


JOURNALISM IN CONFLICT

*The risks, importance
and future of
journalism in conflict
zones*



This resource will take you around four
hours to complete

solutions
not sides 



TRIGGER WARNING

01

Conflict Journalism

This resource talks about issues that might impact or affect you personally. The issues might have impacted your friends or family, and it might also be that reading that resource and engaging in the issues bring up some memories or feelings for you that you had not expected.

Here is some advice to make sure that you are checking in with yourself throughout this resource

- If you feel uncomfortable or upset by the content, you do not need to continue reading or continue the project
- Please reach out to someone; whether a friend or family member, or the mental health support system at your school
- Reflecting on how you feel reading the resource is a good exercise to do, whether by writing it down or speaking with others about

We will be looking at how and why news is reported from conflict zones. This includes looking at violence, trauma, stress, and war. It might be useful to consider now how these words and these topics might affect you. If you feel affected by any of the issues discussed in this resource, there is help out there.

YOUNGmINDS
fighting for young people's mental health

Young Minds



Anna Freud
National Centre for
Children and Families

Anna Freud Centre





JOURNALISM IN CONFLICT

02

What will you learn?

In this resource, you will learn about why conflict journalism is important, the risk of conflict journalism, the importance of thinking critically about headlines coming from conflict zones, and the legal protection of journalists in conflict zones.

- What is conflict journalism and why is it important?
- Can anyone be a conflict journalist?
- The risks of conflict journalism
- The rights of conflict journalists in the UK and abroad
- How does this apply to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict?

This activity can be completed on your own through reading and reflection, or working together with someone you know from home or school.

Here are the kinds of skills which are Important for this activity:



ANALYSIS



ACTIVE LISTENING



RESEARCH



CRITICAL THINKING



Let's get started!



THINKING ABOUT YOU



Take a pen and paper or get together with your group or study partner to discuss the following questions

Why did you choose this research topic?

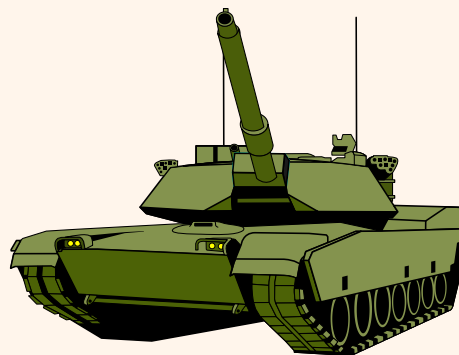
What do you think of when you hear the term 'conflict journalism'?

What do you feel when you see reports on the news from conflict zones?

What do you already know about conflict journalism?

Have you heard of any prominent conflict journalists before?

Can you think of any specific examples where journalists have reported from conflict zones?





KEYWORDS

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Reporting from conflict zones is a very dangerous assignment for a journalist, however their 'on the ground' perspective provides the world with crucial information on what is happening in a conflict. The question that many ask is: why do some conflict journalists choose to put themselves in situations of significant risk to report from conflict zones?

Before we look at why conflict journalism is important, we must look at what it is first

What is conflict? When you think of conflict, what do you think of?



Task: Using the internet, see if you can come up with a definition for conflict. What are some different definitions you can find for the term? Following this, can you find a definition of journalism?





DEFINING CONFLICT JOURNALISM

What is Conflict?

The task above will have shown you that there are many different definitions of the term 'conflict'. The most appropriate definition of the term 'conflict' is "when armed force is used by an organized actor against another organised actor, or against civilians, resulting in at least 25 battle-related deaths in one calendar year" (Save The Children, No Date).

Conflicts can be state based: they can take place between two states, or between a state and one or more rebel groups. Conflicts can also involve non-state actors.

Non-state conflict takes place when the conflict takes place between two organised armed groups, neither of whom is the government of a state

Conflict journalism is sometimes also known as 'war reporting'. These terms are used interchangeably, however do not mean exactly the same thing. The term 'war' refers to conflicts where there has been a specific declaration of hostility by a government or a state. War is a type of conflict, however not all conflict is war.

What is Journalism?

