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**College of Humanities, Language studies, Journalism and Communication
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Public Relation and Strategic Communications Graduate Programme

**Public Relations in Crisis Communication: Investigating the Practice in
the Case of Ministry of Peace during Northern Ethiopia Crisis**

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**Public Relations in Crisis Communication: Investigating the Practice in
the Case of Ministry of Peace during Northern Ethiopia Crisis**

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Declaration

I, undersigned, hereby declared that this thesis entitled, “Public Relations in Crisis Communication: Investigating the Practice in the Case of Ministry of Peace during Northern Ethiopia Crisis” carried out by me under the advice and supervision of Anteneh Tsegaye (PhD) and submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the Degree of Masters of Art (MA) in Public Relations and strategic communication. The thesis complies with the research regulation of Addis Ababa University and meets the standards; originality, quality, and reference materials are cited and acknowledged properly using APA in the text.

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This is to certify that the thesis studied by Yirgalem Gebre Kirstos Gebeyehu, entitled, “Public Relations in Crisis Communication: Investigating the Practice in the Case of Ministry of Peace during Northern Ethiopia Crisis” studied under the advice and supervision of Anteneh Tsegaye, PhD, submitted for the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Public Relation and Strategic Communication complies with the academic research regulations of the University and meets the accepted standards with respect to originality and quality.

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to investigate the Public Relations practice on crisis management the case of the Ministry of Peace, Ethiopia. To this end, the researcher tried to investigate the roles and responsibilities of the PR practitioners on crisis communication in Ministry of Peace, the way they strategically communicate to promote peace and stability, and tools deployed to communicate during the Crisis of ENDF at the Northern Ethiopia. The researcher used Situational Crisis Communication Theory of Coombs. The study followed a qualitative research approach and availability sampling technique is used to identify the sources of data for the study. Interview and content analysis were employed as a tool of data collection. Hence, the public relations practitioners in the ministry and the existing communication documents publicized from the ministry are the sources of data. Thematic and textual data analysis methods were applied in the study. The findings showed that during the Crisis at the Northern Ethiopia Ministry of Peace's Public Relation practitioners produce Positive image building news and statements instead of issues that directly manage the crisis. As the study revealed, the Ministry of Peace Public Relation practitioner work was as if the country is in normal socio-politics contexts; make busy in sharing development related stories except donation news to ENDF and rehabilitation works to the conflict-affected regions. During post crisis period, MoP Public Relations department advocated the rehabilitation efforts focusing on affected areas. Besides, the department did not show expected efforts to deescalate the North Ethiopian crisis happening since November 2020. As the data shown, the Public relation practitioners are active on pre-crisis and post crisis period on the two years Crisis in the Northern Ethiopia. The researcher recommends that the PR department of the Ministry has to work towards maintaining the national peace identifying proactively the crisis prone areas before the outbreak of the crisis, manage the crisis before it goes to worst incidences during the crisis and show roadmaps to build sustainable peace after the crisis. Hence, capacity building and empowerment of the practitioners is an essential element to make the PR department play its expected roles during crisis.

Keywords: Public Relations, Crisis, Crisis Management, MoP,

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

CEO	Chief Executive Officer
ENDF	Ethiopian National Defence Force
FDRE	Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
FPC	Federal Police Commission
MoP	Ministry of Peace
PR	Public Relation
SCCT	Situational Crisis Communication Theory
TPLF	Tigray People’s Liberation Front

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Chapter One: Introduction

1.1. Background of the study

The profession of Public Relations, here after PR, is designed to offer everything to everyone at the same time for an organisation in 1970s. Since then, however, there have been many more efforts to grasp the essence of public relations in governmental, nongovernmental, and business entities. According World Convention of Public Relations Associations hosted in Mexico in 1978, "Public relations is the art and science of analysing trends, predicting their consequences, advising organisational leaders, and implementing planned programs of action that serve both organisations and the public interest" (Newsom & Carrel, 2001, p. 4). As the convention's definition, the word science and art are more important concepts to understand the profession artistically and scientifically.

The other definition formulated in the 1987 by the Institute of Public Relation (IPR) is another useful definition in clearing the concept of Public Relation, as it is sustained and planned managerial effort to build the organisational reputation, good will and rapport with its public (Alison, 2004). The keywords in the definition of IPR such as Sustained and Planned showed as the relationships between the organisation and its publics require effort that must be maintained and established for the bilateral functions. From the above and other definitions given by different scholars, Public Relations encompass popularity, recognition, good will and organisational understanding. PR is working with the public, different groups of people including consumers, employees, suppliers, members, trustees, political bodies, local and national trade residents and many others. One of the vital notions of PR is publics make diverse demands on organisations (Alison, 2004; Benecke, 2013; Center & Jackson, 2003).

During crisis, the primary purpose of a public relation department is to notify all parties involved about the present circumstances, anticipated concerns, and planned responses. The initial types of message the outside world will-prepared crisis management plan. Public Relation agencies that offer online reputation management compliment your in-house staff, offer the following: Access to any trustworthy expertise you may need, help you keep the public updated and choose the right traditional and emerging communication channels. It also helps you to develop plans for handling a crisis, find your best spokespeople and brief them ahead of time, choose the best ways to talk to your audience, and quickly analyse and respond to their comment threads throughout a crisis. Getting ready for a crisis is hard because it's hard to know exactly what the problem will entail. Therefor a group of public relations experts will plan for various scenarios and devise responses to a variety of threats (Achammara, 2008).

