

# Ethical Aspects in Media towards Children in Armed Conflict

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## ABSTRACT

The study aimed to identify the moral role that the media plays towards children during armed conflicts. This study is considered as one of the descriptive studies using the content analysis method. The sample used by the researcher was determined using the class method for the year (2015) with a period of (3 months) which represents the time sample, while the volume of media reports that were analyzed reached (887) media reports distributed over the period, and the study yielded the following results: -

1. The topic of "International Humanitarian Law" was number one on the list of topics with 22.2%, followed by the second position of the Commission on Human Rights with 12.2%.
2. The study results indicate that the international news agencies were first ranked among all sources with (49.6%), followed by agencies+channel sources with (22.6%).
3. The written news reports are the type used by the Al Arabiya website in its coverage of the ethical aspects in the media about Yemen children during armed conflict with (62.1%).

**Keywords:** Media Ethics, Armed Conflict, News Reports, Al Arabiya Channel.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Children are unable to defend themselves and their rights because they simply do not fully understand their rights and cannot defend and properly preserve their rights, it has become imperative for legislators to intervene by legislating laws that explicitly provide for the protection of

children's rights. In the year 1989, the United Nations General Assembly (unanimously) ratified the Convention on the No. (44125) of 1/20/1989 (Rights, 1990).

Special care for children began to take clear areas in international humanitarian law after the 1st World War, and the Geneva Declaration on the Rights of the Child in 1924 was considered the result of great efforts to save children, and this declaration was considered the first building block in international rules for child protection, and that humanity must provide its best for children (Rights H. C., 2007).

Whereas children and women are considered the best victims in armed conflicts because of their ease of exploitation and targeting, for example, forcible recruitment and sexual exploitation, or carrying out work that serves the goals of war, such as espionage and the transfer of military equipment or cooking work, while the elderly and the elderly are usually assaulted, killed or left to suffer from Diseases or hunger on purpose, because they are not good for anything (Alfredson, 2001).

Based on what has been mentioned, the Fourth Geneva Convention and the two Protocols provided additional protection for women and children and give them the aspects every time and place. It is not permissible to attack or attack them for any reason whatsoever or even in any way as long as they have no relationship in operations or armed conflicts (PICTET, 1958).

The broad concept of protecting women, children, and the elderly is of concern to all states that are members of international conventions, and parties to the conflict in the first place, as it is these countries that must respect the agreements and rules of aspects and guarantee the rights of victims of these conflicts (Al-Hussein, 2017).

As international humanitarian law generally aims to protect civilians and victims of international or non-international armed conflicts, this has been devoted to protecting the most vulnerable groups in these armed conflicts such as women, children, and the elderly because they do not have the capabilities to protect their rights from the material and moral aspects as well as the ability to face difficult circumstances, that accompanies these conflicts (Hamad Hilal Al-Balwish, 2020).

Just as international humanitarian law and international agreements have singled out special provisions for the protection of children and women as well, Arab and international professional and ethical codes of honor have been devoted to protecting them, such as Article 16 of the Arab Media Honor Charter, (<http://www.lasportal.org/Pages/Welcome.aspx>, 2021).

Many studies dealt with the issue of the most affected groups in armed conflicts, "Protection of Child Rights - The Role of Media" Media plays a crucial role in society. They act as the eyes, ears, and voices of the public, drawing attention to abuses of power and human rights, often at considerable personal risk (Jogan, 2019), (Katharine Heintz 2009) "Children's Rights and the Media" The child shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive, and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or print, in the form of art, or through any other media of the child's choice (Heintz, 2009). (Rasaq Kayode Awosola 2008) "Child Rights and the Media: The Nigerian Experience" Among

the rights suggested are the rights to love and understanding, adequate food and health, free education, play, identity, and special attention of handicapped regardless of color, sex, religion, and national or social origin. (Omoera, 2008)

The problem of the study is illustrated by the nature and definition of the role assigned to the media in supporting international agreements and protocols for the protection of women and children in armed conflicts as well as the ethical aspects by the media for these groups. Children in Yemen have been selected and the attacks they are subjected to such as killing and torture The burning is as well as about the aspects of sexual assaults by the Houthis and reviewing the news reports and media coverage of the Al-Arabiya website for this conflict.

