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## **Human Security Application: The Study of Media Safety in Humanitarian Missions**

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### ***Abstract***

For media personnel, being assigned for humanitarian missions in conflict zone is considered as a one in a lifetime opportunity. However, there were no training and safety courses provided to media people to equip themselves if any casualties happened. The purpose of this study is to find out the steps of preparation to be taken by media organisations and media personnel before sending their people to conflict zones. This includes safety courses, basic medical training and other courses that deem necessary. The objectives of this research are to identify whether any courses or training were taken or given by media personnel before entering conflict zone while covering news for humanitarian missions, to find out whether media personnel understand about the risks in conflict zones and to identify characteristics of selecting media personnel in humanitarian missions. The research design of this study is qualitative method and data were gained using semi-structured interview

techniques. The tragedy in Somalia involving the death of BernamaTV cameraman, Noramfaizul Mohd Nor was used as a case study. The study found that there was no preparation taken by our media personnel before leaving for humanitarian missions in a conflict zone. Media personnel chosen did understand about the risks they might encounter during humanitarian missions. Lastly the research recommends preparations should be taken by media organisations before sending their media personnel in conflict zones which are basic medical training, syllabus about media safety, survival course and basic military course.

**Keywords:** *Conflict Zone, Humanitarian Missions, Media Safety*

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## **1.0 Introduction**

Human security is an important aspect in people's life. It was initially popularised in the early 1990s by the United Nations Development Program. The 1994 Human Development Report defined human security as people's safety from chronic threats and protection from sudden hurtful and disruptions in the patterns of daily life. There were seven components listed as types of human security which were economic security, food security, health security, environmental security, personal security, community security and political security [1]. The core basis about human security is protecting people. Every time there is a tragedy or a humanitarian calamity, the UN is on the ground offering relief, support and aid. Part of human securities involvement is through humanitarian mission as stated by General Assembly resolution 63/139 of 11 December 2008. It recognises that in strengthening the coordination of humanitarian assistance in the field, United Nations organisations should continue to work in close coordination with national Governments, under the pretext of human security activities.

Malaysia has become official United Nations member on 17 September 1957. Ever since then, Malaysia has been actively involved in international activities. Malaysia has been involved in many humanitarian missions since in 1961 in Congo under UN flag. For other countries like Malaysia, championing humanitarian issues through humanitarian missions is one of many ways in promoting peace.

In order to promote these activities, the important element involved during the humanitarian missions is the media. Media plays an important role in humanitarian mission by contributing to an emerging global conscience through the transmission of live images of brutal conflicts and human sufferings. In crisis like war and natural disasters, media seems to be the credible source in updating the world about the latest development of the crisis. Given their communicative role, the media is deemed as part of important humanitarian unit in human security. It helps to shape citizens views of political and social issues. Through their decisions on which items to include in the news agenda and how to frame them, the media structure discussions on a variety of concerns of human security. Not only do they

influence what problems audiences think about, but they also identify causes and suggest remedies [2].

### *1.1. Media Safety at Risks?*

However while accommodating people with latest updates on humanitarian mission in conflict zone location, media personnel safety are very much at risks. According to Committee Protect Journalist website, 136 media personnel were killed on duty in Iraq because of hostile actions or crossfire while carrying out dangerous assignments. Although cases involving Malaysia media personnel are not as great as international media personnel, safety aspects of media personnel should be strengthened as our country is actively involved in humanitarian missions. News coverage for such event will bring good image to Malaysia in promoting humanitarian causes. It shows how our country plays an important role in encouraging peace thus, acts as an active member of the United Nations. Humanitarian missions, particularly in the midst of disasters are not a field for amateurs.

