocide Thomson (2007) uses the term borrowed from physics - *the Heisenberg effect*. The Heisenberg effect, named after German physicist Werner Heisenberg, explains how viewing a particle alters its activity, speed, or trajectory. Parallels could be arguably drawn between this scientific process and media space: media has the power to influence the behaviour of higher authorities even without actively intervening but simply by objective, responsible and independent reporting. It is especially valuable in times of conflict as the lack of necessary media coverage can be described as what Thomson calls the "*inverse Heisenberg effect*" (2007:453). When journalists betray the principles of fact-based, independent public interest journalism or underestimate the importance of a certain issue, their inaction impacts the actions of conflict's instigators who know that their hands are untied and there is no one out there to criticise and bring attention to their atrocities.

Hate speech which is extensively spread by propaganda in media during the conflicts eventually leads to the idea of a culture war. "*The idea of the culture war is a powerful device to simplify complex political debates into simple matters of "us vs them" and serves to erase nuance and common ground in favour of outrage and polarisation. Polarisation is itself an important facet of information warfare and propaganda,*" says Liam Monsell senior analyst and counter-extremism expert at Protection Group International (in Karakoulaki 2022) Therefore, culture wars pose a danger of radicalizing individuals to an extreme level which with inevitably transforms into physical violence with time.

To develop more coordinated and thorough strategies for combating disinformation and hate speech, it is essential to comprehend the circumstances in which media operate: social, political, cultural and economic. Much may be learned from the experiences of local media actors who struggle to overcome divisions within their neighbourhoods while confronting a shared authoritarian danger. Encouraging various groups and cross-sectional collaboration among media, civil society activists, international organizations, and other grassroots activities is essential for any counter-disinformation effort (Engelken& Sheives 2021). In secure, democratic countries the situation with safety and

data protection is different from those countries torn by political conflicts. Consequently, it is also essential to develop institutions which could resist socio-political influences in those countries.

In terms of media development, it is crucial for media donors to operatively shift their focus to countries which are situated under repressive regimes and lack the tradition of democracy and free media. Experience of Global Forum for Medi Development in Syria showed that the main obstacle on the way to supporting the independence of local journalists and media in such cases is an incomplete understanding of the country's media landscape and lack of trust between local and international media actors (GFMD, 2015). Therefore, in its recommendations, GFMD highlighted that donors who aim to combat extremism and radicalism must also recognize that a democratically oriented and peaceful future for Syria cannot be achieved without a well-educated citizenry enlightened by an independent and objective media. (More on the GFMD's emergency media support in Syria in Chapter 3).

Sir Howard Morrison, a former prosecutor for war crimes who is now a counsellor to the Ukrainian government, has warned of the risks presented by the sometimes offensive and dehumanizing remarks made by Russian politicians and media figures against Ukraine and its citizens. "*Genocide is often rooted in the way that one nation or one ethnic group views another and how it describes them,*" Morrison highlighted, reminding how Nazis called the Poles "subhumans" before and during World War II, or how Hutu leaders in Rwanda alluded to Tutsis as "cockroaches" shortly before the genocide. "*It's this dehumanisation – and the pretence that they are not a real people or have a real culture.*" (Oksamytna 2022) One of the horrible outcomes of such dehumanization in the media space became the genocide in Rwanda in 1994.

### **1.5 Impact of the media on conflict escalation: Rwanda genocide**

The Rwandan government and military leaders perpetrated one of the most heinous crimes against human rights of the 20th century in 1994. During a three-month period of a disastrous civil war, Rwandan authorities conducted an extermination campaign against the country's minority Tutsi population that resulted in the deaths of at least 500,000

people (Des Forges 1999). In his book *Media and Mass Atrocity: Rwanda genocide* Alan Thomson provides a powerful way to grasp the scale of tragedy in Rwanda: he suggests imagining that each word in his 702 pages book is a name of the victim in order to humanize these numbers to think about someone you know. (2019:35)

Internal and international media outlets had a key role in the Rwanda genocide of 1994. Various scholars concluded that the media campaign was so influential that ultimately provoked the genocide (Bromley 2011; Kayumba and Kimonyo 2006; Kellow and Steeves 1998). According to Kellow and Steeves (1998), Radio-Télévision Libre des Mille Collines (RTLM) which was controlled by the government had a disastrous impact on the mindset of Hutu residents. Extremists that surrounded the Rwandan president formed the private radio station RTLM as the voice of the majority Hutu population. And RTLM echoed other radical outlets, such as the newspaper Kangura. As soon as the aeroplane of Rwandan president Juvénal Habyarimana was shot down by unidentified assailants, RTLM sent over a clear message: the Tutsi were guilty; they were evil, and Rwanda will be a better place without them. (Thomson 2007)

RTLM journalists actively used the "hate media" approach at first to dehumanize their neighbours, the Tutsi people, and create racist stereotypes and then openly spread the calls for rape and slaughter which helped those in power who advocated for violence incite genocide.

According to Mark Doyle (in Thomson 2019), two wars were occurring simultaneously in Rwanda: armed conflict and genocidal conflict. Both are interdependent and unique. In the shooting war, there were two conventional armies engaged in combat, while in the genocidal war, one of these armies — the government side, aided by civilians — was responsible for mass murder.

The level of trust and respect for Rwandan media, especially radio, before and during the conflict was quite high which could be directly related to the low level of literacy (less than 50%) (McIntyre & Sobel 2017). Radio was also used as the main governmental channel for spreading official information as well as propaganda and was almost completely controlled by higher authorities in Rwanda. According to Thomson (2007), the first call encouraging to kill Tutsi population was broadcasted by radio in 1992, two

years before the genocide. It was justified as "self-defence" as radio journalists reassured that otherwise, Tutsi will attack the Hutu people first.

Most journalists weren't professionally trained so by taking the side of the government and abandoning grounding principles of non-biased, objective and independent journalism they transformed into social activists and were actively engaged in political actions and mass murders (Taylor 1999) Eventually, Hassan Ngeze, Kangura editor-in-chief, Ferdinand Nahimana, and Jean-Bosco Barayagwiza, RTLM board members, were found guilty of inciting genocide and sentenced to life in prison in 2003 during the United Nations International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), the first international court since the Nuremberg conviction of the founder and publisher of the Nazi antisemitic newspaper *Der Stürmer* Julius Streicher. (UN,2003)

Radio-Télévision Libre des Mille Collines (RTLM) wasn't always like this. When it started broadcasting in 1993 it quickly gained the attention of listeners all around Rwanda for its informal and vivacious style, modern music, witty anchors and interviews with usual people. Compared to the more traditional Radio Rwanda (which had a monopoly as the only radio station in Rwanda), it seemed more attractive, and its audience grew quite quickly. Discreetly for Rwanda's people, RTLM gradually became a voice of the Hutu-led government steadily becoming more aggressive and changing its tone. After the assassination of Rwanda's president, it became an absolute hate media. Authorities exploited RTLM and Radio Rwanda to incite and guide murders in places most ready to target Tutsi and Hutu opposition members as well as locations where killings were first opposed. They depended on both radio channels to excite and organize their followers, and then to provide explicit instructions for carrying out the murders (Thomson, 2007)

Throughout the genocide, RTLM maintained the interactive style it had started in the preceding months. Journalists travelled across Kigali interviewing regular citizens and allowing them to explain on-air what they were doing and why. This affirmation by ordinary citizens of the "righteousness" of their actions contributed to the legitimacy of the genocide in the eyes of radio listeners. When international media began to criticize the genocide, RTLM rejected all negative comments and reassuring listeners that winning in this war is what mattered the most and that all the critics won't remember any crimes committed if they win (Chrétien et al., 1995). Rwandan journalist Thomas Kamilindi who



resigned six months prior to the genocide recalls that radio in Rwanda embodied the voice and will of president Habyarimana already a few years before the genocide started. "*It was difficult to do truly professional work as we were constantly faced with demands from the authorities on the manner in which we should work, right down to the formulation of a phrase*", he shares. (in Thomson, 2007,138)

The absence of international media significantly affected how events unfolded. International media not only failed to completely comprehend and describe the impending genocide but also largely ignored the war crimes done by the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), which is currently Rwanda's governing party, during and after the genocide, leaving us with a distorted narrative. (Dallaire in Thomson, 2019) According to Dallaire, at the time all the attention of international news outlets was dedicated to Yugoslavia and it once more leads to the idea of uneven media coverage of the conflicts worldwide that was mentioned earlier in this chapter. Ethnic-religious conflict in Yugoslavia was easier for Global North countries to explain and study. Whereas conflict in Rwanda wasn't even considered thoroughly and was at first neglected and perceived as a kind of local conflict between the tribes that aren't worth global media coverage. Even though there were more people killed or injured during the 100 days of conflict in Rwanda than during the 6 years in Yugoslavia (Dallaire in Thomson, 2019). Due to their reliance on tribalism as a justification for the bloodshed, the foreign media seldom acknowledged the perpetrators of the genocide who started the mass killings. The impression given to readers was that this tribal warfare had suddenly erupted. By attributing the atrocities to tribal warfare and not to the identified people who were guilty ("*an orgy of tribal killing kills hundreds*"), the media absolved the true perpetrators of responsibility (Wall in Thomson 2007)

Significant editorial choices are often handled remotely and through the perspective of Western values. It implies that the news is oriented toward a foreign audience and that white and Western personalities and institutions are often the focus. (Granger 2021)

Decolonizing media priorities should be one of the key areas of improvement for modern media worldwide. Promoting peace couldn't be achievable without understanding the world first. In order to succeed in the post-abyssal thinking that Sousa Santos (2018) was proposing and, hence, post-abyssal reporting, journalists, especially ones coming from

the Global North countries, should aim to acknowledge the existence of the abyssal line that hides the local context of the conflict from global reporters.

### **1.6 Journalism as a tool countering violent extremism**

Journalists in non-Western countries are more likely to choose active and engaged roles when compared to their Western colleagues. (Hanitzsch et al. 2011) It can be perceived as a necessary attribute of developing society and transitional democracy. Journalists are also keener on promoting changes in the society "*where such transformation rapidly occurs —or where it seems needed*" (Hanitzsch et al. 2011:281) The degree of press control and limitations varies significantly amongst countries in Africa. Kenya and Nigeria have a history of a generally open and independent press, whereas Rwanda is repressive (BBC 2020).

However, the media landscape in Rwanda has noticeably evolved after the genocide. The number of media in the country has increased mostly thanks to international donors' support. Kayumba and Kimonyo (2006) note the importance of a special training program for local journalists at the National University of Rwanda's School of Journalism and Communication launched in 1995 by UNESCO. Promoting genocide or inciting ethnic divisionism is clearly prohibited by Rwanda's Constitution as "*a crime committed by any oral or written expression or any act of division that could generate conflicts among the population or cause disputes*" (Rwanda 2001, Article 3). Nevertheless, this article is still used by an authoritarian government to silence journalists and it eventually leads to journalistic self-censorship (McIntyre & Sobel 2017).

McIntyre's qualitative research based on the in-depth interview of 24 Rwandan journalists showed that Rwandan journalists adopt an active reporting style as opposed to a passive one; they also deeply appreciate their distinctive role in promoting togetherness and reconciliation; they implement constructive journalism techniques and hope that it will have a positive effect on society. Many of the journalists emphasized that taking into consideration the history of Rwanda, they have not only journalistic responsibility to report and inform people but also to enlighten them for the sake of unity and in order to

guarantee that what the media did during the genocide never happens again (McIntyre & Sobel 2017: 68).

In addition, several Rwandan journalists consider themselves watchdogs who keep the higher authorities accountable. Rwandan journalists can't function as government watchdogs in the same capacity as Western journalists, and the relationship between journalists and higher authorities in Rwanda is complicated. To counter extremism, modern Rwandan journalists also serve as a mediator between people and government. By portraying the stories of genocide survivors and criminals coexisting peacefully and using solutions journalism techniques, the media successfully focus on the recovery process and peace-oriented discourse. McIntyre provides an example of one of the radio programs dedicated to the stories of mothers striving to overcome the pain and embarrassment of being raped and having their children rejected by society. In that program, those guilty of genocide were asking for mercy and often were granted forgiveness (McIntyre & Sobel 2017).

Referring to the role of modern Rwandan journalists the term "*contextualist journalist*" might be applied, which McIntyre, Dahmen, and Abdenour (2016) introduced to describe a socially responsible journalist who strives to offer context in the materials and takes the well-being of society into account throughout the newsgathering process.

And yet, according to Skovsgaard and Bro (2017:61), the word '*role*' is a metaphor borrowed and repurposed from the theatre, where individuals must perform a character depending on the plot of the play. To put it another way, cultural expectations often define roles. In the Rwandan context, the reconciling, engaged, contextualist function of a journalist is indicative of society's post-genocide hopes for unification.

Professional, unbiased, and public interest journalism itself is a major input in the peacebuilding process because it facilitates the dialogue between citizens, government and various political forces providing a safe space for productive discussion and problem-solving.

Promoting peace journalism that can act as a counterbalance to official propaganda and manipulation is therefore the greatest approach to prevent governments from inciting hate and violence via the mass media.

### **1.7 Aim of peace journalism in peacebuilding process**

We must admit that conventional news values tend towards conflict escalation. (Hackett and Schroeder 2008). There are a lot of mixed feelings and reasons inside us which make us humans, and which in most cases make us choose news about death, fear, or danger over any peaceful news. The peace-making process is harder for the audience to comprehend and harder for the journalists to cover as it is multi-layered and, in most cases, not even the news in a journalistic sense of this word. While justifying the much greater amount of news about the conflicts in the public interest, the media make a fatal mistake by distorting the real picture of the world in the minds of the public. Such an uneven proportion of the news makes readers, listeners and viewers believe that conflict is common and peace is an anomaly. And yet even the most diverse news world is inevitably misrepresented as there's only a limited number of events that each media can cover. The divide between news that is usually covered by media and those which most likely will be omitted is quite predictable. Jake Lynch (2008) noted that media outlets mostly rely on the official source of information rather than witnesses or survivor's testimony, even important or credible ones; events are easier to report about than processes, especially long-lasting and complex like peacebuilding ones; finally, looking at any conflict from the stereotypical position of two warring sides and separating belligerents on "good" and "bad" in advance is a starting point of every average report about the conflict.

And yet despite all that peace journalism exists, which makes its existence even more valuable and necessary. As opposed to war journalism, it shifts our focus as news consumers from the violence to its effects; it teaches us empathy and motivates us to be initiative in dealing with injustice and outrage; it makes the public care about non-violent solutions more than a victory. Instead of the standard competitive model and zero-sum

scenario usually intrinsic to war journalism, peace journalism focuses on win-win scenarios encouraging resolutions to conflict and using a peace-oriented approach.

As Hamelink summarized, peace journalism "*provides a more balanced news coverage, seeks alternative interpretations, focuses on context, is proactive, humanizes all sides in a conflict, exposes lies from all sides, exposes the suffering, pain and trauma of warfare, and de-anonymizes the evil-doers*". (2021:16) Thus, the social responsibility of peace reporting lies in de-escalating conflicts and promoting peaceful co-existence. Peace journalism proves that the obsessive focus of the modern media outlets on negative news and danger alerts is erroneous as it only divides people into the opposite sides and provokes violent conflicts. McIntyre highlights peace journalism as one of the forms of news framing along with solutions journalism and restorative narrative (which quite often overlap each other) that prove journalists' aspiration for the public good and can be summarized with the term "*constructive journalism*". (McIntyre & Sobel 2017)

One of the objectives of peace journalism is to provide a media climate in which calls to peace agreements and peaceful, non-violent solutions to the conflict in general, could be heard among the flow of hatred, aggression, fear, and panic. It particularly includes avoiding certain stereotypes about actors involved in the conflict to emerge and in this way predetermine their roles. The practice of prejudices and prejudgement is destructive for the fact-based journalism that's aimed at promoting peace. Peace journalists being aware of the destructive power of manipulation should be aspired to use in their work the power of persuasion instead. Bratic and Schirch rightfully emphasize: "*When people's cognition, attitudes, or behaviours change by their own choice, as a result of persuasion, the changes are more likely to be long lasting than if the changes were brought about by force or manipulation*" (2007:13)

The concept of peace journalism was criticized by researchers who argue that it is often confused with the concept of mediation; that peace journalism doesn't have that profound influence on political decisions as it was expected; and finally that it is very similar to the aims of standard professional journalism and there's no need to single it out separately as it puts in question the objectivity and detachment of the standard journalism (Gjeltén 2001; Hanitzsch 2004, 2007; Loyn 2007). Hanitzsch (2004) particularly stressed that because of peace journalism's "naïve realism" epistemology peace journalists are

overburdened with responsibilities that are better left to politicians and policymakers. The existence and impact of peace journalism are directly related to the culture of peace in a particular society. If this culture isn't evolved enough or almost absent peace journalists aren't capable of major social changes on their own: "*We should rather ask: what kind of society is it that creates the sort of journalism that has no sense of peace?*" (2004: 491)

But what makes peace journalism stand out, according to Lynch, is framing. Entman (1993) gives quite a precise definition of framing in communications emphasizing that it means "to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described". (Entman 1993:52) Earlier in this chapter it was discussed how uneven media coverage of the conflicts internationally harms establishing democracy and promoting peace on a global scale. Peace journalists keep in mind how their framing of the report could affect the audience's perception. Moreover, they should be aware of the frames already constructed in the public's minds and when it comes to conflict reporting peace journalists aim to shift their audience's perception towards the search for peaceful solutions and de-escalation of conflicts using a specific media toolkit. As Bratic highlighted: "*People are not only depositories of an endless stream of news, they process themselves, they have their frames of reference, more or less explicit. They would like to have these frames of reference not only deepened but also challenged*" (2016:34).

It also takes an experienced and educated peace journalist to sense the frames that political parties are usually trying to impose on the media which are covering conflicts and crises. Higher authorities tend to insist on their perspective as the only right one and abuse their position to make their narrative a dominant one. Therefore, it is the peace journalist's job to challenge the frame which tries to prevail in the media space by presenting to the audience at least two or more views on the issue (Entman 1993).

In response to criticism, Kempf (2008) argues that it is important not to oppose peace journalism to good journalism but rather look at it from the perspective that good journalism IS peace journalism in its essence as it strives for responsible reporting and not only informs about the issue but searches for solutions. According to peace journalism scholars, objectivity and the uninvolved position of standard journalism are not enough

when it comes to covering the conflict (Lynch& McGoldrick 2005). It is irresponsible on the part of journalists to assume that reporting facts only and making decisions on what to report about will not have any harmful consequences. During the coverage of violent conflict, objectivity could be manipulated and used to create a false picture in which how the events are unfolding is the only way possible, leaving no space for alternatives. As Lynch and McGoldrick noted: "*By obscuring the way it came to be, it can prevent us from seeing how it could come to be different, making change seem impossible and cutting down the options for creative solutions*" (2005:23) This way peace journalists are able to focus the attention of their audience on the solution to the problem instead of the problem itself, engage people in the active discussion and provoke them to think about possible responses to the issue.

