The Role of Media in Covering and Reporting on Conflicts and Peace Agreements in South Sudan: A Case study of Newspapers in Juba.

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: This Research focuses on the role of media in covering and reporting conflicts and peace agreements in the Republic of South Sudan, a case study of newspapers in Juba.

Methodology: Through content analysis, the study examined four daily English newspapers operating in Juba from January to August 2022. The content examined in this research focused on news headlines, opinion articles, editorials, and feature stories on peace agreements and conflicts. The newspapers studied are the Dawn newspaper, Juba Monitor, Number One newspaper, and City Review newspaper. The content analysed by various newspapers includes their differences, characteristics in terms of publications and circulation, and audience reach within Juba. Research examined the media's role in coverage and reports on peace agreements and conflicts, the impacts of the media, and the ethical challenges the media houses faced in South Sudan. The study reviewed theoretical literature on the fundamental media, conflicts, and peace journalism debates. Key thematic areas, especially theories, were studied. The study gave the overall background of media operations, pitfalls, and a way forward.

Findings: The study's findings suggest that newspaper institutions in South Sudan have different characteristics in terms of coverage, ownership, content, editorial policies, and in-house policies regarding the underlying issues they face in the nation. The findings also suggest that government officials who own specific newspapers have greater influence on news content and other stories. The study concluded that the government should not interfere with media houses' operations, and should at all costs permit print media to operate hundred % without interference, sabotage, or surveillance.

Unique Contribution to Theory, Practice and Policy: Article 24 of the transitional constitution of South Sudan must be implemented as stipulated, in letter and spirit. The study recommends that peace and conflict journalism modules should be initiated and included in higher institutions. Moreover, lastly, the laws on the media should be enacted to protect media houses and journalists, particularly in locations where journalists cover sensitive cases.

Key Words: *Conflicts, Peace agreements, Peace Journalism, Gatekeeping, Agenda Setting*

BACKGROUND

 "The media is either lazy or evil, and for the most part, it is both evil and lazy." Roger Stone (April 16th 2021). South Sudanese media dates to a long journey of huddles and struggles in the early 1955 when the first revolution began in Torit (Jok, 2015). In 1950, the media in Sudan had no better equipment to report on wars. There has been a "blackout" of media throughout the Southern Sudan. Jok states that some media entities [sic] reported on the sufferings and massacre of Southern Sudanese, with the aim that the world would get to know the news of torments and misfortunes. At that time, Jok explains … "The Vigilant and Grass Curtain" was the first media that ever existed and published stories from the towns of the Southern regions.

Rolandsen (2007) underscored that the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLA) mobile Thuraya and radio have been at the forefront of broadcasting, much of which has been described as propaganda during the liberation battles. By the end of 2014, many print media outlets opened in South Sudan were Juba Monitor, Citizen newspaper, This Day newspaper, Almasser, Al muwagif, The Dawn Newspaper, No. 1 Citizen newspaper, and The City Review newspaper, to mention a few. The paradigm shift that led to a steep rise in media cannot be disputed since current technology is at the forefront across the globe, and there is a growing demand from citizens to know what is happening in their vicinity.

In 2011, South Sudan finally gained its independence from Sudan. After enjoying only 2 years of independence, the youngest African nation descended into yet another callous and horrendous conflict in 2013. A conflict began as a fallout of two principals, the President and his deputy. This "politically related conflict" was later described by the media as "an ethnic-tribal war" between President Salva and Vice President Dr. Riek. On tribal lines, media reports indicate in all frontiers that the "conflict was between Dinka and Nuer (Malwal, 2015; Johnson, 2016; Kilobi, 2013), with every citizen of South Sudan getting all sorts of unbalanced news reports, excited to the teeth. Within a week, the conflict escalated to Unity State, Upper Nile State and Jonglei State (JS), and then continued until 2015. In short, cessation of hostilities (COH) was rectified (Africa Centre for Strategic Studies, 2019; Bello-Schunemann, 2019; UN, 2022).

