



**ajf** TEMASEK FOUNDATION  
**Asia Journalism Forum**

# Reporting **Religion**

DILEMMAS OF PUBLIC DISCOURSE

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# Media in situations of conflict: Builders and facilitators

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# Conflict: A regular reporting beat

Conflict for many is a beat like any other and in situations of conflict the media plays an undeniably critical role.

This role is far more than being purveyors of information and reaching news out to audiences.

And this role has been changing with expanding definitions of what today constitutes mainstream media.

# Media in conflict: More than channels of information

The Mediascape abounds with examples where the media has played important roles in communities, which have experienced the bitterest of religious and ethnic violence, to recover and move towards healing.

As award winning Israeli journalist Ron Ben-Yishai, says, “The very presence of the media in a situation of conflict makes for greater accountability. The mere presence of a journalist may not be visibly helpful but it certainly can tone down the rate of human rights violations.” (2010 Media in Conflicts Seminar (MICS), Israel)

# Understanding the role of the media in a conflict situation

Emerging as a collective voice and medium of education

Greater answerability and regular monitoring status

Set the community on the road to peace building through mobilization and dialogue

Ensuring that marginalized communities have their rights

# Media: As Facilitators

Some examples from the countries of Afghanistan and India—places that are today conflict sensitive or dealing with the repercussions of modern day ethnic cleansing.

# Afghanistan

## Radio Zohra

Radio Zohra works “to give women a greater voice and to link and educate women around Afghanistan”.

## Radio Rabia Balkhi

Made sure in 2004 that voter registration and the presidential elections were at the top of the news

## Radio Sahar

First independent radio station to set up in Herat, and earned a loyal audience early on.

# India

## Print Media initiatives

### The Hindu

A series in The Hindu Newspaper, picked up by other mainstream news channels, ensured that orphaned and vulnerable children were assisted in shelters for the displaced and given scholarships to ensure continuing education.

### The Times of India

Joint campaign with the Jang Group in Pakistan to promote peace and amity between India and Pakistan.

### Independent Journalists

In various capacities promoting dialogue. As part of peace activists on either side Featuring columnists in each other's newspapers in order to get across the opposite point of view to readers.