

# KURDISH DIGITAL MEDIA

2020



**BOTAN  
INTERNATIONAL**



WITH THE SUPPORT OF  
**REPORTERS  
WITHOUT BORDERS**



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the European Union

**KURDISH  
DIGITAL MEDIA**  

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**BOTAN INTERNATIONAL**

**Murat BAYRAM**  
Editor

**Veene SULAIVANY**  
Writer

**Ridwan XELIL**  
Page Design

**GRAFIKURD**  
Cover Design

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# PREFACE

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**EROL ONDEROGLU**

RSF TURKEY

France and Sweden have been in the forefront with Kurdish communities in each country working for the betterment of the Kurdish language, and Kurds from this region have been wanting to do the same.

We have been patiently waiting a while for a project to come along that is both inclusive and encompassing and not aligned with a single political ideology or party.

We have been waiting for a symposia on the subject of Kurdish reporting and journalism to take place where it originates. We have been waiting for a project that looks into the lens of journalism from a societal and cultural perspective, and sees forward into the future of journalism as well as it's day-to-day happenings.

In a time where the dialogue about journalism and news reporting in Turkey has fallen into darkness, this project was born and brought together people from different aspects of journalism and reporting.

Reporters Without Borders (RSF) commits to fighting for the universal right and protection of freedom of expression of thoughts and ideas. This is why it supports projects and organizations of like minded individuals and groups like this one.

I have witnessed Botan International's commitment to professionalism through a group of talented people working professionally.

# WHY DID WE WRITE THE ENGLISH EDITION OF THIS KURDISH EBOOK?

**MURAT BAYRAM**  
BOTAN INTERNATIONAL  
FOUNDER AND CEO

Kurdish journalism education is forbidden in the Turkish education system, but organizing workshops and seminars is not prohibited.

Botan International is the first Kurdish organization in Turkey that provides Kurdish media education. Reporters Without Borders (RSF) is the first international NGO that has sponsored a Kurdish organization in order to provide Kurdish media education.

To provide a bit of perspective, according to the Diyarbakir-based company 'Rawest', a survey they conducted showed that 16% to 18% of the citizens speak in Kurdish in their homes in Turkey. So about 14 million citizens in Turkey speak Kurdish in their homes.

Up until 1991, speaking Kurdish was prohibited under law. Before the peace process began in 2013, the Kurds were not recognized by the Turkish state. They only received state recognition of their existence during the peace process. However, to be clear, Kurds are still not recognized under Turkish law.

Currently, there is only one TV channel that has news programs in Kurdish in Turkey; 'TRT Kurdi', which is a state-owned TV station. In Turkey, more than 5,000 newspapers and magazines are in print periodically according to the TUIK. But there is no Kurdish-language newspaper publishes in Turkey.

In Turkey, there is no Kurdish news agency. But

there are news agencies that have a Kurdish section, the largest being the state's AA news agency.

Kurds also have agencies that have a Kurdish section and they are often censored. For example, the Mesopotamia News Agency has been banned under law 28 times.

In summary, for the Kurds in Turkey - digital media is not an option, it is the only way.

Digital media is changing very fast. And in order to remain relevant and - more importantly - to survive, there needs to be formal Kurdish training and education to keep the language competitive in the global marketplace. The Kurdish language is from the Indo-European family of languages, and Turkish is from the Ural-Altaic family of languages. Training in one language cannot simply be translated and used to educate speakers of the other language. Kurdish journalists do not have Kurdish digital journalism guides, and therefore being able to provide one allows for a more levelled playing field.

We have prepared and published the "Kurdish Digital Journalism ebook" under the sponsorship of RSF, which has as its defining motto: "for freedom of information".

This ebook is free and accessible to everyone. All our work is very valuable for the legacy of Kurdish media. We thought that the experience of creating a guide with workshops and seminars

in a language prohibited in the education system could be valuable for the world media as well. For this reason, we have combined the lecture notes of Veene Sulaivany, translator of Kurdish-to-English, to create a comprehensive guide. This ebook will not provide an all encompassing guide to digital media, but it will give the user(s) the chance to see which subjects are viewed as important and from which perspective, when training digital media for the first time in a language.

For this program, I invited 14 people who work for international media agencies such as BBC, SBS, New York Times, Reuters, AFP, and some academics of universities such as Inalco and Bern, to teach from their experience and techniques in Kurdish to young Kurdish journalists.

I am grateful to everyone named in this book. I have to admit, my inexperience working with an international body left me scratching my head at some points, and I would not have been able to do it without the cooperation and support of Laetitia Chesseron and Lea Tardie. I'm also a fan of Erol Onderoğlu, like many young journalists in Turkey. He's someone who inspires us in journalism. Thank you very much for writing a short preface to this book. I'm so grateful for the contributions made by RSF, EU, and everyone else who played a vital role in the success of this endeavour.

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*Dedicated to the lives of  
Celadet Ali Bedirkhan  
and Roger Lescod.*

...

*A heartfelt thank you to  
Laetitia Chesseron  
and Lea Tardie for their support  
and partnership.*

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# THE ELEMENTS OF PHOTOGRAPHS FOR DIGITAL MEDIA

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**SERTAC KAYAR\***  
REUTERS

\*In 2006, Sertac began his work in journalism. He started his journey into photography with REUTERS. He received the “Journalist of the Year” award from the South-East Journalists Union. He’s been awarded the “Metin Goktepe award in Journalism”. He’s a member of the International Federation of Journalists and the South-East Journalist Union.



Is photography a technical profession? According to Sertac Kayar, a photographer for Reuters based in Diyarbakir, photography exists in a broader perspective, and limiting the profession to its technical attributes restricts the photographer to a narrow field of work. He argues that photography has become such an essential part of news reporting and news storytelling that it's slowly starting to replace the need for excessive wordy news.

In a world flooded with easy-to-use cameras for even the most amateur of photographers, Sertac says it's important to differentiate yourself from the influx of photos bombarding social media platforms. He says there must be enough compositional interest in your photo to draw an audience towards your news story.

In order to do this, he stressed the importance of knowing your environment even before arriving to take your photos. Being familiar with the street setting, the arrangement of buildings, and where to find good lighting are all essential in creating a piece worthy of attracting an international audience.

Not only does one have to shine above the mountains of photos coming out of every corner, but one must also be unique in creating images that distinguishes them from the herd of professional photographers during the breaking of a news story.

He paints a picture of a few years ago in Diyarbakir during an anti-government protest. Police had encircled a group of less than a hundred protestors in full riot gear. His colleagues were all huddled together and taking photos all from the same angle. He knew if he jumped into the herd he'd never capture an image unique to him. So he scanned the area and found a

space with some steps that gave him some height. The result was a birds-eye view of the event that no other photographer on scene was able to capture. He successfully provided a unique perspective on an event that was soon going to flood news agencies.

"Wêne, nûçeyê dide xwendin", roughly translates to a "photograph tells a news story," according to Sertac Kayar. At times, he says, a photo is enough to produce an entire news story. This is because every photograph has a story to tell, and it's the responsibility of the photographer to tell the story on a world stage.

Photographs are one of the most effective ways to tell a story and express emotions. Sertac suggested that this is because photographs tell the story as it is without changing it.

It was 2016, and the armoured tanks of the Turkish army roamed the streets of the town of Sur in Diyarbakir. The majority of this quaint town was destroyed. Sertac was perched on a street looking directly at the destruction fenced off to the residents. He knew the area, so he was ready for the shot, he just needed the right subject at the right time with just the right amount of light.

He says he had the picture already taken in his mind's eye, he was just waiting for a child, or a woman, or an elderly man to enter the frame to complete the image. In walks an older woman who hoists herself up onto the concrete step of the sidewalk and peers over the fence at the destruction of what may have been her former home or neighbourhood.

Lastly, Sertac made it clear that as members of the press there always exists restrictions and barriers that

obstruct the normal work flow of photographers. He emphasized the need for photographers to be quick-witted and strong problem solvers.

