



# Monitoring of the Swedish NEWS MEDIA'S CONFLICT COVERAGE

CONDUCTED BY THE KVINNA TILL KVINNA FOUNDATION'S MEDIA GROUP JANUARY 21 – FEBRUARY 3, 2008 (WEEKS 4-5)

## MALE SUBJECTS IN THE COVERAGE

Men dominate news reports on war and armed conflict. 85 per cent of news subjects are men and 15 per cent women. News subject refers to the main person in the news item. 60 per cent of the items included in the survey had a news subject. Of the news subjects, a large majority were official sources and only a few were civil society representatives.

NEWS SUBJECT WOMEN/MEN	15% /	85%
SWEDISH RADIO/EKOT	21% /	79%
SVENSKA DAGBLADET	20% /	80%
DAGENS NYHETER	18% /	82%
TV4	14% /	86%
SWEDISH TELEVISION	9% /	91%
TT	2% /	98%

## A LACK OF PEACEFUL RESOLUTIONS

Just over one fifth of the news items mentioned possible resolutions to the conflicts. The word peace was used in 21 per cent of the items. Several media used a reporter who gave a so-called analysis of the conflict, but even this form of reporting offered very few resolutions.

PEACEFUL RESOLUTIONS MENTIONED	22%
DAGENS NYHETER	45%
SVENSKA DAGBLADET	22%
TT	20%
EKOT	18%
TV4	13%
SWEDISH TELEVISION	5%

## CIVIL SOCIETY ACTORS NOT PORTRAYED

Civil society actors such as peace, human rights and humanitarian organisations appeared in as little as 4 per cent of the news items. The parties portrayed in the reports are chiefly officials and conflicting groups. When NGO representatives are in the picture they are chiefly in news items by reporters who are in the vicinity.

NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS	4%
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## EXPERTS ARE CHIEFLY MEN

The media monitored used experts in one third of the news items. Most experts were official sources. Of the experts used in the coverage, 11 per cent were women and 89 per cent men. Nine women experts were used in a total of 262 news items.

EXPERTS WOMEN/MEN	11% /	89%
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## HIGHLIGHTING THE UNDERLYING CAUSES TO THE CONFLICT

The underlying cause to the conflict is highlighted in around 46 per cent of the news items. At closer inspection it is clear that the background information mainly concerns recent events and incident reports rather than underlying causes to a conflict that is still taking place.

UNDERLYING CAUSES	46%
EKOT	77%
DAGENS NYHETER	77%
TV4	73%
SWEDISH TELEVISION	54%
SVENSKA DAGBLADET	33%
TT	28%

## FEW WOMEN IN IMAGES

In the image material illustrating conflict coverage, men appear in 75 per cent the images and women 25 per cent. In most cases the people shown are officials with names supplied.

WOMEN/MEN IN IMAGES	25% /	75%
TV4	33% /	67%
SWEDISH TELEVISION	29% /	71%
DAGENS NYHETER	27% /	73%
SVENSKA DAGBLADET	24% /	76%
TT	-	-
EKOT	-	-

\* The survey also included Expressen, Aftonbladet, City, Metro and Fokus whose conflict coverage was not enough to warrant being listed on this factsheet.



KVINNA TILL KVINNA

The Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation media monitoring.

# THE METHODOLOGY USED IN THE MONITORING

## TIMEFRAME

The monitoring took place for 14 days, weeks 4-5, 2008. First, a control was made to ensure there were no large events taking place during this period, such as international conferences, state elections in the USA or similar that could impact foreign reporting.

## SELECTION

The following media were selected for monitoring: Swedish Television news, TV4 news, the Swedish Central News Agency (TT), newspapers Svenska Dagbladet, Dagens Nyheter, Aftonbladet, Expression, Metro, City, Fokus magazine, Swedish Radio Ekot programme Quarter to Five.

The choice of media showed an equal division between radio, TV and printed media. The emphasis was on daily reporting, but one weekly magazine was included. No local media was included. Many local newspapers use much of TT's material in their foreign reporting so we can still form an opinion of what local editorial offices have at their disposal, even if their selection was not checked.

THERE WERE A TOTAL OF 262 TEXTS/NEWS ITEMS ON CONFLICTS DURING THE ANALYSIS PERIOD.