It requires proper preparations to ensure safety to our media personnel whilst equipping them with education and knowledge about the risks they might encounter. The media have proven to be an influential force in shaping the response of individuals, organisations and governments to these episodic catastrophes. Media is the eyes and ears of people with regard to events in the world. This phenomenon known as CNN effects made people aware that other people's human securities are at stake thus many entities respond to outbreak of disaster through humanitarian missions. The CNN effect coined in the 1990s stands for the media impact on foreign policy, either directly or through public opinion [3]. Media personnel engaged with people's emotion through heartbreaking images of starving children, hopeless civilians and other suffering images.

Therefore, this study concentrates on preparations taken by media personnel before entering disaster areas and understanding selection process made by media organisations to assure Malaysian humanitarian mission involving our local media.

## *1.2. Background of the Study*

Safety issues of media personal in danger zone comes to attention in 2010 when BernamaTV cameraman, Noramfaizul Mohd Nor was shot dead during humanitarian mission in Somalia. He was the first Malaysian media personnel to have died in line of duty while working in a danger zone. In May 2010, Freedom Flotilla which sailed from Turkey carrying activists, aid workers and two Malaysian media personnel, Astro Awani journalist Ashwad Ismail and cameraman Samsulkamal Abdul Latip were attacked and detained by Israeli Defence Forces. Fortunately they came back in one piece after been detained for 28 hours.

Back in 2003, three media personnel were ambushed and kidnapped outside Baghdad, Iraq by a group of armed men as they were travelling in two vans while covering humanitarian missions led by Malaysian Medical Relief Society (MERCY). Lucky for Terrence Fernandez, a reporter from The Sun newspaper, Anuar Hashim, a New Straits Times photographer and Omar Salleh, cameraman with Radio Television Malaysia were released on the same day. These scenarios showed that under unpredictable circumstances nothing much can be done to protect our media personnel safety in danger area.

However, if there are safety courses offered as preparations before entering that dangerous zone, it will be very useful for them in order to help protect themselves. Preparation before entering dangerous zone is very important because it involves people's lives. Thus, Malaysia must ensure our media personnel's safety are taken seriously in order to play important roles in exercising human security's activities actively and at the same time to avoid unfortunate incidents involving our media personnel.

Media coverage of our humanitarian missions reflects a good image of our government and our country. Moreover, it provides faster news from a credible source, which comes from our own media personnel direct from the scene. However, unfortunate incidents involving our media personnel such as being injuries, kidnapped or ambushed may affect the morale of media people to work in disaster areas.



Table 1 shows that Somalia is among the ten deadliest countries in the world for media personnel to work in. According to CPJ website, based on investigations conducted they are reasonably certain that media personnel were murdered in direct reprisal for his or her work or killed in crossfire during combat situations or killed while carrying out a dangerous assignment such as coverage of a street protest.

Therefore, it is necessary to any media personnel to get to know the country first and the risks, before leaving on humanitarian missions in the stated deadliest place.

**TABLE 1**

Deadliest Countries and Number of Media Personnel Killed from 2003 - May 2013

Country	No of Media Personnel Killed
Iraq	151
Philippines	73
Algeria	60
Russia	55
Pakistan	52
Somalia	50
Colombia	44

**TABLE 2**

Media Personnel Killed from 2003 - May 2013 taken from Committee to Protect Journalists, 2013

Year	No of Media Personnel
Jan-May 2013	31
2012	103
2011	86
2010	79
2009	100
2008	69
2007	112
2006	103
2005	62
2004	87
2003	60

According to Committee to Protect Journalist website, 892 media personnel were killed from 2003 to May 2013. Thus, necessary preparations must be taken seriously as standard operating procedures (SOP) before sending anyone to such areas.

In November 2000, the joint code of practice for journalists working in conflict zone or 'safety guidelines' was drawn up by the News Safety Group and adopted by a range of international television broadcasters including Reuters and APTN [5]. It describes journalists to be having the funds for personal insurance coverage against death and injury, and provided with training on safety and access to safety equipment. The safety policy for journalists is that employers must provide their staffs with appropriate training. As a result, APTN and Reuters TV did send their staff to a five-day 'hostile-environment' training program in order to help protect them in conflict zone.