More often than not, the restrictions are legal ones and photographers have to prepare themselves for the consequences of chasing the perfect shot. His example comes again from Diyarbakir. It was International Women's Day, a member of parliament was out in the street, a bouquet of flowers tucked against her chest and forearm and a smile on her face, she was handing them out to the women she came across. To her right were heavily armed members of the police force, this time where she had flowers tucked, they had heavy weaponry and sour expressions.

Sertac faced a lot of legal repercussions from this image, going in and out of courtrooms for two years. Even though the difficulties of the profession, it's important to remain optimistic and continue to capture stories through images to tell the world.



# INTERNATIONAL LITERARY JOURNALISM: STANDARDS AND ETHICS

**MURAT BAYRAM\***  
BOTAN INTERNATIONAL

\*Bayram has been working in journalism for the past 11 years. He is the CEO and founder of Botan International and an editor at OrtadogunNews. He is one of the founders of the Kurdish section or Bianet news, and he worked as its editor while also providing seminars in the Kurdish and Turkish language. Aside from his work in Kurdish news reporting, he's also worked for; the New York Times, Al Jazeera International, Deutsche Welle, Middle East Eye and RT TV, writing news stories, providing photo and video stories, and providing translation services. His news stories have been translated into 6 languages across 8 countries. He's received training from the fellowship program at Oxford University in England, as well as the French Academy.



There have been very few studies conducted on Literary Journalism, but there is a gradual global interest growing for more information on the topic. A prominent study conducted by Doug Underwood of the University of Washington in 2008 entitled, “Journalism and the Novel,” takes a closer look at the discipline of reporting news through storytelling.

This was one of many titles that were discussed by Murat Bayram, author of “Belkî îşev binive”. Murat underscored the detriment of ‘statistical news reporting’ by Kurdish journalists towards their reach of a global audience. “If Kurds continue with ‘news reporting’ and statistics we will not reach an international audience,” says Murat.

Statistics do not invoke human emotion and listeners and readers become passive towards that information. A narrative approach is much more effective in not only capturing the attention of the reader, but it is also much more effective in reaching a wider - possibly global - audience.

The objective of literary journalism is to tell the story of an event or human subject using clear, straightforward language. In traditional storytelling, the use of elaborate and creative language is encouraged. However, with literary journalism, the more simplistic and uncomplicated the language - the better.

Murat outlined three ways to produce a literary news story. He opens with “The New Odyssey,” by Patrick Kingsley. In this journalistic novel, Patrick embarks on a journey through the illegal passage way from Syria to Europe. Here, Murat says, the reporter presents narrative journalism through personal experience, detailing their own eye-witness account of the voyage.

Murat then transitions to, “The Unwomanly Face of War: An Oral History of Women in World War II,” by Svetlana Alexievich. In this example of literary journalism it does not present the writer’s account of the events, instead it tells the story of the eye-witness accounts of more than 200 women who were child soldiers under the rule of the Soviet Union.

Lastly, both “Belkî îşev binive,” by Murat Bayram, and “The Wrong Enemy,” by Carlotta Gall both demonstrate the third way to produce narrative journalism - with both eye-witness accounts from others and their own personal experiences.



Literary journalism would not be as popular without its signature style of writing. Murat says that every successful writer needs to capture the attention of their reader immediately with a hook or you lose them for good. The greatest importance for the writer is telling a human story, “there should be human thoughts and emotions in the writing; the journalist needs to express their humanity,” says Murat.

As important as the hook is to capturing the reader, so too is the research and ‘fact-checking’ of the substance of the story to keep the reader engaged. Without trustworthy eye-witness accounts and expert testimonials, the entire story has the potential to fall flat.

Everyone has a bias whether we would like to admit it or not, and so it’s important for reporters to remain just and fair regardless of their bias, says Murat.

Of all the things that express the essential features of literary journalism, nothing is as essential for the journalist to preserve more than the rights and privacy of their subjects and witnesses.

Murat lists four things that any journalist must abide by when it come to eye-witness and testimonials: first, set parameters for privacy - whether through voice-changing technology or pixelating imagery; second, protect the right of your witnesses; third, never put yourself or others in unnecessary danger; and lastly, always side with and protect the rights of the underprivileged when faced against a stronger adversary.

Never forget - literary journalism is the work of a person, regardless of who they are, it will not be void of human emotion and bias.



# PRODUCTION AND PREPARATION OF VIDEO NEWS

**GULISTAN KORBAN RENCBER\***  
ORTADOGUNEWS

\*In 2003, Rencber began her work in journalism as a news anchor for Diyarbakir's 'GUN TV'. Soon afterward, she moved onto 'Azadi TV' where she became a news editor and presenter for their news program. Following the closing of 'Azadi TV' in 2016, she moved onto an online news agency called '1HaberVar' as a news editor and presenter. She produced and presented an online series where she travelled across Kurdish cities in Turkey, putting 24 cities into the spotlight. She now works for OrtadogunNews and NRT.



With the advancements made in technology and multimedia platforms, news reporting and narrative journalism have provided the world with new ways of receiving information about current global, regional, and local events. The fastest-growing media broadcasting platform is undoubtedly video news.

Video news is a versatile platform in which the content creator has the ability to produce anything for consumption by the general public. Gulistan Korban Rencber, Editor of ortadogunews.com, has become an expert in creating video media content for both T.V. and online platforms.

She shared her expertise with us regarding how to produce and prepare video news. “Firstly, know your topic and the entire process becomes very easy,” Gulistan said. There are a few questions you should also answer before you leave to record your video.

Gulistan says to ask yourself: where will I record; who will I talk to; what is the topic I’ll be focusing on; is my technical equipment ready; and lastly, is my camera-person ready. As a general rule of thumb, she says, become familiar and comfortable with the topic you have selected and the subjects you have chosen to include in your video.

“But sometimes, in our daily lives we happen upon the news,” Gulistan says as she recalls one such example for herself. She was strolling through a neighborhood in Diyarbakir when her eye caught a very interesting storefront. She saw 2 young men working away on a traditional Kurdish instrument called the tembûr. At this point, she jumped at the opportunity and wanted to know if it was worthwhile to turn this into a news story.

In these instances, Gulistan advises us to take advantage of the situation. She suggests to go ahead and start a conversation, and conduct an informal interview to gather some information about what you see. Then head back to your office, develop a proper course of action, and return with the appropriate equipment to complete a full news story.

When it comes to the video itself, Gulistan parted some very valuable advice. She says to try to keep your rough video shoot to a maximum of five minutes before the editing process. The final product after editing should not exceed three minutes or you’ll lose your viewers, she warns. Let the images tell your news story and try not to overload the video with excessive speech. You’re not obligated to ask every question you have prepared. The style of the report should follow that of a narrative news story.

Don’t let the images you record be so far off from what you’re going to say. “If you talk about a personality, bring that person into the shot, if it’s about a process, show that happening in your video,” says Gulistan. It’s imperative, just as in narrative journalism, to keep the language clear and concise, and your sentences short and simple. Avoid elaborate vocabulary and excessive descriptive storytelling.

The second half of her lesson took us through a video presentation. Acting as a news story presenter, the most important thing is to know how to breathe properly. Breathing from your diaphragm, she says, allows you to speak clearly without running out of air in-between your sentences. Her trick? Lay flat on your back, place a heavy book on your stomach, and breathe while trying to lift it up and down with your stomach.

# INTERVIEW PROTOCOL IN DIGITAL MEDIA

**FERID DEMIREL\***  
BIANET

\*Editor of Bianet Kurdish, and a graduate of Marmara Universities' Journalism program, he is now completing his masters in Journalism. He's worked for Birgun, Dicle Haber Ajansi (DIHA), Dem TV, Rudaw TV, and Sputnik as editor, editor-in-chief, and news producer.



Clyde Haberman once said, “exhaustive research is the basic building block of a successful interview.” These exact sentiments were expressed by Ferid Demirel, Editor at Bianet-Kurdish, who says research and preparation are vital to the overall interview process. Ferid further elaborated that without proper questions, the entire interview can fall flat.

