

Funded by the European Union



Implemented by



**ICMPD**

International Centre for  
Migration Policy Development

# How does the media on both sides of the Mediterranean report on migration?

---

A study on 17 countries – by journalists  
for journalists and policy-makers



Funded by the European Union



Implemented by



**ICMPD**

International Centre for  
Migration Policy Development

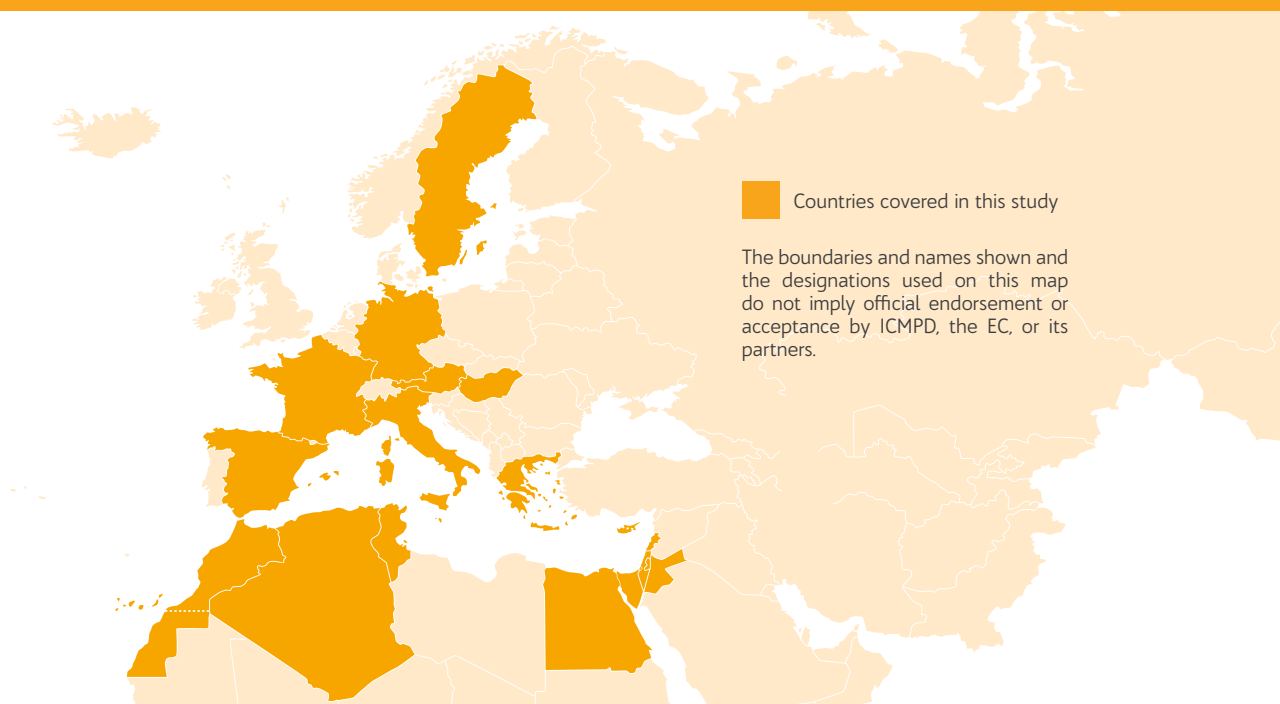
## ABOUT EUROMED MIGRATION IV AND THE STUDY

### “How does the media on both sides of the Mediterranean report on Migration?”

This is a Chapter of the Study “How does the media on both sides of the Mediterranean report on migration?” carried out and prepared by the Ethical Journalism Network and commissioned in the framework of EUROMED Migration IV (EMM4, 2016-2019). The objective of this project, financed by the European Union and implemented by ICMPD, is to support EU Member States and ENI Southern Partner Countries in establishing a comprehensive, constructive and operational dialogue and co-operation framework, with a particular focus on reinforcing instruments and capacities to develop and implement evidence-based and coherent migration and international protection policies. In order to achieve this objective, EMM 4 builds upon the results of the first three phases of the project (2004-2015) and

tailors its activities around two pillars: the first pillar facilitates effective North-South and South-South regional dialogues and co-operation in the four main fields of migration and international protection-related matters (legal migration; irregular migration; migration and development; international protection and asylum). The second pillar focuses on capacity-building by applying a new outcome-oriented approach that includes sub-regional activities, tailor-made national training programmes and targeted technical assistance packages for committed partners. Both pillars are supported by a horizontal and cross-cutting thread aimed at accumulating evidence-based knowledge and establishing effective communication in order to contribute to a more balanced narrative on migration.

Find the entire study at [www.icmpd.org/EMM4migration\\_narrative](http://www.icmpd.org/EMM4migration_narrative)



© European Union, 2017

The information and views set out in this study are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official opinion of the European Union. Neither the European Union institutions and bodies nor any person acting on their behalf may be held responsible for the use which may be made of the information contained therein.



The Ethical Journalism  
Network (EJN) was  
commissioned to  
conduct this study.



# Contents

---

|                         |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| Executive Summary ..... | 1 |
|-------------------------|---|

## EUROPE

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Austria: Good and Bad, but a Lack of Accountability When Journalism Fails the Migration Test.....   | 8  |
| France: Politics, Distorted Images and Why Media Need to Frame the Migration Story.....             | 14 |
| Germany: “We Can Do It”: A Test of Media Solidarity and Political Nerve Over Migration.....         | 20 |
| Greece: Media’s Double Vision as Migrant Crisis Catches the World’s Imagination.....                | 26 |
| Hungary: How The Shock of the New Became a Polarising, Fearful and Toxic Story.....                 | 32 |
| Italy: The Pressure has Eased, but Media Coverage still Fails to Tell the full Migration Story..... | 38 |
| Malta: The Challenge of Normalising Media’s Migrant Crisis Machine.....                             | 44 |
| Spain: Desperation, Tragedy and Criminal Coverage that Distort the Media Image of Migration.....    | 50 |
| Sweden: Journalism on the Spot as Europe’s Asylum Leader Takes a Change of Direction.....           | 56 |

## MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA (EU South Partner Countries)

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Algeria: Public Debate Needed to Confront Denial and Media Stereotypes.....   | 62  |
| Egypt: Positive Stories but Questions Remain over Self-Censorship and Lack of In-Depth Coverage.....  | 66  |
| Israel: Political Division and Internal Fears Drive the Migration Agenda.....   | 70  |
| Jordan: Lost Voices in a Land Built on Migration.....   | 76  |
| Lebanon: Mixed Messages As Media Cope With Internal Stress and External Pressure.....   | 80  |
| Morocco: The Invisible People who Should Take their Place on the Media Stage.....   | 86  |
| Palestine: Unforgettable History, Returning Money and Political Bias Shape the Migration News Agenda.....   | 92  |
| Tunisia: Single-minded Media Fail to Grasp Opportunities to Go Beyond Tales of Woe.....   | 96  |
| Desktop Study: Review of available material analysing and providing guidance<br>on Media Coverage of Migration in Europe, Middle East and North Africa..... | 104 |
| Contributors.....   | 111 |

## Foreword

Having long been a topic of public discussion, the issue of migration has over the past years taken centre stage in European, North African and Middle Eastern media. Conflicts in Syria and Libya coupled with political and economic instability in several countries in the Mediterranean and Sub-Saharan Africa as well as the Middle East have resulted in large scale movement of migrants and refugees through and to North Africa, the Middle East and Europe.

---

*This study aims to understand the prevailing media narratives on migration that exist in different national contexts. It looks at the strengths and shortcomings and provides some insight into the interplay between editorial lines, political narratives, journalistic approaches and public discourse on this sensitive and often polarising subject.*

---

We have all seen the stark images depicted in the media of migrants and asylum seekers packed aboard vessels of questionable seaworthiness, risking life and limb to make the perilous journey across the Mediterranean in search of a safe haven and a better future. These images convey in sharp relief the human struggle in its most desperate moments.

Over the course of the last three years, we have witnessed a range of different approaches to covering migration in traditional media on both sides of the Mediterranean. This study aims to unpack some of these approaches in order to identify and better understand the prevailing media narratives on migration that exist in different national contexts. It looks at the strengths and shortcomings and provides some insight into the interplay between editorial lines, political narratives, journalistic approaches and public discourse on this sensitive and often polarising subject.

It goes without saying that this is an inherently complex task and relates to broader questions on how journalistic intent and editorial lines relate to the political and public sphere. In other words, answering the question of how the political establishment and public opinion on migration affect journalism and vice versa.

In the case at hand, Euromed Migration IV, a programme funded by the European Union, steered by the Directorate General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations (DG NEAR) and implemented by ICMPD, commissioned the Ethical Journalism Network to undertake a study of migration media coverage in 17 countries. The focus was on developing a better understanding of the reality and constraints of traditional media and how these elements impact on their capacity to tell the “migration story”.

The decision to have this study undertaken by journalists was based on the findings of initial desk research which showed that the majority of previous similar studies in this field had been conducted by academics analysing journalistic work, rarely putting forward the point of view of journalists themselves. In this study, 17 journalists critically reflect on how their respective national media have addressed the challenge of reporting on migration. Divided into 17 country chapters, their analyses are based on their insider knowledge and views of the realities of the newsroom, news gathering, editorial policies and various other constraints of professional journalistic work. As such, this study is the first element of a broader investigation into how journalists report on migration. It does not constitute an exhaustive, in-depth analysis of an academic nature preferring instead to give professional, migration-savvy journalists the opportunity to provide critical input and important food for thought for migration actors.

---

*In this study, 17 journalists critically reflect on how their respective national media have addressed the challenge of reporting on migration. Their analyses are based on their insider knowledge and views of the realities of the newsroom, news gathering, editorial policies and various other constraints of professional journalistic work. As such, this study is the first element of a broader investigation into how journalists report on migration.*

---

While the study was carried out with this narrow focus in mind, its findings are naturally of broad interest to a variety of other stakeholders in migration policy-making, civil society, international organisations and the public-at-large.

---

*ICMPD has lent its support to this study because we believe that a fair and balanced view of migration in the media is an essential stepping stone towards developing a more nuanced understanding of migration among the general public as well as contributing to fair and balanced migration policies grounded in facts.*

---

It identifies the main trends and contrasts between the different media approaches in a given country and highlights positive examples and constructive approaches to addressing the challenge of reporting on migration in a professional and appropriate manner.

The 17 countries covered include nine to the north of the Mediterranean and eight to the south, representing an assortment of different political, social and economic contexts and, as the study reflects, a collection of varying approaches to journalistic reporting on migration.

Through the EUROMED Migration IV programme, ICMPD has lent its support to this study because we believe that a fair and balanced view of migration in the media is an essential stepping stone towards developing a more nuanced understanding of migration among the general public as well as contributing to fair and balanced migration policies grounded in facts.

Migration is often a very polarising topic, which generates a fear on the part of the media of appearing to pick a side on the issue. Incertitude does not, however, make for good coverage and solid reporting. We therefore strongly believe that there is a need to allow for balanced narratives on migration to emerge on both sides of the Mediterranean.

Well-informed, fact-based reporting that eschews stereotypes and racial undertones is something that many media outlets deliver, but it is not universal.

The economic model favoured by the tabloid press remains deeply entrenched as it continues to generate revenue and operate with a high degree of impunity. This study explicitly targets traditional mainstream media, which are generally well-intentioned but often lack the resources, support and guidance to provide balanced reporting that is well-researched and contributes to a better understanding of migration as a phenomenon.

As mentioned previously, this study covers a wide variety of media environments across 17 countries. Journalists from these countries were given a great degree of freedom to examine their respective national media landscapes, identify main trends and come up with a number of key recommendations on how to better address and strengthen migration coverage. The end result is a formidable diversity in approaches to these questions between the different country chapters. While we are not always in agreement with the views expressed by individual journalists in the study, we believe that the study as a whole makes a valuable contribution to understanding the strengths and weaknesses of media reporting on migration in the Mediterranean.

---

*While we are not always in agreement with the views expressed by individual journalists in the study, we believe that the study as a whole makes a valuable contribution to understanding the strengths and weaknesses of media reporting on migration in the Mediterranean.*

---

We invite media professionals and policy-makers to consider this study in our joint efforts towards achieving a balanced narrative on migration.



**Michael Spindelegger**

Director General

International Centre for Migration Policy Development

# How does the media on both sides of the Mediterranean report on Migration?

A study by journalists, for journalists and policymakers

## Executive Summary

For more than 2000 years the Mediterranean has been a crossroads of endeavour, trade, civilisation and progress, with people constantly on the move between its shores. In recent years its long history as a crossing point has been scarred by the tragic and appalling loss of life that has accompanied the biggest mass movement of people in recent history.

More than a million people bound for Europe made the migration journey across and around the eastern Mediterranean in 2015. In 2016, according to Frontex, the European border agency, the number of migrants fell dramatically. Despite this reduction in overall numbers attempting the crossing, the tragedy intensified with more than 5,000 people losing their lives in what was the deadliest year on record.

In the last few turbulent years, on both the northern and southern shores of the Mediterranean, the media have faced stern tests of their professionalism in covering migration. Problems related to migration, different types of political discourse and the human tragedy associated with migration have dominated reporting, and this study provides an insight into how the media have reported on a broad and complex topic in the midst of what was repeatedly described as a crisis. It is based upon expert reflections from within journalism on the performance of media across all platforms and, in the spirit of peer review, includes recommendations for improving coverage.

Journalists from 17 countries, mostly around the Mediterranean, have examined the quality of media coverage within their respective national contexts. They highlight examples of good work marked by careful, sensitive and humanitarian reporting and also expose the shortcomings as well as the darker side of media driven by political bias, hate speech and opportunism.

The conclusions from many different parts of the Mediterranean are similar; there are inspirational examples of journalism at its best – stylish, resourceful, and painstaking – and equally powerful instances of media stereotyping and social exclusion.

But everywhere the study paints a picture of journalists and journalism under pressure: of under-resourced media unable to provide the time and money needed to tell the story in context; of poorly trained journalists uninformed about the complex nature of the migration narrative; of newsrooms vulnerable to pressure and manipulation by voices of hate, whether from political elites or social networks.

The influence of social media cannot be underestimated in an age when many, if not most, consumers get their information firstly from social networks and through their mobile devices. The publisher is more likely to be a major internet company, such as Facebook, which requires fresh thinking on how to promote core standards of journalism in covering migration on all platforms.

This study confirms that media narratives continue to shape public opinion, but it also reveals how in all countries journalism is a distorting lens as much as a magnifying glass. On the one hand it can expose inhumanity and corruption in the way that migrants are treated, and on the other it is able to follow an agenda that inspires discrimination and hate that intensifies the suffering of the victims of migration.

The migration story is told in two voices. The emotional coverage of human loss through iconic images of human suffering and the hard realities of massive movements of population that have the potential to disrupt the living conditions, security and welfare of host communities.

What is unquestionable is that media around the Mediterranean tell very different stories. Many countries have been built on migration, but often media appear to lose sight of the migrants in their midst and



## Media and Migration from a migration perspective: Observations from the International Centre for Migration Policy Development

This study is the first element of a broader investigation into how individual journalists and, more generally, mainstream media report – and do not report – on migration, and how such reporting influences public opinion in the Euro-Mediterranean region.

From the perspective of an organisation specialised in migration policy development, the analyses by the 17 authors presented in this study illustrate a number of highly professional and promising approaches to reporting on migration. They also show a number of shortcomings as well as key challenges which journalists, migration organisations, policy-makers and civil society face when it comes to informing the public about a complex phenomenon. Our main observations on these shortcomings are as follows:

1. Due to the migratory context in the last few years in the Mediterranean, the media's reporting on migration focussed almost exclusively on the thousands of people fleeing their home countries as a result of conflict or other contextual factors and the effects of these flows of people on transit and destination countries; as a result, the media also contributed to the perception that migration was "a problem" rather than a multi-faceted global phenomenon with a variety of permutations, challenges and opportunities.
2. Day-to-day realities in countries on both sides of the Mediterranean, migration success stories, the enormous opportunities relating to migration as well as the fact that all Mediterranean countries have a history of migration were and are much less reported on. This begs the question: do most journalists themselves perceive the less- or underreported facets of migration as part of the complex phenomenon? Or do most of them simply not associate positive facets such as labour migration, remittances and others linked to emigration to the migration phenomenon? Has "migration" become synonymous with immigration?
3. A small number of journalists and national media outlets in a few countries seem to address the phenomenon holistically by making a link between emigration of their own nationals to foreign countries – including through reporting on their respective diaspora – and immigration from other countries. An observation by the author of this study's chapter on Spain illustrates this very well: *Spanish migrants themselves are also generally absent from the media, even though a study published in 2013 estimated that as many as 700,000 Spaniards had emigrated since the beginning of the 2008 financial crisis, most of them young, educated people who couldn't find appropriate jobs in Spain. When the media report on them, often they are not identified as "migrants" but just as Spaniards living abroad.*
4. The narrative on migration in the Mediterranean seems to be strongly influenced by national and international media reporting mainly on immigration, and more particularly irregular immigration. More research will need to be conducted to improve our understanding of the interplay between the media's reporting, public opinion and establishment discourses, and which influences which and to what extent.
5. While there is some reporting on a given countries' nationals abroad i.e. their diaspora as well as some stories about successful immigrants and/or integration, these are far from dominating the debate. Furthermore, they are not reported on as further facets of the migration phenomenon but rather as if they were unrelated to it. Migration does not seem to be reported on holistically, but narrowly, with apparently unrelated focuses on a) immigration and b) emigration.
6. This issue of terminology – and migration as a whole being predominantly reported as, and thus becoming, almost a synonym for irregular (im)migration – might be the biggest challenge when it comes to working towards more balanced reporting on migration: "migrants" vs. persons benefiting from eased mobility, "diaspora" vs. expatriate communities are just two examples of the terminological challenge. The development of distinct terminologies creates a separation and widens the gap between "us" and "them"; it impedes better understanding and hampers the perception of commonality.
7. The limited knowledge and technical understanding of migration extant among many media professionals, resource constraints in the sector as well as the lack of migration information and data available to inform the work of even well-intentioned journalists often results in reporting which reduces migration to its extremes. This clearly shows how much work still needs to be done to explain migration more holistically via e.g. supporting journalists in becoming more migration-knowledgeable. Journalists and media decision-makers need to be made aware of these existing tendencies, and migration expert organisations such as ICMPD have an important role to play when it comes to educating journalists and editors about the multiple facets of migration to contribute to more balanced reporting about a complex phenomenon.

*What is unquestionable is that media around the Mediterranean tell very different stories. Many countries have been built on migration, but often media appear to lose sight of the migrants in their midst and give them no voice in their coverage.*

---

give them no voice in their coverage.

This absence of voice is also felt in countries where the status of migrants is changing. Some North African countries, for instance, places formerly regarded as stopping off points by sub-Saharan migrants on their way to European destinations, are now becoming host countries, but oftentimes the media seems reluctant to embrace this new reality.

In some European countries political leaders have welcomed new arrivals and media coverage has ebbed and flowed with the political tide. The enthusiasm for migration in countries like Sweden, Germany and France has weakened in the face of acts of terrorism or rising public concern over the impact of new arrivals on settled communities.

Media everywhere struggle to detoxify the migration issue. Journalists will often edit and remove racism and avoid repeating the hate-speech of political extremists, but others worry that boycotting hostile and bigoted voices inadvertently leads media to play down legitimate public concerns over the negative impact of migration.

It is noted that while Islamophobia and anti-Arab rhetoric is present in some media coverage in parts of Europe, this is mirrored by similar racist narratives directed notably at sub-Saharan migrants in some countries of North Africa and the Eastern Mediterranean.

Across the region the guiding hand of politics is at work. Conservative voices that are hostile to refugees arriving on their doorstep and left-leaning parties that focus on the humanitarian crisis look to their friends in the media to help them make political capital out of the crisis.

In this situation, policymakers and political leaders themselves have a role to play in shaping the public discourse. Everyone with an interest in this issue, not only journalists, has a responsibility to avoid playing on people's fears and uncertainties, to eliminate the language of confrontation and hostility and to encourage national dialogues on how to meet the challenges of migration.

This is crucial because most often the story is told in the context of national experience. To some, as in Hungary, it is a new phenomenon, to others, such as in Palestine and Israel, coverage is framed in the sharp focus of long-running regional conflicts.

In many countries the political temperature has cooled as numbers of migrants on the move have declined, but some media still stoke public fears and uncertainty. However, there are some grounds for optimism as well as examples, such as coverage of the situation in Lesbos in Greece, which shows that global media attention, celebrity visits and a sense of history can help media shape the migration story into a positive, even inspiring expression of human solidarity.



## Conclusions

---

1. Media coverage is vital to shaping people's opinions on migration and the plight of refugees and asylum seekers;
2. Undue political influence, self-censorship inside newsrooms and a prevailing lack of resources hampers the preparation of in-depth, well-researched editorial needed for reporting in context;
3. As a result much of the media coverage of migration reflects political bias and is superficial, simplistic and often ill-informed;
4. The migration story follows two media narratives:
  - » Emotional and highly-charged reporting on the plight of migrants as victims with almost daily human interest focus on tragic events and
  - » The story of numbers, and the potential threat migrants pose to the security, welfare and cultural standing of host communities;
5. Media coverage tends at first to project and reflect empathy, solidarity and goodwill towards migrants fleeing war zones or those who are victims of tragic events, but in time, the tone changes to become more concerned and even hostile towards migrant communities through the use of stereotypes or a negative focus on crime, threats of terrorism and anti-social behaviour;
6. The language of reporting is often laced with hate-speech and loose language, talk of "waves", "invasions" or "tides" and ignorance of the correct terminology to describe migrants, refugees, displaced persons and their status;
7. Media coverage has a strongly national focus, with a lack of detailed reporting on the context and complexities of migration, or reflection on wider social and political issues affecting both sides of the Mediterranean;
8. Media staff at all levels are often ill-equipped and inadequately trained in migration reporting. Often they work in precarious conditions and there is a reliance on badly-paid freelance workers;
9. Media struggle to provide balanced coverage when political or community leaders at national or regional level respond with a mix of panic and prejudice to the movement of migrants and refugees across national borders;
10. In a majority of the countries covered by the study media fail to give adequate voice to migrants themselves and often media reporting relies too heavily on single, official sources of information. Often there are problems of access to reliable data on migration numbers and conditions.
11. Some countries of North Africa, formerly major transit points for people moving from sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East are becoming host countries, but this development is not adequately monitored and covered by media;
12. In most countries the longer-term focus on migration questions such as connection with the national diaspora or the impact of remittances has been obscured by the media focus on the recent crisis, nevertheless in some countries these remain present on the editorial agenda;
13. Social media and online sources often influence media coverage and encourage a "rush to publish" through the dissemination of rumour, speculation and alarmist information that feeds fear and ignorance among the public at large.
14. Most media strive to avoid reporting racist and extremist propaganda relating to migration, but some journalists are concerned that this may inhibit reporting on the often legitimate fears of people living in host communities;
15. There is an urgent need for new initiatives, including new forms of public funding and support, to help media to better explain the process of migration, its role in human history and its contribution to national and regional development;
16. Policymakers, community leaders and people in the public eye have a role to play to promote a civil public discourse and to eliminate hate-speech, intemperate language and provocative actions that exploit fears and uncertainty within society at large.

## Recommendations

---

### Reinforcing positive examples and approaches

To promote existing best practice examples and to encourage use of available information and data including relevant research, glossaries and fact-based materials as set out in the analysis of available material included with this study.

In particular, efforts should be made to

- » Examine whether national initiatives, such as the Charter of Rome in Italy and the Greek Charter of Idomeni, can be applied in other countries throughout the region;
- » Promote exchange of media best practices from countries where the migration crisis is most acute, such as Lebanon and Jordan and other Southern Mediterranean countries
- » Encourage journalists, media support groups and media organisations to develop regional and sub-regional initiatives to improve migration reporting, including use of the Ethical Journalism Network's guide to migration reporting and its 5-point test for hate speech;
- » Encourage prizes and awards at national and regional level to provide examples of professionalism in reporting migration on all platforms of journalism;
- » Promote fresh research by academics on media and migration to identify trends and to highlight developments on different aspects of migration, including the media reporting of refugees and displaced persons.

### Training

To develop comprehensive training programmes for media and journalists including workshops and online methods to encourage ethical reporting with a focus on:

- » Use of correct terminology

- » Understanding international humanitarian law and legal rights of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers
- » Avoiding hate-speech and political bias in reporting of migration concerns
- » Use of images, video and photography
- » Providing balanced coverage of the migrant issue from the standpoints of arrivals and host communities
- » Ensuring presence of diverse voices in media coverage, particularly from migrant groups (settled and new arrivals) as well as from host communities
- » Targeting key players in media organisations, including editors-in-chief and media owners, to show how migration can be placed in the mainstream of editorial work
- » Developing diversity in sources of information.

### Media Action

To develop support programmes for media organisations and to strengthen their capacity to report on migration issues. In particular, by:

- » The appointment of specialist migration correspondents in all newsrooms
- » Improving the conditions of journalists and media workers, including freelance staff
- » Providing resources for research and in-depth journalism to report on the complexities of migration
- » Promoting national media partnerships for coverage of migration
- » Preparing and circulating glossaries and handbooks on migration reporting for newsrooms and journalists working across all media platforms. Make them available in real time in languages used by the media and have them updated regularly.

- 
- » Encouraging the appointment of people with experience of working on migration issues or journalists who are migrants or come from migrant families to work in media
  - » Promoting media action to give more voice to migrant communities through support for media initiatives targeting migrants and refugees (settled communities and new arrivals) including radio programmes in appropriate languages; blogs, columns and articles by migrant commentators
  - » Strengthening the capacity of public service media to report on migration particularly by providing special news and information resources for displaced people from war-zones to help them keep in touch with their home communities
  - » Establishing regular and continual media monitoring and reporting on how media cover migration
  - » Encouraging newsrooms to move beyond coverage of the migration “crisis” and move into coverage of issues of integration that will assist normalisation of migrants in the public sphere.

### **The Role of Policymakers**

To encourage policymakers, community and civil society leaders to play a more active role in creating space for tolerance and dialogue in public discussion of migration. In particular,

- » Policymakers should examine how they can fund and support better journalism without compromising the editorial independence of the media;
- » Political leaders and people in public life who feature in the media should be fact-based in their communications and restrained in the language and terminology they use;
- » All officials and agencies providing information to the media should check facts and verify information thereby assisting the media to prepare balanced reports.

### **Building Dialogues: Understanding Migration and a Culture of Civil Discourse**

To promote the sharing of information and experience between countries and new dialogues at national level aimed at improving understanding in the media and the public at large by

- » Organising national workshops and conferences with journalists and media on the challenges of covering migration, to share experiences and to identify possible joint programmes of editorial work;
- » Organising regional media “summits” or sub-regional conferences to exchange information on the challenges facing journalists and media in different countries;
- » Promoting activities for dialogue involving all stakeholders – migrant communities, civil society groups, academics, media and policymakers – on the need for a common approach to
  - combat hate-speech, stereotyping and misinformation in public discourse
  - awareness and understanding of migration as a natural process with historical roots in all communities
  - the importance of independent and inclusive media coverage to creating peace and stability
- » Inserting migration issues into existing programmes to support public education and training in media literacy
- » Developing research and media monitoring programmes with universities, media support groups and the media at large to create reliable and useful information on migrant conditions, the impact of media coverage and the creation of an information space for all stakeholders around migration issues.
- » Encouraging the creation of independent and alternative media voices inspired from within migration communities





# European Union

Writers from 17 countries have examined the quality of migration media coverage in 2015/16 from a national perspective. The following chapters are the country reports on migration media coverage in the following countries:

1. Austria
2. France
3. Germany
4. Greece
5. Hungary
6. Italy
7. Malta
8. Spain
9. Sweden



# AUSTRIA

## Good and Bad, but a Lack of Accountability when Journalism Fails the Migration Test

» Katharine Sarikakis

The issue of migration began to dominate the Austrian media with the dramatic surge northwards of refugees entering the country along the Balkan route as they made their way to Germany. There was a record number<sup>1</sup> of asylum requests in Austria in 2015, of around 90,000, an increase of 200% over the previous year, and a number, in a country of 8.5 million inhabitants, which was seized on especially by tabloid press as something of an existential threat.

How does the media on both sides of the Mediterranean report on Migration?

*A study by journalists, for journalists and policymakers*



*The coverage in Austria as in other countries was presented by media largely as a crisis for national states rather than for the international community. The largely neutral media reporting at the beginning changed over the year, giving way to increasingly negative coverage of refugees.*

---

It coincided with the discovery of dozens of dead migrants in a lorry on a motorway about 30 km from Vienna, in a news event that became a global story.

The migration surge was mainly a consequence of the deterioration of the armed conflict in Syria. The evident humanitarian crisis was met first with calm and objective media coverage, but was quickly used by certain political leaders to advance a rhetoric defined by stereotypes and xenophobia.

The European Commission Against Racism and Intolerance denounced the inflammatory speeches of FPÖ, the Freedom Party of Austria, and other groups (Freedom House 2016).

Statements by political leaders, such as the Austrian foreign Minister, included a proposal to “keep refugees in island camps”, associated “high birth rates” in Africa with migration flows towards Europe, identified the need for increased border controls as an emergency issue, and ultimately justified the eventual restrictive emergency legislation passed by the Austrian Parliament and signed by the then President of the Republic.

Meanwhile, the government *de facto* closed the Balkan route, reinstating border controls with their EU neighbours. The change in policy to expedite refugee applications including through arrest and detention by police was criticised by international and Human Rights organisations such as Amnesty International<sup>2</sup>.

As reported in the Financial Times: “We have a long tradition of welcoming people humanely and we lost this way of thinking in the last few months,” says Klaus Schwertner, chief executive of Caritas Vienna, the largest charity helping refugees in Austria<sup>3</sup>.

The coverage in Austria as in other countries was presented by media largely as a crisis for national states rather than for the international community. The largely neutral media reporting at the beginning changed over the year, giving way to increasingly negative coverage of refugees. In the press, there were almost double the numbers of negative articles as positive articles, while the number of neutral reports decreased steadily according to one study<sup>4</sup>.

This study shows that media references to legal frameworks that might help people to appreciate the intensity and context of displacement, moved steadily from references to humanitarian aid and refugee laws to an emphasis on Schengen and the Dublin Agreement moving the public debate steadily away from humanitarian crisis and international action to one of

border control and national actors.

In contrast, civil society organisations tried to highlight the international dimension, treating this as a “European” affair. Certain media also played up a criminal subtext to the discussion on migrants. Laws dealing with criminal activity, border controls, and those covering people smuggling, or illegality of migration and “trespassing” received most attention, whereas foundational laws such as the Human Rights Convention and the Geneva Convention on refugees were sidelined.

Despite widespread recognition of the need for media to promote integration of refugees, which became also anchored in the press code of the Austrian Press Council, and in the charter of the ORF, the public service broadcaster, it is clear that there is a need for greater adherence to these guidelines among media professionals.

The reasons for weak media performance are many: the priority given to commercial priorities over ethical and professional content; a professional journalistic culture that relies heavily on political elites as sources of information; and a journalistic bias towards sensationalism. In addition, the Austrian Press Council relies on voluntary compliance among its member and has little possibility to sanction non-members who violate its code and principles. It is therefore commonly referred to as a “toothless tiger”.

Nevertheless, towards the end of 2016, the Council came up with a checklist<sup>5</sup> for journalists covering migration, refugees, and asylum seekers. It provides a useful ethical framework for journalists, but since the tabloids are not members and disproportionately distort and sensationalise reporting on migration, uptake of this checklist is limited to interested freelancers, plus some journalists working for the quality press.

In an effort to counter claims of biased reporting on migration, particularly from groups and individuals associated with right wing online platforms that the public broadcaster (ORF) and other mainstream media are in effect “Luegenpresse” (lying press), the ORF produced a handbook on the role of *quality journalism in migration issues* in which a series of guest authors discussed reporting on migration<sup>6</sup>. The texts evaluate the degree to which the public broadcaster and other media have embraced ethical standards, including accuracy and balance, in their coverage. Foremost among the concerns raised was the need to combat ‘fake news’ which many authors feel leads to increas-

ing mistrust of migrants, as well as the need to reach out to those groups isolated from mainstream migrant reporting.

Indeed, the tendency towards “negative” reporting on migrants is linked to the fact that reporting does not include the voices of migrants. There is a good deal of reporting on alleged crimes committed by migrants, but rarely, especially in tabloid media, are there comprehensive interviews with migrants themselves.

Noteworthy exceptions here must be mentioned, and in particular the ORF, whose guidelines help maintain civil and nuanced reporting, without resorting to excessive bias or editorial control. Although there are examples of editorial bias, neutral and objective reporting is far more prevalent than any other trend. Of particular importance is the bilingual youth radio station FM4 which has maintained a professional pro-humanitarian approach which provides comprehensive coverage in terms of source, voices, aspects and solutions, as well as in-depth analysis.

This exception has been supported by quality reporting across Austrian broadsheet press, however not necessarily systematically. Often the subjective approach of journalists and the economic pressures facing media lead to a distorted view created by what is called “negative framing” (Bonfadelli, 2010, p.183). This also involves the use of negative, fear-inducing terms such as “flood of refugees”, and the focus on fear-inducing themes such as alleged violence and criminality.

Stereotypes of the “criminal foreigner” remain very much the norm in Austrian media. Several scholarly studies have shown repeatedly the negative treatment of migrants by the media, as for example, back in 2001 (Meier-Braun, 2001, p.126) Meier-Braun noted that a “media reality” is created that does not conform to “real reality”. This “media reality” suggests that “foreigners are more criminal, more lazy, and worse than

national citizens – at least in the minds of .. average citizens”.

The Austrian broadsheet newspapers, which are members of the Press Council, have covered migration over the last two years in a more balanced and a less alarmist way than the tabloids.

Initially in Austria there was, especially in the broadsheet press, as well as in public media and private audio-visual networks a focus on welcoming refugees. But within months – and as a presidential election campaign began, in which the candidate of the far right party, emphasised alleged links between migrants and crime and terrorism and presented them as a security threat – much of the press shifted into a mode that focused, particularly in tabloids, on the ‘threat’ presented by migrants. There was a failure to underscore the rights of refugees under international law and to distinguish between economic migrants and refugees fleeing brutal conflict in Syria.

Furthermore, in the tabloid newspapers almost all of the reporting on migration follows an alarmist political line in relation to crime, whereas in the broadsheets there is a high volume of reporting on culture linked to migration, for example theatre productions put on by migrants. The *Kurier*, reported on an initiative Inside Out, in a move they termed ‘*Walk of Fame for Humanity*’ that covered Vienna’s leading pedestrian shopping street with 2,100 large portraits of refugees<sup>7</sup>.

The rise in reporting with the *Kronen Zeitung* (tabloid) corresponds to the height of the refugee crisis and the presidential election.

There is less reporting overall on migration in the tabloid press than in the broadsheets, in part because of the absence of any cultural reporting linked to migration, but also because the focus of the tabloids is narrower. There are virtually no articles on links to the economy or democracy. The focus is primarily on domestic politics, security issues, and reporting on al-



The **issue of migration began to dominate** the Austrian media with the **surge northwards** along the Balkan route as the refugees made their way to Germany.

*While some quality media outlets, including broadsheets, private broadcasters and the public broadcaster make the effort to use correct terminology to describe the migrant community, this is not the case in the tabloid media.*

---

leged criminal offences by migrants, especially sexual assault. The tabloids also seek to exploit any criminal statistics to highlight a supposed 'threat' presented by migrants. The same is true in other tabloids that are not in this database, e.g. *Oesterreich* and *Heute*.

The broadsheets tried to show the human face of migration. But there is no common approach. The professional quality broadsheets clearly make an effort to diversify coverage, and not sensationalise, but the tabloid newspapers often mix up the terms migrant and refugee, and also report inaccurately or in an unbalanced manner.

In one instance<sup>8</sup>, the editor-in-chief of a regional edition of the *Kronen Zeitung*, the country's leading tabloid, suggested in a column that "testosterone-charged" Syrian refugees had engaged in "highly aggressive sexual assaults" and that Afghans had damaged and dirtied a train compartment. He also claimed that "hordes" of refugees had been storming supermarkets "taking whatever they want, and then disappearing". He was forced to apologise after the police denied that this had occurred. He claimed he got the information from Facebook.

This incident came a week after the paper was reprimanded by the Austrian Press Council for having reported on Syrian refugees in a way the police described as distorted and exaggerated, apparently with the goal of representing Syrian refugees "in a bad light". The Press Council said the paper in the article appeared to be suggesting that "every Syrian refugee was a terrorist"<sup>9</sup>, and the article was clearly "discriminatory".

However, the *Kronen Zeitung* and the two other leading tabloids in the country, *Heute* and *Oesterreich* are not members of the Press Council: they argue that the Press Council has been set up by broadsheets to damage their business<sup>10</sup>.

The fact that the country's three leading tabloids – the newspapers that are admonished more often than any others by the Press Council – refuse to be members or accept their rulings, makes it much more difficult for a common professional and ethical reporting line on sensitive issues and particularly on the issue of migration to be established at the level of newspapers and throughout the media.

For example, the Austrian Press Council noted<sup>11</sup> that a July 2016 article by the online site of *Oesterreich* falsely reported that an alleged sexual assault by an African migrant on a woman whose upper bikini part was "torn from her body". The Press Council found that there was no such case. But since *Oesterreich* is not

a member and refuses to be bound by decisions, the impact on the newspaper's reporting ethics and professional standards regarding reporting on migration is likely to be minimal to zero.

While some quality media outlets, including broadsheets, private broadcasters and the public broadcaster make the effort to use correct terminology to describe the migrant community, this is not the case in the tabloid media, two of which – *Oesterreich* and *Heute* – offer free copies. Together, the three leading tabloids – *Krone*, *Heute* and *Oesterreich* – reach millions of Austrians every day, and so inaccurate or sensational reporting on migration has an impact, which may partly explain why the public mood has to a degree shifted away from the welcoming attitude towards refugees back in 2015.

Broadsheets meanwhile have made some efforts to incorporate migrants into actual reporting, with *Die Presse* actually 'handing over' output for a day every week, for a certain period of time, to a team of migrant journalists who worked in conjunction with editors for the newspaper, allowing for an approach which offered a more reflective view from the migrants' perspective.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The Austrian press coverage varies significantly. At times, some newspapers tend to mirror the political mood of political elites while at the same time, the lack of attachment to a self-regulatory body and hence the lack of accountability makes it difficult for journalists and citizens to exercise pressure for accurate and balanced reporting. In this situation it might be recommended to establish:

1. A system of obligatory membership to the Austrian Press Council as a non-state interventionist mechanism to ensure unbiased and balanced reporting;
2. Media actions to give more voice to migrants, not simply as victims or as perpetrators of crimes
3. More internal training of journalists to confront own and systemic biases;
4. More research funded by journalists' organisations collectively to monitor and evaluate shifts in reporting in relation to political positions of political elites, political pressures and economic pressures.

**Professor Katharine Sarikakis** is Professor of Media Industries, Media Organisation and Media Governance at the University of Vienna.

**Anthony Mills** provided additional research in the preparation of this article.

*The professional quality broadsheets clearly make an effort to diversify coverage, and not sensationalise, but the tabloid newspapers often mix up the terms migrant and refugee, and also report inaccurately or in an unbalanced manner.*

---

**The Kronen Zeitung, Der Standard, Die Presse, and Der Kurier, are Austria's four leading newspapers. A summary of their performance in reporting on migrants and refugees related issues shows:**

**Kronen Zeitung:** 367 articles on migration in the past two years with 229 in 2016 alone. Headlines on migration covered or refugees read: terror, borders, crime, politics, security, integration, control, immigration, Viktor Orban, asylum seekers, EU, foreigners, extremism, Brexit, migration, (Austrian foreign minister) Sebastian Kurz, jihad, FPO, Africa, fear, demonstration, with police with the overwhelming alarmist tone of 'Can it get any worse?' while running an anti-EU commentary.

**Der Standard:** Articles over two years 906 with 539 in 2016. Headlines: migration, refugee camps, refugees, populism, rights, integration, dance, Germany, Africa, EU commission, (Austrian defence minister) Doskozil, (Austrian interior minister) Sobotka, surveillance, right wing populism, Europe, Brexit, immigration, Aleppo, EU summit, Mediterranean, deaths, people smugglers, Trump, European Council, Greece, refugee crisis, human rights, , Trump, Austrian foreign minister Kurz, Syria, democracy, Orban, the Euro, EU, Europe, EU austerity, populism, borders, Hungary, Greece, EU deal with Turkey, books, identity, Libya, facts and figures, globalisation, Islamic State, trade, Balkan route, mosque, cultural change, children, migration and art, climate change, Erdogan, Africa, EU summit, asylum, Turkey, OECD, university, Christianity, Islam, Amnesty International, hospitality, FPO, border controls, elections, right wing parties, Hofer, unemployment, sinking boats, civil rights, constitution, artists' house, dialogue, Tsipras, UNHCR, consensus, former Austrian interior minister Mikl Leitner, IMF, protection, The type of coverage was essentially hard news, but also with a positive tone at times: such as news of fewer refugees coming to Germany, or court rejects Swiss limits on immigration, or fellow refugees handing over a suspect to authorities.

**Die Presse:** Produced over two years some 671 with 378 in 2016. Headlines: migration, Doskozil, border

controls, Merkel, Trump, EU, conference, Euro, social pact, art, Lega Nord, populism, immigration, terrorism, Frontex, Turkey, refugees, OSCE, political correctness, internships, recruitment, globalisation, FPO, Orban, schools, people smugglers, migrant deaths, office and residential real estate, literature, Africa, chancellor Kern, Kurz, border controls, Islamic state, bombmaker, inspiration, job market, media, Austrian military, dance, events, police, border fences, EU summit, demagogue, democracy, burka, Italy, Syria, Mediterranean, income, wealth distribution, Visegrad countries, Alternative fuer Deutschland, work, Brexit, integration, borders, guest workers, Turkey agreement, clichés, EU Commission, Juncker, Europol, freedom of movement, right wing, history, fear of migration, refugee onslaught, global citizenship, the Church, centre for dialogue, mass migration, tolerance, women's initiative, unemployment, Hungary, illegal migration, drowned migrants, Islamism, deportation, security, universities, art, job chances, writers, intelligence services warning about migration, military, budget, criminal statistics, people smugglers, voter rights, elections, women and children, UNIDO, immigration, poverty in Africa, the poor masses, and nationalism. The tone was varied, but there was some alarmism for instance on the threat of another refugee onslaught.

**Kurier:** Produced over two years some 778 articles and in 2016 a total of 423. Headlines included : exhibition, cabaret, EU, Europe, International Organisation for Migration, existential crisis for Europe, police, airport, defense minister, asylum seeker upper limit, job market, far right, crime, Muslims, terrorist attack, Brexit, border controls, Turkey deal, foreign minister, racism, discrimination, police, integration, demonstration, deportation, children, jobs, unemployment, Le Pen, populism, globalisation, soldiers, Africa, women, terrorism, social impact awards, UNHCR, artistic performance, refugee summit, Greece, alarmism, Hofer, conflict solving, respect, refugee suffering, destructive populism, refugee waves, support for refugees by Ai Weiwei, traffic chaos at borders, right wing extremism, far right 'Identitaeren', presidential election, Muslim population of Vienna, cinema, EU commission, worries about social peace in Vienna, culture, The content had lots of focus on culture, arts etc, and with positive headlines such as: Austria needs migrants.