Malaysia is very much left behind in providing training or courses to its media people. The result of this study will become a reference to media organisations, especially the government through the Department of Broadcasting (Radio Television Malaysia) in developing future guidelines or S.O.P that could avoid unforeseen incidents that can occur to any media personnel in a disaster zone.

As an active member country of the United Nations, involving in humanitarian missions its shows that Malaysia is committed in peace keeping missions and maintaining human security rights of people no matter where they are. Media personnel, as part of humanitarian missions component plays an important role in creating good reputation and image of our country's noble work through media coverage via visuals and audio.

However, there is inadequate study being conducted in Malaysia, regarding our media safety in disaster zones during humanitarian missions. This causes problems and blameworthiness situations which might happen again if the same tragedy repeats itself. Moreover, the government will be blamed as they take security issues of media personnel lightly especially if it happens under the flag of humanitarian mission. It will affect both Malaysia's reputation and the humanitarian process. Therefore, this research will look at what preparations were given to media personnel before they

enter dangerous areas. Moreover, it also identifies characteristics of selecting media personnel by media organisations and answering research objectives and research questions.

This study is conducted to seek for answers to the question of what are safety measures taken by media personnel before entering disaster zone during humanitarian missions and the criteria of selecting media personnel for humanitarian missions' news coverage by media organisations. Thus, the study aims to identify what preparations are needed to by media personnel before entering disaster zones while covering news for humanitarian missions. In order to answer the research question, this study sets its objectives as the following:

- i) To identify whether any courses or training were taken or given by media personnel before entering conflict zone while covering news for humanitarian missions.
- ii) To find out whether media personnel understand the risks in conflict zones.
- iii) To identify characteristics of selecting media personnel in humanitarian missions.

The purpose of this study is to identify what preparations need to be taken by media personnel before entering disaster zones while covering news for humanitarian missions. Encouraging the safety of media personnel must not be constrained only after the unfortunate incidents happened. Although cases involving Malaysian media personnel are not as serious as international media, this issue must be taken seriously. Media personnel also act served as agent of information and consistent news coverage for such events will bring good image to Malaysia in promoting humanity causes.

## **2.0 The Instrument**

The study uses interviews with media personnel and two representatives from Radio Television Malaysia, representing Malaysia's media organisations. Four professionals were chosen for this study.

### *2.1. Research Technique*

This research uses a qualitative approach in order to answer the research questions and this is achieved through interviews with experts in the field of study. According to [6], participants of the study must focus on the research questions prepared for them and must answer them by recalling their experience. Therefore, all media personnel who were selected had experience working in danger zones while covering for humanitarian mission. The method used in this study is semi-structured interview. Media personnel and media organisation that participated in this research were from the government (Jabatan Penyiaran Malaysia and Radio Television Malaysia). As a national broadcaster, RTM must set good example to other TV stations especially when it comes to employee's security. List of criteria of respondents were drawn up in consultation with knowledgeable people in the field.

Information on the subject of research instrument is an important component in planning research method. This is to ensure data that will be collected is valid and can be used. Interview technique is the main method in collecting information in this study. According to [7] interview is the medium to get verbal information with respondents through face-to-face conversation. The advantage of this method is the interviewer may explain in detail the purposes of the study and types of information needed. The information later will be recorded through audio recording or note-taking.

This interview used structure interview where the interviewer will act like a moderator in preparing questions and guiding answers that will be given by respondents. According to [8], there is no exact number of sampling, interviews as many are needed in order to find out what the researcher needs to know.

### *2.2 Sampling*

Two media personnel who had experience in joining humanitarian missions and two representative from RTM's media organisation were selected using purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is a type of non-probability sampling where the individual's selected to be interviewed are based on certain characteristics which may include specialist knowledge of the research issue, experiences in the subject matter and willingness to contribute in the research

[9]. In order to achieve research objective, an interview technique was used. According to [6], participants of the study must focus on the research questions prepared for them and must answer them by recalling their experience. Therefore, all media personnel who were selected had experience working in danger zone while covering for humanitarian missions.