As is with most disciplines, research is the glue that holds the entire piece together - the piece being the full news story prepared from the interview. Knowing what you’re going to ask will create confidence in not only yourself and your questions, but the entire interview process.

Ferid says to ask yourself: what are your expectations for the interview; what are the expectations of your viewers; who is the personality you’re going to interview; what are they known for; what have they said in the past; what results do you expect; and lastly, what does your viewership expect from the outcomes of the interview. This part of the research process will help guide you in forming your interview questions.

The next thing you should do, according to Ferid, determines a place, time, and date for the actual interview. Here you should consider the structure of the interview. Consider what pace your questions will flow in. Consider the risks of conducting the interview for yourself and the interviewee. And finally, prepare yourself for any surprises that may come up: a change in location, date, or time; or a change in the interviewees’ willingness to answer your questions - to name a few.

The preparation of the questions can only be conducted once your research is completed. Here you will determine in what order you will ask your questions and of course

what the actual questions will be. Questions are very important. Your questions should produce meaningful and thought-provoking answers. “A powerful interviewer knows what the goal of the interview is,” says Ferid.

During the actual interview, the mark of a great interviewer lies in their listening abilities. Throughout the interview, you need to determine when it’s appropriate to interject and when to allow the person to continue their thought. Repeating your question, or even rewording the question to extract a satisfactory answer is sometimes an important skill to have.

As Carl Bernstein famously once said, “I think all good reporting is the same thing - the best attainable version of the truth.” It’s important to respect your interviewee’s level of comfort with answering your questions, but never settle for anything but the best version of the truth.

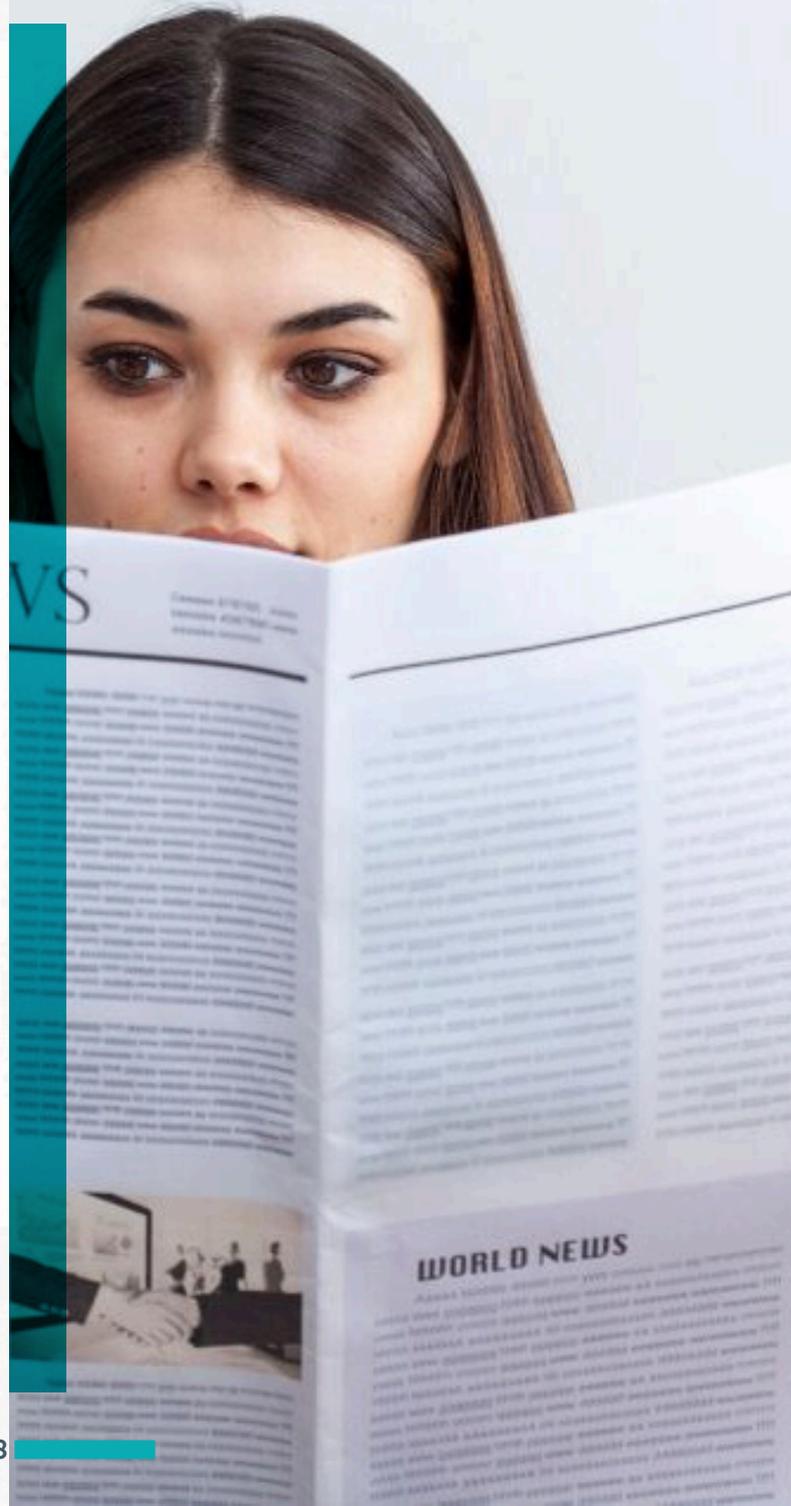
Ferid also provided tips that become a necessary part of conducting the interview. Your equipment becomes an extension of you and your work, without them, you’ll stumble into trouble. “Always bring a pen or pencil - bring more than one pen,” Ferid advises. If you plan to use a voice recording device or a laptop, don’t forget to bring your chargers and batteries. In order for your interview to have any integrity, it’s vital that you ask and receive consent from the interviewee to record them in any way.

Ferid reminded us that it’s important to adjust the interview process based on the genre of interview you are planning to conduct. Interviews can also be conducted on a variety of media platforms - t.v., podcasts, online, and through telephone. Depending on the genre and the platform you choose the number of questions you ask and the manner in which you ask them changes.

# MEDIATIVES AND PROPER NEWS WRITING

**DR. IBRAHIM SEYDO AYDOGAN\***  
INALCO

\*In 2001, Aydogan made the move to France. In 2003, at the University of Sorbun he began his Masters' research on '15th century Paris in Notre-Dame and the Paris of Victor Hugo'. In 2006, at the University of Rouen, he completed his doctoral thesis on "time, complex sentences and tense" in Kurdish literature. His first book, "Black and White", was published in 1999. His second book, titled "Leyla Figaro", was released in 2003. He produced a program for Tishk TV, called "Weje". He presented a program on Kurdistan 24 called "Pencereya Kurdi". In 2007, he began working at INALCO University at the Department of Kurdish studies as the head and as a professor. In 2013, his book, titled "Guman", on his research on language and literature was published by Lise Publishing.



“We cannot be faulted for making grammar mistakes, or writing Kurdish under the influence of Turkish, because we’ve never received formal educational training in our mother tongue.” Dr. Ibrahim Seydo Aydogan. These are the wise words of Dr. Ibrahim, head of the Kurdish department, and associate professor at INALCO University in France.

It’s unfair to compare the grammar and linguistic structure of the Kurdish language with other languages that have been given time and attention for their development. As of today, the Kurdish language still falls short of having a complex set of grammar rules, Dr. Ibrahim says.

What makes developing a standard set of grammar rules for the Kurdish language even more difficult is the unique regional accents and dialects that cause chaos for a linguist. It may be that what is grammatically acceptable for one group of speakers, is not acceptable for another group of speakers of the same language. Dr. Ibrahim says it’s not appropriate to assert superiority in speaking over members of the same language.