In the book *Peace Journalism* Lynch and McGoldrick (2005) were among the first who identified the following tools to map the conflict:

- Mapping the stakeholders
- Mapping needs and fears
- Onion approach
- Partisan perception

Mapping the stakeholders helps peace journalists to shift their focus from the stereotypical bipolar concept of conflict and reach out to as many actors who have an impact on the unfolding of the conflict as possible in order to collect different perspectives. Mapping the needs and fears of the parties involved contributes to a better understanding of the complexity of the conflict and its underlying reasons. Search for common ground and common visions among multiple stakeholders is a real opportunity to open up a space for a peace-oriented dialogue. Here's where the so-called "peeling the onion" approach would come in handy – the unravelling of true motifs of the stakeholders that are usually hiding behind vague and catchy political slogans. Partisan Perception is the way parties in a conflict perceive each other and have different comprehension of the same facts. To compare those perceptions means to look closer at the very source of the conflict trying to understand why both parties don't have the same vision of the issue and their views are so polarized.

Kempf (2007) proposed that peace journalism should be considered a process that consists of two main steps. The first step which should be made at the beginning of the conflict and during its most tense phase is bringing to the public's attention the very idea of de-escalation of the conflict and "*deconstructing the polarization of the conflict parties*" (2007:7). He admits, though, that it should be done very delicately as there is always a high chance that the audience directly involved in the conflict will perceive any reporting that contradicts their position as propaganda or manipulation. Therefore, proposing solutions should be put away till the second step when some realistic and practical recommendations to policymakers should be suggested aimed to reconcile the enemies by inspiring them to identify the source of their clash and resolve it. Only by following this two-step plan, according to Kempf, peace journalism would really contribute to the peacebuilding process and have a tangible impact. (2007:12)

Therefore, peace journalism is not about reporting wins and losses from the frontline and advocating for the ceasefire (which is war journalism's field of interest) but about seeking the cause of the collision and changing the attitude to it to make peace more long-lasting. Surprisingly, not a single scholar has mentioned a key fact that becomes apparent when studying peace journalism and its focus on seeking conflict resolution: the media of both sides involved in the conflict must be interested in finding non-violent solutions to the conflict. This is very clearly seen in the example of the information war in Ukraine which occurs simultaneously with the physical war. While Ukrainian media are creating peace and conflict-sensitive journalism projects (which will be explored in Chapter 2), Russian media are using hate speech to fuel the conflict and, thus, devalue the peace-making efforts of their Ukrainian colleagues.

### **1.8 Influence of conflict-sensitive journalism in alleviating the conflict**

*"Conflict does not end by itself. One of the most important things to take place is communication. For two sides in a conflict to move towards a non-violent resolution, they must first talk. This is where good journalism comes in"*, states Ross Howard in his handbook *Conflict Sensitive Journalism* for IMS (2004:24)



It is important to understand the distinction between peace journalism and conflict-sensitive journalism. According to Howard (2004) peace journalism is more peace/conflict-oriented whereas conflict-sensitive journalism goes further than conflict sharing the opinions of people from both sides who actively condemn violence. Conflict-sensitive journalism is also more careful in choosing words trying to avoid polarizing words and controversial terms. Peace journalism is mostly focused on peace-making actors while conflict-sensitive journalism reports about ordinary people, their sufferings or heroic humanistic deeds. Lynch and McGoldrick (2005) also highlight that one of the main distinctions is that peace journalism is solution-oriented highlighting peace initiatives but conflict-sensitive journalism is even more open in a sense that it "*explores peace ideas whenever they come from*", even outside warring sides' perspective (2005:21)

To normalize the relations between belligerents and humanize the conflict, journalists might need to share people's stories from both parties trying to find common points. For instance, Bratic (2016) mentions Studio Ijambo, a Burundi-based media group that developed campaigns to enhance peace following the Rwandan genocide and has subsequently acted as a peace journalism example for other crises on the African continent. These programmes portrayed those who risked their own lives to rescue members of the opposing ethnic communities from being murdered.

The media should avoid taking sides while covering the conflict. It could harm largely its professional independence, the opportunity to contact and collect the opinions of the opposite side is also lost. Choosing a side makes media more vulnerable as it changes the status of media to civic actors and journalists to activists which makes them a target even more in the eyes of the opponent. And although conflict-sensitive journalism doesn't have the freedom of a peacemaker, it still can contribute by actively assisting in the search for alternatives to violence (Kempf 2003)

Conflict is composed of two elements: crisis and opportunity (Galtung 2013). And conflict-sensitive journalism focuses on the opportunity for peace. When advocating for peace in media, the message should be formulated very clearly and easy to comprehend by the broad audience as news items about the war which are filled with too many unnecessary details tend to confuse people more than inform. Another thing which journalists who are covering the war should bear in mind is the unwillingness of the public

to know the truth sometimes which contravenes their patriotic feelings or the way they perceived the world to be. Social media channels create an "*echo chamber of communication*" which facilitates the creation of a distorted and quite often radical vision of the world of its users isolated from alternative opinions in their information bubbles. (Bauman 2016).

Conflict-sensitive journalism respects the public interests of the community involved in conflict resolution and at the same time provides fact-based and unbiased reporting. In order to humanize the conflict, it uses an induction approach starting with a personal story and linking it to the global trend. It is looking under the microscope trying to differentiate interests that clashed and identify actual motifs behind the military and political positions of the conflicting sides. It also puts the conflict in a perspective and focuses on the damaging long-term consequences of violence

One of the most well-known techniques for conflict reporting is *5Ws* by Rosemarie Schmidt (1994). It uses five basic journalistic questions asked in a different way:

1. **Who?** - Who is affected by this conflict and/or has an apparent stake in its outcome?
2. **What?** - What caused the dispute and which disagreements do the parties need to resolve?
3. **When?** - When did the conflict begin and how long have been present the circumstances that caused it?
4. **Where?** - What geographical or political jurisdictions are impacted by the conflict?
5. **Why?** - Why do the parties hold their positions (what are their needs, interest, and concerns)?

Additional questions can also be asked aimed at exploring possible options for peace and searching for the common ground (*How are the confronting sides going to resolve this? What options have they explored? What common ground is there between them?*)

During the conflict physical violence receives a major part of the media coverage but there are other not-so-obvious kinds of violence that need to be reported. According to

Lynch and McGoldrick (2005), there is also cultural and structural violence that the public needs to know about as those processes although less noticeable at the first glance can cause a lot of damage. They can be a starting point leading to physical violence or have a long-term goal still existing after the actual violence is stopped. Cultural violence includes hate speech, xenophobia (not only hatred towards one country by another but also promoting certain policies, myths and legends of war heroes (glorifying soldiers and battles of the past of one side intimidating the other), religious justifications for war and gender discrimination. Structural violence can be realized through the laws and behaviour of certain institutions or social groups. It includes institutionalized racism or sexism, colonialism, extreme exploitation (e.g. slavery), poverty, corruption and nepotism and structural segregation (Forcing individuals by law to dwell in distinct groups or locations against their consent)

Media organizations generally pay little attention to the processes and roots of violent conflict, whereas conflict resolution groups often underestimate the role of the media in fuelling or alleviating the conflicts they investigate. However, by cooperating, these groups may combine their expertise and examine the role of media in conflict from both perspectives. (Thomson 2007). Puddephat (2006) suggests that the role of the media should be clearly identified at the very beginning of the peace negotiations. All parties in the conflict should agree on the independence of media and prohibit any form of influence, restriction, abuse or threatening media and media workers.

When discussing journalists' role in covering the conflict, last century's scholars used Cohen's binary model which divided journalists into neutrals and participants (1963) Neutrals remained uninvolved and objective whereas participants were engaged and advocating for a certain issue. But with the flow of time society's expectations for journalism have changed and neutral journalists started to be considered more passive and a need for more active journalism appeared (Bro, 2008). Such journalists could not only inform about the problem but also help the community to reflect on it and encourage them to search for solutions. This is what local media are aiming to do nowadays and during the conflicts, their efforts are noticeable and impactful as ever.

## **1.9 Local journalism in the post-liberal peace paradigm**

Taking control over local media is always a substantial aim of all parties in conflict. That's why building a network of independent, public interest local media must be the main task of the peacemakers. According to Puddlehath (2006), during the Forging War in Yugoslavia, the role of local media was in preparing the ground for the oncoming war and ensuring public opinion was mobilised behind the different participants. Destruction of the enemy's media has also become an acknowledged military target. Mercier (2005) provides an example of Serbs who repeatedly bombarded the free daily *Oslobodjenje* in Sarajevo and used a particular electromagnetic weapon which jams not just military communications but also civilian radio and television.

And yet when researching the role of media in the peacebuilding process, most scholars tend to focus on international news organizations completely ignoring the potential local media have in terms of global diffusion and de-escalation of the conflict (Blondel 2004). The significance of local media to the local audience in times of war or conflict is also not studied closely enough.

One way forward, as indicated by Wahl-Jorgensen and Hanitzsch (2009), is to look at journalistic practices beyond the Western context in order to identify diversity in journalism as well as the ways in which roles, and norms and journalistic practices are configured in different contexts. Local media operate differently in each country and, as was observed in the example of media in Rwanda and Russia, it is necessary to understand the national media space before jumping to conclusions. Especially in the post-conflict times, without knowing the logistical difficulties local journalists were facing.

The difficulties that local media outlets are facing during the conflict are highly complicated. Local journalists and their families are far more susceptible to violence and threats than foreign reporters who may freely enter and exit war zones. The local media is more likely to be politicized under the opponent's pressure. They are also much more open to regional authorities and local influential people and control of all those actors may increase the level of stress and, in turn, lead to extensive self-censorship. (Democratic Progress Institute 2012) Harassment and violence drive too many local journalists out of the field of journalism – a field that their voices are needed in as it

directly affects the diversity of information and the power of peacebuilding calls in the national media environment.

The economic situation during the conflict will also be catastrophic, and dependable power sources, a transit system, and equipment that the media relies on will undoubtedly be damaged or destroyed. The majority of donor financing goes to foreign media organizations or non-governmental organizations (NGOs) rather than local media, since funders don't like to take chances and prefer to work with trusted and well-known colleagues. (Lviv Media Forum 2022)

When it comes to peacebuilding efforts, local media can't do that on their own, they do not have the power to implement peacebuilding policies themselves. So their efforts directly depend on legal, political, economic and other social institutions which could make a decision to end conflict policies. (Bratic&Schirch 2007). It is the institutions' responsibility to define concrete policy goals of conflict prevention and peacebuilding which local media can later promote through their channels. Policymakers should focus on the role of the media in representing and, at the same time, shaping public opinion and how peaceful resolutions of the conflicts could be promoted in media and then mirrored in the public sphere.

Media development organizations underestimate the significance of local media. There is a noticeable lack of accessible opportunities. Financial support of local media is a condition for the democratic and independent media environment as lack of state or public funding makes local media turn to advertisers and private sponsors and, as a result, become obligated to reflect the opinion of those who pay. Betz (2019) numerously emphasizes that one of the key parts of steady and efficient media development is exploring and adapting to the local context as only by getting to know the local media space and the needs and interests of the local audience peace journalism will succeed.

Local journalists who want to adhere to peace and conflict-sensitive journalism guidelines must be persuaded of the significance of their role and the role of local media in contributing to the resolution of conflicts. At a time when war, crises, and conflicts pose a danger of violence and devastation to the globe, their duty is more crucial than it has ever been.

To sum up, communication for peace encompasses a range of tactics, methods, and interconnections aimed at overcoming or at least minimizing as much as possible the shortfalls and weak spots in the established communication between the disputing parties, thereby influencing its dynamic and being influenced by it. In the end, peace journalism seeks to contribute to the formation and development of peace-oriented, balanced, and productive relationships between them, so facilitating the joint design of liberating social transformation processes. The role of local media is especially underestimated although it has an opportunity not only to inform about the conflict but also to help the local community to reflect on it and encourage them to search for peaceful solutions. The multi-layered media support (particularly for local media in the areas of conflict), its approaches and long-term goals, therefore, require to be continuously developed and closely studied.

## **Chapter 2. The state of the Ukraine media landscape shortly before and during the ongoing war**

This chapter explores the state of the Ukraine media landscape before and during the war defining the Ukraine media model and providing the necessary context for understanding Ukrainian journalistic culture transformation. It then analyses the impact of the war on press freedom in the country and investigates the efforts of Ukrainian media watchdogs to counter propaganda and spreading war fakes from both parties of the conflict. That leads to studying peace journalism initiatives launched by media and journalists in Ukraine using Hamelink's definition of peace journalism. The efficiency of Ukrainian crowdfunding campaigns to support media in wartime was then analysed. The last part highlights an increasing need for international emergency media support.

### **2.1 Defining Ukrainian media space**

To analyse the Ukrainian media space, it is necessary to define the social role of democratic and peace-oriented journalism first. Most journalistic performance has a significant influence on society. McQuail states that the core activity of journalistic work is the building of narratives of occurrences, so-called "social reality" in a manner that can be disseminated to the community in accordance with norms known to consumers and all parties involved (in Carpentier et al 2006). Journalism entails providing room for the stories of different people and, at times, disputing or assessing their credibility. Thus, the journalism function is a collaborative social construction that explains coordinated and consistent media practices. The scholar also highlights the following three key functions of media in a democratic society (2006:51):

1. Operating as observer and informer;
2. Giving a network and forum for other voices outside the media;
3. Acting as a participant in social life.

The nature and degree of moral ties between the media and society are partially inspired by the features of various systems. There have been numerous efforts to distinguish and

classify alternate types of media. Schudson (2011) offers the following three primary models that regulate the media which is an example of a reasonably common approach: market, trustee, and advocacy. The market model does not truly provide any moral connections for media that take priority over market regulations. Nonetheless, it is apparent that media cannot function in the community only based on profit and loss calculations. The attachment and devotion of audiences are financially valuable, as is community service. The trustee model indicates that the media cares for the best interests of its audience and the broader community and is shielded to some extent from market pressures. In commercial broadcasting, authorities may grant licenses to assure this. Several public interest objectives are required by law in European public broadcasting. The advocacy model refers to media representing parties, ideologies, and issues with a clearly stated social agenda, whereas connections with society are secondary to these goals.

Hallin and Mancini (2004) provide another example for differentiating media models that, ultimately, follows a similar trend. It identifies three types of relationships between the media and a functioning democracy: liberal or North Atlantic (market-based); democratic corporatist or North/Central Europe (government interference guarantees citizen interests as well as media freedom (a form of a trusteeship); polarized pluralist or Mediterranean (media partisanship parallels the framework of a current societal political ideology). Hallin and Mancini (2004: 11) describe it the following way: “The Liberal Model is characterized by a relative dominance of market mechanisms and commercial media; the Democratic Corporatist Model by a historical co-existence of commercial media and media tied to organized social and political groups, and by a relatively active but legally limited role of the state; and the Polarized Pluralist Model by integration of the media into party politics, the weaker historical development of commercial media, and a strong role of the state.”

In terms of the features of political systems, the three models vary in terms of trends of conflict or consensus, majoritarian or consensus administration, individual or structured pluralism, the function of the government, and the significance of legitimate lawful power. Concerning the extent of political parallelism, the power and relevance of periodicals as opposed to radio and television, the level of journalistic competence, and



the involvement of the higher authority in the media system, they also exhibit distinct media system features (Hallin and Mancini, 2004: 67)

When discussing European media space (to which Ukraine arguably belongs), certain circumstances in which media can operate for the public good in a democratic and peace-oriented society should be identified. Cultivating the feeling of unity is one of the aims of European media. McQuail noted that this mobilizing effect of media uniting nations is especially important when there is a common need or danger although it didn't happen in European media space yet (2006:57). Currently, it can be added that the war in Ukraine noticeably contributed to the unity of both European countries and media for the sake of common protection of democratic values (European Commission 2022). European media attention to conflicts both within and outside the EU is quite sporadic and the lack of consensus between media outlets doesn't facilitate the promotion of peacebuilding policies. Journalists' cultivation of professional standards and a feeling of duty, which currently results in reportage of regular but unremarkable internal political activities, could be spread to European politics. This primary challenge that European media "domesticate" EU topics (focusing on their national political goals) and that transnational (pan-European) perspectives are absent was highlighted by several scholars (Machill et al., 2006; Meyer, 2005; Peter and De Vreese, 2003). This prolonged transnational approach may help to tear down the boundaries that have frequently restricted journalists' feeling of commitment to the national political scene and provide an unconventional point of view on European policy matters.

Despite the fact that media development organizations want reporters from transitional states to follow the Western professional media model with an emphasis on "political detachment and adversarialism," several scholars acknowledge that this model does not match the environment of transitional democracies (Vltmer 2013:226). According to Nieminen (2007), Europe's media and communication environment have changed drastically during the last two decades. Digitalization of content has led to the convergence of historically separate economic and regulatory channels for media distribution. As a consequence of competing rationales in national and European regulatory frameworks, a lengthy period of legislative adaptation has ensued. The market rationale seems to have won, establishing a neo-liberal regulatory structure.

The key to successful media development in postcolonial contexts, according to Llamas-Rodriguez and Saglier (2021), is to reconceive the precepts of media theory from a Global South viewpoint. By building hierarchies between legitimate media practices of Western media technologies created by transnational corporations and illegitimate practices of subaltern publics, media theory entrenched in Western academia risks maintaining the ideologies of politicians from North Atlantic states. The postcolonial perspective involves a shift beyond concerns of existing technology and evolving media consumption patterns, toward a more nuanced understanding of how people strive, contribute, and exist under diverse material circumstances.

Due to the importance of problems such as ownership and control, freedom of expression, and censorship in Ukraine, media researchers have focused heavily on them. However, journalism culture, professional ideals, and journalistic standards in Ukraine have not been fully studied (Dyczok 2006). For instance, the Ukrainian media model wasn't previously identified. According to Hallin and Mancini's media models characteristics, Ukraine's media model can be considered a polarized pluralist one:

- **Pluralism in Ukrainian media space is more organized than individualized representation as the strong role of political parties is present.** Oligarch-owned media predominate the Ukrainian media landscape, particularly television. Actively participating in the political life of the nation, oligarchs use the news organizations they control to advance themes that are advantageous to them or their political allies (Ianytskyi 2020). Since 2014, several new independent media outlets have emerged, although they continue to struggle to establish and attract an audience. However, oligarchy does not preclude journalists from achieving substantial degrees of independence, forming grassroots campaigns to preserve their rights, and launching independent media. Therefore, the level of political parallelism is high. The country's overall democratic atmosphere and the struggle between different oligarchic and political parties contribute to the protection of free speech and media diversity. Multiple media watchdogs guarantee that infractions of media norms are studied and denounced openly.
- **State intervention is also strong with certain periods of censorship and regulation.** The Ukrainian government has been quite engaged in the media

realm. The administration has undertaken a drive to increase the prominence of Ukrainian in the media. It is anticipated that language quotas for television and radio, as well as print media, would be debated. Additionally, Ukrainian security agencies intervene in the media field by investigating allegedly Russian-funded media outlets.

