

## **Mass Media Coverage on Terrorism in Order to Achieve Peace and Justice According to the World Agenda of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**

Muhammad Khairil\*, Muhammad Nur Ali\*, Sharifah Zarina Syed Zakaria\*\*,  
Kadir Arifin\*\*\* and Muhammad Rizal Razman\*\*\*\*

*\*Faculty of Social and Political Sciences (FISIP), Tadulako University (UNTAD),  
94117 Palu, Central Sulawesi, Indonesia*

*\*\*Research Centre for Environmental, Economic & Social Sustainability (KASES), Institute for Environment & Development (LESTARI), Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 43600 UKM Bangi, Selangor, Malaysia.  
Email: [szarina@ukm.edu.my](mailto:szarina@ukm.edu.my)*

*\*\*\*School of Social, Development & Environmental Studies (PPSPP), Faculty of Social Sciences & Humanities, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 43600 UKM, Bangi, Selangor, Malaysia.*

*\*\*\*\*Research Centre for Sustainability Science & Governance (SGK), Institute for Environment & Development (LESTARI), Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 43600 UKM Bangi, Selangor, Malaysia.*

### **Abstract**

Government requires cooperation and support from the public, including the media to minimise the threat of terrorism in order to achieve peace and justice according to the world agenda of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Nevertheless, on the other hand, the society also demanded the government for immediate actions to ensure peace as well as justice in accordance to the world agenda of SDGs. In this phenomenon, mass media plays essential contribution to minimise the threat of terrorism to attain peace and justice for the world agenda of SDGs. Therefore, this article examines the relationship between mass media coverage on terrorism, as well as, the role of mass media in minimise the threat of terrorism towards peace and justice in order to achieve the world agenda of SDGs.

**Key Words:** mass media, terrorism, peace and justice, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

### **1. Introduction**

At a time when Timothy Mc Veigh, the perpetrators of the bombing in Oklahoma City, United States of America (USA), in the year of 1995, killed 169 people were asked in court why he chose the Murrah Federal Building as his target, he said that the building has plenty of open space around them and it is so nice to be photographed or highlighted by television. The answer clearly shows that Mc Veigh has accounted for in terms of media coverage in the terror acts<sup>1</sup>. Terrorism and the mass media have a relationship. Terrorism without the publicity of the mass media means that the acts did not reach the maximum target for attention, demonstrating their ability, undermining and damage the image of government, or to withdraw support to the struggle of the terrorists<sup>1</sup>.

An attack on WTC in New York on 11<sup>th</sup> September 2001 by the terrorist group of Al-Qaeda, apparently designed to be a dramatic visual effect for the television audiences<sup>1</sup>. The goal is to show that the symbol of the superiority of the US (WTC) was easy to be attacked and undermined<sup>1</sup>. Bombings in Bali, Merriot Hotel and in Makassar also designed to show that terrorism has the power to destroy sites and industrial areas so that the government needs to consider their aspirations<sup>1</sup>. There are several parties concerned in every act of terror, they are: terrorist, government, public, and media<sup>2</sup>. The Government requires the cooperation and the support of public and media in an effort to minimize the threat of terrorists, to arrest and to punish the perpetrators of terror<sup>2,3</sup>. Society demanded that the government immediately arrest a terrorist and punish them for threatening the harmony of community life<sup>3,4</sup>. While the mass media need the freedom to be able to cover<sup>15,16</sup> the acts of terror without any pressure from anyone, including the government<sup>4,5</sup>.

Information conveyed to the public media should ideally meet the standardization of rules and ethics of journalism<sup>5,6,17</sup> in covering the case of terrorism. It must be truthful, accurate, proportionate, comprehensive and impartial because basically the task of journalism is to provide a viable and necessary information that need to be known by the public<sup>5,6</sup>. The responsibility of journalism is on the truth and public interest<sup>5,6</sup>. In a way mass media plays essential contribution to minimise the threat of terrorism towards peace and justice in order to achieve world agenda of SDGs.

