

14. Transnational dialogues

Cartoons, Daesh and the white terrorist

Atta Ansari

“There is always an ‘Oslo-Process’ behind a dialogue or a reconciliation plan.” A Swedish friend of mine was laughing as he was trying to poke my Norwegian sentiments after a discussion about how much Norwegians love to present themselves as a nation of peacemakers. I replied, “Whether our efforts are successful or not, let history judge. At least we are trying.” (Implying that the Swedes were not doing anything).

Jokes apart, I do not know if it was by accident, but something similar did really happen when the world was in flames after the cartoon controversy in 2005–2006. Some Norwegians, including Muslim and Christian leaders, politicians and academics, immediately started to play the role of firefighters, becoming empathetic listeners and mediators. Trying to calm down the whole situation and encouraging people to talk, rather than shout slogans and promote hate from both sides.

Norwegian journalists were among the first who created a space for dialogue beside the ongoing coverage, to understand the gravity of the cartoon-conflict from various angles, and to discuss how to cover it. Even a team of Christian and Muslim community leaders travelled together in Arab countries to calm down the furor, and to emphasize the need for a peaceful dialogue.

I can recall one morning in January 2006 when I received a phone call from Ashraf Al-Karda. He asked me, “Have you heard the news?”

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A Norwegian Christian magazine has just republished the Danish cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him?” I replied, “My God! Now this is going to become a Christian-Muslim conflict.”

Ashraf was at that time working as a freelancer for the newly established TV channel Al-Arabiya and for a Norwegian company TV2-Nettavisen. I had been working for the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation (NRK) since 1989. We both lived in Oslo. He grew up in a very restricted Islamic society in Saudi Arabia and moved to Norway as an adult. I grew up in the metropolitan city of Karachi in Pakistan, and later in Oslo from the age of 13 years. We had very different backgrounds and political views, but we had one thing in common; our Muslim background, and we were both working journalists. Very few Muslims worked in newsrooms in the Nordic countries at that time.

Looking for an end

In the wake of the burning conflict created by the Muhammad caricatures published by Danish newspaper *Jyllands-Posten*, we often discussed when and how this horrible conflict would end. Moreover, the Norwegians were directly involved after the Christian conservative weekly *Magazinet* published the same cartoons in the name of free speech. It was presented as an act of solidarity and support of free speech, which now was under pressure. The editor-in-chief of *Magazinet* was heavily criticized and accused of fueling tensions.

I had memories of the time when the Iranian religious leader Ayatollah Khomeini demanded Salman Rushdie’s head. Norwegians were directly involved in the conflict, as Rushdie’s Norwegian publisher, William Nygaard, narrowly survived a murder attempt by an unknown person. Although no one has been arrested or convicted, most people believe that a Muslim terrorist tried to kill Mr. Nygaard.

What happened in 2005 and 2006 was beyond anyone’s imagination. We used to ask many questions, such as:

- Would *Jyllands-Posten* have published these insulting cartoons if they had Muslim journalists working in their newsroom? (We thought they might have warned the editor what chaos these cartoons may create.)

- Did the editor speak to any Muslim scholar or Islam expert in Denmark before publishing? (We thought warnings might have stopped them or given the frame of publishing a clear context.)
- Is there only one cartoon with the bomb in the turban, which is problematic? (We thought the two depicting Muhammad as a terrorist and a womanizer were the most provocative cartoons.)

The cartoons painted a picture of Muhammed as a useless figure for our modern time. He seemed rather in opposition to modernity and basic human rights. Most Muslims do look at Muhammed as a merciful and kind person, a man with new ideas of how to develop a just society by teaching about animal rights, giving women the right to inherit the wealth of their husbands or fathers. His rules and laws may be outdated in our time, but they challenged the norms of his time.

Most Muslims saw the Danish cartoons in a context of deliberate provocation, a Western newspaper using its right to draw and publish nasty and insulting cartoons of Prophet Muhammad. The religious ones saw it as an act of sin. The political ones saw it as an act of imperialism. We were both journalist and we saw it as an act of Danish ignorance and naivety.