However, Dr. Ibrahim argues that despite knowing this, a standardized set of grammar rules must be put into place for the Kurdish language. He provided various examples of the detriments of having no ‘set grammar structures’ on the development of the Kurdish language.

The first set of examples took us through the simplification of thought and literary language. Dr. Ibrahim argues that “complex sentences can and do exist in Kurdish. Our thoughts are complex, and so too can our language be complex.” Unfortunately, many notable Kurdish authors and writers have simplified their language fearing if they created literary work with

complex grammar structures it would not be understood.

Dr. Ibrahim quoted Proust saying, “writing complex sentences lend to the development of a language and moves it forward.” If Kurdish authors and writers continue to avoid the use of complex sentence structures in their work, it holds the language back.

The second set of examples that Dr. Ibrahim provided was the use of conjunctions in creating complex sentences. He used the word ‘Ku’ from Kurdish, saying that he’d been criticized as pushing a French-language agenda on Kurdish by drawing a likeness from both.

His response was simple, “my mother - who’s taught me everything in Kurdish - does not know any French. She is not able to read and write in Kurdish, and so the grammar structure differences I observe from spoken and written Kurdish are solely observations from my life,” he concluded.

Finally, Dr. Ibrahim presented examples of sentences in written Kurdish using grammar rules from Turkish. With one particular sentence being so foreign to his Kurdish tongue, he stumbled while reading it and it became the perfect opportunity for him to stress just how difficult it is using another languages’ grammar rules with Kurdish.

As writers of the Kurdish language, the heavy burden falls on our shoulders to push the language towards further development. Complex sentences are not to be feared!

# REPORTING IN CONFLICT ZONES

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**MESUD MUHEMMED\***  
KURDISTAN 24

\*He's worked for several Kurdish news agencies and outlets as a reporter and journalist. Currently, he works at Kurdistan 24 as a news reporter and producer.



Mesud Muhemmed has made a name for himself as a 'conflict zone reporter'. His ambition and courage have taken him to several battlegrounds across Iraq and Syria. What drives his ambition? The words he lives by: "nothing in life is difficult. Remove anything that becomes an obstacle to reaching your goal and always keep your goals in front of you on sticky pads," he says. Simple enough.

Reporting from conflict zones is not an easy feat by any stretch of the imagination, and without proper determination and preparation the safety and well-being of everyone is put into danger. "Prepare yourself for the worst possible scenario. Accept death as a possibility and embrace the fear," says Mesud.

According to Mesud, any journalist that wants to report from conflict zones must have the following: the first being, a very clear intention to enter a conflict zone willingly knowing all the risks involved; the second, a purpose needs to be defined internally for the journalist; and lastly, the journalist must be properly prepared with a committed staff and proper personal protective equipment.

He recounts his past mistakes while first starting as a conflict zone reporter back in 2014 in the midst of the chaos of the war on ISIS. He says while he was in those conflict areas, he observed members of the international press and foreign agencies and their modus operandi - their way of operation. He says he made mental notes from these observations and was able to apply them to future excursions. "Learn from your colleagues," he advises.

Mesud strongly emphasized the need for neutrality on the part of the conflict zone reporter. He listed numerous

security forces he had the chance to travel with during his time reporting their victories and losses. "Just because I was under the security of a group that was completely against my political affiliation and ideology, didn't mean I was in favor of their actions or beliefs. I am a reporter and I was reporting the news," he says.

Mesud advises, "neutrality is important. You must remain civil with the group who holds your life in their grasp - regardless of your political affiliation."

Once in the conflict zone, it's the responsibility of the journalist to find and report the news from a unique perspective. "Divê nûçe bigihînî, ne bî nûçe - You have to report the news, not become the news story," he says. Ask questions, start conversations with members of the security forces whose safety you're under, and gather as much information as you can to create a news story.

The one point Mesud stressed repeatedly is to be safe and careful, and know that as the reporter you are responsible for the safety of your staff. "Be smart, have a map and know safe and strategic points, and know the exact areas to avoid," he concludes.

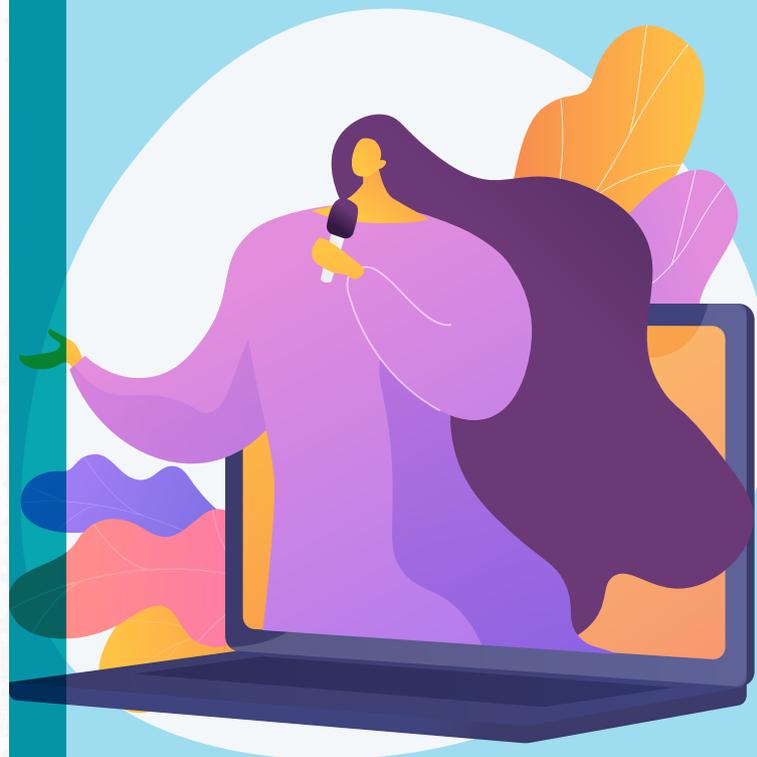


# REPORTING ON WOMEN: EXPERIENCES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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**SAFIYA ALAGAS\***  
JINNEWS

\*In 2008, she began as an intern working for DIHA, and stayed with them until 2012. Because of her work as a journalist, she fought legal battles for 3 years, and so took a break from new reporting. In 2015, she began working for the municipality of Diyarbakir's publishing department. In 2017, because of the domestic conflict in Diyarbakir, she lost her job. Afterward, she began working for Sujin. Sujin agency was shut down shortly after she began working. JinNews Agency was founded, and she began working as the spokesperson and manager of the agency - while simultaneously writing and producing news stories. For her work in journalism, she was awarded the "Maria Grazia Cutuli" award in 2019.





News reporting, much like a lot of things in our world, has a very male-dominated perspective. Rarely do we find a news story with a female point of view. Safiya Alagas, editor of JinNews says, “women’s rights publications require a different language to report news than the one used by the mainstream media.”

This is because, with a unique point of view, women are able to tell the same story in a different language, which at times may be more positive or socially aware than that written by a man. “Why are women’s news agencies necessary? Because we need a perspective that uses appropriate language to address women’s issues in a positive way,” Safiye says.

She argues that the perspectives of men and women are very different and so it’s important for women to write news as well. This is not to say that only women’s news agencies are responsible for reporting on women’s news, she says. It just means that a more socially conscious language needs to be adopted in mainstream media to be sensitive towards the way news stories affect different groups of people.

Kurdish women have a long history of contributing to the growth of Kurdish media in the twentieth century

with their publications - from telling and writing news stories. Safiye provided an exhaustive list, decade by decade, regarding the contributions women have made in Kurdish publications.

In total, Safiye says according to her research, there have been six hundred and six publications made by Kurdish women over various platforms of media during the twentieth century.

From her research, Safiye has found that after the year 1990 there was a shift in Kurdish society. Where once their voices were muted and very few publications were made available, after 1990 there was an increase in publications on various platforms in an effort to amplify their voices.