## 2. Mass Media Coverage on Terrorism

Contemporary terrorist acts has actually been around since the late 1960s. It is marked by an act of air piracy by the Popular Front Liberation of Palestine (PFLP)<sup>4,7</sup>. Since that, there are many studies conducted on terrorism and its relationship with the media and terrorism in the mass media coverage<sup>7,15,16</sup>. Historically the word terrorism was first popularized in the revolutions of France, where the system or regime de la terreur in 1793-1794 interpreted positively as a way to restore order during periods of turmoil and upheaval anarchists after the popular uprising in 1789<sup>7</sup>. At that moment the regime of terror is an instrument of government of the revolutionary state<sup>7</sup>. Post-World War II, terrorism is used to refer violent revolution by anti-colonial nationalist groups in Asia, Africa and the Middle East during the 1940s and 1950s<sup>7</sup>.

The word of terror came from the latin "*ter'or less*" which means fright or great fear<sup>3,8</sup>. Terrorism means that "*policy of getting what one wants in politic by using murder actions ...*"<sup>3,8</sup>. Actually, there is no definition of terrorism which are universally recognized. The United Nations find it difficult to define as well, but it not mean that the characteristic of terrorism cannot be recognized<sup>8</sup>. Terrorism is known as a form of violence that is classified into "political violence" or also called "civil violence"<sup>8</sup>. Political violence covers a very broad spectrum, ranging from demonstrations or protests by violence, spontaneous and sporadic rebellion, insurrection planned and ongoing, coups, insurgency, to the revolution<sup>8</sup>.

According to Adams<sup>3</sup>, terrorism is a threat of physical violence by individuals or groups for political purposes, either for any interest or against the available powers. If actions of terrorism was intended to shock, to paralyze, or to intimidate a bigger target group than its direct victims<sup>3</sup>. Terrorism involves groups who sought to cultivate certain regimes to correct the complaint group/ national, or to undermine the existing international political order<sup>3</sup>. On the other hand, mass media also try to define terrorism. Mass media define terrorism based on Laquer<sup>4</sup>. Laquer<sup>4</sup> has highlighted terrorism as actions which create violence threat, whether by individuals or groups of people in order to undermine the legal political establishment. The use of violence for political purposes in order to deliver propaganda and other opinion that still exist (in a democratic society)<sup>4</sup>. In addition, politically motivated violence committed by minorities without respect human values and the possibility of the collapse of innocent victims<sup>4</sup> and finally actions to achieve political goals through illegal ways. Out of definitions mentioned above, there are three main elements in defining terrorism, *first*, the systematic violence carried out by individuals, groups and nations<sup>4,14</sup>. *Second*, it has political goals and thirdly, the intention of spreading fear in society in imposing the desire<sup>4,14</sup>.

According to a media observer on mass communication study, that the mass media is less worthy in reporting the incidence of terrorist, especially when the number of television stations exploiting the tragic images/pictures of the victims of bombing<sup>9, 11,12</sup>. Media institutions should recognise that fact must be disclosed to the public, news packaging strategy must be carried out by ethics, as well as aesthetics<sup>9,11,13</sup>. Packaging news that is not filtered properly can exploit the fear and horror of the public. The important thing is actually how the journalist conducting an investigation, rather than exploit horrific pictures<sup>10,12,13</sup> of the victims of the bomb. In addition, Wieviora<sup>20</sup> elaborates four relations between terrorism and media. The explanation as follows:-

- 1) Pure in difference, that terrorists does not frighten the population groups targeted outside their victims or do not realize a propaganda coup through their terrorist acts<sup>19, 20</sup>.
- 2) Relative in difference, that violence is not solely oriented on the media, the aim is not to show action or attract the attention of the mass media<sup>19, 20</sup>.
- 3) Media oriented strategy, namely acts of terrorism is the result of calculations done regarding the behavior of the mass media. At the tactical level they play around with confusion among the public or the government<sup>19, 20</sup>.
- 4) A total break with the broader community, the journalist becomes the terrorist enemy<sup>19, 20</sup>.

When the era of the world has become the era of mass media, the actions of terrorists will be widespread all over the world. When the mass media provide information to the public, of course, it must meet the standards and the norms of journalism<sup>15,16,17</sup> that has been set so that people get the right and accurate information<sup>11,12,13</sup>. Critical thinking and in-depth analysis as a benchmark for the creation of a society that can tolerate pluralism, upholding democracy and respect every human rights on humanity<sup>5,6,17</sup>.

### **3. Peace and Justice According to the World Agenda of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) recognised as for the 2030 World Agenda in corresponding to the concept of sustainable development, which consist of seventeen (17) goals with one hundred sixty nine (169) targets<sup>21, 22, 23</sup>.