This ceasefire did not last, and as reported by several media houses, fighting broke out on July 8th, 2016, at Presidential quarters known as Juba One (J-1). The news headlines in several newspapers were heartbreaking and formidable. The headline that caught people's attention was that by the Citizen newspaper, "The Dog-fight in Juba One claimed over thousands of lives".

The discussion was to find solutions to all the poignant activities in which the media played crucial roles. The political discourse in South Sudan has been characterised by hatred, discrimination, and tribal acrimony. According to Ndavula et al (2021) and Jok (2015), media have since been involved in fueling such political space.

More often, there has been fallout and rebellions of SPLM and SPLM-IO members during the implementation period, with party members labelling each other with countless accusations. The delay in implementing this costly peace agreement can be attributed to the role of the media.

Hussain argues that the government can manipulate the media for their benefit. As such, the media has the utmost advantage of playing an active role in a conflict that may spread violence. However,

on the other hand, it can distance itself from broadcasting negative stories, contributing to conflict mitigation and resolution. (Hussain, 2014).

According to Ndavula et al (2021), the government tightly controls newspapers, and at some point, they published government-supported content. Based on this fact, researchers focus on analysing newspapers in South Sudan, which is entirely based on the government's imposition of gag laws, restrictions, intimidation, and surveillance, and whether or not this has implications for coverage of peace processes, peace agreements, and conflicts.

This research paper evaluates newspapers' content regarding their coverage of peace processes and conflict in South Sudan. It will further seek to understand whether more attention was focused on reporting conflicts than peace agreements, or perhaps they had given exclusive coverage to problems rather than solutions. The media's role is important in promoting peace, especially in print media, which has outstanding duties. (Rawat, 2014).

THEORETICAL LITERATURE

Johan Galtung is globally called "the father of peace studies". He first edited a piece of Research called "Journal of Peace Research". The purpose is to illuminate peace-related philosophies, as the Peace Research Institute in Oslo (PRIO) explains. Similarly, the findings of Grewal (2003) have underscored that Professor Galtung later expanded peace theory concepts and included peace and violence. There is no concrete, agreed-upon definition of the word "peace." Peace journalism, according to Lynch and McGoldrick, is"

… "Is when editors and reporters make choices – about what to report, and how to report it – that create opportunities for society to consider and respond with non-violent responses to conflict".

It is precarious that some journalists do not have a formal professional background in conflict theory and analytical reporting. Several universities have since endorsed 'media and conflict' into their curriculum, allowing media practitioners to equip themselves with such fundamental reporting skills on conflict-sensitive and peace journalism or peacebuilding—Lynch and McGoldrick (2000, p.6).

In 1922, American newspaper columnist Walter Lippmann thought journalists only believe in what they see, a picture in front of them, rather than thinking critically. Lippmann argues that the media have the utmost power to present images to a society based on how they perceive it. (Simonson, 2016). Shaw and McCombs were involved in framing the Agenda-setting theory in 1972. It is more about perceptions. An inquiry carried out by McCombs and Shaw (1968 to 1976) on agenda-setting during presidential campaigns shows the relationship between the voters and their candidate, and what the media broadcast. The study later revealed a powerful influence of the media during the election campaigns. Their study, therefore, concluded that mass media have a substantial impact on what they say during the campaign, and that broadcasts can change the mindset of voters towards their presidential candidates. (McCombs et al, 2003).

According to McCombs, the media sets the agenda by tailoring public attention to a few selected topical information about public servants. Mass media scholars' debates on agenda setting lay out two motives. People seek information mainly when it affects their lives, and nobody cares about

what happens in neighbouring countries. However, agenda-setting has a more substantial effect when the publication is relevant to a mass audience.

Although agenda-setting theory has received several challenges from different scholars, the fact remains that the media do not portray the public as a passive recipient of news sources. However, researchers argue that the media select or reject particular salient and report specific discourse as they deem necessary based on the reality of the situation as it unfolds.