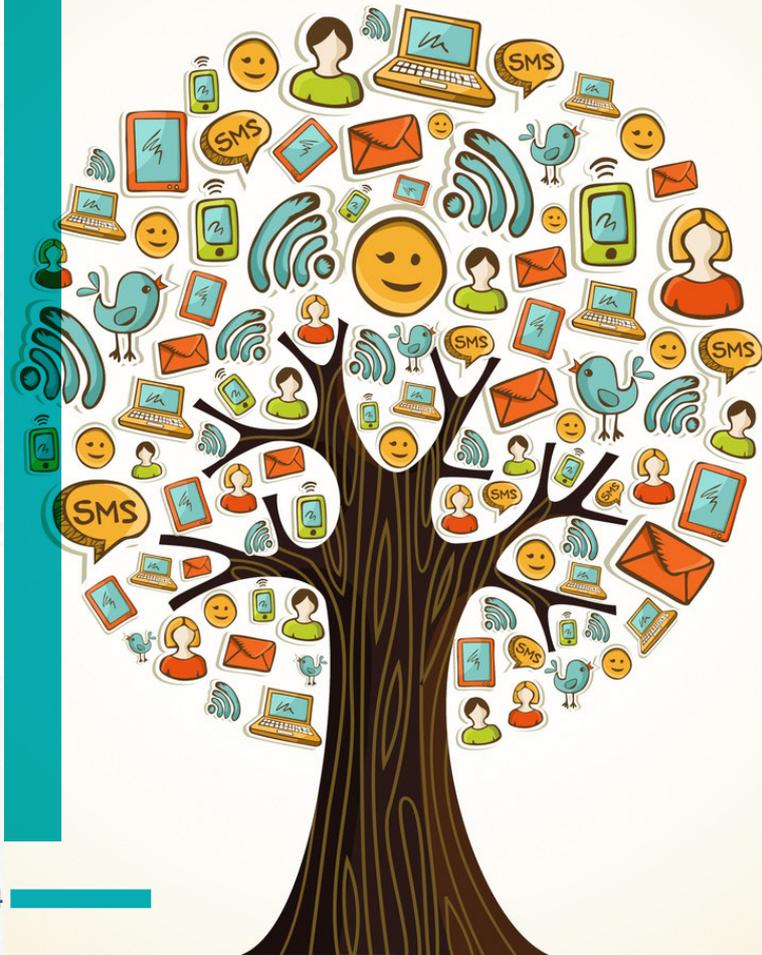
With all these opinions available for consumption, it became clear that there was a need for guidelines on why the language should be considerate of its audience. In Safiye’s opinion, “news reporting must take into consideration its lasting impact on the future. Online news stories remain for a while and are easily accessible.”



# THE RIGHTS OF USERS AND JOURNALISTS ON DIGITAL PLATFORMS

**SIRAZ BARAN\***  
LAWYER

\*Born in 1990 in Diyarbakir. In 2010, he switched majors from mechanical engineering to law at Dicle University. In 2015, he began working as a lawyer. He also works as a local fixer for foreign journalists and writers.



Over the course of human history, we've been privy to new ways of communication. And as much as these new forms of communication have aided in bringing the world together, it's also created new ways in which people can take advantage of one another. Siraz Baran, a lawyer with the Diyarbakir Bar Association, says that digital rights are a new concept in modern human history that needs to be equally regarded as any other form of law and order.

The early building blocks of the Internet were set in 1960 and from there - as the saying goes, "the rest is history." With millions of users online, across an array of social media platforms - YouTube, Twitter, and Instagram to name a few - a framework of legal rights and protocols became a necessity.

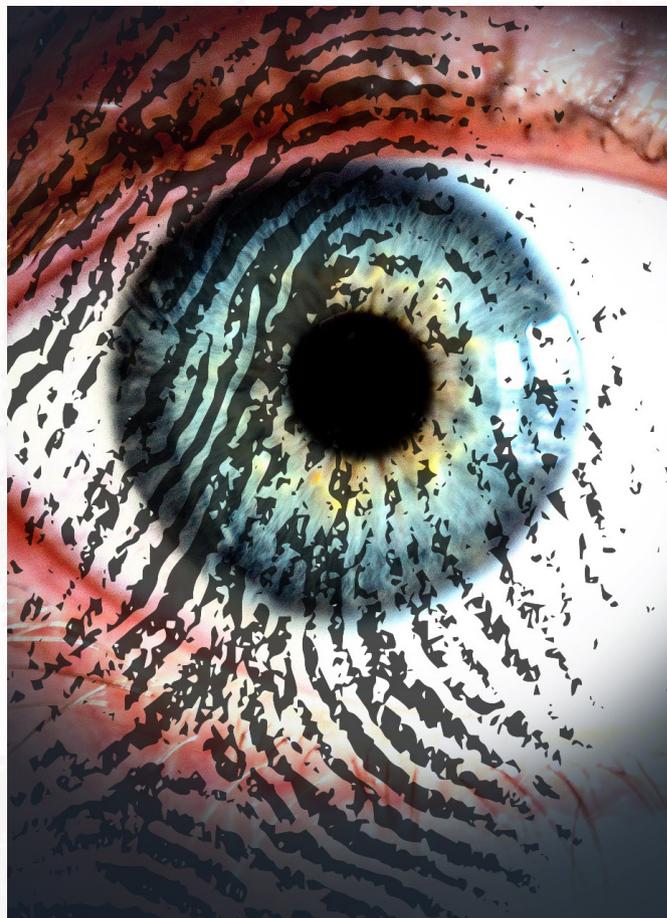
"There's always a chance for anyone's rights to be violated on digital platforms. Knowing your rights protects you," says Siraz. The 'Italian Declaration of Internet Rights' became an internationally recognized guideline for every country to protect the rights of their citizens on the internet.

It's very clear why we need a system of governance for internet use but are we always able to successfully protect ourselves? No. Unfortunately, not in all instances of internet rights violation is there a just and fair outcome.

Take the '#metoo' movement that started in the United States in 2017, when actress Alyssa Milano started tweeting about sexual harassment in the entertainment industry. Thousands of women, young and old, came forward with their stories, and not to anyone's surprise, a lot of them didn't have a proper legal leg to stand on.

Regardless of the outcome of some cases, Siraz says, "the '#metoo' movement was significant because it really brought digital rights to the forefront." Suddenly there was a gradual shift in perception of how we safeguard ourselves and our information online.

Why is it important for journalists to know? News reporting and storytelling has become more internet-user friendly. With millions of users, news agencies have made their new stories available online. So in order to protect themselves, it's important for journalists to know what is in their legal arsenal.





Where once the dissemination of information, regardless of importance, was in the hands of media agencies, it's now become so easy to do with an electronic device and an internet connection. Hatice Kamer, the contributor for BBC and SBS, is an expert Podcaster extraordinaire.

What is a Podcast? It's a digital media platform that brings the power of dissemination to the people through the internet. This platform allows anyone to broadcast anything - within reason of the user guideline policy - to any corner of the world.

The superiority of Podcasts over the radio is being able to download them for the convenience of the consumer, says Hatice. "Once you've downloaded the Podcast, you can listen to it on your drive to work, while you cook dinner, you can listen to it particularly anywhere!"

Whereas radio stations require expensive and heavy equipment to produce content, all you need to produce a podcast is a smartphone, computer, or tablet device and access to an internet connection. Aside from this, you will play a small monthly or yearly fee to broadcast on a network or your own internet domain, says Hatice.

Podcasts open opportunities for young journalists trying to get into news reporting. Not only that but it provides Kurdish speakers with a platform to speak freely without limitations set by a media network or agency. "But they require discipline and a proper agenda," Hatice says.

Yes, broadcasting has become easier, but that does not mean you no longer need a plan of action. Hatice says to ask yourself, "why should someone listen to me?" Without purpose and structure, your entire Podcast could fall apart.

"If you want to create a strong viewership, you must distinguish yourself from the millions of Podcasts available," she says. Not only are you competing with the millions of Podcasts broadcasting online, but you're also competing with other digital platforms. "You have to create interest through smart planning and innovative content - find your niche listener," advises Hatice.

