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The role of the media in times of crisis in encountering terrorism (Azerbaijan)

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Definition:

- ▶ **terrorism** is an act of explosion, fire and/or other action or threat of commission of these actions at which are possible death of people, loss of health by them, material damage, or other dangerous consequences for society for the purpose of harming of public society, creation of panic among the population, rendering influence on the public or international bodies at decision-making;
- ▶ **terrorist** is a person who participates, in any form, directly or indirectly, in the organization, instigation, support or execution of terror activity and/or a person who consciously helps persons and/or a group of persons who carry out this activity”.

(Section of Definitions of the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan “On fight against terrorism” adopted 18 June 1999)

Approaches to media regulation:

- Professional ethic codes (self –regulation)
- Temporary or permanent agreement between media units and state bodies
- Strict legislative framework (regulation)

Legislation:

- The Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan “On fight against terrorism” adopted 18 June 1999
- The Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan “On television and radio” adopted 25 June 2002
- Provisions or by-laws adopted by National Television and Radio Council on the issue

Legislation:

- ▶ *“The form of implementation and activity of media representatives in a zone of conducting of antiterror operations is determined by the head of operational staff”*

(Article 9 of the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan “On fight against terrorism” adopted 18 June 1999)

Legislation:

- ▶ *“The form of implementation and activity of media representatives in a zone of conducting of operations against religious extremism is determined by the head of operational staff”*

(Article 12-1.1 of the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan “On Television and Radio Broadcasting” adopted 25 June 2002)

Legislation:

- ▶ *“The form and volume of information from a zone of conducting of operations against religious extremism is determined by the head of operational staff”*

(Article 12-1.2 of the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan “On Television and Radio Broadcasting” adopted 25 June 2002)

Common principles for media:

- ▶ Dissemination of news should be limited by facts only. Rumors and speculations should not be provided. Creation of sensations from the facts and incidents is not allowed. Special attention should be paid in avoidance of offensive language.
- ▶ Due to the fact that live broadcast can give uneditable platform and be used by terrorists, live broadcast mainly should be avoided. It is not except broadcasts from the cites provided that they are not live.
- ▶ It is prohibited to disseminate information which can support and help terrorists to fulfill their aims and which can publish police (special forces) positions and plans, as well as information that even more aggravate problem. (for example, dissemination of information that special forces are arrived to release hostages)
- ▶ Balance between the statements of terrorists and their agitation from one hand, and between information and interview from other hand should be preserved.
- ▶ It should strictly be avoided to describe with sympathy terror activists or their crime.

ANS license revocation case

- July 17, 2016 ANS TV and Radio broadcasted program that could be considered as a agitation of terrorism. NTRC issued warning on it.
- July 18, 2016 ANS repeated broadcasting of that program.
- July 18, 2016 NTRC adopted decision to suspend programs of broadcaster for period of 1 month.
- July 22, 2016 NTRC filed a lawsuit on ANS demanding to revoke broadcasting license.
- July 31, 2016 Baku Administrative Economic Court adopted decision on revocation of broadcasting license of ANS Media Group (TV and radio)
- Sept.15, 2016 Baku Court of Appeal upheld the decision of Administrative Economic Court.

Legislation:

- ▶ *“If the television and radio broadcaster obviously support or create conditions to disseminate calls to forced overthrow of the power, to encroach on the integrity of the state and security of the country, to kindle national, racial and religious hostility, to make open appeals to mass riots and terrorism, media regulator can suspend broadcasting of programs and appeal to the court demanding to revoke broadcasting license”*

(Article 23.4 of the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan “On Television and Radio Broadcasting” adopted 25 June 2002)

Challenges:

- Absence of internet regulation that leads to availability of area in the Web which can not be regulated or edited.
- Absence of up-to-date code of conduct, self regulation tools in the sphere of electronic media...

*Thank you very much
for your attention!*

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