Confusing for journalists

Not only for politicians and academics, but for journalists and editors too, it was a confusing time. Should we support the deliberate provocation by *Jyllands-Posten*? Should we republish some of the cartoon, or all of them? Some of my Norwegian colleagues were, and still are, against publishing provocative and insulting cartoons of religious figures and symbols. They recall how European media before the Holocaust portrayed Jews. Other believed it was even more important to support *Jyllands-Posten* and *Magazinet* as the reactions against them were violent. As the cartoonists and editors were under direct threats, we all had to stand together and defend the right for free speech – in one way or other.

Difference of opinion among journalists and editors existed in almost every newsroom across Europe. Even within *Jyllands-Posten*, there were many different opinions among the working staff and team of editors. However, the mainstream media did not reflect this internal debate to their viewers and readers.

Minority journalists were under huge pressure from both sides, those who defended the cartoons, and those who did not. Our “own” communities and journalist-friends in Muslim countries were asking: “What kind of journalism is this? Don’t you have any ethical standard or political sense?”

I was invited to host a debate at Oslo Press Club about freedom of speech. Cartoonist and editors were in the panel. I was asking questions. The panel was answering. I was doing my job, being very careful but pushing for a debate. I asked a direct question: “Why don’t you as a cartoonist draw cartoons of Muhammed?” One of the panelists replied; “It’s because of *you* Muslims. I don’t want to pay the price with facing threats....”

Soon after the net trolls were out of the cage. Hundreds in the US and Europe posted humiliating pictures and videos mocking Islamic religious symbols.

Consequences of the provocation

A Danish imam travelled around demanding Muslim leaders act against offending cartoons of their prophet in the West. He had examples of cartoons from *Jyllands-Posten* and others posted on the internet compiled in a paper file. Reactions did not come as shocking news at a time of wars going on in important Muslim countries where the US and Europe were heavily involved. The war in Afghanistan was still going on, and Iraq had been attacked after the presentation of American and British lies, accusing Saddam Hussain of supporting Al Qaeda and hiding weapon of mass destruction.

Thousands of Muslims were killed and tortured during European and American military actions. Millions of Muslims had, and still have, a strong feeling of being under attack from the strongest nations in the world – Europe and the US.

Demonstrations after demonstrations were announced all over Europe. The anger and the violence provoked by the cartoons came closer and closer to our doorstep. Angry long-bearded men chanting *Allah O Akbar* (God is great) in Lahore, Kabul, Tehran, Damascus, Delhi, Dhaka, Jakarta, Beirut etc. Most of the protesters never read the context or saw the cartoons published by *Jyllands-Posten*. Many in the West wondered why they were so angry.

Many were killed during these demonstrations, which fuelled the anger even more. Properties worth billions of dollars were vandalised and burned down. It was a moment of tear for Norwegians, especially when their own flag, for the very first time in history was set on fire, and the embassy in Damascus attacked.

European diplomats complained that cartoon provocation had created a threatening situation for embassy personal and aid workers in some Muslim countries. They were not happy, but few did openly criticize *Jyllands-Posten*. The suicide attack on the Danish embassy in Islamabad in 2008 confirmed exactly what diplomats had feared most. The Norwegian embassy building was also damaged in the same attack.

Most of those who died in cartoon riots were Muslims. Many were beaten and shot by police and military forces protecting embassies and other Western properties in Muslim majority countries. Tension was growing in Europe as well. Many diplomats from Muslim countries in Europe were worried about the situation getting out of control. However, Danish Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen refused to meet ambassadors from 11 Muslim countries who wanted to discuss ways to calm down the situation. Four months later, in February 2006, Mr. Rasmussen was forced to change his attitude after massive protests from Danish diplomats and a boycott campaign against Danish products in Arab countries.

The editor-in chief of *Jyllands-Posten* published an open letter to Muslims around the world. Now he was talking to Muslims globally – not only to Danish readers of his newspaper – explaining that *Jyllands-Posten* believed in democratic rights of free speech and freedom of religion. Mr. Carsten Juste distanced himself from demonizing certain nationalities, religions and groups.

Broken trust

For the very first time in history, the European media and journalists were targeted and aggressively criticised by a huge population of Muslims. It contradicted what we had seen and learned from history.

In many Muslim countries, most people always welcomed Western journalists. The BBC and other European and American channels were popular among a considerable number of people. They were more trusted than local media, which was often controlled by governmental censorship.

However, this trust was now broken. Western journalists working in the field were now under direct threat and targeted more than ever before. Attacks on Christian minorities who had been living in peace in Muslim countries increased substantially in the years that followed.