The concept of crisis management from PR perspective defined as the issues that aimed at reducing the damage and combating crises actually caused (Coombs W. , 2007b; De Gruyter, 2020). In addition, crisis management aims to prevent or mitigate the destructive consequences of a crisis and thus defend the stakeholders, organisation, or industry from harm (Coombs W. T., 1999). Crisis management as a procedure with many parts includes preventive measures, crisis management tactics and post-crisis evaluations. Hence, the role of PR during the pre-crisis, crisis, and post crisis period of an organisation is very essential. Pre-crises are efforts to prepare for crisis management and prevent crises. Crisis is a response for the definite occasion. Post-crises efforts are to take lessons from the crisis and prevent new eruptions (Coombs W. , 2007b). Based on Coombs explanation, in all phases crisis management phases and the role of PR is essential for crisis communication, which is largely defined as the gathering, preparation and distribution of information essential to manage a crisis situation that focuses on the crisis

response, what organisations say and do after a before, during, and after a crisis (Coombs & Sherry, 2010; De Gruyter, 2020).

In Ethiopia, the field of PR has grown dramatically to shape relations between an organisation, institution, or agency and its internal and external publics through actual communication (Tesfaye, 2018). Today, PR actions are mainly seen as the vital of development policy activities. The Ministry of Peace was first recognized in Article 13 of Proclamation No. 1097/2018 to create the powers and functions of the executive bodies of the FDRE. It was later restored in the FDRE by Proclamation No. 1263/2021 to create the powers and functions of the federal government executive bodies. The authority given to the Ministry, it aims to make a national consensus on fundamental national issues, cultivate a culture of peace, respect and tolerance in a national set up developing different strategies and serve as a centre for good, relations among regional states and the federal governments based on partnership and communication. The Ministry of Peace works with the applicable state and federal authorities to safeguard the maintenance of public peace. Designs and implements awareness plans to develop a culture of peace among groups and individuals working closely with religious and cultural organisations to make peace (FDRE HoPR, 2018).

Regarding the Crisis in the Northern Ethiopia, there are numerous reports in relation to the civilian atrocities, human rights violations, crimes against humanities, lootings and demolitions, and others including infrastructural destruction of basic public service providing institutions like hospitals, schools, religious institutions (Ethiopian Human Rights Commission, 2021). The Northern Ethiopia Crisis includes different parts of Ethiopian society. As is has shown in the EHRC report, the two years conflict leads multiple crises like social, political and economic crises. To overcome these crises communication is essential before, during, and after the law

enforcement operation. Mainly, crisis communication during and post crisis period is paramount to maintain peace, especially for the MoP that primarily works on keeping, maintain, and building peace. The application of effective crisis communication during such national turmoil reduces huge distraction and consolidates understanding between the conflicting parties. Therefore, the intention of the study was to investigate the public relation practice of crisis communication on the MoP during the Northern Ethiopia Crisis.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

As many scholars on the public relations area agreed upon, strategic communication conceptualized as a managerial function in a cycle in which the meanings are presented, negotiated, constructed, or reconstructed for strategy formulation and implementation (Van Ruler B. , 2018). As it is explained by Nikoletta (2021), the idea of crisis is multidimensional that indicates difficulties and problems going through anomaly and abnormally. There was slight difference in the insights of organisations recognised as having had no history of past alike crises vis-à-vis those for whom no information about past crises (Coombs W. T., 2004).

Numerous studies conducted on crisis communication in organisations and crisis management in diverse sectors worldwide as well as specific to the Ethiopian case. Of the study conducted on the area is “Crises Communication practices and Challenges: the case of the Federal Police Commission”, conducted by Jaylan (2020). In his study the Federal Police Commission (FPC) does not have a crisis communication strategy that it can use. It follows that the FPC was not able to act before, during and after the crisis happened eloquently, which should have been used to deal with the crises. Therefore, the study revealed that the FPC identified the weakness and strengths of the organisation to act upon the demand of the events happened in discharge of the

FPC. In addition, the outcome indicated that the FPC did not properly engage and consult its active stakeholders and, moreover, that public opinion was not properly managed by establishing a media monitoring and public opinion framework (Jaylan, 2020).

Another study entitled “Crisis Communication: A case Study of the Integrated Master Plan Crisis in Oromia Regional State” conducted by Minale (2018). In this study it is found out that government responses included both crisis communication best practices and crisis responses that could be characterized as unethical. In their communication they were evading accountability, attack the opponent, disparagement and renunciation, while effective crisis communication strategies and tactics have included inform the public in vibrant and succinct terms, acknowledging mistakes and expressing sympathy and concern.

Moreover, Leta (2019) studied “the strategic role of public relations in crisis management and reconciliation process in Ethiopia: the case of displacement crisis in Burayu city” and found out that in Burayu Communications Office, the public relations profession is misunderstood and a big gap in using PR for strategic crisis resolution and reconciliation. As the study conducted by Senait (2020) discovered that the five year communication strategy of the MoP’s uses internal communication methods as a strategic option. However, in terms of external publics’ communication channel it lacks understanding compare to the internal publics.

The central problem researched in the proposed study is lack of peace and stability within the country in which the MoP in general and the PR department in particular expects to work a lot.