Monitoring criteria and the formulation of questions  
These 262 observations were analysed based on a matrix consisting of seventy quantitative questions. The questions were to a certain extent based on Global Media Monitoring (GMMP), last conducted in 2005. The questions were also based on the peace journalism model put together by UK journalists Jake Lynch and Annabel McGoldrick

Eight people were entrusted to conduct the analysis, all with a longtime experience of the media.

## VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

A pilot survey was conducted during a week in September 2007, which tested the questions on a small selection of the media to check the validity and reliability.

This was followed by minor adjustments to the matrix, some questions that were too blunt were increased with sub-categories, some new questions were added and others removed with the aim of making the questions as valid as possible for the monitoring.

Reliability, i.e. to reduce the influence of the measuring instrument on the answers as much as possible, was also fortified in this process, which the entire analysis group took part in. The aim was to achieve as large a consensus as possible in the monitoring.

During the monitoring on January 21 – February 3, 2008 the group constantly discussed cases where uncertainty arose as to the categories. For example, it can sometimes be difficult to determine who is a new subject, is there one or several? How should somebody be described to be placed in the "victim" category? Uncertain cases were discussed and decided upon jointly by the group.

A certain bias in the reporting is impossible to avoid completely. The findings of the monitoring are however clear enough to provide plenty of room for margin of error.

## FINDINGS – QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE

The findings were chiefly qualitative. They give a broad view of measurable occurrences of women and men, number of experts, number of times when conflict resolution was discussed, etc.

But the monitoring was also expanded with other qualitative aspects. Some articles attracted more interest than others. A close scrutiny of them gives room for an analysis of in which way a few articles managed to provide a more complex picture of a conflict, likewise in which way other articles consolidate prejudices, deselect sources and exclude women.



KVINNA TILL KVINNA

MAY 6, 2008

# New media monitoring: **ONLY MEN AND FEW SOLUTIONS IN THE MEDIA'S CONFLICT REPORTING**

Sweden's largest news media give a distorted view of conflicts. Despite both women and men participating in and being affected by conflicts, women only get 15 per cent of the media coverage of conflicts. In the same way, official sources are given preference to private individuals and non-governmental organisations. Possible conflict resolutions are seldom highlighted in the reporting.

This is the result of a survey into the Swedish media's conflict coverage conducted by the Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation during two weeks in January and February 2008. The Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation monitored the conflict coverage of the Svenska Dagbladet, Dagens Nyheter, Expressen, Aftonbladet, Metro and City newspapers, Fokus magazine, the Swedish Central News Agency (TT), Swedish Radio's Ekot programme, Swedish Television news and TV4 news. The image of conflicts presented by the Swedish media is as good as unigender and often lacks a gender and peace perspective.

## **WHY DO WE MONITOR THE MEDIA?**

Media coverage of conflicts plays a significant role in the conflict-awareness of the general public and decision-makers. Media conflict reporting also influences to a great extent the interest in supporting those affected, taking refugees, and the willingness to allocate funds to peaceful conflict resolution and peacekeeping missions. Therefore, it is vital to analyse the media image of war and armed conflict around the world.

The Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation works to support women and women's organisations in conflict regions. In our work we are constantly reminded of how women, and their knowledge and experience, are excluded in conflict resolution and security policies. Media conflict coverage in countries at war is often distinctly unigender. The emphasis is on the military and other contending parties, traditionally man-dominated. Many of our partner organisations work in various ways to try to break these patterns and get the voices of women and non-governmental organisations heard in the media.

Even in Sweden, media coverage of conflicts tends to be dominated by men and official sources. The Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation wishes to highlight this imbalance, which influences the media consumer perception of the world which in the long term can contribute to the upholding of conflicts.

## **HOW DO WE MONITOR?**

We count the number of women and men news subjects. We monitor the various roles given to women and men. Are they representatives of the conflicting parties, civil society or independent experts? Do they speak themselves? Are they named or anonymous? Is the situation of women and men mentioned specifically? We also monitor the extent to which peaceful conflict resolution is taken up and if the underlying cause to a conflict is included in the reporting.

## **HOW CAN THE MEDIA IMPROVE ITS CONFLICT COVERAGE?**

- Actively search for women experts and women generally to be used as news subjects
- Portray women as actors
- Balance the emphasis on official sources by using more experts and representatives from non-governmental organisations
- Cover initiatives to peaceful conflict resolution
- Provide better background information to the underlying causes of the conflict