*Initially in Austria there was a focus on welcoming refugees. But within months ... the far right party, emphasised **alleged links between migrants and crime and terrorism** and presented them as a security threat.*

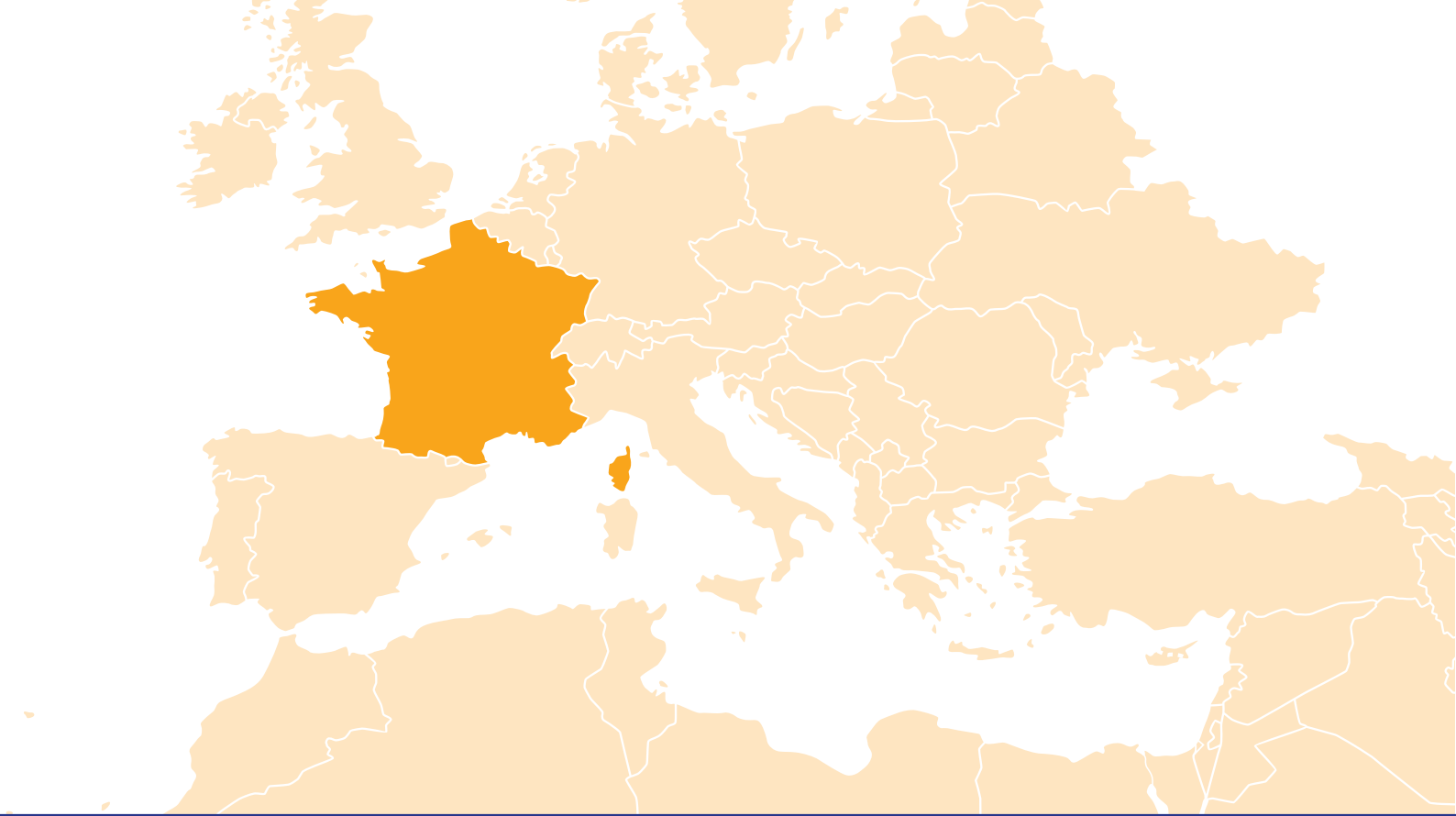
## References:

- Bohm, Marie Katharina (2016) Refugees welcome? : eine qualitative Analyse zum Integrationsbeitrag von Medien für Flüchtlinge in Österreich
- BONFADELLI, Heinz (2010): Rundfunk, Migration und Integration. In: Eberwein, Tobias/ Müller, Daniel [Hrsg.] (2010): Journalismus und Öffentlichkeit. Eine Profession und ihr gesellschaftlicher Auftrag. Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften.
- MEIER-BRAUN, Karl-Heinz (2001): Bleiben Chancen ungenutzt? Migration und Medien. In: HAM [Hrsg.] (2001): Medien – Migration – Integration. Elektronische Massenmedien und die Grenzen kultureller Identität. Herausgegeben von der Ausländerbeauftragten der Freien und Hansestadt

- Hamburg und der Hamburgischen Anstalt für neue Medien (HAM). Band 19. Berlin: VISTAS
- Herzeg, Petra (2011) Geschlossene Gesellschaft: Ueber Diversitaet in den Medien, Journal,ismus und Migration 177- 192 In Julia Dahlvik,Heinz Fassmann,Wiebke Sievers (eds) Migration und Integrationsforschung Perspektiven aus Oesterreich Jahrbuch1/2011 Vienna University Press
- Freedom House (2016) *Freedom of the World Survey 2016* Rowman and Littlefield
- Filimonova, Varvara and Lieb, Nikolas (2015) Refugees in the European Media and the image of the United Nations. Research Paper for the RAUN Programme, Supervised by Katharine Sarikakis, (unpublished) presentation 2 December 2015 University of Vienna Media Governance Research Lab, *Refugees, International Law and the Media*

## Links & Sources

- <sup>1</sup> <http://derstandard.at/2000028877483/90-000-Asylantraege-im-Jahr-2015>
- <sup>2</sup> <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2016/04/austria-asylum-law-refugees/>
- <sup>3</sup> <https://www.ft.com/content/fc68bb26-8bea-11e6-8cb7-e7ada1d123b1>
- <sup>4</sup> A content analysis of online media in six European countries related to their reporting on migration at the height of the crisis found that 61% of the articles could be classified as "neutral reporting", and 27% "obviously negative". However, the percentage of "obviously negative" reporting was highest in Austria and Germany, rising to 37% in Austria and 39% in Germany. Filipova/Lieb (2015) Report on media coverage as presented at Vienna public event on Refugees, International Law and the Media 2.12.2015. The study covered selected European countries over a period of six months April –September 2015 inclusively.
- <sup>5</sup> [http://www.ots.at/presseaussendung/OTS\\_20161129\\_OTS0033/checkliste-des-presserats-zur-berichterstattung-ueber-fluechtlinge](http://www.ots.at/presseaussendung/OTS_20161129_OTS0033/checkliste-des-presserats-zur-berichterstattung-ueber-fluechtlinge)
- <sup>6</sup> [http://zukunft.orf.at/show\\_content.php?sid=147&pvi\\_id=1679&pvi\\_medientyp=t&oti\\_tag=Texte](http://zukunft.orf.at/show_content.php?sid=147&pvi_id=1679&pvi_medientyp=t&oti_tag=Texte)
- <sup>7</sup> <https://kurier.at/kultur/mariahilfer-strasse-mit-fluechtlingsportraits-geplastert/156.240.466>
- <sup>8</sup> <http://diepresse.com/home/kultur/medien/4852574/KroneKommentar-wird-Fall-fuer-Staatsanwaltschaft>
- <sup>9</sup> [http://www.ots.at/presseaussendung/OTS\\_20151130\\_OTS0132/presserat-verunglimpfung-von-fluechtlingen-als-terroristen-in-kronen-zeitung](http://www.ots.at/presseaussendung/OTS_20151130_OTS0132/presserat-verunglimpfung-von-fluechtlingen-als-terroristen-in-kronen-zeitung)
- <sup>10</sup> <http://www.salzburg.com/nachrichten/medien/sn/artikel/oesterreich-klagt-presserat-wegen-unlauterem-wettbewerb-85567/>
- <sup>11</sup> [http://www.ots.at/presseaussendung/OTS\\_20161122\\_OTS0101/falschdarstellung-auf-oe24at-keine-sexuelle-belaestigung-durch-fluechtlinge](http://www.ots.at/presseaussendung/OTS_20161122_OTS0101/falschdarstellung-auf-oe24at-keine-sexuelle-belaestigung-durch-fluechtlinge)
- <sup>12</sup> <http://diepresse.com/unternehmen/pressenews/362719/Migranten-schreiben-fuer-Die-Presse>



# FRANCE

## Politics, Distorted Images and why the Media Need to Frame the Migration Story

» Jean-Paul Marthoz

The “migration story” was one of the most vividly discussed issues in the French media in 2016. It received front-page newspaper coverage, took centre stage on flagship television news programmes and made the buzz on social media. The European Union-Turkish agreement, the drama of migrants drowning in the Mediterranean, or the closing of the so-called Calais Jungle were major stories and, in between these highly charged events, migration in all its forms was a permanent fixture of French journalism.

How does the media on both sides of the Mediterranean report on Migration?

*A study by journalists, for journalists and policymakers*



*Finding the right formula has been difficult and ethical lapses have tainted the coverage of major moments in the migration story. The competitive nature of journalism, especially among cable news channels, has been an excuse for forgetting elementary principles.*

---

The coverage was mostly driven by events, the way conventional journalism describes breaks in the news routines, and statements by government officials or their political opponents. The themes evolved as some stories suddenly emerged in the news while others lost their prominence and became repetitive.

More fundamentally, the way most media approached migration was also the result of an ominous trend: the extreme politicisation of the migration issue in the context of the rise of xenophobic populist movements.

While in years past the economic ideology and the left/right divide largely determined the media's political line, migration has become one of the most crucial "revealers" of their core values. The migration issue is a "marker" in the battle of ideas. It crystallises broader views on other societal challenges. It defines editorial lines and puts the media's professional norms to the test.

In a country where the National Front is credited with 30% of the vote and is being increasingly "normalised" by mainstream media, the discussion has even moved away from the conventional hot button issues brandished by the far right of alleged "illegals' over-criminality", "social security profiteering" or "job thefts from nationals", to deeper and more intractable questions of national sovereignty and ethno-cultural identity.

## **The anti-Islam agenda**

Migration has been hijacked in particular by the far right in order to reinforce its anti-Islam agenda. While migrants and refugees come from a diverse range of countries the major focus has been placed on Muslims and the "dangers" they represent for the integrity and the "soul" of the nation. For these radical circles the Christian heritage but also secularism (laïcité), which allegedly define France's culture and constitutional order, are "mortally threatened" by the growing presence of Muslims "who refuse to assimilate".

Terrorism has added a dramatic dimension to what was already a challenging issue. Successive attacks in Paris, Brussels, and Nice as well as a number of other incidents have provided a particularly dramatic backdrop to the question of migration. In fact, the traditional stigmatisation of migrants is now used as a side argument for a more fundamental rejection of the "other", drawn less from what he/she does than from who he/she is. France has been influenced by Harvard University professor Samuel Huntington's

nativist thesis on the clash of civilizations being part and parcel of the French public debate.

## **The rising right Wing media sphere**

The migration issue has inevitably been marked by a significant dose of polarisation. The coverage is heavily influenced by politics and the will to score political points for or against the opening of the country's borders. Appalled by the "lepenisation of the minds" (a reference to the Le Pen family's leadership of the National Front), the left wing and liberal media have tried to counter these discourses by practicing a form of coverage which at times tends to understate the "negatives" of migration and highlight its "positives". Articles or programmes on the way migrants and refugees contribute to society and enrich its diversity have been regular features in a number of media outlets.

Such approaches, however, are increasingly challenged by a growing right wing mediasphere. Traditional right wing publications, like the weekly Valeurs actuelles, have increased their circulation numbers or visibility. New magazines, like the "anti-political correctness" Causeur, have also hit the newsstands.

More to the right, the so-called "fachosphere" has developed a dense and dark jungle of websites which provide a megaphone to hate-mongering and migration bashing. It also systematically attacks the leftist or mainstream media, which are denounced as tools of a "cosmopolitan elite" bent on imposing multiculturalism and undermining France's traditional roots. So-called reinformation websites regularly publish articles on what "you will not see on TV" in order to delegitimize the moderate or liberal mainstream media.

The far right has even created its own media observatory (OJIM, Observatoire des journalistes et de l'information médiatique) which monitors the mainstream media's alleged "anti-France" positions. Despite a cascade of condemnations for incitement to discrimination or hate speech the right wing media have clearly established themselves on the public scene.

## **The media crisis**

The rise of far right media is benefitting from the economic crisis affecting legacy media. Many newsrooms have seen cut backs, there is less investigative journalism; fewer specialised journalists able to master all the complexities of the migration story; and less money to send reporters to countries of origin in order

to investigate the reasons behind the decision to embark on the perilous, and sometimes deadly migration journeys.

According to a January 2016 IFOP (Institut français d'opinion publique) survey only 17% of the French public trust the media to cover immigration fairly and objectively. 43% (63% for the National Front voters) think they minimise "the problems related to migration" while 40% think that they exaggerate them. <http://www.atlantico.fr/decryptage/80-francais-considerent-que-question-migrants-va-compter-lors-vote-election-presidentielle-2017-jerome-fourquet-ifop-2540468.html>

The mainstream media's public credibility, according to the 2016 edition of the La Croix (a Catholic quality daily) barometer, remains fragile. Half of the population does not trust the accuracy of their reporting and this trend registered a 7% decline in relation to 2015. <http://www.la-croix.com/Economie/Medias/Comment-retablir-confiance-dans-medias-2016-02-02-1200737098> Only one French person in four believes that journalists are independent from political parties or big business.

Such figures produce a sense of insecurity which makes the media an easy target for the far right. They are even called the "Lügenpress", the lying press, a slur used since the times of Nazi Germany in order to discredit the "liberal media" and their alleged "political correctness".

The centre-right party's (Les Républicains) presidential primaries have shown that attitudes are hardening around the issues of identity and immigration. "The candidates", wrote centre-left daily Libération in its review of the TV debates, "have multiplied ex-

aggerations and fibs about asylum seekers". François Fillon, the winner of the election, "started to rise in the polls after the second TV debate, when he talked about Islamism", said IFOP expert Jérôme Fourquet in an interview with Le Soir. The expressions of solidarity and humanity which prevailed at the time of the JeSuisCharlie marches in the wake of the January 7, 2015 attacks against the satirical weekly have given way to expressions of anger and resentment.

Journalism has always been a reflection of the intellectual mood and, as Libération wrote, "the mood today leans to the right" [http://www.liberation.fr/debats/2016/04/17/la-france-penche-t-elle-a-droite\\_1446815](http://www.liberation.fr/debats/2016/04/17/la-france-penche-t-elle-a-droite_1446815). The framing of migration and asylum is strongly influenced by a shift in cultural hegemony. So-called public intellectuals like Le Figaro columnist Eric Zemmour, best-selling writer Houellebecq or the "neo-reactionary" philosopher Alain Finkielkraut have been providing an umbrella under which a number of media, consciously or not, approach issues of migration or national identity.

Books decrying "France's submission to Islam", the rise of Jihadism in the banlieues, or the challenge to France's national identity have become best sellers. In such an atmosphere "forms of self-censorship," says Jean-Marie Fardeau, director of VoxPublic (and former director of Human Rights Watch, France), have seeped into the coverage under the pretext that the public is not ready to hear a discourse on the need to open borders".

According to a January 2016 IFOP (Institut français d'opinion publique) survey

**ONLY 17%**  
OF THE FRENCH PUBLIC

trust the media to  
cover immigration  
fairly and objectively.

So-called reinformation websites  
regularly publish articles on what

**"you will not see on TV"**

in order to delegitimize the moderate  
or liberal mainstream media.





**Divisions among EU member states** have become part of the national conversation and shouting matches.

Public service media have also been lauded for their attempts to provide **thorough and balanced coverage** of this most complex and divisive of news stories.

## The Europeanisation of the debates

The French debates are also affected by the trans-nationalisation of the migration story. Incidents abroad, like the 2015-2016 New Year's Eve sexual assaults on women at the Cologne train station, or the discussion of migration in the US electoral campaign with Trump's threats to build a wall along the Mexican border, filter back into the French media and contribute to the framing, in fact to the "droitisation" (the right wing interpretation), of national stories.

"The fear that comes from Cologne might be stronger and more lasting than the spirit coming from Charlie", Claude Askolovitch editorialised on cable TV news channel I-Tele <http://info.arte.tv/fr/les-agresions-de-cologne-vues-par-la-presse-etrangere>.

With the Syrian refugee crisis and the controversy around Turkey's role in regulating the migration flow the coverage has increasingly been EU-focused, adding to the sense of a "flood" or an "invasion" and of a decreasing national control, "because of Brussels' unelected elites", over immigration. The divisions among EU member states have become part of the national conversation and shouting matches.

While anti-migrant politicians derided Angela Merkel's "irresponsibility" and "German arrogance", pro-migrant circles referred to the Chancellor's "humane and ethical policies" to slam their own government's passivity in front of the massive exodus from the Middle East or Africa. "If Jean Jaurès (the iconic socialist leader murdered on the eve of the Great War) were alive," *Le Monde* wrote, "he would not have accepted that such a human cause did not concern the Socialist party". Likewise, on the far right end of the political spectrum, arguments proffered by populist governments like Viktor Orban's in Hungary or media savvy xenophobic politicians in Austria or the Netherlands have been recycled into the French national debate around the issues of national sovereignty, "Christian civilisation" and the "Islamic threat".

## The media performance

Despite the tormented and tumultuous political context "there have been a significant number of good practices," says VoxPublic Director Jean-Marie Fardeau. "A number of media have not only fairly and humanely reported the facts but also highlighted the complexity of the issue. Such an approach has been used not as an excuse to silence inconvenient truths but as a condition for a more truthful and accurate representation of reality".

There have indeed been examples of great reporting. The AFP (Agence France Press) news agency, for instance, has devoted a lot of resources and talent to covering this huge story. The reflections of its journalists on the MakingOf/Correspondent blogs, illustrates a commitment to public interest journalism.

<https://correspondent.afp.com/covering-refugee-crisis> "For reporters," AFP writes, "covering the migration crisis is often an experience which marks them for the rest of their lives". <https://making-of.afp.com/la-tragedie-des-refugies-vue-par-lafp> Public service media, in particular RFI, France Inter, Arte, and most of the "liberal" quality papers and magazines, have also been lauded for their attempts to provide thorough and balanced coverage of this most complex and divisive of news stories.

"Fact-checking" has been more widely used and applied to hotly debated controversies. For instance, more information has been provided on the real numbers of migrants, their impact on the economy, and their dependence on social welfare. *Le Monde's* so-called "decoders" or *Liberation's* in its *Désintox* columns have used that technique to debunk urban legends, fake news and rumors. In a 13 October 2016 article *Le Monde's* Mathilde Fangé critically addressed six "received ideas", such as "They are invading France," "They are better housed than French homeless," "They receive medical treatment at the expense of the French," "Migrants are stealing jobs from the French", "Migrants profit from social allocations", and "Family

reunion opens the gateway to mass immigration.” In Le Un weekly on 9 September 2015, Loup Wolff applied this sceptical approach to claims by the Interior minister of its “success” in combatting “illegal immigration”.

Many media have also endeavoured to explain and use the correct language instead of mixing all the terms in a hodgepodge of (sometimes intentional) confusion. Le Monde for instance refers to “migrants in an irregular situation” to designate the so-called “llegals” and painstakingly underlines the differences between migrants and refugees and what that means in terms of their legal status and rights. “Beware of not confusing a migrant and a foreigner,” warns the center-right daily L’Opinion. “One can be a migrant without being a foreigner if one has acquired the French nationality. One can be a foreigner without being a migrant if born in France of two non-French residents.” <http://www.lopinion.fr/edition/economie/c-est-l-insee-qui-dit-l-immigration-est-tres-concentree-quelques-101230>

To counter stereotypes some media have also adopted a humanitarian approach and chosen to tell personal “human interest” stories. Migrants are not described as “others” but as “part of our shared humanity”. But this is not a panacea. “The priority given to the emotional and individual dimension disarms more substantive reflections. And lays the ground for the simplifying ‘solutions’ of the far right”, warns New York University professor Rodney Benson in a May 2015 Le Monde diplomatique essay on French and US coverage of migration. Even if it is an essential part of the story the good-intentioned reporting of personal dramas, be it the rescue of children at sea or the dire conditions of undocumented migrants in the Calais Jungle, may boomerang and feed instead racism and

rejection. The media are operating in a society where the anti-immigration mood weighs on all events and distorts all interpretations.

In August 2016 a survey showed that six out of ten French people believed that “migration has had a negative impact”. <http://www.thelocal.fr/20160823/im-migration-negative-for-france-majority-says>

“The media bombardment of images of migrants and refugees arriving on Europe’s shores have heightened the fear of uncontrollable migration throughout most of Europe, with the key issue being their ability to integrate,” said Yves Bardon, a director of the French polling company IPSOS.

## Ethical lapses

In any case finding the right formula has been difficult and ethical lapses have tainted the coverage of major moments in the migration story. The competitive nature of journalism, especially among cable news channels, has been an excuse for forgetting elementary principles. During the closure of the Calais jungle in October 2016 examples there were numerous examples of violations of the migrants’ dignity and privacy. Hundreds of reporters thronged to the scene, put their cameras right in the faces of the migrants, overwhelmed them with identical and often silly questions, and entered their private shelters, without asking their authorisation, just to “get the picture”.

“This human subject,” wrote Le Monde’s Aline Leclerc, “should require a superior form of dignity. It is one of these moments when journalists find themselves confronted with their ethics, their capacity to resist the pressures of the mass media, and the demands of their newsroom, in order to find a balance between news gathering and respect for

August 2016 a survey showed that

**6 out of 10**  
French people  
believed that  
**“migration has  
had a negative  
impact”.**



*“The media bombardment of images of migrants and refugees arriving on Europe’s shores have heightened the fear of uncontrollable migration, with the key issue being their ability to integrate.”*

Yves Bardon, Director of IPSOS

*Paradoxically, in an age dominated by the discourse on globalisation, the migration story, at least in many mainstream media, is often covered in fragments, as separate stages.*

---

the other." [http://www.lemonde.fr/actualite-medias/article/2016/10/27/journalistes-a-calais-la-loi-de-la-jungle\\_5021114\\_3236.html](http://www.lemonde.fr/actualite-medias/article/2016/10/27/journalistes-a-calais-la-loi-de-la-jungle_5021114_3236.html)

The battle over numbers has been particularly sensitive as they seem to provide a scientific element to an otherwise highly ideological discussion. "If there is a domain where framing on the basis of figures is particularly delicate, it is migration," writes demographer François Héran in *Les Cahiers français*, a journal of La Documentation française. If precise and pertinent figures on migration and especially undocumented migration are hard to come by, French journalists can rely on a number of official agencies, like the OFPRA (Office français de protection des réfugiés et apatrides) or the INSEE (the national institute of statistics).

But in a country which is reluctant to allow the collection of ethnic statistics and where, as François Héran puts it, "politicians are affected by a staggering lack of statistical culture", the politicisation of the debate blurs everything. In right wing media where the concept of "Français de souche" (of old French descent) is pervasive, figures on migrants and foreign-born residents are often mixed up with those of non-white or non-Christian citizens, even if they have been in the country for generations.

## **A narrow focus**

The approach in many media has often been narrowly focused on the problems associated with migration. "The general background noise has been that migration is a problem and a threat," says Jean-Marie Fardeau. "Many media have also followed the government's communication policies, mainly related to security issues, while a very fragmented civil society was at pains to propose a powerful counter-narrative".

The coverage has generally been triggered by two classic hooks of journalism: political controversy or dramatic images. Politicians are often driving the story and the looming presence of the far right has regularly led to statements which distort realities and degrade the public discourse. Images are also a trap. They may sometimes reflect compassion when they show survivors of capsized boats in the Mediterranean or corpses of children on a beach.

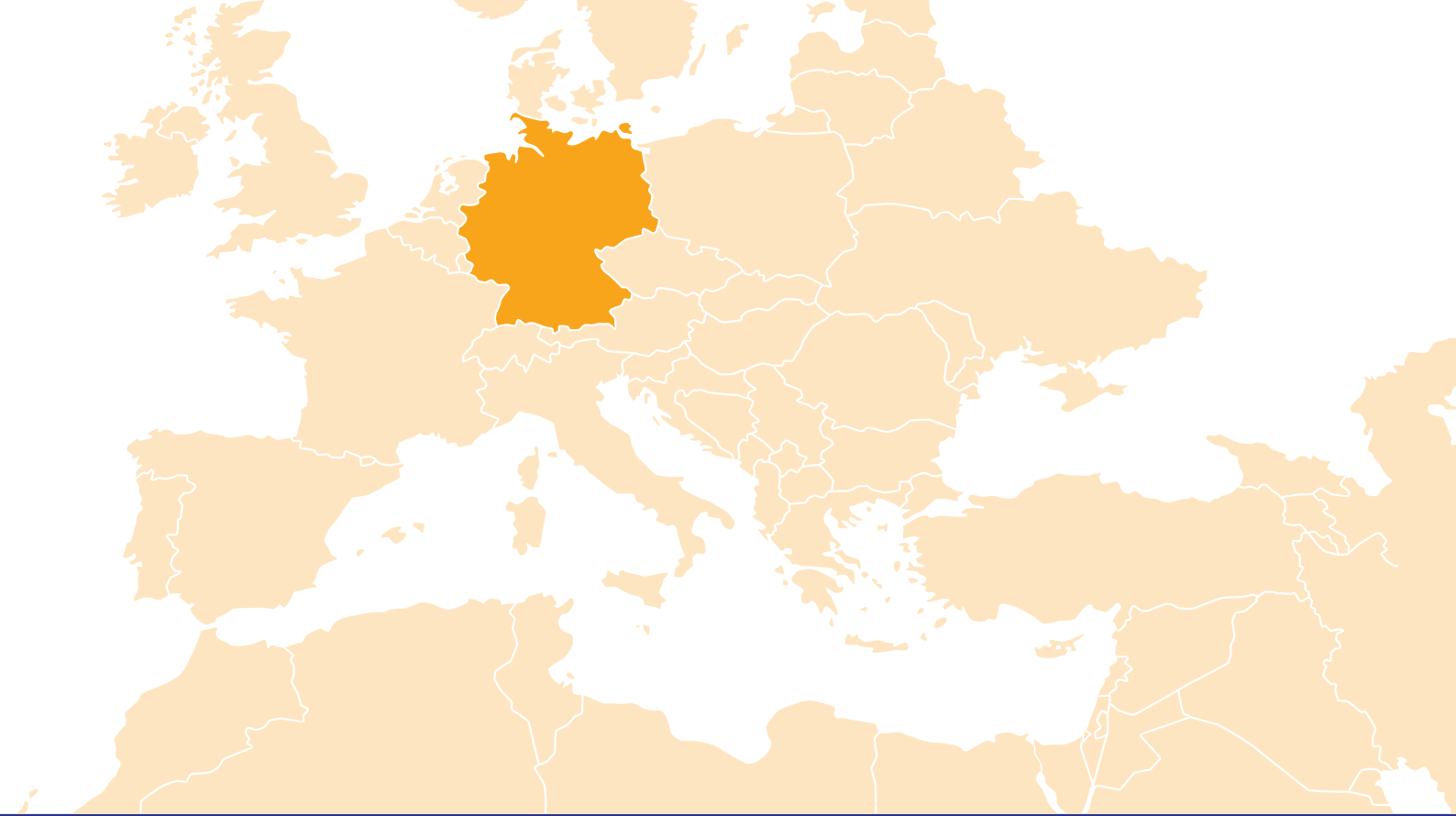
But many such images can also be subverted and framed as another indicator of the themes of "invasion" or of the refugees' "irresponsibility." The constant diffusion of images showing long columns of asylum seekers on the Balkan routes or of confrontations along hastily erected fence lines is a case in point of ambiguous coverage.

Few media outlets regularly address broader issues, like remittances, diaspora networks, the challenges of migrant children's education, or human trafficking. The global aspect of migration is barely treated. Few examine the push factors in migration. Few, for instance have covered the political situation in Eritrea or Sudan which may help explain the presence of refugees from those countries in the boats crossing the Mediterranean. Even fewer cover transit countries' policies or lack thereof, in Libya, for instance.

More fundamentally the deeper roots of emigration are rarely thoroughly addressed. "Beyond the migrants' difficulties," writes Professor Rodney Benson, "journalism should analyse the way the world organisation of the economy as well as the foreign, trade and social policies of Western countries like the US and France favour emigration from the South". Paradoxically, in an age dominated by the discourse on globalisation, the migration story, at least in many mainstream media, is often covered in fragments, as separate stages. The dots are not connected although migration is one of the most emblematic symbols of a globalised world which hesitates between opening and withdrawal, exchange and confrontation.

The role of journalism is all the more important since many perceptions about migration are born and prosper in social media where fake news and hate speech proliferate. Coverage of migration is a reminder not only that journalism matters but also that it must regain the power it has lost as a credible gatekeeper and a respected framer of one of the most crucial stories of our time.

*Jean-Paul Marthoz is a Belgian journalist and writer. He is the author of *Couvrir les migrations* (covering migration), De Boeck Université, Brussels, 2011, 240 pages.*



# GERMANY

## “We Can Do It”: A Test of Media Solidarity and Political Nerve over Migration

» Michaela Maria Müller

Before the beginning of the refugee crisis in summer 2015, reporting in the German media on migration and refugees was neither coherent nor comprehensive. In terms of sheer numbers, approximately 15,000 news items about refugees were published between 2009 and 2015, according to a study by the Hamburg Media School.<sup>1</sup>

How does the media on both sides of the Mediterranean report on Migration?

*A study by journalists, for journalists and policymakers*

*Today, German reporters and correspondents who were on the spot recount the quandary they faced between wanting to help the humanitarian effort, on the one hand, and their obligation to do their jobs as journalists on the other.*

---

Following the sinking of a boat in the Mediterranean, one narrative predominated: The event was described from the start as a “tragedy.” As the story developed, journalists covered the numbers of victims, their countries of origin, and suspected causes of the disaster. In-depth investigations into the reasons for migration, however, were absent in the media.

This may be attributed to the fact that migration and refugees were treated exclusively as problems for Europe’s external borders, while their domestic political import was ignored – a perspective that in retrospect has proven to be shortsighted.

That changed in 2015. The number of reports in the media rapidly increased. In that year alone more than 19,000 news reports were published. Between July and September 2015, during the height of the refugee crisis, some newspapers published up to seven articles per day.

## **The Summer of 2015**

On 17 June 2015 Hungarian prime minister Viktor Orbán announced plans to build a fence, 175 kilometers long, on the border with Serbia to keep refugees from entering Hungary illegally. As a result migrants and refugees who had already made it to the Balkans on their route to Europe stepped up their efforts to get to the border before it closed. Up to 3,000 refugees per day began arriving in Hungary, where they were housed in reception centres or slept at Keleti train station in Budapest while figuring out how to continue their journey to other European countries. Basic necessities – accommodation, water, food, medicine, clothing, and diapers – were lacking.

The situation was little different in Greece or Italy. Images of poor castaways made their way from Europe to the rest of the world.

The atmosphere elsewhere in Europe was fraught. On 27 August the Austrian police discovered on the A4 motorway near Parndorf an abandoned refrigerated lorry that belonged to a human trafficking ring; it contained 71 human corpses. On 2 September the Syrian child Aylan Kurdi was found dead on a beach in the Turkish seaside resort town of Bodrum. He had fled Syria with his parents and drowned when their boat capsized.

Today, German reporters and correspondents who were on the spot recount the quandary they faced between wanting to help the humanitarian effort, on the one hand, and their obligation to do their jobs as journalists on the other.

This fundamental conflict persisted through the weeks that followed. Martin Kaul, a reporter for Die

Tageszeitung, commented: “The media-generated euphoria was like wind in our sails. All of a sudden we recovered our belief in a humanitarian Europe and a Germany that was open and friendly, a belief that others had perhaps lost.”<sup>2</sup>

## **“We Can Do It”**

At her summer press conference on 31 August German chancellor Angela Merkel made her by now well-known pronouncement “we can do it.” The statement polarised public opinion, being enthusiastically received by one half of it and vehemently criticised by the other. Many mass media outlets such as Die Zeit, Der Spiegel, and Bild newspaper adopted it as their own. Shortly afterwards, Die Zeit, for example, printed the affirmative headline “Of Course We Can Do It.”

The Hamburg Media School study concludes that 82% of German news items in 2015 cast the issue of refugees in a positive light. Twelve percent were purely informative; while only six percent viewed the country’s refugee policies as a problem.<sup>3</sup>

On 5 September 2015 Angela Merkel pledged to take in all of the refugees who had been stranded at Budapest Keleti train station. Now Germany became their destination. The governments of Hungary and Austria arranged for the refugees to continue on to Germany, with Austria supplying shuttle buses. Within days, up to 13,000 refugees were arriving in Germany every day. Federal, municipal, and local agencies were overwhelmed. Countless volunteers helped to provide supplies and accommodation.

The media reinforced people’s willingness to help. Germany’s largest tabloid, Bild, styled itself as an advocate for the refugees. The conservative newspaper extended an explicit welcome to them and began a campaign, titled “Helping Out,” which involved printing regular tips to help readers get involved where they lived. The campaign logo even used the #refugeeswelcome hashtag, which had previously been the domain of the left and of left-wing politics.

In late August the news magazine Spiegel printed words by German president Joachim Gauck on the cover. Following a visit to a Berlin refugee shelter, Gauck had expressed his hopes for a “bright Germany” characterised by openness, while decrying the “dark Germany” of hate and racism. Spiegel reproduced the opposition on a double cover: on one cover, the title “Bright Germany” is displayed over an image of people releasing balloons into a blue sky; while the other, “dark Germany” cover depicts an asylum shelter going up in flames. Each title is followed by a statement by Gauck: “It’s up to us how we want to live.”<sup>4</sup>

## Diversifying the Discourse

The desire to give refugees and immigrants a voice and a forum soon took hold in newsrooms. Refugees were no longer to be simply the subjects of news articles, but their authors as well.

The first such project of a large scale for the public-at-large appeared in Zeit Magazin on 28 May. Published bilingually in German and Arabic, it addressed the situation of refugees and was illustrated with cell phone photos provided by refugees themselves, which they had taken on their journey to Germany. Additionally, one article in the issue tells the story of the successful integration of Fatmire Alushi, a midfielder on the German national women's football team. She and her parents had migrated to Germany in the early 1990s, refugees from the war in Kosovo. With its wide circulation amongst a predominantly liberal, educated readership, this bilingual issue of Zeit Magazin left an important mark on the discourse.

The Berlin daily Tagesspiegel in Berlin was one of the first newspapers to feature a regular weekly column written by a recent "newcomer in Berlin," the Syrian student Ahmad Al-Dali, who describes in it his impressions and experiences of the city.

In his first column, Al-Dali makes his position clear: "The term 'refugee' is connected with the need for help and weakness. But I don't want pity. I hate to ask for help ... As a refugee, you lose the feeling of being a person. You lose yourself ... There are people who think they know everything about me, when they hear I am a refugee. However, I have a past in Syria and hopefully a future in Germany. In Damascus, I was a normal student. I played the bass guitar and made music with a friend."<sup>5</sup>

As of July 2016 the Süddeutsche Zeitung has also published a regular column titled "Neue Heimat" (New Homeland). It appears every Friday and is written by four immigrant journalists: Lillian Ikulomet from Uganda, Olaleye Akintola from Nigeria, Nasrullah Noori from Afghanistan, and Mohamad Alkhalaf from Syria.<sup>6</sup>

Some media outlets have long put a premium on diversity, integration, and identity, such as the daily newspaper Die Tageszeitung (also known as taz) or the quarterly Missy Magazin, a feminist journal for politics and pop culture.

On the television and radio station Deutsche Welle, the Lebanese-German journalist Jaafar Abdul Karim hosts the talk show Shababtalk, on which young people from both Germany and the Arab world discuss topics such as political participation, equal rights, and sexuality. In addition, Karim produces a video column for Spiegel Online called "Jaafar's Videoblog,"<sup>7</sup> and on Zeit Online he writes the trilingual blog "Jaafar, shu fi?"<sup>8</sup>

## The Changing Mood:

### From Autumn 2015

The sympathetic treatment of refugees in the media that began in summer 2015 had negative effects as well. It awakened the feeling that the concerns and fears of the German population were not being taken seriously.

Following the terror attacks in Paris, on 13 November, the euphoria in the media became more muted. Just two weeks later, on 25 November, the daily newspaper Die Welt announced in one headline that "terrorism and refugees will be the end of our high standard of living."<sup>9</sup> This is just one example. More and

*You lose the feeling of being a person ... There are people who think they know everything about me, when they hear I am a refugee. However, I have a past in Syria and hopefully a future in Germany.*



## Lügenpresse

is another important concept that has gained in significance in reporting on the refugee crisis. In common use at Pegida demonstrations, chanted by choruses of anti-Islam demonstrators



*Following the terror attacks in Paris, on 13 November, the euphoria in the media became more muted. Just two weeks later, on 25 November, the daily newspaper Die Welt announced in one headline that “terrorism and refugees will be the end of our high standard of living.”<sup>9</sup> This is just one example. More and more, refugees were blamed for both the increasing threat of terrorism and actual attacks, and they were subject to blanket condemnation.*

---

more, refugees were blamed for both the increasing threat of terrorism and actual attacks, and they were subject to blanket condemnation.

Then in Cologne on New Year’s Eve, more than a thousand women were sexually assaulted or robbed by almost as many men. The perpetrators were quickly described as having “come from North Africa.” But only gradually did the proportions of the attacks become clear. The Kölner Stadtanzeiger was the first to report on the event, publishing an online article, “Mass Assault of Women at Central Station,” on New Year’s Day. There was another short item on 2 January in the same paper. Then more and more media began reporting on the incidents, including international newspapers like The New York Times and The Guardian.

Journalists were faced with a dilemma from the start: to name the perpetrators’ presumed countries of origin or not? Guideline 12.1. of the German Press Code specifies that a suspect’s “religious, ethnic, or other minority membership” may not be identified “unless this information can be justified as being relevant to the readers’ understanding of the incident.”<sup>10</sup> But this sort of discretion had become complicated in the meantime since agitation against refugees, foreigners, and immigrants was already snowballing on social media. If journalists chose not to mention the presumed origin of the perpetrators, right wing politicians and opinion makers would accuse them of suppressing the truth – and accuse the media of being Lügenpresse, i.e. “the lying press.”

Lügenpresse is another important concept that has gained in significance in reporting on the refugee crisis. It is quite correctly associated with National Socialism, but was originally coined in the nineteenth century as a means to stigmatise the press. Today the term is in common use at Pegida demonstrations, chanted by choruses of anti-Islam demonstrators, as well as in statements by the ultra-right party Alternative für Deutschland (Alternative for Germany), or AfD.

What happened on New Year’s Eve in Cologne altered the coverage of refugees in the media. The authors and editors of the monthly magazine Cicero, which carries the subtitle “Magazine for Political Culture,” struck an increasingly nationalist tone. This was something new. Previously, in December 2014, the magazine had drawn attention to itself with a subversive cover, which featured a well-known slogan from the 1990s – “The boat is full!” – which right-wing poli-

ticians and media used at the time to inveigh against asylum seekers and refugees. This was placed over an illustration by the Italian artist Emiliano Ponzi that shows a tourist about to dive into a swimming pool on the deck of a cruise ship. Beside her, in the water around the bow of the ship, people are floating and drowning. The cover story, too, presented a critique of the idea of sealing off Europe’s borders as well as portrayals of refugees.<sup>11</sup>

Following the events in Köln, however, the magazine did an about-face. The cover of the February 2016 issue featured an image of Angela Merkel seated on a sofa, drinking tea, while outside the window behind her the Cologne cathedral is going up in flames. The headline below reads: “...no longer my country: Germany between loss of control and government failure.” Articles in the issue talk of an “inundation of Germany” and an “invasion from faraway cultures.”<sup>12</sup> This reversal of approach was sharply criticised by other journalists; and many regular contributors ended their association with the magazine.

In summer 2016 three attacks took place in quick succession that intensified debate over domestic security and refugees. On 17 July a 17-year-old refugee, who was living in Germany as an unaccompanied minor, attacked passengers on a regional train outside Würzburg. He injured four people and was shot dead while trying to escape. On 22 July a mass shooting took place in a Munich shopping center; a German-Iranian high school student killed nine people before shooting himself. On 24 July in the Bavarian town of Ansbach a Syrian refugee set off a bomb in his backpack, injuring 15 people and killing himself.

On 19 December the Tunisian Anis Amri carried out a terrorist attack with a stolen lorry on the Christmas market at the Berlin Breitscheidplatz. He was shot dead four days later by police in Milan. In the Berlin attack 11 people died and another 55 were injured. The newspaper Berliner Morgenpost decided to stream live from the crime scene and was criticised for doing so.<sup>13</sup> However, on the whole the regional and national coverage was unbiased, sober and in accordance with journalistic standards.

Domestic security and refugees were regularly discussed as two sides of the same coin, even when there was no connection – as in the case of the mass shooting in Munich, where the killer had grown up in Germany and had leanings towards right-wing

extremism. A Bild headline asked: "After Bloody Week in Germany, How Are Refugees Monitored?" Die Welt wrote: "Bavaria Cracks Down on Violent Refugees." The news channel n-tv titled one report in more or less neutral terms: "Terror, Extremism, Refugees: What Germans Fear"; but the report itself only reinforced a feeling that every refugee was a potential criminal.<sup>14</sup>

The discourse from late 2015 onwards also included discussion of whether statements made by Chancellor Merkel and the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF) had led to the increase in the number of immigrants to Germany during the previous year. People pointed to the supposed effect of pictures of the train station in Munich or selfies taken by refugees together with Merkel, which had circulated millionfold in social media.

In September 2016 the BAMF published the exact numbers of refugees: around 890,000 had been registered; 441,899 had applied for asylum.<sup>15</sup> What is notable here is that the number was only minimally higher than the one the Federal Office had estimated at the beginning of the year. This contradicted the notion that the government's statements were taken as an "invitation." Most refugees had already left their countries – primarily Syria, Afghanistan, and Iraq – by spring of 2015, well before the statements were made, which is attested by findings from migration studies.<sup>16</sup> With its informative infographics and multimedia coverage, Die Zeit has provided extensive, nuanced, and often multilingual reporting on the topic.

## Hate Speech

Hate speech that flows out of the right-wing and nationalist milieu via social media undoubtedly has an influence on public opinion, but the media's treatment of hate speech has also been significant not least because of previous controversies which raised questions about the ways in which concepts and their meanings are handled.

There had already been concern expressed over coverage of murders carried out by the right-wing terrorist organisation National Socialist Underground (NSU). In a series of killings, the group's members murdered nine people, the majority of whom were originally from Turkey. The police needed six years to solve the crimes. Meanwhile, media formulations such as "Döner Killings," raised negative stereotypes and suggested the victims were killed by others from within the Turkish migrant community. This was proved not to be the case. In a study by the Otto Brenner Foundation journalists were taken to task and given recommendations for ethical conduct.<sup>17</sup>

The ways in which language shapes false representations is explored by Udo Stiehl and Sebastian Pertsch on their website [www.floskelwolke.de](http://www.floskelwolke.de). Using specialized software and Google, the two news journalists analyze 1,385 German media websites twice a day, from the smallest local newspaper to the largest news digest. Their focus is on hundreds of key terms, classified according to three categories, which they examine for implicit biases while tracking their incidence in the media. Each of the terms is added to a glossary and supplied with a brief commentary. For example, as the commentary for the phrase "illegal refugee" explains: "There is no such thing as an 'illegal refugee' because only the entry or residency in a country can be illegal, not the person. To be a refugee – as a consequence of war, for example, or expulsion – is both legal and guaranteed as a human right. To refer to people as 'illegal refugees,' therefore, is a dangerous confusion of terms."

By critically unpacking terms that are commonly used in the media, Stiehl and Pertsch encourage readers to evaluate their own language. Instead of speaking of a "wave of refugees" one might instead refer to "people migrating." When a problematic term cannot be dispensed with, they recommend qualifying it with a modifier such as "so-called," for instance.

Using **specialized software and Google**, the two news journalists **analyze 1,385 German media websites** twice a day, from the smallest local newspaper to the largest news digest. Their focus is on hundreds of key terms, classified according to three categories, which they **examine for implicit biases** while tracking their incidence in the media.





*There are still thousands of people who have been living in mass accommodations, such as school gymnasiums and container settlements, since they arrived in summer 2015. For some the situation has become so unbearable that with financial support from the German government they return to the country from which they had so recently escaped.*

---

Journalists, too, are also increasingly subject to hate speech on the Internet and must defend themselves. Political trolls often attack prominent reporters and media personalities with vitriolic posts, tweets, and comments. On 29 August 2015, for instance, after being barraged with slurs and threats, the television presenter Dunja Hayali posted a statement on her Facebook page in which she asserted very clearly that asylum is a human right.<sup>18</sup>

## How Are Things Different Now?

Currently the media gives too little coverage to the positive side effects of migration, including both economic and social transformation processes. What happens to the remittances that the diasporas send back to their countries of origin? How do these experiences change people and their environments, not only in their old homes, but in their new ones as well?

There has also been too little reporting on migrants establishing companies and making financial investments in Germany. Although it must be said that company founders from other countries may not set much store by this sort of labeling. Reporting on recently arrived refugees often follows the principle of the “single story,” according to which integration takes place quickly and successfully, but which often ignores the difficulties involved in the process.

Finally, not enough has been written about so-called voluntary returnees. There are still thousands

of people who have been living in mass accommodations, such as school gymnasiums and container settlements, since they arrived in summer 2015. For some the situation has become so unbearable that with financial support from the German government they return to the country from which they had so recently escaped. Stories like these can usually only be found on blogs or on the Facebook pages of aid organizations.<sup>19</sup>

It would also be important to find out more about the influence that opinions circulated in social media have on the work that journalists do. Social media are a part of the public sphere, and debates on Facebook and Twitter are often covered by reporters.

In Germany the events of the past year have changed the way migration is reported on, and the causes of migration and expulsion are now being addressed. In November 2016, for instance, the newspaper Die Tageszeitung launched a series of investigative reports on migration between Africa and Europe.<sup>20</sup>

Journalists’ initial enthusiasm and occasionally even advocacy for refugees have since been replaced by attempts to represent the complexity of migration. Media perspectives and approaches to the phenomenon have likewise become more global and nuanced.

**Michaela Maria Mueller** is a freelance journalist and writer based in Berlin. Translated into English by Bill W. Martin.

## Links and sources

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.faz.net/aktuell/feuilleton/medien/studie-wie-ueber-fluechtlinge-berichtet-wurde-14378135.html>. The study is to be published in January 2017.

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.ndr.de/der\\_ndr/presse/mitteilungen/Medienmagazin-Zapp-Wir-schaffen-was-Bilanz-nach-einem-Jahr-Fluechtlings-berichterstattung.pressemeldungndr17488.html](http://www.ndr.de/der_ndr/presse/mitteilungen/Medienmagazin-Zapp-Wir-schaffen-was-Bilanz-nach-einem-Jahr-Fluechtlings-berichterstattung.pressemeldungndr17488.html)

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.faz.net/aktuell/feuilleton/medien/studie-wie-ueber-fluechtlinge-berichtet-wurde-14378135.html>

<sup>4</sup> Der Spiegel 36 (29 August 2015).

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.tagesspiegel.de/berlin/newcomer-in-berlin-dont-call-me-refugee/12370620.html>

<sup>6</sup> [http://www.sueddeutsche.de/thema/Neue\\_Heimat](http://www.sueddeutsche.de/thema/Neue_Heimat)

<sup>7</sup> [http://www.spiegel.de/thema/jaafars\\_videoblog/](http://www.spiegel.de/thema/jaafars_videoblog/)

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.zeit.de/serie/jaafar-shu-fi>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.welt.de/wirtschaft/article149231373/Terror-und-Fluechtlinge-werden-uns-Wohlstand-kosten.html>

<sup>10</sup> Deutscher Presserat, German Press Code: Guidelines for Journalistic Work as Recommended by the German Press Council (Berlin, 2013), p. 9, online: [https://www.presserat.de/fileadmin/user\\_upload/](https://www.presserat.de/fileadmin/user_upload/)

[Downloads\\_Dateien/Pressekodex13english\\_web.pdf](#)

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.cicero.de/salon/cicero-gewinnt-cover-wettbewerb-mit-fluechtlingstitel-glasklare-position-gegen-die-politischen>

<sup>12</sup> [http://solon-buch.ciendo-shop.com/img/books/width167/B616134826\\_k.jpg](http://solon-buch.ciendo-shop.com/img/books/width167/B616134826_k.jpg)

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.rp-online.de/panorama/deutschland/anschlag-in-berlin-wenn-live-berichte-zur-gratwanderung-werden-aid-16477874>

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.n-tv.de/panorama/Davor-fuerchten-sich-die-Deutschen-article18176386.html>

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.bamf.de/SharedDocs/Anlagen/DE/Publikationen/Broschueren/bundesamt-in-zahlen-2015.html?nn=1367528>

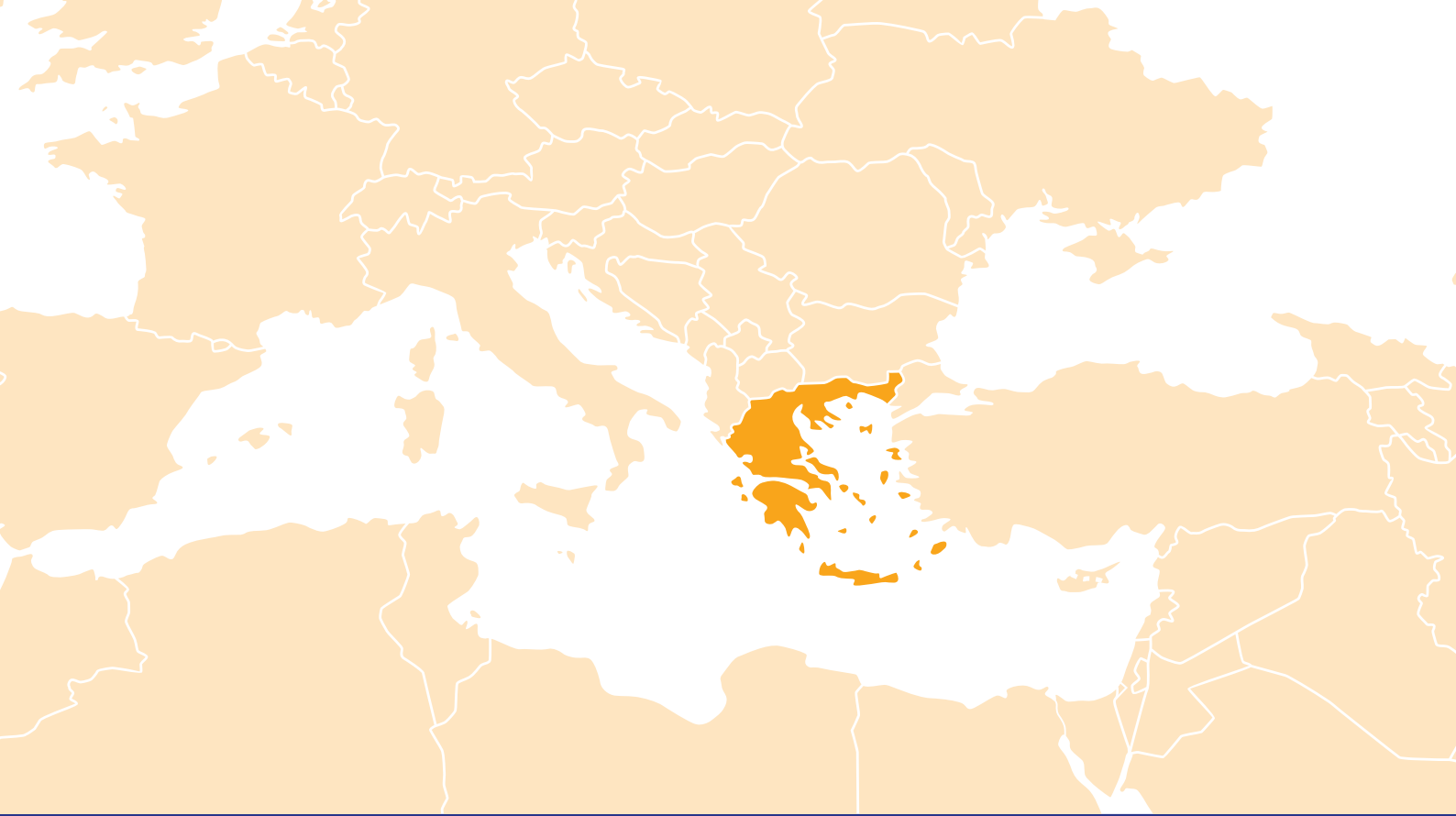
<sup>16</sup> <http://www.zeit.de/politik/ausland/2016-10/angela-merkel-influence-refugees-open-borders-balkan-route>

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.otto-brenner-stiftung.de/otto-brenner-stiftung/aktuelles/das-unwort-erklart-die-untat.html>

<sup>18</sup> <https://de-de.facebook.com/DunjaHayali/posts/87814982239519>

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.theyhavenamesberlin.org/goodbye-mohib/>

<sup>20</sup> <http://www.taz.de/Schwerpunkt-Fluechtlinge/!t5201005/>



# GREECE

## Media's Double Vision as Migrant Crisis Catches the World's Imagination

» Nikos Megrelis

Prior to the 1990s the first significant migration flow of men and women to Greece came from the Philippines many of whom worked in Athens mainly as domestic workers for the affluent and upper-middle class. The Greek media as well as Greek society in general hardly noticed their presence. They worked in people's homes for six days a week and lived elsewhere on their day off. They were rarely seen in public places and were never integrated into Greek society. They rarely troubled the police or the authorities and so, in turn, did not suffer widespread discrimination or from racist comments, either in the mass media or elsewhere.