The first prevailing problem identified in this research is on strategies deployed to communicate public information during the crisis. The second is to evaluate the capacity of the practitioners to manage the crisis as a result of their communication and the third issue was how they produce messages and communication products before, during, and after the Crisis in Northern Ethiopia.

Therefore, the researcher intended that the Ministry of Peace as an office who has a direct relation to build and maintain peace communicate public messages during a crisis, in this case the Crisis at Northern Ethiopia. Thus, the researcher tried to address the issues regarding roles and responsibilities, actual practices and the strategies to communicate crisis in line to the missions given to the Ministry.

1.3. Objectives of the study

1.3.1. General objective

The general objective of the study was to investigate the role of public relations for strategic crisis communication in the case of Ministry of Peace during the Northern Ethiopia Crisis.

1.3.2. Specific objectives

The specific objectives of the study were to:

- Identify the role and responsibilities of Ministry of Peace PR practitioners on the Crisis at the Northern Ethiopia;
- Assess the actual crisis communication practices in the Ministry of Peace PR practitioners in promoting peace and stability during the Crisis at the Northern Ethiopia;
- identify the strategic crisis communication tools deployed to communicate during the Crisis at the Northern Ethiopia;

1.4. Research Questions

1. What are the roles and responsibilities of PR practitioners in MoP's during the Crisis at the Northern Ethiopia?
2. How the PR practitioners in MoP practice strategic crisis communication to promote peace and stability during on the Crisis at the Northern Ethiopia?
3. What strategic crisis communication tools are deployed to communicate during the Crisis at the Northern Ethiopia?

1.5. Significance of the Study

The study has contributions for those who work on the public relations area such as practitioners and researchers as well as the Ministry of Peace in proving insights to communicate crisis on pre, during and post crisis period. First it contributes to the Ministry of peace to assess its potential for crisis communication getting lessons learned from the Crisis in Northern Ethiopia. It helps update the level of strategic crisis communication in light of the standards and criteria of contemporary theory. Second, it helps the management at all hierarchy to understand the roles and responsibilities of PR in preventing, resolving, and transforming the crisis when it happens at the organisations that showed its essence for the management of the organisation. Third, the study serves as a basis for further future research.

1.6. Scope of the study

The study location was at the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Ministry of Peace. Crisis communication assessment at the conflict country is broad and it is very difficult to manage with a single study. Thus, the researcher delimited herself to a specific time and place. To this end, the

thesis focused on the Crisis in Northern Ethiopia. The case offers a different meaning and offers the possibility to carry out analyses from different points of view. The researcher wants to analyse the role of PR practice in MoP in overcoming the crisis and restoring the normal situation in the Northern Ethiopia. In short, this study looks only at the federal government and TPLF conflicts and analyses the role that public relations practitioners and professionals in MoP play in crisis prevention and management.

1.7. Organisation of the study

The study organised in to five chapters. Chapter one deals on the introduction of the study such as background of the study, the statement of the problem, study objectives, the scope and significance of study as well as organisation of the study. The theoretical part of the work, in the second chapter, deals with discussions and reviews of concepts about the practices of the PR from general to specific issues. In this chapter the theoretical framework of the study, situational crisis communication theory, has been discussed. Chapter three is devoted solely to discuss the methodology that a research followed throughout the study including, the researcher methods, methods of data collection and analysis that the study followed to address the research questions. The data presentation and analysis follows in chapter four. In the last chapter, chapter five, findings of the study are summarized and conclusion and recommendation remarks are stated.

Chapter Two: Review of Related Literatures

This literature review section is designed to explore the Public Relations, concepts of crisis, crisis communication, crisis management, the roles of PR in crisis management, challenges of PR, tools of Public Relation, meanings of peace, and Ministry of Peace experiences. The chapter aimed to provide conceptual and theoretical framework to investigate the Crisis Communication of Public Relation on Ministry of Peace on the North Ethiopian conflict.

2.1. Public Relations

2.1.1. Defining Public Relations

The profession of PR is the pillar of any organisation and acts as a bridge among the organisation and its public. There is no single definition for PR; it is defined in different ways by different scholars at different times. But the definitions given by the different scholars share some important key concepts. One of the definition of PR given by Newsom and Carrel (2001) defined PR as the art and science of examining trends, forecasting their consequences, counselling organisational leaders, and applying well-articulated programs of action that serve both the organisations and the public interest. In line with this definition, Public Relation is a bi-lateral two-way activity that passes through listen the public while conveying the message of the organisation. PR can only be successful when goals of the organisation are companionable with public interests (Haywood, 2002). An institute with successful PR will achieve positive Public relationship. If it focuses only on maintaining the organisational reputation at any cost, however, it won't be successful (Center & Jackson, 2003). What Public Relation activities convey above all are vision, mission, and values of the organisation for worse or better. As a managerial function, Public Relations involve in policy and information in the best interest of the

organisation and its internal and external public. In practice, decent public relations is about tackling a problem honestly and openly and then resolving it in a sustainable way (Newsom, Turk, & Kruckeberg, 2004).