- **Weak legislative and professional institutions define the Ukrainian media scene.** The bulk of laws governing the media industry was created and implemented in the 1990s and are consequently redundant in the present setting. The same may be said of professional institutions, the majority of which were created during the Soviet period or built on Soviet norms; these organizations have little if any impact on the media environment. Simultaneously, NGOs and watchdogs, which have proliferated since the Revolution of Dignity in 2014, seem to be effectively filling the function of defunct institutions.
- **Newspaper circulation is quite low.** According to the statistics of the specialists of the Ivan Fedorov Book Chamber of Ukraine 1,529 newspapers were published in 2020, including 467 with a national distribution sphere, 214 with a regional (regional) distribution sphere, and 752 with a local distribution sphere - 207 cities, 360 districts, etc. (Detector Media, 2021). The overall distribution of all newspapers for the year exceeded 1,155,000,000 copies. Compared to 2018, before the coronavirus outbreak, the number of newspapers by title reduced by 207, and the total yearly distribution of all periodicals dropped by 672,00 copies.

The modern Ukrainian media landscape can't be completely explained without an understanding of specific media culture and its connection to the political development of the country.

## **2.2 Ukrainian journalism culture transformation**

When describing journalism culture in Ukraine we refer to the concept of journalism culture formulated by Hanitzsch as a *“set of ideas and practices by which journalists, consciously and unconsciously, legitimate their role in society and render their work*

*meaningful for themselves and others.*” (Hanitzsch 2007:369). The scholar identifies three main elements (institutional roles, epistemologies, and ethical ideologies) and seven dimensions (interventionism, power distance, market orientation, objectivism, empiricism, relativism, and idealism) of it. Particular attention will be paid to the ethical ideology as opposed to the dominant objective professional culture the new journalism culture with a counterhegemonic set of values emerges which includes peace and conflict-sensitive journalism.

The interventionism dimension is typical for peace journalism which takes on itself the role of peace advocate and instead of distancing from the flow of events and reporting objectively and neutrally decides to participate and eventually intervene by promoting positive changes and helping to seek peace-oriented solutions. It is also typical for non-Western journalism cultures in general. In the study *Mapping Journalism Cultures Across Nations*, Hanitzsch and a team of researchers (2011) explored national journalism cultures by interviewing 1800 journalists from 18 countries. The results of that study provided a global picture of journalistic practices, understandings of their duties, and responsibilities. As well as exploring Western (Europe and the USA) journalism cultures in Europe scholars also explored non-Western ones, including the post-Soviet media space of such countries as Bulgaria, Romania, and Russia. Ukraine wasn't included in the research therefore the results for post-Soviet countries can't be imposed on Ukrainian media space and can be used only for the comparative analysis. It once again shows that Ukrainian journalism culture is underestimated by Western media practitioners, and it needs to be studied more closely and thoroughly.

Hanitzsch and his co-authors emphasized that the journalism culture approach they were using “*does not suggest that western values are generally 'better' or 'more professional' than others*” (2011:274) Such an approach considerably contributes to the postcolonial perception of international media space. Not considering Western journalism culture hegemony as a given helps to develop more constructive and global discussion.

The results of the study showed the level of market orientation in post-Soviet countries is quite high which means that the media values the audience's interests higher than the actual worth and importance of the information. As opposed to European media which put the significance of news above its potential attractiveness and usefulness to the

audience. Power distance is also much weaker in post-Soviet media than in their European and American colleagues. According to the authors, critical journalism is specifically undeveloped in Russia where its weak power distance is “*indicated by the willingness of journalists to convey a positive image of political and business leadership*”(2017:281). Such conditions obviously became humus for propaganda growth and spread. Both Russian and Bulgarian media were also unsuccessful in engaging their audiences in political discussion and civil actions, which is, in turn, one of the major aims of German, Austrian and Swiss media.

In turn, the interventionism of journalistic culture leads to empiricism, which prioritizes an empirical justification of truth highlighting the importance of observation and the journalist’s experience. Simultaneously peace journalism culture moves away from market orientation because as we explored earlier in the previous chapter, public interest in peace is much lower than in conflicts and crises. At this point, it is essential to differentiate public interest and public need as the audience may not be interested in reading about peace but desperately need it.

Several researchers contend vigorously over Ukraine's position as a postcolonial state. Some of them view the postcolonial approach as an appropriate method for analysing Ukraine's contemporary cultural, social, and geopolitical position and for emphasizing the power imbalance between Russia and Ukraine, thereby revealing the Russian imperial hegemony (Kappeler 2014; Snyder 2015). Others emphasize the challenging repercussions of Ukraine's complicated history and, hence, the limitations of postcolonial theory in interpreting the Ukrainian context (Hrytsak 2015; Horbyk 2016). Ukraine unites itself a wide range of colonial experiences which is quite complicated to define as a single postcolonial theory. Hrytsak contends that the postcolonial paradigm fails to describe the historical narrative of Ukraine since inside “*the Russian empire and the Soviet Union, Ukraine was more central than a colony*” (2015:733). Moreover, he explains the various and contradictory Ukrainian colonial realities by Ukraine's dual extreme positions in the past: “*as the core of the Russian and Soviet projects, on the one hand, and as the centre of the anti-imperial and anti-Soviet resistance, on the other*” (2015:733)

After attaining independence in 1991, Ukraine has been on a lengthy, tumultuous path toward accountable democratic government, as transformations in the governing elites

have produced discernible adjustments in the policy and ideals adopted by higher authorities. The rise of independent media increased when the state enacted laws in 1994 permitting the privatisation of media outlets, guaranteeing the right to free speech, and establishing the National Council of Television and Radio Broadcasting to regulate these new types of media (Gryvniak 2017).

The 2004 Orange Revolution and the 2013–14 Euromaidan, also known as the Revolution of Dignity, are the events that have affected the path of reforms the most. The Orange Revolution ushered in the first genuine phase of democratic transformation, but it soon stalled out. Then, from 2010 to 2013, the administration of Viktor Yanukovich reverted to authoritarianism, until the second continuous wave of democratization with the Revolution of Dignity emerged in February 2014. These political activities played an important role in the formulation of media reform and affected the strategies and plans of policy and decision-makers. Notably, unlike many other governments founded after the disintegration of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), Ukraine did not face long-term institutional repression of civilians and the media after its independence.

Ever since Euromaidan, numerous Ukrainian journalists have adopted a more interventionist perspective. This might be justified by the country's dangerous conditions and vital problems, such as the foreign invasion. And this may be explained by the feelings of confidence that several journalists encountered during Euromaidan. This transition, however, has not been restricted to Euromaidan and conflict coverage but has expanded to other topics journalists investigate mostly political issues. It was subsequently bolstered by the outbreak of the war in eastern Ukraine, which presented a significant danger to the country's fragile independence and sovereignty. This, in turn, may be attributed to the ineffectiveness of democratic systems, which compels many journalists to play a more proactive and radical role in the life of society (Budivska&Orlova 2017)

Local media in Ukraine are undergoing a challenging time of transformation in which media (primarily newspapers) that were formed and sponsored by local governments are now expected to become autonomous and generate their own revenue. This de-nationalization is occurring de jure, but in many regions, allegedly de-nationalized media

keep receiving disguised or open support from local administrations. This allows affecting the media landscape of the area (Internews Ukraine 2020).

Talking about power distance, Ukrainian media are diverse, but mostly under the control of oligarchs who already own most of the main TV networks (except for the public broadcaster Suspilne) and dictate their editorial practices. The Ukrainian media continue to be influenced by a long heritage of state ownership and government intervention, a lack of market management skills, and tolerance of censorship preserved from the Soviet period (Orlova 2016)

Freedom House's Freedom of the Press reports (2019) classifies the Ukrainian media landscape as "partially free." There are several susceptible domains, including privacy protection and security. In May 2016, the website Myrotvorets revealed the personal details of over 5,000 Ukrainian and international media workers (Ianytskyi 2020). Those on the list have been authorized to cover the fighting in Eastern Ukraine by the self-proclaimed authorities of Donetsk and Luhansk. The website claimed that by posting their personal information, it was releasing details on "collaborators" with separatist republics, which Ukrainian authorities perceive to be terrorist organizations. The website was sharply condemned by a number of journalists and media organizations. The website continues to function amid government investigation.

Due to the significant vagueness of media-related legislation in Ukraine, its execution is intermittent, nonlinear, irregular, asymmetrical, and non-transparent (Gryvniak 2017). Current legislations are mostly descriptive and, as a consequence, inadequate in their regulatory role, preventing them from translating into precise, policy measures. Instead, these descriptive rules often intersect and replicate one another, resulting at best in inefficiency and at worst in legal obstacles (Ianytskyi 2020). In 2014, the Ukrainian Law on Public Service Television and Radio Broadcasting was enacted. In accordance with its rules, the construction of a joint public service broadcaster (UA: PBC) via the merging of national broadcasters was accomplished in 2017, along with the creation of a supervisory board and the election of an executive board. However, the consolidated broadcaster continues to be chronically underfunded, impeding its growth into a formidable player in the Ukrainian media landscape. Dvorovyi (2018) suggests that in order to operate properly it must be assured that UA: PBC does not rely on outside choices for its financing

by changing existing law to enable the broadcaster to be supported via re-allocation of frequency license fees.

The primary challenges to establishing an independent, professional, and diverse media culture in Ukraine are financial (Internews Ukraine 2020). The relationship between media owners and political party leaders has resulted in considerable control of media and a shortage of independent, powerful conventional media. In return for positive media coverage, parliamentary groupings oppose legislative initiatives that threaten the broader commercial interests of media owners. Specifically, these lobbying activities have hindered the implementation of progressive laws advocated by notable CSOs involving multimedia media services and financial transparency. Ultimately, Ukrainian media strive to maintain economic viability, particularly in locations where advertisement markets are limited and media dependency on local oligarchs is evident. A paywall is uncommon in Ukrainian online media, which mostly monetizes its content via hidden advertisements and sponsored articles. Such concealed ads are termed *dzhynsa*. In the 1990s and 2000s, *Dzhynsa* were prevalent, but currently, they are less prevalent than they were previously (Ianytskyi 2020).

The Ukrainian media landscape reflects global trends. In the Ukrainian media, digitalization, the expanding influence of social media, a revived emphasis on local content, and different types of monetisation are all in play (Gryvniak 2017) The Ukrainian internet community is very dispersed. There is no regulation regarding the openness of property and editorial boards, which permits the construction of media websites with no disclosure about their connection or editorial principles. Such websites can promote certain storylines in the interests of their proprietors, and it often has a direct effect on the quality and accuracy of the delivered news. Russian propaganda narratives are readily accepted, but it is essential to keep in mind that information distortions are frequently employed by Ukrainian internal actors in their conflicts with one another (Ianytskyi 2020).

Ukraine's post-Soviet heritage and the complex socio-political setting of independent Ukraine have had a significant impact on the professional culture. Before Euromaidan, the Ukrainian media landscape was defined by media instrumentalization by their owners, a history of censorship, and undeveloped professional standards, despite the apparent



embrace of a western approach to journalism. The Euromaidan and subsequent full-scale Russian invasion posed even greater problems to the Ukrainian media and journalists.

Patriotism is obvious in both the news and the journalists of Ukrainian media sources that support the national ongoing fight for independence, beginning with the conflict in Donbas (Nygren et al. 2016). In this journalism culture, partisanship is prioritized over neutrality, and journalists see themselves as engaging in the nation's protection. Political and military leaders are often subjected to severe criticism from journalists. This critical attitude and the partisan reporting were the product of the great mobilization and force exerted by the Ukrainian society. Outside the boundaries of this national discourse, constraints were placed on Russian and separatist media. There was a noticeable contrast between pro-Western and pro-Russian media in the 2000s. As most Ukrainians believe that Russia unlawfully annexed Crimea and supplied military backing to separatist rebels in Eastern Ukraine, it was exceedingly difficult for any media outlet or political entity with a clear pro-Russian stance to get any traction in Ukraine today (Ianytskyi 2020). Numerous Russian journalists were forbidden to operate in Ukraine, and by the Ukrainian presidential decree Russian television networks were withdrawn from cable television bundles and accessibility to Russian social networks was limited. Likewise, it was very difficult or almost impossible for Ukrainian journalists to work in the temporarily held territories. The situation has escalated since the beginning of the war in 2022. Russian state-controlled and propaganda-disseminating media have been banned, and the Russian army has been numerously attacking journalists, media, and communication systems in order to deny the Ukrainian public access to independent, public interest journalism (RSF 2022).

As for the objectivism and idealism of the Ukrainian journalism culture, there are a number of media development-focused organizations in Ukraine, including the NGO Media Development Foundation and the private consulting company Jnomics. It would be more accurate to state that media development, both as an objective and a policy, occurs at the crossroads of the activities of several non-governmental organizations. For instance, the media watchdog Detector Media participates in media development, although its primary methods consist of meticulous surveillance and scathing criticism. Instead of being a source of funding/training/promotion, etc., it motivates the media to

strive for improvement. The Institute of Mass Information, for example, is largely a think tank, and media development is simply one of its many tasks.

According to Ianytskyi (2020), the steady enactment of reforms, the growth of civil society, and the active reunification with the EU are significant aspects that give the Ukrainian journalism culture the basis for a sustainable, if prolonged, evolution. However, the Russian invasion in 2022 drastically changed its path.

### **2.3 Impact on press freedom since the start of the war**

In times of war, the Ukrainian government had the legal authority to regulate, filter, and restrict information flow. After Russia's full-scale invasion, Ukraine decided not to choose the path of military censorship. Instead, it reduced a sizable percentage of television and radio broadcasting and initiated a joint information marathon in which representatives of higher political or military authorities promote relatively similar narratives. Therefore, although Ukrainian journalists and the media may not have total freedom, the framework in terms of which they carry out their duty remains quite broad (Dankova et al. 2022). Representatives of the Ministry of Defense and the army commanders have frequently cautioned the media against irresponsible commentary and reportage of events from the frontline, as well as the consequences of Russian attacks. There are frequent calls for journalists to rely entirely on official information. Nevertheless, journalists pursue their professional urge to gather information from a variety of sources to investigate and report more.

*“Depriving Pryamiy, Channel 5 and Espresso from the air is a false decision that would suit Putin's Russia, but not free Ukraine. They should be returned. Also, it is time to stop or somehow transform the joint marathon. It accomplished its mission. The war occupied 99% of the agenda, and social and humanitarian problems disappeared from the air - but they did not disappear from our lives. They must be highlighted and resolved,”* emphasizes Oksana Romaniuk, executive director of the Institute of Mass Information (Dankova et al. 2022)

Sergiy Tomilenko, the President of the National Union of Journalists of Ukraine, was interviewed for this research. He shared that one of the main challenges for press freedom at the moment is not censorship as it can be imagined but an economic crisis. It can lead to shutting down media companies and journalists leaving their jobs. As a result, people wouldn't be informed about what happened, there wouldn't be enough reliable information. Local political power would also be uncontrollable, so it is crucial to acknowledge how important the role of journalists as watchdogs of democracy during the war is.

The mission of the National Union of Journalists is a classical one: building a corporate voice to protect the rights of journalists, lobbying media policy, and protecting from certain initiatives that some politicians want to impose by force without previous approval of the journalistic community. The safety of journalists was and remains one of its priorities. Fighting impunity, in general, has always been a relevant topic in the Ukrainian media space. In 2019 NUJU has launched the Index of Physical Safety which included all cases of impunity against Ukrainian journalists, typically it's 70 cases of physical aggression against journalists per year. Hence, one of the NUJU's main aims was to prove by deeds their motto "Journalists are important". But the war made NUJU modify its mission. "*Now our most important mission is to help media and journalism in Ukraine survive and protect our journalists so they could remain in the profession,*" stresses Sergiy Tomilenko. Since the very first day of Russia's invasion of Ukraine National Union of Journalists in Ukraine (NUJU) works in an emergency mode to provide much-needed support for media and journalists in Ukraine. Further in this chapter the projects NUJU initiated during the war will be explored.

According to the updated parts 2 and 6 of Article 27 of the Law of Ukraine "On Ensuring the Functioning of the Ukrainian Language as a State Language", from July 16, 2022, all Internet resources, websites, social media pages and channels on communication platforms included, must have the main version in the Ukrainian language (Ziatuk 2022). The absence of a media version in the Ukrainian language from July 16, 2022, will mean a deliberate violation by its owner of the requirements of the law on the state language, or the fact of the lack of state registration of the mass media and/or the owner. Despite this, Russian is still widely used in Ukrainian media: there are several Russian-language

websites, periodicals, and newspapers, and Russian is often used in television programs and interviews. The Ukrainian media landscape is multilingual and the print media market before the Russian invasion is proof: 1,370 outlets were published in Ukrainian, 612 in Russian, and 459 in both languages (Ianytskyi 2020). There were additional outlets available in the languages of national minorities: 4 in Hungarian, 2 in Polish, 2 in Romanian, and 1 in Gagauzian. Furthermore, there existed 44 outlets in English. Historically media landscape in Eastern and Southern Ukraine before the Revolution of Dignity was bilingual with a tendency to the prevalence of Russian-language resources as it is the major spoken language of those regions. Therefore, although the decision to have a mandatory Ukrainian version of the media is justified by the ongoing war in the government's eyes, it most probably will negatively affect small local media with limited resources which are currently still operating in Russian or its minority language and could not have the human capacity to maintain the website and/or social media channels in several languages.

The need for reliable and verified information during the war in Ukraine is extremely high. Although social media remain one of the most important channels of information, they are not credible enough and a high level of media literacy is required to consume information from there. The low level of digitalization and Internet coverage in Ukraine once again proved the importance of traditional media (newspapers, local radio and television) in Ukraine for debunking fakes and helping citizens cope with anxiety.

One of the first things the Russian army did when they got temporary control over certain Ukrainian territories is informational neutralization (from the interview with Sergiy Tomilenko). Editors-in-chief were immediately captured and forced to become local propagandists. However, the majority of journalists refused and did not become collaborators. But it automatically implies they have to shut down their work because in occupied territories they can't continue work independently. They become silent but, instead, occupants immediately begin their media activity.

Well before the Russian invasion, the "information war" with Russia was already damaging Ukraine's media landscape. But in February 2022 it moved to another level.

## **2.4 Countering fakes and propaganda**

Military propaganda has existed for a very long time, but the significance and operational complexity of media usage in wartime have lately expanded. Special departments are established to consider the issues involved in generating news before and during warfare. Especially now, when democratic cultures consider comprehensive censorship as undesirable and more politically damaging than militarily advantageous, this is considered essential (Mercier 2005).