The concept of Sustainable development has been defined by the World Commission on Environment and Development as ‘development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of the future generations to meet their own needs’<sup>21, 22, 28, 29, 30</sup>. The above-said concept focuses three main pillars, i.e. environment, economic and social aspects. This concept of sustainable development has been emphasized in the 1992 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in Rio de Janeiro, as the results, Agenda 21 and Rio Declaration has been institutionalised<sup>31,32,33</sup>. Agenda 21 emphasises the following matters, which include sustainable human settlement, population, consumption pattern, poverty and human health<sup>21, 24, 25</sup>. Basically this concept of sustainable development has been an ingredient in the international legal agenda since early as 1893. According to the case of United States of America v Great Britain [1893] 1 Moore’s Int. Arb. Awards 755, well known as Pacific Fur Seals Arbitration, where in this case the United States of America has stated that a right to make sure the appropriate and lawful use of seals and to protect them, for the benefit of human beings, from meaningless destruction as well as for peace and justice<sup>22, 26, 27</sup>. This concept of sustainable development is perhaps the greatest current term of environmental policy with embedding the elements of peace and justice, commanding support and presented as a fundamental at the Rio Summit, Rio Declaration on Environment and Development in year 1992<sup>21, 22, 34,39</sup>.

According to Article 33 of the Lome` Convention 1989 states that ‘in the framework of this Convention, the protection and the enhancement of the environment and natural resources, the halting of deterioration of land and forests, the restoration of ecological balances, the preservation of natural resources and their rational exploitation as well as for achieving peace and justice are basic objectives that the African-Caribbean-Pacific (ACP) states concerned shall strive to achieve with Community support with a view to bring an immediate improvement in the living conditions of their populations and to safeguarding those of future generations’<sup>22,35,36,37</sup>. The above-mentioned Article 33 introduces into international legal framework the concept of sustainable development with one of the initiatives<sup>21,38,39</sup> as being spelt out by individual country through her National Constitution, which highlighted the individual rights and protections as well as for peace and justice. These protections consistent with the concept of sustainable development in order to achieve the SDGs.

Seventeen (17) goals of the SDGs which cover on no poverty; zero hunger; good health and well-being; quality education; gender equality; clean water and sanitary; clean energy; good jobs and economic growth; innovations and infrastructure; reduce inequalities; sustainable cities and communities; responsible consumption and production; climate action; life below water; life on land; peace and justice; finally, partnership for goals<sup>21, 22, 23</sup>. As for peace and justice are based on the Goal 16 of the SDGs, stipulated that promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels<sup>21, 22, 23</sup>. Under the Goal 16 of the SDGs, there are a number of targets that have been stipulated to ensure the Goal 16 of the SDGs on peace and justice is achievable<sup>21, 22, 23</sup>.

### **4. Mass Media Coverage on Terrorism in Order to Achieve Peace and Justice According to the World Agenda of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**

Referring to all of the targets stated under the Goal 16 of the SDGs, it has shown that target 10 of the Goal 16 of the SDGs, highlighted that need of mass media to play essential role on dissemination of information to promote peace and justice in order to achieve the world agenda of SDGs. As stipulated in target 10 of the the Goal 16 of the SDGs, stated that **(16. 10 of the SDGs)** - Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international

agreements<sup>21, 23</sup>. **(16. 10. A. of the SDGs)** - Strengthen relevant national institutions, including through international cooperation, for building capacity at all levels, in particular in developing countries, to prevent violence and combat terrorism and crime<sup>21, 23</sup>.

Thus, mass media coverage on terrorism basically to ensure public access to the information and protect fundamental freedoms as well as, to prevent violence and combat terrorism in need future. On top of that, the mass media provide information to the public; therefore, it is a responsibility of every journalist to meet the standards and the norms of journalism that has been set, so that people will get the right and accurate information<sup>5,6</sup>. Critical thinking and in-depth analysis as a benchmark for the creation of a society that can tolerate pluralism, upholding democracy and respect every human rights on humanity<sup>16,17</sup>. As the results, mass media significantly contribute the achievement for peace and justice according to the world agenda of SDGs as stipulated under target 10 of the Goal 16 of the SDGs.