Many People misperceive that PR is all about image building in the sense of false facade or cover-up. This misunderstanding of PR is consolidated by regular reports of Public Relations Professionals (Newsom, Turk, & Kruckeberg, 2004). It is clear that public goodwill is an important asset that an organisation can have. Hence, a well-informed public with a optimistic attitude towards the organisation is crucial to its existence (Wells, Burnett, & Mariatary, 1998; Center & Jackson, 2003). The term PR is often misinterpreted and misused, part of the confusion stems from the fact that PR cover a very broad notion including PR as concept, profession, leadership or a career (Onabajo, 2018).

Public Relation works at variety of organisations such as governmental, non-governmental and, business corporations (Tench & Yeomans, 2009). In such organisations, PR operates under various nomenclatures such as Public Relations, Corporate Communications, Corporate Affairs, Public Affairs, Communications Management, and Reputation Management. However, apart from the differences in their names, in practice there is no vital difference between these terms. Regarding on this, Steyn (2002), argued that there is no theoretical difference among the nomenclatures of PR.

Van Ruler and Vercic (2004) also confirmed either corporate communication or Communication management can be recognized as alternative terms for Public Relations. For better understanding of PR, it is significant to take a closer look at the functions of the PR departments in an organisation.

2.1.2. Historical Review of PR

Some PR scholars argue that PR is actually an old profession, referring to the concept of public discourse and rhetoric in the Plato's Republic (DeFleur & Dennis, 1991). From the general point of view, there is no a clear literature that identifies the centre, founder, and distinct efforts in the process of making Public Relations profession to this effort because it emphasizes on energies to convince not only thoughts but also performances. Since the efforts to underline all PR activity, the overall attempt of PR is as old as human development (Newsom, Turk, & Kruckeberg, 2004).

However, written documents showed that the academic field of PR in United States focused on its origins in the United States, but not in other countries (Benecke, 2013). According to Cutlip and Broom (2000), the term PR is first coined in 1807 in the USA during the leadership of President Thomas Jefferson during his 7th address to congress about "state of thought" and "Public Relations" parallel. Hence, historically USA had backed to the growth of modern PR. More specifically, the founding fathers of modern PR profession, Lee and Bernays, are working a lot in shaping the principles and practices of the PR profession (Theaker, 2001).

In a nutshell, PR practice is a 20th century phenomenon. Its basic elements notifying, influence, and establishing relationship with people were essential to the society as just as they are today relatively. The goals, techniques, tools, roles, and ethical standards of PR practices reconstructed simultaneously. Contemporarily, the goals and practices of PR targeted to build a harmonious rapport through strategic communication, to build a good image, to manage the affiliation, and to administer communication between the organisation and the public (Habtamu, 2021).

2.1.3. Roles and functions of PR

PR professionals are technicians who produce and convey communication messages and activities. They can be technicians who mainly engrave and produce organisational messages. From this point of view, PR plays as communication technician, prescriber, facilitator, or problem-solver (Benecke, 2013).

Communication technicians: This role of a PR base on a technical skill of writing that requires implementing strategies with the communication manoeuvres of news releases, newsletters, leaflets, pamphlets, online media options, event-based speeches, web contents, blogs, and social media messaging. This PR practitioner's role is to produce messages for publicizing, rather than identifying problems and suggest solutions.

Expert prescriber: the main duty of a PR is to handle managerial function as a consultant or with little input or participation with other higher level management of the organisation.

Communication facilitator: This role of PR is directly related to information processor of an organisation listen the organisation management and the public and then communicates information between the organisation and its significant communities.

Problem-solving facilitator: PR as a problem solver who participates with the management team to identify, describe and resolve problems that have a potential to hurt the organisational statuesque before, during or after it happens. The PR assists the management members in putting the problem and recommends the solutions from the public relations point of view. In such participation, the PR can play a role of problem solving.

2.1.4. Public Relation in Government offices

PRs role in government structures is paramount. They can also be known as government communication, or strategic communication or corporate communication, in line with the objectives, duties, and responsibilities as well as powers and job descriptions executed by the department and its respective staff members at the public or the government institutions (Canel & Sanders, 2011). Notwithstanding of the actual political set up, the government is established upon the public consent charged to enact governors determination, in which the PR practitioners must clearly understand the public's opinion for informed decision making (Puddington, 2009).

In a general point of view, government PR is the administration procedure by which an organisation or individual actor for governmental or political mission, through decisive communication and action to impact, create, shape, and preserve relationships and reputations with key publics towards institutional goals (Strömbäck & Kiouisis, 2011). Government public relations are a crucial bridge in between the government bodies and the citizens. "A specialized skill and service, an intellectual and practical training, a high degree of professional autonomy, a fiduciary relationship with the client, a sense of collective responsibility to the profession as a whole, an embargo on some methods of attracting business and an occupational organisation testing competence, regulating standards and discipline" are some of the important elements in the government communication (L'etang, 2002, p. 50).

2.1.5. Models of Public Relations

Like other disciplines, PR has its own models. Gruning (1984), and his colleagues examine the practice of PR for 15 years and theorized the traditional four PR models: press royalty, public information, two way asymmetric, and two way symmetric communication models (Gruning,

1984). Based on Grunig (1992) four PR models of Public relations, the models are crucial in relation to the purpose of the communication and how the messages are conveyed to the respective publics.