The Cambridge dictionary defines journalism as "the work of collecting, writing, and publishing news stories and articles in newspapers and magazines or broadcasting them on the radio and television"

So, what is Conflict Journalism then?

“ Conflict Journalism can be defined as 'the work of collecting, writing and producing news stories, articles, and broadcasts from situations where armed force is used between two organised groups' ”

Task: Can you think of any places, conflicts or situations where conflict journalists may previously have, or currently, work?





WHY IS CONFLICT JOURNALISM IMPORTANT?

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Task:

Why do you think that it is important for journalists to report from conflict zones?

Read [this speech](#) delivered by the conflict journalist Marie Colvin in 2010, and write down or discuss answers to the following questions:

- ? What are some of the reasons Colvin gives for why being a conflict journalist is important?
- ? How does Colvin think conflict journalism has changed over time? What aspects does she think have stayed the same?



Source: Brian Smith in the Telegraph





DIFFERENT TYPES OF CONFLICT JOURNALISM

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Conflict Journalism comes in many different forms, but it can be broken down into two main categories: print and broadcast.

Print Journalism: Newspaper articles, magazines, books, flyers and academic journals are all examples of print journalism.

While it may include pictures, print journalism is intended to be read. The term means 'printed documents that get across information about something'

Broadcast Journalism differs from this, as it is presented through video or audio, on TV, or on the radio

Task 1:

Are the following resources print or broadcast journalism?

1. ["Palestinian shot dead by Israeli soldiers in West Bank"](#)
2. [BBC reporter ducks as explosions rock Ukraine's capital Kyiv - BBC News. 1:43-2:24](#)
3. ["Zion's Vital Signs"- The New Yorker](#)
4. ['In our teens, we dreamed of making peace between Israelis and Palestinians. Then my friend was shot' – podcast](#)
5. [In A Time Of Monsters: Travels Through a Middle East in Revolt](#)

Task 2:

Can you make a list of the pros and cons of print journalism, and the pros and cons of broadcast journalism? Which format do you think is more appropriate for accurately and quickly portraying stories from conflict zones?





WHO CAN BE A CONFLICT JOURNALIST? 08

Traditionally, conflict journalists were young military officers, tasked with sending news back to the frontline.

During World War One and Two, conflict journalists were often sent by to the frontline by news agencies to cover and report back on what was happening. During this time, news from the front was highly censored and controlled by the government, for both military and propaganda purposes.

Following the end of World War Two, conflict journalists have still been sent to cover conflict zones by major news outlets, however more and more journalists have taken on freelance work in conflict zones.

Censorship: Sometimes governments or other organisations will limit what journalists can publish or broadcast. This is called Censorship.

Propaganda: information, especially of a biased or misleading nature, used to promote a political cause or point of view

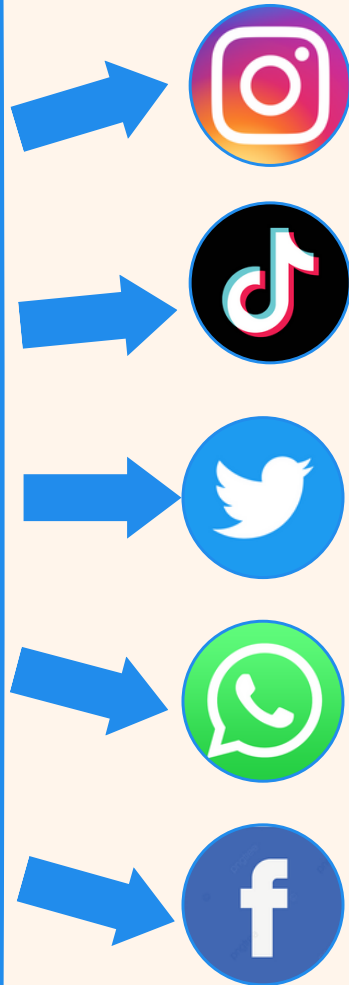
Freelance: Journalists who work for themselves and then send their stories to whichever publication they are currently writing for



SOCIAL MEDIA AND CONFLICT JOURNALISM

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However, the rise of social media has produced an entirely new form of conflict journalism. Modern technology has changed how war and conflict is reported in the media. Social media means that the public have almost unprecedented access to events happening on the frontline of conflict. This is clear when we look at the instant analysis and professional commentary that filled social media following the Russian invasion of Ukraine.