Ensure your Podcast is technically sound. Podcasts require a lot of technical skills, so to make it easier for yourself to plan your speech and ensure you are speaking clearly. Before you start; make sure nothing is obstructing your microphone, make sure your internet connection is strong, and make sure you're confident in yourself and your content.



# DIGITAL MEDIA MANAGEMENT

**ALI DURAN TOPUZ\***  
GAZETE DUVAR

\*He's study law at Istanbul University. From 1994, he's been working in law as a legal advisor to radio and news agencies. He's been an integral part of the formation of Aksam and Radikal news agencies, and has written for Radikal as well. He's taken the role of presenter for Sputnik radio and IMC. Currently, he's an ongoing contributor for many magazines writing about law, political activism and politics. He is also the spokesperson for Gazete Duvar.



One of the most innovative seminars to come out of Botan Internationals Workshop is without a doubt the one presented by Ali Duran Topuz, editor of Gazete Duvar. He started his seminar by graciously saying he is still a student of his profession and instead of asserting his professional expertise, he would rather pose questions to warm-up our minds and thoughts.

His questions were industry-specific and also general in the context of thinking and thought. His objective was to have us become comfortable in a state of continuous learning - to never feel as if we've outgrown the 'student' phase of our professional lives.

To understand digital media management, one must accept that in this innovative industry, changes are inevitable and there must always be room to adapt to these changes otherwise you cannot survive.

This is not to say abandon your individuality to be part of the industry. It just means set for yourself boundaries and work and adapt within those boundaries.

Ali Duran said as-a-matter-of-fact, "media is a collection of information itself and it's also a medium for other forms of information to spread." Our contribution and place in this industry mean that we must accept that what we do is a part of a grander scheme for the future.

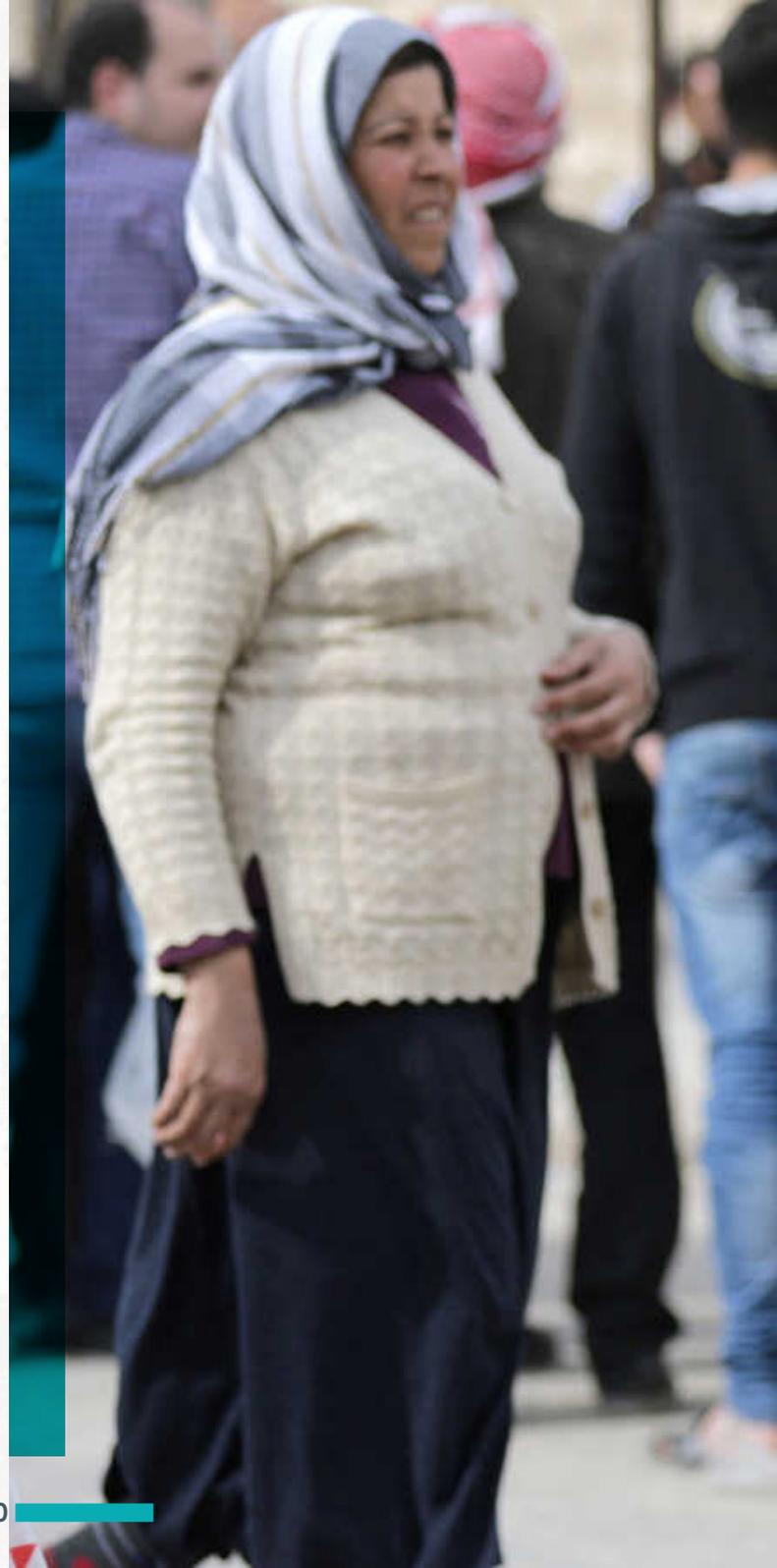


# HOW ARE KURDISH WOMEN PORTRAYED IN EUROPEAN MEDIA?

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MURI DARIDA\*  
JOURNALIST

\*Muri Darida is German. She's a journalist. She speaks 7 languages and writes news in each one. She speaks Kurdish well, and has presented seminars in Kurdish previously. She's studied psychology and has worked extensively in Kurdish Women's Studies.



If a google search is done for 'Kurdish Women', there is an overload of images of militant women with weapons on their person. Muri Darida, a freelance Journalist from Germany, says this is detrimental to the general public opinion of Kurdish women.

Kurdish women hold a variety of professions and are talented beyond the image of militias. Unfortunately, she argues, this is not what is portrayed on international mainstream media. The images from news reports stick Kurdish women in the fight against ISIS draped in monotone colors, carrying weapons.

Kurdish women are more than this. They are writers, teachers, and singers. They are more than fighters, and perpetuating this image in the media does not allow them to tell their own stories.

Muri says that Kurdish women are the keepers of their own stories and it's their responsibility to be more vocal against the suppression they face from representing themselves for all that they are. As a white German, she says no matter how sympathetic and empathetic she is to the struggle of Kurdish women, she can never tell their stories as best as they can themselves.

"We have to push Kurdish women to write their own narrative and create their own identity in the international media sphere," says Muri. Her message was simple: "write your own stories, rewrite the image of what is being forced on you - only then can you truly show the world what it means to be a Kurdish woman."



# REPORTING FOR KURDISH NEWS AGENCIES

REDUR DIJLE\*  
MA

\*Redur was born in the village of Derishe in Mardin, and was raised in Diyarbakir. He studies economics at Dicle University. His book “Eshefa Temeneki” and “Kesek” have been published. He also works as a translator. He’s been working as a journalist for the past 6 years. He previously worked at DIHA news agency, and currently works at MA news agency.



The history of news reporting started with the urge to share feelings and opinions expressed through language. Today it has evolved into a profession, with the purpose of delivering the events of the day by taking a position and reporting it through language. Redur Dijle, the editor at MA, gave us a glance into the life of a journalist working for a news agency.

Redur says that agencies gained popularity at the turn of the twentieth century. In 1835, Charles Havas opened the first news agency in France. News wrote at the time only interested diplomats and bankers. Fast forward to 2020 and nearly every person keeps up with the day's events one way or another.