- **Press Agency Model:** Media is the common means of addressing organisational messages regardless the truthfulness of the information. The communication is one-sided, uneven aimed at promotion by any means available, usually especially via mass media, which is frequently labelled as a propaganda.
- **Public Information Model:** The PR professionals publicise candid info about their institution in a unilateral, uneven style to communication as in-house journalists.
- **Two-way asymmetric model:** The PR professionals research and develop messages aimed to persuade stakeholders towards the institutional goal. The organisational interests with the attitudes and values of stakeholders are combined for a purpose, changing the behaviour of relevant stakeholders.
- **Two-way symmetric model:** This model is a balanced two-way model that targets to establish agreement amid organisations and their intentional identified stakeholders to manage conflict and advance communication (Grunig, 1992).

The above four models have its own characteristic's. All models have treated their own way. Based on those characteristics the researcher identifies the Public Relation practice in crisis management on the MoP's. And which model is practicable and effective for PR practice in the Northern Ethiopia Crisis management.

2.2. Crisis: Definition & Types

2.2.1. Defining crisis

Crisis is unexpected event or situation that can disturb individuals or organisations, cause economic and reputational impairment, or can loom stakeholder affairs (Coombs W. , 2009; Pearson & Clair, 1998; Ulmer, Sellnow, & Seeger, 2007; Seeger, 2006). This shows that a crisis is rough for internal or external publics. The UK Department for Business Innovation and Skills also defines a crisis as an infrequent situation that goes further than the space of routine corporate and affecting operations, security and status of an organisation.

In accordance to the Institute of public Administration Ireland (2009) definition, crisis is a change that can happen unexpectedly or take some time, leading to an imperative problem that needs to be resolved instantly. Cornelissen (2014) defines a crisis as an event that entails critical and instantaneous accomplishment by the organisation. Additionally, Tench and Yeomans (2009) defined crisis, occasion that interrupts the regular operations of a business or organisation. Managing crises requires critical knowledge and wisdom. When a crisis occurs in the organisation, the manager must be tense and critical. Then, as Cornelissen (2014) said a crisis normally arises when something is happened hasty and unforeseen event that disturbs the operations of an organisation and poses both a financial loss and a reputational damage. Therefore, it is an important for a public relations organisation that is always ready to deal with unexpected crises.

2.1.2. Types of crisis

A crisis arises from natural calamities, accidents, civil disorders, government actions, and others that may impend the existence of an organisation or its corporates. In relation to the crisis, the

way media give coverage of the event is a serious issue that the organisation gives attention. Mainly, undesirable media reporting looms the reputation and public image of an organisation, especially during the crisis (Griese, 2002).

According to Tench and Yeomans (2009), the key principles in crisis management are swayed by the crisis analysis in a range of international settings due to the difference in the situation. According to them, defining the actual problem is the most critical feature of the productive PR crisis management to ensure the business improves in terms of both market share and reputation. In order to do this, the PR practitioners have to centralize and control the flow of information.

As noted by Coombs (2004), a plan to manage crisis has become a requisite advantage in our fast-changing world because attempting to tackle crises and turning them into an opportunity is an art for a successful management. Effective and fast communication can even strengthen a company's reputation because stakeholders and the public judge an organisation by the manner in which a crisis is managed, not how it happened. The company is often granted a second chance and reacting efficiently and effectively is the key human interest imperatives.

Tench and Yeomans (2009) state the ten key principles in crisis management, listed as: define the real problem, centralize or at least control information flow, isolate a crisis team from daily business concerns, assume a worst-case planning position, do not fully depend on one individual, always resist the combative instinct, understand why the media are there, remember all constituents (stakeholders) contain the problem, recognize the value of short-term sacrifice.

2.3. Crisis communication

Communication is vital throughout the crisis management process (Coombs & Sherry, 2010). Strategic communication that is implemented through internal and external communication processes

have to be well-articulated and functional crisis communication system in an organisation (Zhao, Falkheimer, & Heide, 2017).

Also, Tench and Yeomans (2009) stated that in this new information and communication age, where a crisis is coming, it is crucial to understand the role of communication and information, particularly the role of the internet. Similarly, Cotnelissen (2014) also noted the importance of developing communications plans for likely crisis scenarios and identifying key responsibilities for communications professionals before the outbreak of actual crisis. This includes: Identifying the organisation's key spokespersons; media training for the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), directors and head of the spokespersons; establishment of a team that communicates a crisis, in the event of foremost crises, a press office to process media inquiries and handle the publication of information; establishment of safe crisis locations where the media can meet and be informed in the event of dangerous situations; and identification of contacts at relevant external bodies who may need to be communicated in the event of a crisis.

Crisis communication between the organisation and its public before, during, and after the adverse event should keep the image of the organisation from damage as low as possible. In his opinion, the duty and role of communication experts during and after the occurrence of the crisis is focusing on the reconstruction of organisational image whereas the pre-crisis period communication mainly focused on prevention (Kaman, 2016).

Coombs (2007b) said that since crisis management is a process that passes through three phases: pre-crisis, crisis response, and post-crisis. Pre-crisis stage is all about hindrance and prevention. The crisis stage is working in response to the occurrence. In the post-crisis phase, ways are sought to better prepare for the next crisis and the commitments made in the crisis phase,

including follow-up information, are fulfilled. Similar to this, Alzahrani (2016) also explained these three crisis management cycles.