In his analysis of modern Russian propaganda, Yevhen Fedchenko differentiates three kinds of audiences that propaganda is aimed at (in Misky, 2022) Over the last few decades Russian propaganda was aimed first and foremost at Russians themselves as government-controlled media were tasked with creating an alternative reality for their readers, listeners, and viewers. According to Russian propaganda, Ukraine is an inferior country (as it was presented during Soviet Union times) and a failing state that has sunk into turmoil and anarchy. It is a puppet in hands of the European Union and the USA who use Ukraine in order to destroy Russia. The desire of Ukrainians to end up with the Soviet past and join the EU was considered a betrayal of shared values and in the eyes of Russian higher authorities clearly indicated that Ukraine could propose an idea of creating an anti-Russia coalition. Russian disinformation had to infect the mindsets of its citizens with anti-Ukrainian hysteria to mobilize society to support armed aggression.

Quite distinct accents were targeted for the Ukrainian audience; it was vital to weaken Ukrainians' trust in their country's continued existence and resistance. Demonstrate that everything is proceeding in accordance with Russia's strategy and there is no reason to oppose it. In all wars, propaganda and disinformation are employed to damage the morale of the opposing side.

The third audience, for whom propaganda and disinformation communications were entirely different, is international. Various groups may be formed from it. There is an attempt to persuade Western countries that Ukraine had fallen and lost control. This idea has been promoted by Russia since the Revolution of Dignity in Ukraine in 2013. Falsehoods about "Nazism" in Ukraine are also addressed, which were intended to bolster the legitimacy of Russia's aggressive measures against the "fascist government". For the

Global South, however, Russian media presents a different narrative: Russia is not battling with Ukraine, but rather with the belligerent and colonial in their nature Western countries, USA and NATO. This resonates deeply with postcolonial nations, who tend to believe that Russia is fighting against Western colonialism.

Daria Zarivna, the communications advisor to the head of the Office of the President of Ukraine, explained that the war in the information space began long before the invasion. She divides the narratives with which Russian propaganda works into magistral narratives that have been spread over several years and dynamic narratives that change depending on needs (Betsa-Belousenko 2022). Main magistral narratives of the Russian propaganda that circulate in the Ukrainian media space since the Crimea annexation are the following:

- Ukraine as a country doesn't exist and never did. Historically it always was Russia's "youngest brother" and therefore requires Russian guidance and leadership
- Russian language in Ukraine is banned and Russians who live in Ukraine are oppressed.
- During the Revolution of Dignity in 2013-2014, the government was overrun by nationalist and neo-Nazi groupings which pathologically hate everything Russian and plan to create an alliance against Russia with Western countries.

Although the current Russian government doesn't have the ability to force either Ukrainian or international media to spread its propaganda (except for DDOS attacks (Barrett, 2022)), it has all the power to cut off counteractions within the country. To silence the Russian media (as well as Russian citizens in general) who refused to spread the official position of the government since Russia invaded Ukraine, article 207.3 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation was hastily adopted. According to it, for disseminating false information about the actions of the armed forces of Russia, the perpetrators face up to three years in prison. If the fake is distributed as part of an organized group or was accompanied by forgery of evidence, the maximum sentence increases to 10 years in prison. If the dissemination of unreliable information caused

serious consequences, the perpetrators will face up to 15 years in prison. (BBC, 2020) That's what happened to the websites of the independent TV channel Dozhd (known worldwide as TV Rain) and the prominent liberal radio station Ekho Moskvyy, which have been shut for allegedly inciting extremism and violence, as well as "systematic dissemination of misleading information regarding the actions of the Russian military." (Vetsko&Kralova, 2022)

In regions under temporary Russian control such as Crimea, annexed in 2014, Donbas, and places temporarily occupied by the army in 2022 the Ukrainian media are often censored and replaced with Kremlin propaganda. Ukrainian communications technologist Georgiy Pocheptsov has studied how contemporary Russian propaganda, which he calls "meta-propaganda", evolved from the traditions of Soviet propaganda. (Pocheptsov 2022) He claims that modern Russian propaganda became much stronger and more effective in a way that it gives everyone its own version of propaganda. "*The old propaganda acted from the first step. Today's propaganda does not go on the attack directly, it first finds weak points that allow it to penetrate into the mass consciousness,*" he states. Another quite effective feature of modern Russian propaganda is its infotainment character. It is present not only in the news but also in entertainment programs which helps to format the model of the world of its consumers with the help of unnoticeable mini- intrusions.

Another technological development of the current information war is using fake fact-checks to spread disinformation. Researchers at the Media Forensics Hub of Clemson University and ProPublica uncovered more than a dozen clips by Russian social media users claiming to debunk allegedly fictional Ukrainian fakes (Silverman& Kao 2022). This tactic is aimed mostly at the Russian audience to convince them that the Russian army doesn't make any harm in Ukraine and the Ukrainian government bomb its own cities and blames Russia for it. Obviously, such fake fact-checks were completely unsuccessful among Ukrainian users who experienced the Russian army's massive bomb shellings themselves.

Factcheck journalism in Ukraine is growing as a distinct subgenre, and fact-checking is now an important journalistic quality complementing more conventional, traditional journalistic ideas like impartiality and objectivity. However, it should be not only reactive as it is at the moment but also proactive by counter-fact-checking before disinformation

is disseminated, or at least attempt to reduce its likelihood of becoming viral. One of its main goals should be assuring that misinformation and disinformation do not gain from social media algorithms, but news of public interest does (Lehmann-Jakobsen 2022).

Detector Media is among the biggest and oldest media watchdogs in Ukraine. It was founded in 2004 and has covered Ukrainian media history from the Orange Revolution through Euromaidan, the country's defining milestones.

As Russia started a full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, the 30-person team shifted its attention to fighting Russian propaganda and disinformation. Although they had done work in this area, its importance grew as Ukraine attempted to prevail on the information battlefield as well as the real one. According to Otar Dovzhenko, the editor-in-chief of Detector Media, they have three work options during the war (Protsiuk 2022).

The primary objective is to analyze, systematize, and disprove Russian disinformation. For instance, there is a daily timeline in Ukrainian and English that collects and analyzes major fakes. The second is the systematization of prominent personalities in Ukraine who backed the invasion. This section's page views have topped 100,000, which is a significant number for a specialised media outlet such as Detector Media. The third category consists of articles regarding information hygiene. During the first days of the conflict, the informational space was cluttered with messages disseminating panic moods and "patriotic fakes" that exacerbated the situation. However, Dovzhenko states, that the situation then stabilized after several weeks, and individuals' information hygiene improved.

The media watchdog's readership rose from 20,000 to 100,000, causing Detector Media to adjust its focus such that its content is now aimed at a public audience as opposed to journalists and specialists as it was in peacetime. Otar Dovzhenko emphasized that Russian war propaganda doesn't succeed in the Ukrainian information space. "*Russians don't understand a thing about Ukraine and haven't studied it. I have an impression that they have relied on Soviet-time books in trying to understand what Ukraine is and how it lives. The fakes they've used to try and influence the Ukrainian audience don't hold up at all*", he sums up (Protsiuk 2022).



It should be mentioned that during the war not only Russian but Ukrainian fakes are widely spreading. They are so-called “patriotic fakes” aimed at lifting citizens’ spirits. On more serious disinformation coming from the Ukrainian side, the media watchdog agreed on don’t actively debunking pro-Ukrainian fakes during the war so as not to harm Ukraine. However, they investigate the most harmful ones, spread disproof if it comes from official sources, and highly encourage everyone involved in any communications not to make up fakes (Protsiuk 2022).

According to Oleksandr Tkachenko, the Minister of Culture and Information Policy, the war in Ukraine proved that if the level of media literacy in society was higher, Ukraine could now spend less time and energy on countering Russian fakes and manipulations. *"This war demonstrates that media literacy should become a mandatory element of our daily life, not only in schools and universities but also in all other areas,"* says the minister (Betsa-Belousenko 2022). Ukrainian experience shows that media literacy could be one of the conditions for state democratic development as it contributes to producing democratic values.

Any conflict or war requires journalists to reconsider their techniques. Old methods, such as reporting on diverse perspectives from a distance and identifying the sources, are no longer effective. Because a well-balanced display of information results in a deceptive balance between the truth revealed originally and a false response. For this reason, the professionals must investigate the route of peace and conflict-sensitive journalism, which will allow them to build a more critical perspective in order to methodically separate the strategic objectives of messaging from the facts and to go beyond the factual element of the news (Mercier 2015). It may also help them avoid being readily misled by state propaganda and communication strategies, of which they are the major focus.

## **2.5 Peace journalism in in times of war in Ukraine**

As Angelina Kariakina the Head of News of the Ukrainian public broadcaster UA: PBC rightfully said, “In Ukraine, journalism is a means of survival” (Rietdorf 2022). During the war, media become essential and provide citizens with life-important information

such as notifications about air raids, schedules of humanitarian corridors, places to receive emergency medical help, safe and officially approved routes for evacuation and mapping of shelters in the area.

The process of content transformation in the Ukrainian war since the beginning of the war has already passed two stages (Media Development Foundation 2022):

1. **Shock** – media discontinued all present initiatives in order to dedicate limited human and financial resources to news material, or in extreme circumstances pause almost every activity owing to unsafe conditions, the transfer of newsrooms, or the confusion of senior executives. Media that successfully organized their activities around formats such as chronicles or marathons and prioritized social media benefited from this phase.
2. **Adaptation** – this second stage is defined by media companies seeking their area in meeting the informational demands of the public. Individual endeavours emerge (e.g. special projects on volunteer support, interviews, a cycle of articles on constantly relevant issues etc ). Media with a long-term outlook who do not wager on stories immediately related to the frontline would likely gain from this stage.

According to the Media Development Foundation report (2022), Ukrainian media have reached the third stage of this predicament, which is defined by a re-evaluation of the potential future of media activity.

As it was highlighted in the previous chapter the war conditions in which peace and conflict-sensitive journalism exist are mentally, financially, logistically and technically challenging for both journalists and media. This work deliberately focused on conflict-sensitive reporting and peace-oriented media projects in Ukraine during the ongoing war and yet it doesn't deny the prevalence of war journalism and patriotically inclined biased media. In general, during the war Ukrainian media have a disturbing tendency to inform about liberated villages and towns more than about those which were left and occupied. It certainly corresponds to a state victorious narrative but not to reality in which large territories are temporarily controlled by Russia. This unequal coverage affects Ukrainians

who live in the occupied territories. When they don't find themselves in the news, they feel abandoned and betrayed. This impression of unimportance plays into Russian propaganda's hands which aims to polarize Ukrainian society. The same flaw has the national Tv marathon UA: Together which deliberately pays more airtime to the news from more "strategically important" towns and cities. For instance, news about heavy shellings of little towns and villages is quite often missed out although there might be more victims and destruction than in bigger and more well-known cities. It doesn't help to unite the nation in times of danger as well.

With every case of the Russian army's atrocity, brutal war crimes and demoralizing news from the frontline it is getting harder for Ukrainian journalists to remain objective, seek alternative viewpoints and keep their feelings aside. But that is exactly what makes so valuable the efforts of journalists and media which, despite public and donors' lack of interest and state's disapproval, try to apply their peacebuilding or conflict-sensitive perspectives. Even this non-widely spread approach can eventually become a trend in the Ukrainian media space and make a difference.

Hamelink's definition of peace journalism will be applied to analyse Ukrainian media space in times of war. Peacebuilding content started to appear in the Ukrainian media during the very first days of the war. A Series of reports published in Ukrainian media in the first weeks of the war focused on debunking the main idea of Russian propaganda that Ukrainians hate Russians and want to kill them. Ukrainian media Channel 24 prepared extensive material which collected the thoughts of ordinary Ukrainians as well as official statements of Ukrainian public organisations and opinion leaders who encourage Russian citizens to condemn war and protest against its government's decision. "*We are not cursing you, but your cowardice and passivity. If you act, we will be proud of you as we are now proud of every Ukrainian,*" workers of the Anti-Corruption Center emphasized. (Mindzhosa 2022)

Several materials humanise the opposite side in the media. For instance, Ukrainian media TSN (Television news service) covered news about Russians who declared their refusal to fight with the neighbouring country and are now taking part in the war on the side of Ukraine. One report was dedicated to the civilians from Belgorod, a Russian city near the Ukrainian border, who drop to the Ukrainian army information about the movement of

Russian troops towards Ukraine, their composition, etc (Khmelnyska 2022). Another report described the "Freedom of Russia" legion which has appeared in Ukraine, where volunteers from former Russian soldiers who are opposed to the regime of Russian President Vladimir Putin are accepted (Kurpita 2022). The wave of peaceful protests in Russia during the first months of the war was also actively reported. Such materials show the Ukrainian audience that not all Russians support the actions of their government and help to humanize the enemy.

What devalues these humanistic efforts of Ukrainian media is the complete opposite activity of Russian media. The material "War as a goal. Young Ukrainians in neo-Nazi training camps" published on the website of Russian state-controlled media Ria Novosti is one of the thousands of examples of hate speech and polarizing societies and encouraging violence. The news item describes fictional training camps where "thousands of Ukrainian children have been poisoned by neo-Nazi ideology" and are taught to hate and kill Russians (Ria Novosti 2022). The material was later debunked as a fake by Detektor Media (2022).

When asked about conflict-sensitive initiatives launched by NUJU, Sergiy Tomilenko shared how project Ми з України! (We are from Ukraine!) was created. Initially, a display of journalistic solidarity between Ukrainian and Lithuanian journalists and solidarity with the Ukrainian people, this initiative turned into a series of journalistic cooperation. Lithuanian journalists wanted to assist their Ukrainian colleagues and came up with the idea of creating a special edition of the newspaper together, the prototype of journalists' unity. As a result, 80 000 copies were published in Lviv sponsored by Lithuania. One-third of the content was from Lithuanian journalists and a majority of the content is inspiring, anti-militarist stories written by Ukrainian journalists about how in times of war and danger volunteers and ordinary people show heroism.

*"The newspaper was distributed by engaging NUJU members in all regions to give away to Ukrainians for free. It is more valuable than simply distributing by post because many people contributed to this process, journalists shared the newspapers with people at volunteers' centres, at the frontline, and in hospitals. The feedback was great, and this was our way to cheer up citizens and support reading culture. We're also planning to transform this initiative into a rubric in different media about Ukrainian ordinary people,*

*their bravery and heroic acts of kindness,”* noted Tomilenko. His following words generally describe the common approach of modern Ukrainian media in times of war: *“We don't want to mirror Putin's actions and make Ukraine anti-Russia. We want to be a part of the global constantly evolving media environment and protect democracy”*.

When describing the current content of the public broadcaster UA: PBC Angelina Kariakina highlighted that it is very important to report not only about war. *“Ukraine is an operating state with people who are working at factories, going to their jobs and healing and taking care of people in hospitals, with kindergartens and communities trying to establish a normal life. Ukraine is a very vivid democracy, and that needs to be covered. So much is missing in the coverage, especially in the foreign media – apart from the context of the war that didn't start on February 24. It started eight years ago, but it also started hundreds of years before with the Russian imperialistic oppression of Ukraine, and the Soviet oppression. It is a long story to cover, and it is a long context to give to the audience, just to explain what is happening and what the implications are”* (Rietdorf 2022). Her words basically describe one of the main aims of peace journalism which are providing more balanced news coverage, focusing on context, exposing the suffering and trauma of warfare and de-anonymizing the criminals.

Another direction in which Ukrainian journalism moved during the war is solutions journalism. Ukrainian media Rubrika was the first Ukrainian media completely in solutions journalism format established in 2018. As Rubrika's editorial board stated in an official letter (2022), *“It is decisions that will save the world when it is on fire. Decisions and those who implement them”*. Currently, their main aim is to create solutions for the sake of a peaceful future for Ukraine and discuss those solutions that are already effective, so that more people have the chance to try them out for themselves and to propagate good practice or resolve a critical matter immediately. Some of their recent materials are about the experience of rebuilding destroyed cities and solving the housing crisis for internally displaced people; solutions to the food crisis relevant for many; resources to support Ukraine from abroad and resolving some psychological questions such as how to help a child cope with war, what to do if a panic attack is coming, what should those who were raped in the occupation do (Rubrika, 2022).

Peace-oriented content is especially valuable in local media. But local media leaders were unprepared for war, which reduced the productivity of the newsroom to a minimum and sometimes disintegrated the whole media organization (Media Development Foundation 2022). Around 40% of newsrooms relocated from potentially dangerous cities for work and living in safer western regions. For them, journalistic centres were created.

## **2.6 Setting up international journalistic humanitarian centres**

In April 2022 solidarity centres were launched by the National Union of Journalists of Ukraine (NUJU), with the support of the International and European Federations of Journalists (IFJ-EFJ), and the Independent Media Trade Union of Ukraine (IMTUU) to help journalists to continue their work during the war in Ukraine.

NUJU has around 18 000 members and their presence in every region is strong. So when the war began, they started to receive tons of requests from different journalists who were risking their lives and required safety equipment because they wanted to continue their work. There was a chronic deficit of safety equipment from the very beginning: helmets, vests, first aid kits etc. NUJU also had to help journalists who became refugees or moved within the country as well as those journalists who remained in the occupied territories. During the first month, their schedule turned into a constant hotline – from morning till evening NUJU workers were responding to hundreds of requests most of which were quite urgent.

European Federations of Journalists and International Federations of Journalists supported NUJU on how to systematize support. During training in the first weeks, some analogies with Syria and Afghanistan were made and there was an idea of temporary journalistic shelters in western Ukraine. But Sergiy Tomilenko has repeatedly highlighted to trainers that it is not completely correct to compare the situation in Syria or Afghanistan with the current situation in Ukraine from the point of view that there is a sudden big flow of hundreds of journalists with their families, so it's extremely hard to work with all those requests in a shelter mode.

Instead, NUJU suggested to its international partners to create centres where Ukrainian media specialists could work on requests, assist with application forms, and organise some events. It would be a system of assisting needs and allocating help and this way would be more efficient. This project was born by war, although the union had some protocols before the war such as a work plan for emergencies to protect personal data, how to contact if there is no connection etc. From the beginning, it was agreed that journalistic humanitarian centres won't be a hub like Lviv Media Forum but rather NUJU representative offices in Lviv, Ivano-Frankivsk and Chernivtsi, a small coworking space with two workers and a few computers.

An example of a journalistic centre's assistance could be the case of Новий День (Novyi Den), a newspaper in Kherson. The city is temporarily occupied so the editorial board had to evacuate to Lviv. It's a challenge for them as they mostly worked with the print version, and the website is not developed enough. Publishing the newspaper on occupied territory is physically impossible, the local audience in Lviv is completely different than in Kherson and developing a digital version is dangerous as editors don't want to attract attention to their team which remained in Kherson. NUJU media workers in journalistic humanitarian centres psychologically supported them and connected with IREX who sponsored 5 Novyi Den journalists with 3 months of financial support. Thus, journalists in the profession didn't abandon their audience and now have resources for transformation.