The researcher managed to get Hj. Muis Shefii, Assistant Director TV Current Affairs News and Yazid Naim, Chief Reporter as representative from media organisation. Both had more than 25 years working in RTM and had an experience working as media personnel before. Media personnel, Izham Sidik and Peterson Matthew that agreed to participate in this research. Peterson Matthew was in Somalia when the tragedy involving BernamaTV cameraman, Noramfaizul Mohd Nor. Izham Sidik has 15 years' experience in media and had experience in humanitarian missions in Gaza, Aceh, Japan and many more places. He is also a TV Producer cum broadcast journalist for Disaster Unit.

### **3.0 The Procedure**

Case study was used in this research. The case study method was used because the researcher deliberately wanted to cover contextual circumstances, considering that it might be very much relevant to phenomenon of study [10]. Case study research is a qualitative approach in which the researcher explores a case or multiple cases over time, through specified, in-depth data collection [11]. In this research, the incident of BernamaTV cameraman who died during humanitarian mission in Somalia was selected as case study.

In case study research, the single case is typically selected to illustrate an issue, and the researcher compiles a detailed description of the setting for the case [12]. According to [13] a single case study might be selected for its uniqueness which he valued it by the prerequisites of understanding the range and variety of human experience that is essential in understanding and appreciating human conditions. In this research, the source of information was through interviews with media personnel and representative from media organisation.

All data will not be helpful without analysis [14]. He added that the analysis involves breaking data down into bits and the 'beating' the bits together. In qualitative research data analysis will be done as soon as data gathering process

started. Performing personal interviews or observations were the preliminary point of analysing qualitative data [15]. This was a simultaneous and ongoing process of data gathering. Constant analysis should be made to evaluate the data in ensuring the data gathered are enough, relevant to the studies and answers research questions. Information collected in the early data analysis may help out the researcher to steer clear of repetitive data.

In sum, it will help reduce cost, time and energy. [15] also suggested that the earliest stage of data analysis started with reading that particular data gathered repeatedly while making additional notes and comments about the data. This type of data management was also known as case study data base or case record [16]. The other way of data analysis was through writing summary based on the interview performed. Researcher wrote back all recorded interviews or notes taken during the interview and then types it using computer. The transcripts then will be summarised featuring basic information about participants, and information about questions that had been asked throughout interview session.

According to [17], there are no straightforward rules stated to steer the data analysis of qualitative data. This is merely because the data collected were largely textual, thus make statistical procedures in applicable. Therefore he advised researchers to base their analysis on the personal interpretation of words which makes data analysis more crafty, artful and clever. He also suggested writing summary base on the interview conducted. It started with reading repeatedly all recorded interviewers or notes taken during the interview. Analysing qualitative data requires more than just reporting the essence of the interview answer. Undoubtedly common sense steers much of the analysis after the interview is finished. As a result, what the researchers noted was the interview results reflect the interviewees answer. For this paper, the researcher tried to analyse what safety measures were taken by media personnel before entering a disaster zone and what criteria are used by media organisation in selecting media personnel.

#### **4.0 Results**

Data from the interview were transcribed, analysed and summarised to answer the objectives of the research paper. Two media personnel and two

representatives from Radio Television Malaysia (RTM) media organisation were interviewed regarding preparations of media personnel before leaving on humanitarian missions. The data were analysed using content analysis or textual analysis that is summarising context in which the message are created or presented [18].

#### *4.1. Discussion of Research Objectives*

This study is conducted to seek answers to the question on safety measures taken by media personnel before entering disaster zone during humanitarian missions and the criteria of selecting media personnel on humanitarian mission's news while covering by media organisations.