#### **The aims of the study are as follows**

- Focus on news reports that deal with the ethical aspects of the media towards children in armed conflict.
- Determine the media sources on which the news reports on the Al Arabiya website relied on the ethical aspects of the media towards children in armed conflicts.
- Types of reports that dealt with the issue of ethical aspects in the media towards children in armed conflict.
- Identify the trends of news reports that dealt with the issue of ethical aspects in the media towards children in armed conflict.
- The most prominent elements used in news reports that dealt with the issue of ethical aspects in the media towards children in armed conflict.
- The media frameworks types were used in news reports that talked about the issue of ethical aspects in the media towards children in armed conflicts.
- The level of objectivity in news reports that dealt with the issue of ethical aspects in the media towards children in armed conflict.

## 2. METHOD AND PROCEDURE

The researcher used the descriptive method with analytical style to reach a scientific analysis and an accurate and complete description of the problem of the study and for it to be in line with the objectives defined in this study(Thompson, 2009), The researcher used the content analysis tool as a research style to reach accurate results, as this method is characterized by objectivity, and an accurate description of the results(Marilyn Domas White, 2006).

The researcher identified the study population with all the news reports that were broadcast on the website for Al Arabiya channel on the subject of the children of Yemen, which included ethical aspects in the media towards children in armed conflicts, as the study sample was determined in 2015 as the year in which Yemen witnessed violent and intense armed conflicts, where the researcher divided the year 2015 into three time periods that included each period (4 months). One month was randomly chosen from each period, as shown in Table (1).

Table 1: shows the division of the time research sample

Period	Sample	Number of media reports
The first period - includes months (1,2,3,4)	3	250
The first period - includes months (5,6,7,8)	7	186
The first period - includes months (9,10,11,12)	10	436

### Study tool

The researcher identified the main and sub-categories of analysis on the study index, giving each category a number, then the researcher unloaded these data in the content analysis form, which is the tool through which the results were analyzed.

### Analysis Unit

The researcher chose (The subject unit) to analyze the media material, as it is the most accurate unit within the units of analysis.

### Categories of Analysis

After the researcher was informed of the content of the study sample, the following categories were identified for analysis:

#### Subject category

It is all the topics covered by the Al Arabiya website in the reports about children of Yemen, which included, the United Nations status, the Red Cross, the Supreme Committee for Human Rights, human rights organizations, the international community from Houthi crimes, and the status of international humanitarian law, international aid for the children of Yemen as well as the UN Security Council's position on violations of children's rights in Yemen.

- The Media Sources Category: These are the sources that the Al Arabiya website relied on to collect its information regarding the children of Yemen and included: the private Al Arabiya channel sources, international and Arab news agencies, as well as the unspecified agencies and sources of the site itself.
- The Trend category: refers to the content of news reports on the subject of ethical aspects in the media towards children in armed conflicts and includes, support, opposition, neutral, without direction.
- Highlight elements category: typography elements related to media directing used about the issue of protecting Yemen's children in armed conflicts and included, pictures, videos, and social links.
- Media Frameworks Category: It is the type of media that Al Arabiya used during its presentation of news reports on the children of Yemen in armed conflicts and included: conflict frameworks, responsibility, humanitarian concerns, ethical principles, as well as the economic results framework.
- Objectivity category in news reports: This category defines the extent of impartiality and impartiality in the

presentation of informational material and the primacy of the public interest over personal interests and included: absolute objectivity, relative objectivity, without (bias).

The scientific foundations of the test: -

- **Validity:** The research presented the study scout form to three arbitrators<sup>1</sup>, who are professors of Jordanian universities who are specialists in the media in the field of content analysis.
- **Stability:** The researcher offered a percentage (10%) of the study sample to two analysts<sup>2</sup> for re-analysis using the (HOLSTI) equation to test the stability of the instrument and the reliability rate was (92.7%) according to the following:

$$CR=2M/(N1+N2)$$

**CR** reliability coefficient.

**M:** Total agreed decisions: b Number of cases of the first symbol

**N2** is the number of instances of the second encoder

$$\text{Reliability factor } CR = (80 + 84) / 76 * 2 = 92.7$$

### Statistical measures

After the researcher finished analyzing the content, the data was entered into the questionnaire by coding it and using the SPSS statistical program, where percentages were used as a statistical method for the study.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### First - Topics of news reports on the ethical aspects of the media towards Yemeni children in armed conflicts

Through Table (2) and by looking at the media topics mentioned in the news reports of Al Arabiya channel that dealt with the issue of ethical aspects in the media

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towards the children of Yemen in armed conflicts, which amounted to (887) news reports, which included (11) media topics and the results differed in percentages from as the amount of media coverage that was large, medium, and low, Where the subject of "international humanitarian law" scored the highest frequency of (197) and a percentage of (22.2), while the position of the UN Security Council and the violation of children's rights in Yemen came in 9 and 10 ranks, respectively.