With the rise of social media, news agencies have become a more reliable means of consuming news and news stories. Redur says it became obvious for news agencies to also make their material available on online platforms.

The availability of news available online has strengthened the relationship people have with news agencies and journalists. "News agencies continue to remain relevant because they produce reliable news stories through qualified reporters and journalists," says Redur.

According to Redur, the mark of a successful news journalist is one who is always alert and aware. This means the person is always ready to break a news story. He says reporting for news agencies requires a lot of articulation and quick-thinking in order to be able to break the story first.

Reporting, like many professions, is also technical in nature. Redur provided some of the news reporting's

technical criteria. It's imperative that the journalist be able to write clearly, the premise of the entire job is writing. Poor writing abilities can lead readers to infer incorrect opinions and lead to confusion.

The report itself must be clear in meaning and grammatically sound. The last thing you want to do is to spend hours researching, collecting information from sources, and writing out your report only for it to be plagued by grammatical errors. This is not only devastating for the reputation of the journalist but also the agency. The prestige of the agency falls when it produces sub-par content.

Headlines or 'FLASH' news has to be written with meticulous care. It acts as an advertisement to draw consumers to read, listen, or watch the news story from that particular agency. The title for this type of news story should be contained to eight words at the maximum and free of personal opinions and comments.

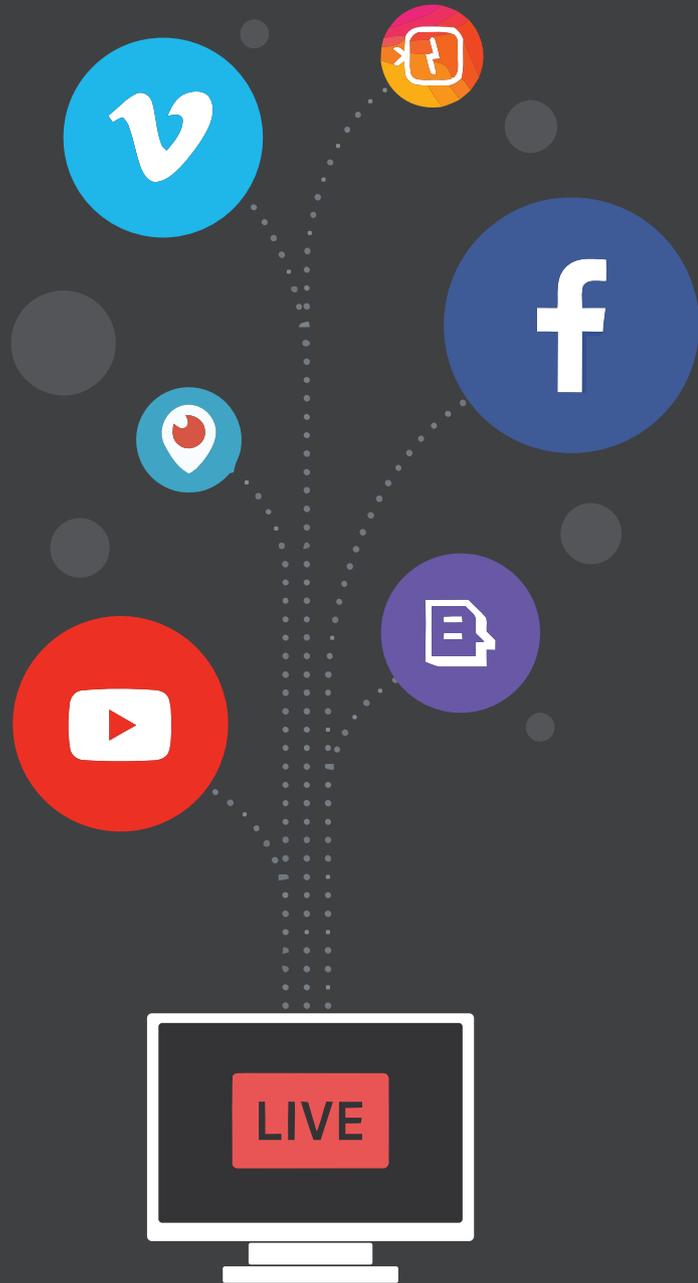
It's important to remain neutral while telling a news story and including both sides of the story only strengthens the legitimacy of the writer and the words written. The objective of a news story is to report facts. If personal opinions are included it will create an unsolicited perception in the mind of the consumer on that particular issue or event.

Lastly, the decision to publish the article lays in the legitimacy of the sources used to tell the story. Without reliable and trustworthy sources, the entire story holds no value for the consumer. It's also important to note that if the safety of a source is in question, it's the responsibility of the journalist to keep them confidential, Redur says.

# HOW TO LIVE STREAM ON SOCIAL MEDIA

MAHMUT BOZARSLAN\*  
AFP

\*He has been a journalist in Diyarbakir for 26 years. He works for AFP, VOA and AI Monitor. He worked for NTV for 15 years and for Al Jazeera Turkish service for 5 years. He is the founder of Diyarbakir-based news website, Ortadoğu News.



If you ask Mahmut Bozarlan, contributor for AFP and VOA, who would live stream video online he'll tell you there are two reasons for someone to do so. First, companies and corporations using it as a form of marketing and advertising. Second, individuals using it as a means of self-promotion for their skills, opinions, and/or abilities.

Just like creating a Podcast, live stream video also requires a course of action and a well-defined agenda. Mahmut says to ask yourself, "why will someone watch me?" This is why it's imperative the topic of the live stream creates enough interest for viewers to watch.

The next crucial thing to pay attention to is your appearance, your demeanor, your surroundings, and your internet connection.

Firstly, ensure that you're properly dressed for your topic of discussion. Depending on your live stream, you may want to dress formally in business attire or be more informal with casual clothing. And whether you're indoors or outdoors becomes a factor in your choice of clothing as well.

Then you should be aware of how you use your body language when you speak. Make sure you try to keep neutral and non-threatening body language otherwise you risk losing your viewers. Your demeanor should also take into account your tone of voice and the pace in which you speak - keep it appropriate for your guest and viewers.

Lastly, you should keep in mind your location. Make sure wherever you broadcast your live stream the background or things behind you contribute to creating interest for your viewers to watch you. And be mindful of

your internet connection, says Mahmut, "the last thing you want to have is a poor connection and that's all your viewers remember from your live stream."

He says to help with nervous, you can keep a notepad or notebook in your hands to try and distract you from being completely aware of your vulnerability, but "never read directly from your notes because it conveys self-doubt in your chosen topic and makes it appear as if you're not confident in your abilities." Not only does it help with nerves, he says, it'll also keep you on track in terms of your agenda for speaking.

If you are not prepared with the proper technical equipment then obviously there is no way you can successfully broadcast a live stream video. Things to have when you intend to live stream Mahmut says is an electronic device - this could be a laptop, smartphone, or tablet; a tripod for smaller devices so you may position them and be more mobile; a professional-grade microphone; and a reliable internet connection.

During the live stream, introduce your topic, and if you have a guest speaker make sure you give them a proper introduction as well. Once you feel confident about what you've said, you can turn to your speaker and have them begin their part of the interaction or you can begin asking them questions, says Mahmut.