How does the media on both sides of the Mediterranean report on Migration?

*A study by journalists, for journalists and policymakers*

*The mixed messages coming from media on migration issues is also influenced by the fact that within Greek journalism there are two strong influences, one group fiercely nationalist and anxious to protect Greece, its culture, identity and history from external threats, and the other, non-nationalist tendency which sees itself as more pro-European and outward-looking.*

---

There was a further significant migration flow from neighbouring countries in the beginning of the 1990s (from Bulgaria and Romania) and, in particular, from Albania following the death of Ramiz Alia at the end of 1991.

As a result of the implosion of state authority in Albania (one day the doors of prisons were opened and all detainees were released) there was an influx of more than two million Albanians who came to Greece by all possible means in search of a better life. The absence of any proper preparation by Greek authorities to deal with such a great number of destitute people, often going hungry, set the scene for a public backlash. Additionally, among the new migrants were criminal elements and the crisis sparked a mass media response in which racist stereotypes were often used in relation to the newcomers.

Thousands of stories in the media, both print and electronic, focused on a crime wave driven by a so-called "Albanian mafia." Albanians were blamed for many hideous crimes and were accused of being responsible for the rise in crime at that time, although this was never corroborated by official data or evidence <http://www.astynomia.gr/images/stories/NEW/hellas.pdf>.

The television news continuously broadcast sensational stories from the Greek-Albanian frontier showing terrified citizens, guns in hand, preparing to deal with Albanian crooks. Almost any crime, or any misdemeanour no matter how minor, could be attributed to the migrants irrespective of evidence or facts on the ground.

The reality was something else as the evidence in the survey "Business Activity, Risks and Competition in the Historic City Centre of Athens" conducted by the Political Sociology Institute at the National Social Research Centre, reveals. The survey debunks the myth that migrants are to be found on top of the list of offences against property and persons. In fact, the traders interviewed who were victims of attacks named foreign nationals third on the list of key perpetrators.

<http://www.peals.gr/component/content/article/1-category-1/746>

This trend in the media was challenged by some journalists and media. This led to an easing of discrimination in the public discourse and contributed to assisting the permanent settlement over the years of almost one million Albanians in Greece. This group were economically integrated and many of those

who were once farmland and construction workers became small business owners and traders.

A spike in media racism occurred in 1996, when Greece and Turkey were brought to the brink of war. But this quickly dissipated as a result of special circumstances at the time, not least because of catastrophic earthquakes in Turkey in 1999 which forged a climate of compassion in Greece. Greek and Turkish journalists set up a contact group, aiming to challenge propaganda, eliminate racist stereotypes and to prevent the manipulation of media for war-mongering. During this time whenever there was an issue in bilateral relations, Turkish journalists were hosted in Greek TV news and vice versa. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oygzzolYzMo>

The media background to the refugee crisis that arose in 2015 showed that migrants, in general, were subject to media profiling that, either openly or implicitly, involved racist stereotypes. The nature of media coverage has been considerably influenced by the activities of "Golden Dawn", a neo-Nazi party which has organised assaults against migrants, in the spirit and style of Nazi storm troopers. This triggered sympathy from within media for the victims, although many times media noted that somehow, they were "also to blame" because of illegal street trading or being resident without a permit.

Prior to 2015 it was rare for media news reports to focus on how migrants may be victims of state bureaucracy and face high annual charges in exchange for a temporary residence permit. Equally rare were news reports on the difficult integration procedures for migrants, especially Africans and Asians, and the problems they faced in integrating economically and socially in Greek society.

The mixed messages coming from media on migration issues is also influenced by the fact that within Greek journalism there are two strong influences, one group fiercely nationalist and anxious to protect Greece, its culture, identity and history from external threats, and the other, non-nationalist tendency which sees itself as more pro-European and outward-looking. This conflict continues and should give an idea of the media context in which the migration story was placed.

The year 2015 was marked by an influx of refugees on an unprecedented scale, sparking a humanitarian crisis that resonated across the country and was felt across the European Union. During the year, some 900,000 refugees arrived, mainly on the islands of

Lesvos, Chios, Samos, and Kos. [http://www.astynomia.gr/images/stories//2015/statistics15/allodapwn/12\\_statistics\\_all\\_2015\\_all.png](http://www.astynomia.gr/images/stories//2015/statistics15/allodapwn/12_statistics_all_2015_all.png)

Lesvos bore the brunt of the influx, with around 512,000 refugees, compared to some 12,000 in 2014. Samos received some 104,000 compared to 7,000 in 2014, and Chios around 120,000 against 6,500. [http://www.astynomia.gr/images/stories//2015/statistics15/allodapwn/12\\_statistics\\_all\\_2015\\_methorio.png](http://www.astynomia.gr/images/stories//2015/statistics15/allodapwn/12_statistics_all_2015_methorio.png) In terms of origin, almost 500,000 were from Syria, 200,000 from Afghanistan, and 90,000 from Iraq.

[http://www.astynomia.gr/images/stories//2015/statistics15/allodapwn/12\\_statistics\\_all\\_2015\\_sull\\_yphkoothta.png](http://www.astynomia.gr/images/stories//2015/statistics15/allodapwn/12_statistics_all_2015_sull_yphkoothta.png)

At the same time, Greece saw a change in government with the coalition of the left-wing party SYRIZA and the right-wing/nationalist party Independent Greeks (ANEL). The creation of this heterogeneous coalition had within it a contradictory approach to the migration crisis. On the one hand, there is a more friendly and open approach on refugee questions from SYRIZA while, on the other, there is a more aggressive and racist rhetoric both at the local and national level from ANEL.

The capacity of the media to cover these events was not made easier by the economic crisis which overwhelmed traditional media outlets during 2015. The media saw dramatic reductions (up to 50%) in salaries, with months of arrears in the payment of wages – from 3 to 5 months – and cutbacks across the board in terms of editorial work. The non-payment of salaries provoked strikes and the capacity of media to report was reduced. The traditional media is hard-pressed, and the online and information websites provide equally bleak conditions. They pay very low wages to young and inexperienced news editors.

This economic and political reality puts in context the capacity of Greek media to report effectively and professionally, not just on migration issues, but across the landscape of journalism.

## The first influx (January 2015 - August 2015)

According to official data, from 1 January 2015 until mid-March 2016, 1,000,357 people arrived in Greece via Turkey. As of April 2016, some 557,476 migrants were formally registered in Greece, most of them originating from twelve countries. The Interior Ministry statistical evidence shows that legally resident third-country nationals come from: Albania (387,023), Ukraine (19,595), Georgia (18,334), Pakistan (16,578), India (14,357), Egypt (12,084), Philippines (10,468), Moldova (9,092), Bangladesh (6,301), Syria (5,799), China (4,840), Serbia (2,968).

<http://www.tovima.gr/society/article/?aid=795716>

No statistical surveys are available on media coverage of the mass influx of the hundreds of thousands of refugees over the last two years but George Pleios, Professor at the National Capodistrian University, in a recent study published in October 2016, divided this two-year period into three segments.

He reports that in the summer of 2015, media coverage reflected the stereotypes of the past. Refugees are often presented indiscriminately as part of the migrant group, and negatively labelled as “illegal immigrants” and the arrival is called a “tsunami”. There is blatant indifference to their rights.

“Indeed” says Professor Pleios, “The mass media spread fear that the arrival of refugees will cause problems to public health and the local economy, for instance tourism, and that national security may be threatened, involving loss of territory to Turkey, with terrorist activity by Jihadis. It is seen as a threat

According to official data, from  
1 January 2015 until mid-March 2016,

**1,000,357 people arrived  
in Greece via Turkey**



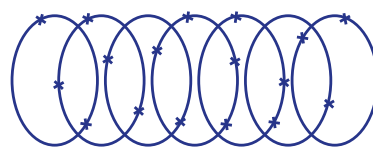
The refugees are often presented indiscriminately as part of the migrant group, and **negatively labelled** as “illegal immigrants” and the arrival is called a “tsunami”.



*whilst many fears were irrational and driven by racist rhetoric, fears over the impact on the local economy were real.*

**Tourism on the North-Eastern Aegean islands, for instance, dropped by**

**BY 70%**  
during the crisis period.



**The large numbers of refugees coupled with the total absence of preparedness of the Greek state created wretched living conditions in the streets, the squares and other open spaces and sparked riots in so-called hot spots, the open and closed detention centres.**

to religious and cultural identity, and a demographic threat to the profile of the population". It is worth noting three elements behind this coverage.

First, many media allegations were inspired by statements of ANEL government members (led by the president of the party and National Defence Minister of the government Panos Kammenos); second, whilst many fears were irrational and driven by racist rhetoric, fears over the impact on the local economy were real. Tourism on the North-Eastern Aegean islands, for instance, dropped by 70% during the crisis period.

<http://www.skai.gr/news/greece/article/321903/70-i-ptosi-tou-tourismou-sta-nisia-tou-anatolikou-aigaiou-/>; Third, the media reporting was also influenced by the policy failure and lack of response of the European Union and the Greek government.

The large numbers of refugees coupled with the total absence of preparedness of the Greek state created wretched living conditions in the streets, the squares and other open spaces and sparked riots in so-called hot spots, the open and closed detention centres. Most media covered these riots as threats to public order without detailed reporting on the causes of discontent. Only media favourably disposed to the opposition talked about the incompetence of the government.

## **The second period** **(September 2015 - March 2016)**

This second period is characterised by a shift with media deploying less racist terminology. The dominating picture is that of humanitarian support; of refugees fleeing war zones and being welcomed.

This sharp change of approach arose largely because the drama of refugees arriving on Greek islands became a global story with thousands of journalists from the world's media broadcasting shocking reports, pictures and video material on the arrival and rescue

of these desperate people.

Dramatic stories of desperate people circulated around the globe; pictures that touched the world with drowned bodies washed up on beaches (particularly that of Syrian boy Aylan Kurdi) were shown in the Greek media as well. This form of coverage focusing on the human cost did much to displace the rhetoric of racism.

At the same time, media noted that the vast majority of islanders were moved by the drama of refugees. The solidarity is reflected in the picture below with the three old ladies feeding a baby while its mother is having some rest. The three "grandmothers" were Nobel Prize nominees.

The softening of media coverage was also reinforced by the refugees themselves who in their numerous interviews made it clear they were declaring they were passers-by; for them Greece was a transit country and their final destinations were further afield – towards Northern Europe and mainly to Germany.

Other factors also shaped the news coverage in this period. Media were influenced by the so-called diplomacy of celebrities. The Pope and the Ecumenical Patriarch, Susan Sarandon and Angelina Jolie, all travelled to Lesbos and had their photos taken with refugees, thus contributing to the eradication of the sense that refugees are a threat.

Media also dwelt on the tragic origins of the arrivals. They recognised that the vast majority of migrants were Syrian refugees with families and young children and that most of them were educated. It also helped that the Syrian refugees had only good words to say about the Greeks and the welcome they received.

The Syrian war, the inhuman crimes perpetrated by ISIS and the destruction in Aleppo were all important elements in coverage that highlighted the need for humanity and solidarity and helped people better understand why Syrians were leaving their country.

During this period, Greek photographers became high-profile award winners (Yiannis Behrakis whose picture features in this report was awarded the Pulitzer prize). Their work was recognised in major international journalism competitions. Film-makers also shone, with dozens of documentary films arising from the crisis. Hundreds of photo exhibitions were organised and many theatrical plays which showcased the refugee issue were also staged.

There was also an important historical reference that influenced the collective memory for Greek media observers and society. Lesvos, the island in the international spotlight, had generations earlier been the main hosting place for Greek refugees after catastrophic events in Asia Minor in 1922 when the Greek army was defeated in the war with Turkey. The 2015 events stirred memories and public sensitivity related to that time.

Politically, the tone was less alarmist and more even-tempered. Within the Greek government, the voices of the extreme right ANEL were marginalised and their president refrained from making statements “pouring oil onto the fire”. At the same time, a picture of German Chancellor Angela Merkel with refugee children, played an equally important role. This image was extensively reproduced in the Greek Media. It reinforced what many saw as a positive message, that Germany, a country associated with negative sentiment by many because of the economic crisis, would be welcoming the refugees and they would not be staying in Greece.

## The third period

(March 2016 – December 2016)

From March 2016, onwards there was a spectacular decrease in refugee flows. According to official data, during the first 11 months of 2016 some 201,156 refugees and migrants were registered for illegal entry, as compared to the 797,371 for the same period in 2015.

[http://www.astynomia.gr/images/stories//2016/statistics16/allodapwn/11\\_statistics\\_all\\_2016\\_all.png](http://www.astynomia.gr/images/stories//2016/statistics16/allodapwn/11_statistics_all_2016_all.png)

[tics16/allodapwn/11\\_statistics\\_all\\_2016\\_all.png](http://www.astynomia.gr/images/stories//2016/statistics16/allodapwn/11_statistics_all_2016_all.png)

There were two reasons: firstly, the deal between the European Union and Turkey by which Turkey agreed to process refugees and migrants before they were allowed to move on to Greece and, second, the closure of borders which led to as many as 10-15,000 refugees being stranded for months in Idomeni in wretched conditions.

The suffering and distress of these people and their desperate efforts to pass through the borders (which were closed from the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia); their exploitation at the hands of people traffickers and some corrupt local groups; as well as the almost total absence of support on the part of the Greek state, became a topic of international media attention.

There were many thousands of media reports, and images circulating through social media, all stimulating a wave of sympathy, compassion and solidarity. But they also sent a strong message to other refugees seeking to come to Greece from Turkey – that routes to Northern Europe are closed and that those who try to make the journey would face miserable and inhumane conditions.

The Greek media coverage at this time shifted again. It became more negative and hostile with efforts to transfer those people to other areas inside the country in places with minimum levels of organisation (such as former military camps, not operational hotels). There was uncritical and unchallenged excessive coverage of hostile public reactions, reflected at many levels but particularly in television and internet media.

Kostis Papaioannout, former Secretary General for Migration Policy who resigned in disagreement over the policies, put it this way: “Idomeni was the critical point. Media changed their approach towards the refugees. They were no longer viewed as poor, miserable people and a transit problem, but rather as being in a permanent situation and that refugees represented a risk and threatened the living conditions of the locals and the country overall.”

**Police and Port Authorities arrests of irregular foreign nationals for illegal entry and stay Comparison between the 12-month period in 2014 and the 12-month period in 2015**

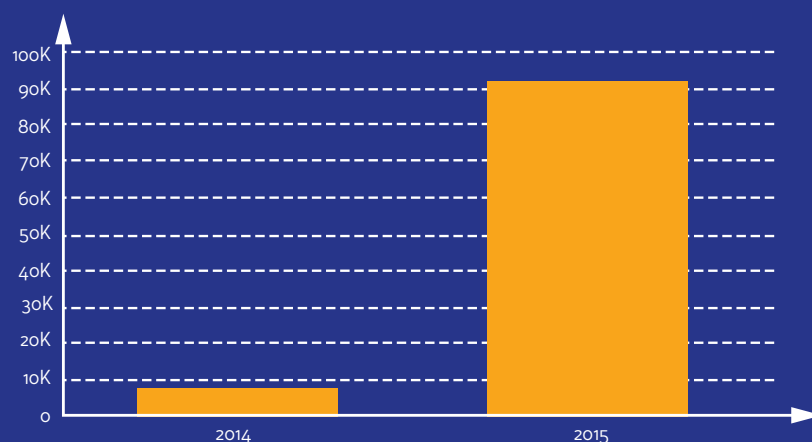






Photo by Yannis Behrakis

*During the crisis of the past two years, the media have shown the capacity for professionalism and humanity, but they have also demonstrated how easy it is to retreat back into divisive and harmful coverage.*

Professor Pleios underlines this in his study. "The likelihood of having thousands of refugees stranded for a long period of time and, indeed, amidst the economic crisis, was one of the key reasons for this shift," he says.

The situation was made no easier by the lack of will on the part of the European Union to impose quotas for the relocation of refugees, as well as the change in the stance of Germany, which became more restrictive, and the development of a sense that Greece and Italy would become "warehouses for souls" in Europe. At the same time publications began linking refugees in general with terrorist attacks, and there was more coverage of statements by religious leaders arguing that "Muslim refugees are a risk for Europe". <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2016/03/18-eu-turkey-statement/>

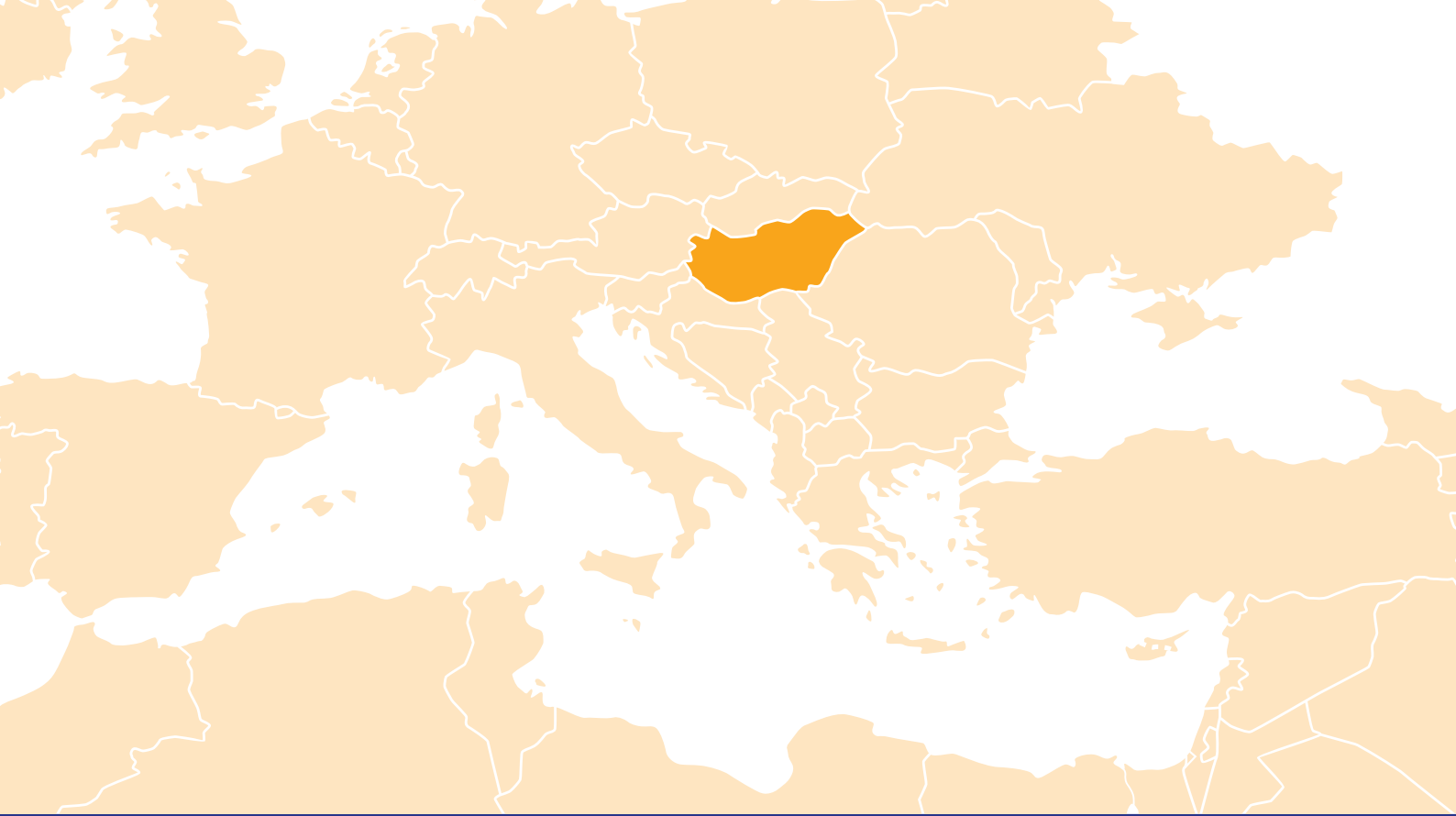
Even the EU-Turkey deal, although it sought to control the irregular flow of humanity, was reported with many reservations by the Greek media. Some interpreted it in a way to suggest that it was creating a situation whereby this neighbouring country would play a dominant role with the ability to regulate refugee flows to Greece.

In conclusion, since March 2016 the Greek media portray the refugee issue as a permanent problem and

not a matter of people in transit. The tone remains ambiguous and, whether out of incompetence or for reasons of political expediency, there is almost a total absence of reporting on good practices or efforts by groups and institutions or refugees to help them have a normal life with basic standards of living, jobs, education, and access to cultural activities.

During the crisis of the past two years, the media have shown the capacity for professionalism and humanity, but they have also demonstrated how easy it is to retreat back into divisive and harmful coverage. While the situation remains unstable and without a unified political and social programme that can build public confidence, the media may find themselves becoming instruments for populism and political exploitation of public uncertainty over migration.

**Nikos Megrelis** is an award winning journalist and film maker



# HUNGARY

## How the Shock of the New Became a Polarising, Fearful and Toxic Story

» Balázs Weyer

The current migration crisis is a new experience for the Hungarian public and the media. Before the summer of 2015, the Hungarian media neglected the issue; migration did not figure in people's minds and it rarely took prominence on the news agenda. I became aware of this when attending a workshop on migration and the media in Paris some years ago, organised by the Ethical Journalism Network, the Global Editors Network and the International Organisation of Migration. I was left wondering how much of the discussion is relevant to Hungary.

How does the media on both sides of the Mediterranean report on Migration?

*A study by journalists, for journalists and policymakers*



*To judge the nature and quality of the Hungarian media's efforts to report on migration is difficult as the circumstances were extreme: hundreds of thousands of people came rushing through the country in a month; there was a mix of extremes -- signs of panic and at the same time empathy within society; and deepening partisanship fuelled by government rhetoric and propaganda.*

---

I had the feeling that although we have never faced migration, the issues brought up at that meeting which were of concern to colleagues from countries used to dealing with migration, figured also in the way Hungarian media has reported on its own minority Roma community – everyday ethnic discrimination, unconscious mixing of poverty issues with matters of race, political partisanship, and a profound lack of a common language to address issues of “the other”, as well as an absence of reliable and widely accepted facts and narratives.

Thus, on the one hand the Hungarian media was inexperienced when it came to reporting migration, but on the other hand it had rich experience of the editorial challenges. Soon after this workshop the Editor's Forum Hungary and the Center of Independent Journalism organised one of their regular conferences on migration, preparing special ethical guidelines for reporting. At the time, not many were interested. When migration became the hottest topic on the news agenda just a few years later, Hungarian reporters and media were largely unprepared and it was too late for reporters to refer to any guidelines or conference papers.

To judge the nature and quality of the Hungarian media's efforts to report on migration is difficult as the circumstances were extreme: hundreds of thousands of people came rushing through the country in a month; there was a mix of extremes -- signs of panic and at the same time empathy within society; and deepening partisanship fuelled by government rhetoric and propaganda.

Just a year before the crisis, a survey of Hungarians' political priorities found that just 3% of those surveyed considered immigration a serious issue. Also in 2014, a study by the Hungarian Helsinki Committee, an NGO specialised in refugee issues, stated that “migration is hardly, if at all, reported by the media. Migrants are practically invisible for the public. Overloaded editors consider the subject unattractive.” The report added: “Migration only appears in the form of statistics, never as people. The only exceptions are crime stories... editors are not aware of the terminology regarding migration... The passivity of the media contributes to the negligence of the dangerously uninformed public’.

Clearly the media was unprepared. Migration had previously been a minority issue; the playground of some NGOs and despite a number of conferences, workshops, and the publishing of media guidelines,

that was the baseline for journalism when the migration story exploded on the media scene a year later.

At the heart of the public confusion since 2015 lies a new word, intentionally made up for propaganda purposes: “migráns”. This word has not existed before.

In previous decades, Hungary's limited experience with refugees related to ethnic Hungarians from Romania and Serbia at times of conflicts, wars and deprivation. During the different waves of wars in the Balkans, it meant Serbians, Bosnians, and then, Kosovars. But these waves of limited migration did not cause much in the way of social disruption. The media traditionally used the Hungarian equivalents of ‘refugee’, or ‘asylum seeker’, to describe the people coming to the country.

All that has dramatically changed. As a recent study states, ‘One of the clearest edicts concerned the word “refugees,” which has all but disappeared from coverage of the crisis. There are words in Hungarian for refugee (“menekült”) and asylum seeker (“menedekkerő”), and previous refugee crisis were also discussed using the word “bevándorló,” which translates roughly as “incomer.” Instead, a foreign-sounding imposition from Latin was deployed: “migráns.”

This brand new, made-up word, was used by government officials and media under government direction or influence replacing every other term. Journalists at state media were reportedly told to use the word every time they address the issue. ‘Migráns’ sounds foreign and sounds ugly, while ‘menekült’ (refugee) has soft, empathetic connotations.

Also, the term ‘economic immigrant’ was coined to put an emphasis on the job security issue, rather than the humanitarian, asylum seeker approach that sees migrants as people escaping from war zones. From that point, the choice of words used made a clear distinction: those using ‘migráns’ clearly shared the governments’ anti-migrant rhetoric. This led to a situation where using any of the older terms became a political statement even if it wasn't meant to.

As a result, unbiased reporting became almost impossible. No words were left untouched by this war of rhetoric. No matter which words a journalist picked to describe the people at the borders and in the pop-up camps, it surely meant something else, something more than intended. However, ‘migráns’ clearly took over subconsciously even in the everyday speak of the country.

*“Migration only appears in the form of statistics, never as people. The only exceptions are crime stories....editors are not aware of the terminology regarding migration.... The passivity of the media contributes to the negligence of the dangerously uninformed public”*

---

The total lack of a common approach, the chaos of terminology and the lack of experience created a situation, where within a year, the number of people who considered migration a serious potential threat, or a potential source of terrorism and job insecurity, increased from 3% to 76% and 82%.

It may appear that reporting on migration itself was the major media story of the past two years, but that is not entirely true. In fact, the story became more about the government's policy and its anti-migrant rhetoric. The migration crisis itself lasted hardly a month, but the topic remained at the top of the news lists for more than a year. This focus on government policy started earlier, with the Charlie Hebdo attacks in January 2015.

The prime minister put it at the top of his list after attending the free-speech-march on 11 January 2015 in Paris following the Charlie Hebdo attacks. On the day of the march he spoke out on public media about migration and terrorism, not protection of free speech. From that point on it became his number one issue. The state media and the ever-growing number of government-backed private media followed suit. Many argue that this was an intended scapegoating strategy. “Fidesz tried stirring a debate around the death

penalty, and then experimented with a narrative about defending the ‘little man,’ but neither stuck. Then they switched to migration and that started to resonate”, says Csaba Toth, analyst with Republikon Institute, a liberal think-tank, in a recent report.

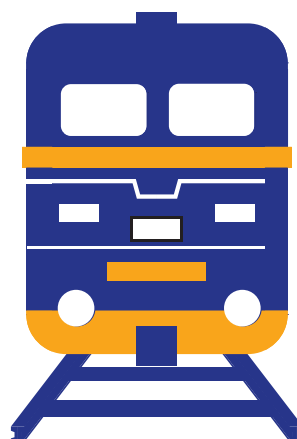
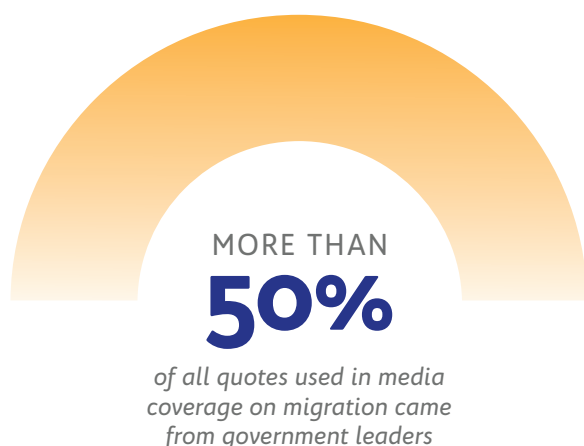
Migration was certainly on top of the media agenda during the physical presence of hundreds of thousands of migrants at border control points with Serbia (and later on their main exit point, on the border with Austria) and in central Budapest, at Keleti railway station. These were the days of breaking news hysteria when sober, fact-based reporting was almost impossible because of the lack of facts – there was no data, no official reaction, and no spokespeople available on either the government or the police side, and nobody, of course, to speak on behalf of migrants.

Many media narratives were hysterical, with judgments of the crisis based on their general approval or disapproval of the government's policies. Most coverage was emotional – on one side, fuelling public fears, where the general image of migrants was the one of aggressive, shouting, uncontrollable horde of young man, on the other side, there was a different viewpoint – flaying the government's supposedly inhuman, cynical scapegoating, with images of small children

Within a year, the number of people who considered migration a serious potential threat, or a potential source of terrorism and job insecurity, **increased from 3% to 76% and 82%**



Coverage and general narratives of the crisis were dominated by the government's actions to close the borders with Serbia and to build a fence along 170 km of the Hungarian-Serbian border



Migration was certainly on top of the media agenda during the physical **presence of hundreds of thousands of migrants** at border control points with Serbia and in central Budapest, at Keleti railway station.

playing in the miserable conditions of the pop-up refugee camps, crying mothers and handsome young men with flawless English, talking smoothly and with sophistication.

Of these two emotional approaches, the former proved to be the more effective, as four of the five national TV stations (three state owned, one private but under strong government influence) and the national public radio's news channel followed official rhetoric in unison. These are the main sources of information in most of rural Hungary.

A content analysis published in journal Médiakutató showed that media outlets close to the government intensified their reporting on migration months before the influx of migrants reached Hungary, creating an apocalyptic atmosphere. The same analysis shows that in the months prior to the crisis government leaders dominated media coverage, with more than 50% of all quotes used coming from them; NGOs and experts had a less than 10% share. There were only two recorded cases where actual migrants got a chance to speak, although this changed later, when migrants became more accessible during the peak of the crisis.

The statistics on the choice of photographs used by the media is also telling: 31% pictured a government politician, 11% a member of police or border patrol, and 22% migrants. Most of the latter pictured migrants either in groups or from behind, or in positions which emphasise links to criminality – lying on the floor, handcuffed or with blurred faces. (Editors and reporters working with state TV reportedly were told not to use pictures of children or any sort that could trigger sympathy for migrants.)

Most of the people of Hungary had no personal experience of the crisis, as migrants crossed the country from Szeged in South East through Budapest and towards Vienna in the North West. Large numbers of migrants were only visible in Budapest and two border

villages, Röszke and Hegyeshalom.

Since no refugees or migrants were physically visible elsewhere, everyone in other parts of the country relied on television and radio reports for information – and much of what they learned was terrifying. Studies later pointed out that those who had personal experience with migrants during the peak of the crisis were less concerned about migration than those who followed it through the media.

There is also some evidence suggesting that the results of the referendum on whether or not to accept European Union settlement quotas held a year later, where citizens who lived near the scenes of the crisis voted more in favour of the plan from the EU which was strongly opposed by the Hungarian government.

Certainly, there were many news outlets, mainly in the digital, non-legacy media field, who tried hard to dig deeper than report only on the emotional and superficial drama of migration. Some went as far as Greece to follow refugees along their route. One of the most prominent examples was that of a reporter of Index who went undercover. He mixed with the migrant crowd, registered with officials using a fake Kyrgyz passport, was taken to refugee camps and followed migrants through the country.

(He was later formally convicted of forgery and of using a fake identity in official proceedings in the first instance, although the court acknowledged that going undercover is not illegal and served the public good in the respective case – and the sentence was accordingly light, a reprimand. Still, the reporter appealed against the judgement).

NGOs and spontaneous civil movements also gained a lot of media attention as the crisis triggered the biggest ever grassroots civil initiative to help migrants along their route. But soon, coverage and general narratives of the crisis were dominated by the government's actions to close the borders with Serbia

*This atmosphere of crisis has lasted since the migration story broke and has been reinforced by the quota referendum campaign. It is not clear if this crisis will ease in the near future, but that will need to happen if journalists are to get their profession back on track.*

---

and to build a fence along 170 km of the Hungarian-Serbian border. After this was done, the influx of refugees stopped and coverage of migrants fell away to be replaced by a story dominated by the government's policies towards migration and their disagreements with some of Hungary's neighbours and the European Union.

Migration is still in the news, but it's more about the government than the migrants themselves. The announcement of the 'quota referendum' led to a campaign that appeared to be about everything but the issue of migration itself. The government claimed that the European Union has no right to force its member states to take in any migrants (the EU proposed to establish mandatory quotas to help in relocating 120,000 refugees from front-line states such as Greece and Italy. It called for Hungary to resettle 1,294 people.) The government also argued that Hungary needs to have control over its own culture and laws.

The intensity of the government campaign was unprecedented. The towns and countryside were filled

with advertising hoardings to the extent that during the last few weeks of the campaign it was almost impossible to find empty slots even for commercial advertising campaigns.

Those who opposed the government campaigned for a boycott of the referendum. Much of the media coverage focused on the disagreement between the European Commission and the Hungarian government and the referendum's legal irrelevance in tackling the issue.

Changes in the approach of other European governments and the rise of anti-migration groups were seen as the triumph for the Hungarian government. In the end the referendum witnessed a low 43% turnout, which was not enough to make it binding, but of those who voted 98% were in favour of the government. (In fact, the result has changed little either in the government's or the opposition's policies.)

Although migration has been on top of the agenda since 2015, most news outlets still fail to provide access to the deeper analysis, background and context.



There are a few exceptions: particularly Index, one of the few independent outlets with significant audience and which invested in improving its reporting from the Middle East, sending reporters to Iraq and Syria, as well as to Turkish and Greek refugee camps.

In summary, with a few notable exceptions, the media showed little competence in covering migration and the shock of the crisis did not provide enough time to catch-up with the skills. The strident political reaction pushed editorial coverage to the extremes, where taking a stand against or on the side of migrants became the mainstay of everyday politics. All of these circumstances provided for reporting that put emotion before facts in an extremely partisan atmosphere – pro-government talk was dismissed as inhuman and cynical, while all other approaches were stigmatised as soft and migrant-friendly (and probably financed from abroad). Unbiased reporting was almost impossible; whatever was said was seen as taking a stand, whether that was intended or not.

Emerging from this media crisis is not easy. Although there have been a small number of workshops and trainings in the past few years on reporting migration, the interest and turnout has been very limited, with migration not considered an attractive or interesting issue. At the same time morale among journalists remains low as a result of financial and political difficulties experienced within media and a high number of

journalists struggling with intense workload pressure; regrettably many have little confidence in the future of their profession. Professional associations and trade unions are either non-existent or have limited resources with which to change the situation.

This atmosphere of crisis has lasted since the migration story broke and has been reinforced by the quota referendum campaign. It is not clear if this crisis will ease in the near future, but that will need to happen if journalists are to get their profession back on track. The first surveys and academic papers on the crisis are now being published and they may provide a chance for media and journalists to develop positive strategies for media futures that will build on the hard lessons of telling the migration story over the past two years.

**Balázs Weyer** is the Chairman of Editors' Forum Hungary and a lecturer on media ethics and journalism at various universities and institutions in Central and Eastern Europe.

## References, links and sources:

BERNÁTH Gábor, MESSING Vera: Bedarálva – A menekültekkel kapcsolatos kormányzati kampány és a tőle független megszólalás terepei (In: Médiakutató, XVI/4)

[www.mediakutato.hu/cikk/2015\\_04\\_tel/01\\_menekultek\\_moralis\\_panic.pdf](http://www.mediakutato.hu/cikk/2015_04_tel/01_menekultek_moralis_panic.pdf)

BERNÁTH Gábor, MESSING Vera: Pushed To the Edge – Research Report on the Representation of Roma Communities in the Hungarian Mainstream Media (Working Paper Series, Budapest, 2011)

[www.socio.mta.hu/.../megjelent-bernath-gabor-messing-vera-2013-pushed-to-the-edge\\_](http://www.socio.mta.hu/.../megjelent-bernath-gabor-messing-vera-2013-pushed-to-the-edge_)

ZÁDORI Zsolt: Pánik a sötétben – Migrants in the Hungarian Media (Hungarian Helsinki Committee, 2014) [helsinki.hu/wp\\_/PANIK-A-SOTETBEN\\_Migransok-a-magyar-mediaban-2014.pdf](http://helsinki.hu/wp_/PANIK-A-SOTETBEN_Migransok-a-magyar-mediaban-2014.pdf)

Survey on the popular sentiment towards migrants (Autumn 2015, by Republikon Institute)

[republikon.hu/media/21002/a-menekultek-megitelese-2015-oszen.pdf](http://republikon.hu/media/21002/a-menekultek-megitelese-2015-oszen.pdf)

Daniel HOWDEN: The Manufacture of Hatred: Scapegoating Refugees in Central Europe (In: News Deeply, 14 December 2016)

<https://www.newsdeeply.com/refugees/articles/2016/12/14/the-manufacture-of-hatred-scapegoating-refugees-in-central-europe>

BOGNÁR Adrienn – JANKY Béla: Menekült-hírek és vélemény-

alkotás 2015 őszén – egy médiahatás-vizsgálat első eredményei (in: Társadalomtudomány Szemle, 2015/4) [socio.hu/uploads/files/2015\\_4/janky.pdf](http://socio.hu/uploads/files/2015_4/janky.pdf)

Caro ROLANDO: On Fear, Media Freedom and Responsibility: The Refugee Story in Hungary (30 November, 2015, on IFEX.org)

<http://mediashift.org/2015/12/on-fear-media-freedom-and-responsibility-the-refugee-story-in-hungary/>

FÖLDES András: Így nyerte meg a röszkei csatát a kormánya médiában is (30 September 2016, [Index.hu](http://index.hu))

[http://index.hu/belfold/2016/09/30/igy\\_nyerte\\_meg\\_a\\_roszkei\\_csatat\\_a\\_kormany\\_a\\_mediaban\\_is/](http://index.hu/belfold/2016/09/30/igy_nyerte_meg_a_roszkei_csatat_a_kormany_a_mediaban_is/)

A politikai tájékozódás forrásai Magyarországon (published in November 2016 by Mérték Médiaelemző Műhely) [http://mertek.eu/sites/default/files/reports/mertek\\_newsconsumption\\_hu\\_2016.11.25.pdf](http://mertek.eu/sites/default/files/reports/mertek_newsconsumption_hu_2016.11.25.pdf)

The Refugee Crisis and the Reactions of the Visegrad Countries – Final Report (September 2016, Hungarian Europe Society)

[http://www.europatarsasag.hu/images/2016Sept/The%20Refugee%20Crisis%20and%20the%20Reactions%20of%20the%20Visegrad%20Countries\\_FINAL%20VERSION\\_GEMMA.pdf](http://www.europatarsasag.hu/images/2016Sept/The%20Refugee%20Crisis%20and%20the%20Reactions%20of%20the%20Visegrad%20Countries_FINAL%20VERSION_GEMMA.pdf)



# ITALY

## The Pressure has Eased, but Media Coverage still Fails to Tell the full Migration Story

» Anna Masera

The infinite emergency of international migration continues. Read through the eyes of Italian media, the year 2016 confirmed the centrality of the migration phenomenon, but the tone of the information flow of all major media outlets (press, television news and social media) was often more useful to the political debate than to supporting understanding of what is really happening: often the ideological point of view leaves out, or even contradicts, the clarity of the numbers.

How does the media on both sides of the Mediterranean report on Migration?

*A study by journalists, for journalists and policymakers*



This tendency continues and confirms the one already detected in 2015 (<http://ethicaljournalismnetwork.org/resources/publications/moving-stories/italy>), when international migration became central for Italian media after the tragedies that occurred in the Mediterranean Sea.

The pressure of migration in Europe hasn't been uniform over time and this has determined different responses in terms of public opinion.

By the time that the crisis had eased it was clear that the public had grown tired of the media coverage during 2015 and 2016.

As public editor at *La Stampa* this past year the message I got from readers on the migrants drama was that they couldn't stand being bombarded by tragic stories any longer.

"After all those stories about failed landings with sunken ships and drowned babies, I don't want to hear it anymore, the pain is unbearable, but what worries me even more is seeing the effect on my kids: they are becoming jaded because they feel sickened by emotional reporting that doesn't explain what is happening and just wants to impress and shock," wrote one reader last summer. "Please tell us stories also about those migrants who make it".

Italy has always been a frontline state dealing with migration from the southern Mediterranean and although the perception is that the sea favours an unchecked migration process is widespread, according to data the routes by land and by sea find a balance according to the border policies applied by the different states.

According to Frontex, the number of migrants that reached Italy by sea routes from January to November 2016 stood at 173,055 compared to the 122,557 who entered Europe by land in the same period of time. Only a year earlier there were 764,000 illegal crossings on the Balkans route (by land) compared to 153,946 by sea.

Even if Italy, after Spain and the United Kingdom, is the OECD country with the highest increase in international migrants - six percentage points between 2000 and 2010 (3.7% - 9.7%) - in 2015 Germany alone

received 175,000 asylum requests, compared to the 83,540 received in Italy.

Although the data represents an altogether fairly balanced, but nonetheless serious situation across Europe, much of the storytelling by newspapers was set more with the aim to satisfy the emotional mood of the readers than to give an objective account of why, how and how much the landings are changing and having an impact on the demographic composition of the country.

Analysis of how media cover the migration story is highly reliable in Italy because it is home to Carta di Roma (Charter of Rome) one of Europe's leading specialist media monitoring groups which is focused on the migration story and which came into being after a scandal over media discrimination.

The demonising of a Tunisian linked to a gruesome murder case led journalists' leaders in Italy - The National Council of the Journalists' Association (Consiglio Nazionale dell'Ordine dei Giornalisti, CNOG) and the Italian National Press Federation (Federazione Nazionale della Stampa Italiana, FNSI) to unite with press owners, academics and policy experts to prepare an industry code to combat poor reporting of refugee and immigration issues.

They acted after the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) criticised sensationalist media coverage of a multiple murder in Northern Lombardy in 2006. Raffaella Castagna, her two-year-old son, her mother and a friend were found dead from stab wounds.

Some sections of the Italian press rushed to judgement and swiftly blamed Castagna's Tunisian husband, who had served prison time on drug charges. In fact he was in Tunisia at the time of the murders. In January, police arrested Castagna's two middle-aged neighbours on charges of murdering her and the three others, apparently due to a feud over noise.

Many journalists were shocked that once the truth emerged none of the major media outlets apologised for their intemperate coverage. There was no display of conscience or responsibility, at best only a regretful shrug.

## NEWSPAPER ANALYSIS

### La Repubblica

What stands out in *Repubblica* is an increase in attention for the subjects of immigration and hospitality. The peak was reached first in February 2016, regarding the political stance of the European Union, and then again between May and June 2016 due to an increase in the number of shipwrecks on the Italian coasts. Most of the opening articles in the newspaper were dedicated to the political aspect of immigration, in particular to the confrontation between the Italian government and the European Union. In the analysis of data, particular emphasis is given to the women and children who were victims in the shipwrecks. On May 30, 2016 *La Repubblica's* opening headline was: "Landing emergency. Not enough boats. It's a children massacre" and again on the same day on the website an article describes the drama: "The mothers tried to hold their children high, but the water kept rising and many went under". Alarmist tones are accompanied by appeals to humanity and hospitality.







## NEWSPAPER ANALYSIS

### Libero

The keyword that right wing Italian newspapers *Libero* and *Il Giornale* use to interpret the migration crisis is invasion. *Libero* is particularly negative. *Libero*'s declaration of intent can be read in the answer that its founder Vittorio Feltri gave to the president of the Republic Sergio Mattarella, who had written a letter to the newspaper following a controversy on the front page:

*"We are sorry that the president never expresses solidarity to the poor Italian people who have to suffer the invasion of foreigners without anybody worrying about their own hardships... I live side by side with the people and I know their suffering, which are worsened by the massive presence of immigrants in disarray".*

In a letter in January 2008 to the editors-in-chief of major media, UNHCR condemned the reports saying "Strong and rather unexpected evidence of xenophobic sentiments emerged, as did a media system ready to act as the sounding board for the worst manifestations of hate."

The protest opened up a dialogue on media coverage of refugee and migration issues, much of which has been characterised by alarmist and warlike language and which has been blamed for stirring up hostility and intolerance.