Agenda-setting posits that media professionals can stick to one specific theme, and such a topic remains fresh in the audience's brains, hence creating and setting the agenda in society. Gatekeeping is not quite far from such an audacious truth. (ibid).

Kurt Lewin, the German American psychologist, pioneered "gatekeeping" and sometimes referred to "a wife or mother" who deliberately decides which kind of diet the family should have for their meal. In media today, "gatekeeping" is related to a person who decides which news content makes its way to the headline, and which one should be kept for the following news bulletins.

Lewin initially referred to gatekeeping as a food chain and later added that gatekeeping can also be applied to news sources via communication groups. (Twente, 2019). McCombs and Shaw looked at the effect associated with the rule of gate-keeping. The duo argued that gate-keeping is attached to news items and the media's emphasis.

Furthermore, the concept of gatekeeping is more related to agenda-setting. The link is that gatekeeping is an element of decision-making regarding the selection of news sources, while agenda-setting is more of a choice and how that affects the viewers or listeners. (McCombs et al, 1976). The concept of gatekeeping has now entered over 50 years and has since been developed into many command languages, including "gatekeeping in organisations". (Twente, 2019). In media today, "gatekeepers" can be editors or station managers tasked with deciding which information makes its way into the broadcast, and which ones are curtailed. In a real-world situation, gatekeepers truncate vital information in editorial decisions that otherwise would have been important to the public.

South Sudanese journalists have gone through teeth and nails in fulfilling their quest to provide credible, accurate, and balanced news information to their audiences.

These tasks are therefore poignant. Poignant in the sense that coverage of conflict and peace processes is not an easy ride. It requires better news judgment. A judgment that is not partisan or affiliated with any political entity. (Gilboa, 2009). There have been serious calls for media entities to focus on peace journalism instead of conflict journalism.

Conflicts can occur anytime, anywhere, regardless of proximity and distance. Whatever the reasons that underlie the causes of conflicts, the world has witnessed an unbelievable scale of conflicts, wars, and cold wars. December 15th, 2013, and July 8th, 2016, will go down in South Sudanese history as the dark days of their history.

The media also reported how politicians used these peace agreements to scramble for money-spinning positions. President Kiir later announced the transition in March 2020. It is alleged that military generals who were left out of the peace deal would later go to the bush and initiate another guerrilla fight. This time, it is not just a war, but a re-branded "peace war".

Media have played some abysmal roles in fueling the conflict, which is seen as a double-edged sword. It was supposed to be a medium that would have lobbied for peacebuilding, but it had done the opposite. (Jok, 2015).

The theoretical frameworks examined were the main selected theories used to help explain the media's role in covering peace and conflicts. This study is guided by the Peace Journalism theory developed by Professor Johan Galtung in 1964.

The study emphasised more on media coverage to be comprehensive, truthful, and balanced while covering conflicts and peace truces. McGoldrick and Lynch argue that the media should be impartial, report fairly, and not be manipulated by the government.

McCombs and Shaw underscored that the media have used agenda-setting to control society, and their published stories tend to divert people's attention. Something that the media should avoid, or work for the betterment of the country and not for their self-interest.

Lewin, McCombs, and Shaw talked about gatekeeping and how the media use it. These theories are quite vehement and relevant to this study. It helps to advocate for better, responsible, and credible media that will help society to pass on information that is of public interest.

METHODOLOGY

This Research evaluates newspapers through qualitative content analysis, especially the newspapers' headlines, feature stories, opinions, editorials, and columns. The period of analysis ranges from March 2022 to August 2022. Particular interest is paid to reporting on specific content of implementation of peace truce, and conflicts related to cattle-raiding, defections, political insurgencies, among others. The researcher used various secondary data from the library: books, archived newspapers, and peer-reviewed journals. The fundamental issue at hand is an examination of these newspapers through the content analysis method. The study focuses on content and information related to peace truces and conflicts in the selected newspapers for studies, including an analysis of headlines, feature articles, opinions, and editorials.