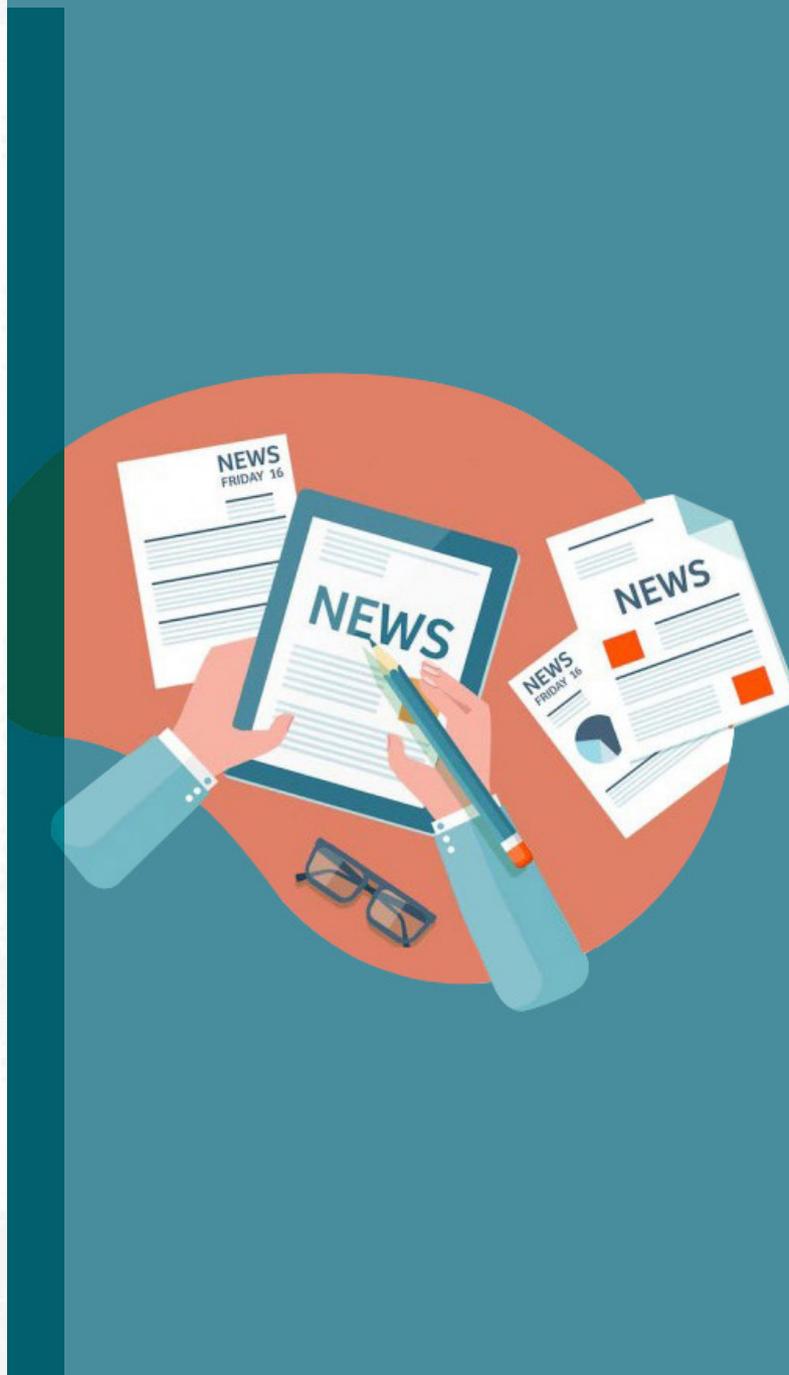
Remember, when you ask a question you have to give the other person an appropriate amount of time to respond. However, keep in mind if they seem to be going off on a tangent or if you notice an error in what they themselves missed while speaking - you should interject to make the proper correction(s), he says.

# SELECTING AND PRODUCING KURDISH NEWS FOR DIGITAL MEDIA

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OMER FARUK BARAN\*  
VOA

\*Omer was born in Suruc. He studied at Istanbul Technical University and Dicle University, majoring in architecture, sociology, and law. He's received awards for his stories titled, "Biremjar" and "Zenebej". He began his work in journalism with Rudaw and later moved onto Sputnik. Currently he is an editor for VOA. He's published a photologue called "Flashhilat", a book on poetry, and a book entitled, "Seveke Istismar".



Compared to last year, digital media has become a more popular platform for the dissemination of news stories and news reports, according to Omer Faruk Baran, editor of VOA. He says that it's become increasingly easy to reach thousands of readers at once by publishing online.

He criticizes Kurdish media for not being able to compete with other foreign news agencies. International agencies have become a beacon of non-partisanship to some degree and strictly focus on reporting facts without personal inferences.

"What we lack in Kurdish media is the ability to leave our political ideologies and affiliations out of our broadcasting and reporting techniques," says Omer. He blames this on the continuous outpour of propaganda from agencies allied with specific political parties.

By holding onto their political affiliations and ideologies, Kurdish news agencies have produced 'lingo' and 'jargon' that plagues their news telling. This vocabulary is inappropriate and lowers the prestige of Kurdish news agencies when compared to other foreign agencies.

In order to compete with the likes of CNN and BBC, Kurdish news agencies need to learn to use a neutral language of reporting. "A lot of the language we read is very insensitive and international news agencies don't see it as a legitimate source to use in their own stories," says Omer.

A lot of Kurdish news reports are one-sided and in effect become very biased in their reporting. "There must be a sense of balance for the reader," says Omer, "so it's important to get the story from both sides of the issue." In reporting and news stories we are never limited in

the number of sources we use, so there should be no reason why one voice receives attention over another.

The only exception to not using neutral language is when you use a direct quote from an individual or group with direct ties to the issue or event you're writing about.

A successful news story should have short simple sentences, and the wording needs to be written with a conscious mind. The journalist must accept that with the varying dialects in the Kurdish language, their word choice should reach a majority of readers without being lost in the dialect of their region.

Finally, Omer touched upon data-based journalism before he spent an entire session writing a new story with the participants. Using data from John Hopkins University - Coronavirus Resource Center, Omer pulled statistics of deaths and those infected and sentence-by-sentence wrote a full news story with the participants.

The purpose of the exercise was to demonstrate how to condense a large report and statistical data into a simple news report. It's important that the news story be simple enough for the average reader to read without confusion or misunderstandings.

Omer's last words to Kurdish journalists, "your job as a journalist is not freeing the oppressed. You're responsible for reporting facts."

# GENDER ROLES, WOMEN, AND KURDISH SOCIETY

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DR. ISABEL KASER\*  
BERN UNIVERSITY

\*Dr. Isabel Kaser completed her doctoral thesis on Kurdish Women's Activism. She is a professor of Gender and Society at Bern University. She is an Ambassador for Switzerland's ministry of foreign affairs. She also contributes to Botan International.



In modern Kurdish history - specifically in the twentieth century, we've witnessed women hold prominent roles in writing their own identities and how these identities fit in Kurdish society.

Dr. Isabel Kaser, a lecturer at the University of Bern in Switzerland, dedicated years to her research on gender studies. Most recently, she completed her doctoral thesis on the Kurdish women's freedom movement at SOAS.

She spent several years living in Kurdish societies in the middle east observing and researching the current status of Kurdish women and what has become of their identities. She argues, "gender norms are never fixed and they may shift because of reasons such as war, migration, modernization, conflict, insecurities, etc."

From her research, she asserts that "analyzing gender is also an analysis of power in that society." Part of her research took place during the beginning of the war on ISIS, and her focus turned to the role women played before and after the conflict.

She observed, and she says this is not specific to Kurds - in fact, she pointed out El Salvador as well, that during the conflict and war women become a part of the resistance movements. She says that conflict opens up spaces for women to take on roles outside of the private sphere that they were once limited to.

"Once the conflict is over, women are pushed back into their conservative roles of private life," says Isabel. Most often, the ruling class in politics is men and they promise to change and equality for women, she says, but significant roles and responsibilities are never given to women in a proper way.

Isabel says that Kurds are very unique in their approach to gender identity, in that there are four separate agendas from each region that aim to define justice and fairness with regards to gender roles and identities.

Interestingly enough, Isabel concedes that more often than not a lot of the literature on gender studies focuses on women in society. But she says, men are also a part of gender studies and deserve recognition for the transformation their identities go through pre-and post-conflict. "Just like every new revolution promises a 'new woman' it also promises a 'new man'."

Isabel says for her next research project, she aims to look at the creation of identity in the context of culture and art.



## KURDISH DIGITAL MEDIA

❖ 2020 ❖



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