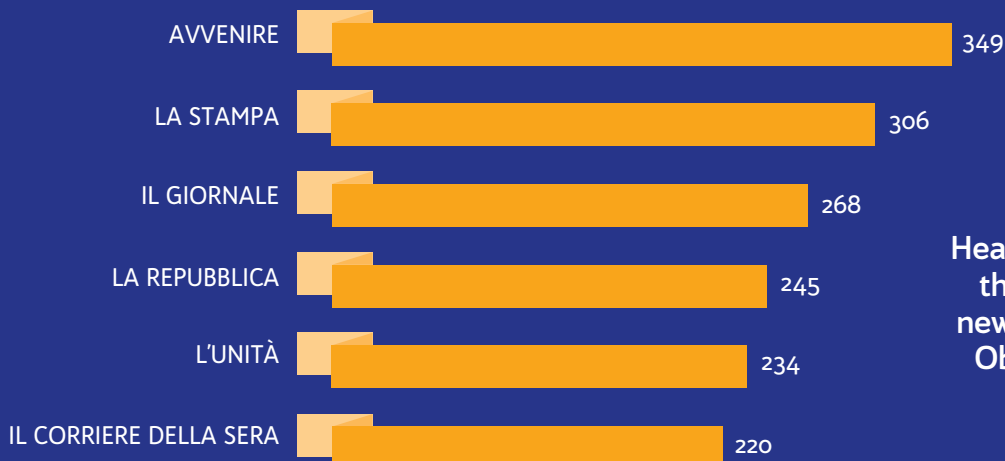
The FNSI, working with academics, press employers, media experts and UNHCR, prepared a draft a code. Once on paper it became a topic for wide-ranging, often heated, discussion inside media and beyond. The conclusion was the adoption of the Charter of Rome, a detailed code of conduct which urges media to be more responsible, tolerant and professional in their treatment of issues affecting asylum seekers, refugees, victims of trafficking and migrants, both those living in Italy and elsewhere.<sup>1</sup>

In particular, the code says Italian journalists must:

- Use appropriate language, stick to the facts and avoid terms that inflame the situation;
- Avoid spreading inaccurate, simplified or distorted information;
- Protect asylum seekers, refugees, or victims of trafficking and migrants who choose to speak with media by protecting their identity;
- Use reliable and expert sources so people get clear, comprehensive analyses of the issues;

As well as the code, the journalists agreed to insert issues relating to asylum seekers and migrants into training courses for journalists and also put in place a series of national and regional debates on how the media do their job. (<http://ethicaljournalismnetwork.org/resources/publications/moving-stories/charter-of-rome>).

In collaboration with UNHCR, the Charter of Rome Observatory (Osservatorio della Carta di Roma) was established and today works with universities, research



Headlines on immigration on the front pages of Italian newspapers analysed by the Observatory (January 1st - October 31st 2016)

## NEWSPAPER ANALYSIS

### Il Corriere

On *Corriere della Sera*, in 2016, the subject of migrants appeared in 67 front pages, with different angles. In the first part of the year the attention of the newspaper was polarized by European issues, starting from the complaints in Cologne on New Year's 2015/2016 to the crisis of the Schengen agreements. The newspaper tries to abandon the daily news spiral in order to give a global reading to the phenomenon and the political implications of the most involved States, in particular Germany. The paper changes its angle when a shipwreck with 562 migrants occurs. On May 28 on the front page the talk is about the "carnage of migrants", counting 45 victims in three days. The European nature of the emergency surfaces again after terrorist attacks in Nice and Munich, two events not directly related to immigration, but politicians evoke it in their comments. The attention on migration lessens in the second part of the year.



institutes and other groups to monitor coverage to ensure that different media outlets are doing their job properly when dealing with discrimination, xenophobia and intolerance.

Looking at **press coverage**, the Observatory has been particularly active, analysing media using as its benchmarks its own code of conduct and the Charter of Rome. For the past year, the research by the Observatory was conducted on the following newspapers: *La Stampa*, *Avvenire*, *Repubblica*, *Corriere della Sera*, *il Giornale*, *l'Unità*.

What emerges most clearly is the centrality of the migration topic in the papers: during 2016, 1,622 news stories were dedicated to the subject of immigration, 10% more than in 2015, a year that had already registered a peak in visibility (and landings). Furthermore, according to the Observatory, there is continuity in the treatment of the phenomenon, because in the newspapers that have been analysed there have been only 12 days without any headlines on migrants.

However, the Observatory found an important change compared to the previous years: there was a significant easing of the alarmist tone, down to 27% of the articles (compared to 46% the year before). This can be explained by the wide visibility of the political scene and the improvement in European and national management of arrangements for handling migrants on their arrival.

Yet some anxiety-provoking topics, as defined by the Observatory, remain: especially in order to mark a difference between "us" and "them", but these themes that highlight the different interests of communities in sometimes adversarial tones, are reduced.

Where the problem persists it is, in particular, related to those cases in which there seems to be a relationship between migration and terrorism, criminality and insecurity. In some cases there is a sarcastic and dismissive style directed towards migrants and refugees, but according to the Observatory this form of coverage and sentiment is found mostly in the coverage of a single right-wing newspaper, *il Giornale*.

Considering issues related to migration, the Charter says that the most frequent keywords are "hospitality" (34% of the information) and "migration flows" (24%).

The theme of humanitarian corridors, which is very relevant on a geopolitical level, remains unexpectedly marginal: only 12 headlines (articles) were fully dedicated to the subject, nine of them in the Catholic newspaper *Avvenire*. Instead, three times more articles were dedicated to social and cultural issues related to the phenomenon, with a negative slant.

Finally, there are significant differences in intensity regarding the treatment of migrants and immigration issues, with a particular focus and peak interest in the months of January and June.

What was mostly covered in January was the New Year's incidents of violence and attacks on women at the train station in Cologne (Germany), while in June all newspapers gave extensive coverage to stories concerning the wearing of the so-called burkini on French and Italian beaches and the three worst tragedies at sea that happened at the time.

In **Primetime Television News** the Observatory also conducted research on prime time television news across seven networks: *TG1*, *TG2*, *TG3*, *TG4*, *TG5*, *Studio Aperto* and *TgLa7*.

The subjects "migration" and "migrants" received, according to the Observatory, ample space on the prime time editions of television news: according to the research, the sample size was of 2,954 news stories in 10 months. And there were only eight days when the subject was not present on any of the seven networks analysed.

Also in this case, as for the press, the Observatory found that the first issue connected to the subject matter was hospitality and the conditions for dealing with migrants on their arrival (36%) followed by reporting on migration flows (27%) and issues related to security (24%).

This last issue was mainly dealt with by Mediaset, the major private media company, with 37% of news reports on security matters. During 2016 there were altogether 2,954 news stories on migration on Italian prime time television news, which is 26% less than during 2015.

The issues that found more space were the most striking ones to receive widespread coverage: in particular, the cases of sexual violence and assaults

in Cologne during the New Year celebrations of December 31, 2015, and the murder case in Fermo, a small town in central Italy, on 5 July 2016 when a Nigerian man was beaten to death.

He and his wife had arrived in Europe from Libya in 2015, after reportedly fleeing the terrorist group Boko Haram. His wife was immediately granted asylum status as a fresh debate erupted over how society and lawmakers should respond to racism.

There was also extensive media coverage of how a dozen migrant women had to be relocated after residents of Gorino, a small town in Ferrara in northern Italy, put up a barricade to stop them entering and chanted anti-migrant slogans. The protestors created road blocks at three entrances to the city against the asylum seekers on October 24, 2016.

Interestingly enough, the observatory points out that the landings are not as central anymore for the media as the issue of borders is.

There is also no proven correlation between the high exposure to the migration phenomenon and citizens' perception of insecurity or threat, but on the other hand there is a correlation between the sensationalist way in which the matter is told and the increase in fear. A glaring example is the connection between migration and jihadist terrorism of Islamic origin.

One last detail is finally very important regarding television news reports: immigrants, migrants and refugees are represented with their own voices only in 3% of the reports. The issues regarding them is present on television news through the stories told by institutions, citizens and special episodes, but what is almost completely missing is the self-narrative of those who live migration in the first person.

One of the main concerns for the Charter of Rome has been to work on the language of newspapers. The alarmist tone adopted by the main newspapers regarding migrants is seen as counterproductive for

the purpose of a constructive debate on integration.

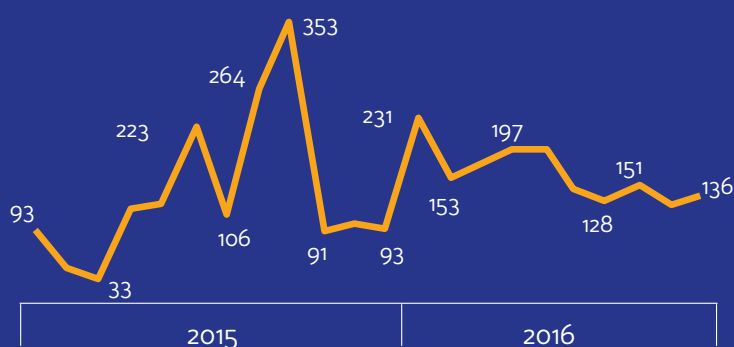
The use of words such as "irregular" or "immigrants" entices racial hatred, according to the Charter, especially when they serve the purpose to give visibility to articles that cast a shadow on refugees. When the ethics protocol was written, it said that migration as a subject was dealt with only in dramatic, negative terms. The journey of migrants too often became "an invasion" in newspapers and the political debate used sentences like "problem of national interest" to describe it. Also, there was a lot of reporting on the request for "security" to face what was considered by the press, a "problem".

The problem of terminology is also found in online sources. A post on Google Trends up until 2015 noted the use of the terms "clandestines" and "migrants" in searches with a substantial humanisation of the terminology. Limiting to the Italian media outlets which are gathered by Google News, a comparison of researches on the words "Refugees", "clandestines", "extra communarians" and "migrants" shows the confirmation of this last description for all of 2016 (exceptions only in June and November).

And in the presentation of Carta di Roma Observatory, *La Repubblica* wrote that there are "... more moderate tones by 20 per cent in the media (TV and newspapers) but racism explodes on social media".

But as Valigia Blu, the independent news outlet, <http://www.valigiablue.it/razzismo-media-social-network/> explains this has to be seen in context: "The semantic analysis of 73,000 tweets posted between July 6th and July 20th on what happened at Fermo, is a small microcosm on Twitter with very low numbers, which do not allow extrapolation about social networks in general (sic)".

One of the key issues in media coverage has been the need to give voice to the opinions of migrants themselves. In Italy there are some participatory



*Trend of the immigration headlines on the front pages of Italian newspapers, January 1st-October 31st 2016 noting the peaks over news of the Hungarian wall, the picture of Aylan Kurdi and the closing of the border.*

During 2016 there were altogether **2,954 news stories** on migration on Italian prime time television news, which is **26% less than during 2015.**

journalistic projects that involve readers in a chorus of storytelling on migration in our society. One is *Migranti by Valigia Blu*, a constructive journalism project which has produced storytelling on migrants in the media, *racconto dei media sui migranti*; another is *Open Migration*, created by the Italian Coalition on Freedom and Civil Rights - Coalizione Italiana Libertà e Diritti Civili (CILD).

Also at *La Stampa* we have invited readers to *compose a choral story on migrants*. Stories that look like life. Hopefully a life than can allow for a happy ending.

**Anna Masera** is Public Editor of *La Stampa* and Director of the Master Degree in Journalism at the University of Torino.

**Contributors:** Additional material supplied by collaborators from Master in Giornalismo di Torino: Raffaele Angius, Alessandro Cappai, Lucrezia Clemente, Camilla Cupelli, Emanuele Granelli, Marco Gritti, Luca Indemini, Massimiliano Mattielli, Lovinia Rosi and Romolo Tosiani.

## NEWSPAPER ANALYSIS

### Il Manifesto

*Il Manifesto* published the picture of little Aylan drowned on the beach on its front page the day after the tragedy of his death. It was a choice that many other newspapers also made to move the conscience of the readers on the tragedy of migrants, in spite of the polemics on social media where many Italian media analysts oppose the exploitation of human suffering through media sensationalism. In particular, this left wing newspaper is known to always make graphic choices of great impact on its front page.



## NEWSPAPER ANALYSIS

### La Stampa

Across 70 front pages taken from *La Stampa* in 2016, migration appeared as the most noteworthy news and was read mostly from the political point of view. The tendency is not to use emotional images. Headlines, except in a few rare cases don't use sensationalist or emotional tones. When there were no updates on migration politics, the paper used stories and images on the lives of immigrants, especially those of children. The most used term is "migrants", often at the beginning of the headline, to contextualize the news story. Altogether, therefore, compared to 2015 there is a lower tone that fits the "normalisation" process described in Carta di Roma's 2016 report.

## NEWSPAPER ANALYSIS

### Il Giornale

*Il Giornale*, part of the media empire of the family of Silvio Berlusconi, distinguishes itself for the continuous attacks on the world of Islam and on migrants, who are often associated offhandedly to terrorism. Its tone of voice is apocalyptic. The polarisation of the Italian press touches its apex with *Libero* and *Il Giornale*, which bluntly foment hostility among readers often using coarse language. Migration is treated like an invasion at the expense of tax payers, the suffering of migrants is not taken into consideration in the editorial line, regardless of events. The discourse is set on the rivalry between impoverished Italians and refugees, foreshadowing a fight without quarter.





# MALTA

## The Challenge of Normalising the Media's Migrant Crisis Machine

» Mark Micallef

On the surface, Malta has a vibrant media landscape. The Mediterranean archipelago currently hosts three national television stations, and a small commercial outlet, more than ten radio stations, 12 newspapers - four of which are dailies - and about eight online news portals. This is despite the fact that in terms of population, Malta is equivalent in size to Manchester. This disproportionate diversity is not the result of the island's extraordinary productivity but rather has to do with the fact that the local industry does not obey market principles and remains dominated by the country's political institutions; the main political blocks, the incumbent Labour Party (Social Democratic) and the Nationalist Party (Christian Democrat), the Catholic Church, and Malta's largest union, the General Workers Union (GWU).

How does the media on both sides of the Mediterranean report on Migration?

*A study by journalists, for journalists and policymakers*



This dynamic effectively stifles prospects for privately-owned media, especially in the broadcasting sector, and consolidates the dominance of these institutions over the public sphere, exacerbating the challenges of operating in a micro-economy.

On top of this artificial race for market share, Maltese newsrooms have to meet the particular exigencies of covering a city state. News outlets perform a hybrid function, dealing with international, national and hyper-local news simultaneously. A day's typical news agenda may have a list of political, economic, court and crime stories, something between what you might see in a European national newspaper (but not quite at the level of a regional outfit); a focus on a pressing development in neighbouring North Africa, and a raging dispute over garbage collection arrangements in a village of 1,000 people.

This context is vital to understanding news coverage of migration in Malta. The fragmentation of the market means all editorial departments are under-resourced, most of them severely. At the time of writing, the country's largest newsrooms would not have more than four to five writers on any given shift. As a result, hardly any media is really able to meet the news demands outlined above, let alone invest in the immersive journalism needed for reporting on large scale, complex phenomena such as mass irregular migration.

Mario Micallef, News Coordinator at the national broadcaster Television Malta, also believes Maltese journalism is facing an acute cyclical human resources problem that makes matters worse. "If we issue a call for applications, there will be no shortage of CVs but when you go through with the interviewing process you end up asking yourself if any of the candidates really have what it takes. This limits your options severely when it comes to the day-to-day coverage of something delicate like migration."

In spite of this challenging and uneven landscape, migration proved to be a nexus issue that focused resources and empowered parts of the press, individual journalists and columnists, and civil society, to assert their independence from institutions and demand more accountability from the state.

This does not mean that the reporting has been easy, far from it. The importance of this spontaneous, civic-minded dynamic cannot be overstated in analysing the Maltese media coverage of migration. The editorial line of virtually all news outlets rows against the tide of the xenophobic sentiments of large swathes of the Maltese population. As argued by leading Maltese media researcher Carmen Sammut, a purely commercial industry would not be able to sustain that situation in a small market like Malta.

Social researcher and co-founder of the NGO Integra Foundation, Maria Pisani argues that the most obvious difference between the media in Malta and elsewhere, is the complete lack of tabloid press. "Malta is lucky. There is nothing like what we see in the British tabloid press, for instance, and that is a great advantage. I would say the Maltese press has been responsive when journalists' attention was drawn to issues with their work."

## Shock and awe: the first years of boat migration

Most of Europe woke up to the 'crisis' in 2015 with a surge of Syrian asylum seekers fleeing war and life with no prospects. Southern European states were acquainted with the phenomenon well before 2015, but even then the initial reaction was one of unprepared shock.

On 2 November 2001, one of the very first 'boatloads' of sub-Saharan African migrants landed in Malta, just weeks after the country ratified the 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees, broadening the islands' commitment to offer asylum to non-Europeans. Around 57 men, the majority from Sudan, ran aground at a tourist hotspot, appropriately called Paradise bay. Both events received little attention despite setting the tone for what would later become the country's defining crisis.

In 2002 arrivals shot up to 1,686. The public discourse was instantly dominated by words like "crisis", "influx" and "siege". The following year, the debate took a backseat as the country debated EU membership and arrivals dropped substantially. However, it returned with a vengeance in 2004 when almost 1,400 people arrived. The numbers kept climbing until 2008 when an all-time record of 2,775 arrivals was recorded. A year later Italy brokered a controversial deal with Libya to push back asylum seekers and arrivals plummeted until the revolution in 2011.

During these early years, most journalists' initial reaction was to replicate the sentiment of shock and sense of crisis. Virtually all of the reportage, with some exceptions, was preoccupied with the limit of Malta's size and resources.

The use of terminology was uninformed, clumsy, in many instances insensitive, and occasionally outright xenophobic. "Illegal immigration" and "illegal immigrant" were used as blanket terms even by sympathetic outlets. Maltese-language newspapers tended to use the pejorative term "klandestini" (clandestine) and there was confusion about what refugee status and asylum really meant, legally.

However, over time this changed. From a journalistic perspective the migration story was a perfect storm: it had an underlying human dimension and was at once a major international and local political story that was highly relevant to virtually all audiences. This meant that news managers could dedicate more resources to this field and as a result a handful of journalists managed to become semi-specialised.

This had a positive impact on the quality of reporting. Many journalists became adequately sensitised and knowledgeable about terminology and its implications. The term "irregular immigrant" started being adopted as a generic collective description, later morphing into "undocumented migrant" or "migrant". The terms refugee and asylum seeker started being used more frequently and appropriately. The term "klandestini" virtually disappeared. A fundamental underlying problem, however, remained as the general tone of coverage never really moved away from crisis mode. The main elements of

the reportage concerned four primary areas:

1. **Arrivals:** AAs happened in the rest of Europe after 2015, the primary focus of the Maltese press was on the highly-emotive and visually-compelling phenomenon of arrivals, with human stories about harrowing journeys as well as on the statistics of people crossing and the number of people who died or went missing. The unintended effect of this intense focus on the spectacle of boat migration is that it entrenched the sense of indefinite crisis.<sup>9</sup>
2. **Detention:** Successive governments for years staunchly defended Malta's detention policy which saw undocumented migrants detained for a period of no less than 18 months. This proved to be a central battleground between the political class (government and opposition agreed on this policy), civil society and liberal journalists. In the early years, conditions in the centres were terrible and they were poorly managed by untrained and often unwilling army units. Successive Home Affairs Ministers tried to limit negative exposure by barring access to the press. The move had the opposite effect of drawing more attention to the facilities which became a focal point for effective journalism that brought about substantial change in the area.<sup>10</sup>
3. **National Debate:** Migration became the centre of a profound political debate on two fronts. The first revolved around the critical appraisal of the government by the media together with civil society. As it did with its focus on detention centres, the Maltese media managed to develop a position of strength that kept government in check on several occasions; the incumbent Labour Party had a taste of this in July 2013 when the government tried to fly a group of largely Somali asylum seekers back to Libya. Journalists broke the story early in the planning phase of the expulsion and this alerted NGOs, which formed a coalition and successfully obtained a his-

toric injunction from the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) to block the action. The second front concerned prevailing negative attitudes towards migrants and asylum seekers. The main political parties largely steered clear of this debate on the (correct) assessment that there were no gains to be made from such a hot potato. The battle with the anti-immigrant, hard right movement was largely fought within the realm of civil society, with some journalists taking a front line position.

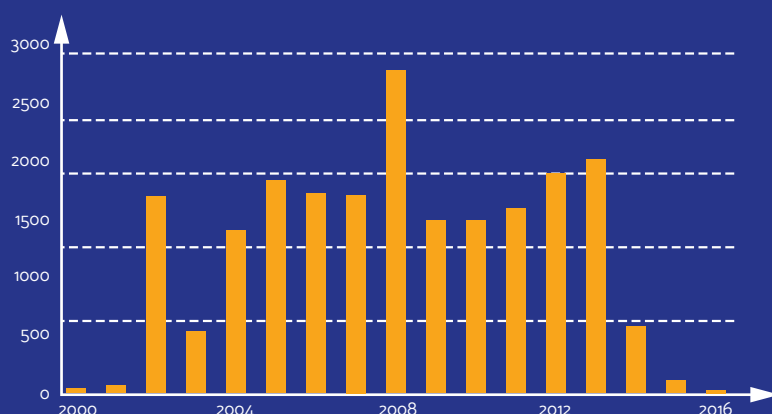
4. **International dimension:** On the international front, Maltese governments engaged in a constant squabble with Italy over responsibility for search and rescue sometimes leading to embarrassing stand-offs where both countries would refuse to assume responsibility for groups of migrants stranded on the high seas. At a European level, both countries, along with a coalition of southern Mediterranean states battled the "indifference" of northern member states, then largely oblivious to the problem. Local press coverage was more or less aligned with the position of the Maltese government.

The empowerment of the media and civil society was also a product of the vacuum left by the main parties. It was a development that cut both ways, as this same void is what opened a space for anti-immigrant movements and the far right.

By 2005, anti-immigrant groups were in an open battle with a section of the media considered liberal. A year later, anonymous arsonists started torching the homes of prominent journalists, columnists and human rights lawyers. It was a troubling development that had the effect of bringing all journalists together in a rare moment of solidarity.

However, it also entrenched the two blocs. The reporting of the anti-immigrant movement was almost consistently critical but it was having the reverse effect of that intended. By antagonising the movement –

## 'BOAT IMMIGRANT' ARRIVALS



Number of migrants and asylum seekers arriving by boat to Malta between 2000 and 2016.

Source: Ministry for Home Affairs and National Security of Malta/UNHCR Malta,  
<http://www.unhcr.org/mt/charts/>



which enjoyed a sympathetic ear among many Maltese even if not outright support – the far right leaders were gaining a platform.

The arsons led to some arrests and though none of those apprehended were ever charged, the process helped disperse the movement. More importantly, Maltese journalists writing in the field had learnt a valuable lesson and collectively wound down their coverage of the far right. By the time the next general election was held in March 2008 the movement lost its platform – also because arrivals are down at this time of year – and hardly featured in the election results.

## Migration after Mare Nostrum

Two back-to-back disasters that took place off the Italian island of Lampedusa in October 2013 saw Italy launch Mare Nostrum, the first state-sponsored maritime mission in the central Mediterranean, whose primary task was search and rescue and not border control. This was a defining development that would effectively neutralise disputes between Italy and Malta over who should take vessels in distress because Mare Nostrum, for the first time, rescued migrants just outside Libyan territorial waters, well before they reached Malta's Search and Rescue (SAR) area.

Unable to sustain the €9-million-a-month operation on its own, Italy terminated Mare Nostrum in November 2014. The EU's planned successor operation was initially a much smaller border patrol that drew back EU maritime assets to 30 nautical miles off European shores. But when tragedy struck again – as predicted – this time killing an estimated 700 people in the single largest shipwreck in the Mediterranean since the Second World War, that plan was scrapped. As a result, Triton was re-launched as an unprecedented European rescue effort in the same waters earmarked by Mare Nostrum and Italy remained in charge of coordination.

This had an immediate impact on arrivals for Malta.

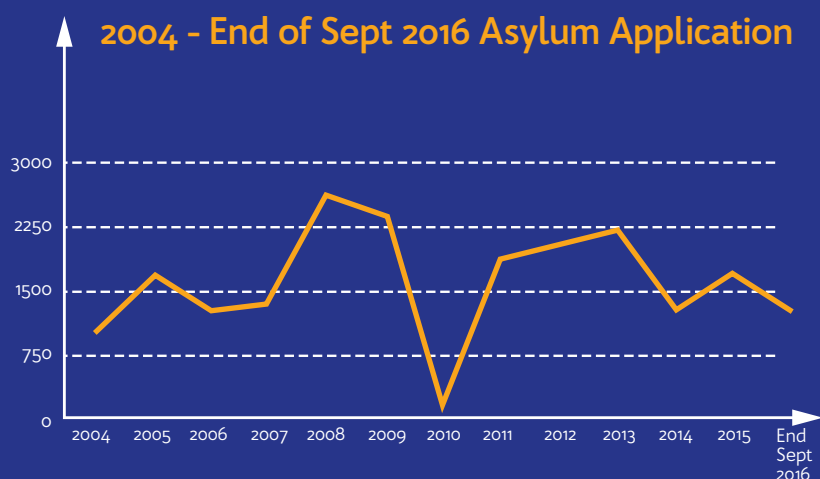
From just over 2,000 asylum seekers arriving in 2013, the number dropped to 568 the following year, and just over 100 in 2015. The 29 people who arrived to Malta in 2016 after being rescued in the Central Mediterranean were medically evacuated. All the while, Italy was welcoming unprecedented numbers of migrants and asylum seekers.

There has been a lot of speculation surrounding a secret, "oil rights for migrants" deal between Malta and Italy to explain why Italy was now taking virtually all migrants coming from Libya. However, virtually all reporting failed to evaluate the impact that the shift in rescue zone had on Malta's position, largely because the few articles written on this topic largely followed up on articles in the Italian press. Not a single Maltese news outlet has investigated this issue thoroughly to this day.

In fact, the effect of the drop in arrivals on the Maltese press since 2014 has been to deflate interest in the subject altogether. The machine that had been built around the crisis years between 2002 and 2014, now appeared to have run out of fuel. But the 'crisis', did not go away, if anything, it has become more complex.

This is true, even when looking narrowly at the number of arrivals. In 2015, Malta processed more asylum applications than it did ten years earlier. This is because many Libyans fled to Malta on regular visas and asked for asylum particularly after the second civil war in 2014. Other nationalities like Syrians, Eritreans and even Somalis would cross from Italy by ferry or by air using fake documents; many of them after having entered Europe through the Aegean for instance. For a very long time, the Maltese press was virtually oblivious to these developments.

Journalists interviewed for this piece, consistently complained that none of them were given time to develop their own beat. Sarah Carabott, a leading and nuanced newspaper journalist in this field, said she often did much of the ground work in her "free time".



Data for asylum applications clearly shows that the **drop in arrivals of migrants by boat** does not correspond to a drop in asylum applications.

Source: UNHCR Malta.

"During my working hours I have to work on other stories, normally the sort of content that is more feasible to deliver on the day," she says.

Moreover, over time access to the migrant story has become more difficult. "I have been noticing that it has become more difficult to gain migrants' trust in recent years," she says. "They have become more guarded in their interactions with the Maltese due to their day-to-day experience with racism. I confirmed this when I started telling interviewees that I faced their experiences first-hand because my husband is black. I wouldn't normally share personal details about me, but I found that this really helped build a relationship of trust. They would really open up after learning this about me".

The crisis machine sprung back to life towards the end of November 2016, when a group of 33 Malian men were rounded up and placed in detention pending deportation. The move followed the announcement of a review of a temporary protection status, known as THPN, which is normally granted to failed asylum seekers who cannot be repatriated.

The two issues were unrelated, but the timing caused a lot of confusion. Nonetheless, both issues are illustrative of the current problem with the coverage of migration by the Maltese media. The arrest of the Malians, in fact, is part of an European Union-wide plan to develop 'compacts' with third countries along the lines of the controversial cash-for-migration deal that the EU struck with Turkey in March 2016.

Had this development taken place in 2005, journalists would have pursued it more closely. But in 2015 and 2016, the Commission's workings on migration only received cursory attention as overwhelmed newsrooms have redirected their resources towards issues that are more pressing to their audiences.

The second issue concerns the broader question of

integration and the living conditions of the migrants and refugees currently living in Malta. The review of the THPN status opened a debate on the fate of 1,000 or so migrants, currently residing on the island, many of them settled and in employment but who cannot really bank on a future in Malta due to the transient nature of their legal status.

Sub-Saharan African migrants themselves drew public attention to this festering problem during a protest in March of 2016 – the first occasion where migrants voiced their own concerns in a protest that was entirely a grassroots initiative.

During that demonstration, African migrants protested against the fact that despite having been in Malta for a long time – in some cases up to 15 years and more – and having established a stable household and in some cases a family, secured regular employment and paid taxes, they were being denied long-term residency. This prevented them from gaining access to such basics as a bank account, loans or the ability to plan for the post graduate education of their children let alone their pensions.

This is an urgent debate that should be taking place in the context of the greater challenge of the integration of foreign nationals generally. While the number of migrants arriving by boat has plummeted, in fact, for over a decade Malta experienced an unprecedented inflow of foreigners in the form of EU migrants and third-country nationals who travelled and settled in Malta regularly.

This revolution presents great challenges and opportunities for Maltese society in the coming decades. However, save for a few attempts by committed journalists, this great story with manifold social implications, hardly receives any attention in the press. When it does, more often than not, it is in the form of straight

## References, links and sources

<sup>1</sup> Carmen Sammut, "Media and Maltese society," (USA: Lexington Press, 2007: 25).

<sup>2</sup> Carmen Sammut, "The Ambiguous Borderline between Human Rights and National Security: The Journalist's Dilemma in the Reporting of Irregular Immigrants in Malta", (Global Media Journal - Mediterranean Edition 2:1 2007).

<sup>3</sup> Malta had already been receiving irregular migrants by boat prior to 2001 and at that point had a developed internal smuggling industry which saw a network of Maltese criminals ferry migrants from Malta to Sicily on high-speed crafts in the dead of night. However, most of this activity concerned small groups of individuals, mostly North Africans, who pooled in the cost of a vessel or hired fishermen or seamen to sail them to Malta, Lampedusa or Sicily. Others arrived in Malta by air or scheduled ferry from Libya and overstayed their visa. The November 2011 incident was one of the very first incidents that included sub-Saharan Africans overwhelmingly and which fit the pattern of organised human smuggling that eventually established itself in the central Mediterranean.

<sup>4</sup> The scope of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees had been restricted by the original 26 signatory countries mainly to refugees in Europe, a reflection of the historic context in which it had been formulated; the refugee crisis which followed WWII. Malta only withdrew this geographic limitation in 2001, when it accepted a whole set of new responsibilities under the 1967 New York protocol. Important provisions such as the principle of non-forcible return (non-refoulement) of refugees to territories where they could face persecution on the basis of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion were only added to the original convention after 1951. All of these legal responsibilities were pivotal to guarantee the rights of thousands of asylum seekers who travelled to Malta from Libya irregularly after 2001.

<sup>5</sup> Henry Frendo, "Malta's changing immigration and asylum discourse",

January 29, 2006, The Sunday Times of Malta.

<sup>6</sup> Malta joined the EU on May 2004 after a fiercely fought campaign that included both a referendum and a general election. The country's two main parties were divided on the question, with the incumbent Nationalist Party campaigning for and the Labour Party against. A referendum held on March 8, 2003 was won by the Yes camp but the Labour Party argued it would only be bound by the result of a General Election and the issue was decided definitively with national polls held on April 12 of the same year.

<sup>7</sup> A popular argument used by the government at the time was that proportionately the arrival of every 1,000 migrants in a single year in Malta was proportionately equivalent to Germany receiving 200,000 people during the same period.

<sup>8</sup> In 2005, media researcher Brenda Murphy (referenced earlier) carried out an analysis of terminology used by Maltese media. One of the highlights in her paper was an incident in which a news anchor transitioned from a news item about jellyfish to one about the rescue of a group of migrants by underscoring that both features essentially dealt with an "invasion".

<sup>9</sup> Mark-Anthony Falzon, "Immigration, Rituals and Transitoriness in the Mediterranean Island of Malta", (Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, 38:10, 1661-1680, 2012).

<sup>10</sup> Malta's mandatory detention policy was changed in 2016, following the adoption of the EU's Reception Conditions Directive a year earlier. The move followed years of controversy in which successive administrations, with the support of the then Opposition, fiercely defended the detention policy on the basis that removing it would prove to be a "pull factor". In February 2004, live coverage of the heavy-handed suppression of protests at the Hal Safi detention centre led to an inquiry which though timid in its recommendations, confirmed that the armed forces had used excessive force on that day. In June 29, 2012, a Malian man, 32-year-old Mamadou Kamara, was killed while handcuffed by two soldiers who then tried to cover up the incident. Their trial is still ongoing

reporting of protest, by migrants themselves or by the anti-immigrant movement reinforcing the popular notion that migration is a crisis issue.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

In this context, the highest priority for the Maltese media today is to move away from high-octane, sensational reporting of migration and towards more profound coverage of day-to-day interaction and integration of migrant and local populations. The success of this transition will eventually depend on addressing the structural issues affecting the Maltese media outlined above and which goes well beyond the issue of migration reporting. However, in the short and medium term there are actions by key stakeholders which might be useful to help ignite this much-needed transition. The following are some practical recommendations in this spirit.

- 1. Funding:** Stakeholders such as the Institute of Maltese Journalists (IGM) should consider funding to finance immersive journalism in the field of migration. While the IGM's effort in revising the code of ethics are welcome, there has been too much focus over the years on self-regulation rather than practical solutions to empower journalists to be more probing and far-reaching with their work.
- 2. Migration convention:** The time is ripe not only for the Maltese press but for all stakeholders involved in migration to hold a convention that kick-starts a wide debate on the challenges Malta faces in this area.

**3. Improving best practice reporting:** Though progress was made over the years, there is still a lot of room for improvement on use of terminology. The moderation of online comments boards, fact-checking, sourcing of stories and interfacing with NGOs and migrants' grassroots groups are also areas that could be improved with best-practice setting guidelines and capacity building. The IGM could play a valuable role of coordinating this effort.

**4. Widening migration coverage:** Newsrooms need more imagination in their treatment of migration to move into issues of integration and the importance of this process for the country from a social and economic perspective.

**5. Normalisation of migrants in the public sphere:** Migrants and refugees, whether they have entered Malta regularly or not, fundamentally remain trapped in the public imagination as a transient group. When they are featured in the press – even favourably – they are presented exclusively in this persona. News outlets should actively seek to include migrants as columnists or even as regular sources in mundane current affairs news that have nothing to do with migration. *Maltatoday.com.mt* deserves credit for being a pioneer in this field, employing a refugee to write a blog in 2014. A greater effort from all news outlets is needed in this area.

*Mark Micallef is a Maltese journalist and researcher specialised on migratory flows and smuggling networks; he has done extensive fieldwork on these subjects in Libya, Turkey and Myanmar.*



# SPAIN

## Desperation, Tragedy and Criminal Coverage that Distort the Media Image of Migration

» Jose Miguel Calatayud

Up to the early 1970s Spain was a country where the migration story concerned political and economic exiles and emigrants who left Francisco Franco's dictatorship. The trend started to reverse from the mid-1980s, when now democratic Spain joined the European Union (EU), and mostly from the 1990s, when, already richer, it started to receive more and more economic migrants from Latin America, northern Africa and some parts of Europe.

How does the media on both sides of the Mediterranean report on Migration?

*A study by journalists, for journalists and policymakers*

However, this evolving and complex phenomenon has been translated in Spain into a much more simplistic media discourse dominated by two stories. The first and most graphic is that of desperate Sub Saharan Africans either trying to climb the walls separating the Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla from Morocco, or being rescued from drifting, overcrowded dinghies in the Atlantic or in the Mediterranean. This despite the fact that almost all migrants arrive in Spain by regular and legal means, and that sub Saharan Africans make up only 3.95 % of all foreigners in Spain.<sup>1</sup>

And the second is about some of these migrants already living in Spain being associated with criminal activities. These mostly relate to Moroccan men linked to drug trafficking or other misdemeanours, Romanian gangs participating in organised crime, or Latin American youth gangs committing acts of violence.

A meta-study on how the Spanish media covers migration<sup>2</sup>, published in 2012 but relevant up to the “refugee crisis”, identified five main, repeated and

harsh response by the authorities; and

- the quality gap, with populist and sensationalist media producing a rather visual and emotional discourse, and prestigious media outlets making more of an effort to acknowledge the complexities of the migration process.<sup>4</sup>

Throughout 2015, as more asylum-seekers and migrants were becoming stranded in north Africa, Turkey and Greece, and drowning in the Mediterranean, the media increased their coverage of this phenomenon, reporting more on the hardships faced by people trying to reach Europe and focusing less on the stories of Sub Saharan Africans trying to enter Spain.

The definite turning point in the Spanish media was the image of the dead body of Syrian toddler three-year-old Aylan Kurdi, on a Turkish beach, widely published on 2 and 3 September 2015. The images shocked many and provoked a change in the general media discourse.

---

*The definite turning point in the Spanish media was the image of the dead body of Syrian toddler three-year-old Aylan Kurdi, on a Turkish beach, widely published on 2 and 3 September 2015. The images shocked many and provoked a change in the general media discourse.*

---

distorted narratives: the idea of “avalanche” and “invasion”; the danger of migrants bringing illnesses or inappropriate cultural customs; the association between migration and criminality; migrants being poor and marginalised; and the invisibility of migrant women.

On television and in pictures as well as in print, migrants would usually be portrayed as poor, young men and as passive actors in the story. Photographs would show them from a high angle, which diminishes the subject, while the rescuers and the police dealing with the migrants would be pictured from low angles, making them look more impressive.<sup>3</sup>

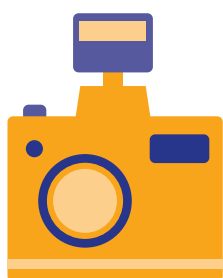
In general, the migrants themselves wouldn’t be given much of a voice and the full context of the situation in their countries of origin and reasons why the migrants left would also be missing in these news stories. There would, of course, be differences between media coverage according to

- the platform of reporting, with television channels offering the most simplistic discourse, and radios and mainly the press offering a more in-depth analysis;
- the ideological bias at work, with conservative news outlets taking a harder, anti-migration stance, and progressive media being more welcoming towards migrants and more critical of the

Migrants and asylum-seekers became more humanised, individualised and relatable and were given a voice to explain the reasons that had led them to risk their lives trying to reach Europe. Images and pictures started to show them as families, small groups or individuals posing for the camera and having names and surnames, and not only as anonymous bodies overcrowding dinghies or trying to “assault” a wall.

A bigger effort was made to try and bring the big picture to light, researching why so many people from different places, and not only war-torn Syria, were risking everything for a chance to enter Europe.

Also those media outlets that had maintained an anti-migration position changed their discourse. The story was of a “tragedy” afflicting “the refugees”, and media asked for Europe to do something. Now being considered “refugees”, those attempting to reach Europe were doing so because they had been “forced to” leave their countries of origin and were escaping war and conflict and sometimes persecution. For a while, this trend included not only Syrians and Iraqi but also people from other places that a few weeks before were almost invisible to the mainstream Spanish media, as was the case for Eritreans, Congolese and Sudanese people among others.<sup>5</sup>



On television and in pictures as well as in print, migrants would usually be portrayed **as poor, young men** and as **passive actors** in the story. Photographs would show them from a high angle, which diminishes the subject, while the rescuers and the police dealing with the migrants would be pictured from low angles, making them look more impressive.

Migrants and asylum-seekers became more **humanised and individualised** and were given a voice to explain the reasons that had led them to **risk their lives trying to reach Europe**



Following being labelled a “refugee crisis”, the media nearly stopped using the word “migrants” and began to refer almost exclusively to “refugees”, bringing together and confusing different legal categories like “economic migrants”, “asylum-seekers”, “beneficiaries of humanitarian assistance” and “refugees”. This confusion could be seen for example during the second half of 2015 in the coverage of “The Jungle”<sup>6</sup> camp in Calais, where thousands of people were living in dire conditions and hoping to cross into the UK. For El País newspaper, in July there were only “migrants” in “The Jungle” but by November – after the death of Aylan Kurdi – they’d all turned into “refugees”<sup>7</sup>, while in some other articles both terms were used.

Other media in Spain followed exactly the same pattern, and “refugee” was being used so much that Fundéu, a foundation that advises in the use of the Spanish language in the media and online, ended up picking *refugiado* (refugee) as the 2015 word of the year.<sup>8</sup>

However, the *honeymoon* between the refugees and some of the Spanish media that previously, before Kurdi, used to support anti-migration positions started to crumble after the attacks in Paris on 13 November 2015, in which 130 people died, and was practically finished a few weeks later after the events in Cologne, in Germany, on New Year’s Eve, amidst reports of groups of men, supposedly including asylum-seekers and refugees, harassing and

sexually assaulting dozens of women near the city’s train station.<sup>9</sup>

Those media who invested most in covering the human angle of the crisis produced accounts which sometimes tended too much towards the emotional. This was the case of Cadena SER, the news radio station with the highest number of listeners in Spain<sup>10</sup>, which in early 2016 made the effort of broadcasting special programmes, for example from Jordan, but also included touching background music in its news clips about migration, while other news stories didn’t include any background music.

While initially welcomed by media analysts and activists, this “pro-refugee discourse” might end up creating different categories in which economic migrants or those fleeing persecution on religious, sexual or other grounds are perceived as less legitimate or as having less right to come than those escaping war, as noted by Red Acoge, a federation of Spanish NGOs working on migration and refugee issues.<sup>11</sup>

Throughout 2016, as the novelty of the refugee story began to fade and the public was becoming less sensitive to the repetition of dramatic images, Spanish media coverage of migration went partially back to focusing on those trying to cross the Spanish borders coming from Sub Saharan Africa, while it also kept an eye on the migrants and asylum-seekers trying to reach Europe by crossing the Mediterranean. This was helped by the NGOs running rescue boats, namely Doctors Without Borders (Médecins



*Following being labelled a “refugee crisis”, the media nearly stopped using the word “migrants” and began to refer almost exclusively to “refugees”, bringing together and confusing different legal categories like “economic migrants”, “asylum-seekers”, “beneficiaries of humanitarian assistance” and “refugees”.*

---

Sans Frontières, MSF) and Proactiva Open Arms, a small Spanish NGO, as both hosted many journalists on board their ships and allowed media access to the rescue operations and to the people rescued themselves. During the last few weeks of 2016 and the first of 2017, as freezing weather spread over Eastern Europe, the harsh conditions faced by migrants and asylum seekers in countries like Greece and Serbia brought them back to the front pages.

### **From migrants to refugees and back to migrants**

Red Acoge has published a four-volume study on how the media covered migration in Spain between 2014 and 2016<sup>12</sup>. The three volumes covering 2015 and 2016 have analysed more than 2,800 news stories in 30 national, regional and local media outlets. The study highlights how during the coverage of the “refugee crisis” media generally improved the quality of their coverage of migration stories, in particular by humanising and giving migrants and asylum-seekers a voice, and by trying to provide context to explain why these people had left their places of origin.

Red Acoge found that the number of articles containing “errors” fell from nearly 50% among those analysed during the first part of 2015 to 20% of those analysed in 2016. The most common errors

described by the study are similar to those from the pre-2015 reporting of migration: indicating the migrants’ nationality even when it is not relevant (mostly in the case of those already in Spain); alarmism over migration and criminalisation of the migration process; reduction of migrants to figures and statistics; use of overly dramatic stories; and confusion in the use of different terms like “migrant”, “asylum-seeker” and “refugee”.

Journalists contacted during the research for this article<sup>13</sup>, recognise the shortcomings of media coverage of migration, but defend their reporting, particularly given the difficult circumstances – increasing job insecurity and lack of resources – in which many of them have to work, especially freelancers.

Almost all journalists say they have sought guidance on how to cover migration stories in Spanish and international manuals and codes of professional ethics, but they have done so on their own initiative. Most say they have attended talks, conferences, workshops or courses on how to cover migration, but again they have done so on their own as their media houses hadn’t provided them with this kind of training. Almost all journalists say this training is recommended or even necessary in order to cover such a complex issue as migration.

Disparities arise on the issue of working embedded within NGOs and on how they may influence



Throughout 2016, as the *novelty* of the refugee story began to fade and the public was becoming less sensitive to the repetition of dramatic images, Spanish media coverage of migration went partially back to focusing on those trying to cross the Spanish borders coming from Sub Saharan Africa, while it also kept an eye on the

**migrants and asylum-seekers trying to reach Europe by crossing the Mediterranean.**



*When it comes to challenges and obstacles found in their work on migration, journalists note the lack of transparency of the Spanish authorities, and, especially among freelancers but also some staffers, the lack of resources and support available to do their job properly.*

---

the news agenda by acting as gatekeepers and even as providers of their own content to the media. Some journalists don't see being hosted and transported by an NGO and having access only to its beneficiaries as sources and always with NGO staff present as translators as being a problem, but others acknowledge that just by providing access to particular situations NGOs are influencing media coverage.

Another difference appears when discussing the role of social media as reporting tools. Some journalists say these are now just one resource among many and say content found on social media can be used for reporting, while others don't feel comfortable using it and say journalists should be extra-careful and verify all sources and content coming from Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and other online services.

When it comes to challenges and obstacles found in their work on migration, journalists note the lack of transparency of the Spanish authorities, and, especially among freelancers but also some staffers, the lack of resources and support available to do their job properly. There's particular concern over the lack of time allowed for research and work on in-depth stories and the lack of interest that some

editors show in this kind of journalism.

Some journalists say they've been pressured to rush some stories, a problem with all news reporting and not only migration. But no one said they'd been censored or forced to cover these stories from a sensationalist point of view. Nevertheless, several of those interviewed requested they remain anonymous because of fear of retribution, which is a worrying sign that might be connected to increasing job insecurity in Spanish media.

### **Conclusion: asylum-seekers are humanised but a bigger media effort is needed**

News media these days struggle to cover long-term, complex issues that are difficult to explain in daily news stories, such as migration. The economic crisis and increasing job insecurity have also weakened the capacity of news outlets to report on complex stories; there are fewer staff and resources available to produce even more content than before. The burden is increasingly falling upon badly-paid freelancers, who the media tend to rely upon more and more, including reporting from conflict zones and crisis-affected areas.



Some journalists say these are now just one resource among many and say content found on social media can be used for reporting, while others don't feel comfortable using it and say journalists should be **extra-careful and verify all sources and content** coming from Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and other online services.

On top of this, the highly competitive online information ecosystem pushes some media to rush reporting and run sensationalist pieces.

Spanish migrants themselves are also generally absent from the media, even though a study published in 2013 estimated that as many as 700,000 Spaniards had emigrated since the beginning of the 2008 financial crisis, most of them young, educated people who couldn't find appropriate jobs in Spain<sup>14</sup>. When the media report on them, often they are not identified as "migrants" but just as Spaniards living abroad.

If we refer to the EJN Guide for Migration Reporting, in general the Spanish media would get an average score. The reporting is sometimes too emotional, there is some confusion between different legal concepts like "asylum-seeker" and "refugee", the bigger picture and full context are usually absent from the narrative, and before "the refugee crisis" migrants weren't often given a voice. On the other hand, and even though many media still describe the attempts by Sub Saharan Africans to scale the walls in Ceuta and Melilla as "massive assaults", for the most part the Spanish media usually avoid extremism and inflammatory content.