Some academics and journalists, including myself, emphasised that the media in Europe should avoid portraying a “black and white picture”: the white majority as the “tolerant” one, and Muslims as the “intolerant”. We should not only publish opinions and actions of hard-liners, but also reflect views of Muslim academics, Norwegian experts on Islam and international politics, as well as individuals of Muslim communities. Only in this way, could we present a larger picture of different opinions, both politically and religiously, to decrease the gap.

Oslo talks 2006

Ashraf al-Karda came up with the idea of a Nordic-Arabic dialogue meeting for journalists and media experts. His idea was discussed in a meeting of the Nordic Journalists Federation in February 2006. Interestingly, the Danish delegation did like the idea, but they refused to host any dialogue meeting in Denmark.

The Norwegian Journalist Federation (NJ) decided to arrange a dialogue meeting in Oslo in cooperation with the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), Free Word Trust and the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The meeting, held in April 2006, brought together media experts and working journalists from a variety of media companies based in Egypt, Qatar, Lebanon, Norway, Denmark, UK, etc. The meeting was conducted in a friendly atmosphere. Many of us brought questions to this meeting, rather than solutions and answers.

None of the Muslim journalists was in favor of publishing cartoons in *Jyllands-Posten*. It was pointed out that given the current political situation and lack of a common global understanding of free speech, newspapers should be careful before offending religious feelings. We had entered a new age of communication. Something published in one country was no longer hidden from rest of the world. Some saw it as an imperialistic act and others as pure naivety. There was a huge communication gap and difference of opinion about how one should understand the context of and explanation for the commissioning and publication of the cartoons.

Nobody was really discussing the Danish angle, the motivation for defying the unwritten ban on portraying the prophet. The focus was mainly on the international impact, that is, how the cartoons were perceived in a time of war and the reality of our world, with huge gaps regarding education and understanding of democratic values. However, there was no war in Denmark and Norway. Many journalists could not realize and understand why people were so angry about some cartoons of a prophet who lived 1,400 years ago.

The use of violence and aggressive actions was clearly condemned. The need for more cultural and religious knowledge in newsrooms was underlined.

Several of the participants have later referred to the Oslo-talks as a beginning of an international dialogue on freedom of speech and challenges faced by the media in a polarized and fast-paced digital media reality. IFJ's Secretary General Aidan White and several of the participants drew momentum from the first Oslo-talks into other international debates on the same themes. After the meeting in Oslo, NJ's leader Ann-Magrit Austenå was invited to a Norwegian-Indonesian working group planning for a global conference on cultural dialogues and freedom of expression in Bali.

Conference marathon

After the Oslo-talks and the Bali conference, many other national and international conferences were initiated. They were mostly financed and supported by media organizations or educational institutions based in Europe and the US and targeted Westerners working in the media field.

Attending some conferences since 2006, I was sometimes disappointed, either by the superiority demonstrated by some participants, or the level of politeness. Sometimes, we did not dare to discuss the controversial issue of blasphemy and a growing violent culture among religious groups, in both Europe and Muslim countries. And at other times, it all seemed to be a drama of a never-ending clash of civilisations, as forums became the platform for discussing all issues within Islam and Islamic societies; gender inequality, child marriage, forced marriages, homosexuality, violent jihad, hate against West, secularism vs. religiosity etc.

A huge amount of money and other resources have been spent to discuss how we can promote free speech, but the outcome as real support of local media and working journalists is still very low. Educational activities in Muslim countries were not given much priority. Alternatively, as a Pakistani journalist participating in a conference in Lillehammer said: “Europe is spending all this money to protect their economic interests in Muslim countries. That’s why they want us to understand why it is important for them to print insulting caricatures of our prophet.”

Conferences have helped some journalists and experts to meet and establish contacts. Muslim journalists and academics have been invited to Western countries to present their views and perspectives. However, after a short while, the frequency of provocations from media and social media went down. So did the frequency of conferences and cooperation across borders. However, the need for supporting working journalists in some Muslim countries is even higher than before. They face censorship and allegations of blasphemy, threats and violence orchestrated by religious groups.