The variation in the media coverage depends on the context in which media professionals carry out their work, for example, in wartime, news reporting is not only affected by economic, symbolic, and media restrictions, but also by the strategic goals of armed groups. Thus, ethics codes are more than just documents in which journalists explain how to do their work the right way (Serrano, 2014).

**Table 2: Topics of news reports on the ethical aspects of the media towards Yemeni children in armed conflicts**

Subject	Frequency	%
Red Cross	67	7.6
UN Position	87	9.8
The position of the World Commission on Human Rights	108	12.2
The position of child rights organizations	90	10.3
The position of the international community	22	2.4
Attitude towards Houthi crimes	53	5.9
International Humanitarian Law	197	22.2
International aid for the children of Yemen	62	7.1
UN Security Council Position	105	11.8
Violation of the rights of the child in Yemen	76	8.5
Others	20	2.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>887</b>	<b>100</b>

### Second - Press sources for news reports on the ethical aspects of the media towards Yemeni children in armed conflicts.

**Table 3: shows the press sources for news reports on the ethical aspects of the media towards the children of Yemen in armed conflicts**

No	Press Source	Frequency	%
1	Al-Arabiya private channel sources	196	22.0%
2	International news agencies	440	49.6%
3	Arab News Agencies	10	1.1%
4	Agencies + channel sources	200	22.6%
5	Unspecified	41	4.6%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>887</b>	<b>100%</b>

In Table (3), news agencies come first in the world with a frequency of (440) and a rate of (49.6%), which confirms the

control of international news agencies as the main source for most of the information on the Al Arabiya channel website, while the unspecified category came last in the press sources, with a percentage of (4.6%), The press source changed since the end of the cold war, specifically after the fall of Berlin Wall & the dissolution of Soviet Union, the peak was during and after the Iraq occupation 2003 (Nohrstedt, 2009).

### Third - Type of news reports on the topic of moral aspects in the media towards Yemeni children in armed conflicts

Table 4: The type of news reports on the topic of ethical aspects in the media towards Yemeni children in armed conflicts

No	Press Reports	Frequency	%
1	Photo News Reports	304	34.2%
2	Written news reports	550	62.1%
3	Photo + written news report	33	3.7%
<b>Total</b>		<b>887</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table (4) shows that written news reports are among the most common types of reports used in writing about the ethical aspects of the media towards the children of Yemen in armed conflicts, which accounted for (550) and a percentage of (62.1%), through the results presented in table (4), that the nature of the channel's website dictates that the written reports be more than the video reports, in contrast to the main television channel that relies on filmed news in the first place.

### Fourth - The trends of news reports on the issue of moral aspects in the media towards Yemeni children in armed conflicts

Table 5: Trends in news reports on the issue of the moral and legal aspects of Yemeni children in armed conflict

No	Press Reports	Frequency	%
1	Agree	724	81.63%
2	Neutral	111	12.51%
3	Not agree	0	0
4	Do not carry any direction	52	5.86%
<b>Total</b>		<b>887</b>	<b>100%</b>

From table (5) has been observed that the news reports of the Al Arabiya channel supported a percentage (81.63%) for the issue of moral aspects in the media towards the children of Yemen in armed conflicts, while in the neutral direction the

percentage reached (12.51%), and these results indicate that Al Arabiya channel supported There is a lot of moral aspects in the media towards the children of Yemen, and the researcher attributes the reason for this to the policy of Al-Arabiya channel in support of the war against the Houthis, as it opposes the Houthi regime in Yemen, which made it work to highlight the moral aspect of protecting children.