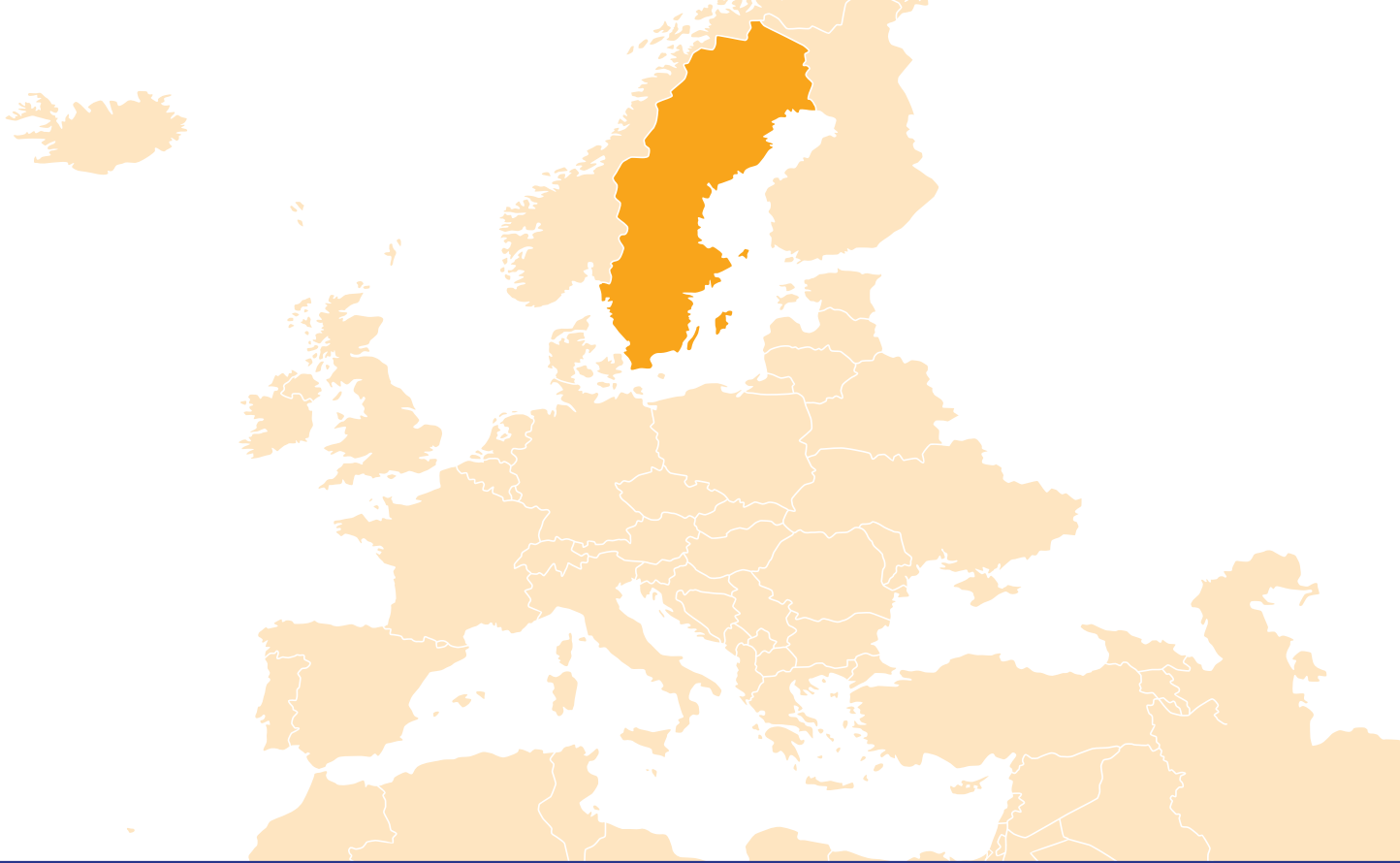
## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. To improve coverage of migration, the Spanish media should also improve the job security of their staff and freelance contributors, and make sure they have adequate resources to do their jobs.
2. They should invest in specific training for their staff, including freelancers, and promote the use of a common guide on how to cover migration. This could be done through the Federación de Asociaciones de Periodistas de España (FAPE) and the Col·legi de Periodistes de Catalunya, which together represent all professional Spanish journalists and which have already produced general codes of professional practice<sup>15</sup>.
3. Finally, when it comes to migration, above all, the Spanish media should make an effort to follow their own fact-based agenda and aim for the big picture and providing appropriate context.

**Jose Miguel Calatayud** is an award-winning journalist based in Barcelona.

## References, links and sources

- 1 In 1999 people of Sub Saharan origin made up 3.28% of all those of foreign origin living in Spain. This has been slowly increasing and by 2015, the latest year for which figures are available, reached 3.95%. The main countries which migrants arrive in Spain from are, in this order: Romania and other EU countries (mainly the UK, France, Italy and Germany), Morocco, Colombia, Venezuela and other Latin American countries, Pakistan, from China. These figures come from Instituto Nacional de Estadística (INE). Población (españoles / extranjeros) por país de nacimiento, sexo y año. Available online in Spanish on <http://www.ine.es/jaxi/Tabla.htm?path=/t20/e245/p08/lo/&file=01006.px&L=0>
- 2 López Talavera, M<sup>a</sup> del Mar. "La ética periodística en el tratamiento informativo de la inmigración". Article published in Universidad Complutense de Madrid, Cuadernos de Información y Comunicación, p339-354, 2012. Available to download as a PDF file in Spanish on <https://revistas.ucm.es/index.php/CIYC/article/view/39343>
- 3 See, for instance, Muñiz, C. & al. "Retratos de la inmigración en la prensa española. ¿Una imagen fija de la discriminación?" and Igartua, J.J. & al. "La imagen de la inmigración en los informativos televisivos. Algo más que noticias". Both are published as articles in Gómez Isla, J. (ed.). Cuestión de imagen: aproximaciones al universo audiovisual desde la comunicación, el arte y la ciencia. Edited by Universidad de Salamanca, May 2013.
- 4 See, for instance, Igartua, J.J. & al. "El tratamiento informativo de la inmigración en la prensa española. Análisis comparativo de los diarios El País, El Mundo, ABC y La Razón". Published as an article in FerrolAnálisis. Revista de Pensamiento y Cultura, 19 (p197-208). 2004. The article is available online in Spanish on [https://www.academia.edu/6260717/El\\_tratamiento\\_informativo\\_de\\_la\\_inmigraci%C3%B3n\\_en\\_la\\_prensa\\_espa%C3%B1ola\\_An%C3%A1lisis\\_comparativo\\_de\\_los\\_diarios\\_El\\_Pa%C3%ADs\\_El\\_Mundo\\_ABC\\_y\\_La\\_Raz%C3%B3n](https://www.academia.edu/6260717/El_tratamiento_informativo_de_la_inmigraci%C3%B3n_en_la_prensa_espa%C3%B1ola_An%C3%A1lisis_comparativo_de_los_diarios_El_Pa%C3%ADs_El_Mundo_ABC_y_La_Raz%C3%B3n)
- 5 See Red Acoge. Inmigracionalismo 3. Medios de comunicación: agentes de integración y cohesión social. Estudio sobre Periodismo e Inmigración. Published in December 2015. It analyses this phenomenon and includes many examples. It's available to download in Spanish on [http://www.redacoge.org/mm/file/2015/Intervenci%C3%B3n%20Social/Informe\\_Inmigracionalismo\\_3.pdf](http://www.redacoge.org/mm/file/2015/Intervenci%C3%B3n%20Social/Informe_Inmigracionalismo_3.pdf). And see also Comisión Española de Ayuda al Refugiado. Informe 2016: Las personas refugiadas en España y Europa. June 2016. Available to download as a PDF file in Spanish on <https://www.cear.es/informe-cear-2016-las-personas-refugiadas-en-espana-y-en-europa/>
- 6 Teruel, Ana. "Tratar de cruzar es nuestra rutina diaria". El País, 29 July 2015, available online in Spanish on [http://internacional.elpais.com/internacional/2015/07/29/actualidad/1438196867\\_585012.html](http://internacional.elpais.com/internacional/2015/07/29/actualidad/1438196867_585012.html)
- 7 Verdú, Daniel. "Atrapados en La Jungla". El País, 18 November 2015, available online in Spanish on [http://internacional.elpais.com/internacional/2015/11/17/actualidad/1447787741\\_900819.html](http://internacional.elpais.com/internacional/2015/11/17/actualidad/1447787741_900819.html)
- 8 Fundéu. "Palabra del año 2015: Refugiado". Available online in Spanish on <http://www.fundeu.es/recomendacion/refugiado-palabra-del-año-2015-para-la-fundeu-bbva/>
- 9 See note 5.
- 10 According to the latest official audience figures covering the period from February to November 2016. The data is available online in Spanish on <http://www.aimc.es/-Datos-EGM-Resumen-General.html>
- 11 Red Acoge's website is available in Spanish on <http://www.redacoge.org>
- 12 The four volumes are available to download in Spanish on <http://www.redacoge.org/es/documentos.html>
- 13 Written or phone interviews were conducted with one analyst and eight journalists working with Spanish –and in some cases also international– media: six from the press, one from the radio, and one photojournalist. They all had covered migration since before 2015. The author of this report himself has also reported on migration for the Spanish and international media, but only before 2015, and has been a humanitarian worker who has followed the subject closely during the last two years.
- 14 González-Ferrer, Amparo. "La nueva emigración española. Lo que sabemos y lo que no". Study published on 2 October 2013 and available to download as a PDF file in Spanish on <http://www.fundacionalternativas.org/laboratorio/libros-e-informes/zoom-politico/la-nueva-emigracion-espanola-lo-que-sabemos-y-lo-que-no>
- 15 FAPE's code is available online in Spanish on <http://fape.es/home/codigo-deontologico/> and the Col·legi's code is available online in Catalan on <http://www.periodistes.org/ca/home/periodisme/codi-deontologic.html>



# SWEDEN

## Journalism on the Spot as Europe's Asylum Leader Takes a Change of Direction

» Arne König

That 2016 was a year of intensive reporting of migration in the Swedish media comes as no surprise. Sweden had become the European Union country with the highest number of arriving asylum seekers per capita after almost 163,000 asylum seekers had arrived in 2015, compared to roughly 80,000 in the previous year.

*During 2016 only 29,000 asylum seekers reached Sweden. This change was also reflected in the media. The editorial tone went from welcoming to a more negative one in relation to migrants, as problems related to migration came in focus.*

---

In the autumn of 2015 the government argued that restrictions were needed, to uphold “order and security” in the country. They introduced severe restrictions to reduce the numbers of arriving refugees. In a short period of time, the image of Sweden changed from a country seen as perhaps the most “generous” in Europe, concerning migration, to being one of the most restrictive.

During 2016 only 29,000 asylum seekers reached Sweden. This change was also reflected in the media. The editorial tone went from welcoming to a more negative one in relation to migrants, as problems related to migration came in focus.

The SOM-institute at the University of Gothenburg, which makes yearly surveys on social questions in Sweden, found that when it comes to issues that most concern Swedes, the question of migration and arriving refugees had become the most important.

Border restrictions, identity checks and issues flowing from the arriving refugees dominated media coverage in 2016, according to a report from Novus Retriever, a Swedish survey institute. Almost 250,000 articles on the so-called refugee crisis were published. The second biggest issue was the United States election, with 150,000 news items. According to Novus Retriever there was more interest among Swedes in media coverage of the “refugee crisis” and the war in Syria. Every second person surveyed said reporting on the US election was too extensive.

Based on the debate among journalists, in media reports and academic research, one political party stands out as key to understanding why media coverage of migration has in some cases avoided asking tough questions: Sverigedemokraterna, SD, (The Swedish Democrats).

Despite its roots in right wing and Nazi circles (which the party has tried to erase from its historical record) it is now the third largest party in the country, with 12.9 per cent of the vote in the last general election and with 49 of the 349 seats in Riksdagen, the Swedish parliament. The party’s main political goal was to preserve “Swedish values” and restrict immigration. For a long time the party only focused on migration and immigrants.

The SD was considered by many voters simply a racist party and other parties in the parliament made an agreement to block it from exerting political influence by not negotiating with or making agreements with SD. Today, this common position is no longer so strong. The Conservatives former leader, then prime minister, Fredrik Reinfeldt gave a speech in 2014 where he said we should open our hearts to refugees. But in 2016 his party has adopted many of the views of Sverigedemokraterna and the Conservative leadership no longer support their

previous chairperson and prime minister on his view on refugees.

This political approach, aimed at avoiding racist and inflammatory political discourse, also had an impact on media coverage of the wider issue. For a long time according to academics as well as journalists, the lack of debate on immigration among the traditional parties (meaning not SD) also starved public discussion because it led the media to not report on migration in terms of costs and in terms of problems.

When public service TV initiated a debate under the headline – How much immigration can we afford? – it led to inflammatory discussions. Many journalists as well as the public were moved instead by images of refugees arriving on the shores of Italy and Greece and the pictures of the ones who did not make it, lying dead in the Mediterranean. Emotions were strong all over Europe and media in Sweden for a long time reflected on the humanity of helping arriving refugees to find their way. One journalist, working for public service TV on assignment in Turkey to report on the refugees, even ended up bringing a young boy to Sweden and is now facing trial for smuggling the boy into the country.

Right wing organisations and websites such as Avpixlat, linked to SD through one of its leading members, claim there is a conspiracy among journalists not to provide critical reporting of migration. There is even a myth that journalists made an agreement among themselves not to do any critical reporting. Among the websites hostile to migrants, and among some groups in the population, the cover up theory is strong.

These groups feel they are not allowed to speak freely and that sentiment has been reinforced by the fact that traditional media, responding to hate speech and misinformation, now automatically block comments on migrant stories. It is an issue which has also led to public comments from the former conservative minister of culture, who also is a former journalist.

In general terms, the public has a high degree of confidence in public service media and morning newspapers. Nevertheless, according to the SOM-institute, around 60 per cent of Swedes do not think the media reports truthfully on migration problems.

But media and journalists are under severe pressure. They are attacked by hate sites, and their credibility is undermined also by the emotional power of the migration story and the very fact that facts do not count as much as they did before on this issue.

At a time when the profession of journalism is losing status, media haters are delivering threats on the net and are especially targeting female journalists. It is clear that some of these journalists are being silenced by the hate. In the summer of 2016, the Swedish Union of Journalists presented a survey on threats against

journalists which showed that four out of ten had experienced violations, pressure and harassment. A quarter of them said they had not reported as they would have otherwise, due to external pressure.

Swedish journalists are often accused of bias. In the public debate they are accused of being politically left and it is fair to say they are voting for the green party and leftist ideas more than the public in general. However, repeated studies at the University of Gothenburg conclude that this does not influence their reporting.

A small interview study by journalist and researcher Björn Häger suggests that journalists have, indeed, been partially restricting themselves on reporting migration. The reason is to avoid giving support to racists and to promote values supported by SD. Beyond this study, this tendency is often mentioned by journalists.

In some cases newsrooms and media have adopted guidelines not to support racist ideas in their reporting. For public service radio and TV this is a particular obligation because the network has an agreement with the state that they can broadcast freely, but must promote democratic ideas and values. In one example, when a leading SD politician spoke on TV, there were signs broadcast simultaneously giving the correct facts so the democratic values could be promoted. This issue of objective and balanced or neutral reporting is now under discussion within Swedish journalism. Traditional ways of presenting the views of opposing forces in a story is not enough, when obvious lies are presented. This is of course more of a problem for live broadcasting than for written reports.

The Institute for Media Studies, an independent body, is carrying out a study to look at how the media has reported on migration in more detail, but for now there is only information on this from an examination of the four leading newspapers' opinion pages. That is to say the opinion pages of the papers, not readers' letters or debate material produced by external writers and organisations. The study focused on migration and integration covering 1,000 articles from 2010 to July 2015. The conclusion is there is no evidence to support the idea that opinion pages in leading newspapers give a

mostly positive picture of migration towards Sweden. The bias is not that the articles are about the positive impact of migration; it is about pointing to problems connected to migration. This is in line with research about news journalism and its strong tendency to focus on problems and negative issues. Bad news is so to speak good news, as Professor Jesper Strömbäck, in charge of the study, puts it.

In the book *Migration in the Media* the Institute gives some researchers and journalists the opportunity via personal essays to give their views. Their impressions vary. The debate around upholding a consequence neutral journalism is there, and for some of the writers in the book that has been and is a problem in reporting.

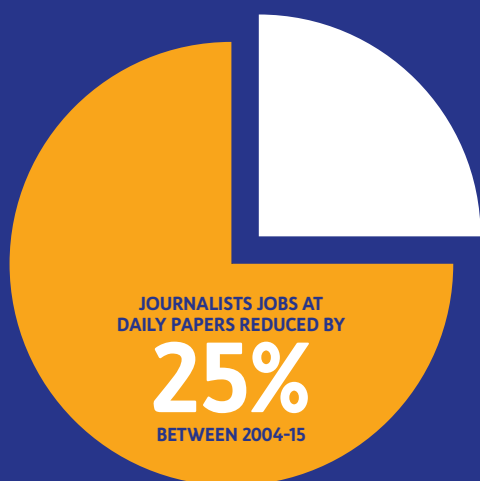
The interpretation is that the professional values of journalists are losing ground, as confirmed by the previous study of Swedish news rooms. It is relevant to ask in these circumstances to what extent journalists are connected to the expectations of their readers, listeners and viewers.

Overshadowing this, with its own influence on the migration story, is the role of social media on the work of traditional journalists. The media community often claims that so-called click journalism is not a driving force, but in reality this sort of journalism is present as media outlets continue to publish the most read stories/most clicked stories day after day. The attitude that the priority must be given the audience what the audience apparently wants, prevails in many media outlets.

One criticism of the reporting on migration has been the lack of presentation of hard facts, and focusing more on emotional stories. This is again linked to the argument that negative sides of migration are not presented.

As an example of the hard facts discourse, the journalist Lasse Granstrand, who for three decades has been reporting on migration, in the book refers to unemployment figures for migrants and how Swedish schools are producing poorer results, perhaps due to the challenge of welcoming many migrants.

And yes, the writers in the book *Migration in the*



Media haters are delivering **threats on the net** ... It is clear that some of these journalists are being silenced by the hate... **4 out of 10** had experienced **violations, pressure and harassment** ...





Media, claim the reporting has been focusing on the traditional; conflicts and problems, which is in its turn connected with the “nature” of journalism. At the same time some of the writers note the general trend in the media debate, which is that the restrictions on migrants trying to come to Sweden is all right. That has led to more negative reports in the media, relating to, for example, problems and violence among asylum seekers.

One issue that has certainly had an impact on media coverage is the social and employment crisis in Swedish journalism. The job market for journalists in Sweden is weak. In daily papers the number of journalists has been reduced by a quarter in the period 2004-2015. Still the most common way for media outlets to save money is to reduce staff. Local media is suffering. Out of 290 local geographical areas, kommuner, 32 have no journalistic coverage at all, according to the latest yearly report from the Institute for Media studies. The Institute notes that access to information and journalism continues to be a matter of class and economic resources. The young, poor, and uneducated have the least access, and these three categories are common among migrants.

An old issue in the debate about journalists is who they themselves are, are they representative of the population? One major problem is that they are not as connected with migrants and the migrant community as perhaps they should be. Half of the total members of the Swedish Union of Journalists live in the capital, Stockholm. They are normally well educated, live in the city, not in the suburban areas with many immigrants. Many journalists for production reasons tend to leave the news room only if really necessary. Their work is done by telephone and with the help of the internet, they do not often meet the world of the migrants, or other underprivileged groups.

For a long time the media has been dominated by white people and journalists only had Swedish experiences and background. Slowly this is changing, especially in public service media, where second generation migrant staff are now more present and more journalists with migrant backgrounds are entering the profession.

The media community has during the last years developed a growing sensitivity on words used to describe their subjects. But in a study on the language of the four leading newspapers in Sweden, done in November 2015, researchers claim that words that dehumanise refugees are being used. They point to reports using words like “streams”, “flows”, and speaking of a need to control the “flows of refugees”. The situation around the refugees is described as a “threat” or as being an expression of something fearful when connected to terrorist actions.

As fashionable words in social media are used to connect to the media audience, and these words change often, this is a lively debate. Migrants often accuse Swedish society of not being welcoming, not allowing them to integrate. Using the word immigrant for second or third generation swedes has been a problem. The most recent approach is to use “born in Sweden/ not born in Sweden” as a more neutral description. For example, the unemployment figure for persons born in

Sweden is roughly 4-5 per cent, for persons not born in Sweden it is 20-25 per cent.

At the same time, it is clear that Swedish traditions and bureaucracy can be very hostile. Asylum seekers suffer due to an under-resourced migration authority and have to wait for a long time for a decision on their asylum request, often a year, sometimes a year and a half. During that time they are not allowed to work, and they are not given language training.

A man from Bangladesh with a job and several years in the country was forced to leave as his job at the time was not formally and correctly advertised. Another well integrated person with a job and permit to stay was not paid according to the collective agreement, by mistake, as it seems. He earned 10-20 Euro too little per month and would have had to leave the country, had he not been saved by a campaign. A young boy of colour was in December 2016 chosen to be Lucia, the traditional light bearer before Christmas, in a big department store in Stockholm. The old tradition used to be that Lucia was a blond girl and a hate campaign followed that prompted the department store to drop the idea.

All of this provides scope for journalism that is informed and sensitive and that provides a comprehensive overview of the complex realities of migration. The problem remains in how to create the political, professional and public information space for the story to be told without being overwhelmed by prejudice, bigotry and self-interest.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

With that in mind Swedish media could strengthen their role by supporting more effective journalism. Some recommendations on that could be:

- **More Specialist Migration Correspondents:** Sweden has two journalists named as migration correspondents, and both working for public service media. Given the importance of the migration story, more media outlets could be encouraged to give journalists the opportunity to become specialised on migration.
- **Training for the Migration Story:** Sweden used to have a good tradition of further education of journalists, but media’s funding crisis has reduced these possibilities. Journalists need to be trained in finding new information and new sources on migration and this training should be directed at reporters and editorial managers.
- **Strengthen fact-based communications:** The migration story is a casualty of so-called post-truth discourse in which facts are less important than emotional responses. The importance of facts and fact-based reporting is the very nature of journalism and it may be useful, using migration as a theme, to promote public debates on media literacy and how ethical journalism and fact-based information are essential for free expression and responsible public communications.

*Arne König is a Swedish journalist and editor who served as the president of the European Federation of Journalists from 2004-2013.*



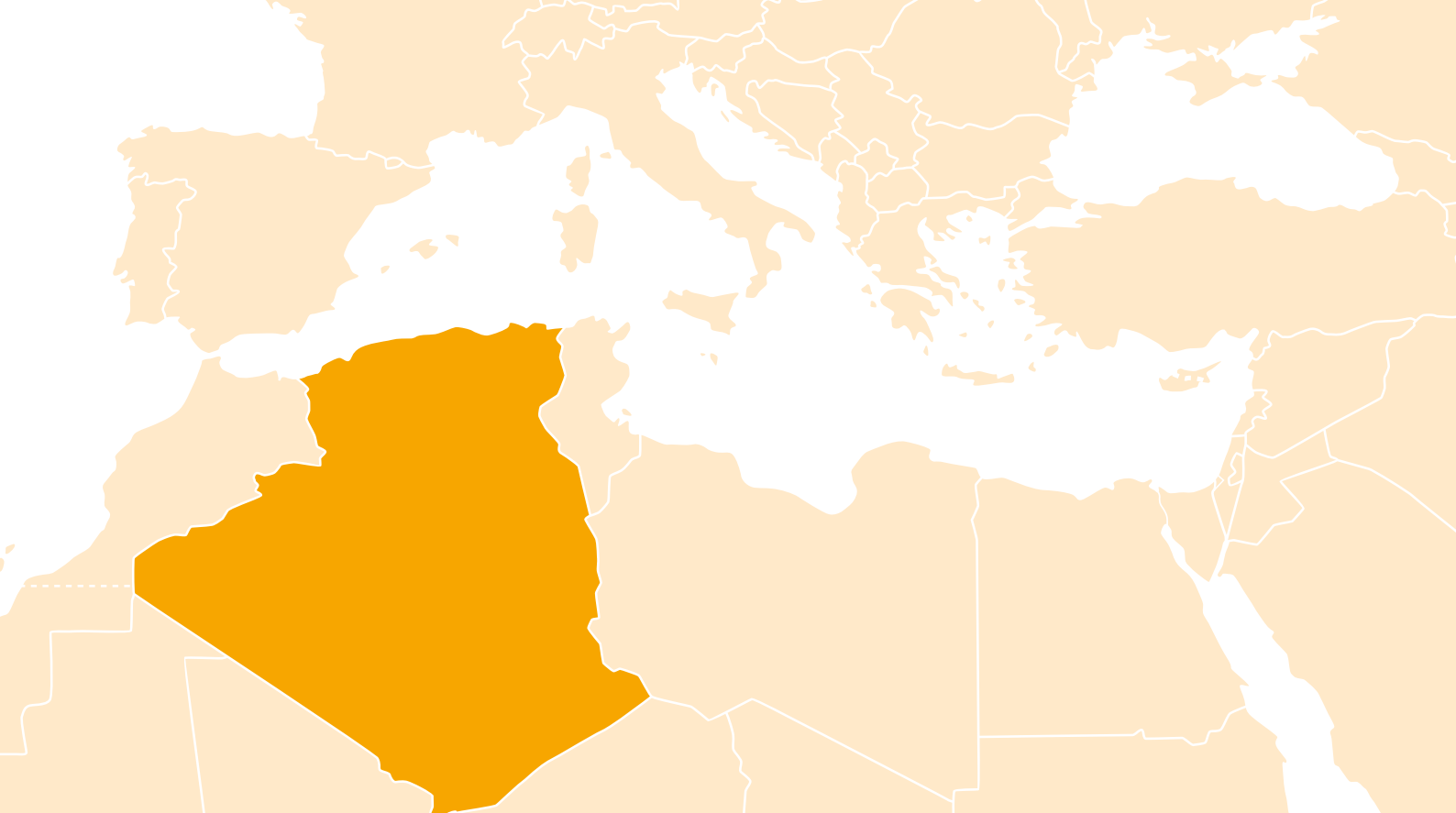




# Middle East and North Africa (EU South Partner Countries)

Writers from 17 countries have examined the quality of migration media coverage in 2015/16 from a national perspective. The following chapters are the country reports on migration media coverage in the following countries:

1. Algeria
2. Egypt
3. Israel
4. Jordan
5. Lebanon
6. Morocco
7. Palestine
8. Tunisia



# ALGERIA

## Public Debate Needed to Confront Denial and Media Stereotypes

» Faten Hayed

Algeria has always been a host country for migrant communities, and even more so since its independence. The Sahrawi people and the Palestinians, for instance, were very quickly integrated into the Algerian social fabric and a very deep relationship has been forged over the decades with both communities, a policy well accepted and supported within Algerian society.

*There are signs of change, with groups in civil society, including academics, and some journalists and politicians now trying to change this situation. Their challenge is to reshape the current public discourse, which is not a true reflection of society, and to help people in Algeria come to terms with far-reaching changes taking place in the country.*

---

And yet more recent migration and, in particular, that from sub-Saharan Africa has not seen the same sort of untroubled integration. Indeed, migration questions have developed and been embraced quite differently.

In the space of a few years, Algeria has gone from being a place of transit to a settlement country for many thousands of sub-Saharan migrants and refugees, as well as for people on the move from Syria, Libya and Yemen. Yet talk and consideration of migration and refugee issues in Algerian media, whether it is in the press, on radio and television or on digital platforms, appear to be discouraged.

Migration-related themes are often relegated to the “other news” section on the news agenda and reporting on migration tends to focus on its association with matters of security, violence and the rising migrant death toll in the Mediterranean Sea and the Algerian Sahara.

It is estimated that today tens of thousands of migrants in Algeria attempt to either continue along the hard road to Europe or to find a job in Algeria, as thousands of them do, despite the insecurity of the work, everyday social problems and administrative red tape.

The question of human mobility is usually handled from a security point of view, with a keen eye, particularly, on the political and social problems facing society in Mali and Libya.

Often sub-Saharan migrants and refugees find themselves isolated and with limited social support; they may find themselves in difficult situations where there is no easily accessible institutional mechanism or identifiable person with whom they can discuss matters and resolve the problems they face.

## First signs of positive change

On a positive note, however, there are signs of change, with groups in civil society, including academics, and some journalists and politicians now trying to change this situation. Their challenge is to reshape the current public discourse, which is not a true reflection of society, and to help people in Algeria come to terms with far-reaching changes taking place in the country.

Media coverage of migration during 2015 and 2016 was, like in almost all other countries in the North African region, marked by a number of tragic events. The media focus was clearly related to the humanitarian crisis caused by deaths of migrants in the Mediterranean, and problems of exclusion, mass deportations, violence and sometimes the mobilisation of Algerian civil society on the migration issue.

## Reporting peaks around incidents

One tragic example was an incident that took place on 1 October 2015 when Marie-Simone D., a 33-year-old Cameroonian national, was beaten and raped by around seven Algerians at the entry to the Coca district in the metropol-

itan area of Oran. Almost a year later, in 2016, the Oran criminal court handed down 15-year prison sentences to three youths for this assault and rape.<sup>1</sup>

In another incident, on 25 October 2015, some 18 sub-Saharan African nationals, including two children and three women, died and another 50 or so were injured in a serious fire that destroyed the hangar in which they were living in the Saïd Otba industrial estate in the town of Ouargla. It had been in use since 2012 when the local authorities converted it and made it available for migrants. Within weeks the Algerian authorities moved the occupants to another location.<sup>2</sup>

The situation of Syrian refugees has reportedly deteriorated considerably since the beginning of the crisis in Syria. Algeria has taken in more than 25,000 Syrians, although the media has reported that many remain marginalised.<sup>3</sup>

During 2016 more violence involving migrants made headlines. On 25 March 2016, dozens of sub-Saharan migrants were injured near the OPGI district in Béchar, 950 km from Algiers as a result of a stone-throwing assault by dozens of masked attackers. Media reported how migrants tried to call the police for help, but allegedly their calls were not acted upon. When the police intervention did arrive, tear gas canisters landed next to the migrants' living quarters.<sup>4</sup>

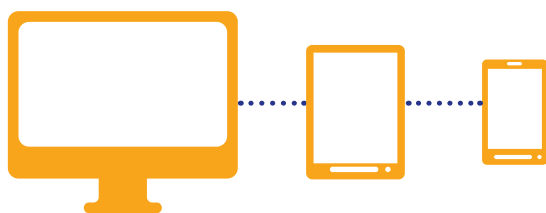
Again, the suffering of migrants made news on 16 June 2016 when the bodies of 34 people, including 20 children, were found the week before in the Nigerian desert. They had been trying to reach Algeria.

There was a spike in news reporting on 26-27 November 2016 when in the Dely Ibrahim district in Algiers, a building that housed around 150 sub-Saharan migrants was attacked by local residents. No other incident has ever prompted so many articles and responses on the social networks.

Finally, media extensively covered events on 1 December 2016 when 1,500 migrants and asylum-seekers were deported. The president of the Algerian Red Crescent, Saïda Benhabylès, explained why the deportation was needed: “Given the overcrowded conditions in the capital and the security problems they create, the public authorities have decided to transfer the migrants to the South, where the living conditions are better,” she told the daily newspaper *El Moudjahid*.

## Prejudices and stereotypes are reinforced

Regrettably, most Algerian media still relegate migration coverage to the second tier of news reporting or, worse still, to the status of brief items in news columns. Few media, whether print or television, explore the subject in depth, through investigations or immersive reporting which might involve living alongside migrants and refugees, or following the progress of major cases involving justice and deportations. They tend not to generate original information about the issue.



... it is important to note that the **migrant question** is taken up by many **Algerian activists** and **human rights groups** who issue press releases and run migrant-support solidarity operations through the **social networks**.

Instead, like the local authorities, Algerian media generally content themselves with reporting the “official” versions of information issued by the Algerian defence ministry (MDN) or the press agency Agence de presse algérienne (APS), and tend to use press releases from the authorities (the police forces), the Algerian Red Crescent and the human rights watchdog (CNCPPDH) without questioning the content.

At the same time, some media, often reflecting bias and prejudice in the unfeeling use of terms to describe migrants and their communities, may have contributed to linking sub-Saharan migrants and even refugees to criminal activity. This has led in some cases to a downward spiral in ethics and use of language, with migrants unjustly portrayed as being associated with trafficking, theft, disease transmission and aggression. In this way some Arabic and French-language media have been stereotyping migrants for years. In November 2016 an article in the French-language newspaper *El Watan* laid the blame on migrants, apparently without any grounds, after outbreaks of violence in a working-class district<sup>10</sup>.

The problems of stereotyping give rise to the misuse of terms like “Blacks”, “Africans”, “illegals”, “immigrants”, “criminals” and “traffickers” when media are referring to migrants. Sadly there is, to date, no common lexicon.

Moreover, sometimes journalists working for the same newspaper will use different terms, which suggests that there is no editorial consistency on the terminology to be used. Often media and writers do not consult Algerian migration experts or fundamental texts, including Algerian law and the major special-purpose texts which exist around the question of migration. Similarly to Europe or other countries of the region, this same problem of linguistic indecisiveness is also a feature of the political class.

Nevertheless, some journalists do make the effort to follow the recommendations of the NGO Médecins du Monde (MDM), the IOM (International Organization for Migration) and UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees). Often these are journalists who have received special coaching, such as the journalists who have received training initiated by Institut Panos Europe and delivered through a series of workshops in Algiers and Oran<sup>5</sup>.

In order to tell the migrant story more truthfully and effectively, and to deal with migrant related issues, such as the importance of remittances, and relations with the Algerian diaspora, more than just a superficial interest in migrants and their communities must be taken.

But mixing with migrants and refugees does not happen often. As a result, migrants are isolated and frustration mounts as the years pass. This lack of knowledge of the economic and social realities of migrant life is revealed by the fact that a 2008 report on migrants’ contribution to the Algerian economy published by the CREAD (a research centre

in applied economics for development) remains the only reference document for journalists.

## Migrants, money transfer, and denial

In April 2016, the digital newspaper *Maghreb émergent* reported a discussion with Leila Beratto - RFI journalist in Algeria and co-founder of the “Terminus Algérie” project - who has been working on economics and migration questions for two years which showed how the question of money transfers by migrants to their families is almost taboo in Algeria.

Many migrants do not have bank accounts and this makes transferring money difficult except through international wire transfer agencies and further complicates the search for reliable figures. Subterfuge is used to send money, by creating an internal network, made up of migrants, and which escapes notice and official monitoring and control. Moreover, migrants’ investments are limited since they do not have the right to buy a home and often live in rented or sub-let accommodation.

An article written in 2015 by the Algeria correspondent of the “Middle East Eye” website reports that a windowless garage is rented out for \$230<sup>7</sup>. This is an exorbitant rent that shows that some landlords take advantage of the lack of official controls and often migrants are the victims of these irregularities.

All in all, talking about and reporting on migrants puts a focus on an issue that it appears almost everyone prefers not to discuss. There is a sense of denial that is often so strong that some media outlets claim migrants will leave soon which goes some way towards explaining why media coverage sometimes fails to report from within the migrant community in Algeria. Despite efforts by a number of stakeholders in various sectors, including the authorities, too often migrants remain the invisible men, women and children whose opinions are not reported but who, nevertheless, may be the subjects of xenophobic articles and occasionally racist front pages.

The low quality of media coverage is reflected in the fact that there tends to be a handful of photos that reappear frequently in Algerian newspapers and news websites. Online news sites make excessive use of photos showing migrants begging in the streets of large towns, migrants crowded into trucks, and sick or injured migrant children.

These clichéd photos are often used to support opinion pieces, but overall there are very few first-hand accounts by migrants, or comments from academics or specialised researchers which might give more perspective to the public debate.

Recently, in December 2016, the president of the CNCPPDH, the national consultative committee for the protection and promotion of human rights, accused sub-Saharan

migrants of spreading Aids and sexually-transmitted diseases (STDs) in Algeria, in an interview given to the Arabic-language daily *Al Sawt Al Akher*<sup>8</sup>.

Questioned about the situation of sub-Saharan migrants in Algeria, he stated that “the expansion of these African migrants into several communes in Algiers” might “cause numerous problems for Algerians”. On the other hand, in another, more sympathetic tone, the newspaper *El Hiwar*<sup>9</sup> commented in 2016 on migrants’ situation and the assistance given to them during the month of Ramadan.

## How the reporting improves, and why it needs to improve further

But even with these problems, today the situation is improving. Far more than in earlier years, certain media now encourage in-depth feature reporting. Much more needs to be done though, given the scope of the problem and the urgent need to talk about migrants and their life in Algeria and particularly the need to focus on social questions such as the problems facing stateless migrants or the right to work, social security cover, age and education. As yet, the debate on migration is still not a part of public discourse and remains neglected.

In order to confront this problem journalists and editors need to make migration an essential part of the routine of everyday journalism and not just driven by the news of dramatic events or that content which comes from foreign press agencies alone.

Very often journalists face difficulties trying to approach migrants, or to obtain access to official sources or even to shoot film footage in certain areas. Official permission is often needed and this makes the task more complicated. At the same time journalists and media have limited resources, whether it is access to and use of equipment or the funding for allowances to go out into the field and to report more intensively on the subject.

Debates within traditional journalism circles are ongoing. There are reports of journalists who get into heated exchanges with their superiors when it comes to handling articles on migrants. Within the media community there is often division, unacknowledged racism and a lack of understanding of the core issues.

Beyond the traditional media framework, it is important to note that the migrant question is taken up by many Algerian activists and human rights groups who issue press releases and run migrant-support solidarity operations through the social networks.

A platform on migration has been set up to report on the situation. And recently, on 20 and 21 July 2016, subregional consultations for North Africa were held in Tunis to develop a civil society network on the movements of refugees and migrants in the Middle East-North Africa region. This initiative was organised by UNHCR and gathered delegations from Algeria, Morocco, Mauritania, Libya and Tunisia. The aim of the civil society network is to provide a “platform” for regional partners to combine their individual voices and present a stronger call to protect and assist displaced persons. During the consultations, Algerian sociologist Hocine Labdelaoui, who is affiliated with the CREAD, said he was ready to oversee this encouraging initiative.

This sort of development should elicit more responses from the media community which unfortunately still provides a narrative scarred by a dangerous vocabulary and an apparent reluctance to move beyond clichés and racial stereotypes. This undermines the efforts of many journalists who are seeking to provide a different editorial approach and who are endeavouring, with training, to put forward a faithful image of migration in Algeria and a more truthful reflection on the complexities of the migration

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The main recommendation, which would appear to be an urgent priority, is to train journalists, chief editors and journalism students on migration.
2. Redefine the media’s sources and work more closely with researchers, academics and Algerian research centres, and Algerian authorities.
3. Forge more partnerships with NGOs and Algerian associations.
4. Create room for discussion with the local authorities in order to be kept constantly informed.
5. Compile a migration glossary of the terms used.

**Faten Hayed** is a journalist for *El Watan Week-end* in Algiers.

## Links and Acronyms

<sup>1</sup> Report by the KBC television channel <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YJxhzrL5vpY>

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.algeria-watch.de/fr/article/pol/migration/ouargla\\_refugies.htm](http://www.algeria-watch.de/fr/article/pol/migration/ouargla_refugies.htm)

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.elwatan.com/hebdo/magazine/algerie-les-refugies-syriens-aspirent-a-une-vie-decente-11-11-2016-332615\\_265.php](http://www.elwatan.com/hebdo/magazine/algerie-les-refugies-syriens-aspirent-a-une-vie-decente-11-11-2016-332615_265.php)

<sup>4</sup> Video filmed by migrants in Béchar: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7bUmmnmLlaY> / Coverage of the dramatic event by the television news on the Echourrouk News channel: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gR28DhVJlbc>

<sup>5</sup> [http://www.panosgl.org/sites/default/files/content\\_uploads/MIMIG\\_RAP\\_Atelier-Oran\\_2013-03-11.pdf](http://www.panosgl.org/sites/default/files/content_uploads/MIMIG_RAP_Atelier-Oran_2013-03-11.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.maghrebemergent.com/actualite/maghrebine/58105-malgre-les-violences-l-algerie-dispose-d-un-modele-economique-qui-attire-les-migrants-l-beratto-sur-radiom-audio-video.html>

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.middleeasteye.net/reportages/migrants-en-alg-rie-la-fin-d-un-tabou-pas-des-probl-mes-1136448724>

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.assawt.net/2016/12/%D9%81%D8%A7%D8%B1%D9%88%D9%82-%D9%82%D8%B3%D9%86%D8%B7%D9%8A%D9%86%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D9%81%D8%A7%D8%B1%D9%82%D8%Ag-%D9%86%D8%B4%D8%B1%D9%88%D8%A7-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D9%8A%D8%AF%D8%A7/>

**LAADH:** Ligue algérienne des droits de l’Homme, Algerian human rights league

**HCR:** United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

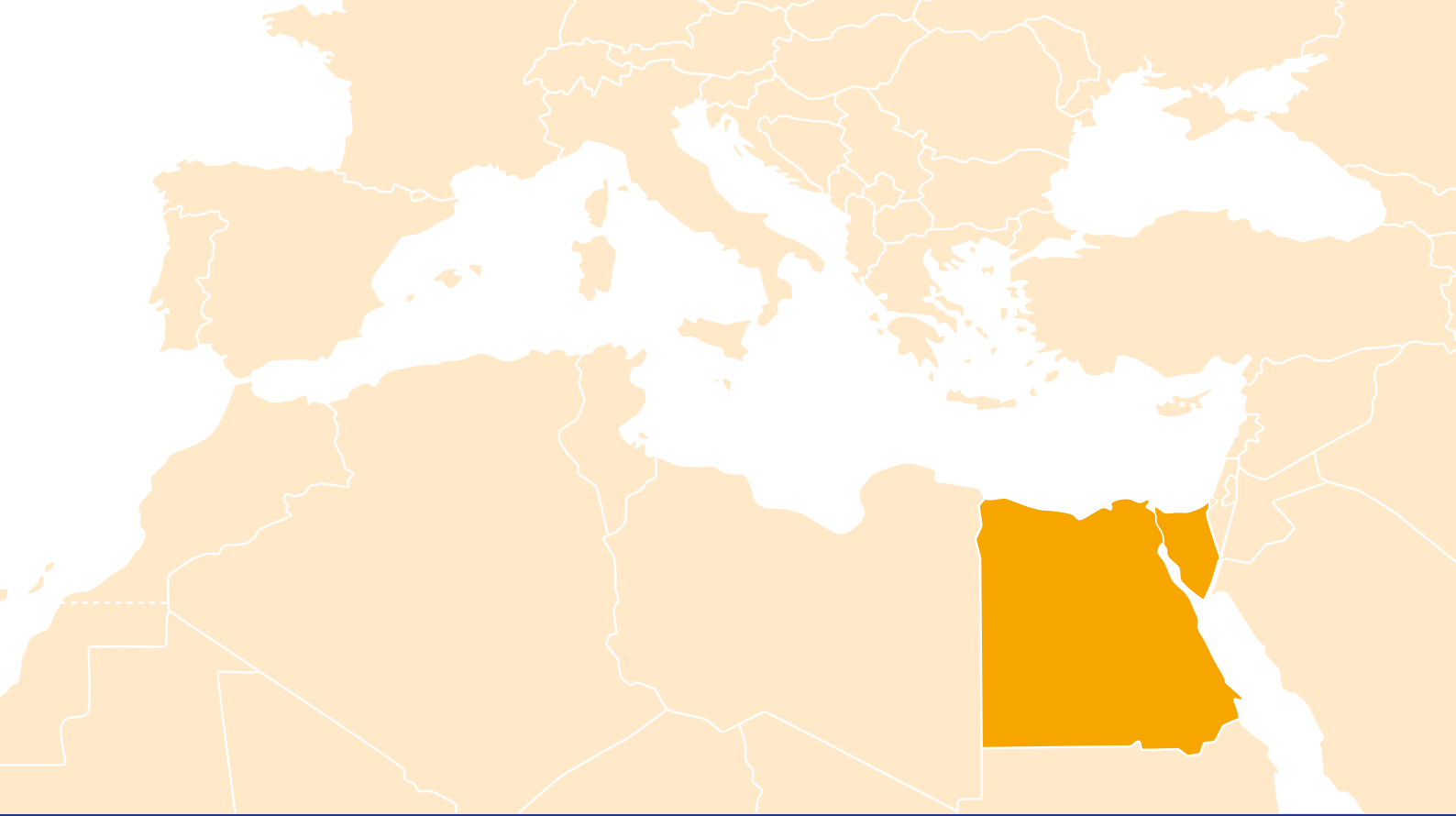
**MDM:** Médecins du Monde

**CREAD:** Centre de recherche en économie appliquée pour le développement, research centre in applied economics for development

**IOM:** International Organization for Migration

**MDN:** Algerian Ministère de la Défense nationale, national ministry of defence

**APS:** Algérie presse service



# EGYPT

## Positive Stories but Questions Remain over Self-Censorship and Lack of In-Depth Coverage

» Sarah EL-Shaarawi and Abdulrahman Elsamni

Given Egypt's location at the northern tip of Africa, its proximity to regional conflict zones and its shores as a gateway to the Mediterranean, the country has long been a transit point for migrants seeking better lives either through legal or irregular means.

How does the media on both sides of the Mediterranean report on Migration?

*A study by journalists, for journalists and policymakers*



*Articles taking a broader view have tended to focus on Egypt's burden, and the lack of international aid the country receives despite housing such a substantial migrant population.*

---

In recent years, with crises in nearby nations ballooning, the influx of migrants to the country has spiked. This was particularly true when the 2003 USA-led invasion of Iraq forced millions to flee from their homes. By 2007, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) estimated that over two million Iraqis had fled the country. According to official registered numbers about 150,000 of them landed in Egypt.<sup>1</sup>

Since civil war broke out in 2011, millions of Syrians have fled the war-torn country. Official statistics as of 31 October 2016 place the number of registered refugees residing in Egypt at just over 115,000 (UNHCR).<sup>2</sup> However, these numbers reflect only those registered, and the actual number is likely to be substantially higher. These figures reflect the numbers most frequently quoted in Egyptian media, which put the total number of refugees, including economic refugees, living in Egypt in 2016 at 5,000,000, with 4,000,000 of those African, 500,000 Syrian, and 400,000 Iraqi.

Since 2015 there has been a relatively consistent narrative pertaining to issues of migration in the Egyptian mainstream media, including both state run and private news outlets. There has also been consistent coverage, naturally peaking when major events take place.

However, given the political, social, and economic turbulence at home and abroad, particularly in the last year, stories about migration have not been at the top of editorial agendas.

This has meant that some issues related to migration are only covered in the context of other reporting. For example, 2016 was a particularly challenging year for the Egyptian economy with foreign reserves dropping, spiking commodity prices, and the devaluation of the Egyptian pound. As part of extensive coverage of economic issues across the board, a drop in remittances from Egyptians living abroad was widely reported.

While there are exceptions, the most widely read private and state run publications have generally maintained a favourable image regarding the country's policies toward migrants. Private daily newspaper *Youm7*<sup>3</sup>, for example, which according to Amazon Analytics company Alexa, is the fourth most visited website in Egypt (only lagging behind the local and international versions of Google<sup>4</sup> and YouTube), has consistently maintained the state and government line and published content framing Egypt's stance toward migrants in a positive light.

Despite often citing UNHCR, and other international and news organisations, the publication by and large avoided using the metrics from these sources, instead choosing to publish numbers consistent with those of the government as provided by officials in public statements. However, this was not the case across the

board, with state media reporting both UN and government numbers. This reflects the fact that official numbers are widely underreported and accurately measuring the number of unregistered migrants in the country is, like in many other countries, virtually impossible.