Minority bashing

In the aftermath of the cartoon controversy, minorities in Muslim countries were put under pressure by local groups of religious fundamentalists, the same segments who were active in creating a worldwide protest wave. In Pakistan, Afghanistan, Egypt, Malaysia, Indonesia, Nigeria, as well as in other countries, we witnessed people from Muslim, Christian and Hindu minorities accused of blasphemy. In some cases, Muslims belonging to same sect were blaming each other for committing the sin of blasphemy.

Some of those accused have been even been killed in a horrible way on the spot by angry mobs. I consider many of these killings and violent attacks on minorities a form of “revenge”. You could hear people saying: “we don’t want European or American freedom of speech in our country.” Implicitly, freedom to criticise holy prophets is unacceptable.

Violence against minorities have been justified as a punishment for offending religious sentiments. Before 2005, there were very few attacks on religious minorities in Muslim countries. Moreover, even fewer cases of blasphemy. Warlike situations in Afghanistan, Pakistan,

Iraq, Libya, Indian-controlled Kashmir, and later in Syria boosted such attacks against minorities. Weak governance and corrupt police forces have given small radical fundamentalist groups more political space than they have deserved, considering their poor public support.

Sadly, you can turn to Europe and see minorities under racist attacks and political pressure here as well. Many Muslims growing up in Europe before the 9/11 terror attacks in the US, including me, were never asked questions about religion. Our loyalty to the nation and national values was never questioned.

The deadly attack on the French satire magazine *Charlie Hebdo*, which presumably was a response to their publication of prophet Muhammed cartoons, cemented the “us” and “them”-narrative even more. Again, we witnessed how an act of the pen was retaliated with violence and murder, although not many Muslims in Europe reacted when the cartoons were first published in *Charlie Hebdo*. In addition, not many Muslims have ever approved or supported the killings of *Charlie Hebdo*'s journalists. Still, we have seen a growing number of violent racist attacks on Muslims in many European countries. Abusive and racist remarks on social media or comments in a web debate are very common. A growing number of politicians and right-wing activists arguing harshly against immigration and explaining socioeconomic challenges in European cities as a “Muslim-problem”.

The occurrence of *Daesh*, Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) which may be seen as an after-effect of the American led invasion of Iraq, became a new game-changer, as significant as the 9/11 terror attacks in the US in 2001 and *Jyllands-Posten* publishing the Muhammed cartoons in 2006. Attacks like the one on *Charlie Hebdo* and Jewish centres, and vehicles being used to kill innocent pedestrians in several countries, may be connected to the war in Syria, with the growth of *Daesh*, which represented a new form of religious and political extremism among Sunni Muslims, spreading across the world.

In recent years, the increase in refugees and migrants crossing into Europe via Turkey and Libya has often been used as a pretext for right-wing extremists' increased hostility toward minorities, particularly against Muslims. Parts of the harsh language, the arguments and aggression often championed by the right-wing extremist, have now been adopted by some mainstream leaders and parties. We have seen voices

criticising Islam and Muslims getting louder and reaching out to larger groups of voters. Some organisations, specific bloggers and websites focus one-sidedly on critique of all the negative consequences of migration and highlighting differences between Muslims and Norwegian values. According to some activists and politicians, democracy, equality and free speech are purely Norwegian values – and they are not compatible with Islam. These voices are now represented in the parliament through the Progress Party, one of the coalition partners of the national cabinet. Recently the Progress Party, in their annual national congress, decided to put forward a national law banning the Muslim call to prayers known as the *Azan*. Current national legislation gives local union councils the right to decide whether to allow the *Azan*. The only problem is that none of the mosques in the entire country has ever applied for permission to announce the *Azan* from a mosque minaret. Who needs the *Azan* from a minaret when you have an app on your cell phone?

A group of young men and women have been radicalised in the aftermath of the war in Iraq, and the anger increased after the insulting cartoons of Muhammad. Radicalisation accelerated after the emergence of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), a sectarian and brutal religious militant group in Iraq and Syria. Almost 80 Norwegian Muslims have joined the war against Bashar Al Assad's regime. Half of them either died or came back to their homeland Norway. Some are imprisoned in jails or camps and others still missing.

The very first public demonstration by this radicalised group of young Muslims, which later named themselves the Prophet's Ummah, was organised in 2010. The occasion was resentment against the Norwegian Police Security Service (PST), which had a Facebook page with racist comments and links to an offending cartoon. The debate here was not monitored according to any ethical standard. We do not know if it was intentional or just a matter of obliviousness. What we know is that one of the founding members of Prophet's Ummah, who reacted to this, was censored and blocked by PST. The newspaper *Dagbladet* reported the story, but they were also criticized for republishing the cartoon.