A) Pre-crisis phase

In this phase, the most crucial duty and responsibility of PR as a managerial function is trying to manage crises before they occur and adopting. This is the essential basis for any effective crisis management to prevent possible crises and preparing to react to them when they occur. According to his explanation, prevention involves trying to reduce known risks that could lead to a crisis. The preparation includes planning, preparing, anticipating and the implementation of exercises to trial the crisis management strategy and the team. Organisations are better able to cope with crises when they have a annual crisis management plan crisis management taskforce that drills producing and delivering crisis messages in advance. From the Coombs (2007a) and Alzahrani (2016) explanation it is important to comprehend the duties of PR professionals to protect from the negative effects of a crisis by creating a good plan, designing a well-resourced crisis management team and taking experience as a lesson.

B) During crisis

The PR officers are discharging many responsibilities in times of crisis, especially those related to the rational picture of the organisation, improper behaviour conditions, management issues, or solving emerging difficulties. Apart from the regular and prescribed duties or commonly acknowledged job descriptions, new and emerging tasks are designed in line to the responsibility of public relations during the crisis that cannot be understood solely through the communication process, which is the basis of public relations work. It is the PR responsibilities of performing one's role during crises, and these responsibilities are also indispensable to the functions

commended with that role. In general, in this phase the capability of a PR to deal with the crisis shapes the effectiveness of the organisation that have after the crisis.

C) Post-crisis phase

After an intensive crisis resolution during the crisis, it is no longer the focus of management attention, but the PR has ample responsibilities to maintain the organisational statuesque. As stated before, reputation repair and stakeholders' confidence building can be continued or initiated at this stage conducting continuous communication with relevant stakeholders. Hence, the PR provides additional information and publishes apprisers on the retrieval process, remedial actions, and/or inquiries into the crisis (Coombs.W.T., 2007a).

According to Coombs (2007b) the post crisis phase is the survival phase for organisations that should enhance the survival of the organisation. Recovering, maintaining, and normalizing the regular mission are activities done at this stage.

In addition to the three phases, it is important to distinguish between crisis knowledge management and stakeholder response management Coombs (2009) stated that crisis knowledge management is about detecting sources, gathering information, analysing information, sharing knowledge and making decisions. On the other side, stakeholder response management involves communicative efforts to persuade how stakeholders perceive the crisis, the organisation, and the organisation's response.

2.4. Crisis Management

Successful crisis management is a feature of good governance. Now a days, unforeseen national and international events pandemics, climate change and terrorist attacks have increased the importance of good crisis management.

Crisis management is an organisation's strategy-based process to identify and respond to the threat, predicted event with negative consequences that have the potential to harm the organisational endeavour. Preparation, management, and assessment are basic ways to understand the demands of crisis management team are to look at crisis management at different stages (Institute of Public Administration Ireland, 2009). The institute also explained why crisis management has become important in recent years. The Ethiopian government is trying to control the chaos with violence, causing the country to suffer even more. As it is stated in Cornelissen (2014), crisis management targeted to control the activities of organisations in order to protect both organisations and stakeholders. The aim of crisis management and communication is to control events and activities with minimum cost in compatible with social, safety and environmental standards to develop exigency plans to prepare for potential crises and communication plans to effectively respond to crisis scenarios as they arise.

According to Institute of Public Administration Ireland (2009, p. 12)(2009, "crisis management does not start when crises arises and end when the crisis is over". It requires action before a crisis happens, while the crisis is recounting, and after it is completed. Effective crisis management safeguards company's reputation (Tench & Yeomans, 2009).

2.5. The Role of Public Relation in Crisis Management

One of the crucial aspects of modern PR is crisis management and communication. According to Hazarika (2012, pp. 92-93), there have been PR five steps that should be implemented to properly manage a crisis. First, the company should react promptly and address the public immediately after discovery of the crisis. Second, the company in crisis should uphold honesty, since the public is more eager to condone an honest mistake than a calculated lie. Third, it is important to be informative before the media and the public interest spread their own gossips. . And then, it needs to state clearly as the company cares about the victims of the crisis to show public concern. Finally, cultivate mutual relationships by learning from the crisis happened (Hazarika, 2012).

Also, Hazarika (2012) proposed six types of crisis responses, ranging on a range from defensive to accommodative. These responses are attack the challenger, deny the claim, justify claims, show pacification, take corrective action, and ask for comprehensive apology.

Achammara (2008) states that the role of PR in crisis management should not only be understood through the contact, a process of dealing with the crisis as an important part of crisis management but also the way they manage the contact. Close contacts are the right to protect the reputation of the organisation in crises. On the other hand, weak or cracked contact communication processes in crises leads to increased unrest and exacerbates the losses of the crisis-related messes. Therefore, he concluded that crisis communication falls within the framework of all kinds of contacts. All the activities and roles of PR are practiced in line with this framework. Within the framework of crisis communication PR work various communication activities.

In short, according to Hazarika (2012), PR is an aspect of communication that concerns the relationships between an entity receiving or seeking public attention and the various publics interested in it. In this context, it is then possible that crises are linked communication and public relations, crisis public relations that have a dynamic role to deal with such intense environment.

2.6. Challenges of Public Relations

Misunderstanding and shaky team spirits are relatively common and difficult to be certain to manage the crisis immediately because there are divergent ideas on that an organisation will not face critical challenges over time. There are also other challenges that the PR professionals attempt to act against the mutual benefit of the organisation and the public. Some of them are social media, time, budget, and trust deficit.