The major media focus was on stories about refugees living inside the country, often telling the stories of positive experiences. However, the tone of articles discussing irregular migrants tended to be less favourable, centering less on individual human stories and more on taking a tough stand against people trafficking and illegal activities related to the exploitation of migrants and refugees.

In many instances, individuals – most frequently Syrians – were interviewed or quoted as thanking Egypt for its hospitality. Several articles featured Cairo-based community leaders of various nationalities expressing their gratitude, and in the case of Syria stating that their lives in Egypt were a stark improvement from that which they had fled. In October of 2016, a representative from the National Council for Human Rights was quoted as saying that refugees living in Egypt have fewer complaints than Egyptian citizens.

Articles taking a broader view have tended to focus on Egypt's burden, and the lack of international aid the country receives despite housing such a substantial migrant population.

In this vein, several stories were published that in one way or another expressed the concern that Europe is attempting to "export" their refugee crisis to Egypt, amid reports of a German proposal to establish a resettlement centre in the country. This type of coverage has tended to be more sensationalist in tone, and generally framed the migration issue in the context of national security rather than as a matter of humanitarian concern.

Although rare, there were investigative pieces taking a deeper look at some of the challenges and risks faced by migrants. One recent (December 2016) example from *Youm7* delved into the illicit organ trade specifically targeting African refugees in the country. (It should be noted here, that this same publication was strongly criticised in recent years for its overtly racist coverage of sub-Saharan African migrants in Egypt. The most notable example of this was from 2014, when a headline from their print edition read *Black Terror Gangs in Cairo*, with the "N" word in English splashed in huge letters across the otherwise Arabic page.)

State media tended to report less on the issue of migration. The country's main state newspaper *Al Ahram*<sup>5</sup>, for example, published a fraction of the number of articles relating to migration when compared

to many of the private media and many of these reflected the issue from an international, particularly European, perspective. It should also be noted, however, that *Al Ahram's* overall output is substantially less in terms of quantity of articles than the larger private publications.

State newspapers focused more on statements by President Abdel Fatah El Sisi, with many articles reprinting his comments on the financial burden shouldered by the state, highlighted remarks on the need for rehabilitation and access to social services for refugees, and international cooperation to combat illegal migration by providing more legitimate avenues for those seeking security and a better life abroad. President Sisi was also quoted by multiple outlets recounting efforts made by Egypt to treat refugees with dignity, highlighting the fact that Egypt has avoided the creation of refugee camps, and stating that refugees live "just like Egyptians without discrimination."<sup>6</sup>

There is little coverage of Egyptian migration – legally or otherwise – from the country, despite a history of being the top sender of migrants in the Arab region, due in large part to its sizeable population. According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), Egypt is also the country with the greatest number of unaccompanied minors irregularly migrating to Europe.<sup>7</sup> There are, however, exceptions. The most notable recent example of this was the 21 September 2016 capsizing of a boat, bound for Italy and carrying at least 450 passengers, eight miles off the coast of Rosetta.

The victims came from many different countries, but the majority of the identified bodies and survivors were Egyptian. President Sisi's comments in the days following the tragedy were widely covered, as he promised work on new development projects to improve living standards, and pleaded with Egyptians to stay, to stand by their country, and to open their wallets to help alleviate some of the financial burden and help fund national projects.

When covering the country's migration experience, Egyptian media has by and large focused on personal human interest stories, almost exclusively about the Syrian refugees. While sometimes recounting stories of hardship, more frequently the narratives highlights the success stories of busy shops and restaurants, or other fruitful business endeavours of the new arrivals, and puts a focus on their resourcefulness.

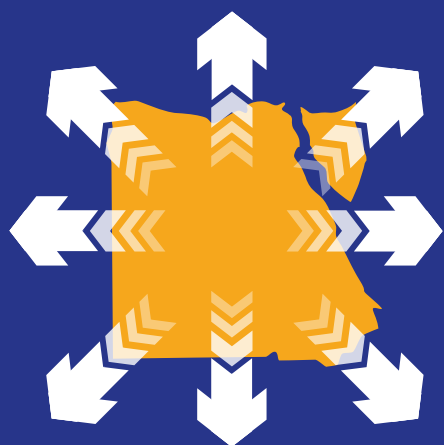
This trend is apparent on television as well, where the majority of Egyptians still get their information. In the last year, several episodes of popular television shows featured Syrian refugees who have been interviewed or profiled, and generally casting a positive light on their experience in Egypt.

A particularly noteworthy instance of this occurred less than a month after the Rosetta boat tragedy, when a programme on private satellite channel Al Nahar hosted two Syrian refugees who had successfully opened businesses in Egypt. They were hosted alongside two Egyptian survivors of the September disaster.<sup>8</sup>

The episode questioned why Syrians are succeeding in Egypt, while Egyptians are attempting to leave. This confrontational style is common on Egyptian talk shows, and often raises questions about the editorial motives, the journalistic ethics at work, and levels of professionalism in the local media industry.

In sum, while there are exceptions, particularly from non-traditional outlets like *Mada Masr*<sup>9</sup> for example, which publishes in both Arabic and English and offers articles that are both critical of and consistent with state narratives, the vast majority of media coverage paints an overwhelmingly positive picture of the Egyptian state in its dealing with issues of migration.

This runs counter to criticism by international organisations and opposition press outlets (almost exclusively based outside Egypt) over the way the country has dealt with migrants. Egypt has long received flak from these groups for discrimination against migrants and



There is little coverage of Egyptian migration – legally or otherwise – from the country, despite a history of being the **top sender of migrants** in the Arab region, due in large part to its **sizeable population**.

refugees. In 2007, Refugees International, for instance, published a report<sup>10</sup> after Egypt “closed its doors”, barring any further entry of Iraqi refugees into the country. This report and others like it paint a damning picture for refugees who do make it into the country, stating that they are not granted any official status, nor given access to social services.

There are several possible explanations for the general trend in reporting on migration; one of them is self-censorship which has been identified as a growing issue in recent years.

Furthermore, in recent years, the media landscape in the country has become much less diverse.

Egypt also has longstanding issues with professionalism and capacity shortfalls among journalists, editors and other media personnel. The media industry remains under-regulated, and attempts at passing new media laws since the ratification of the 2014 Constitution, which included commitments to draft progressive media laws and preserve freedom of expression, have been confronted with red tape.

Anecdotal evidence suggests a decline in discriminatory content relating to migrants in the country. This is likely the result both of greater awareness about the migration crisis, and the backlash that comes when media publish objectionable content.

Stereotypes that compartmentalise migrants in Egypt remain prevalent. Syrian refugees, for instance, are widely portrayed as being highly productive and resourceful, and coverage of them often focuses on their success in Egypt and their contributions to Egyptian society. On the other hand, while it appears that explicitly negative coverage of African migrants and refugees (or coverage including hate speech such as the example provided above) has diminished, there is relatively little reporting on them despite their significant presence in the country. In addition, the African migrant community is rarely identified by nationality. For example, in much of the reporting on the all too common sinking of migrant boats, despite often being the largest or second largest identified group of casualties, the bodies of those lost from sub-Saharan Africa are frequently referred to simply as “unidentified African migrants.”

As is the case with much of the coverage on migration internationally, there are often problems in the use of migration-related terminology. In Egypt, the term refugee is most ubiquitous and often refers to those fleeing conflict, as well as economic migrants, living in the country. However, when reporting on irregular migration, people trafficking or events associated with illegal migration operations, the term refugee is far less common. Instead words like “victims”, “migrants”, and “illegal migrants” are more frequently used.

While there appears to be a reduction in hate speech and discriminatory reporting, more work needs to be done to ensure transparency and representation of migrant voices in the Egyptian media. While, human interest stories are excellent vehicles for fostering understanding, empathy, and tolerance, the overall perception of refugees and migrants in the country could be vastly improved if there were more narrative accounts that better represent the actual migrant populations living in, and moving through the country.

Additionally, coverage of the challenges facing Egyptians and why many of them are attempting to leave – and risking their lives to do so – should be better documented in a more substantive, and less reactionary, way.

The reforms to guarantee the Constitutional commitment to free expression and press freedom need to proceed. For years, there has been dialogue and efforts toward reforming Egyptian media to help ensure professionalism, press freedoms, ethical coverage, and a balanced narrative. In order for sensitive and complex issues like migration to be covered fairly, the values enshrined in the Constitution need to be implemented as intended.

**Sarah El-Shaarawi** is managing editor of Arab Media & Society.

**Abdulrahman Elsamni** is a journalist who teaches Mass Communication in the Faculty of Arts at Ain Shams University in Egypt.

## Links and sources

<sup>1</sup> UNHCR Statistics on Displaced Iraqis Around the World <http://www.unhcr.org/461f7cb92.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Syria Regional Refugee Response <https://data.unhcr.org/syrian-refugees/country.php?id=8>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.youm7.com/>

<sup>4</sup> Google.com.eg and Google.com

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.ahram.org.eg/>

<sup>6</sup> For example: <http://www.youm7.com/2978988>

<sup>7</sup> Why Unaccompanied Egyptian Children are Migrating to Europe <http://www.iom.int/news/why-unaccompanied-egyptian-children-are-migrating-europe>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CAqQVQwfZmY>

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.madamasr.com/>

<sup>10</sup> Egypt: Respond to the Needs of Iraqi Refugees <http://www.refworld.org/cgi-bin/txis/vtx/rwmain?page=country&docid=47a6eef40&skip=0&coi=EGY&querysi=iraqi%20refugees&searchin=title&sort=date>



# ISRAEL

## Political Division and Internal Fears Drive the Migration Agenda

» Shaïke Komornik

Apart from brief interruptions, Jews have immigrated continuously into the originally Ottoman and later British-administered Palestine since 1882. Mass immigration characterised various periods of the 20th Century, especially the years before and after the founding of the state in 1948. The war that broke out with the neighbouring Arab states at this time led to the mass migration of Palestinian refugees and displaced persons. Later wars generated further refugee movements, with the result that today almost three quarters of Palestinians, around seven million, live outside their homeland.

How does the media on both sides of the Mediterranean report on Migration?

*A study by journalists, for journalists and policymakers*

*The term “immigration” in Israel refers specifically to non-Jews who enter or wish to enter Israel for work purposes or to unite with their families. All Jews in the world are considered potential citizens and can enter Israel and become citizens on entrance, if they wish to, according to the “law of return” that was ratified after the birth of the state on 1948.*

---

The population of Israel has doubled several times over the decades as a result of immigration. Since 1948 more than three million immigrants have been registered. In the 1990s Israel had the highest percentage of immigration worldwide in proportion to the size of its population.

Since the turn of the century Israel has been dealing with the immigration issue more intensively. There are several approaches to dealing with this which are reflected in the Israeli political and social arenas and as a consequence in the mass media coverage.

In order to fully understand these approaches we must first draw a picture of the current situation regarding the immigration issue in Israel.

The term “immigration” in Israel refers specifically to non-Jews who enter or wish to enter Israel for work purposes or to unite with their families. All Jews in the world are considered potential citizens and can enter Israel and become citizens on entrance, if they wish to, according to the “law of return” that was ratified after the birth of the state on 1948.

In Israel we refer to three main groups of immigrants:

**Firstly**, Palestinians from the West Bank or Gaza who wish to become Israeli citizens in order to unite with their families or to improve their living conditions. They could do it theoretically till 2012 by marrying an Israeli citizen, but that year the high court issued a ruling allowing the interior minister to refuse such requests on the basis that it can be used as a means of infiltration by hostile elements into Israel, with the underlying reason of a possible change in the demographic balance between Jews and Arabs in Israeli society.

This sort of immigration is now very rare and residence permits are given to very few.

The media coverage of this kind of Palestinian immigration was, and still is, divided along political lines. The left affiliated media underlined the human aspects of denying a person the right to unite with his family bringing up stories of fathers who cannot see their children or husbands who are living away from their wives. The Left-wing newspaper *Ha'aretz* was the leader in framing this issue as an issue of humanity and not in terms of political and security considerations. However, most of the Israeli mainstream media regards this kind of immigration as a potential threat with expressions like the “fifth column” and an “enemy

from within” used to describe the apparent threat.

Cases of Palestinians who have used the family reunion pretext to enter Israel to commit terrorist acts have occupied the headlines and the front pages of the mainstream media when the debate was at its hottest, before the ruling of the High Court of Justice.

The media interest in this sort of immigration has diminished since the court’s ruling and it seldom gets media attention which is usually reserved for cases involving Palestinians who moved to Israel before the restrictions and were accused of committing terror attacks. One can safely say that this kind of immigration has ceased to arouse media interest due to its small or virtually non-existent scale.

**A second group** of migrants are workers who come in large numbers from countries like The Philippines, Thailand, India and Nepal. They come to Israel with a work permit for 3 to 5 years working as carers for elderly or handicapped Israelis, or as agricultural workers. Most of these temporary workers return to their countries after the expiration of the work permit but quite a few of them choose to stay as illegal aliens to live and bring up their families in Israel.

This group of immigrants does not draw too much media attention. They are usually accepted as hard working people who want to provide for their families.

The main media coverage, which was dedicated to this group, was after the former Interior Minister, the head of the Shas religious party, Elie Yishay had decided in 2006 to launch an operation to expel these illegal immigrants from Israel and to toughen the criteria used to grant the children of these immigrants, who were born in Israel, citizenship.

These actions caused uproar within large sections of Israeli society and civil rights and civil society organisations who considered these steps a violation of human rights and an infringement of the rights of children who were born and raised in Israel and had no connections to the countries from which their parents came from.

The media, almost without exception, gave the fight of these children and their parents to gain citizenship very sympathetic coverage. Mainstream papers and radio and television networks ran with human interest stories of children and adolescents who were fully integrated in Israeli society and who were about to be deported to countries which are

foreign to them. The media brought up stories which emphasised the emotional trauma of removing children from their homes and putting them on a plane to a strange country.

The only exceptions to this line of coverage could be found in the religious media, newspapers and radio stations (television and internet are forbidden to the ultra-orthodox Jews) which are concerned with the “danger” of inter-marriage with non-Jews and they are usually opposed to granting non-Jews permanent residence permits. The religious media strongly supported the Interior ministry’s policy of deporting these children and members of their families, but their views carry little weight in Israeli society as a whole.

**The third group of immigrants**, which caused and still causes a very hot debate within Israeli society, are illegal immigrants and refugees who have entered Israel in large numbers during the last 15 years from African countries via the Egyptian border.

These immigrants used to cross the border and head straight to southern Tel-Aviv where they joined their fellow countrymen in establishing small colonies working in low-level jobs. If they were captured many would claim to be refugees from war torn countries like Sudan or Eritrea and were thus given a temporary permit to stay without officially recognising them as refugees.

According to data published by the immigration authority in October 2016 there are 37,000 asylum seekers from Eritrea and Sudan living in Israel now. Some 8,000 came from Darfur where a genocide has been taking place for more than 13 years. These figures were almost double those of a decade ago, before the government had taken steps to close the border with Egypt with an electric “smart” fence and by encouraging the Egyptian government to

strengthen border controls.

After this was achieved the Israeli government launched a plan to send these refugees back to their own countries or to a third country that was willing to accept them by giving them a sum of money as an incentive to leave of their own free will.

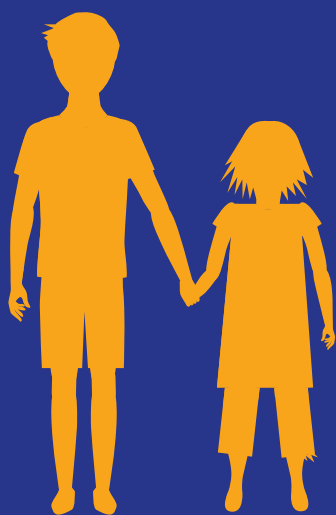
The government has refused or intentionally neglected to process the requests of these refugees to grant them permanent asylum. Of 18,000 such requests only about 2,000 were interviewed and only one person was given refugee status.

The influx of African refugees or immigrants has caused a very sharp debate in Israeli society and has brought social and racial tensions to the surface, which has been reflected in the media coverage of the issue.

The residents of southern Tel-Aviv who are of a low socio-economic status to begin with, resented the settling of the African newcomers in their neighbourhoods. Violence and demonstrations have erupted and the tensions between groups of different social and economic status intensified. Some politicians took advantage of the situation, even going as far as using blunt racist language, accusing the refugees of spreading diseases and calling them a cancer within society.

The government has tried to deal with the issue in several ways. First, it tried to arrest as many of the migrants as possible and incarcerate them in a special detention camp in the Negev area. This decision was challenged in the high court by human rights activists and the court has allowed the government to build the camp but ordered that the residents remain free to go out and work in the daytime. It also put a limit on the time that a refugee can be detained there to three years.

The Israeli media coverage of this immigration



The left affiliated media underlined the human aspects of denying a person the right to unite with his family bringing up stories of **fathers who cannot see their children** or **husbands who are living away from their wives**.





The liberal media tended to emphasise the **plight of the refugees** and the **dangers they might face** if they were deported back to their countries...



The more mainstream and right wing media tend to **emphasise the potential dangers** which the migrants might pose to Israeli society.

and refugee problem has shown sharply different approaches. The liberal media, such as *Ha'aretz* newspaper and channel 10 TV and the public radio and TV, tended to emphasise the plight of the refugees and the dangers they might face if they were deported back to their countries, in addition to mentioning the treaties that Israel has signed and must adhere to on the issue of the refugees.

Another point which the liberal press stresses is the moral commitment of the Jewish people to help other peoples in distress, mentioning the cold shoulder the Jews received when they were persecuted and exterminated during World War 2.

This media approach tries to tell both sides of the story. It is committed to telling the story of the migrants and that of the communities who suffer the burden of the influx of another poor and wretched group of people into their neighbourhoods. The framing with which this media has chosen to deal with this dilemma is to criticise the government for its inept handling of the problem.

The more mainstream and right wing media, on the other hand, tend to emphasise the potential dangers which the migrants might pose to Israeli society. They tend to stress the fact that many of these immigrants are Muslims and that they could constitute a security problem in the future. Newspapers like *Maariv*, *Israel Hayom* and TV channels like *TV20* and religious Radio channels stress the danger that the migrants constitute by raising issues of high crime rate and inter-marriage. These media tend to press the government to take firm action to minimise the numbers of African immigrants. These pressures pushed the government to take the steps mentioned above to stop the immigrants arriving and deport large number of those who

live here.

Another aspect of the immigration and refugee issue that has captured the interest of the Israeli media is the situation in Europe and the great flows of refugees from Syria and Iraq to the European continent. The overall approach of the mainstream Israeli media to this issue can be summed up in two framings.

The first is bringing up the plight of the refugees with human and sensational stories. This narrative arose mainly when the crisis was at its peak in 2015, when the main papers and TV stations sent correspondents and reporters to the main crisis locations and covered the human stories extensively. As the human crisis began to lose its momentum the narrative began to change, emphasising the potential danger that these refugees, the vast majority of whom are Muslims, can pose to European countries and to the European culture.

The big TV networks (*channel 2* and *channel 10*) broadcast special reports on the growing Muslim population in Europe and the radicalisation of young Muslims born and raised in the continent. The attitude of some of the mainstream media was that Europeans, having had a taste of "what we have been facing for decades", might "now change their attitude towards Islam and stop criticising Israel."

As to the role that Israel should take vis-à-vis the Syrian refugee problem most prominent Israeli columnists and public opinion makers, while acknowledging the suffering of the refugees, advised the government not to enter the Syrian quagmire, for two main reasons: firstly, on the basis that Israel given its internal situation should not absorb more Muslims, some of them very radical; and, second, that Israel should in

*While the mainstream media is stressing the interests of the locals as opposed to those of the migrants, and emphasizing the potential dangers of migration, it does not use racist, inflammatory or derogatory terms. It does so only when quoting politicians or anti-immigration activists who try to stir up emotions.*

---

its own interests keep out of the Syrian conflict.

The more liberal media, mainly *Ha'aretz* newspaper, took a different approach encouraging the government to accept a limited number of refugees from Aleppo, but this was the exception. There were other voices, such as the head of the labour opposition Yitzhak Herzog, who called upon the government to take this kind of action, but they were disregarded, and the issue has failed so far to stir up a debate in the mainstream media.

Put simply, the migration coverage of the Israeli media tends to split along political lines. The left wing and liberal media, which has shrunk very much in the last few decades, is more inclined to stress the broad human rights issues, social injustice and the moral obligations to give the destitute a helping hand. It uses human interest stories to foster sympathy for the migrants, making more use of the terms "refugee" "asylum" "human rights" than the mainstream media. These media are more likely to call upon the government to grant migrants civil rights and citizenship and to give them more opportunities to speak and to present their case to the Israeli public.

Mainstream media, however, are more likely to give priority to informing the public about the state's interests as they perceive it and to emphasise the side of the Israelis who are more vulnerable and prone to

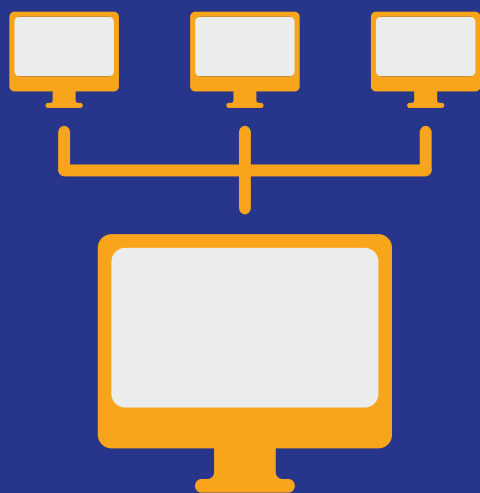
hardship as a consequence of newcomers moving into their neighbourhoods.

These media are also concerned with the human aspects of the immigrants and refugee issues but they do not try necessarily to achieve a change of attitude or to influence the public but rather to gain more readers or ratings by appealing on an emotional level.

While the mainstream media is stressing the interests of the locals as opposed to those of the migrants, and emphasizing the potential dangers of migration, it does not use racist, inflammatory or derogatory terms. It does so only when quoting politicians or anti-immigration activists who try to stir up emotions.

The case is totally different when we talk about social media. It seems that writers who are not professional journalists lose all inhibitions and moral sense when they write about the issue. There you can easily find violent discussions, blunt racist expressions and intolerance.

The Press Council in Israel has put a good deal of effort into curbing these violent discussions but unfortunately it does not have any effect on social media. It has brought several cases to the ethical tribunals but it has no jurisdiction over social media there. The situation in the social media has driven the



The case is totally different when we talk about social media. It seems that writers who are not professional journalists **lose all inhibitions** and moral sense when they write about the issue. There you can easily find **violent discussions, blunt racist expressions** and **intolerance**.



*The situation in the social media has driven the government to start preparing a law to **force social network sites to remove any inciting or racist posts immediately** upon the authorities*

---

government to start preparing a law to force social network sites to remove any inciting or racist posts immediately upon the authorities' request. The Press Council opposes this bill on the ground believing that it might constitute a slippery slope and have a negative effect on free speech. It prefers to find less intrusive means to curb the phenomenon.

In conclusion we can say that the internal immigration issue has ceased to occupy much of the press attention in the last few years, since the scale of the problem has been diminished with the erection of the fence on the southern borders. On the whole the Israeli mainstream media has dealt fairly with the issue, but it should try to detach itself from the subjective point of view and give the migrants more voice and opportunities to have their say. The more

ideologically committed press should also try give its audience more balanced reporting, but there is not much ground for optimism in this case.

On the whole, the mainstream press should pay more attention to the refugee and migration issue beyond Israel's borders. There should be more intensive and in-depth reporting of this complex issue rather than only reporting on the sensational cases where the human tragedy is at its peak. This is an issue for constant review and the media would do well to make it a more regular feature on the news agenda.

**Shaike Komornik** is a senior news editor in Israeli Public Radio in Arabic and chief editor of the digital section of the Israeli Broadcast Authority in Arabic.



# JORDAN

## Lost Voices in a Land Built on Migration

» Daoud Kuttab

Since its first days, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan has been a destination of choice for refugees and migrants. Within two years of Trans Jordan declaring independence in 1946, a large number of refugees flooded the tiny desert country east of the Jordan River. Over the years refugees and migrants would become part of this young Kingdom's DNA.

How does the media on both sides of the Mediterranean report on Migration?

*A study by journalists, for journalists and policymakers*

*The Syrian crisis has created the largest group of voiceless migrants. Numbering nearly a million and a half, Syrian refugees in Jordan are only given a voice in Jordanian media when a celebrity (like Angelina Jolie) or a United Nations official makes a public visit. Such voices are usually scripted and they do little to reflect the real views or the social realities of the Syrian population.*

---

This first batch of Palestinian refugees did little to change the landscape of media in Jordan. East Jerusalem was still in Arab hands and media outlets stayed in Palestine which, at the time, had a superior level of educated intellectuals, schools, colleges, and a decades-long tradition of newspapers, books, radio, film and cinema.

However, the June 1967 war had a much more profound impact on the media scene in Jordan. As the Jerusalem and the rest of the West Bank fell into Israeli hands, newspapers and the once famous Ramallah Radio station were no longer able to work and press owners quickly moved to Jordan. While many of Jordan's population were refugees of the 1948 and 1967 wars, most didn't live in refugee camps and refused to take UN rations and other services. Many businessmen and intellectuals became involved in various media ventures.

The Al Issa family who were the publishers of Filastine (Palestine) since the early decades of the twentieth century set up Al Rai along with other partners. Slowly the government moved in to take it over and as a result Al Rai has become the newspaper of record for Jordan. Others, led by the Sharif family set up *Ad Dustour*, a daily newspaper that has become the unofficial voice of Palestinians in Jordan. Radio and TV would continue to be government property and while Palestinians worked in these media outlets, they didn't have a clear and independent voice at Jordan Radio and TV Corporation which became part of the ruling government's media landscape.

The media scene for refugees, migrants and even citizens remained relatively closed between 1967-1989 when Jordan ended its state of emergency and witnessed a return to democratic rule with the elections of an East Bank-only parliament.

Refugees and migrants continued to arrive in Jordan as different countries witnessed wars and civil disturbances. The Lebanese civil war brought trends of thousands of migrants but coming from a strong media country, their voices were reflected in the media back home rather than in the new temporary country they had involuntarily moved to.

The invasion of Kuwait in 2000 brought the biggest influx of returnees who were mostly Palestinian citizens of Jordan that had sought work in the wealthy gulf state. The invasion of Kuwait by Saddam Hus-

sein, which Jordanians and Palestinians didn't clearly denounce, brought a wave of 400,000 returnees. In addition to this, a young Jordanian prince, Abdullah, son of King Hussein (who would later become king), married a Palestinian Jordanian, Rania Yassin.

A new wave of weekly newspapers were established by some of the journalists that had worked in Kuwait. Nidal Mansour's *Al Hadath* attempted to reflect the aspirations of these returnees but like all other media in Jordan the content was general and did not specifically concern any single group.

The second Gulf war, however, saw a new group of Iraqi migrants, many with suitcases loaded with cash. They quickly became involved in business and real estate but stayed away from politics and media. The fact that many of the Iraqi refugees/migrants used Jordan as a transit country in order to reach other destinations (Canada, Australia etc.) meant that there were no serious issues that needed to be addressed by Iraqi-owned media.

It would be another decade before an Iraqi businessman would set up an Iraqi FM radio station in Amman, taking advantage of the 2002 audiovisual law, which opened up the media landscape and was widely seen an important step for media freedom in Jordan ([http://www.huffingtonpost.com/daoud-kuttab/audiovisual-media-in-jordan\\_b\\_6850912.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/daoud-kuttab/audiovisual-media-in-jordan_b_6850912.html)). Forat FM, however, kept out of politics and didn't even broadcast news. It provided light entertainment and quiz shows for a population that was happy to hear someone with an Iraqi accent on the airwaves.

Smaller groups of migrants have also made Jordan their homes. Over the years some Muslims from former Soviet Union countries returning from the Haj in Mecca decided to make Jordan their new home mostly in the Zarqa area. Other migrants came from Ethiopia, Sudan, Yemen and Somalia. But these groups rarely featured in the media landscape. Apart from occasional one off articles, most migrant voices were totally unheard.

The Syrian crisis has created the largest group of voiceless migrants. Numbering nearly a million and a half, Syrian refugees in Jordan are only given a voice in Jordanian media when a celebrity (like Angelina Jolie) or a United Nations official makes a public visit. Such voices are usually scripted and they do little to reflect the real views or the social realities of the Syrian population.

The only efforts to mitigate this problem have come from Syrian media (usually based outside of Jordan) and efforts by non-profit media organisations. Free-lance Syrian journalists working for Turkish or European-based media continue to work in Jordan but they cover Syrian migrant issues from the point of view of the conflict inside Syria rather than provide any detailed focus on the daily lives and the humanitarian conditions in which refugees live.

A number of European governments, Japan and UN-ESCO provided support for training and the production of a weekly hour-long programme on *Yarmouk FM* (part of Yarmouk Public University) and *Farah El Nas* radio (part of the Princess Basma Foundation). The project included the training of Syrian journalists and gave Syrian migrants a chance to call and speak about some of the challenges that they were facing. The programme ran from 2012-2015 and ended because of lack of funding.

Another more ambitious and long term project was carried out by the Amman-based non-profit organisation *Community Media Network* (CMN). With funding from the United States government and other foundations, more than 100 Syrians were trained over a five-year period. Trainees were provided with work opportunities and paid a stipend for their work. While Jordanian law doesn't allow Syrian migrants to work as journalists, the stipends were provided as travel and communications expenses rather than as a full time contract.

Syrian migrant trainees became the key part of a daily radio programme on *Radio al Balad* called "Syrians Among Us". The idea of the programme was focused on training Syrian journalists and coupling them with local

Jordanian reporters with the aim of *empowering Syrians* and as part of an effort to counter the hate speech that at times poured from local Jordanian media.

The daily *10-minute bulletin* was broadcast on several Jordanian radio stations including the official radio station in Irbid and the *Voice of Karak* in addition to the broadcasts on *Radio al Balad* in Amman. The daily bulletins were also posted online and distributed as podcasts. Daily headlines of the bulletin were translated into English and made available via a mailing list to diplomats, NGOs and UN officials.

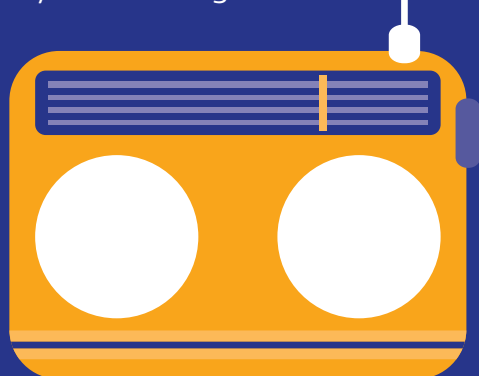
The radio programme also included live reports from a field reporter in the Zaatari camp. However, the Zaatari reporter had to use an alias for fear that he might be punished for working as a journalist without a permit.

Some of the Syrian migrant journalists trained by *Community Media Network* were involved in some of the most hard-hitting investigative reports that were produced in Jordan by the investigative journalism unit at *Radio al Balad*. Investigations included issues of corruption, *forced* deportation, and the *confiscation of official* documents of Syrians.

Syrian migrant journalists that have benefitted from training in Jordan have also been able to use their newly-developed skills to find jobs with major Arab and international media outlets. They provided a chance for Syrian issues to be regularly covered by regional and world media outlets.

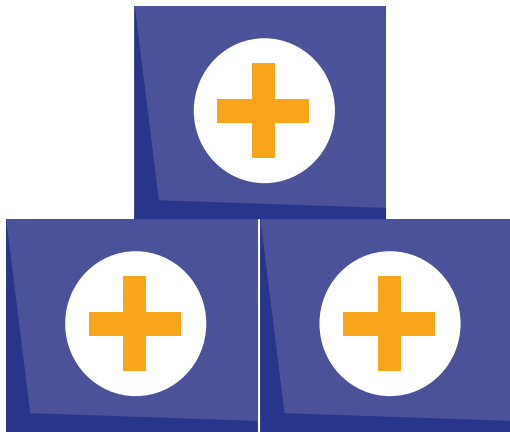
One of the problems facing Syrian migrants has been the lack of access to reliable and useful information. Most Syrian refugees have no idea where to go and who to talk to in order to resolve basic humanitarian issues.

Syrian migrant trainees became **the key part of a daily radio program** on *Radio al Balad* called "Syrians Among Us".



The radio programme also included live reports from a field reporter in the Zaatari camp. However, the Zaatari reporter **had to use an alias for fear that he might be punished for working as a journalist without a permit.**





*Media communication is not only necessary to give Syrian migrants a voice but it is also important to provide them with basic information, public health guidance and various other crucial issues related to the lives of Syrian migrants.*

One attempt to address this problem was a media project organised by **CARE** International. The project included the commissioning of a 45-minute video that has been screened in various offices of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). The video, that plays on a loop, provides simple information such as where to go for registration, signing up for schools and how to fill out basic forms. The video, which is repeatedly played in the various arrival points for Syrian refugees, also includes uplifting reports and success stories of Syrian migrants in Jordan.

Despite all of the above efforts, most observers feel that this is nothing more than a drop in an ocean. With such a huge population that counts for nearly one fifth of the entire population in Jordan, it seems that a much more robust effort is needed to provide Syrian

refugees with a voice and a medium by which they can express themselves.

Media communication is not only necessary to give Syrian migrants a voice but it is also important to provide them with basic information, public health guidance and various other crucial issues related to the lives of Syrian migrants. More should be done to fill this void and to provide wider public understanding of their situation if the plight of refugees is to be eased.

**Daoud Kuttab** is an award winning Arab journalist and media entrepreneur. He is former Ferris Professor of Journalism at Princeton University and the director general of Community Media Network. More on [daoudkuttab.com](http://daoudkuttab.com)



# LEBANON

## Mixed Messages as Media Cope with Internal Stress and External Pressure

» Magda Abu-Fadil

With Lebanese media mired in dysfunctional domestic politics, facing regional security threats and international upheavals, and troubled by their own shaky existence, it is no surprise that there has been a hodgepodge of migration coverage since 2015.

How does the media on both sides of the Mediterranean report on Migration?

*A study by journalists, for journalists and policymakers*

*Lebanon has a turbulent history, including a civil war from 1975 to 1990 during which print and broadcast media were created to service warring factions, mostly along sectarian and politically ideological lines. ... Radio stations and TV channels continue presenting their founders' views, if not in full militia fashion as during the war, but their bias is inescapable.*

---

Although glossaries of migrant-related terminology – provided by international organisations and NGOs – exist, journalists covering the story still use terms like “migrant,” “refugee” and “settler” incorrectly and interchangeably.

Glossaries are not always updated fast enough to keep up with the media’s needs, and not necessarily available in the three main languages used in Lebanese news outlets: Arabic, French and English.

Statistics are a tricky topic. The government’s figures on the number of Syrian refugees and migrants may vary from those of international organisations and United Nations agencies tasked with registering asylum seekers.

A sticking point is the number of undocumented residents who slip undetected across borders, evade aid agency safety nets, and disappear through the cracks of bureaucracy.

Lebanon is not a signatory to the 1951 UN convention on “non-refoulement,” or not sending refugees away once they arrive.

Sociologist Mona Fayad wrote an analysis piece in *Annahar* daily 4 October 2016 <http://www.annahar.com/article/480019> on *Media’s Role in Dealing With Syrian Migration*. She said Syrian refugees, exceeding a third of the population, threatened Lebanon’s social equilibrium and that the impact had begun to manifest itself in the rising rate of violence and security incidents involving Syrians who accept aid in exchange for services rendered to partisan groups.

Her article also touched on the causes of youth radicalisation in migrant and refugee groups and neighbouring disadvantaged local communities, and the friction caused by their interaction.

“We shouldn’t overlook the fact that the Syrian migration comes against a backdrop of Lebanon undergoing a dangerous political, economic, and social crisis tied to domestic problems and the conflict in Syria,” she said, noting that all these factors could undermine security and become a time bomb in the medium and long term.

Lebanon, whose population is about four million, hosts upwards of 1.5 million Syrian refugees, and some half a million Palestinians in camps established after the creation of the state of Israel in 1948, to which were added thousands of Iraqis fleeing the violence in their country after the US invasion in 2003.

*Naharnet* <http://bit.ly/2gCx9lw>, quoting the United Nations, reports that more than half the Syrian refu-

gees in Lebanon do not have valid residence permits, leading to a rising number of unregistered new-borns.

Additionally, many Syrian refugees are hamstrung by measures making it almost impossible for them to obtain or renew their residence permits. As a result children are dropping out of school – if they even attend – and replacing adult men to become their families’ main breadwinners.

Lebanon has a turbulent history, including a civil war from 1975 to 1990 during which print and broadcast media were created to service warring factions, mostly along sectarian and politically ideological lines. They competed with state-run outlets and have morphed into commercial, albeit partisan, ventures.

Radio stations and TV channels continue presenting their founders’ views, if not in full militia fashion as during the war, but their bias is inescapable.

While examples of fair and balanced coverage of migrant-related issues exist, they seem to have been overshadowed by a proliferation of hate-mongering journalism. Those listed in this report focus on the negative coverage and its ramifications.

Shifting political alliances since the Syrian conflict began in 2011 have also meant a certain degree of recurrent escalation or de-escalation in the tone used by some media outlets.

There was no reporting in these examples on the diaspora in general, remittances, diaspora investments, and little on migrants’ repatriation, save for Lebanese politicians’ statements about setting up safe havens within Syria for those escaping the violence.

Most of the emphasis was on the politics, economics, development / aid and security angles of the story. As with donor fatigue, there is refugee fatigue, so stories involving Syrians reflect the mood.

Emotional, human interest and fact-based issues dominate the news agenda when security and terrorism matters are at stake or when crimes are committed; when Lebanon receives or requests more foreign assistance to handle the flood of Syrians; and when international dignitaries and celebrities visit refugee camps.

Major challenges in telling the migration story from inside the newsroom include:

- Access to reliable data and statistics. Data comes from conflicting sources with an interest at stake, so verification can be problematic;

- Political and economic interests that influence media coverage and combine with sectarian, religious, and social considerations;
- The presence of hate speech in public discourse, which has become increasingly common. Politicians take to different media platforms to blame their rivals for policy mistakes and social media used by all sides adds fuel to the fire by repeating offences that lead to hate crimes;
- The lack of voices for migrants; some media fail to be inclusive because of other priorities, interests, budgets and deadlines.

In all of this social media play an increasingly visible and influential role in coverage of migrants. In some cases it's positive, like rallying support for needy refugees, but it can also be negative, blaming them for rising crime figures, or for adding to demand for basic services and putting pressure on crumbling infrastructure. This often inflames politicians' negative statements.

A tendency to sensationalise and to use stereotypes has always been present in Lebanese media but this ebbs and flows with the magnitude of crises. In television, it's common for newscasts to begin with the headlines followed by an editorial-cum-opinion introduction passing off as news. That segment is used to lash out at adversaries, criticise policies and practices, defend positions, and draw attention to certain causes, before delving into actual news reports.

Online media provide a wider spectrum, given the possibility of posting content 24/7 but social media and comments – where available – are fertile ground for exacerbating matters.

Editorial bias is inevitable in a country where media answer to political, economic, religious and sectarian patrons and where neighbouring Syria, whose government

is both villain and hero to different groups of Lebanese citizens, is an inextricable part of Lebanon's history. During the Lebanese civil war Damascus sent troops under Arab League auspices to help quell the violence. This led to 30 years of heavy-handed tutelage.

The troops were chased out following a civil revolt in 2005 after former prime minister Rafic Hariri was assassinated, but Syrian influence over internal Lebanese affairs remains strong.

Meanwhile, the levels of competence and skills of journalists covering the migration story range from good to mediocre. In general, underpaid journalists don't have fixed beats so reporters may cover different topics on a given day leaving little time to worry about the political correctness of choosing the right terms.

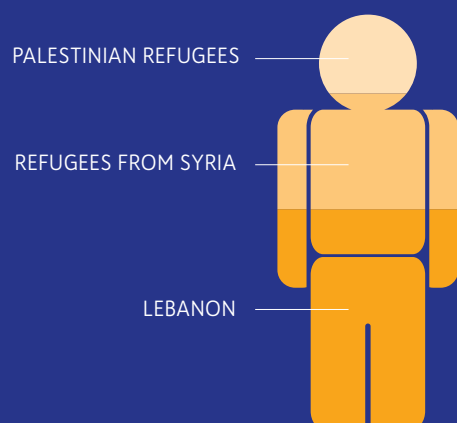
Moreover, drastic budget cuts in most media mean journalists have to multitask on fieldwork and may also spend more time covering from their desks to meet increasingly shorter deadlines.

Pressure of time and limited sources of information hinder Lebanese journalists. Advertising revenue has been falling for many years and newspapers have laid off editorial staff, or cut the number of pages, and turned their attention to digital publishing. An enormous burden falls upon the remaining journalists.

The grave economic problems have seen several news organisations unable to pay their employees in months, so there is little incentive to go out on a limb in reporting assignments. Some leading papers have announced their intention to close down.

Where there's engagement with the audience it varies from cursory to non-existent. Staffers may respond to comments and social media posts, but more often individual journalists active on social media do the engaging.

**Magda Abu-Fadil** is a journalist and director of Media Unlimited in Lebanon



Lebanon, whose population is about **four million** hosts upwards of **1.5 million** Syrian refugees, and some **half a million** Palestinians in camps established after the creation of the state of Israel in 1948, to which were added thousands of Iraqis fleeing the violence in their country after the US invasion in 2003.

# CASE STUDIES

---

The following are a selection of media controversies in 2016 arising from migration-related coverage:

**CASE ONE:** “A refugee’s shoe is worth more than Lebanon and the leaders..Bassel Al Amin to jail” was a *Lebanon Files* headline 6 December 2016. The online news site said media student and former intern at *Al Jadeed TV* Bassel Al Amin had posted on his Facebook page: “The shoe of a Syrian refugee, worker and citizen is worth more than your republic, cedars, Lebanon, right wing, independence, government, revolution and leaders.” <http://www.lebanonfiles.com/news/1119419>. The Lebanese penal code dates back to 1943 and bars “targeting national unity or disturbing the serenity of the nation’s elements,” a catch-all phrase for stifling dissent. *Lebanon Files* said the Anti-Cyber Crime Bureau had summoned Al Amin for questioning and he had been jailed for a week.

*MTV News* said it was honoured to protect Lebanon against marauders and launched into a tirade against all media that defended Al Amin’s right to speak up under the guise of freedom of expression, including *Al Akhbar* daily which it labelled “base, mercenary, racist, and sectarian to the bone.” *MTV* is anti-Syrian regime, *Al Jadeed* has seesawed in allegiances and *Al Akhbar* is pro-Syria and supportive of Hezbollah, a close ally of the Syrian regime. An *MTV News* reporter asked whether *Al Akhbar*’s journalist who strongly supported Al Amin should be addressed in like fashion and aired a mock Facebook post stating: “*MTV*’s shoe is worth your paper, slogans, racism, sectarianism, pens, dependence (on patrons), history, and anyone supporting your support..”

---


*MTV News said it was honoured to protect Lebanon against marauders and launched into a tirade against all media that defended Al Amin’s right to speak up under the guise of freedom of expression, including Al Akhbar daily which it labelled “base, mercenary, racist, and sectarian to the bone.”*

---

Former interior minister and lawyer Ziad Baroud said <http://bit.ly/2heNYmE> the Facebook rant did not justify incarceration, that it could have been handled with a fine, and that the code needed updating. “All journalists reject being summoned to any investigation, be it by the anti-cyber crime bureau or any other authority, but in the case of Al Amin, all journalists in Lebanon wash their hands of him because he insulted his people, land, cedars and country’s leaders for the sake of a Syrian refugee’s, laborer’s, and citizen’s, shoe,” *Lebanon Files* said. “Wouldn’t he be better off going to live in Syria and participate in the so-called revolution his way by dealing with the shoes?” *MTV Lebanon Prime Time News* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C1WJV5Ct9OE> aired a segment 8 December 2016 called “The Baseness of Debasing Lebanon.” The channel broadcast a report laced with invective, an introduction blaming the law “for not disciplining hooligans.” It referred to Al Amin as a “so-called” Lebanese and a trainee of *Al Jadeed TV*, with which the former channel had been in a serious mudslinging contest for months.

Following his arrest, several journalists and activists defended Al Amin on social media and called for his release using the hashtag “A (Facebook) status is not a crime” while *MTV News* launched its own campaign across platforms and in emails to opinion leaders slamming *Al Akhbar* and *Al Jadeed*.

**CASE TWO:** *MTV Lebanon Prime Time News* – December 7, 2016 – YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6YBdJzgLCs4&feature=youtu.be>. This report on Syrians in refugee camps in Lebanon raised alarms about their ballooning birth rates, but refugees considered them a blessing, according to those interviewed. Tents barely large enough for a family of five had seen an average increase of one person a year, the reporter said. Refugees interviewed for the report averaged 7-10 children per family, saying it was normal and good. One refugee said he stopped at eight children because camp conditions were difficult.



Students from *Académie Libanaise des Beaux Arts* (ALBA) posted a YouTube video called “I wouldn’t date a Syrian” that went **viral on traditional and social media.**

*Annahar* daily caused a social media stir when it published a story November 9, 2016

**“Further Deterioration of Air Quality Following Syrian Asylum Costing \$151 Million Since 2011.”**

**CASE THREE:** Students from arts school *Académie Libanaise des Beaux Arts* (ALBA), at the University of Balamand, posted a YouTube video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hw7rOd3pzT8> called “I wouldn’t date a Syrian” that went viral on traditional and social media. It showed French-speaking female students dismissive of Syrian young men in racial tones. The video purported to survey women students by asking if they would date Syrian men. All the women’s replies were negative citing cultural and educational differences. The video was subtitled in Arabic. <http://www.lebanondebate.com/news/292125> An ALBA professor published a Facebook clarification saying the video was a student assignment to highlight the issue of “veiled racism in Lebanese society and the impact of a sensitive topic on social media.” But it went awry when the video elicited angry reactions, with comments suggesting these Lebanese women were trying to dissociate themselves from their Arab identity and appear Westernised by speaking French, and blasted ALBA for its students’ insensitivity. An email from ALBA’s administration later reiterated an earlier statement saying the video was part of an academic project, issued an apology, and condemned all offensive racist, political or religious content.

**CASE FOUR:** *Al Joumhouriya* newspaper published a report on 10 November 2016 headlined: “Dima Sadek Attacks OTV and Calls for Action” <http://www.aljoumhouria.com/news/index/336670>. The article said LBCI TV anchor/presenter Dima Sadek had joined other critics of OTV, her former employer and an arm of the Free Patriotic Movement of Lebanese President Michel Aoun, to disparage an episode of the candid camera-type program “Still Your Heart” in which actors insulted and demeaned a Syrian.

The channel had aired an episode in which a refugee was terrorised when the station crew insulted and humiliated him by forcing him to get down on his knees and stomach and take off his clothes, before admitting it was a stunt. Activists attacked the station on social media.

Sadek expressed revulsion at the episode, noting it proved society was sick, and called for action before disaster strikes.

On November 18 *Al Joumhouriya* quoted Sadek as saying: “Stop That Program.” <http://www.aljoumhouria.com/news/index/336477>. She posted online messages saying: “From the day I left OTV, I took a firm decision not to criticize this station, no matter what... After I saw the video, I considered that faced with such sadistic hallucination and nausea it would be unethical not to attack OTV, or at least this program..What madness, what hatred, what blasphemy made you reach that point? Are those who wrote the script and produced the terrifying and revolting segment we saw, humans like us? What, pray tell, is this? What is this? Where did you get all this hatred and racism and haughtiness? Since when were you like this?”