One of the main aims of those journalistic humanitarian centres is to promote solidarity and cooperation. *"We highly encourage mutual help, those who received help we encourage to help others by sharing resources, contacts and experience"*, said Sergiy Tomilenko.

## **2.7 Crowdfunding campaigns started by Ukrainian media and media development organisations**

According to Media Development Foundation (2022), only about a third of outlets (31.6%) tried to get funding from their audience. The crowdfunding experience was

unsuccessful for most media due to the low amount of funds allocated from the audience which tends to support the Armed Forces of Ukraine and volunteer initiatives more actively.

Jakub Parusinski, co-founder and editor at The Fix media and managing partner at Jnomics media consultancy, has launched the two most successful crowdfunding initiatives to support Ukrainian news organizations in times of war. The first one was opened in December 2021, when the whole editorial board of the Ukrainian media Kyiv Post was sacked by a person who acquired the media and resigned to establish the Kyiv Independent, a new English-language online media. Jakub, the outlet's CFO, supervised the creation of a membership model that would most probably assure the outlet's long-term viability. During the war, The Kyiv Independent newsroom grew from a start-up with around 30,000 visitors per week to one of the most prompt and trustworthy on-the-ground sources for the conflict in English with millions of followers (Abend 2022). The fundraising campaign *Keep the Kyiv Independent going* caught the world's attention during the war and was relatively modified to get journalists the body armour, satellite phones and other equipment they required to report during wartime. The campaign managed to raise more than 1.8 million euros (as of July 2022).

The *Keep Ukrainian media going* fundraising campaign was launched by *The Fix's* team along with Jnomics, *Are We Europe*, and the Media Development Foundation on February 25, the second day of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. This campaign initially aimed to assist media organizations in relocating to European states, establishing back offices and “*safeguard Ukraine's independent and ethical media – an important part of Ukraine's social fabric*” (The Fix 2022). In the following months, more than three million euros were contributed to help the Ukrainian media. The campaign was used to support the maintenance of a number of significant national periodicals in Ukraine, as well as for safety and security purposes. The assistance has been made possible by dozens of European media organizations and over 15,000 individual donations (The Fix 2022).

In the interview for this research, Jakub Parusinski noted that it was important to act right away. According to The Fix experience, the first couple of days is the most important as the decision to donate, for at least half of the people came during the first 10 days. So if



the campaign was delayed by a week, it would have lost at least 25%. Therefore, it is crucial to be present at the moment when people care and are ready to support.

When talking about the most important ingredients of the campaign's success, Jakub Parusinski named process and timeline. *"It's all about the product. Can you do it in a one-click or two clicks? When people open it, do they see their own currency? Or do they see some currency that they're not familiar with? Is the payment process crash? Is the payment gateway sort of opening up? And is it reliable? Specifically, the number of clicks required between seeing the campaign and the successful transaction of money from your account. That's super important. The slogan has around 20-30% importance, but then the product is what really matters: the digital processes of payments, how easy it is, and how well designed that is. That's at least more than half of the success. We did it on the GoFundMe platform, which has a very good product. And I think that played a really big role. People also need to be familiar with the platform that they use, because when you're donating, you always feel a little bit uncertain. You already feel nervous, like what are these people going to do with my money? So you want a platform that people know."*

As The Fix was founded as a media publication and advisory research centre, it wasn't designed to do philanthropic work. With the flow of time and constant growth of capacity, it has become abundantly evident that there is a need to step up efforts, both to garner more support and to ensure that funds are distributed as efficiently as possible. For this purpose, in June 2022 the Fix Foundation was created. It will focus on the long-term success of Ukrainian media, so that they may manage to play an essential role in six months, three years, and beyond. Its purpose is to assist a free press and media in Ukraine and Eastern Europe, as well as to establish a more competitive and interconnected European media community.

In general, the fundraising experience of The Fix once again proves that international media development sector should put additional efforts to ensure the long-term survival of media, specifically local ones, and maintain the overall sustainability of the media environment not only in Ukraine but on a global scale as well.

## **2.8 Increasing necessity for emergency media support**

Ukraine's media market remains undeveloped despite the country's large population (Ianitskyi 2022). It was founded around 30 years ago, after the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the first online media appeared only 20 years ago, coinciding with the Internet's broad usage. In addition, Ukrainians have not formed a culture of purchasing the content, in part because of inadequate copyright law and in part because the first Ukrainian online media provided its content for free.

Even before the Russian invasion, the Covid-19 issue and regional conflicts undermined local media and news websites, pushing many of them to close. In order to survive, many news organizations have resorted to producing sponsored, biased information, which has fueled public scepticism of the media. Regional media in Ukraine nowadays face a lot of obstacles: a shortage of resources, heavy reliance on their "owners" and other powerful figures in their regions, the potentially greater fluctuation of their profession, and a technological lag behind their counterparts in other countries to name a few. The situation became much more

For the Ukrainian media environment to continue expanding, substantial investments are required. The business paradigms that existed before the massive military invasion are no longer viable. Intense mental strain is placed on team members, and teams are often dispersed across Ukraine and the globe. The planning period has been drastically reduced to one week, or at most one month (Media Development Foundation 2022)

Prior to the war, several donors and partner organisations financed Ukrainian media. Since the Revolution of Dignity, more than a dozen corporate and government-funded entities have invested in transformation. Together, they have covered a broad variety of timely topics, from policy change to the evolution of quality journalism. Their diverse aims and emphasis areas reflect the multiplicity of foreign aid players in this field. Larger players that have worked in Ukraine for years tend to concentrate on long-term policy reforms, while smaller actors are more likely to address current, urgent problems.

One approach to implement international media support for the sake of peace-oriented journalism would be to provide core support to the prominent local media with the

greatest levels of professional capabilities and whose work has an influence on regional or even national policymakers. The availability of core assistance helps local media to preserve operational freedom and pursue their own aims with agility in accordance with donors' principles.

On the local level, media couldn't be considered wealthy but nevertheless, they were profitable. Even with the circulation of 3 000 copies newspaper made ends meet with the help of subscriptions and advertisements. But now when this market is destroyed, they are not ready. One such example of local media that would be saved by emergency media support is Вісник Ч (Visnyk Ch), a local newspaper in the Ukrainian city Chernihiv. Before the war, it was profitable and had 34 000 copies - huge circulation for local media (Voitskhovska 2020). But its infrastructure is now destroyed. Serhii Narodenko, who has been editor-in-chief for around 20 years, is now asking international donors for financial support to continue publishing the newspaper in the second half of 2022 and distribute it for free to subscribers who already paid for the first half of the year but are no longer able to continue paying the subscription fee. This approach is a bright example of how financial support could be used by media not simply for following its usual path but modifying the tactic with the needs of its audience during the ongoing war in mind.

According to analysts, the GDP of Ukraine would decline by 35 to 50 per cent by the end of 2022 (Lviv Media Forum 2022). Under such circumstances, the Ukrainian media will be unable of sustaining itself as either a media outlet or a business. Without varied and targeted sponsor backing, many editorial boards that sustain community cohesiveness and awareness would disappear. In light of these circumstances, it is prudent to maintain the present level of donor support while adapting it to changing demands and professional media capacities.

The focus of emergency media support should be also placed on editorial boards that stayed in the occupation or left the region partly or completely. They continue to operate for their audience who lives in the temporarily occupied territories. Such media may not be able to specify their medium- and long-term goals, but one of their immediate requirements is physical safety for their media crew, which may be on "shooting lists." (Lviv Media Forum 2022) These media outlets need assurances of physical protection and the capacity to relocate to a secure region, with the participation of international

media support organizations. The next stage would be to identify technical and adaptable means of maintaining contact with the remaining audience in the seized territory.

The media sector in Ukraine was partially supported by international donors long before the war. Notably, it was a strategic decision of the EU, USA and UK governments to create a counterpoint to Russian propaganda and promote their own view on what the future of Ukraine could look like. But it is in hands of media development and journalism support organisations who receive this financial support and act as mediators between international donors and recipients of media support to make sure that this support is based on ideals, such as ethical journalism and freedom of expression. It is essential for such organisations to acknowledge the importance of the role of a free independent press in a functioning society or democracy. The last chapter will explore the experience of the Global Forum for Media Development in assisting media and journalists in Ukraine in times of war, its efficiency and possible benefit for the evolvement of the media support sector in general.

To sum up, Ukraine's media model can be considered a polarized pluralist one. Ever since Euromaidan in 2013, numerous Ukrainian journalists have adopted a more interventionist perspective which may be attributed to the ineffectiveness of the democratic system. After Russia's full-scale invasion, Ukraine decided not to choose the path of military censorship. Therefore, although Ukrainian journalists and the media may not have total freedom, the framework in terms of which they carry out their duty remains quite broad.

Well before the Russian invasion, the "information war" with Russia was already damaging Ukraine's media landscape. To counter the constant flow of Russian disinformation and fakes, fact-check journalism in Ukraine is growing as a distinct subgenre and becomes an important journalistic quality complementing more conventional, traditional journalistic ideas like impartiality and objectivity.

Despite public and donors' lack of interest and the state's disapproval, some media and journalists continue to apply their peacebuilding or conflict-sensitive perspectives contributing to the peacebuilding and conflict-resolution processes.

The war demonstrated that viewers were very reliant on local media and communications from a trusted nearby source. However, Ukrainian media, especially small local ones, are unable of sustaining themselves in times of war. Without varied and targeted sponsor backing, many editorial boards that sustain community cohesiveness and awareness would disappear. Therefore, emergency media support for free press and media in Ukraine will contribute to building a more strong and more united European media community.

### **Chapter 3. Emergency support for media and journalists (on the example of GFMD efforts in Ukraine)**

Chapter 3 is devoted to the close study of GFMD emergency media support actions dedicated to assisting media and journalists in Ukraine during the ongoing war. A critical approach is used to identify the benefits and drawbacks of GFMD advocacy efforts (launching the Perugia Declaration for Ukraine and organizing a high-level session on the safety of Ukrainian journalists at the UNESCO World Press Freedom Day conference); collaboration with major social media companies (collating the list of the trusted public interest news organization in Ukraine for big tech companies to verify); teamwork with GFMD members and partners on identifying needs and opportunities for Ukrainian media and journalists both in-country and in exile (creating emergency mapping coordination sheet) and setting up dedicated resource centre “Ukraine media support coordination”. A comparative analysis of GFMD’s previous experience with emergency media support in different countries is used to formulate general recommendations for multi-layered emergency media support in the areas of conflict globally. Therefore, the recommendations suggested in this thesis have a global character and can be implemented by international media development organizations without a connection to any particular crisis or country or used by scholars in further academic research.

#### **3.1 The mission of emergency media support**

Over the last few decades, the amount of international media support has significantly increased (Kumar 2006). Major donors have expanded their support for projects aimed at promoting freedom of speech, media freedom, multiple perspectives, democratic press laws, investigative reporting, and equitable access to information technology, even though the amounts of financing are negligible in comparison to the entire expenditures of foreign assistance.

However, only lately have academics paid attention to the theoretical foundation and significance of emergency media support. Despite the long and illustrious tradition of studies in the area of development and international assistance (Jacobson and Servaes 1994; Waisbord 2008), media and democracy-related concerns have gotten little attention

(Price et al 2002). The increasing importance of the media in modern politics emphasizes the need of prioritizing peace-oriented media democracy in international assistance. The consolidation of democracy on a global scale obviously necessitates the backing of media systems that conform to deep-rooted standards of freedom and independence (Ikenberry&Carothers 2000).

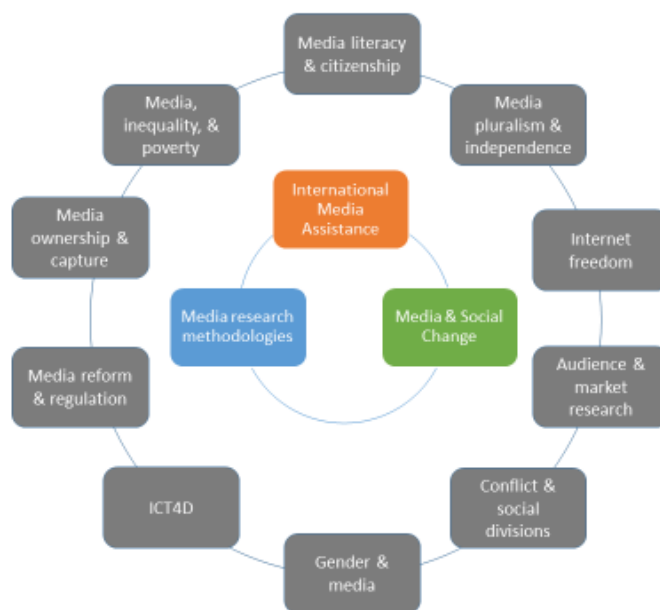
Despite a rising acknowledgement of the need for international support for the media, the present methods of support seem ineffective considering the scale of journalism's current challenges. Journalists throughout the globe are endangered by the strengthened attempts of authoritarian regimes and violent groups to repress them, while the media industry has already been damaged by the downfall of its advertising-based financial model. Moreover, the tools used by the elite to restrict what people read, watch and listen to have developed, although the measures for defending journalistic independence really haven't.

Rothman and Benequista (2017) are convinced that researchers can assist in resolving this issue, but only if the media development research area is adequately defined and supported. In international support sectors such as fostering democracy, public health, the fight against corruption, and others, researchers have contributed to the elimination of myths and ineffective techniques and the introduction of more creative and successful support tactics. For scholars to play this revolutionary role in the area of international assistance for media development, however, they must devote a great lot more attention to the problem from a far greater range of views.

*“If media development researchers can unify around a common agenda, build stronger bridges between scholars and practitioners, and communicate its knowledge meaningfully to policy-makers and donors, international media development might just yet emerge from this crisis in time to help save journalism,”* emphasized the scholars (Rothman&Benequista 2017)

*In 2017 Center for International Media Assistance, the Global Forum for Media Development, the University of Westminster and the University of Leeds organized a public discussion in Cartagena, Colombia to raise interest in a media development research community. After collecting participants’ opinions they identified key topics which were then organized into 12 categories shown in Figure 1.*

**Figure 1: 12 categories of research topics related to media development**



*Source: Rothman, P., & Benequista, N. (2017). Media development needs a community of scholars. Center for International Media Assistance.*

Realizing that these 12 criteria were too wide to serve as a cohesive objective, the workgroup further reduced them into three major research topics that might be used to characterize media development as a study field (Rothman&Benequista 2017):

1. Recognizing the role of international support for media development, including its political economics, its background, principles, and tactics, among other things.
2. Acknowledging the link between media and social, economic, and political developments. This might include the significance of media in democracy, conflicts, or progressive results, but the overarching goal is to comprehend how media systems can help the advancement of society.
3. Enhancing methodology for assessing media development and media support, distinguishing media's position in larger development and democratic processes, and analyzing the influence of policies and international assistance, among other initiatives that seek to facilitate media development.



According to the aforementioned categorization, this study belongs to the third kind of research topic attempting to explore the importance of emergency media support and possibilities for its enhancement on the example of the Global Forum for Media Development's efforts to support media and journalists in Ukraine in times of war.

As an example of effective media support, GFMD provides a plethora of experiences for examining the accomplishments of international donors and organizations to foster media development and social change objectives. In addition, the assessment of GFMD activities sheds light on key global concerns that are at the core of current discussions about the major obstacles to effective emergency media support.

The Global Forum for Media Development is the largest global community of media development, media freedom, and journalism support organisations. 125 members from across the world provide GFMD Secretariat with a mandate to act in the interests of the media development sector and journalism as a whole (GFMD 2021a). Their trusted status, track record, and mandate from the members means GFMD is able to convene and work with international media development agencies, local and regional media assistance groups, researchers, policymakers, donors, tech platforms and many others to develop a common understanding of the sector needs and priorities and to take collective action to address them.

In an interview for this study Tom Law, GFMD's Deputy Director highlighted that the organization envisages a world in which democracy, human rights, and sustainable development benefit from a pluralistic and informed public sphere underpinned by free, independent, and viable public-interest media and journalism.

*“GFMD's role is to be a bridge between organisations which are trying to support media and journalism around the world, donors, and policymakers. And because we're seen as an impartial body, we are a network of over 100 organisations, and we have a mandate, and the credibility to do that. We can do things that are very difficult for individual organisations to do. So, when we speak to donors and policymakers we do so on behalf of our community. We do so by having on almost all occasions an evidence base behind us be that our surveys of members or research that we've done. And that enables us to*

*influence how donors and policymakers approach supporting media. GFMD is able to have that impact because we're an established network,”* he noted.

GFMD was founded in 2005 in Amman, Jordan, and has its headquarters in Brussels. Its core value is to “*support the creation and strengthening of journalism and free, independent, sustainable, and pluralistic news ecosystems*”, as defined by UNESCO declarations at conferences in Windhoek, Almaty, Santiago de Chile, Sana'a, and Sofia (GFMD 2021a).

The GFMD is financially supported by membership fees which are set depending on the staffing numbers and size of each member organisation. Membership fees make up roughly one-third of GFMD’s income. The other two-thirds of GFMD’s income comes from international donors. GFMD receives core funding from the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) and Open Society Foundations (OSF). Core funding for the GFMD IMPACT programme comes from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). GFMD also receives programmatic funding from a variety of sources (GFMD 2020b).

As part of GFMD core funding comes from its members, it gives them a certain degree of independence. What GFMD is trying to accomplish is to represent its members, but at the same time encourage the donors who want to continue giving money to the media support sector to see what they could do slightly differently and to approach it differently. This goal is quite hard because of the political pressure and political priorities of the governments that the donor agencies represent and work on behalf of. But it's a challenge that GFMD has always grappled with.

In addition to facilitating the sharing of knowledge and skills between GFMD members and partners through regional caucuses, working groups and interactions between individual members on how to most effectively secure the future journalism and independent media, the work of GFMD can be broadly broken down into three core areas:

1. **Helping members get funding:** it includes curating an up-to-date, searchable list of funding opportunities worldwide; providing guidance and fostering collaboration and the

exchange of information on fundraising through multilingual resources, events, and mentoring; profiling and mapping donors and funders.

2. **Advising donors and funders on how to fund media development and journalism: this is directly related to the activity of GFMD's International Media Policy and Advisory Centre (GFMD IMPACT)** in terms of which GFMD responds to help desk requests from donors by commissioning research, conducting surveys, and producing policy papers; plays a coordination and information sharing role in emergencies and crises; curates and shares knowledge produced by members and partners acting as the institutional memory of the sector; encourage the evaluation of media development work as a way to identify and advance best practices, methods and technologies.

3. **Targeted media policy and advocacy activities:** together with members, partners, and others GFMD works to establish an enabling environment for free, independent, pluralistic, and viable media and public-interest journalism by addressing the political, social and structural constraints to media freedom and media plurality through peer-led advocacy. The organization serves their members and partners by building their capacity to carry out joint work in the areas of policy and advocacy activities, representing them on the international stage, serving as a convenor for them and facilitating their access to advocacy opportunities.