##### *4.1.1. Identifying Whether Any Courses or Training Were Taken or Given By Media Personnel before Entering Conflict Zone While Covering News for Humanitarian Missions*

Noramfaizul Mohd Nor from BernamaTV was the first media personnel from Malaysia who got killed while covering news for humanitarian mission. His death was heavily politicised by the opposition via social media since the public was shocked about the lack of safety preparations offered to the media people when working in conflict zones. According to Committee to Protect Journalist website, [www.cpj.com](http://www.cpj.com), since 1992, 985 journalists were killed in their line of duty. Among that figures, 50 journalists got killed in Somalia. Based on the data gathered using interview method, all respondents agreed that there was no preparation given by media organisation and taken by the media personnel before departing on humanitarian missions in conflict zone.

The first respondent, Muis Shefii was from the media organisation. He is the Assistant Director TV Current Affairs News in RTM. According to him there was no course given to media personnel—before and after the tragedy involving BernamaTV Cameraman, Noramfaizul Mohd Nor. He added awareness about media safety only arises after the incident occurred.

When asked about action taken by RTM News Department regarding this matter, Muis Shefii said that news administrator did suggest to IPTAR (Institut Penyiaran Tun Abdul Razak) to conduct a course regarding media safety but

no action was taken. However, RTM did invite BBC (Britain Broadcasting Corporation) to share their personal experience with RTM staff.

Yazid Naim was the second respondent from media organisation. He is the Chief Editor in RTM and has been working in RTM for 31 years. He responded that no course was given to RTM's media personnel before the tragedy involving BernamaTV cameraman, Noramfaizul Mohd Nor occurred. After the incident, RTM did send their media personnel to courses conducted by Malaysian Press Institute, Asia Pacific Institute for Broadcasting Development (AIBD), Cable News Network (CNN) etc. except it was not a specific preparation course. It was more on precautions to media personnel in conflict zone. In short, it was just a talk. Other than that media personnel in RTM were only involved in simulation courses conducted by Civil Defence Department (CDD), National Security Council (NSC), Malaysian Fire and Rescue Department etc.

Idzham Hadi Sidek was the first respondent for media personnel. He had 15 years experience in news reporting. He never takes any specific course as preparations before leaving on humanitarian missions, mostly because there was no course offered. However if RTM got invited by WATANIAH or RELA to attend simulations they will send representatives but it was not him. Only after the tragedy in Somalia, safety issues of media personnel were taken seriously.

Peterson Matthew was the second respondent representing media personnel. When asked whether he had taken any specific courses before accepting assignment in conflict zones, he said no course was offered. Only after the tragedy in Somalia where only KPKK said that the media personnel must have basic army training, join WATANIAH or RELA, safety course, bullet proof jacket, etc. However he was not sure about the execution of the said statement.

Based on the answers given, there was a clear statement that there were no courses or training given to RTM media personnel before entering conflict zone on humanitarian missions, even after the tragedy that took the life of media personnel in Somalia. Although life and death was already is not in our hands that is not a reason to ignore safety measures. Media organisation should equip their personnel because basic training may help them to survive during humanitarian missions in conflict zones.



#### *4.1.2. Identifying Whether Media Personnel Understand About the Risks in Conflict Zones*

In the real world, there one risks in every profession, including media personnel. Once people acknowledge the risks, they will prepare themselves to overcome any problems and obstacles. According to Muis Shefii media personnel were given the choice to accept or to reject such assignment but usually they never refuse to work in disaster area or conflict zones. RTM has identified several people who can work in said places thus it was easier to select people based on volunteerism or willingness basis. There were some RTM staffs offered themselves voluntarily but they were not chosen because the department felt that they were not ready yet.

Media personnel were not given any black and white document regarding the risks of accepting jobs. If the invitation of covering news comes from NGOs, they will provide media personnel with group insurance. That was why RTM only send permanent staff to conflict zone or danger area rather than media personnel on contract basis because they will not get the same benefits like the permanent staff if anything happens to them. To conclude, he stressed that the media personnel did understand the risks before accepting any assignments in conflict zones.