## 5. Conclusion

Information conveyed to the public media should ideally meet the standardization of rules and ethics of journalism<sup>5,6,17</sup> in covering the case of terrorism. It must be truthful, accurate, proportionate, comprehensive and impartial because basically the task of journalism is to provide a viable and necessary information that need to be known by the public<sup>5,6</sup>. The responsibility of journalism is on the truth and public interest<sup>5,6</sup>. In this manner, mass media plays essential contribution to minimise the threat of terrorism towards peace and justice in order to achieve world agenda of SDGs. Mass media coverage on terrorism basically to ensure public access to the information and protect fundamental freedoms as well as, to prevent violence and combat terrorism in need future.

Mass media coverage on terrorism in order to achieve peace and justice according to the world agenda of SDGs. Based on the Goal 16 of the SDGs, stipulated that promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels. By covering information on terrorism, in a way, will provide answers for handling terrorism in order to ensure peace and justice. In this manner, as the result will promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

## References

- [1] Pudjomartono, S. 2003. *Terorisme dan Media*. Jakarta: Kompas.
- [2] Wiewiorke, M. 1993. *The Making of Terrorism*. London: The University of Chicago Press.
- [3] Adams, J. 1986. *The Financing of Terror: How The Groups That are Terrorizing The World Get The Money To do It*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
- [4] Laquer, W. 1987. *The Age of Terrorism*. Boston: Little Brown.
- [5] McQuail, D. 1987. *Mass Communication Theory: An Introduction*. London: SAGE Publications.
- [6] De Fleur, M.L. & Rokeach, S. B. 1975. *Theories of Mass Communication*. New York: McKay Company.
- [7] Permadi, G. 2003. *Fantasi Terorisme*. Semarang: Masscom Media.
- [8] Nainggolan, P. P. 2002. *Terorisme dan Tata Dunia Baru*. Jakarta: Tiga Putra Utama.
- [9] Carter, C & Weaver, C. K. 2003. *Violence and the Media*, Maidenhead: Open University Press.
- [10] Curran, J. & Gurevitch, M. 1991. *Mass Media and Society*. London: Edward.
- [11] Potter, W. J. 1999. *On Media Violence*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- [12] Webster, J.G. 2009. *Media Choice: A Theoretical and Empirical Overview*. New York: Routledge.
- [13] Perse, E. M. 2001. *Media Effects and Society*. New York: Routledge.
- [14] Gamson, W. & Modigliani, A. 1989. Media discourse and public opinion on nuclear power, a constructivist approach. *American Journal of Sociology* 95: 1–37.
- [15] Klapper J.T. 1960. *The Effects of Mass Communication*. Glencoe: Free Press.
- [16] Rubin, A. M. 2009. *Media effects: Advances in theory and research*. New York: Routledge.
- [17] Peter, J. & Walther, J. B. 2016. Media Effects: Theory and Research. *Annual Review of Psychology* 67: 315–338.
- [18] Lang, A. 2013. *Discipline in crisis? The shifting paradigm of mass communication research*. *Communication Theory* 23 (1): 10–24.