Task:

Can you think of any times that you have seen media from conflict zones posted on social media?

If you were on the ground in a conflict zone, what forms of media, and platforms of social media would you use to portray what was happening?

Can you think of any reasons it is good that more people have access to the means by which they can share information about conflict to the outside world?

Can you think of any issues this might cause?





MEDIA 'FRAMING' IN CONFLICT JOURNALISM

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While journalism in conflict is crucial, as Marie Colvin outlined in her 2010 speech, for portraying real accounts of what is happening 'on the ground' in conflict zones, the media produced may be biased towards one side of the conflict's perspective.

'Media framing' is defined as "the angle or perspective from which a news story is told". Journalists from different sides of a conflict may use the term 'terrorist' to label those from the other side.

Take a look at this story about the killing of a Palestinian, who shot dead an Israeli soldier. What can you identify about how this event has been framed by different news sources in Israel and Palestine? What are differences you see? Are there any similarities?

THE JERUSALEM POST

'Justice was done' - Family of slain IDF soldier after killer shot dead in second attack

Udai Tamimi killed IDF soldier Noa Lazar last week. On Wednesday, after 11 days on the run, he tried to kill another Israeli and was stopped.

The manhunt for the Shuafat checkpoint killer came to an end on Wednesday night when he was shot dead in a failed shooting attack at the entrance to Ma'aleh Adumim, south of the Israeli capital.

The terrorist, east Jerusalem resident 22-year-old Udai Tamimi, arrived at the entrance to the West Bank city and opened fire at nearby security personnel. According to United Hatzalah volunteer EMT Akiva Skolnick, the terrorist was killed by returning fire from the guards. A grenade and knife were found on his person.

The Jerusalem Post is an Israeli newspaper



The village of Nabi Saleh holds the funeral of its martyr Al-Tamimi

Ramallah - Ma'an - Large crowds in the village of Nabi Saleh, northwest of Ramallah, mourned the body of the martyr Qusai al-Tamimi, who was shot dead by the occupation .during the confrontations that erupted at the entrance to the village at dawn

The funeral procession proceeded from in front of the Martyr Yasser Arafat Hospital in the city of Salfit, to the home of the martyr's family, to take a farewell look at him, and to pray for him before his funeral, amid patriotic chants condemning the crimes of the occupation and a .comprehensive strike

.And the occupation forces fired tear gas at the funeral procession

Ma'an is a Palestinian news agency





THE RISKS OF CONFLICT JOURNALISM

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Therefore, when reading journalism produced in conflict zones, we need to think critically about who that information gives power to, and the message that that information contains.

What we have considered here must not take away from the amazing work conflict journalists do though, sometimes putting themselves in situations of extreme danger to ensure that stories get told.



Marie Colvin (1956-2012)

Marie Colvin was an American journalist who worked as a foreign affairs correspondent for the Sunday Times. She was first appointed as the paper's Middle East correspondent, then moved on to be their Foreign Affairs correspondent. Though specialising in the Middle East, she also covered conflicts in Chechnya, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Zimbabwe, Sri Lanka and East Timor.

Colvin put herself at significant risk throughout her career to ensure that stories from the frontline were reported. She lost her eye from the blast of a Rocket Propelled Grenade while reporting from the Sri Lankan Civil War. When talking about this incident, she later stated that her attacker was aware that she was a journalist before they fired the RPG.

Colvin covered the Syrian Civil War, crossing into Syria on the back of a motorbike to avoid restrictions on journalists entering the country. She was killed, alongside photojournalist Rémi Ochlik, by Syrian artillery fire while covering the bombardment of Homs. Colvin took risks to ensure that real stories of "humanity in extremes, pushed to the unendurable" were captured and reported on, and was trying to enact this philosophy when on her last assignment in Homs.