Minority reporting

From 2005 up to now, I have noticed a slow, but steadily increasing professional attitude among mainstream journalists in Norway. It is

my observation that national media is presenting diversity in a much better way than 13 years ago, at the same time, not backing away from reporting critical stories about and from the minority communities.

Bringing forth different voices from minorities and reflecting diversity of opinions inside various communities, is an extremely important task to prevent the “we and them” narrative. Daily newspapers, such as *Aftenposten* and others have promoted free debate by letting young Muslim debaters write opinion articles. Many young voices have been given space in mainstream media. The majority seems to consider Muslims born in Norway as Norwegians and treats them equally. This reality is extremely important to represent in the media.

The Norwegian media has, since 2009, strongly encountered the narrative of radicalised Muslims by allowing their spokespersons to participate in media debates. Not by banning or censoring them, but by letting them talk and listen. It may be true that exposure is the best counter-tactic facing extremism. Words against words. As ISIS is on the verge of defeat in Syria, recruitment to Jihad and the group Prophet’s Ummah is on the decline in Norway.

A new generation of Muslim lawyers, doctors, journalists, teachers, writers, social activists, actors, and politicians has emerged, wishing to play an active and positive role in Norwegian society. Many appear in the media primarily as Muslims, but some are also invited because of their education, talent or profession.

We have witnessed groups of racists increasing their activities and targeting young Muslims. Some women have been severely bullied on social media, and have at least for a while lost courage and withdrawn from the public debate. Muslim women speaking against Muslim men are equally badly treated by groups of men on social media.

Newsrooms all over Norway are still very dominated by white, middle-class ethnic Norwegians. This is hopefully changing as a number of journalists from minorities have been recruited into mainstream media in recent years. According to my observations, almost half of them are working for Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation (NRK). Working journalists with minority background are often perceived as role models, integrated, as well as bearers of multiple identities, being both non-white and Norwegian. Most of them produce all kinds of stories, not as “Muslim Journalists” or “Immigrant Journalists”. They are

sharing views and experiences from growing up in Norwegian society, and delivering authentic reports of contemporary Norway. Twenty percent of Oslo's population have their roots in other countries. That is not the percentage in the newsrooms in Oslo. Diversity seems still not to be on the agenda for most of the media companies.

Terror in Norway

As the group of young radicalised Muslims, The Prophet's Ummah, became more outspoken in 2011, the peaceful society of Norway experienced its deadliest terror attack post World War II.

On July 22 that year, a Norwegian terrorist shot 69 people, mostly youngsters, dead at a Youth Camp hosted by the Labour Party on the island of Utøya. They were hunted and shot one by one, on the island, by a single man, Anders Behring Breivik. Eight others were killed by a car bomb that exploded and destroyed much of the central government office a few hours earlier. These were well-planned attacks carried out by the same man, a self-claimed Nazi and admirer of Hitler, who wanted to punish the Labour Party for promoting multiculturalism and "contaminating" Norwegian race and culture.

In the first few hours after news of the attack broke, many internationally recognised media channels and news sites in the US and Europe strongly speculated that Al Qaeda was behind these coordinated and massive attacks in Norway. *The New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Fox News* and *CNN* assumed that the terrorists were Muslims. Many experts suggested the attack to be "Islamist terror." Few, however, went as far as the British tabloid *The Sun*. Even the next day, their speculation continued on the front page with this headline: AL QAEDA MASSACRE – NORWAY'S 9/11. A few speculations from Norwegian experts were also noted.

Some Muslims were attacked by angry Norwegians who also assumed that the attackers were of the Islamic faith, as registered by the Norwegian Center against Racism. Three hours after the bomb blast in Oslo, Breivik laid down his weapon and gave himself up to the police at Utøya. The terrorist was a blue-eyed, white, ethnic Norwegian. It was a very strange situation for many analysts, journalists, editors and terror experts frequently appearing on TV screens. This time, no Muslims were to blame, unlike in Madrid, London and New York. No community

leaders or imams to be hunted down by newshounds. Muslim leaders and communities shared the nation's grief by attending ceremonies and crying in public. Simultaneously, many must have wondered how the Norwegian media would tackle the situation if (God forbid) the next terror attack in the land of the Nobel Prize would be carried out by a Muslim.