Yazid Naim mentioned that, true media personnel will be very happy working in war zone or conflict area. That was like the ultimate satisfaction in this job. In RTM, all media personnel understand the risks working in conflict zone. Some staff even volunteers themselves and willingly representing RTM to gather news during humanitarian missions. That proves they already understand the risks working in conflict zone. He added that every media personnel have his/her own strengths and weaknesses.

For example, some reporters are good in current news reporting but not so good in sports reporting. As a leader, he already identified which media personnel are suitable for humanitarian mission's coverage, especially in a conflict zone. Sometimes, it was "forced acceptance" (*paksa rela*) choice to the media personnel but usually if the passion for work is strong, they will happily accept it.

Izham Hadi Sidik has his own opinion regarding this matter. He was well aware of the risks even before accepting these tasks. He listed a few possibilities

including dying, working in the conflict zone, possibilities of intervention by military, government or freedom fighter, equipment may get confiscated, kidnapping and other kinds of danger. He mentioned that danger does not only occur during humanitarian mission in conflict zone. Even when working on a daily basis, media personnel always encounter risks if they are not careful in their line of duty. When asked about his understanding regarding conflict zone, his understanding was a condition where all people or civilian were not allowed to get in, except for military team or rescue team. Even the media were not allowed to enter. It can be because of natural disaster, war or other casualties, the kidnapping for instance. He added that the definition of 'conflict zone' is big, depending on the situation.

He had many experience covering news for humanitarian missions including in Aceh and Japan during the tsunami, Gaza and many more places. He opined that to be a reporter, they have to be smart. He never encountered unfortunate incidents involving shooting or weapons mostly because it was easy to enter the conflict area as tourists rather than media personnel. As for equipment, the smaller, the better. That will make his job easier and will not arouse suspicion. He was given the choice to accept or to reject humanitarian mission's assignment but because he was so passionate with his work, did not turn down the offer.

Planning and preparation is very important and this consists of sourcing local information, assessing local contacts and carrying out thorough risk assessments. Media personnel who went on humanitarian mission in conflict zone must do preliminary research and become very familiar with the roots cause of the conflict and the perpetrators involved. This is vital for media personnel to get to know the place before actually getting there.

As for Peterson Matthew, he was well aware about the risks of working in conflict zone. He knew that he has a choice to reject the assignment. He never signed any document upon accepting humanitarian assignment in conflict zone. In his respond about the risks, he said that there are risks working in conflict zone where the chances to live is 50/50, there is a possibility of getting shot, earthquakes, natural disasters or kidnappings. When asked about his understanding concerning conflict zone, Peterson Matthew responded that danger zone, risks zone and conflict zone are all the same. It is a place where there is no guarantee for safety. It is not a safe zone. It could be a war or natural

disaster. It can be the government of the said country declaring emergency because of something bad has happened. In danger zones, people live in fear and have shortage of food and clean water. He was in Somalia when the incident involving BernamaTV cameraman occurred. He was the one who seek help when it happened. Before he went to Somalia, he did a little bit of reading about Somalia to get to know about the country, the people and the problems.

He admitted he was frightened knowing the fact that Somalia was number one war zone, during that time. Living by his principle, he convinced himself that job must be done like any other job. News had to be delivered no matter what difficulties he encountered.

#### *4.1.3. Identifying Characteristics of Selecting Media Personnel in Humanitarian Missions*

There are certain criteria identified by the organisations before sending media personnel on humanitarian missions, especially in conflict zones. Muis Shefii stated that the main reason was the ability of the reporter and cameraman (media personnel) to work in a stressful environment independently. They must be able to adopt themselves in dangerous situation, take care of themselves and at the same time accomplish the main reason why they were sent there which is to deliver news to RTM. Not everyone can work in stressful situation and that was why RTM always send the same media personnel to cover news on humanitarian missions. They have proven to the department that they can deliver whatever news they need even when the situation was really bad there.