### Fifth - The most outstanding elements used in news reports on the issue of moral aspects in the media towards the children of Yemen in armed conflicts

#### - Pictures

Table 6: The use of images in news reports on the issue of moral aspects in the media towards Yemeni children in armed conflicts

No	Pictures Use	Frequency	%
1	Uses images	761	85.79%
2	Not Using Images	126	14.21%
<b>Total</b>		<b>887</b>	<b>100%</b>

#### - Videos

Table 7: The use of video in news reports on the topic of moral aspects in the media towards Yemeni children in armed conflicts

No	Videos Use	Frequency	%
1	Uses videos	303	34.17%
2	Not Using Videos	584	65.83%
<b>Total</b>		<b>887</b>	<b>100%</b>

#### - Hyperlink

Table 8: The use of hyperlinks (HYPERLINK) in news reports on the topic of ethical aspects in the media towards Yemeni children in armed conflicts

No	Hyperlink Use	Frequency	%
1	Uses Hyperlink	113	12.74%
2	Not Using Hyperlink	774	87.26%
<b>Total</b>		<b>887</b>	<b>100%</b>

These factors which had been displayed were among the most outstanding elements used in news reporting, so knowing what the media deem worthy of publication will allow you to promote issues and events of interest to the media and influence your leadership's expectations regarding news coverage. Public affairs officials who understand the unique aspects of a news business have the best chance of obtaining desirable news coverage (Howard, 2006).

### Sixth - Media frameworks used in news reports on the topic of ethical aspects in the media towards Yemeni children in armed conflicts

Table 9: The media frameworks used in news reports on the topic of ethical aspects in the media towards Yemeni children in armed conflicts

No	Media frames	Frequency	%
1	The framework of conflict	171	19.28%
2	Framework of responsibility	375	42.28%
3	Humanitarian Concerns Framework	167	18.82%
4	Ethical principles framework	159	17.92%
5	Economic Results Framework	15	1.7%
<b>Total</b>		<b>887</b>	<b>100%</b>

From Table (9), it is clear that Al-Arabiya TV used (5) types of media frameworks, and through the data, it is clear that the responsibility framework ranked first in the types of media frameworks used, the last was an economic framework, the success of the new generation of press & media technologies-combined with their interactive and even supposedly participatory nature-fuels the assumption that we are living in yet another new communication revolution. To assess and appreciate the contemporary (mass media) transformations, and the (mass) media possibilities to contribute to a democratic participatory culture, it is ironic that we need to ignore the media and their technologies (at least in the first stage) and to focus on the ideological political processes that provide the discursive context for these Media organizations and technologies, which are affected by all the factors that determine the responsible, economic and social media frameworks (Carpentier, 2007).

Seventh-Objectivity in news reports on issues of ethical aspects in the media towards Yemeni children in armed conflicts

Table (10) Objectivity in news reports on issues of ethical aspects in the media towards Yemeni children in armed conflicts

No	Media frames	Frequency	%
1	Objectivity	744	84.0%
2	Subjective (biased)	86	9.6%
3	Unspecified	57	6.4%
<b>100</b>		<b>788</b>	<b>100%</b>

From Table (10) it is evident that most of the news reports by the Al Arabiya

channel on the subject of the moral and legal aspects of the children of Yemen are stripped of personal feelings and opinions and thus reflect professionalism in news reports. Bias has been a factor in the news since time immemorial, the production, dissemination, and consumption stages of the news cycle are rife with opportunities for its introduction and influence (Park, 2009).

### 4. CONCLUSIONS

Through the results that were presented and discussed, the researcher reached the following conclusions:-

- The variation in the attribution of subjects in news reports on the ethical aspects of the media towards Yemeni children in armed conflicts.
  - International news agencies are the main source of news among all the sources that Al Arabiya relies on.
  - Due to the nature of the website, written news reports constituted the largest percentage of coverage of the topic of ethical aspects in the media towards Yemeni children in armed conflicts.
- Al-Arabiya channel supported the issue of moral aspects in the media towards the children of Yemen in armed conflicts, and this coincides with the channel's policy opposing the Houthi regime in Yemen.
- The responsibility framework recognizes all the media frameworks used, and this coincides with the approach taken by Al Arabiya in covering such topics.
  - High objectivity, avoiding prejudice, and high professionalism is among the defining characteristics of the way to deal with media news.

### 5. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Giving the issue of violating the rights of children in Yemen during armed conflicts more space in news reports and the rest of the audio and read media.
2. Not to rely on international agencies as sources of news, because this limits independence in the delivery of

information and may affect the channel's policy.

3. Conducting comparative studies between news channels in dealing with human rights issues and regarding children, women, and the elderly.
4. Conducting a future study on the importance of activating international laws and regulations in the field of protecting children in armed conflict.

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