According to Brewer (2003), the term content analysis is a research method used to identify and determine the presence of certain words, themes, or concepts within some given qualitative data. Researchers used qualitative analysis to analyse the presence, meanings, and relationships of certain words, themes, or concepts.

Using qualitative content analysis, the researchers aimed to understand issues covered by newspapers, especially peace agreements, conflicts, cattle-raiding, and political campaigns. Hesmondhalgh (2006) attested that content analysis can create fundamental accounts of how media representation, which may involve a potentially vehement claim. Therefore, these claims can result in setting the precedence of an agenda that builds on media theories, Hesmond et al. Al. (2021).

This paper analysed samples of about 2,000 news stories, opinion articles, feature stories, and editorials written by the editors, all drawn from four local daily English language newspapers. These newspapers are based in Juba, the capital city of South Sudan, and their circulation is limited to the vicinity of Juba. These newspapers include, but are not limited to, (Juba Monitor, Number 1 One Citizen, the Dawn newspaper, and the City Review newspapers), especially.

(Jok, 2015). Since South Sudan is a new nation with a smaller number of newspapers, the sample of selected newspapers came into play because they were the only daily newspapers in the country. The selected newspapers are diverse, with different editorial policies and principles. These newspapers' contents operate in the context of what they gain and their societal position.

South Sudanese transitional constitution of 2011, as amended in 2018, dictates that the official language of the nation is English, and the standard language to be used by the local communities for better interpretation and understanding is 'local Arabic' known as 'Arabic Juba'. This is so because the literacy rate is 34% according to UNESCO (2021). With English as the dominant language at the official level, the daily English newspapers were selected due to the paradigm shift in context and content.

A random selection of newspapers published copies from January to August 2022 was collected for prior analysis. Samples on front pages (news articles, feature stories, opinion articles and editorial pieces) were critically analysed to understand better what happened to the collapse of peace agreements and the beginning of the rogue war in South Sudan. (Shannon, 2005)

RESULTS OF THE STUDY

A sample of 1,360 news stories, 123 features, 82 opinion articles, and 126 editorial articles was written on both peace agreements and conflicts in South Sudan, from January to August 2022. This content analysis was carried out in light of the research questions, aims and objectives.

Table 1: Coverage on News Headlines

Number of coverage on News headlines by four newspapers in South Sudan		
Newspapers	Coverage on Conflicts stories	Coverage on Peace agreements stories
Juba Monitor	380	134
The City Review	205	115
No One Citizen	100	15
The Dawn	237	86
Total news headlines	**922**	**350**

Table 1 shows that the Juba newspapers have focused more on conflict-related stories than peace agreements. One thousand two hundred seventy-two news stories were published from January to August 14th, 2022, with 922 stories on conflicts and 350 on peace agreements. For instance, some newspaper companies are affiliated with some parties, which makes it challenging to balance stories, primarily where a 'conflict of interest' exists. (Tamazuj, 2022)

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Table 2 Coverage on Feature Stories

Number of coverage on feature stories by four newspapers in South Sudan		
Newspapers	Coverage on Conflicts stories	Coverage on Peace Truce stories
Juba Monitor	30	16
The City Review	25	12
No One Citizen	10	4
The Dawn	15	11
Total news headlines	**80**	**43**

Table 2 shows that the number of feature articles published from January to August is less than the news stories. Eighty feature articles were published on conflict-related stories compared to 43, which is the number of feature articles published on peace agreements. This, therefore, indicates that the readers of newspapers in Juba consume more stories on conflicts than stories on peacebuilding or peace processes. It translates to readers knowing much about conflicts as opposed to peace.

