

## Journalists' Respons[ability] to Promote Peace (audio)

Cape Town: One of the participants at the Congress is journalist Frank Jomo from Malawi. In this interview, Frank shares insights on the responsibility of journalists to de-escalate violence through careful reporting.

Citing the example of the Kenyan election conflicts in December 2007, Frank notes that when journalists reported the tribes of people who committed violent acts, the violence was exacerbated by acts of retribution. When journalists did not name tribes, the violence was reduced. Frank shares an additional example of the care required to only identify people with their religion if religion plays a direct role in their actions or motivations.

These examples relate to Cees Hamelink's workshop on hard versus soft communications. "Hard" communication refers to beginning a dialogue with an agenda to tell one's own story, including truths about past offenses. If instead one intentionally practices "soft" communications, with openness to new insights and outcomes, one can listen better, and allow a new, shared future to emerge.

These insights highlight how thoughtfully we should choose the words we use to communicate, especially when we are speaking about violence or conflict. While some words may be accurate, they may not be conducive to building peace and understanding. We must analyse our communications through an additional lens to truth "that of fostering openness and mutual understanding."

Listen to the interview

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