THE RISKS OF CONFLICT JOURNALISM

Frank Gardener (1961-)

Frank Gardener, currently the BBC Security Correspondent, was left seriously injured in an attack by Al-Qaida gunmen while reporting from Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, in 2004. He was left paralysed in the legs as one of the bullets hit his spinal nerves. After seven months in hospital, and more of rehabilitation, Gardener returned to reporting for the BBC, using a wheelchair or a walking frame. He now normally reports from the BBC studios but has also reported on events from places like Afghanistan.

Gardener's story shows that even journalists not reporting directly from conflict frontlines are still at risk of attack.



Source: Clara Morden/TheTelegraph



Source: Al Jazeera Network

Shireen Abu Akleh (1971-2022)

Shireen Abu Akleh was a Palestinian-American journalist who worked for Al-Jazeera. She was one of the most well-known names across the Middle East for her reporting on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

On May the 11th 2022, Abu Akleh was reporting on an Israeli raid on the Jenin refugee camp in the West Bank. Her and another journalist, Ali Samodi were shot by the IDF. While Samodi survived, Abu Akleh was killed. Abu Akleh's killing drew widespread criticism from the international media, and her funeral served as a flashpoint for violence across the West Bank.





THE RISKS OF CONFLICT JOURNALISM

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Nizar Banat (1978-2021)

Nizar Banat was a Palestinian human rights activist, who used his platform to report on the human rights violations and corruption of the Palestinian Authority. Because of his work to report on the actions of the Palestinian Authority, he was arrested many times. He drew thousands of followers to his Facebook videos, where he broke down the illegal action of the Palestinian Authority, and the Israeli occupation. Before he was killed, the Palestinian Authority tried to silence him many times- he was threatened, arrested and his house was shot at, but this did not deter him from reporting on Palestinian corruption. On the 24th June 2021, his house was raided by Palestinian Security Forces, who badly beat him, with his death later announced by the Palestinian Authority later that morning. This drew significant condemnation from international organisations and states, who expressed concerns relating to violence perpetrated against Palestinian civil society and human rights activists.



Source: AFP

Task:

1. *Think about how you would prepare to go in and report from a conflict zone, knowing the stories of those who have been injured while doing the job. Would you be worried? Would knowing that this work is crucial make you feel less worried?*
2. *What would you take with you to go and report from a conflict zone?*
3. *Research what, if any, training conflict journalists may receive before they move onto the frontlines of a conflict.*





RIGHTS OF CONFLICT JOURNALISTS

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We've learned about the risks of being a conflict journalist, but what legal protection do they have in conflict zones?

Geneva Conventions (1949): The Geneva Conventions are the basis of International human rights law. They are intended to protect those who are not fighting, and those who can no longer fight.

Now that we've looked at the risks to being a conflict journalist, we're now going to think about the legal rights of conflict journalists.

While no specific law applies to the protection of journalists, the Geneva convention of 1949 set out rules to protect those who are not taking part in the conflict, or who can no longer take part in conflict. It is specified within the protocol that journalists must be protected as civilians, so long as they do not take an active part in the conflict situation. This means that all parties in conflict must take steps to protect journalists, avoid deliberately attacking them, and make sure that their rights are upheld if they do get captured.

The protection of journalists does not only apply internationally, but also in the United Kingdom.

Task: Can you research what has been done to protect journalists in the UK?





YOUR TASK

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We now know a little bit about the risks conflict journalists take, and the legal protection that they enjoy.



Source: New Yorker, Jess Lowe

Can you research what has been done to protect journalists in the UK, using the example of a time where journalists were not well protected from harm on UK soil.

When we talk about journalism in conflict zones, we mostly think of journalist covering international conflict. However, the role of conflict journalists covering violence in the UK, and the risks they take, also needs to be taken into account.

Task: In groups, or by yourself, put together a 4 minute presentation on the killing of the Irish journalist Lyra McKee in 2019.

Research:

Who was she?

What happened to her?

What were the laws and provisions in-place to protect journalists from harm in the UK in 2019?

Following the killing of Lyra McKee, has anything changed in how journalists are protected in periods of conflict?

Some websites are attached here to get you started.

<https://cpj.org/data/people/lyra-mckee/>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-47985469>

<https://www.newyorker.com/news/postscript/the-incredible-life-and-tragic-death-of-lyra-mckee>

If you feel affected by any of the issues discussed in this resource, there is help out there.