**CASE FIVE:** *Annahar* daily caused a social media stir when it published a story November 9, 2016, “Further Deterioration of Air Quality Following Syrian Asylum” <http://bit.ly/2fCxOzo> Costing \$151 Million Since 2011.” The unsigned news item referred to Environment Minister Mohamed Machnouk chairing a meeting to discuss a proposed national strategy for air quality management. Machnouk said a 2011 World Bank study had estimated the deteriorating air quality cost Lebanon \$151 million annually based on a garbage crisis in the country and the presence of some 1.8 million Syrian refugees. Pro-Syrian advocates took to social media to criticize *Annahar* on charges of stereotyping and dehumanising Syrian migrants.



**CASE SIX:** The *NOW Lebanon* news website headlined an article November 22, 2016: “Hezbollah MP: Regulate movement of Syrian refugees in Lebanon” <https://now.mmedia.me/lb/en/NewsReports/567141-hezbollah-mp-regulate-movement-of-syrian-refugees-in-lebanon> The article said a member of Hezbollah’s parliamentary bloc had called for regulating the movement of Syrian refugees in Lebanon, hours after a north-eastern town was rocked by a wave of deadly terror attacks. It said the legislator proposed gathering the refugees in “one camp,” with no details on how the plan may be implemented, adding that their movement should be regulated through special passes granted by security forces after their relocation.

**CASE SEVEN:** *Al Akhbar* daily reported August 17, 2016 <http://www.al-akhbar.com/print/263857> “MTV is Worried About Journalism By Strangers.” It said a news item on MTV pointed to problems threatening Lebanese journalists’ livelihoods caused by Syrian asylum seekers edging them out of jobs. The Journalists Union had expressed alarm about competition from foreigners in media organisations undermining Lebanese journalists’ employment. *Al Akhbar* criticised the union for mobilising to protect Lebanese journalists from “strangers” but systematically denying them rights and depriving them of union membership. “While waiting for the union president to take a stand, Labour Minister Sajaan Qazzi was firm and used terminology akin to war and exclusion, saying the media world must be cleansed of foreigners,” *Al Akhbar* said. Qazzi had referred to print media, where he said foreigners were replacing Lebanese, and insisted on “Lebanizing the Lebanese press” – a throwback Civil War and sectarian cantons parlance, it added.

**CASE EIGHT:** French-language daily *L’Orient-Le Jour* reported April 4, 2016: “Syrian Refugees: Lebanon’s Burden is Truly Gigantic.” <http://www.lorientlejour.com/article/981528/refugies-syriens-le-fardeau-que-porte-le-liban-est-reellement-gigantesque.html>. It

said Lebanon must bear the consequences of hosting huge numbers of Syrian refugees who become illegal residents, of unregistered new-borns, of a birth rate double that of the Lebanese, and of eventual integration into the job market.

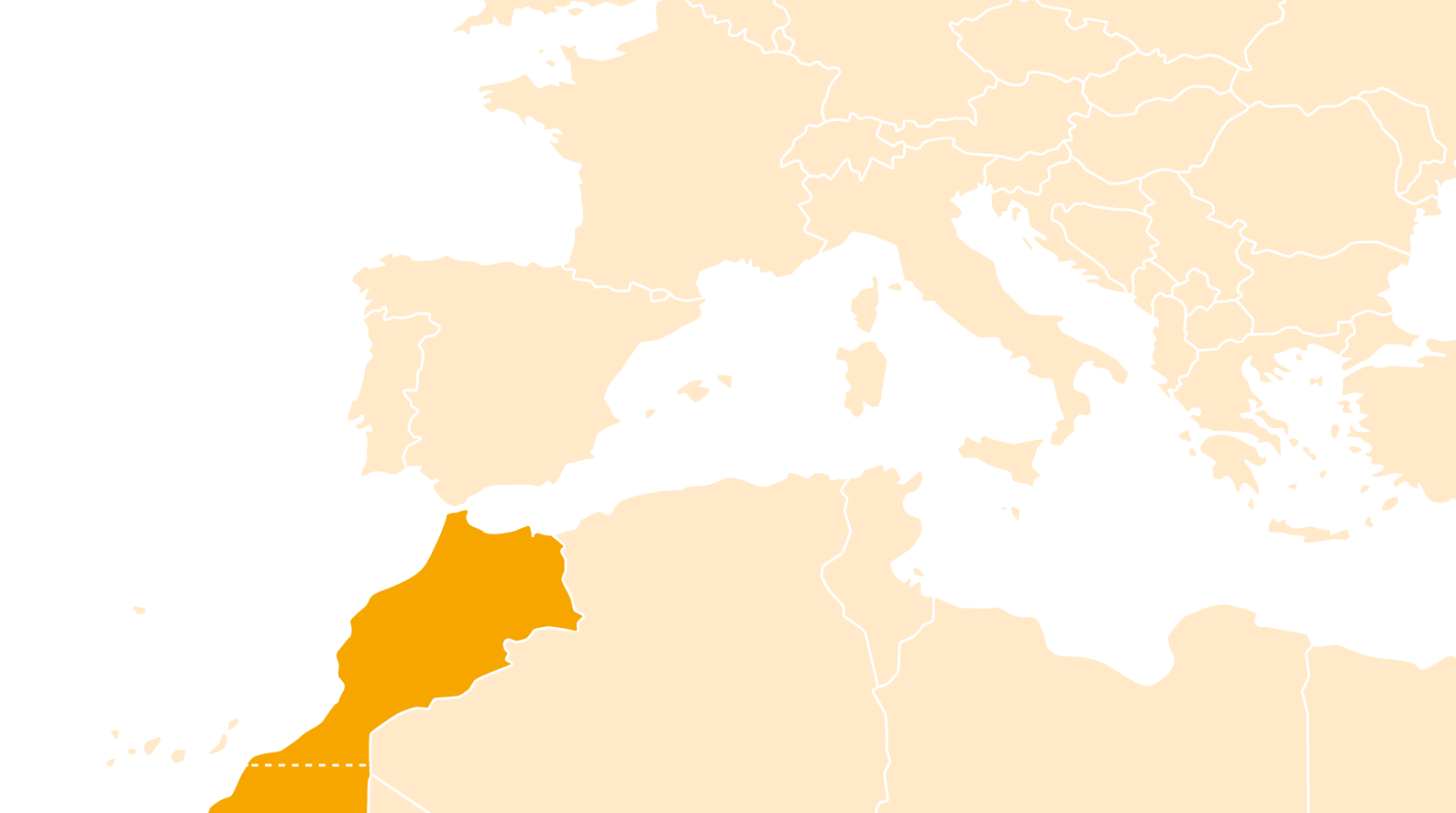
**CASE NINE:** The French-language monthly *Magazine* November 2016 issue headlined an article “Syrian Refugees: Rabiye Residents’ Daily Calvary.” [http://magazine.com.lb/index.php/fr/component/k2/item/17290-r%C3%A9fugi%C3%A9s-syriens-le-calvaire-quotidien-des-habitants-de-rabi%C3%A9?issue\\_id=253](http://magazine.com.lb/index.php/fr/component/k2/item/17290-r%C3%A9fugi%C3%A9s-syriens-le-calvaire-quotidien-des-habitants-de-rabi%C3%A9?issue_id=253) The feature focused on “rudeness, filth, and insecurity” in the Beirut suburb of Rabiye where residents were furious at the endless parade of Syrian refugees heading to the German embassy nearby and turning residents’ daily lives into a nightmare. The reporter mentioned refuse, discarded food, outdoor and in-building bathroom use, and aggressive behaviour towards residents. *Magazine* said residents had petitioned local MPs and written to the German ambassador to relocate the refugee reception centre, to no avail.

**CASE TEN:** *Lebanon Files* wrote on September 9, 2016: “Basil is a Racist..But Granting Citizenship Isn’t Handled with Epics” <http://www.lebanonfiles.com/print.php?id=1089438>. It said Foreign Minister Gebran Basil – son-in-law of President Michel Aoun – had offered netizens and social media users the chance to lambast his “racism” following his remarks at a Lebanese expat conference in New York during which he announced he’d support a law granting citizenship to the children of Lebanese women married to foreigners, provided they’re not Syrians or Palestinians, “to safeguard our land.”

**CASE ELEVEN:** An *Al Modon* article October 1, 2016 titled “Eye on Syrians in Lebanon”..Racism’s Tragedy <http://www.almodon.com/print/20a1d991-f6a1-40e9-bf2c-9ea607a49129/69910cb6-f43a-4271-b6d6-b86ef-9fb1ffc> said propaganda against Syrians was “documented” and that racism was no longer limited to political statements but had become institutionalised.

---

*Given the range of views, bias and prejudice that infects Lebanese media recommending a course of action for journalists to rectify negative coverage may seem straightforward, but to be effective it must reach all levels of the media. The steps outlined in the introduction to this report, all of which apply to Lebanon, will certainly help.*



# MOROCCO

## The Invisible People who Should Take their Place on the Media Stage

» Salaheddine Lemaizi

On 12 September 2005, the regional weekly *Achamal* ("The North") ran a front-page headline *Black crickets invade the north of Morocco*. Four years later, *Maroc Hebdo* headlined *The black peril* on the front page of a feature on irregular migration. These two front pages deeply shocked migrants living in Morocco and those who defend the rights of migrants. These professional blunders from a decade ago continue to define how migrants of all origins and their defenders regard media treatment of migration.

How does the media on both sides of the Mediterranean report on Migration?

*A study by journalists, for journalists and policymakers*

At conferences and symposiums on migration-related issues in Morocco, migrants complain about the Moroccan media's mistakes in its coverage of migration, which they say is dominated by sensationalism and stereotypes.

Since 2013, institutional changes, marked by the launch of the national strategy for immigration and asylum, have obliged stakeholders to review their approach and in particular to move beyond these two "original sins" relating to how the media cover migration. While it is unclear whether media treatment is improving, it is certainly true that it is undergoing changes that are worthy of in-depth analysis.

Morocco has been a country with a history of migration to Western Europe. Moroccan migrants settled in France and the Benelux countries from the 1940s onwards. The Moroccan press have covered their movements and the difficulties encountered by the different generations of immigrants in the host countries. Today 11% of Moroccans live outside the kingdom. In theory, at least, the Moroccan media have followed these developments.

From the early 2000s on, Morocco also became a stepping-stone on sub-Saharan migrants' journeys to Europe. Then, beginning in 2006, Morocco gradually became a host country for these migrants. Some of them work in the large urban centres of Rabat, Casablanca and Tangier while others live in extreme insecurity. This is also true of those who "choose" to remain in the informal camps situated in Oujda or Nado (in the east of Morocco) and who often fall victim to human trafficking networks and police repression.

Moroccan society has not yet come to terms with the major changes arising from the fact that these migrants are now staying in the country and, according to some, there is evidence that racist behaviour is an everyday occurrence<sup>1</sup>. Some media publish this racist content while others endeavour to provide a more balanced account of a complex reality. In all, the transition from transit country to country of residence<sup>2</sup> has not gone smoothly in the media.

## 2000 - 2005: a history of failure

On 10 September 2013, on the instructions of King Mohammed VI, the Moroccan government launched a "once-only" operation to regularise the status of irregular migrants. This was a paradigm shift in Moroccan policy. Migration, which had until then been seen as a security question and handled by the Interior Ministry, became a public policy issue, with a dedicated ministerial department and diplomacy aimed at sub-Saharan African countries.

When dealing with migration before 2013, the majority of Moroccan media coverage was caught in the trap of sensationalism. Coverage played on the audience's fears, used stereotypes and simplified complex issues. From 2000 to 2013, regular lapses in adherence to the code of professional conduct as established by the journalists' syndicate were a feature of Moroccan newspaper and television reporting.

Media in the first years focused on sensationalist images and journalistic coverage alternated between

compassion and sensationalism.

In 2002, journalist Mustapha Abbassi from the Arabic-language daily *Al Ahdath Al Maghribia* produced one of the first reports from the Belyounech forest (in the north of Morocco), where irregular migrants were living.

During this time there was also disastrous media coverage of incidents at Sebta and Melilia (enclaves occupied by Spain on the African continent) in 2005. Moroccan and Spanish authorities were implicated in the death of several sub-Saharan migrants who attempted to break out and reach the two towns.

Faced with a story of humanitarian crisis, the majority of Morocco's media, and the print media in particular, took the official, "Moroccan" side. A large number of papers simply reflected the official propaganda (*Le Matin*, *L'Opinion*, for instance). Apart from rare exceptions like *Le Journal hebdomadaire*, which no longer exists, or the magazine *Telquel*<sup>3</sup>, the print media did not question this policy. The sorry symbol of this state of affairs is the front page of the regional weekly *Achamal* (Figure 1) and its "Black crickets..." headline. Although a so-called "standard-setting" newspaper, run by a veteran journalist, the paper paid for this serious professional misconduct. The issue was seized by the Tangier court and its director given a one-year suspended prison sentence for "incitement to racial hatred".

During that month other newspapers adopted a xenophobic stance when treating this issue. Examples include the daily *Al Haraka* [The Movement], a mouthpiece for the Mouvement populaire party, and *L'Opinion* [Independence], a mouthpiece for the nationalist party.

## 2006 – 2013: Between quality reporting and "security"-focused journalism

This period of media work is marked by four major trends. Firstly, Morocco's implementation of a new security policy to manage migratory flows. The second development was the emergence of a network of associations to defend the rights of irregular migrants. The third factor was the European Union's steering role in shaping Moroccan government's priorities on migration through civil society stakeholders working



**FIGURE 1**  
The regional weekly *Achamal* in 2005: "Black crickets invade the north of Morocco". The publication was seized by the Tangier court.



**FIGURE 2**  
*Maroc Hebdo,*  
November 2012



**FIGURE 3**  
*MHI repeats the*  
offence with a  
sensationalist front  
page



**LE ROI MOHAMMED VI DÉCIDE LA  
RÉGULARISATION DE LA SITUATION DE TOUS  
LES IMMIGRÉS**

**FIGURE 4**  
*King Mohammed VI decided to regularise the*  
situation of all migrants  
Toutsurlemaroc.com  
(website does not exist any more)

on the migration issue: projects were launched to support migrant communities as well as, in particular, to strengthen the quality of media coverage. The fourth development has been the to-and-fro of media coverage which alternates between quality research, investigation and reporting on the issue to coverage which is security-focused journalism, and which prepares the ground for public support of government policy and justifies the Interior Ministry's migration decisions.

This "security-focused" journalism takes two forms. Firstly, it makes no mention of any mistakes committed by the Moroccan authorities. It may even go so far as to justify expulsions or the destruction of irregular migrants' camps as "being part of Moroccan policy on combating human trafficking networks". Researcher Laura Feliu Martinez sums up the situation as follows: "According to statements by human rights associations, the two public channels, zM and RTM, help convey an image of immigrants centred on the security aspect by dwelling on successful law-enforcement operations to arrest immigrants in transit and in irregular situations".

Secondly, this form of journalism can be seen almost daily in the newspapers' "other news" pages. The figure of "the African" drug dealer, currency receiver or prostitution ringleader is present in the columns of newspapers with large readerships, such as the dailies *Assabah*, *Al Massae* and *Al Akhbar*<sup>5</sup>.

Quality journalism is emerging in Morocco in the columns of the French-language press, but it is the exception rather than the rule in the Arabic-language press. The excellent work of some journalists cannot disguise recurrent instances of inappropriate language about migration still used in the Moroccan press. Many mistakenly criticise the Arabic-language press as being solely responsible for the provocative language on the subject, but in fact the Moroccan press in its entirety publishes articles that breach the journalists' community's code of professional conduct. The case of the front page of *Maroc Hebdo International* is emblematic (Figure 2).

“

zM and RTM, help convey an image of immigrants centred on the security aspect by dwelling on successful **law-enforcement operations to arrest immigrants** in transit and in irregular situations.<sup>4</sup>



In November 2012, it published the headline *The Black peril*. This cover page and the journalist's text is an example of the confused issues and clichés on sub-Saharan populations that have been appearing in the press for the last 10 years. The article breached professional conduct, contained factual errors, used photos unsuited to the context, and was a mix of opinion and information. What makes this case reprehensible is that the paper's management and the journalist concerned were slow to apologise. The delayed response of the paper's management made it the subject of a social media campaign. They finally presented a half-hearted apology, but only one week later<sup>6</sup>.

This deplorable front page finally prompted a debate on media coverage of migration in Morocco. It was effectively an electric shock for a fringe of Moroccan society<sup>7</sup>. Within the profession, a number of journalists criticised the magazine and a member of the magazine's editorial team publicly disapproved of the article<sup>8</sup> - an extremely rare occurrence in the Moroccan press. Nevertheless, ten months later, the same weekly repeated the offence with another sensationalist front page (Figure 3).

### September 2013 to the end of 2014: "migration" becomes a trendy topic

On 9 September 2013, a watershed date for the "migration" issue in Morocco, the national human rights watchdog - the Conseil national des droits de l'Homme (CNDH) - released a report entitled *"Étrangers et droits de l'Homme au Maroc : Pour une politique d'asile et d'immigration radicalement nouvelle"*<sup>9</sup>. The document triggered a once-only operation to regularise the situation of irregular migrants. Some of the recommendations contained in the report concerned the work of the media. For example, it exhorted the Moroccan media and journalists to "refrain from publishing or distributing messages inciting people to intolerance, violence, hate, xenophobia,



**FIGURE 5**  
*Rabat News: The entire population of Rabat and the surrounding region under threat from the dangerous African Ebola disease*

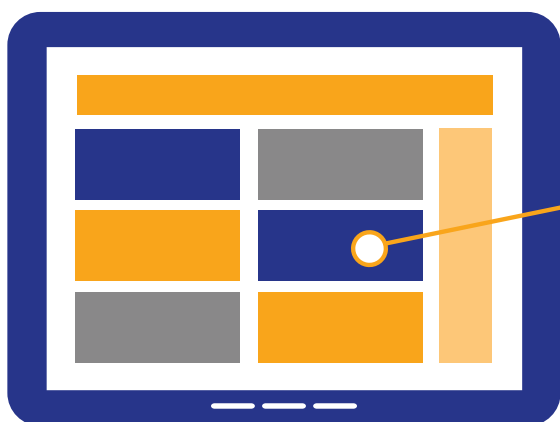


**FIGURE 6**  
*"His crime: being 'Azzi' [negro]. This was the attention-catching title of a thorough investigation into the racism experienced by sub-Saharan migrants; it illustrates more professional treatment of migration issues by Moroccan journalists.*



*Quality journalism is emerging in Morocco in the columns of the French-language press, but it is the exception rather than the rule in the Arabic-language press. The excellent work of some journalists cannot disguise recurrent instances of inappropriate language about migration still used in the Moroccan press.*





... many online users' comments on these same articles were racist or xenophobic, referring specifically to the sub-Saharan populations living in Morocco. *These expressions of hate lurk, with absolute impunity, in this Moroccan dark web.*

racism, anti-Semitism or discrimination against foreigners". The report and royal interest in the new migration policy, along with the government's involvement in implementing the policy in record time, brought "migration" under the spotlight. From being an "invisible" population for many public media, migrants went on to becoming a trendy topic for all private and public newspapers. During this period the following trends were observed:

1. **An indulgent attitude towards the State.** Under the cover of the regularisation operation, the public media (Agence MAP and the television channels) or media close to the State are promoting government policy. The "migrant" is only there to "thank His Majesty the King" (Figure 2) and "the Moroccan people for their welcome". Questions about how the operation was carried out are squeezed out (criteria, rejection rate, etc.).
2. **Continuing Sensational treatment.** Treatment of the issue continues to be marked by occurrences of racist language and breaches of professional conduct. The print media continues to convey clichés about migrants. The cover page of Rabat News (Figure 5) in March 2014 illustrates this.
3. **More Professional treatment.** "His crime: being a negro" was the attention-catching title of this Moroccan weekly (Figure 6). The journalist conducted an investigation into the racism experienced by sub-Saharan migrants in a small town in the north of the country. This is one of many examples of thorough fieldwork carried out by journalists. Over the year, it was noted that journalists were becoming increasingly specialised in the migration issue (*Libération*, *Yabiladi*, *Telquel*, and *Akhbar Al Yaoum*, for instance.).

## The features of media treatment in 2015

The year 2015 marked a low point in public discourse on migration. A press review on articles dedicated to migration in 2015 made five observations:

1. **Migration is an "invisible" subject.** In 2015, few print media (paper or online) addressed the story. Irregular migration and issues related to refugees and asylum-seekers still receive scant media attention. In 12 months, based on a press review of over 400 articles, around 20 media outlets took an interest in the subject and only a handful of them (*Yabiladi*, *Libération*, *Telquel*, *Hespress*) regularly dealt with the subject and were able to put the issues into perspective. The risk is that the subject is forgotten or left aside. This arises because there are few competent journalists with a sound grasp of the thematic, and the lack of precision over the legal terminology and the various issues involved in the subject. At editorial level, the "invisibility" of the topic makes it difficult to develop a common approach that can be set out in editorial charters. Instead, we are seeing case-by-case treatment based on the media agenda.
2. **Migration is an "institutional" topic.** Media treatment of migration in 2015 is also characterised by a focus on news about public institutions working on the topic. The majority of articles reflect on the migrant regularisation campaign launched in 2013 or dealt with the symposia organised by the ministry in charge of migration or its national and international partners. Other articles covered events organised by international organisations to mark International Migrants Day (18 December) or International Refugees Day (20 June). This event-focused treatment leaves no room for dealing with the reality of migrants' everyday experience. The



media were also content to base their reporting on the official versions, without seeking the viewpoint of the main people concerned.

**3. Migration remains a “hot” topic.** Media treatment of migration in 2015 peaked in the month of March, coinciding with operations to clear and dismantle irregular migrants’ camps near the Moroccan town of Nador (in the northeast). That month, 55 articles were produced. The majority set out the authorities’ version of the facts and only a minority quoted from reports and observations made by NGOs that defend migrants’ rights. These articles stuck to the facts, but the facts as seen by the authorities. This sort of strong media mobilisation during similar events (arrests, minor news items, trials, fatalities, etc.) is not specific to the migration issue: it stems from the internal operating constraints of the press, which devotes its attention to topics primarily as dictated by the media agenda, without having its own specific vision for treating the topic. This seasonal treatment heightens migrants’ mistrust of journalists. The strong media presence only found during these events does not allow for a longer-term, more balanced, objective, humanistic treatment of the theme.

**4. Migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers are noticeably absent from the print media.** The press review shows the almost total absence of migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers as sources in articles dealing with their situation. It should be noted that, out of the 400 articles surveyed, only 10 drew on statements by migrants. The migrant voice is replaced by spokespeople who speak on their behalf, including the NGOs and international organisations. In fact, the migrant becomes a passive subject: “beneficiaries of humanitarian action” or people who are “deported”, “resettled” or “arrested”.

**5. Hate speech on social media.** The online media articles surveyed did not contain any hate speech or racist speech. Instead, the articles fell into

the categories of sensationalism, stereotypes or simplification, though without supporting any racist or xenophobic discourse. On the other hand, many online users’ comments on these same articles were racist or xenophobic, referring specifically to the sub-Saharan populations living in Morocco. These expressions of hate lurk, with absolute impunity, in this Moroccan dark web.

As the national strategy for immigration and asylum (SNIA) is entering its fourth year, disappointment is running high among the regularised migrants, who are still waiting for several aspects of the migration policy announced in 2013 to take effect.

Migrants’ expectations include a legislative reform, access to health care, education and work, but also an improvement in media treatment of the subject. The main challenge facing Moroccan media is to report on progress being made to support this settlement migration<sup>10</sup> and the challenges arising from this new situation, with its ups and downs. In other words, media should guide and support the migratory journey of people living on Moroccan soil in their everyday experience. There should be more focus on the day-to-day realities of their lives as a next-door neighbour, work colleague, teacher, health care system user or job seeker. It is essential for the Moroccan media to discard any media treatment that reflects an image of migration solely in terms of transit or invasion. As journalist and teacher Jean-Paul Marthoz so aptly says, the media must make a choice: *“Faced with such ‘loaded’ subjects as migration, journalism has a choice: either contribute to the world’s misfortune through its negligence or its indifference, or, on the contrary, play a part in defending human dignity, with journalism’s code of conduct”*.

**Salaheddine Lemaizi** is a freelance journalist and guest teacher at the Institut supérieur d’information et de communication, Rabat (Morocco).  
Blog: [journalinbleb.wordpress.com](http://journalinbleb.wordpress.com)

## References, links and sources

- <sup>1</sup> See this report: “Au Royaume de Mohammed VI, un racisme permanent et impuni”, <http://www.h24info.ma/chroniques/le-maroc-de-mohammed-vi-un-racisme-permanent-et-toujours-impuni/26898>.
- <sup>2</sup> See also: “Campagne Maghrébine contre les discriminations raciales : Pour des législations nationales contre les discriminations raciales”, <http://www.gadem-asso.org/campagne-maghrebine-contre-les-discriminations-raciale-s-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AD%D9%85%D9%84%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%BA%D8%A7%D8%B1%D8%A8%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%B6%D8%AF%D9%91-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D9%86%D8%B5/>
- <sup>3</sup> Le Journal hebdomadaire et Telquel, editions published on 15 October 2005.
- <sup>4</sup> Laura Feliu Martínez, “Les migrations en transit au Maroc. Attitudes et comportement de la société civile face au phénomène”, L’Année du Maghreb [Online], V | 2009, posted on 09 July 2010, viewed on 12 April 2015. URL: <http://anneemaghreb.revues.org/611>; DOI: 10.4000/anneemaghreb.611
- <sup>5</sup> We have no intention to minimise the danger of such networks, but the coverage given to them by the press is out of all

proportion to their real importance in criminal networks in Morocco.

- <sup>6</sup> Read the editorial by Mohamed Selhami, director of MHI, <http://www.maghress.com/fr/marochebdo/105253> (viewed on 12 April 2015)
- <sup>7</sup> For an in-depth analysis of this front page, read Nadia Khrouz, Des « mots » aux « regrets » : qu’est devenu le « Péril noir » ? <http://www.cjb.ma/268-les-archives/270-archives-editos/382-archives-editos-2012/des-mots-aux-regrets-qu-est-devenu-le-peril-noir-2082.html> (viewed on 12 April 2015)
- <sup>8</sup> Wissam Boujaidani, « Péril noir », la réaction d’un journaliste de MHI, <http://www.yabiladi.com/articles/details/13739/peril-noir-reaction-d-un-journaliste.html> (viewed on 12 April 2015)
- <sup>9</sup> The report is available here: <http://www.ccdh.org.ma/fr/communiqués/le-cndh-elabore-un-rapport-sur-lasile-et-limmigration-au-maroc>
- <sup>10</sup> Fouzi Mourji, Jean-Noël Ferrié, Saadia Radi and Mehdi Alioua, Les migrants subsahariens au Maroc, enjeux d’une migration de résidence, Université internationale de Rabat and Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, 2016
- <sup>11</sup> Jean-Paul Marthoz, Couvrir les migrations, De Boeck (2011).



# PALESTINE

## Unforgettable History, Returning Money and Political Bias Shape the Migration News Agenda

» Bassam Ewaida

The story of migration today figures strongly in Palestinian media but it's almost always told in the context of Palestine's own history of tragedy and refugee crisis. During 2015-2016 coverage focused on the thousands of Syrians fleeing the civil war particularly to Europe via the Mediterranean as well as the plight of people displaced by conflicts in Iraq and Yemen.

How does the media on both sides of the Mediterranean report on Migration?

*A study by journalists, for journalists and policymakers*

*The term “migration” is common and well-understood in Palestinian media. Several newspapers like Alquds say that Palestinians are the best people on earth to understand its meaning since forced migration constitutes a humanitarian issue in Palestine for more than 60 years since people were forced out of their homeland as a result of killing and destruction.*

---

Their stories of migration and suffering have been linked through a clear line and common methodology among the official, private or party media to the continuing ordeal of Palestinians under Israeli occupation. The suffering of migrants and refugees is seen in the context of the events during the Palestinian Nakba (Catastrophe) in 1948 when tens of thousands of Palestinians were forced to leave their homes.

The term “migration” is common and well-understood in Palestinian media. Several newspapers like *Alquds* say that Palestinians are the best people on earth to understand its meaning since forced migration constitutes a humanitarian issue in Palestine for more than 60 years since people were forced out of their homeland as a result of killing and destruction.

Migration and refugee cases are broadly covered by all Palestinian media which regularly report on cases of young Palestinians threatened by the Israeli occupation who are forced to seek refuge in other countries, such as Turkey, leaving through the Gaza tunnels.

On 23 February 2015, for instance, *Maan News Agency* published a report that 40% of West Bank residents planned to leave Palestine for work and to live in political and economic stability. On the same day, *Alquds Alarabi* newspaper, published in London, stated that 30% of West Bank residents are considering leaving because they are unable to work.

One of the key issues covered by media related to migration is the issue of expatriates’ money transfers and investments in the Palestinian land. Padico holding company is the Palestinian leader in diaspora investment in Ramallah on the West Bank. The company occupies much space on the economic pages of the daily Palestinian newspapers such as *Alayam* and *Alquds*.

This is part of the media focus on Palestinian migrants living outside Palestine. In Latin America, for instance, there are 700,000 of them, 350,000 of which live in Chile alone.

Palestinian newspapers have reported that the total money transfers to Palestine by expatriates in 2014 were worth about \$1.84 billion. Most of these transfers came from the Arab Gulf states, the United States and from European Union countries.<sup>1</sup> The issue is covered in detail by Palestinian Studies Journal (*Majalat Adirasat Alfalastinia*), which in issue No.59, produced a detailed report on how migrants invest in Palestine. These questions are followed in detail by

*Alhayah Aljadida* daily, affiliated to the Palestinian Authority, and *Maan news Agency*, a private agency supported by the Netherlands and Denmark, which gives special importance to the expatriates’ investments in diaspora, particularly in Turkey.

It’s a subject that inspires official interest. *Alhayah Aljadida* newspaper reported that the Palestinian Trade Center (Paltrade) and the Palestinian Investment Promotion Agency held two workshops in Turkey in August 2015 to activate communication between Palestinian businessmen in the diaspora and trade supporting institutions in Turkey. The workshops were sponsored by the Palestinian-Turkish businessmen’s union and advised on investment in Palestine, Palestinian products, export capacity as well as the investment and export environment in Palestine.

Elsewhere, the evidence suggests there is plentiful and continual coverage of migration issues, although there are no official figures on the number of news reports, interviews and photos published since 2015 on migration.

The Palestinian media uses two methods of covering migration issues, one focused on emotional and human interest aspects and the other on fact-based reporting.

The Palestinian media like others used the photo of Aylan Kurdi, the Syrian toddler found dead on a Turkish beach, comparing it with the photo of Mohammad Durra, the Palestinian child killed by the Israeli forces during the Palestinian uprising (Intifada) in 2000. Sometimes there were comparisons between the tragedy of Syrian migrants from Aleppo or Iraqis from Mosul and the Palestinian people’s migration from Haifa and Jaffa in 1984.

Media use all kinds of visuals (infographics, graphics, video, charts and interactive maps) to show refugee numbers, ages and the countries they migrate to and then compare them with previous years. One of the most famous pictures used by the media was that of a foundering boat in the midst of stormy seas carrying hundreds of immigrant.

In another example, photos of refugees in a Greek camp published by *Alhayah Aljadida* newspaper showing women hanging their clothes to dry in an open ground were compared with archive photographs of Palestinian women hanging their clothes on electricity wires on the public road in Shatila refugee camp in Lebanon.<sup>2</sup> Almost daily, one can find items, reports or photographs of refugees on the front page

of the Palestinian newspaper *Alayyam*.

The peak media coverage was between January - July 2016 when more than one million Syrians migrated to Europe, particularly to Germany. But since then coverage of refugees has fallen.

The Palestinian media also report on different migrating groups inside the region occupied in 1967 and in surrounding countries (Jordan, Lebanon and Syria) and between the West Bank and Gaza. The media has followed the Palestinian migrant situation in Gaza, especially since the Israeli war in 2014, as well as the destruction of the Al-Yarmouk camp in Syria.

There are many challenges facing the editorial rooms in the Palestinian media, not least gaining access to reliable data and statistics. The media often depends on official sources for their news on migration, such as the Palestinian Central Bureau of statistics and the Palestinian Ministry of Economy. But most news coverage on statistics and numbers broadcast by Palestinian media is taken from international news agencies.

The role played by political and economic interests in newsrooms is critical and many political parties and social movements exert a powerful influence. The messages from Palestinian satellite channels on the Syrian crisis are subject to influence. The Hamas move from Damascus to Qatar has left its impression on *Alaqa* satellite channel coverage of Syria, which was in sharp contrast to *Falastin Alyawm* channel which affiliated to the Islamic Jihad movement.

While all Palestinian media organisations run stories on the endurance of displaced Syrians, Iraqis and Palestinians, explanations for their migration differ. *Alaqa* channel, affiliated to Hamas, for instance, says the reason behind the migration of thousands of Palestinians from Al-Yarmouk camp in Syria is Bashar

Assad's regime and the military "assault" of the Syrian army against Palestinian civilians in the camp. On the other hand *Falastin Alyawm* says that the reason for migration from Al-Yarmouk camp is action by extreme terrorist groups in Syria like ISIS, and others.

These views are reflected in the political terms and language used in the news bulletins with channels apportioning blame for the Al-Yarmouk attacks in line with their political bias.

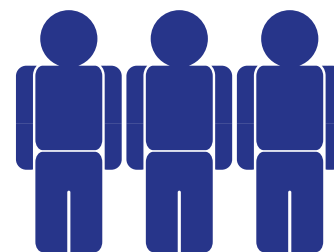
*Palestine TV*, affiliated to the Palestinian Authority, attempts to be neutral. It does not blame Assad's regime for the migration of thousands of Palestinians in order to allow for direct communication with the regime. It seeks to maintain equal political distance between Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Turkey on the one hand, and the Syrian government and Russia on the other.

But different approaches persist. *Alaqa* channel has no correspondent in Al-Yarmouk camp, while *Falastin Alyawm* has a permanent correspondent in addition to an editor for Palestinian affairs. On 24 April 2015, *Falastin Alyawm* reported: "*The Palestinian Akram Kusa martyred by sniper gunshot at the entrance of Al-Yarmouk camp*". On the same day, *Alaqa* broadcast: *Palestinians martyred by sniper gunshot from the Syrian regime at the entrance of Al-Yarmouk camp*.

The former dropped from its news the notion of "Syrian regime" responsibility for the killing while *Alaqa* uses political, not informative, terms when addressing Palestinians migration. It is noticeable how the media discourse of these two channels is similar to that of Hamas and Islamic jihad movements. *Alaqa* policy reveals the nature of political relations with Qatar and the tense relationship with Iran and Hezbollah which led to the cutting off of Iranian aid



**The media often depend on official sources for their news on migration, such as the Palestinian Central Bureau of statistics and the Palestinian Ministry of Economy. But most news coverage on statistics and numbers broadcast by Palestinian media is taken from international news agencies.**



PALESTINE HAS SOME  
**1.700.000**  
FACEBOOK USERS WITH  
AN AGE RANGE OF  
**21-25 YEARS**

to Hamas, which at one point was up to 280 million USD annually.

Another problem is hate speech in media even though it is banned in law. Article (7- clause "a") of the Palestinian Press and Publication law prevents publishing anything that might stir up violence, intolerance, racism and sectarianism. Article (3 a) bans articles that harm national unity, incite hatred, or spread seeds of hostility, disagreement, and arouse sectarianism in the community.

In addition, the Palestinian Journalists Syndicate Code calls for "values of tolerance, acceptance of other opinions, denouncing defamation, discarding incitement to violence and hatred against any person, party or institution on the basis of sex, ethnicity, religion or political affiliation".<sup>3</sup>

Nevertheless, the Palestinian territories is a leader among Arab countries in respect of hate speech, especially after the 2006 split between the West Bank controlled by Fatah and Gaza controlled by Hamas. The Palestinian split is reflected in most aspects of life, including the division of war prisoners, martyrs and exposing the political arrests practiced by the Palestinian Authority.

On 26 February 2016, the programme Hadath Wa abaad (event & dimensions) aired on *Falastin Alyawm* was dedicated to political arrests. During the broadcast Nafith Azzam, the leader of the Islamic Jihad movement equated political arrests practiced by the Palestinian Authority and to those of Israel.

There are no codes of conduct or charters of honour that ban hate speech on *Palestine TV* and *Wafa* agency, both affiliated to the Palestinian Authority, nor is there for *Alaqa TV*, or *Falastin Alyawm TV*. However, a women's radio station called *Nisa' Fm* bans incitement to violence and demands respect for pluralism and free expression.

The Palestinian media do give space for migrant voices to be heard. *Palestine TV* broadcast a special program called *Arza wa zaitona* (cedar and olive) from Lebanon, hosted by Maher Shalabi, which addressed the Palestinian refugee crisis in Lebanese refugee camps

The Palestinian media has transmitted the voices and several topics about the Palestinian refugees from Syria, especially from Al-Yarmouk and Nayrab camps and from Iraq and Libya as well. *Falastin Alyawm* produced a programme on the Palestinian refugees suffering in Shatila camp.<sup>4</sup> *Al Quds* press agency had a special interview with Muneer Maqdash, head of Fatah movement forces in Lebanon in which he said that some parties are seeking to eliminate Palestinian presence in Syria and that extreme organisations are not allowing supply aid into the camp. Also, the Palestinian *Awdahcenter* makes films on Palestinian refugees.<sup>5</sup>

Few communities on social media have such a big impact on media coverage as that in Palestine. Palestine has some 1,700,000 Facebook users with an age range of 21-25 years old. This number is rapidly increasing. At international level, Palestine has been one of the top countries for Facebook subscriptions. But its popularity comes at a price. Because of social media problems, the Palestinian Public Attorney issued a decision on 3 January 2017 to crackdown on electronic crimes.

Social media do influence news coverage and sometimes they have a direct influence on political and social decisions. For instance, when Facebook activists launched a campaign to support Palestinian refugees in Al-Yarmouk, the Palestinian authority hastened to send aid to the refugees to calm down Palestinian public opinion.

From time to time, the Palestinian Authority issues political or judicial decisions in response to social

*The Palestinian media never rush to publish their migration related news, reports and news stories. They sometimes hasten to publish names of martyrs killed in the occupation and where they rely on Israeli sources or on Facebook.*

---

media pressure. Similarly, Palestinian media are often not to blame for stirring up the migration issue as a provocation; often the responsibility lies with social media activists.

Pictures of refugees in abject conditions transmitted by media, however, do rouse Palestinian public opinion. The stereotypical image of the current Palestinian refugees in Al-Yarmouk camp in Syria, or Iraq or Libya is particularly negative. It is often a dehumanised image of suffering, weakness, and agonised faces. It is the same stereotypical image of the Palestinian refugee in Gaza seen during the Israeli war of 2014: it is an image of refugees suffering from harsh realities -- deprivation, poverty, and helplessness.

On the other hand, the image of Palestinian refugees in Europe or Latin America can be positive; it is a vision of the successful immigrant and investor who is well-mannered, strong, and smiling with a relaxed expression.

These stereotypes give an impression of the Palestinian migrant displaced from his home with two faces – that of the image of a freedom fighter alongside the image of suffering, pain and hardship living in tents.

This is seen in the way political bias operates in the editorial room. For example, in 2015, the Palestinian Authority's Palestine TV featured photos of Palestinians whose homes were demolished by the Israeli occupation especially in Khuzaa district in the north of Gaza strip. They showed displaced people living in United Nations school accommodation. One

family lives in one room and sometimes in school lavatories. Interviews are made with women crying because of their hard living conditions.

Conversely, *Alaqa* channel avoids such reports in order not to highlight the state of despair among the residents and to maintain public morale. For this reason, Hamas, aware of media opposed to their political line, banned the distribution of *Alquds*, *Alhayah Aljadida*, *Alayyam* newspapers in Gaza for long periods and prevented *Maan* agency from covering the news in the area.

Palestinian journalists who cover migration are usually highly professional. They have long experience of reporting hot events in the occupied Palestinian territories and many have lost their lives to tell their stories.

The Palestinian media never rush to publish their migration related news, reports and news stories. They sometimes hasten to publish names of martyrs killed in the occupation and where they rely on Israeli sources or on Facebook.

But even so, Palestinian media are at a disadvantage. They often lack the financial resources to maintain specialist correspondents. None of the Palestinian newspapers (*Alquds*, *Al Ayyam*, *Alhayah Aljadida*), or the local radio stations (*Raya*, *24*, *Ajyal*, *Nisa FM*, *Najah*) and *Palestine TV*, or news agencies, or *Alaqa TV* have correspondents in Lebanon, Syria or Europe, or in Germany, where there are 800,000 Palestinians, or in Latin America. Only *Falastin Alyawm* has a correspondent in Syria who reports on news relating to the Palestinian refugees there.



These stereotypes give an impression of the Palestinian migrant displaced from his home with two faces – that of the **image of a freedom fighter** alongside the **image of suffering, pain and hardship** living in tents.



Although advertising and commercial influence does affect media content there is no evidence of commercial pressure affecting the Palestinian media when it comes to the migration issue.

The state of the relationship between the media and their audience differs from one medium to another. In local radios, there is wide cooperation as most of the local radios broadcast morning shows through which citizens can call but the level of interacting with audience in national such as *Palestine TV* is very low.

In conclusion, it is clear that the Palestinian media covers the migration story well, but they report it in a context which is uniquely Palestinian and reflects the history of suffering in the territories. However, the political interests of local parties, social movements and media owners have a decisive impact on the newsrooms of Palestinian media.

Although Palestinian journalists who cover migration issues are highly professional and there are outstanding examples of good reporting, the media coverage of migration tends to focus on emotional, human interest reporting or fact-based realities. Migration news is reported selectively in the party TV channels which often reflect a political bias which hinders media coverage. At the same time, social media have a great clear impact on the news and, as we have seen, can directly influence political decisions. The problem of negative stereotypes of Palestinian refugees remains a problem.

## Recommendations

- 1. ORGANISING** awareness-raising seminars and conferences that help people better understand the consequences of migration. Is Europe really the paradise described by social media? This is important given statistics that show 40% of West Bank residents are thinking of leaving.
- 2. PREPARING** documentaries showing the hard realities facing Palestinians, Syrians and Iraqis in the target countries of migration (in Germany for example where there are around 800,000 Palestinians and one million Syrians).
- 3. DEVELOPING** academic courses, for example, at Birzeit university in the West Bank on The Palestinian media and migration
- 4. CALLING** upon Palestinian media to adopt self-regulation and codes of conduct banning hate speech and racism based on religion, race or sectarianism.
- 5. DEMANDING** separation of editorial and administration in media institutions.
- 6. CALLING** upon the Palestinian media to organise their own information sources on the migration issue and to appoint correspondents in refugee districts.

**Bassam Ewaida** is assistant professor at Birzeit University, Ramallah and Al-Quds University, Jerusalem. He is also a correspondent at the Arabic division of Funkhaus Europe.

## References and links

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.pead.ps>

<sup>2</sup> "Alhayah Aljadida" newspaper 14 . 2 . 2015

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.pjs.ps/ar/pjs2/code-of-Conduct>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NrQyVdOJtLo>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bUxN6dHirPo>



# TUNISIA

## Single-minded Media Fail to Grasp Opportunities to Go Beyond Tales of Woe

» Sana Farhat

Dramatic political change brought about by the fall of the former regime in January 2011 coupled with the changes in migration flows have led to the migration issue becoming a prominent focus of the Tunisian media landscape. The importance of the migration issue on the agenda of Tunisian media can be attributed to the large number of young Tunisians setting out for Europe, many of them without visas and at great risk to their lives. At the same time the conflicts in Libya and Syria have generated a large number of refugees and within the country there is a large body of migrants from African countries.

How does the media on both sides of the Mediterranean report on Migration?

*A study by journalists, for journalists and policymakers*

*During 2015 and 2016 the main events that marked media coverage of migration were the tragic shipwrecks involving young Tunisians or migrants of other nationalities (Algerians, Syrians and sub-Saharan) attempting to cross the Mediterranean to Europe in makeshift boats.*

---

The change in the migration phenomenon has been reflected across all media platforms -- in the newspapers, television and online media. Each sector of the news media, in their own way and with their own approach, deals with migration in all of its aspects, both as a source of news and as a continuing theme for editorial coverage.

During 2015 and 2016 the main events that marked media coverage of migration were the tragic shipwrecks involving young Tunisians or migrants of other nationalities (Algerians, Syrians and sub-Saharan) attempting to cross the Mediterranean to Europe in makeshift boats. In particular, news coverage focused on:

- The appalling tragedy involving 28 young Tunisians from Ben Guerdane - a town on Tunisia's south-east border with Libya - who made an attempt to cross from the Libyan coast at Sabratha (north-west Libya, 50km from the Tunisian border). This event was reported by media to include a total absence of attempts by Tunisian authorities to recover the bodies of those who drowned at sea and take charge of the survivors. These events figured strongly in coverage during July 2016.
- There were regular reports during 2015 and 2016 on Syrian refugees, their living conditions in Tunisia and the difficulties they contend with on a daily basis.<sup>1</sup>
- Media also provided coverage arising from the presence of up to an estimated 2 million Libyans in Tunisia. Media have reported on them since the Libyan crisis in early 2011, after which, according to the International Organisation on Migration, nearly 350,000 immediately fled Libya to Tunisia, a continuing story that is set in the context of current events. This continuing coverage intensified around the public debate highlighted in media following the adoption of the new law that allows foreigners to buy land and assets in Tunisia.
- Racist attacks on sub-Saharan citizens have also been under the media spotlight. The latest took place in December 2016 following an attack on three young Congolese students.
- Another event that made headlines in Tunisian media and on the social networks was the attack on young sub-Saharan students following the defeat of a Tunisian football team playing against a team from an African country.<sup>2</sup>

- The high point of migration coverage in 2015 and 2016 led to further media reflections on question of the young Tunisians who perished in the Mediterranean in 2011, which was reported by media taking a close interest in the subject.<sup>3</sup>

All of these incidents and coverage indicate how Tunisian media monitor the migration issue, which becomes a hot news topic mainly when there are "dramatic shipwrecks" involving young Tunisians. Unfortunately, when media take an interest in migration it is generally not in an attempt to understand the phenomenon or its development, or the journeys of individual migrants, or their causes or their consequences, but rather to report or comment on events involving migrants of different nationalities.

There is no common approach and individual media tend to report according to their own assessment of the issue which may vary from organisation to organisation. The change of political direction in recent years has given media and journalism more editorial freedom, but it appears that there is as yet not enough capacity and confidence within journalism or common recognition of the positive role that independent, ethical and critical media should play in defending human rights and shaping public opinions.

This lack of consensus on how to report migration also leads to a lack of agreement on the way journalists use terminology in their reporting and how media describe the issues. Several media make frequent use of discriminatory language such as the terms "clandestine immigration", "Harga"<sup>4</sup> and "Harraga"<sup>5</sup>. These terms are found in articles that deal with shipwrecks involving young Tunisians, or other nationalities, attempting to cross the Mediterranean to Europe. Using terms to describe the makeshift boats such as "clandestine immigrants' boat"<sup>6</sup> tends to reflect an editorial judgement, and is not objective.