GFMD's Executive Director Mira Milosevic noted in her interview for this research that nowadays a new phase in international relations has approached, where there are open conflicts in different parts of the world, with participation from different sides.

*“And supporting media is more important than ever, especially since those conflicts are followed by a huge impact on the civilian population. And therefore, any kind of assistance to their information gathering and sharing is actually considered humanitarian support in emergency situations. But it's tricky because it involves a lot of powerful players simultaneously doing their war propaganda. Ukraine is not the only example, we have an ongoing war in Yemen, for instance. In a lot of other situations when you have small regional conflicts any kind of assistance is seen as interference. So, it's becoming more and more complicated and yet more and more needed. Because the*

*powerful players have so many tools at their disposal to manipulate both the civilian population and politicians, economic power holders, or military power. So, we are facing a completely new playing field, where we need to rethink a lot of things that we thought we knew how to do," she said.*

### **3.2 GFMD previous experience in emergency media support**

By the time the war in Ukraine started GFMD already have previous experience in coordinating emergency media support efforts during conflicts in Syria (2013-2016), Yemen (2016), Sudan (2020) and Lebanon (2020-2022).

A big challenge that GFMD had at that time was that it was expected as an organization to perform a proper coordinating function. What that meant is physically bringing together a great number of actors from both the international sphere and also local media, journalists, and organisations, to usually spend three-four days coordinating who's doing what in the media development sector, and discussing how they're doing it etc. However, media development is not set up for cooperation between every country or even donor. It is obvious that every foundation has its own goals, strategies and rules. It is especially relevant in times of conflict turning into war. The capacity of emergency media supports directly depends on the political situation in the country. When local conflict turns into an international one and more international organisations begin to engage, sometimes it could be better for media development organizations. Because at times, from an international relations point of view, such assistance can make more damage than benefit if an organization tries to impose a hierarchical model of media support without really listening to the local players and realizing their real needs.

Encounter with conflicts in the former Yugoslavia, Sudan, Zimbabwe, Pakistan, and Afghanistan over the past two decades has demonstrated that providing people with access to credible, highly qualified, and independent information is essential to any attempt to bolster a sustainable resolution to the conflict which will initiate a political process to stop the fighting, combat extremism, and guarantee more democratic consequences. As the crisis escalated, donor assistance to the Syrian media was necessary

to guarantee that the fledgling independent media industry thrived and endured. A few years into the war, however, showed that donors, implementers, and Syrians had to reassess their strategy in light of the evolving nature of the conflict and the insights acquired from prior assistance initiatives. GFMD has created several suggestions for funders, implementers, and Syrian media as a result of its coordination work with Syrians and media development experts working on Syria projects from 2013 to 2016 (GFMD 2015, June).

GFMD highlighted that a fundamental component of the response to the Syrian war must be a long-term, adaptable, and appropriately donor involvement supporting independent media. Without a society that is well-informed by unbiased and qualified media, it will be impossible to garner enduring public support for a somewhat democratic future in Syria. A longstanding and adaptable approach fosters trust between Syrians and internationals, provides the time required to improve the professional competence of journalists, encourages the creation of appealing and interesting content, and guarantees that initiatives can react rapidly to changes in the character of the conflict in order to sustain advancement. GFMD also explored that the Syrian audience should be at the centre of donor programs, including efforts to comprehend the news and information demands of the Syrian population and improve the circulation of independent media.

Such support has to be for the long-term benefit of the Syrian audience, enabling them to obtain the most competent, impartial, and thorough news and information possible via the media that adequately suit their informational expectations and desires. This needs assistance for persistent audience analysis and content monitoring to confirm that budget and programmatic decisions are made intelligently, and support is allocated to media that show a dedication to enhancing professionalism and reaching critical audiences inside Syria or among refugees. Then, these media must get funding to convey their material successfully and extensively through broadcast, print, or the Internet.

An integrated approach to the Syrian media industry will also provide the greatest results. Providing simultaneous support for professional journalism and content, distribution of print, broadcast, and online media, sound management, appropriate equipment and operational funding, and the safety and security of journalists will enable media

organizations and journalists to work more efficiently and sustain their gains in the challenging Syrian environment (GFMD 2015, June).

Lastly, the GFMD experience demonstrated once again that media experts, implementers of media development, and funders must coordinate their efforts. Due to limited resources and the difficulties of acquiring frequent and trustworthy information from inside Syria, coordination has a higher sense of urgency. Existing coordinating structures need financial and political backing to work more often and comprehensively than is presently the case. Better coordination would have guaranteed that programs produced by Syrians or by Syrians in conjunction with foreign organizations are the most effective and deserving of donor funding. However, restricted and short-term financing has hindered the capacity to engage more Syrians and smaller foreign NGOs and promote more regular cooperation.

In 2016 in Brussels, the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) and the Global Forum for Media Development (GFMD) co-hosted a public solidarity gathering for Yemeni media that was attended by several members, partners, and government officials. Moreover, a consultation co-organized by UNESCO, IFJ, and GFMD in cooperation with international organizations and Yemeni partners established an action plan for Yemeni journalists and media to promote peace and dialogue. This action plan was partially implemented by UNESCO in 2020 when in partnership with Media Association for Peace (MAP), and with the support of RNW Media it organized 5 days-training on peace journalism for 10 Yemeni journalists from different regions. As part of the project *Empowering Yemeni youth towards peace: providing access to information and participation* supported by the United Nations Peace Building Fund, this program on peace journalism sought to enhance the skills and capabilities of young journalists to give fair coverage of the peace building process, providing them with the tools to comprehend the current discussions while bearing in mind the many nuances involved in relaying unbiased information (UNESCO 2022, April 21). The training centred on media ethics, conflict comprehension and analysis, combating misinformation and hate speech, and exercising peace journalism. Integrating online access to the information with media development and support, it was one of the first youth-focused programs in Yemen,

offering insight into the contemporary thoughts and concerns of Yemeni youth about peacebuilding while reinforcing their freedom of speech and goals with decision-makers.

In 2020 a group of media development donors asked GFMD to hold media development coordination dedicated to the situation with media in Sudan. A meeting held on 2 April 2020 covered the political situation in Sudan and its media sector, provided legislative agenda and defined the media landscape. During the meeting key needs were assessed and the media development coordination mechanism was discussed with the planning of follow-up actions. All led into a report that was later shared with all participants of the meeting.

On August 4, 2020, the Beirut port explosion blasted a city to bits and resurrected ancient scars for a frail society already struggling with civil instability, a protracted socioeconomic catastrophe, and the COVID-19 epidemic. On the initiative of the SKeyes Center of the Samir Kassir Foundation and with the cooperation of International Media Support (IMS), GFMD gathered together Lebanese, regional, and international media support organizations to create a Joint Coordination Mechanism (GFMD 2020a). The GFMD emergency media support strategy was the closest to the one they later implemented in Ukraine as their activity in Lebanon is considered the most efficient and carefully coordinated.

To help continue coordination, GFMD has developed a spreadsheet listing the organizations asked to join the information-sharing program. The spreadsheet contained background information on each organization, a summary of their initiatives in the MENA area, and a description of their Lebanon recovery activities. In March 2021, as a preface to the second coordination meeting, GFMD, SKeyes, and IMS conducted interviews with media support experts and Lebanese media representatives with established and/or creative business strategies in Lebanon and the MENA region.

According to the GFMD research on Sustainability & journalism support in Lebanon, there are still limitations in the provision of help for new media startups and successful digital platforms that prioritize user involvement (Randall 2022). A short-term approach to training also turned out to be unsuccessful as quality investigative journalism takes years but too often training is short-term.

Lebanon's experience also showed that there is a positive perspective on supporting local media, even small ones. According to one of the donors, refusing to put quantity above quality and working for a well-imagined, loyal and highly engaged local audience is often an effective business strategy provided that they have a clear business plan, a list of aims, and are ready to focus on progress even if it will be on a smaller scale (Randall 2022).

The work during the abovementioned conflicts was a useful experience for GFMD. It proved that major donors and most of the implementing media development organisations are big, strong and well-resourced organisations which GFMD didn't have the full capacity to coordinate profoundly. *“Once we realised that, it helped us to change the emphasis. Information-sharing, facilitating people coming together, discussing and sharing who's doing what in this sector is something that we realistically can do,”* said Mira Milosevic in an interview.

### **3.3 Emergency and crisis media coordination mapping**

The conclusion of the Cold War paved the way for the advancement of international media support. Since then, as the sector has expanded and spread throughout the world, one objective has received relatively little attention: a mindset of partnership and coordination within the media development community (Dean 2012). And although some scholars suppose that media support organizations should coordinate their activities by the end of the media support project (Waisbord & Jones 2010; Dean 2012), when it comes to emergency media support in times of war or conflict the experience of GFMD proves that coordination of efforts is especially valuable and productive from the very beginning.

Since the start of the war in Ukraine, GFMD has been working with other organisations on mapping the needs of many Ukrainian organisations as well as the potential assistance that could be provided to them. Via bi-weekly coordination meetings, several technical needs have been identified and addressed by the different organisations. These have been outlined in the shared spreadsheet that is being updated by media assistance groups working in the region. The spreadsheet has restricted access only for the participants of the meetings in order to protect some data and contact information which is aimed for

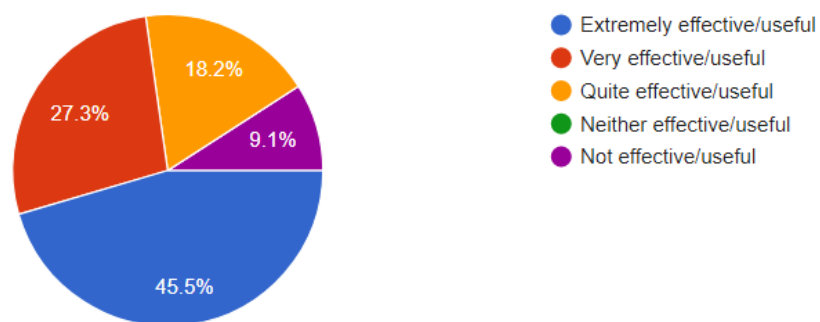


internal use only from undesirable incognito editors and DDOS attacks. It contains updated information about the organisation's capacity, available resources, offered a response, and who they are working with as well as their needs and main concerns.

Meetings usually start from the participants' updates divided into the following areas of work: coordination efforts, financial support, safety equipment, content production and training, evacuation and relocation, re-establishing newsrooms and housing outside Ukraine and advocacy.

According to the internal survey with the participants of the information-sharing meetings, 45.5% of participants find GFMD's overall information-sharing activities on Ukraine media assistance extremely useful, 27.3% find it very useful, and 18.2% find it quite useful and only 9.1% do not find it useful.

**Figure 2. Rating GFMD's overall information sharing activities on Ukraine media assistance**



*Source: personal production based on GFMD internal survey*

Most participants noted that information-sharing meetings helped them realize where they can assist to fill gaps and not duplicate initiatives others have launched. Uniting international and national actors together was a positive experience as well as it allowed representatives of Ukrainian media organizations to easily connect with multiple new partners and donors and share with them their most crucial needs and concerns. Among the main suggestions were inviting more Ukrainian local actors and considering the possibility to translate the meetings and shared materials into Ukrainian to involve them

more actively. Having one coordinator per country (or in the case of Ukraine per several cities) could also be useful in systemizing coordination between partners.

*“We’re grateful to GFMD for its efficient coordination and information-sharing efforts because that is what we need right now - uniting donors for coordinated support and spreading information about these opportunities to a wider media community. In the long-term media support’s goal should be to save the diversity of media in Ukraine and transparent access to information,”* said the President of the National Union of Journalists in Ukraine Sergiy Tomilenko. In July 2022 GFMD was awarded a certificate of appreciation from NUJU for solidarity and significant assistance to journalists in Ukraine during the war.

**Image 1. GFMD’s Certificate of Appreciation awarded by NUJU**



Source: GFMD. (2022d, May 3). Emergency funds and resources for media and journalists in Ukraine.

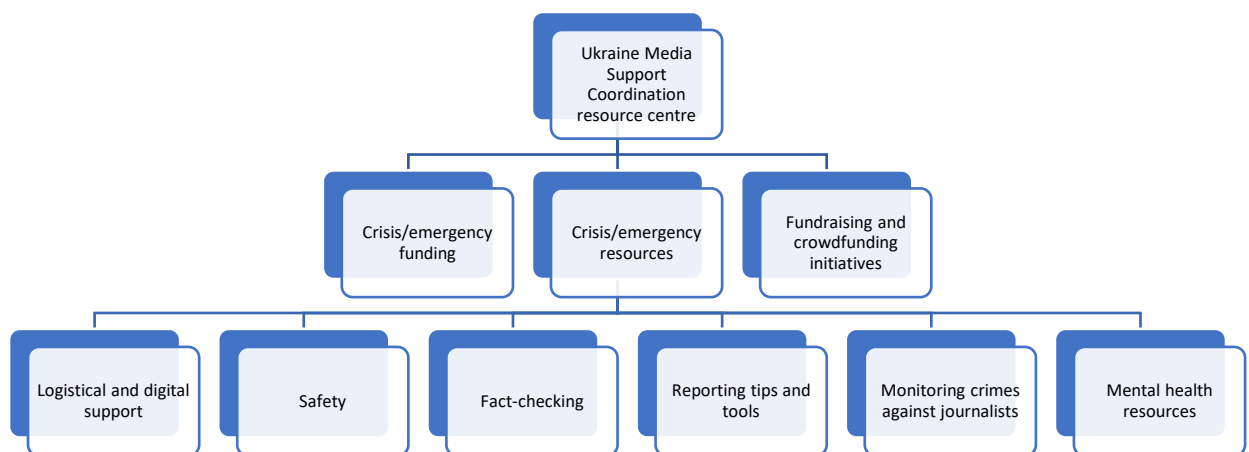
### **3.4 Dedicated resource centres in English and Ukrainian**

Responding to requests from members, partners, and donors, in March 2022 GFMD created a resource centre Ukraine Media Support Coordination which I am responsible

for maintaining and regularly updating with resources previously translated by me into Ukrainian. As can be seen in Figure 2 the resource consists of three main sections:

- An extensive list of organisations providing emergency funding for Ukrainian journalists and media.
- A curated list of resources for journalists and media.
- A list of all of the fundraising campaigns and crowdfunding efforts to support Ukrainian media and journalists.

**Figure 2. The structure of GFND’s Ukraine Media Support Coordination resource centre**



*Source: Personal production adapted from <https://ukraine-coordination.gfmd.info/>*

All of this information that was gathered in the resource centre by GFMD is being fed into the chatbot run by GFMD colleagues at The Fix Media. A chatbot and a helpline “UA Media Support Centre” allows media and journalists to locate accommodation, equipment, funding, and employment options, as well as learn how to operate during conflict (The Fix Media 2022).

The same information also appears in English in a dedicated section of the GFMD Media Development Fundraising Guide, which is designed for anyone applying for media development and journalism support funding. It aims to be comprehensive, and support individuals and organisations making their first applications as well as provide a refresher for more experienced fundraisers.

The emergency funding section consists mainly of donor profiles which provide grants, fellowships, and scholarships. During one of the information-sharing meetings Ukrainian colleagues noted that they struggled to find contact information of the organizations which provide emergency funding, the dedicated section with emails, phones, faxes and physical addresses of all the media support organizations was translated and provided. To make navigation more user-friendly contact info was also added near each emergency funding opportunity.

The section with emergency resources consists of the following subsections: logistical support (journalistic solidarity centres and hubs in Ukraine as well as available offices in Europe for Ukrainian journalists and media who left the country); safety (hotlines, media safety advisory, online courses and recommendations to mitigate risks), digital support (connecting with tech support providers, Pro-bono protection against DDOS attacks, verifications of accounts on Twitter and Facebook, anti-virus software support), fact-checking (free resources to fact-check dubious information, photo and video footage), reporting tips and tools, mental health resources (toolkit to report about the traumatising events from the frontline as well as from afar), monitoring crimes against journalists (links to the databases recording Russia's crimes against Ukrainian media and journalists) and further reading.

The last section includes all existing Fundraising and Crowdfunding initiatives launched to support Media and Journalists in Ukraine including both campaigns by international media actors (like the one started by The Fix Media and described in Chapter 2) as well as calls for help from Ukrainian national and local media.

In general, the resource centre provides a good example of media support that instantly reacted to the needs of the media in times of war and adapted it to make them more accessible and user-friendly.

### 3.5 Perugia Declaration for Ukraine

Collating the needs of Ukrainian media and journalists together with the possibilities of international media development organizations and media donors helped GFMD to define key obstacles for the media sector during the war in Ukraine. This knowledge was transformed into the Perugia Declaration for Ukraine, one of the GFMD’s most prominent efforts to support Ukrainian media and journalists. As part of the GFMD team, I actively participated in writing, editing and translating it. The Perugia Declaration for Ukraine was launched on 9 April 2022 at Thomson Foundation’s panel discussion *Russia’s invasion of Ukraine: how local journalists are telling the story for their communities and the world* at the International Journalism Festival in Sala San Francesco, Arcivescovado, Perugia (GFMD, 2022a, May 3).

**Image 2. Perugia Declaration for Ukraine**



*Source: GFMD. (2022a, April 9). Perugia Declaration for Ukraine – 3 May 2022.*

The declaration starts with the statement that the war in Ukraine once again proved the significance of independent, ethical journalism “as a powerful antidote to the disinformation and propaganda that characterise hybrid warfare, and as a pillar of democracy upon which other freedoms and rights depend” (GFMD 2022a, May 3). It specifically uses the term public interest journalism which refers to the Emergency Appeal for Journalism and Media Support issued by GFMD a year earlier, in 2021. That declaration which turned out to be the second most successful declaration and was signed

by 171 media organizations, called to support trustworthy and fact-based journalism organisations and independent media, which had a crucial role in providing people with vital information during the COVID-19 pandemic. (GFMD 2021b, November 23).

Perugia Declaration for Ukraine then provides a list of recommendations relevant for emergency media support globally. One of the issues that international media development organizations rarely pay attention to is ensuring that field producers, translators and production managers are perceived as journalists and not “fixers” (Oliver 2022, March 26). The declaration specifically highlights the importance of field producers having the same rights, social security, compensation and credit as international reporters. The declaration also provides an objective perception of the war in Ukraine acknowledging the need to support independent and credible Russian and Belarussian media and individual journalists that had to flee their homeland and work in exile. Concerns about Russia’s destructive impact on press freedom within the country and its attempts to attack independent journalism in the neighbouring countries are raised and Russia’s actions to harm press freedom and attack individual journalists are strongly condemned.