Social Media: information published on social media is becoming more complex and controversial than ever during crisis management (Quesinbery, 2009). Scholars agreed that due to the diversity of attitudes, skills, and demographics of the social media community, social media is a challenge to manage crisis though measuring the effect of social media on PR professionals is very intricate.

Time: Information floods and the time to address that information are undoubtedly a challenge in the daily communication process of PR during the time of crisis. PR is an on-going activity and if the program is uncontrolled and need to devote enough times to promote their organisation and make the ground clear from rumours and leaks (Books, 2002).

Budget: Budget constraint is another challenge setback in the implementation of PR activities as it's not allocated at the beginning of the fiscal year. Budget adjustment needs before beginning

plan implementation and set rational expectations to apply programs and also needs to search external budget sources (Books, 2002).

Lack of Credibility: The other challenge is the public opinion towards the PR professionals as the public viewed them as a propagandist or spin-doctor. Both the company and the experts themselves believe that PR activities are only on the side- and in favour- of the organisation. In reality, PR communicates truth-based information to key stakeholders that influence business outcomes and increase the stakeholders'. Hence, the first challenge that PR officers face is to correct the public's misperceptions regarding changing PR by practically showing them stand up for their organisation and their common public interest in equal measure (Johnston, 2017).

2.7. Public Relation Tools

Tools applied at Public Relations departments to serve as a means of communications with the target audiences are varied based on the nature of activities, target groups and the time and situation (Banik, 2004). In the next section, some of the public relations tools from the various Public Relation tools are discussed.

2.7.1. Conventional media

The conventional mass media such as newspaper, magazine, radio and television are among the most used tools by PR professionals to engage many people in line with the missions and visions of the organisation (Jefkins, 2004). PR professionals should know the type of media uses and the message conveyed on the tool. In this regard, the broadcast media have a strong impression on both the illiterate and the literate community though the budget for message preparation is expensive.

2.7.2. Digital and social media

Today the world is symbolized as a small village due to the proliferation of the internet and the expansion of digital technology. In the new information and communication order and globalization and the growth of social media have played a different role in the fastest growing socio-economies (Quesinbery, 2009). Facebook, YouTube, Telegram, Twitter, and others are most important and fast growing social media platforms with almost multi-million users worldwide, especially the young generation use social media platforms to write and discuss what they see and hear in the community. Likewise, PR professionals across the world are wisely using social media platforms as the primary tool to facilitate their business. PR professionals utilise social media to connect with stakeholders, customers, decision makers and other targeted groups that ignored in the mainstream media eliminating the budget and cost of message delivery (Polarde, 2010).

2.7.3. Press Release

Press releases are the hand outs that prepared and dispatched by the PR officer for a purpose. They are the output in the fundamental day-to-day work of PR in a certain public relations. As a core element of PR communication tool, press release is primarily intended to obtain unpaid space in publications and airtime on broadcast stations, as well as on the websites of well-known media organisations. Press release messages are written by PR aimed to inform the organisation's success, promotions, new products, and other events for various media. In fact, media editors and some critical journalists dismiss most press releases because most press releases are either more exaggerated or self-promotional than having newsworthiness (Smith, 2002). To this end, an energetic PR expert produces press release with facts and supported by attention grabbing photos

and videos. Inappropriate, messy, tedious and recklessly produced press releases always cause PR to lose unpaid promotion in the media houses. Hence, it is expected that the PR experts produce relevant and timeliness facts with professionally produced audio-visual materials (Jefkins, 2004). Well-articulated press release can attract the attention of the editors and offers the possibility of being published or broadcasted, which allows the organisation to communicate with its target audience to achieve its goal. On the reverse, irresponsibly produced weak press release have the chance of discarding in the media house; rejected by the news editor. It is wastage of resources without adding value to an organisation. Therefore, the PR professionals are expected to understand the nature of each medium, the news style and the journalist's work pressure in order to prepare the best press release that have the chance of acceptance for publication or broadcasting (Smith, 2002).

2.7.4. Sponsorship

Sponsorship as a tool of PR is covering some or all costs of a certain event in the media are a way to advertise and commercialise an organisation's good, service or the overall business. Sponsorship is a way of covering the cost of a certain event or programmes to promote a product in order to gain significant mass media coverage to reach to the target publics. Like other PR message production, PR professionals should research and evaluate the effectiveness of the sponsorship before the event and after the sponsorship message has been broadcasted (Jefkins, 2004). The sponsorship message should be based on facts without exaggeration.

2.8. Meanings of Peace

Peace has different meanings that vary depending on the context of use. The word peace derives literally from the original Latin word 'pax', meaning a pact, control, or agreement to end war or

dispute and conflict between two people, two nations, or two antagonistic groups of people (Khemanando, 1995). The word peace essentially means the absence of war. From a military point of view, therefore, they wage wars to win the peace, or use violence to keep the peace. In military paradigms, peace is viewed as the ultimate or ideal goal rather than a means to an end. Historically and politically, it understands why peace is mostly defined as the absence of war. This is because wars of various kinds have been fought throughout the history of human society. Whenever wars break out, people need peace and ask for peace. The peace that people needed and demanded is the state of absence of wars, the state of no fighting. However, many peace researchers disagree with focusing on peace only in terms of the absence of war. In their opinion, peace is something more meaningful, valuable and important (Khemanando, 1995).