Journalism of the future

Tensions fanned by the cartoon controversy are still high, both in Europe and in Muslim countries. The controversy was like a vitamin injection for many hardliners. They now had a new common cause, the fight against "Western freedom of speech." The same groups are violently resisting any challenge to their religious rhetoric and dogma. Their end goal is to Islamize whole societies and build theocratic state systems.

The situation is especially depressing in Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan. Rising Hindu extremism in India is alarming too. Outspoken journalists are targeted by Hindu nationalists and attacked by elected politicians. In Muslim countries, hundreds have been accused of blasphemy, and some killed by mobs. Bloggers have been kidnapped, murdered and jailed. Journalists and editors criticizing the rhetorical misuse of religion to justify violence are accused of following a Western agenda.

In Europe, a small segment of the population is outright racists or Nazis. However, far too many have adopted their rhetoric of suspicion against minorities. Mainstream political rhetoric such as "you are not Norwegian" or "you are not Polish" is forcing alienation and distance between people of different origin. In the Norwegian public sphere, attacking debaters and intellectuals promoting co-existence is not uncommon, especially on social media.

We live in an era where every single person can publish or broadcast live from almost anywhere in the world. We are using freedom of expression and modern communication technology to promote our ideas and sharing experiences. Not listening, but sharing is the new trend. Lobby-bloggers, opinion-makers and ideology-based channels telling mainly one side of the story, challenge traditional and independent media, which strive to be objective.

It should be a global journalist responsibility to counter narratives of hate and suspicion against minorities. Challenging the so-called

“alternative facts” and analysing politicians’ rhetoric in the light of laws against racism and human rights laws should occur more often. We must ensure that not even a single voice is stifled. Those who want to be heard, must be allowed to speak without facing threats and harassment.

The mainstream media must play the role of a driving force for democratic rights and an open and inclusive public conversation. Engaging young readers and viewers by representing their stories must be part of the new global journalistic responsibility.

Minority rights, gender equality and anti-racism should work as editorial guidelines for leading media channels all over Europe. I like to hope that over the past 12 years, we have all learned at least one thing; freedom of speech is a common struggle, a universal right for every member of our global society. It has *nothing* and *everything* to do with East or West, religiosity or secularism, poor and rich etc. We all need it to think freely, communicate freely and to criticise actions in disfavour of humanity at all levels.

When it comes to the question of practicing press freedom, one cannot overlook cultural differences, levels of education and local perception of media. Neither can we ignore global and regional geopolitical facts and consequences of the many wars since 2001. The media is always an easy target for political exploiters, extremist groups, or those who want to maintain their illegitimate power in corrupt societies in the Islamic world.

In Norway, the Public Broadcasting (NRK) had a Muslim woman wearing a headscarf (*hijab*), as a presenter for a TV series about Parliament elections in 2017. It spurred an enormous number of reactions against NRK. The Broadcasting Council received thousands of complaints, asking how the national channel could promote Islam and oppression of women by hiring a *hijab*-wearing woman as a TV presenter. The “hijab-haters” made no complaints against the same young woman, Faten Mahdi Al-Hussaini, when she three years earlier became the most critical and outspoken Muslim voice against ISIS and their supporter group, the above-mentioned Prophet’s Ummah. In 2014, Al-Hussaini even called this group “Satan’s Ummah” in her famous speech in front of the Parliament, and thus became a public figure already as a teenager. Many youngsters born and raised in European cities today have a strong feeling of being alienated and marginalized

by their own societies, because of their colour or religious identity. The latest trend in Denmark is to judge people by which part of the city they come from. Ghetto has become an acknowledged official term to use for areas where more than 50 per cent of the population can be defined as non-Westerners. It means mainly people of all colours and ethnicities other than white Danish. Even those born in Denmark 30 years ago, are considered as non-Westerners. Their contribution as individuals, or their qualities and skills seem not to matter in how society defines them. Youngsters, white and non-white, are connected to a global web offering fake news and false comfort by confirming inferiority. There is much to suggest that rubble and conflicts will continue for many years to come. That is why journalists and editors cannot remain naive or indifferent, either consciously or unconsciously.