Perugia Declaration for Ukraine also calls for everyone to realize that there was not enough to support media in those countries in times where it was most needed to prevent disastrous consequences. At the same time, it is emphasized in the declaration that the courage, dedication, and professionalism of Ukrainian and international journalists fascinated the world and caused a growing wave of respect for this profession. This fledgling, newly discovered, and reignited appreciation of journalism's significance by the general public and policymakers is precarious. Ukrainian reporters and foreign correspondents reporting from Ukraine have won “a window of opportunity” (GFMD 2022a, May 3). The greatest advances are often achieved during times of crisis and GFMD stresses that the media development community cannot afford to jointly waste it.

Finally, the declaration calls on four different groups of actors in the media support sector and contains a set of recommendations for each group encouraging action “for the sake of the immediate future and safety of our Ukrainian colleagues, and the long-term viability of independent, public interest journalism everywhere” (GFMD 2022a, May 3). Those groups of actors are the following:

- international media and journalists;
- private and public donors, and funders of professional journalism;
- the EU, its member states, and members of the Media Freedom Coalition;
- technology, telecoms, internet intermediaries and advertisers.

International media and journalists are being asked to help with personal protective equipment, providing safety training, hiring displaced Ukrainian journalists or providing them with a place to work, and assuring that field producers and translators have all the necessary safety guarantees and decent salaries. From an ethical point of view, international media and journalists are also highly encouraged to treat Ukrainian media and journalists equal to their own staff and use appropriate language in their reporting on the Russian invasion of Ukraine. The latter request is a crucial part of peace journalism as incorrect wording can hurt those directly involved in war actions and even provoke conflict and violence. For instance, international media tend to often use the wording “Ukrainian war” which is politically incorrect as it creates an illusion that it was Ukraine that initiated the war.

Also, at the beginning of the war media avoided calling it the war but rather conflict or crisis. It was extremely painful to observe for Ukrainians who appeared at the epicentre of the full-scale war that the world underestimates the scale of terror and destruction of this war. Ukrainian journalists suggest using “Russia’s war in Ukraine” or “Russian invasion of Ukraine” instead (Detector Media 2022, March 23).

The declaration also appeals to private and public donors, and funders of professional journalism to offer flexible financial support to media and journalists in Ukraine, consider journalism as a public good and not use it as an instrument for strategic communication, and make it easier and more accessible the process of applying for financial support (particularly shorten the list of required documents and provide services in various languages), launch specific fellowships or scholarships for individual journalists, think about not only financial but also technical or methodological support (UNESCO 2022, April 21).

In a call to the EU, its member states, members of the Media Freedom Coalition GFMD encourages to provide legal support to helping Ukrainian journalists, as well as independent Russian and Belarusian journalists with visa and accommodation issues; investigate war crimes against media and journalists and held war criminals accountable and protect journalists under international humanitarian law.

Technology, telecoms, internet intermediaries and advertisers, in turn, are asked to collaborate with journalists to improve efforts on fact-checking, and media literacy; prevent automatic takedowns of content from trusted media documenting war crimes and crimes against humanity; provide internet access to the larger audience possible. Another issue tech companies should face is modifying algorithms which prevent media, especially small and local ones, to appear in the news feed of a wider circle of users and monetise its content of high quality. Advertisements should also be regulated which could not only look unethical near news about the atrocities of war but also be an obstacle to users' way to reach vital information.

It was important for GFMD to reach a wider audience as possible therefore it was decided to translate the declaration into several languages most used by GFMD general and affiliate members and partners. Perugia Declaration for Ukraine was translated and at the moment available in 10 languages: Arabic (إعلان بيروجيا من أجل أوكرانيا – 9 نيسان 2022), Belarusian (Перуджійська декларація у підтримку України), English (Perugia Declaration for Ukraine), French (Déclaration de Pérouse pour l'Ukraine), German (Perugia-Erklärung für die Ukraine), Italian (Dichiarazione di Perugia per l'Ucraina), Portuguese (Declaração de Perugia para a Ucrânia), Ukrainian (Перуджійська декларація у підтримку України), Russian (Перуджийская декларация в поддержку Украины), Spanish (Declaración de Perugia para Ucrania). Personally, I have translated the declaration into Ukrainian and German and edited and proofread the versions in Russian, Belarusian, English, French and Italian.

The declaration received wide and immediate media coverage and over the course of several months was signed by 219 international media organisations, 14 of which are Ukrainian media and media organisations – GFMD's personal record.



Perugia Declaration was also presented on 4 May at the World Press Freedom Day (WPDF) Conference 2022 during the high-level session “Safety of Journalists in Ukraine War” organized by UNESCO and the Global Forum on Media Development. The aim of the session was to offer a platform for discussions on the current issues confronting journalists in Ukraine, providing the viewpoints and observations of media professionals within and outside the country, as well as comments from the international community. The discussion moderator by GFMD’s Deputy Director Tom Law included President of the National Union of Ukrainian Journalists (NUJU) Sergiy Tomilenko, Deputy General Secretary of the International Federation for Journalists (IFJ) Jeremy Dear, Co-founder and Editor of The Fix Daryna Shevchenko, Director of Operations and Campaigns of the Reporters Without Borders (RSF) Rebecca Vincent and OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media Ms Teresa Ribeiro.

Perugia Declaration for Ukraine is a foundation for future collective advocacy efforts of GFMD, its members and partners. In particular, it will be used in the discussion at the International Press Institute World Congress on September 8-10 2022 in New York City dedicated to the improvement of media assistance coordination mechanisms.

### **3.6 GFMD future long-term advocacy and media support plans**

GFMD is planning to increase its efforts to continue supporting media and journalists in Ukraine in a long-term perspective: *“There are two main reasons why we need to continue supporting media in Ukraine. Firstly, war crimes and crimes against humanity must be documented by independent witnesses, such as journalists if those responsible are to be held to account. And secondly, if the media sector is destroyed, it's very hard to rebuild it. Keeping journalists in their jobs now will make rebuilding the media sector -- as a vital part of a functioning society -- slightly easier in the years to come. Whereas if media organisations no longer exist or most journalists have left and gone to do new jobs, it's very hard to bring them back or to replace their experience and skills. So those are two of the reasons why it's important to support Ukrainian media,”* shared GFMD’s Deputy Director Tom Law.

In particular, GFMD is planning to focus on specific recommendations from the Perugia Declaration for Ukraine and start with realizing in practice recommendations for technology, telecoms, internet intermediaries and advertisers.

With the help of its members and partners, GFMD has crowdsourced a list of over 160 independent, trustworthy, public interest news organisations that their members and partners are familiar with and/or collaborate with within the region. This list was used by Facebook in the development and launch of the *News Tab* in Ukraine (Facebook 2021). GFMD has collaborated with Twitter to verify and grant a blue tick to most of the Ukrainian media accounts based on GFMD referrals on this list. GFMD was also able to fast-track safety and security issues raised by OCCRP and others to Facebook and Twitter. A document with guidelines for the Twitter account verification process was also prepared for GFMD members. As part of their ongoing efforts to strengthen information ecosystems, promote the work of members among digital platforms, and ensure the rich information their network produces can reach a wider audience, GFMD will work with the public policy team at Twitter to verify the accounts of journalism, news media, journalism support, and media development organisations who are the grantees and partners of their members, especially ones from Ukraine and throughout the Global South in general. GFMD has also prepared guidelines for the Twitter account verification process

GFMD has also commissioned a piece of research into the effectiveness of coordination and information sharing in the media development and journalism support sector to explore the ways of its enhancement. The future research will allow estimating whether resource centres are really reaching the Ukrainian audience, how bi-weekly meetings can be modified to be more efficient, how effective GFMD's International Media Policy and Advisory Centre (GFMD IMPACT (its help desk function in particular) and how to make the best of GFMD's communication tools (website, newsletters, mailing lists, social media channels, Slack groups) to connect with members, donors and partners.

### **3.7 Critical assessment of the GFMD activities**

There has traditionally been a minimal review of media support programs, either before or after their implementation (Price 2002). Evaluations of the current social media sector that include legal and political analyses, consumer surveys, and focus group studies are one technique to increase the efficacy of media support. However, a lack of trustworthy data, resources, experience, and the motivation to conduct academic research in an atmosphere that is frequently extremely politicized, and turmoil impedes the sector's evaluation efforts. Therefore, GFMD's realization of the necessity of research to analyse the efficiency and usefulness of its activities is objectively the right decision. Hopefully, the critical assessment and recommendations from this study will also become part of GFMD's evaluation and improvement process.

Closer examination of GFMD's efforts allowed to identify some blind spots which deserve attention because they can have significant implications for the effectiveness of various actions in support of GFMD's main goals.

According to the results of an internal survey on information-sharing meetings, some members find the media assistance mapping sheet slightly confusing. Excel document has quickly overgrown its format turning into a resource centre of its own. Therefore, GFMD should analyse how to better position data in a more accessible and meaningful way. It is directly related to another issue which is turning collated information into visually appealing and clear donor reports, infographics and tables. Donors have a tendency to indigestion of too big chunks of formally written information so it is better to condensate lengthy reports into two-three page summaries and visualize key facts and numbers. It will definitely make a positive impression on donors who will have a clearer vision of what GFMD is doing and why is it worth supporting them.

In terms of Ukraine media support, a better understanding of local Ukrainian media actors might help. For this more representatives of not only major national but small regional or local media should be invited to the information-sharing meetings. It is important to know their opinion on whether the areas of work in which GFMD provides emergency media support are still relevant and how to better prioritise them. That leads to another issue which in the case of Ukrainian small media organisations is the language barrier. GFMD

has already made the first step in this direction by establishing a regularly updated resource centre in Ukrainian. GFMD is also working on the complete translation of their Media Development Fundraising Guide in Ukrainian and Russian. But simultaneous translation during the meetings would significantly improve the effectiveness of communication between national and international actors. As these meetings are organized online, GFMD could benefit from acquiring some kind of software for video calls with the option of automatic translation or adding subtitles live. Currently, they have Ukrainian, Russian, French, Spanish and Serbian native speakers who can help with communication with members and partners in those languages. But their human resource and physical capacity are understandably very limited to implement such required projects therefore language issues could be something that can be considered in a long-term perspective.

Another area of improvement could be producing shorter pieces of briefings and information. The section of the website with the latest news has to be updated more regularly with intermediary achievements and next goals in terms of media support so not only members and partners but also usual users and followers would be updated on what is GFMD currently working on. That can be complicated in a way that during the ongoing emergency media support it is not recommended to make premeditated conclusions. And yet condensing that big amount of accomplished work into readable, clear and relatively short reports could help an organization's transparency and credibility.

Despite Perugia Declaration for Ukraine states that GFMD continues to “*stand in solidarity with all journalists around the world who work in areas of conflict or where freedom of expression is limited, to deliver trusted information in the public interest*” (GFMD 2022c), from its latest activity it is obvious that GFMD is completely focused on emergency media support for the Ukrainian media sector. It is clear that for GFMD is important how to represent their membership. But to play that role properly they should represent their smaller members in all the parts of the world who don't have as big a voice and try to make sure their voices are heard by donors and policymakers. This way they will prove their main aims and justify the presence of the word Global in its name. It also brings us to the issue of whether there is enough human resource to implement all projects

simultaneously, but GFMD has to improve their long-term goals measurement in order to succeed in all the projects it has currently started.

Another important blind spot in GFMD's current emergency media support is the complete lack of a peace-oriented narrative. In both its official call for increased support of media and journalists in Ukraine (Perugia Declaration for Ukraine) and other publications democracy and fundamental human rights are mentioned but promoting peace and dialogue is nonetheless important. Media support in war zones and as part of a peacebuilding process may need strategies distinct from 'traditional transitions' in retrospect. A greater focus is usually placed on media support that promotes future stability or economic change rather than democratic reform (Price 2002). They already have previous peace-oriented experience when GFMD collaborated with UNESCO on creating an action plan for Yemeni journalists to promote peacebuilding and peace-oriented dialogue. This practice had big significance and shouldn't be omitted in future emergency media support efforts. The point on promoting peace and dialogue can also be incorporated into the Principles for Effective Media Assistance on which Global Forum for Media Development works together with the Centre for International Media Assistance.

### **3.8 General recommendations to enhance efforts for emergency media support**

What the media support sector lacks is evidence-based, verified arguments that relate particular actions to broad media transformation processes. This would need the establishment of strategic assessments that provide a clear generative model that suggests workable solutions to issues and defines how interventions are related to continuing local activities and are a key to long developments that stimulate future changes. (Waisbord & Jones 2010).

Following 10 recommendations were based on Global Forum for Media Development's experience in emergency media support, in-depth interviews with GFMD's Executive Director Mira Milosevic, Deputy Director Tom Law, the President of the National Union of Journalists of Ukraine Sergiy Tomilenko and the Editor and Co-Founder of The Fix

Media Jakub Parusinski and personal journalistic experience of the author compared to the theoretical framework on media development and media support of modern scholars. The recommendations have a global character and can be used by emergency media support actors without a connection to any particular crisis or country.

- 1. Start coordinating efforts with partners at the very beginning of the emergency media support project, not in the post-conflict stage.** Although some scholars are convinced that media support organizations should coordinate their efforts only by the end of the project to compare the effectiveness of their activities (Waisbord & Jones 2010; Dean 2012), the GFMD experience proved otherwise. GFMD's information-sharing meetings on media support in Ukraine helped partners realize where they can assist to fill gaps and not duplicate initiatives others have launched.
- 2. Identify strategic communications intentions behind media donors support.** In the media support, sector donors don't always have the purest motivations. They're also quite strategic and they're doing so for political reasons. But when funds are used by an international media assistance organisation, which operates based on ideals, such as ethical journalism, freedom of expression and independent press in a functioning peace-oriented democracy, they will be able to influence donors' approach. Funding that was given from a strategic communications perspective can be used for independent fact-checking, media literacy or to support the sustainability of developed revenue models for small independent media.
- 3. Strengthen the business component of media support.** According to Lviv Media Forum's (2022) latest research, a predicted drastic fall in GDP by the end of 2022 in Ukraine means that Ukrainian media will be unable of sustaining itself as either a media outlet or a business. Historically Ukraine has weaker development of commercial media therefore like any other country with a polarized pluralist media model, it requires guidance and support in its first steps in the media business field. Media development organizations should support rather than subsidize. Growing the overall media market without simply trying to compensate for some gaps again brings us to the idea of the greater significance of long-term goals over short-term ones in emergency media support.

- 4. Explore product management, logistics and managing financial operations within media support.** To make modern media support as effective as possible in emergency situations media development organizations should think about hiring specialists with experience in organizing fundraising campaigns. As Jakub Parubinski noted in his interview, their fundraising experience showed that managing logistics issues required twice as many resources (human, technical and financial) and time as usual. But knowing these developing areas of work allows for making emergency media support much more efficient and proactive.
- 5. Develop a specific media support model for local media.** The potential that local media have in terms of global diffusion and de-escalation of the conflict is not used enough. The war in Ukraine demonstrated that citizens are very reliant on local media and communications from a trusted nearby source. However, more likely that only the most prominent and competent local media will be able to remain in the media market in the nearest future. Therefore, organizations should develop a specific media support model for local media. Jakub Parusinski suggests scaling regional networks, rather than trying to save individual media. It will help to look at the media's performance from more than half a year's perspective and identify whether it simply needs a one-time financial inflow or more complex mentoring support.
- 6. Include mentorship and traineeship programs for media.** Media Development Foundation (2022) suggest that media development organizations should help national media to carry out an audit of available resources and develop financial plans in three variations: pessimistic, optimistic and realistic. In terms of Ukraine, local editorial boards would also benefit from mentoring programs which could include management support and training for editors on where to look for funding opportunities and guide them during the application process.
- 7. Make resources providing emergency media support more accessible.** As Sergiy Tomilenko highlighted, most regional media do not have experience in applying for grants, the linguistic barrier is also an obstacle. It is important to make support more accessible for all media actors, so the receivers of the support won't be only well-known national media, those who received it in previous years and are familiar with the procedure. Consider providing simultaneous translations or live subtitles for

maintaining productive dialogue between national and international actors during the online meetings.

- 8. Break away from a mindset that prioritizes current organizational concerns at the expense of long-term collaboration between local and global partners.** Donor initiatives have prioritized short trainings, but less so the establishment of long-term legislative mechanisms for the education of journalists, media business management, and audience researchers (Wiasbord 2010:33) Media funders have a profound impact on the performance and capability of media support initiatives. As a result, the donor system poses several obstacles to the media assistance field (Price 2002). Due to the urgent nature of recovery efforts or other funding constraints, media development plans sometimes lack a long-term vision that integrates them with other elements of political and economic life. Consequently, many initiatives are unmanageable in the long term after donor funds are exhausted. Therefore, there is a larger need to fund local organizations capable of continuing media programs once the brief intervention time concludes.
- 9. Stop inequality of media support on a global scale.** Because all the attention of the international media support community was focused on the war in Ukraine, killings of Palestinian journalists on the territories of the West Bank and Gaza occupied by Israel remained majorly unnoticed. Peebles (2022) stated that the continuous targeting and extermination of Palestinian journalists are unfairly ignored by Western media development organizations because of their political wariness and certain prejudices. The same issue was brought up in the latest report assessing the efficiency of the Media Freedom Coalition, where it was stressed that the MFC must guarantee that its activities are “guided by a comprehension of the complex, dynamic, and varied concerns of journalists and media workers worldwide” if it really wants to correspond its aim to defend media freedom globally (Myers et al 2022:5). Post-colonial approach is needed to make sure media support is distributed equally worldwide.
- 10. Use media support tools to promote peace, constructive dialogue and non-violent conflict resolution.** Media development organizations tend to underestimate or simply ignore the significance of peace journalism and the increasing need for its support. Promoting democracy and press freedom is not the same thing as both



concepts don't necessarily include peacebuilding efforts in themselves. Surprisingly enough, any media development organization that currently provides media support for Ukrainian media and journalists doesn't mention peace! Neither does even UNESCO's Windhoek+30 Declaration which calls for affirming information is a public good and was adopted at the 2021 World Press Freedom Day Global Conference (UNESCO 2022). Unfortunately, conflict is a defining element of modern history but media organizations have the power to encourage a peacebuilding narrative. Media assistance programs can also be found under the umbrella of humanitarian assistance (Price 2002) which opens more opportunities for media organizations to promote peace and establish a peace-oriented dialogue.

## **Conclusion**

This work aims to contribute to the idea of media as a key actor in the peacebuilding process and strived to prove that consistent and time-efficient international media support is one of the key requirements for the survival of independent peace journalism. The first chapter is dedicated to identifying an answer to the first research question: to what extent is the role of peace journalism essential for shifting the perception of both policymakers and the audience towards de-escalation of conflict and its peace-oriented resolution.