Table 3: Coverage on Opinion Articles

Number of coverage on Opinion articles by four newspapers in South Sudan		
Newspapers	Coverage on Conflicts stories	Coverage on Peace Truce stories
Juba Monitor	10	4
The City Review	8	10
No One Citizen	20	18
The Dawn	8	4
Total news headlines	**46**	**36**

Table 3 indicates that newspaper houses in South Sudan have published more opinion articles (46) on conflict-related stories in comparison to those on peace agreements, which is 36. The difference in numbers is that conflict stories are widely covered, while peace articles are less covered. 10 opinion articles published is the difference between conflict stories and peace stories. This is a big gap!

Table 4 Coverage on Editorial Articles

Number of coverage on Opinion articles by four newspapers in South Sudan		
Newspapers	Coverage on Conflicts stories	Coverage on Peace Truce stories
Juba Monitor	4	6
The City Review	54	22
No One Citizen	15	10
The Dawn	9	6
Total news headlines	**82**	**44**

Table 4 shows that the newspapers have published more editorial articles on conflicts (82) than peace agreements (44), as shown above. Again, the results shown in Table 4.4 above clearly show

that newspaper companies in South Sudan are keen to pay much attention to existing conflicts, as shown in every daily publication.

Therefore, the study concludes that editors at respective newspapers in South Sudan publish stories on conflicts, making it challenging to shed more light on the peace truce and peace processes.

ROLE NEWSPAPERS PLAYED IN DISSEMINATING PEACE AGREEMENTS AND CONFLICTS

Journalism according to Ndavula et al, (2021) is the logical reporting, disseminating, and covering of events by writing, editing, and reporting or publishing through print (newspapers, magazines) or broadcasting (radio and Television) and mainstream media, social media, like (YouTube, messenger, WhatsApp's) among others.

The primary responsibility of every newspaper is to seek, dig deeper, and report on what is happening in society as it unfolds. In that legitimate role, newspapers are called the "middlemen" or a gateway. Because newspapers play a greater role in shaping society, that role can be either negative or positive. Media connects the government, individuals, and the neighbouring countries closer together. (Bojanic & Madsen, 2014), Cited in Mohammed et al (2019).

(Gilboa, 2009) Submits that scholars and practitioners have neglected the role played by the media in disseminating stories on conflicts. The researcher also observed the newspapers' headlines with utmost concern. Newspaper companies could instead have a reversal strategy, for instance, converting negative stories about conflicts into positive ones that will lead to conflict resolutions and eventually a lasting peace in South Sudan.

Gilboa (2009) further underscored the cases related to the use of pictorial evidence that were recorded in Bosnia and Rwanda. These countries had firsthand cases of the role media played in those days, and it tells you how the publication of stories, in particular pictorials like cartoons, can create controversy that demonstrates that indeed, newspapers can cause havoc and mayhem through their publications. In the case of South Sudan newspaper companies, there are, on several occasions, front pages covered with numerous pictorials.

[Ibid]: The headlines in these two newspapers indicate that the reader who had consumed such news on this day had mixed reactions. Perhaps, it had created confusion more than ever, "this had sparked hatred among the communities affected by such unverifiable reports. Two days later, a revenge attack was launched, and an alarming number of deaths reported was beyond measurable.

Prager (2021) posits that newspapers can shape public opinion regarding their societal role. In Colombia, he said, the debate on the peace process garnered high momentum since the media had fueled polarisation rather than creating a peaceful dialogue. In South Sudan, newspapers' reports on conflict and peace truce divided the communities. For example, coverage on South Sudan people defence forces (SSPDF) attacking the Sudan People Liberation Army – In Opposition (SPLA-IO) faction had since created formidable scenes that hungered the opposition forces citing that media houses in Juba, is being controlled by the government, and that, they are partisan in the way they report their news stories.

The fact that journalists ascribe to some parties, which makes them fulfil their 'conflict of interest' regarding news coverage or opinions, is more than poignant. The mentality and decisions made by

journalists to join parties make it extra difficult for them to be neutral, especially when the country is at war, like South Sudan.