- [19] Tuman, J.S. 2003. *Communicating Terror: The Rhetorical Dimensions of Terrorism*. London: SAGE Publications.
- [20] Wiewiorka, M. 1993. *The Making of Terrorism*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- [21] Khairil, M., Emrizal, Razman, M.R., Ramli, Z. & Arifin, K. 2017. Understanding terrorism based on radicalism idea in order to avoid instability for achieving environmental peace and justice the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). *Journal of Food, Agriculture & Environment* 15(1): 48-51.
- [22] Ali, M. N., Emrizal, Razman, M.R., Ramli, Z. & Arifin, K. 2017. Understanding aggressive behaviour to avoid damages through the precautionary principle towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). *Journal of Food, Agriculture & Environment* 15(1): 52-55.
- [23] United Nations General Assembly. 2015. *Transformation Our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. United Nations Resolution Document No. A/RES/70/ 1. New York: United Nations.
- [24] Razman, M.R., Mokhtar, M. B., Zakaria, S, Z, S., Arifin, K & Bakar, N.F.A. 2014. The process of negotiations towards acceptance of the Montreal Protocol in Malaysia: Focusing on environmental management. *Information* 17(4):1255-1262.
- [25] Sulaiman, A. & Razman, M.R. 2010. A study on international environmental law and governance: Focusing on Basel Convention and role of precautionary principle. *Journal of Food, Agriculture & Environment* 8(3&4):1216-1219.
- [26] Emrizal & Razman, M.R. 2010. The Study on International Environmental Law and Governance: Focusing on the Montreal Protocol and the Role of Transboundary Liability Principle. *The Social Sciences* 5(3):219-223
- [27] Razman, M.R. 2015. A study on global financial mechanisms in the Montreal Protocol from environmental law and management perspectives. *International Business Management* 9 (1): 111-116.
- [28] Razman, M.R. 2014. Sale of Goods Act, 1957: The role of statutory implied terms towards food and environmental sustainability. *Research Journal of Applied Sciences* 9(9): 624-628.
- [29] Razman, M.R., Mohamad, R.J., Syed Zakaria, S.Z., Amisah, M.A., Arifin, K., Jaafar, M.H. & Ramli, Z. 2015. Experiences of Malaysia in the Montreal Protocol through financial and technical incentives: Focusing on ideas and values in the environmental governance towards sustainable development. *Journal of Food, Agriculture and Environment* 13 (1): 125-130.
- [30] Emrizal, Razman, M.R. & Jahi, M.J. 2011. Study on human habitat and environmental protection: Focusing on the criminal law and the concept of sustainability. *Research Journal of Applied Sciences* 6(1): 10-14.
- [31] Razman, M.R., Nordin, N.H., Mokhtar, M.B., Zakaria, S.Z.S. Arifin, K. & Ramli Z. 2015. Study on Packaged Food Safety in Kajang Municipal Council towards Food and Environmental Sustainability. *Information* 18 (2): 521-536.
- [32] Zainal, H.M.R., Razman, M.R. & Jahi, M.J. 2011. Interest on costs and benefits approach in urban sustainability: Focusing on the precautionary principle. *International Business Management* 5(3): 114-118.
- [33] Emrizal & Razman, M.R. 2012. A comparative study on local criminal law and the international principle of transboundary liability towards human habitat sustainability. *International Business Management* 6(2): 102-108.
- [34] Razman, M.R., Mokhtar, M. B., Zakaria, S, Z, S., Nordin, N. H., Arifin, K & Ramli, Z. 2014. The law of tort focusing on private nuisance in food hygiene safety towards environmental sustainability. *Journal of Food, Agriculture and Environment* 12(2): 160-164.
- [35] Razman, M. R., Supian, S., Ramli, N. A., Azlan, A. & Ngah, M.S.Y.C. 2013. Environmental management and sustainability: A study on the precautionary principle focusing on health and food hygiene safety. *Journal of Food, Agriculture and Environment* 11(1): 1051-1054.
- [36] Razman, M.R., Jahi, J.M., Mokhtar, M. B., Arifin, K, Ramli, Z., Aiyub, K., Zakaria, S.Z,S. & Awang, A. 2013. The law of tort focusing on negligence towards environmental sustainability in Malaysia within the scope of interest approach. *Research Journal of Applied Sciences* 8(8): 398-403.
- [37] Razman, M.R. Ramli, N.A., Azlan, A. & Ngah, M. S. Y. C. 2013. Packaged food safety in urban area: An observation from the Malaysian law of tort on negligence. *Journal of Food, Agriculture and Environment* 11(1): 132-135.

- [38] Sulaiman, A & Razman, M.R. 2010. A Comparative Study on the International and Islamic Law: Focusing on the Transboundary Liability and Trespass for Better Living Environment in Urban Region. *The Social Sciences* 5(3):213-218.
- [39] Razman, M.R. & Azlan, A. 2009. Safety issues related to polychlorinated dibenzo-p-dioxins (PCDDs) and polychlorinated dibenzofurans (PCDFs) in fish and shellfish in relation with current Malaysian laws. *Journal of Food, Agriculture & Environment* 7(3&4):134-1

Corresponding author: Sharifah Zarina Syed Zakaria, Ph.D.  
Research Centre for Environmental, Economic & Social Sustainability (KASES),  
Institute for Environment & Development (LESTARI),  
Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia,  
43600 UKM Bangi, Selangor, Malaysia  
Email: [szarina@ukm.edu.my](mailto:szarina@ukm.edu.my)