Yazid Naim clarified that media personnel selected have to understand the tasks given. For reporters, journalists and even technical crew must have the ability to work independently. At the same time, they must also remember they were assigned there to get news. In short between working, personal safety and connection with people at the location, that person must deliver whatever is needed for news first. That was the first reason why he was sent there. In order to keep fit, they must take vitamins and drink plenty of clean water. This is applicable not only when working outstation but also for any assignments. They must be mentally and physically prepared.

#### *4.1.4. Summarisation of Experts' Views*

There was evidence that even after the tragedy in Somalia, there was no serious action taken by media organisation to ensure the safety of their media personnel before sending them to gather news during humanitarian missions. Media organisations are just fortunate to have competent staffs that can take care of themselves in conflict zones.

### **5.0 Conclusion**

Championing human security issues through actively participating in humanitarian missions was a noble action taken by a small and developing country like Malaysia. Not only is it setting good example to other countries but at the same time set an excellent image using the power of media. Media has the power to influence the public and leave its mark in society and on history. A story may not only reflect what is happening on the ground it can also stimulate a wide range of feelings and views among the public which might then react in a variety of ways. In other words, media personnel are in a situation to make a distinction. Therefore, safety of media personnel in humanitarian missions should be strengthened in order to make sure incidents in Somalia will not happen to our media personnel again. In order to do so, preparations before leaving on dangerous duties is very important.

This study looks at preparations of our media personnel before leaving on humanitarian missions in conflict zone. It is a surprise to note that none of our media personnel had proper training or attended specific courses before accepting to work in dangerous places. It can be concluded that their passions for work especially going on humanitarian missions make our media personnel “to not think much” about preparations of their safety. What matters more was contributing and delivering the best reporting and news coverage to their workplace, RTM. They were independent, took care of each other’s safety, including all the equipment and tried to steer clear from danger. They even acted like tourists in order to avoid suspicious by the army in conflict zones.

As for media organisation, selection of media personnel for humanitarian missions’ coverage was not easy for them. They usually pick the same people,

based on their experience and ability to work in stressful situation. Most of the people selected were known for their passion of working in such area. Some of RTM's media personnel volunteered themselves. This kind of volunteerism makes it easy for media organisation to select the best media personnel to represent RTM in the humanitarian missions. It is sad to know that there was no specific course given to RTM media personnel before leaving for dangerous assignments. This is because most of them were assigned crews at the last minute. If the media personnel went for humanitarian missions with NGOs, there will be a short briefing about their safety. Group insurance will be provided for them by the NGOs. That is why RTM always send permanent media personnel to attend humanitarian missions so that if anything unfortunate happens, they will get government servants' benefits.

All work done has its own standard operating procedure (SOP). So far, there is no specific guideline related to preparations for media safety during humanitarian missions in conflict zone. They only followed Arahan 20 provided by National Security Council which mostly caters to what to do during disaster in Malaysia, in terms of news coverage.

This research found a few fields that requires RTM's media personnel to be given a compulsory course as preparations for them in case they are assigned to this kind of assignment again. This includes basic medical training, syllabus on media safety, survival course and basic army training. Prevention is better than cure. RTM must step up in terms of safety of their media personnel. RTM can come out with a few safety courses by inviting international media player like BBC, Reuters or AP. Lucky enough there was no incident involving deaths of their media personnel during coverage of humanitarian missions. They must well equip their media personnel and set a good example to other media organisations.

Without realising it, ensuring safety of media personnel is a hidden warfare that can help government to propagate agendas, especially in relation to humanitarian issues. When media personnel safety is guaranteed, it is easy for them to work and deliver news. From the news gathered, government propaganda can be instilled, for example, people live safely here in Malaysia compared to other country. Malaysia is lucky in because there are no severe calamities happen. At the same time, patriotism and humanity can be promoted through humanitarian reporting.

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