Cassidy (2005), as cited in Gilboa (2009), alludes that journalists should select neutral bodies, especially during the debates on peace processes. That will make it easy for the neutral bodies to develop positive proposals or solutions to quail any urgent problem (s).

As seen in agenda-setting theory, whatever journalists repeatedly publish in the newspapers automatically sticks in the minds of ordinary citizens. This, therefore, sets the ball rolling for the consumers of the information published.

Jok (2015b) in his policy briefing published by the think Tank, 'Sudd Institute', lamented that media houses in South Sudan had polarised the communication space, making it difficult to believe which media house is right and which is wrong.

Aslam (2014) submits that the media's role depends on the publication they postulate on conflict. Jok urged that media use in peacebuilding has only been limited to independent media houses. Newspapers owned by individual entities and affiliated with some parties are not independent at all. These media houses are seen as not being impartial.

The discrimination regarding the publication of news stories by the newspaper companies is a clear violation of ethical principles upon which the media operates. Journalists and other media professionals working in the print media have largely compromised the ethical media jurisdictions. The argument that Jok Madut posits in his paper holds water. Jok stated that media houses in South Sudan side with either political parties or with their communities. As the common phrase goes, "blood is thicker than water", it seems to have served its purpose.

Looking at the statistics above (Ibid), newspapers that private individuals fund tend to control or align with the opinion of the warring parties, and this may be, at some point, used for the candid mobilisation of people to join rebellions in the vicinity of South Sudan. (Jok, 2015).

As Jok notes, media within the country have been widely used by the government and its allies to spread acrimony and semblance to their followers. The government have widely and massively used the State-owned television and radio stations to paint a positive image to the international communities by bluntly spreading messages choreographed by bunches of lies, to cover the atrocities committed. (Jok, 2015, p 14).

The researcher drew the line between the positive and negative roles played by the newspapers during the conflict and after through the processes of the peace agreement in 2018. The newspapers reviewed indicates that good number of stories were covered on conflict, making it crystal clear, that the public understands what had been happening in the country since independence, and the readers can attest to the fact that, they too, had consumed stories on peace processes and peacebuilding, though not more than that of the conflict's articles.

IMPACT OF NEWSPAPER REPORTS ON CONFLICT AND PEACE AGREEMENTS IN SOUTH SUDAN

The impact of newspapers' coverage on conflict and peace truce in South Sudan can be felt in all corners of the country. The December 15th, 2013 conflict brought the controversial role of the media to the limelight. For example, on the eve of December 15th, 2013, a newspaper company

published an alleged story predicting that there would be 'bloody conflict' in South Sudan anytime soon. Juba Monitor newspaper published an article citing the conflict between Dinka, 'the tribe of President Salva Kiir' and Nuer, 'the tribe of Vice President, Dr. Riek Machar'. Subsequently, other media outlets picked up the report and broadcast it to a larger audience. These media outlets include, but are not limited to, Radio Tamazuj, Eye Radio and Radio Miraya (the UN-led radio station).

There is no doubt that the media has created a condition; still, it is not very clear, and it is dividing the nation apart! Several signed peace agreements were not accurately covered; for instance, in 2015, the cessation of hostilities agreement (ACOH) did not hold water. This is because several media outlets, both local and international, have not covered this peace process extensively.

First, most news reports are full of, and focused centrally on, conflict-related articles as discussed earlier in the above paragraphs. Secondly, [sic] … few newspaper companies dominate the publication space, and when they do any coverage, it is always partisan, if not all the time, sometimes, they are … Jok (2015).

Through the National Security Service (NSS), government officials have been mandated to monitor the media in Juba directly. What they do is that they dictate the kind of stories that are about, and in the interest of the government, bluntly would be permitted to make their way to the headlines, and those that are about the opposition parties are truncated without mercy, leaving newspapers to have no voice whatsoever. (AI, 2021), (Akademie, 2019) & (IPI, 2018).