In fact, the terms used by journalists to talk about the migration issue are not always consistent. There are several examples of inconsistent terminology in different media but also within one and the same media. Many journalists do not have a good command of the words, or understanding of the definitions laid down by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) or the concepts and complex aspects of the migration story. This failing may be due to unfamiliarity with the vocabulary suggested by the IOM. Often several different and thus confusion terms will be found in the same article, such as "irregular

departure”, “clandestine immigration” or “irregular immigration”.

When it comes to media coverage of the Tunisian diaspora, this is overshadowed by the focus on more dramatic news coverage and tends to revolve around occasional and seasonal events, principally the return of Tunisians living abroad to their home country during the summer holidays, summer schools or the once-yearly congress of Tunisians abroad. It is during this period that a handful of Tunisian media may talk about Tunisians living abroad, mentioning their contribution to the national economy in the form of money transfers.

However, a few television programmes endeavour to show Tunisians living abroad in a positive light. *Ahlan Tounes*<sup>7</sup> is one such weekly programme broadcast on the national channel 1, *Watania 1*. Its target audience is the Tunisian community abroad.

In general, Tunisian media use information articles, comments and opinion pieces to talk about migration with regular coverage of the various foreign communities in Tunisia, and particularly on Tunisians attempting to migrate, but the main focus is on shipwrecks, the hardships and the living conditions.

However, the “migration story” genre describing migrants’ life experiences is not particularly common in Tunisian media, apart from a few articles that interview Syrians in Tunisia<sup>8</sup>, or which relate the schooling of Syrian and sub-Saharan children in Tunisian schools.<sup>9</sup>

The nature of reporting tends to highlight the facts of the migrants’ situation and this shapes the narrative of reporting by the media. Occasionally, it is clear that some journalists reporting on the issue have trouble managing their emotions. This can be seen in

their coverage of shipwrecks or when they deal with subjects about the foreign communities established in Tunisia. In some cases, their positions are negative, even openly racist. They convey stereotyped images of migrants, based on the exclusion of others.

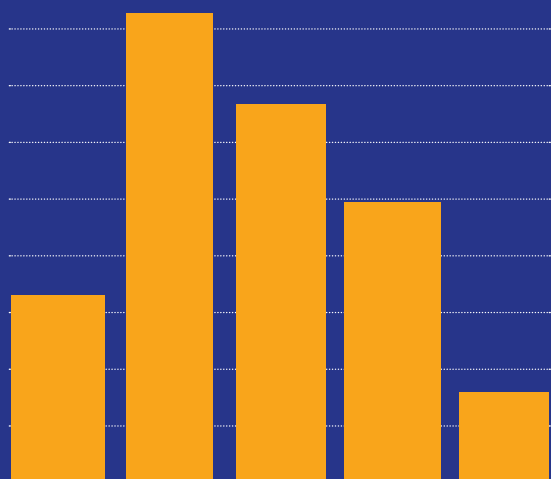
As a result, stories about migrants have not altered the way the media report on the various groups’ everyday life experience. Indeed, as one of them points out, because journalists have their own singular way of crafting stories based upon their individual vision, belief and affiliations with the migrant communities, it affects the quality of their work. As a result, “the migration issue is not handled in an in-depth, objective way by all of the journalists in Tunisia. It is generally confined to the information,” said journalist Rim Saoudi<sup>10</sup>.

This observation has been confirmed by academic research into the subject in Tunisia. Academic Riadh Ben Khalifa, in an article entitled *La Harga au prisme de la presse tunisienne* (February 2011 – May 2013), states that Tunisian journalists, who had been subject to stringent censorship up until then, suddenly found themselves in a climate in which they could comment freely on the migration problem.<sup>11</sup>

## The Newsroom Challenges

The migration story is not high on the list of priorities of most chief editors. It only tops the news lists when there are dramatic events to report - shipwrecks or other sensational incidents that will catch their audiences’ attention.

Nor do media managements highlight the notion of migrants’ rights as being linked to human rights. They are too often motivated by financial gain in a bid to



In Tunisia it is still difficult to access reliable data and statistics, despite the adoption of an organic law on access to information in March 2016. Media have no choice but to rely on **ministerial press releases** or **the figures provided by the consulting companies or associations** that carry out some research on the subject.

*Occasionally, it is clear that some journalists reporting on the issue have trouble managing their emotions. This can be seen in their coverage of shipwrecks or when they deal with subjects about the foreign communities established in Tunisia.*

---

attract advertising.

The pressure exerted by managing editors with an eye on sales and marketing, for instance, has a direct impact on journalists' work. Some downplay the story opting for short news items on migrants and migration or they publish articles on shipwrecked migrants in the "Other news" pages, hence editorial carelessness, the use of stigmatising vocabulary and the lack of precision.

Others spotlight the consequences of the presence of specific communities (Libyans, sub-Saharan, etc.) and their impact on the economy and consumers' standard of living. Often this leads to negative messages, of exclusion, racism and hate, and the promotion of deeply-rooted stereotypes to the disadvantage of these communities.

Journalists also have to contend with other obstacles. [ajouter In Tunisia au debut] It is still difficult to access reliable data and statistics, despite the adoption of an organic law on access to information in March 2016. Media have no choice but to rely on ministerial press releases or the figures provided by the consulting companies or associations that carry out some research on the subject.

As one report indicates: "Tunisian journalists have difficulty exploring the complexity of the migration question and the various issues it involves... They lack the resources necessary to carry out in-depth investigations".<sup>12</sup>

It is important to note that some journalists obtain information about shipwrecked migrants on the Italian coasts from foreign media sources. Even the images and photos they use to illustrate reports and articles published in the print or online press are usually taken from websites.

This is because there is a shortage of photographers interested in the migration issue, and managing editors are reluctant to allocate resources to expanding the media coverage of migration issues.

Other considerations have a bearing on media coverage of migration, including political and business interests. This can lead to more hate speech. Even some public media broadcast messages stigmatising migrants suggesting there is "a risk that the structure of the Tunisian population will be profoundly altered by these migratory phenomena".<sup>13</sup>

A call to review visa procedures and tighten controls has been launched in these media. "Ban

immigration or bring back visas for the nationals of certain specific countries" or "provide the support and governance necessary to avert the downward social ills imported from elsewhere..."<sup>14</sup> are some of the messages conveyed by certain public media.

Moreover, hate speech directed at Libyans, the sub-Saharan community, refugees and Syrian asylum-seekers<sup>15</sup> can also be found in public debate and speeches.

The media relay the discourse of limitation, subsequently possibly leading to exclusion, expressed by government officials, among others. For instance, "the Secretary of State for Immigration has said that the Tunisian government will be unable to take in more Syrian refugees, given the country's limited resources as a result of the current economic situation".<sup>16</sup>

The media also relay what Tunisian officials say without analysing or reviewing the words used. Several examples show that not only certain journalists, but even public figures and some leading officials have scant knowledge of immigration terminology.<sup>17</sup>

It is not surprising that as a result of these factors there is often a lack of objectivity in the treatment of migration-related issues which may explain the poor response of the media audience to the challenges of the migration crisis.

On the other hand, a number of young activists are trying to take a different approach to reporting on the migration story and in efforts to assist migrants. They are using alternative media, such as social networks or websites run by associations. They are also using the tenets of human rights and personal freedom of movement to defend migrants' rights and denounce racist acts against foreign communities in Tunisia.

Foreign communities in Tunisia are also creating a movement using online opportunities and the social networks - Facebook, YouTube, etc. - to convey their concerns and get their messages across.

## Conclusions and Recommendations

In summary, it is clear that this analysis of some Tunisian media reveals that news media coverage of migration does not play a major role in the editorial life of journalism in the country and where it does, it revolves around news about shipwrecked migrants and the living conditions of Arab or sub-Saharan communities in Tunisia.

At the same time, human rights issues arising from migration are not a priority for media coverage and in the nature of reporting several media reflect a poor command of the migration issue and more specifically the vocabulary and terminology defined by international migration organisations.

Confronted with both internal obstacles posed by the editorial team and external obstacles, journalists have nowhere to turn for help. They are ill-equipped to cover migration issues. They are also pressed for time and under pressure from their managing editors.

These problems lead media to reflect a contradictory image – on the one hand highlighting the difficulties migrants face while on the other conveying messages of stigmatisation, stereotypes or even messages of exclusion.

There are, however, examples of good journalism practice in the alternative media, which try to handle the migration issue objectively by presenting a range of different speakers and viewpoints. The online newspaper *nawat* is an example of this.<sup>18</sup>

The story report produced by Agence Tunis Afrique Presse on the living conditions of Syrians on the outskirts of Tunis, and which was published by a number of media<sup>19</sup>, is another positive example and underlines the importance of training journalists and raising the awareness within media of the need to make migration a central theme in genre of journalism.

## Recommendations

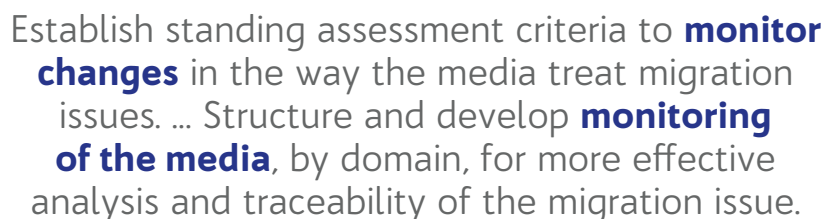
The following proposals may be useful in helping to improve media coverage of migration in Tunisia:

- Introduce a strategy for training journalists in migration issues: help journalists vary journalistic genres and not confine themselves to reporting the facts about migration.
- Directly target the senior management of Tunisian media – the editorial directors and chief editors – to raise their awareness of the importance of covering migration-related subjects objectively.
- Include media coverage of the migration issue in the Tunisian government's proposed national migration strategy (2016-2020).
- Establish standing assessment criteria to monitor changes in the way the media treat migration issues.
- Structure and develop monitoring of the media, by domain, for more effective analysis and traceability of the migration issue.
- Build partnerships with media regulatory bodies and structures in Tunisia, such as the Haute Autorité Indépendante de la Communication Audiovisuelle (HAICA); journalism training establishments; the Centre Africain de Perfectionnement des Journalistes et Communicateurs (CAPJC); the Syndicat National des Journalistes Tunisiens (SNJT), in order to help bring the Ethical Journalism Network migration reporting guide to the attention

The migration story is not high on the list of priorities of most chief editors. It only tops the news lists when there are **dramatic events** to report – **shipwrecks or other sensational incidents** that will catch their audiences' attention.

WITH INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL OBSTACLES  
**journalists are ill-equipped to cover migration issues**





- Form a partnership with the national press agency (Agence Tunis Afrique Presse) to distribute this charter within the editorial team and adopt consistent concepts in dispatches and reports.
- Work on developing and creating alternative media managed by the migrants.
- Run a campaign to promote the Ethical Journalism Network guide (on combating hate speech in the media) to the various media and journalists in Tunisia. An initiative could be conducted with the SNJT, Article 19, the Arab Institute for Human Rights and the EuroMed Rights network to promote the

- Develop and promote the Ethical Journalism Network Moving stories report, we recommend translating it into French and Arabic so that it is more accessible to Tunisian journalists, and organising training sessions on the subject.

## References, links and sources

- 1 <http://www.assabahnews.tn/article/111889/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D9%88%D8%B1%D9%8A%D9%88%D9%86-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%AA%D9%88%D9%86%D8%B3-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%A3%D8%B3%D8%A7%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%AA%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%B5%D9%84>
- 2 <http://www.realites.com.tn/2015/02/tunisie-une-elimination-a-lorigine-de-plusieurs-agressions-envers-les-noirs/>
- 3 Assabah newspaper: <http://www.assabah.com.tn/article/102062/%D8%AE%D8%A7%D8%B5-%D9%85%D9%83%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%Ag-%D9%87%D8%A7%D8%AA%D9%81%D9%8A%D8%Ag-%D8%AA%D9%83%D8%B4%D9%81-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%84%D8%BA%D8%B2-%D8%AA%D8%B7%D9%88%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D9%85%D9%86-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%88%D8%B2%D9%86-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AB%D9%82%D9%8A%D9%84-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D9%82%D8%B6%D9%8A%D8%Ag-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A%D8%A7%D8%B1%D9%82%D9%8A%D9%86-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D9%81%D9%82%D9%88%D8%AF%D9%8A%D9%86-%D9%81%D9%8A>
- 4 An Arabic word meaning “to burn”.
- 5 An Arabic word used to describe irregular immigrants, literally “burners”.
- 6 <http://www.webdo.tn/2016/07/04/naufage-dun-chalutier-neuf-rescapes-tunisiens-de-retour-a-ben-guerdane/>
- 7 Translation: “Welcome Tunisia”
- 8 <http://directinfo.webmanagercenter.com/2015/10/01/les-conditions-difficiles-des-refugies-syriens-en-tunisie/>
- 9 <http://directinfo.webmanagercenter.com/2015/09/16/>
- 10 Live interview with Rim Saoudi, journalist at Assabah.
- 11 La Méditerranée au prisme des rivages. Menaces, protections, aménagements et Méditerranée occidentale (XVIe-XXIe siècles), Paris Éditions Bouchènes, 2015, PP 139-156.
- 12 Ibid.
- 13 <http://www.lapresse.tn/13112016/104986/migration-lopportunite-de-la-crise%C2%A0.html>
- 14 Ibid.
- 15 <http://www.businessnews.com.tn/les-libyens-aurent-desormais-le-droit-daeter-des-biens-immobiliers-sans-autorisation.520.681013>
- 16 <http://directinfo.webmanagercenter.com/2015/09/15/belgacem-sabri-le-nombre-des-refugies-syriens-atteint-4-mille/>
- 17 <http://directinfo.webmanagercenter.com/2015/06/11/limpact-de-la-migration-sur-le-developpement-local-theme-dune-journee-detude-a-tunis/>
- 18 <https://nawaat.org/portail/2015/09/24/refugies-en-tunisie-des-vies-suspendues/>
- 19 <http://www.assabahnews.tn/article/111889/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D9%88%D8%B1%D9%8A%D9%88%D9%86-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%AA%D9%88%D9%86%D8%B3-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%A3%D8%B3%D8%A7%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%AA%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%B5%D9%84%D8%A9>

# REVIEW OF AVAILABLE MATERIAL ANALYSING AND PROVIDING GUIDANCE ON Media Coverage of Migration in Europe, Middle East and North Africa

## Introduction

The objective of this research – carried out between November 2016 and January 2017 – was to review the major writings and analysis of how media in Europe, the Middle East and North Africa cover the story of migration.

The review focuses on analysis of migration coverage and guidance on how to cover migration with a bias toward what is most relevant for journalists and does attempt to analyse coverage of migration, as this is the role of the 17 country chapters of this report.

The review is structured in the following way:

- » Key findings across all regions
- » Codes of ethics, glossaries and guidelines on reporting migration
- » Recommendations for and from media
- » Campaigns and awards on migration reporting
- » Review of Analysis of Media Coverage of Migration in Europe, Middle East and Africa

---

## Key findings across all regions

As the desk research was conducted largely in English far more information is available on European media rather than the output from Middle East and North Africa. A follow up to this work looking at content in French and Arabic would be valuable.

### 1. Academic and policy rather than media perspectives

Existing analyses of media coverage of migration in Europe, the Middle East and North Africa, are largely academic in nature and are rarely written from the point of view of journalists and media professionals. What is often missing is an appreciation of the extent and impact of self-censorship, political influence and how the market conditions and precarious nature of journalistic work affect the way media work, news-room priorities and the framing of the news agenda.

### 2. The media's role in public attitudes to migration

Analysis of public attitudes to migration and of editorial angles (positive, negative or more balanced) is common in many countries. However, research often stops short of investigating the role of media in shaping these attitudes. More research is needed to

map the media coverage of migration against public attitudes over longer periods. Studies often do not detail whether policies and media coverage of migration (positive or negative) is driven by public opinion or the other way around. This is important to establish as policymakers often justify anti-migration policies on the grounds of public opinion. In some countries, Hungary for instance, some reports indicate that state-media played a deliberate role in promoting anti-refugee attitudes for political advantage.

### 3. Tone, language and hate speech

There are many campaigns directed at media coverage and the work of journalists by the policy and NGO community, especially on the questions of inappropriate language and hate speech against migrants. Most are national campaigns and some with a cross-border focus, but the impact of these activities on media is unclear with little monitoring of response.

Further research is needed to understand:

- » How much working and active journalists are involved in such campaigns;
- » Whether the engagement of news industry figures or the active participation of journalists, their unions and associations makes a significant difference?
- » Whether some striking national initiatives – such as the Charter of Rome in Italy and the and the Greek Charter of Idomeni – have an impact beyond Italy and Greece?

#### **4. Workshop and seminars appear to far outnumber published studies**

Human rights, journalism and media development organisations are actively promoting conferences and workshops to discuss migration coverage and to provide training. The study found that these are too rarely followed up with practical guidance for journalists. Often the nature of the debates and outcomes

are hard to define. The number of activities, training and workshops were so numerous that only a select few have been included in the study.

#### **5. Misleading and false information**

False and fake news is becoming a problem for all media but it can have serious consequences when refugees and vulnerable people are the victims; even causing violence against refugees as documented in one example in this study. More research is needed into the specific issue of propaganda and fake news about migration in order to fully understand the extent of the problem and how to address it. With so many of the migrants entering Europe from predominantly Muslim countries, fake news about Muslims is especially common. This illustrates how understanding coverage of migration must be seen within the wider issues facing media.

Fake news about migration is a growing issue but this study focuses on literature directly related to migration.

---

## **Codes of ethics, glossaries and guidelines on reporting migration**

### **Carta Di Roma (2014). Code of Conduct Regarding Asylum Seekers, Refugees, Victims of Trafficking and Migrants**

See: <http://www.cartadiroma.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/CODE-AND-GLOSSARY-ENGLISH.pdf>

The National Council of the Journalists' Association (Consiglio Nazionale dell'Ordine dei Giornalisti, CNOG) and the Italian National Press Federation (Federazione Nazionale della Stampa Italiana, FNSI) Charter of Rome invites Italian journalists to "exercise the highest care in dealing with information regarding asylum seekers, refugees, victims of trafficking and migrants living in Italy and elsewhere".

### **Deutsche Welle (2016). Study reveals shortcomings of Arab media**

See: <http://www.dw.com/en/study-reveals-shortcomings-of-arab-media/a-19310209>

This article gives some details of guidelines for improving Arab coverage of the refugee crisis that were adopted in Beirut by media professionals from the Middle East and North Africa. The guidelines, which are based on a study by the DW Akademie, state that journalists should "report in a responsible manner, supported by facts, without exploiting the suffering of the refugees in an unprofessional, biased or exaggerated manner." (The full guidelines could not be found on DW website. An inquiry has been made.)

### **Ethical Journalism Network (2016).**

#### **Five-point guide for migration reporting**

See: <http://ethicaljournalismnetwork.org/ejn-launches-new-migration-reporting-guidelines-gfmd>

Launched at the Global Forum for Media Development in Jakarta in September 2016 the EJN's five-point guide for migration reporting is available as an infographic in over 10 languages. The guidelines were developed by journalists and advisers to the EJN with input from the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) and have been circulated within IOM circles.

### **Ethical Journalism Network (2014).**

#### **Five-point test for hate speech**

See: <http://ethicaljournalismnetwork.org/resources/publications/hate-speech>

See: <http://ethicaljournalismnetwork.org/resources/infographics>

In 2016 the EJN's five-point test for hate speech was translated into Arabic, French and many other languages spoken in the region, including Albanian, Bosnian, Croatian, Czech, Dutch, Finnish, Italian, Macedonian, Montenegrin, Portuguese, Serbian and Turkish. It is increasingly used in education and training programmes for journalists.



### European Broadcasting Union (2016). *Big Data: a tool for journalists to fight stereotypes and prejudice?*

See: <https://www.ebu.ch/news/2016/10/big-data-a-tool-to-fight-stereotypes-and-preconceptions>

This major network of public service broadcasters in Europe and North Africa has developed materials to assist journalists using data to cover migration. Infographics can give audiences a new outlook such as through "Migrants, mi-hommes" created by Sylvain Lapoix of #DataGueule whose video's objective was to "fight stereotypes in media storytelling on refugees and migrants and to present them not just as 'migrants' but as real people, as hommes".

### European Federation of Journalists (2016). *8 tips for migration coverage*

See: <http://europeanjournalists.org/blog/2016/11/28/8-practical-tips-for-migration-coverage/>

At the 10th edition of the Civil society media seminar held by the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) in Vienna on the subject of "Communicating Migration", Michael O'Flaherty, the Director of the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights, shared practical tips for journalists covering migration. Inspired by Michael O'Flaherty's speech the EFJ developed eight practical tips for migration coverage.

1. Collect impeccable data: big picture is known but we know little about the details and the lack of

quality information is a problem when we write about human stories.

2. Report the whole story about migration policies by reporting on local communities and challenge myths about migrants.
3. Produce videos where refugees speak and explain their situation, give a voice to local communities.
4. Use correct wording: 3/5 people are coming from the top 10 refugee camps in the world, by deduction we can clearly say that the majority of them are fleeing persecution; instead of writing "migrant or refugee crisis" which makes the people a problem it's better to write "crisis of migrant policy"; instead of talking about the "EU / national values" or "moral values", it's better to talk about the "universal values which Europe hold dear"
5. Correct misleading images: refugees and migrants are not young strong men using smartphones or tourist family members travelling with expensive luggage. The fact is 9/10 migrant children are unaccompanied, they are tired, exhausted, hungry and need urgent help.
6. Use international tools like FRA's Media Toolkit, EJN's ethical guidelines on migration reporting, Charter of Roma, Charter of Idomeni,... to enhance your reporting skills on migration.
7. Develop better skills on media literacy, help your audience better understand how to consume your contents and counter fake news or propaganda.
8. Engage with social media and accept the fact that you can't fully cover and understand that world.

### International Organisation of Migration (2011). *IOM, Glossary on Migration, International Migration Law Series No. 25*

See: <http://www.iom.int/key-migration-terms>

The IOM's publications section has no reports on communications. The IOM defines a migrant as any person who is moving or has moved across an international border or within a State away from his/her habitual place of residence, regardless of (1) the person's legal status; (2) whether the movement is voluntary or involuntary; (3) what the causes for the movement are; or (4) what the length of the stay is.

For more migration definitions from the IOM see:

<http://www.iom.int/key-migration-terms>

<https://www.iom.int/sites/default/files/about-iom/IOM-definition-of-a-migrant-15March2016.pdf>

<http://www.iom.int/migration-law>

### ILO (2014). *Media-Friendly Glossary on Migration*

See: [http://www.ilo.org/global/topics/labour-migration/publications/WCMS\\_310235/lang--en/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/global/topics/labour-migration/publications/WCMS_310235/lang--en/index.htm)

The ILO is using the Media-Friendly Glossary on Migration glossary created by Panos-UNAO in 2014 as the basis for an Arabic language glossary, which is expected to be launched in early 2017.

**Panos Europe Institute / United Alliance of Civilizations, UNAOC (2014). Media Friendly Glossary on Migration**

See: [https://www.unaoc.org/wp-content/uploads/UNAOC-Panos-Europe-Institute\\_Media-Friendly-Glossary-on-Migration.pdf](https://www.unaoc.org/wp-content/uploads/UNAOC-Panos-Europe-Institute_Media-Friendly-Glossary-on-Migration.pdf)

This collaboration between the now closed Panos Europe and UNAOC sprung from a 2013 seminar for a group of editors-in-chief from Africa, Asia and Europe brought together by UNAOC and the Global Editors' Network at which it was recommended that a "media-friendly glossary of terms in multiple languages" be created for journalists "to ensure specificity and accuracy in their word choice". According to the glossary's foreword: 'The request for such a tool comes as an answer to two ongoing trends. On one side, the changing aspect of human migrations and of words used to characterize these movements. On the other

hand, the pressure put on journalists – who don't always benefit from a specific training on migration – to report in print and audio-visual media with precision and appropriate terminology. The work of the media greatly influences how the public views migrants and issues related to migration. Media have the power to create positive or negative perceptions; accurate or inaccurate perceptions.'

**UNHCR. Reporting on Refugees: Guidance by & for journalists**

See: <http://www.unhcr.ie/images/uploads/pictures/pdf/reportingonrefugees.pdf>

According to the UN <http://refugeesmigrants.un.org/definitions> although often used interchangeably by the general public, there are crucial distinctions between the terms "refugee" and "migrant".

---

## Recommendations for and from the media industry

**AFP (2012 to present). Covering the refugee crisis**

See: <https://correspondent.afp.com/covering-refugee-crisis>

The AFP Correspondent blog aims to take readers behind the scenes at the global news agency Agence France-Presse with a focus on handling the migration story.

**Al Jazeera (2015). Why Al Jazeera will not say Mediterranean 'migrants'**

See: <http://www.aljazeera.com/blogs/editors-blog/2015/08/al-jazeera-mediterranean-migrants-150820082226309.html>

Barry Malone an online editor at Al Jazeera English wrote in August 2015: The umbrella term migrant is no longer fit for purpose when it comes to describing the horror unfolding in the Mediterranean. It has evolved from its dictionary definitions into a tool that dehumanises and distances, a blunt pejorative [...] Migrant is a word that strips suffering people of voice. Substituting refugee for it is – in the smallest way – an attempt to give some back.

**Centre for Policy Studies (2013). Pushed to the edge. Research Report on the Representation of Roma Communities in the Hungarian Majority Media, 2011.**

See: [http://cps.ceu.hu/sites/default/files/publications/cps-working-paper-pushed-to-the-edge-2013\\_o.pdf](http://cps.ceu.hu/sites/default/files/publications/cps-working-paper-pushed-to-the-edge-2013_o.pdf)

"The original report was published in Hungarian with the title 'Szélre tolva. Kutatási zárójelentés a roma közösségek többségi médiaképéről, 2011'. This working

paper discusses results of a content analysis of the coverage of Roma by the mainstream media in 2011. The analysis is a continuation of the authors' two decades' long cooperation uncovering and analysing the ways in which mainstream media represents Hungary's Roma communities and contributes to the reproduction of public stereotypes about this ethnic group. The research analysed a wide range of media including largest political dailies, weekly papers, tabloid dailies, internet news portals, and TV news programs. Special attention was paid to the thorough analysis of the visual images published in newspapers and TV news programmes.

**Central European University (2015). Infiltration of political meaning – production: security threat or humanitarian crisis? The coverage of the refugee 'crisis' in the Austrian and Hungarian media in early autumn**

See: <https://cmds.ceu.edu/sites/cmcs.ceu.hu/files/attachment/article/1041/infiltrationofpoliticalmeaning.pdf>

**DW Akademie in Lebanon**

See: <http://www.dw.com/en/dw-akademie-in-lebanon/a-19109424>

DW Akademie: Working with its local partners, Basmeleh & Zeitoon and the Maharat Foundation, DW Akademie is supporting the creation of an online community platform in the Shatila refugee camp in Lebanon. Community journalists are being trained here and local trainers are being qualified. Standards for reporting on sensitive topics such as displacement and migration are collaboratively being developed and applied.





The **media have a responsibility** journalists should not forget about when reporting and writing articles. **Inaccuracy should be avoided**, as it might build a misleading portrait of the public opinion or, even worse, have a negative influence on it.

**Ethical Journalism Network (2015). *Moving Stories – An International Review of How Media Cover Migration*. p12/112.**

See: <http://ethicaljournalismnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/moving-stories-ejn.pdf>

See: <http://ethicaljournalismnetwork.org/resources/publications/moving-stories/recommendations>

The EJN report argues that media can help audiences “better understand the complex migration story by applying ethical principles, avoiding crude stereotypes, developing good newsroom practice and engaging with the audience.” When covering migration journalists should abide by the five core principles of journalism in their work; accountability; humanity; impartiality; independence; and accuracy. The recommendations also cover; newsroom practice and the role of unions and associations; how to engage with the media audience and connect with migrants; challenge hate-speech; and the need to demand access to information.

**Ethical Journalism Network (2015). *Refugee Images – Ethics in the Picture***

See: <http://ethicaljournalismnetwork.org/resources/publications/ethics-in-the-news/refugee-images>

See: <http://ethicaljournalismnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/ejn-ethics-in-the-news.pdf>

Misja Pekel and Maud van de reijt examine what decisions are made before photographs of refugees and war victims appear in our newspapers, or as video and stills on our computers, mobiles and television screens. They ask whether journalists should be more critical when publishing and interpreting such pictures.

**European Broadcasting Union (2016). *How public service media are helping public understanding of the refugee crisis***

See: <https://www.ebu.ch/contents/news/2016/04/how-public-service-media-are-hel.html>

This EBU talk in Brussels, focused on how its members are contributing to understanding of the refugee crisis are bringing together refugees and locals. The work of ERT (Greece), ARD /WDR (Germany) and SR (Sweden), are highlighted as examples.

**European Journalism Centre (2013). *How journalism can rid migration of its sour reputation***

See: <http://ejc.net/magazine/article/how-journalism-can-rid-migration-of-its-sour-reputation#.WC8PxenLdSU>

“To what extent do the media reflect the public opinion, and to what extent do they shape it? In both cases, the media have a responsibility journalists should not forget about when reporting and writing articles. Inaccuracy should be avoided, as it might build a misleading portrait of the public opinion or, even worse, have a negative influence on it.” The EJC highlights some common mistakes and good practices that should be taken into account when writing about migration.

**European Federation of Journalists (2016). *More solidarity needed while reporting on migration issues***

See: <http://europeanjournalists.org/blog/2016/10/25/more-solidarity-needed-while-reporting-on-migration-issues/>

The EFJ has called for more solidarity while reporting on migration issues and has been increasing the attention it gives to improving coverage of migrants and refugees for the last few years. Regarding specific actions from our affiliates the EFJ highlights the Idomeni Charter in Greece (involving the Greek Union Esiemth) and the Carta di Roma in Italy (involving the Italian union, FNSI). They also expect that this issue will be part of their current DG Justice Project on Hate Speech.

**Hungarian Europe Society (2016). *The Refugee Crisis and the Reactions of the Visegrad Countries***

The Hungarian Europe Society conducted comprehensive and comparative research in the Czech Republic, Poland, Slovakia and Hungary examining the arrival of mostly Muslim asylum seekers from the Middle East into Europe. The report analyses the how the V4 countries responded. The research included a survey that found that, according to the answers, received migrants arriving from the conflict zones were most usually referred to by the media as migrants (71%) and as



refugees (65%) while the label of illegal migrants was also rather frequently used (51%). Less used terms were economic immigrant (29%) and asylum-seekers (14%).

### **Independent (2016). Nazi language becoming increasingly common in Germany's discussion of refugee crisis, researchers say**

See: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/nazi-language-germany-refugee-crisis-far-right-racism-a7429921.html>

"Rise in use of Nazi phrases comes amid unprecedented growth in number of attacks on asylum seekers and refugee accommodation [...] Words belonging to the years of the Third Reich are increasingly being used by German politicians and members of the public to criticise their government's response to the refugee crisis. The increase in the use of Nazi terminology comes amid an unprecedented rise in the number of attacks on asylum seekers and refugee accommodation."

### **International News Safety Institute (and The Dart Centre)**

See: <http://dartcenter.org/event/workshop-covering-immigrants-and-mental-health>

The International News Safety Institute has launched a survey into the psychological impact on journalists covering the migrant crisis, following anecdotal evidence that some journalists are finding it is taking a high emotional toll on them. The project has featured in the BBC and Guardian. Awareness about this began in 2013 when the Dart Center hosted a workshop for journalists to improve news coverage of immigrants and refugees, with a special focus on mental health.

### **Le Monde (2016). Journalistes à Calais : la loi de la « jungle » ?**

See: [http://www.lemonde.fr/actualite-medias/article/2016/10/27/journalistes-a-calais-la-loi-de-la-jungle\\_5021114\\_3236.html](http://www.lemonde.fr/actualite-medias/article/2016/10/27/journalistes-a-calais-la-loi-de-la-jungle_5021114_3236.html)

In this article published on October 27, 2016, Le Monde journalists criticise coverage of the "Jungle" camp and reflect on their own coverage about how their journalists experienced covering the dismantling of the camp. The article describes how reporters felt covering the story, what they saw and how they thought journalists in general were behaving while reporting on the migrants stranded at the camp in Calais. The report makes the journalists part of the story. It compares the journalists wrapped up in ski jackets and woollen hats and the migrants wearing only sweaters and plastic sandals. It is a self-critical article highlighting how the journalists – and they are 800 of them, 48 for the BBC alone – have little regard for the privacy of the migrants walking into their shacks and shoving microphones into their faces.

The Le Monde journalists explain that it is often

difficult to get the balance right between getting the information and respecting the dignity of the person that is the subject of the story. They say that whenever there is a big media event (and this could be a natural disaster or a terror attack or just the dismantling of the "jungle" camp) the larger the number of journalists, the tougher the competition, the sooner fundamental principles, even the law are thrown aside. "If the others do it, what not me?" The article concludes that doing anything for the story as if the journalist's life depended on it is always disturbing but especially so if the life of those covered in the story is really on the line.

### **Organisation of News Ombudsman**

ONA (2010). *Policy change on illegal immigration terminology*.

See: <http://newsombudsmen.org/columns/a-policy-change-on-illegal-immigration-terminology>

ONA (2011). *The debate over immigration language*.

See: <http://newsombudsmen.org/columns/the-debate-over-immigration-language>

ONA (2013). *LA Times updates guidelines for covering migration*.

See: <http://newsombudsmen.org/columns/l-a-times-updates-guidelines-for-covering-immigration>

### **South East European Network for the Professionalisation of Media (2016). OSCE Representative issues recommendations on rights and safety of members of the media reporting on refugees**

See: <http://seenpm.org/osce-representative-issues-recommendations-rights-safety-members-media-reporting-refugees/>

### **PICUM (2001), Ethical Guidelines**

See: <http://picum.org/en/resources/ethical-guidelines/>

After workshops on migration reporting PICUM – the Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants – published guidelines in five languages; English; Français; Español; Italiano; Nederlands.

### **Refugee Journalism Project (2016). A project from the London College of Communication and the Migrants Resource Centre**

See: <http://migrantjournalism.org/>

"By bringing together disparate individuals, The Refugee Journalism Project aims to create a network that reaps the benefits of collaborative working. Whether it's a UK journalism student filming with a Syrian translator; an Afghan film-maker reporting on location in Calais with an Irish journalist; or an Eritrean producer working within a global media organisation, these unions create a reciprocal flow of understanding and learning, ultimately helping to aid integration."

# Communications campaigns & competitions

## **A Day Without Migrants' social media campaign**

**Run by:** IOM and launched in 2016

**Location:** Global

In 2016 IOM launched a social media campaign, 'A Day Without Migrants,' in partnership with the Egyptian award-winning click-funding innovators Bassita, to highlight the real and positive impacts that migrants have on the communities that host them. See: <https://www.iom.int/news/iom-launches-day-without-migrants-social-media-campaign>

## **Arab Media Hub against Hate Speech**

**Run by:** EIJ and launched in 2015

**Location:** North Africa and Middle East

Hate speech is growing in Arabic language media including against migrants. A meeting of the hub organised by the Ethical Journalism Network, The American University in Cairo (AUC) and Egypt Media Development Programme (EMPD) in Cairo in December 2016 resolved to find new ways to challenge hate speech across all platforms in Arab media. See: <http://ethicaljournalism-network.org/turning-page-hate-arab-world>

## **Award for Excellence in Reporting Fairly on Labour Migration**

**Run by:** ILO / **Location:** Global

ILO annual media competition to recognise exemplary media coverage on labour migration. See: [http://www.ilo.org/global/topics/labour-migration/news-statements/WCMS\\_522341/lang--en/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/global/topics/labour-migration/news-statements/WCMS_522341/lang--en/index.htm)

## **"I am migrant"**

**Run by:** IOM / **Location:** Global

The IOM's campaign aims to provide an easy to access alternative to negative stories on migration so that journalists can find positive individual stories of migration. See: <http://iamamigrant.org/about>

## **FAIRWAY**

**Run by:** ILO / **Location:** Gulf

The FAIRWAY project develops research to inform policy making, to support implementation of laws and policies, and to work with the media and through advocacy campaigns to reduce discrimination against migrant workers. See: <http://www.ilo.org/beirut/projects/fairway/lang--en/index.htm> and [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yv8oXfh\\_tCI&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yv8oXfh_tCI&feature=youtu.be)

## **MedMedia**

**Run by:** EU-funded programme implemented by a consortium by BBC Media Action (lead), the International Federation of Journalists, IREX Europe, the Blanquerna School of Communications and the Jordan Media Institute.

**Location:** North Africa and Middle East

MedMedia aims to facilitate the progress of media reforms by offering policy-makers, regulators, broadcasters and union leaders access to relevant experience and know-how from both sides of the Mediterranean. <http://www.med-media.eu/projects-database/>

## **Migrant Voice**

Migrant Voice a UK NGO hosted a debate on migration and media coverage at its third annual conference focusing this year on media and immigration. Media, academics, migrants and the public engaged in an inclusive debate on migration, examining public attitude and media representation of migrants, and raising alternatives voices and messages. See: <http://www.migrantvoice.org/>

## **Media Against Hate**

**Run by:** EFJ and launched in 2015

**Location:** Europe

#MediaAgainstHate is a Europe-wide campaign led by the European Federation of Journalists (EFJ) and a coalition of civil society organisations. We aim to counter hate speech and discrimination in the media, both on and offline, by promoting ethical standards, while maintaining respect for freedom of expression. It's objectives include improving media coverage related to migration, refugees, religion and marginalised groups. See: <http://europeanjournalists.org/mediaagainsthate/>

## **Refugee Journalism Project**

The Refugee Journalism Project run by the London College of Communication works to help our participants re-establish their journalism careers in the UK. In 2016 the project included journalists from Syrian, Sudan, Eritrea, Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Gaza and the Yemen. <http://migrantjournalism.org/>

## **The Migration Dilemma**

**Run by:** Deutsche Welle / **Location:** West Africa

DW's new multi-media project traces the dangerous journey to Europe undertaken by West African refugees. Reporters look into the social consequences of this exodus on the families and communities that have been left behind, and they discuss alternatives to fleeing with African youths and decision-makers. See: <http://www.dw.com/en/dws-new-multimedia-project-for-west-africa-the-migration-dilemma/a-36410361>

## **The New Arrivals**

The European Journalism Centre launched The New Arrivals in 2017, "a collaborative journalism project that brings together El País (Spain), The Guardian (UK), Le Monde (France) and Spiegel Online (Germany) to report on migration to Europe. Over a period of 18 months, the four news organisations will closely follow newly-arrived migrant communities to illustrate their integration challenges, humanitarian situation, professional aspirations, and the impact of their arrival on both the host and the home countries."

<https://thenewarrivals.eu>

<http://ejc.net/projects/news/article/major-european-publishers-to-team-up-on-18-month-migration-project>

## **World Refugee Day**

**Run by:** UNHCR and launched in 2000

**Location:** Global

In 2015 public service media across Europe collaborated with UNHCR and European Broadcasting Union partner association COPEAM to raise public awareness about World Refugee Day 20 June. See: <http://www.un.org/en/events/refugeeday/>

*The complete literature review is available via a link at [www.icmpd.org/EMM4migration\\_narrative](http://www.icmpd.org/EMM4migration_narrative)*

# Contributors

## EUROPE

---

### Austria - Professor Katharine Sarikakis

Katharine Sarikakis is the founding co-editor of the International Journal of Media and Cultural Politics. Having served as Chair of the Communication Law and Policy Section of European Communication Research and Education Association for six years, she is now a member of the Executive Board. Katherine is also a member of the international council of International Association for Media and Communication Research. In 2011, Katherine moved from the University of Leeds to the University of Vienna where she is Professor of Media Industries, Media Organisation and Media Governance.

### France - Jean-Paul Marthoz

Jean-Paul Marthoz is a Belgian journalist and writer. He is the author of *Couvrir les migrations* (covering migration), De Boeck Université, Brussels, 2011. As well as being an adviser to the Ethical Journalism Network, he also advises the Committee to Protect Journalists, Human Rights Watch and Index on Censorship. His most recent books include *Balancing Act*, which examines the European Union's record on press freedom and *Objectif Bastogne* about US reporters during World War II.

### Germany - Michaela Maria Müller

Michaela Maria Müller is a freelance journalist and writer based in Berlin. She received her MA in History and Political Science in 2006 and has since then written on migration and human rights for Amnesty Journal, Süddeutsche Zeitung, Frankfurter Rundschau, qantara.de and Zeit Online. She is a member of the German Federation of Journalists (Deutscher Journalisten-Verband).

### Greece - Nikos Megrelis

Nikos Megrelis is an award winning journalist and filmmaker who has directed and presented a number of documentaries and programmes on current affairs and social issues. "Shooting vs Shooting" (2011) won numerous awards and was nominated by the Greek Film Academy for best documentary in 2012. He served as General Director at ERT World, Greek Public Television's channel for Greeks abroad from 2011-2013. Megrelis was nominated in Spain for the Press Freedom Award in 2013.

### Hungary - Balázs Weyer

Balázs Weyer is the chairman of Editors' Forum Hungary, a professional association of news media editors. He is also a lecturer of media ethics, new media technology and investigative journalism at

various universities and institutions in Central and Eastern Europe. He is a member of various professional bodies, such as the so-called trinity committee of AIPCE (Alliance of Independent Press Councils of Europe), jury member of Hegeto Honorka Award for excellence in minority reporting.

### Italy - Anna Masera

Anna Masera is Public Editor at *La Stampa*, where she began working as web editor and social media editor in 1999. She took a two-year leave of absence as spokesperson at the Italian House of Representatives in Rome in 2014-2015. She is Director of the Master Degree in Journalism at the University of Torino since July 2016. She graduated and received a BA in history from Yale in 1983 and a MA from Columbia in Journalism in 1984.

### Malta - Mark Micallef

Mark Micallef has been engaged with migration from Africa and the Middle East for more than a decade as a journalist, TV presenter and researcher. During this time he reported extensively on the subject from Libya, Turkey, Greece, Malta, Brussels and Italy with investigations, analysis and extensive interviews with asylum seekers, activists, politicians as well as human smugglers and traffickers. Between 2008 and 2013 he managed the newsroom of *The Times of Malta*, Malta's biggest-circulation newspaper, and in 2015, he directed and set up [www.migrantreport.org](http://www.migrantreport.org), a platform dedicated to in-depth reporting of migration.

### Spain - Jose Miguel Calatayud

Jose Miguel Calatayud is an award-winning journalist based in Barcelona and covering Europe since 2016. Between 2009 and 2014, he covered Sub-Saharan Africa from Nairobi, and then Turkey and the Middle East from Istanbul. He holds an MA in International Journalism (with distinction) from City University London. In 2015, he took a break from journalism and worked as a Humanitarian Affairs Officer for Doctors Without Borders in DR Congo.

### Sweden - Arne König

Arne König is a Swedish journalist and editor with a background in print media, radio and TV and book publishing. The main focus of his work is media and human rights. He served as vice president of the Swedish Union of journalists from 2000-2012 and president of EFJ, the European Federation of Journalists from 2004-2013.

## MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

---

### Algeria - Faten Hayed

Based at the *El Watan Week-end* in Algiers since 2009, Faten Hayed has worked as a journalist and researcher, specialising in African politics, migration, terrorism, religion and violence against women. Hayed participated in the prestigious “Femmes d’avenir en Méditerranée” (FAM) 2016 diploma programme at Sciences Po Paris. In 2016 she received the “Francophone General News Award - Print” from “The CNN Multichoice African journalist awards”.

### Egypt - Sarah El-Shaarawi

Sarah El-Shaarawi is managing editor of *Arab Media & Society*, a media studies journal published by the School of Global Affairs and Public Policy at the American University in Cairo. Her work appears regularly in *Newsweek Middle East*, and has also been published in *Foreign Policy* and the *Cairo Review of Global Affairs*, among others. She is a contributor to the forthcoming volume *Online Around the World: A Geographic Encyclopedia of the Internet, Social Media, and Mobile Apps* (ABC-CLIO, 2017).

### Egypt – Abdulrahman Elsamni

Abdulrahman Elsamni teaches Mass Communication in the Faculty of Arts at Ain Shams University in Egypt. He completed his M.A. at the American University in Cairo. Abdulrahman’s master’s thesis is on the framing of refugees in global media and his research work has been published in *Arab Media & Society*. He is also a poet who publishes in Egyptian newspapers.

### Israel - Shaïke Komornik

Shaïke Komornik (born 1955 in Haifa, Israel) is a senior news editor in the Israeli Public Radio in Arabic and chief editor of the digital section of the Israeli Broadcast Authority in Arabic. He is also a columnist on several web sites in Hebrew and has translated two books from Arabic to Hebrew. Shaïke Komornik is a member of the executive committee of the Israeli Journalists Association in Jerusalem and a member of the presidency of the Israeli Press Council.

### Jordan - Daoud Kuttab

Daoud Kuttab is an award winning Arab journalist and media entrepreneur. He is former Ferris Professor of Journalism at Princeton University and the director general of Community Media Network. Find out more on [www.daoudkuttab.com](http://www.daoudkuttab.com)

### Lebanon - Magda Abu-Fadil

Magda Abu-Fadil is Media Unlimited director and consultant and veteran foreign correspondent/editor who worked with Agence France-Presse, United Press International, Asharq Al-Awsat, Al Riyadh, Defense News, Events and The Middle East. She founded the Journalism Training Program at the American University of Beirut. Magda is a regular blogger on media issues for the Huffington Post.

### Morocco - Salaheddine Lemaizi

Salaheddine Lemaizi is a freelance journalist and guest lecturer at the Higher Institute of Information and Communication, Rabat, Morocco. You can find out more about his work by visiting his blog at <https://journalinbled.wordpress.com/>

### Palestine - Bassam Ewaida

Born in Nablus, Bassam Ewaida obtained a Ph.D in 2009 from the Free University of Berlin, Germany on Political Islam in Palestine. He is assistant professor at both the Birzeit University, Media Department, Ramallah and the Al-Quds University, Institute of Modern in Jerusalem. Since 2008 he has been a correspondent at the Arabic division of the German channel Funkhaus Europe.

### Tunisia - Sana Farhat

Sana Farhat is a reporter for the Tunisian press agency (TAP) in Paris. From 2004-2015 she was a journalist at the Tunisian daily newspaper *Le Temps*. Sana studied journalism and has a Masters in sociology. She has reported on the migrants living in Calais and Syrian refugees in Paris as well as covered migration in Tunisia. In 2014, Sana was the coordinator of media monitoring in the Tunisian Forum of Economic and Social Rights.





[www.icmpd.org/emm4](http://www.icmpd.org/emm4)  
[www.euromed-migration.eu](http://www.euromed-migration.eu)

[EMM4\\_Team@ICMPD.org](mailto:EMM4_Team@ICMPD.org)  
[@EMM4\\_migration](https://twitter.com/EMM4_migration)

**International Centre  
for Migration Policy  
Development (ICMPD)**

**HEADQUARTERS**

Gonzagagasse 1, 5th floor  
1010 Vienna  
Austria  
Tel: +43 1 504 4677 0

**REGIONAL COORDINATION OFFICE  
FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN**

Development House, 4A  
St Anne Street  
Floriana, FRN 9010  
Malta  
Tel: +356 27792610

**TUNISIA OFFICE**

Carthage Centre / Bloc A / 1st Floor /  
Office A5, Rue du Lac de Constance  
Les Berges du Lac 1  
1053 Tunis  
Tunisia  
Tel + 216 31 342 053