As there are certain gaps in the academic literature when it comes to differentiating efforts aimed at preventing war (war journalism) and promoting peace (peace journalism), this work specifically explores peace-promoting function of the media, which eventually has more long-term goals: instead of simply advocating for the ceasefire it is seeking the cause of the collision and encourages to seek non-violent solutions to make peace more long-lasting. It firstly explores particular cases of the media influence when fallen into the wrong hands can lead to conflict escalation (Rwanda genocide case) or generate massive hate of one society towards another and provoke physical conflict (case of Russian propaganda). It then leads to the idea that the obsessive focus of the modern media outlets on negative news and danger alerts is erroneous as it only divides people into the opposite sides and provokes violent conflicts and suggests peace and conflict-sensitive journalism as an alternative to violence. When researching the role of media in the peacebuilding process, most scholars tend to focus on international news organizations completely ignoring the potential local media have in terms of global de-escalation of the conflict and the significance they have to their local audience. Therefore, the last part of this chapter focuses on major difficulties that local media are facing in times of war and emphasized the growing need for media support.

To explore how and under what circumstances international media support is key to the survival of peace journalism, the second chapter investigates the experience of Ukrainian national and local media during the ongoing war. Being a member of the National Union of Journalists of Ukraine with more than four years of journalistic experience, helped me to describe the state of the Ukraine media landscape shortly before the war defining Ukraine's media model as a polarized pluralist one and providing the necessary socio-political context for understanding Ukrainian journalistic culture transformation. It then

focuses on the impact the war has been having on press freedom in Ukraine, particularly focusing on the destructive effect of Russian war propaganda and disinformation and identified three kinds of audiences it is aimed at. In this regard, the chapter then shows that fact-check journalism in Ukraine is growing as a distinct subgenre, becoming an important journalistic quality complementing more conventional, traditional journalistic ideas like impartiality and objectivity. Using Hamelink's definition of peace journalism, it leads to studying how despite public and donors' lack of interest and state disapproval, some Ukrainian media continue to apply their peacebuilding or conflict-sensitive perspectives contributing to the peacebuilding and conflict-resolution processes. The chapter also delves into such Ukrainian media initiatives as setting up journalistic humanitarian centres and launching a crowdfunding campaign to keep Ukraine's media going. Closer research shows that Ukrainian media, especially small local ones, are unable of sustaining themselves in times of war. Without varied and targeted sponsor backing, many editorial boards that sustain community cohesiveness and awareness would disappear and, thus, the chapter concludes with the idea of an increasing need for international emergency media support.

Finally, the last chapter is devoted to the close study of GFMD's emergency media support actions dedicated to assisting media and journalists in Ukraine during the ongoing war. It starts with identifying the mission of emergency media support and refers to the opinion of some scholars that the media development field strongly requires researchers who could act as mediators between media practitioners and policymakers and donors and share their suggestions to facilitate media development based on their critical assessment. It then shares previous experience in coordinating emergency media support efforts during conflicts in Syria (2013-2016), Yemen (2016), Sudan (2020) and Lebanon (2020-2022) and compares it to current GFMD efforts such as emergency and crisis media coordination mapping and information-sharing meetings; setting up dedicated resource centre Ukraine Media Support Coordination in Ukrainian; crowdsourcing a list of independent, trustworthy news organisations in Ukraine for big tech companies to speed up account verification and strengthen information ecosystem.

Special attention is paid to the Perugia Declaration for Ukraine, one of the GFMD's most prominent advocacy efforts. Its call for increased support for Ukrainian media and

journalists and set of recommendations for four different groups of actors in the media support sector are closely analysed.

Many scholars noted that the media support sector traditionally lacks the strategic assessment of its activities which can suggest workable solutions to deal with certain issues and stimulate constructive transformations of the sector. Critical assessment of GFMD's efforts allows to identify some blind spots which, as this work showed, are quite common for the media support sector in general. These blind spots are insufficient accessibility of collated data, growing need to visualize the results of the completed work for donors, improvement of collaboration between national and international media actors, inequality of media assistance with a tendency to focus on only one conflict at a time and complete lack of a peace-oriented narrative. The results of this closer examination of the drawbacks of emergency media support the field as well outcomes of the in-depth interviews with key media actors and previous thorough analysis of related academic works helped to answer the second research question: how the GFMD's experience in the emergency support of media and journalists in Ukraine can be used to improve emergency media support globally.

This led to formulating 10 general recommendations, both ethical and practical, to improve and enhance emergency media support which is not directly linked to any specific country or conflict and therefore is relevant and applicable globally. In particular, practice-oriented recommendations suggest emergency media support actors start coordinating efforts with partners not in the post-conflict stage but at the very beginning; identify donor's strategic communication intentions to better understand their motivation; strengthen the business component of the media support by providing media with support to grow overall media market instead of simply subsidizing and filling in the gaps; make emergency media support as effective as possible by exploring new aspects such as product management, logistics and managing financial operations; develop specific media support model for local media which could potentially include mentorship programs, managements traineeship and assistance with developing a long-term financial plan for local media; make resources providing emergency media support more accessible, particularly by simplifying the financial support application process and helping with overcoming the language barrier. Whereas ethical recommendations

encourage media support actors to break away from a mindset that prioritizes current organizational concerns at the expense of long-term collaboration between local and global partners; make sure media support is distributed equally worldwide by applying a post-colonial approach. The final recommendation to use media support tools to promote peace, constructive dialogue and non-violent conflict resolution is directly connected to the first part of this work which proved that peace journalism is one of the major conflict resolution tools and can be used to influence both decision-makers and society to consider alternatives to violence and seek peace.

Interviews with GFMD's Executive Director Mira Milosevic and Deputy Director Tom Law, President of the National Union of Journalists of Ukraine Sergiy Tomilenko and the Editor and Co-founder of The Fix Media Jakub Parusinski were contributed as a part of the GFMD's future research aimed to assess the effectiveness of coordination and information sharing in the media development and journalism support sector. They will also be published on the GFMD's website. I started writing this work as Communications Intern and finished it as a Communications Manager. As GFMD's Communications Manager, I'm planning to help GFMD to improve the blind spots identified in this research by working on and making amends to the organisation's communications strategy and bringing the attention of the GFMD's Secretariat to the significance of a peace-oriented narrative in their advocacy efforts.

The role of the local media and its usage of peace journalism during the ongoing conflict as well as the significance of emergency media support is underestimated by most scholars. It is mostly an unexplored field, and this work could become a starting point for further research on both of those topics. Recommendations suggested in this work can be used by media practitioners to implement in their work and further elaborated by media development scholars.

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## Appendix

### 1. Interview with Sergiy Tomilenko, President of the National Union of Journalists of Ukraine (NUJU)

#### **What was NUJU's mission before the war and whether it has been modified after 24 February?**

Our mission is a classical one: building a corporate voice to protect the rights of journalists, lobbying media policy, and protecting from certain initiatives that some politicians want to impose by force without previous approval of the journalistic community. The safety of journalists was and remains one of our priorities. Fighting impunity is a relevant topic for Ukraine. We monitored and launched the Index of physical safety which included all cases of impunity against Ukrainian journalists, usually it's 70 cases of physical aggression against journalists per year. In general, our mission is to prove by deeds our motto "Journalists are important".

Now our most important mission is to help media and journalism in Ukraine survive and protect our journalists so they could remain in the profession.

#### **Since the beginning of the war, NUJU started a few big projects. One of them is Journalists' solidarity centres, could you please tell us a bit more about how they work?**

We have around 18 000 members. NUJU is strong, we were present in every region, every age category, and every kind of journalist. So when the war began, we started to receive tons of requests from different journalists who were risking their lives and required safety equipment because they wanted to continue their work. There was a chronic deficit of safety equipment from the very beginning: helmets, vests, first aid kits etc. We also had to help journalists who became refugees or moved within the country as well as those journalists who remained in the occupied territories. Maybe we got slightly used to it with time but during the first month, our schedule turned into a constant hotline – from

morning till evening we were responding to hundreds of requests most of which were quite urgent.

Our partners, EFJ, and IFJ, supported us on how to systematize support. During trainings in the first weeks, some analogies with Syria and Afghanistan were made and there was an idea of temporary journalistic shelters in western Ukraine. But we repeatedly highlighted to trainers that it is not completely correct to compare the situation in Syria or Afghanistan with the current situation in Ukraine from the point of view that we have a sudden big flow of hundreds of journalists with their families, so it's extremely hard to work with all those requests in a shelter mode.

Instead, we suggested to our international partners to create centres where our specialists could work on requests, assist with application forms, and organise some events. It will be a system of assisting needs and allocating help and this way it will be more efficient. This project was born by war, although we had some protocols before the war, we discussed a work plan for emergencies to protect personal data, how to contact if there is no connection etc. From the beginning, we agreed that it wouldn't be a hub like Lviv Media Forum but rather our representative offices in Lviv, Ivano-Frankivsk and Chernivtsi, a small coworking space with two workers and a few computers.

We also highly encourage mutual help, those who received help we encourage to help others. An example could be the case of Новий День (Novyi Den) – a newspaper in Kherson. The city is temporarily occupied so the editorial board had to evacuate to Lviv. It's a challenge for them as they mostly worked with the print version, and the website is not developed enough. Publishing the newspaper on occupied territory is physically impossible, the local audience in Lviv is completely different than in Kherson and developing a digital version is dangerous as editors don't want to attract attention to their team which remained in Kherson. Since they contacted us, we psychologically supported them and connected them with [IREX](#) who sponsored 5 colleagues with 3 months of financial support. We're happy that they remained in the profession, they didn't abandon their audience and now have resources for transformation.

## **How important is the role of local media in Ukraine during the war?**

One of the first things the Russian army did when they got temporary control over certain territories is informational neutralization. They immediately captured editors-in-chief forcing them to become local propagandists. We're proud that the majority of journalists did not become collaborators, they refused. But it means they have to shut down their work because in occupied territories they can't continue work independently. They become silent but, instead, occupants immediately begin their media activity.

In Ukrainian territories, people need reliable, verified information. It is very dangerous in times of war to rely on social media. Although social media are important channels of information, you need a high level of media literacy to consume information from there. We can't rely completely on national TV channels either. Due to all respect for the Ukrainian TV marathon, national broadcasters can't pay attention to all territories and cover all important issues. The low level of digitalization and Internet coverage in Ukraine once again proved the importance of traditional media (newspapers, local radio and tv channels) in Ukraine for debunking fakes and helping citizens cope with anxiety.

One of the main challenges for press freedom at the moment is not censorship as you can imagine but an economic crisis. It can lead to shutting down media companies and journalists leaving their jobs. As a result, people wouldn't be informed about what happened, there wouldn't be enough reliable information. Local political power would also be uncontrollable, so we acknowledge how important the role of journalists as watchdogs of democracy is. We don't want to mirror Putin's actions and make Ukraine anti-Russia. We want to be a part of the global constantly evolving media environment and protect democracy.

## **What was the aim of the project We are from Ukraine?**

Project Ми з України! (We are from Ukraine!) is a display of journalistic solidarity of Ukrainian and Lithuanian journalists and solidarity with the Ukrainian people. This initiative turned into a series of journalistic cooperation. Lithuanians wanted to help and came up with the idea of creating a special edition of newspaper together, the prototype of journalists' unity. As a result, 80 000 copies were published in Lviv sponsored by

Lithuanian colleagues. One-third of the content was from Lithuanian journalists and a majority of the content is inspiring, anti-militarist stories written by Ukrainian journalists about how in times of war and danger volunteers and ordinary people show heroism.

The newspaper was distributed by engaging NUJU members in all regions to give away to Ukrainians for free. It is more valuable than simply distributing by post because many people contributed to this process, journalists shared the newspapers with people at volunteers' centres, at the frontline, and in hospitals. The feedback was great, and this was our way to cheer up citizens and support reading culture. We're also planning to transform this initiative into a rubric in different media about Ukrainian ordinary people who became heroes.

### **How in your opinion emergency media support for Ukraine can be improved?**

We appreciate all efforts aimed at supporting Ukrainian media and journalists. One of the critical issues at the moment is accessibility. Most regional media do not have experience in applying for grants, the linguistic barrier is also an obstacle. I think it is important to make support more accessible, so the receivers won't be only well-known national media, those who received it in previous years and are familiar with the procedure.

On the local level media were not very wealthy but they still were profitable. Even with the circulation of 3 000 copies newspaper made ends meet with the help of subscriptions and advertisements. But now when this market is destroyed, they are not ready. I can name one of such cases in need of emergency media support. Вісник Ч (Visnyk Ch), a local newspaper in the Ukrainian city Chernihiv was profitable and had 34 000 copies - huge circulation for local media. But its infrastructure is now destroyed. Serhii Narodenko, who has been editor-in-chief for around 20 years, is currently asking donors for financial support to continue publishing the newspaper in the second half of this year and distribute it for free to subscribers who already paid for the first half of the year but are no longer able to pay the subscription fee. This is a good approach and an example of how important in times of war to think about your audience and its needs.

We also have an idea to create with the help of international partners Ukraine Media Development Fund to collect governmental and state financial support from different democratic countries (existing example - Ukrainian Cultural Foundation)

We're grateful to GFMD for its efficient coordination and information-sharing efforts because that is what we need right now - uniting donors for coordinated support and spreading information about these opportunities to a wider media community. In the long-term media support's goal should be to save the diversity of media in Ukraine and transparent access to information.

## 2. Interview with Jakub Parusinski, the Editor and Co-founder of The Fix Media

**The Fix Media started an amazingly successful campaign to support Ukrainian media in the first days of the war. In terms of emergency media support, why do you think it was important to start acting right away?**

Well, I would say it's mostly about the fact that when you're dealing with this kind of big emergency, it's really the first couple of days that are the most important in terms of that's when people care when the attention. And I think if we look at the numbers as well, probably the decision to donate, for at least half of the people came in during the first sort of 10 days. So if you think about it from that perspective, anytime that you delay by a week, you lose at least 25%. So I would say it's mostly about making sure that you're there when people care and are ready to support.

**In an interview with Reuters, you highlighted that logistics issues are more important and difficult than fundraising ones. Should media support organisations pay more attention to logistic support?**

Most media organisations will not have to deal with logistics more than a couple of times in their life. In general, I would say that the media support field tends to be weak in most kinds of areas. We don't really have a lot of people who are good in product management, logistics, operations, and things like that. And I would say that we need more of them if we're trying to make community development as effective as possible in emergency situations. And if we're talking about media development organisations, they need to have some capabilities there. But again, it kind of depends on what you want. If you want very competent organisations, then you're going to centralise and scale. And usually, people in the media sector don't like that. They like small underdog start-up organisations, but then those tend to have a very low level of capabilities and competence. The bigger the organisation the more centralised is decision making, it's very difficult to react perfectly. But I guess it's really a question of what they're trying to solve.

**What was the most important ingredient of the success of the fundraising campaign?**

Oh, it's definitely about the process and timeline. It's all about the product. So, can you do it in a one-click or two clicks? When people open it, do they see their own currency? Or do they see some currency that they're not familiar with? Is the payment process crash? Is the payment gateway sort of opening? And is it reliable? Specifically, the number of clicks required between seeing the campaign and the successful transaction of money from your account. That's super important. What the slogan is and things like that have around 20-30% importance, but then what I would describe as product really matters: the digital processes of payments, and how easy it is, and how well designed that is. That's at least more than half of the success. We did it on GoFundMe platform, which has a very good product. And I think that played a really big role. People also need to be familiar with the platform that they use, because when you're donating, you always feel a little bit uncertain. You already feel nervous, like what are these people going to do with my money? So, you want a platform that people know.

**How do you see the mission of The Fix Media and whether it has changed since the beginning of the war in Ukraine?**

It sort of bounced back and forth. Initially, we reallocated all of our time and resources toward supporting Ukrainian media. And then now that things have stabilised to some extent, we've sort of pulled back because there are other organisations. Basically, our point was, that we can move faster, and we know the sector better. So we can be a first mover, but at the end of the day, once the big dogs are coming in, it's fine for us to sit back and we're back. We have launched the Fix Foundation. So we're concentrating all of our support activities on the foundation going forward because, at the end of the day, the media is a publication, it's an advisory research centre. It wasn't designed to sort of doing philanthropic work, and we're now going to have an organisation that is more directly sort of focused on that.



**How in your opinion emergency media support can be improved? In terms of helping Ukrainian media and journalists and the field in general?**

Before the war, Ukrainian media received a lot of support, and the way that it was organised was not perfect. If we're talking about the long-term stuff, I think there wasn't done enough. So, there's always this desire amongst donors to help weaken the struggling organisation. But what happens, because of that is, that sometimes we're just going to prop up organisations that are going to die anyway, and we just keep them alive for no reason. And, honestly, that ruins the market, because somebody talented is sitting in that organisation. And it's like trying to climb up here, one month, one year, one decade. And during that time, they could be actually working in a different project being much more productive, and not taking away resources. The philanthropic media development community needs to be a little bit better at having gotten to say "Okay, this project is not going anywhere", and think about it this way. So, for instance, you have venture capital that invests in start-ups. And the way that they do it is they pick 10 start-ups, and they hope that one of them is going to do exceptionally well. And two, or three of them are going to do okay, and then five of them are going to fail. Now, if you expect that five of them are going to fail, what you want them to do is fail as fast as possible, right? You basically want to cut those as quickly as possible. So you can focus on the ones that really have potential. We kind of tried to do the opposite in media that we want to prevent organisations from falling as long as possible. But they never really succeed. In the short-term supporting media rather than just subsidising media themselves, I would look at things that grow the market. So for example, increasing the amount of advertising that is available. Like growing the overall market without trying to compensate for some gaps. And then the second thing is tools and infrastructure. And by that, I mean companies that do payment solutions, HR, payrolls, and help with operations, there are so few of those in here. And we need more of them. And I think I would invest in the market supporting efforts, the infrastructure, and the pipeline. Because right now we're just filling budgets for a lot of organisations. And the sad truth is that a lot of those organisations are going to die anyway because that money's going to end up being wasted. But meanwhile, the market overall is struggling. I'd say there's a 30% chance of an opportunity to help them, but we can do better.

### **What about local media? How they can be saved?**

I think we should try to save the competent ones. But I don't think there's a good model yet. I think there are other organisations that are doing interesting things. But right now, I don't see very many local news organisations that are able to be competitive and deliver news that is competitive on the national level. So, I'm very worried about local news. And I don't think that we're going to solve it by funding 130 organisations across the country. Before the war, what I really liked was this story that came out of Canada a couple of years back. There were a bunch of local news agencies with tiny capital that were up all-over British Columbia and Canada, and they actually had a reliable model that was based on newsletter plus website, plus podcast in a way that made it sustainable. Now British Columbia is super-rich. So, you can take the solution from there and just put it in Ukraine. But I feel like there's innovation on the model that needs to happen before we can really scale because otherwise, we're just getting problems.

I would try to scale regional networks, rather than trying to save individual media. I think you need a certain size of organisation to be able to manage all of these challenges of local media. But there are exceptions. There's some local media that are excellent. But I wouldn't just try to push a bunch of money into local media without some idea of how the problems can be solved at scale.