The role newspapers played in South Sudan has since been controlled and managed by some parties. It became difficult for the newspapers to operate smoothly without sabotage or interference from the above parties. In one way or another, newspaper companies fall victim to these crooks, and perhaps, whatever they publish is either being censored if it does not support the position of the government or otherwise.

Amnesty International reports indicated that hundreds of South Sudanese fled their homes. On July 25th, 2019, a newspaper editor was detained without charges or trials. In the same month, a youth activist was jailed and denied family visits. Several formidable ordeals happened under the blanket. Media professionals have suffered at the hands of security officials. The imposition of gag laws has since impacted how the media executes its mandate. (Amnesty International, 2022, p. 339).

Amnesty International and Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) jointly noted with concern that the right to freedom of expression, association and assembly largely remained a worrying factor. Media professionals are restricted and censored. As indicated in the subsequent paragraphs above (Ibid), newspapers are shut down on several occasions, journalists are threatened or jailed, or perhaps some would opt to quit the profession as a whole to avoid death traps. One can imagine the impacts!

Some published articles are biased, unbalanced and cannot be verified. Such news stories do more harm. The long-term impact is massive, and those impacts still haunt South Sudan. Peace agreements have not been holding water. Several signed peace agreements are failing to materialise. Why? What role did the media play? What went wrong?

In Summary, South Sudan's media, particularly newspapers, have had an enormous impact. John (2016). Although newspapers in South Sudan have tried to bring the stories of conflicts and peace truces to light, there are some controversies about their work. So, newspapers have had less coverage on peace agreements, which was the very reason why few readers in South Sudan understand less or nothing regarding the paradigm shift in political dynamics.

CHALLENGES NEWSPAPERS FACED IN SOUTH SUDAN

The South Sudanese media fraternity suffers more than any other media house globally. Several newspaper managers and journalists in South Sudan have been in the jaws of security officers. National security service agents interfere with the publication processes. Security officials are deployed in all the newspaper companies to monitor their publications. As usual, they would eliminate what they deemed inappropriate.

In November 2011, the editor of Destiny newspaper, Mr. Ngor Aguot Garang, was arrested. He was held in prison for several weeks, together with one of his reporters. In 2015, Joseph Afandi was held by the NSS for nearly a year without trial. When journalists are jailed, they are tortured beyond measure. (Akademie, 2019), (ARTICLE-19, 2016), and (RSF, 2021).

Amnesty International records that between 2011 and 2015, about six journalists were killed in cold blood while they were in the line of duty. The government security officials have shut down several newspapers. These practices have immensely impacted the output of media activities in South Sudan. (Amnesty, 2007)

CONCLUSION

The findings indicate that the media played some roles before, during, and after the conflicts and the signing of peace agreements. 922 conflict stories and 350 stories on peace agreement stories. This indicates that the audience had consumed many stories about conflicts. Much attention and focus on conflicts, meaning that it had resulted in prolonging the conflict, as stories published at the time fueled and escalated war and hatred among the people of South Sudan.

Media houses in South Sudan have often fallen prey to the government security forces. Media professionals have also been used as tools for the destruction and delay of South Sudan by constantly broadcasting or publishing stories that are of interest to certain political parties, individual members of specific communities, and paying allegiance to the incumbent government. This research dissertation has discovered that certain media houses in South Sudan are responsible for escalating war, communal conflicts, and motivated cattle-raiding businesses. This was done by constantly publishing stories in rural areas.

Finally, it is befitting to draw the line that there is an avenue for South Sudan journalists or the media fraternity to begin to understand that it is always important to have both stories balanced for the benefit of society. Peace journalism and conflict journalism to be introduced in universities across South Sudan.

Areas for Further Research

◆ The role of the South Sudanese government in safeguarding freedom of expression and Access to Information

◆ The role of civil societies in engaging legal institutions to implement Article 24 on media freedom and Access to information.

◆ Rethinking the mandate of the Media Authority of South Sudan.

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