

Migrants, Refugees, IDPs and Ethic Journalism

Guidance by and for Journalists in the Eastern Partnership Countries and Russia

Whoever controls the media, controls minds

Jim Morrison

Mass media plays a central role in the modern societies and hence also in the dissemination of democratic values, pluralism, as well as in the (re)production of xenophobia and racism. Migration, asylum, human diversity and its impact on modern societies remain controversial, newsworthy topics about which people have controversial opinions. On the post-Soviet continent, the terms “refugee”, “internal displaced person” and “asylum seeker” in media are used interchangeably, without distinction. Frequently the word “illegal migrant” used as a lazy shorthand for newcomers with unauthorized status.

Nowadays media framing in the Eastern Partnership Countries and Russia differs based on specific migrant groups the discourse is focusing on, immigration coverage is often negative and conflict-oriented. For example, the terms “migrants” and “immigrants” are closely associated with the media frame of economic threat or a threat of increased competition on the labour market, while “refugees” and “asylum seekers” are associated with an economic burden on the country’s welfare system. Frequent exposure to such media coverage leads to negative attitudes towards migration, migrants and may activate stereotypical cognitions of migrant groups, and even influence vote choice.

That means: each journalist is responsible for checking and cross-checking information journalists share and being aware of terminology and the language journalists use. Telling the truth, respecting privacy, providing equal access to the information that necessary for the functioning of democracy and making a significant impact on diversity are listed as a main responsibility of each journalist

MIGRATION

The movement of a person or a group of persons, either across an international border, or within a State. It is a population movement, encompassing any kind of movement of people, whatever its length, composition and causes; it includes migration of refugees, displaced persons, economic migrants, and persons moving for other purposes, including family reunification.

MIGRANT

Migrant is a person who is moving or has moved across an international border or within a State away from his/her habitual place of residence, regardless of

- the person’s legal status;
- whether the movement is voluntary or involuntary;
- what the causes for the movement are;
- or what the length of the stay is.

MIGRANT WORKER

Migrant worker is a person who either migrates within their home country or outside it to pursue work

ILLEGAL MIGRANT

Illegal migrant is an inappropriate term. No human being is illegal. Better to use an “unauthorized immigrant” or an “undocumented immigrant”

REFUGEE

International law defines refugees as people who are outside their country of origin and whose life and, or human rights are seriously at risk because of who they are or what they believe (e.g. their race, gender, ethnicity, political thoughts or religious beliefs, social group) and their governments will not or cannot protect them.

Refugees are legally entitled to certain rights and to be protected against forcible return to their countries of origin.

ASYLUM SEEKERS

Asylum-seekers are people seeking protection as refugees, who are waiting for the government to decide on their applications. These people are entitled to stay in the state unless their application to be considered as a refugee is rejected. They also have a right to a fair hearing of that application and to an appeal if necessary. Everyone has a right to seek asylum in another country.

INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSON

People who flee military or ethnic or religious conflicts and other conflicts may be refugees. If they don't cross an international border, they are referred to as “internally displaced persons”. Those who do not qualify for refugee status may alternatively be granted subsidiary protection or a humanitarian status allowing them “permission to remain” for a defined period if they cannot safely return to their home country.

A SUBSIDIARY PROTECTION

Subsidiary protection can be given to a person who does not meet the legal definition of a refugee. Three grounds exist for giving subsidiary protection. They include when a person faces:

1. the death penalty or execution in his/her country of origin;
2. torture, inhumane or degrading treatment or punishment;
3. indiscriminate violence from an international or internal armed conflict.

DIVERSITY

Diversity is a concept that aims at encouraging tolerance for people of different backgrounds.

In a frame of this work has been used following materials

- Reporting on Refugees. The UNCHR Report <http://www.unhcr.org/58e1ed994.pdf>
- IOM (2007) Glossaire de la Migration. http://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/iml_9_fr.pdf
- Refugee Phrasebook 2016 <https://www.refugeephasebook.de/>
- European Commission (2015): European Migration Network Glossary https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/content/irregular-migrant-0_en

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