According to Albert Einstein, peace not only means the absence of war, but also means or includes the presence of justice, law, order or government in society; Peace is not just the absence of war, but the presence of justice, law, order, in short, government. Hence, peace must also include justice in society as true peace is not just the absence of tension but the presence of justice (Vesilind, 2005; Kin, 2008).

The other conception of peace is from his Holiness Dalai, is related to Human rights. So, peace is not only the absence of war, is of little value. Peace can only exist where human rights are respected, where people are fed and where individuals and nations are free. From this point of view, peace means respect for human rights, the well-being of people and the freedom of individuals and nations (Abram, 1995).

In addition to true peace sometimes the concept of peace also comes with the notion of inner peace, which is peace of mind or soul. It is self-keeping, within oneself. It is a state of stillness,

serenity, and serenity of mind that comes from not having suffering or mental turbulences such as worry, fear, greed, craving, hatred, malevolence, delusion, and/or other ruins. Inner peace is emphasized in the area of religions, especially in the religions of the East. According to religions, this kind of peace can be achieved through prayer, meditation, wisdom, and other ways (Fishel, 2008). From, this paper point of view, the peace discussed so far in this thesis is not about inner peace or true peace, rather it encompasses about external peace that aimed to keep the stability and order of the people in a nation.

External peace is peace prevailing in society, nations and the world happy coexistence of people and nature. External peace can be described in negative and positive senses Negatively it is the absence of war, hostility, agitation, social disorder, riots, social injustice, social inequality, violence, human rights violations, riots, terrorism, ecological imbalance, whereas positively it is a state of social synchronization, social justice, social equality, friendship, concord, public order and security, respect for human rights and ecological balance (Gultung, 1995).

2.9. Ministry of Peace

The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Ministry of Peace evolved from the Ministry of Federal Affairs, established in 2001, which initially was responsible for regional affairs and urban development. In 2005, urban development was removed from the ministry's tasks. In 2009, the ministry gained more powers in handling religions, with the aim of encouraging tolerance between people of different religions. In 2010, the ministry gained powers related to registering charities and societies, and to "possession or use of arms, fire arms and explosives". In October 2018, the Ministry of Peace was re-created as a new ministry, aiming to promote "peace,

democracy and development" and to "focus on maintaining law and order, and create political unity among the peoples of the nation (Ministry of Peace, 2020).

The power and duties of the MoP are the following:

- a) Generates ideas for the adoption of policies, strategies and laws related to peace and implements them once approved;
- b) Works with relevant federal and local government agencies to maintain internal peace; The Ministry of Peace draws up a strategy that makes it possible to respect the peace of the country and the people. It carries out awareness and movement activities;
- c) Works with relevant government agencies, cultural and religious institutions and other relevant bodies to ensure peace and respect among adherents of different religions and beliefs, as well as between different nations, nationalities and peoples;
- d) Designs and implements strategies to prevent extremism based on religion, ethnicity and other reasons;
- e) Coordinates relevant bodies to create national consensus on important national issues; It presents solutions to the government. When decided, it will monitor its performance;
- f) Facilitates cultural exchanges and civic education that strengthens national unity and understanding in collaboration with relevant bodies;
- g) Designs awareness and movement strategies to develop a culture of peace, respect and tolerance in society and oversees their implementation;
- h) Identifies the causes of environmental conflicts through research; It presents a study that shows the directions of solutions so that society does not lead to conflict and instability, and when decisions are made, they are implemented;

- i) Serves as the centre of relations to strengthen the federal system through the establishment of good relations and cooperation based on understanding and partnership between the federal government and the states;
- j) Facilitates the resolution of inter-state disputes under Articles 48 and 62 (6) of the Constitution and other relevant provisions;
- k) When the relevant laws are protected, it designs and implements, at the request of the states, a solution for the permanent resolution of the disputes and conflicts arising in the states. When the federal government decides to intervene in state affairs, it coordinates its implementation;
- l) Registry of religious organisations (Federal Negarit Gazzette, 2018).

2.10. Public Relation in Ethiopia

A century history of Ethiopian mass media arises with hand written newspapers then to radio and television at the hand of government. This showed as the demand of information was high and it was easily circulated to the royal circles. The newspapers, the radio as well as the other media platforms in the country once started as the PR tool for the Emperor and the royal cabinets. They were dominantly produced by the Ministry of Pen (*Tsehafe Tizaz*) of the country. In relation to media and communication, radio started in 1935 under the Ministry of Information. Television program started in 1964. During that time, the Ministry of Information should serve as the bridge between the government, the people and the rest of the world (Ministry of Information, 2003, pp. 31-35)

The Ministry of Information was established in 1942 around Abune Petros statue area in Addis Ababa. It was named the Ethiopian Information organisation under Yetshefet Ministry. Its

mandate was to disseminate information, controlling the printing press of the government and newspapers, publishing laws, regulations by Negarett Gazette. After a year it was organized as Information and Newspaper office. In 1964 it was named the Ministry of Information. In 1966 it was named as the ministry of information and culture. In 1976 it was named Ministry of Information and Merha Behere. From 1988-1995 it changed its name as Ministry of Information. In 2008 it is organized under the name of government communication affairs office) (Ministry of Information, 2008, p. 7;) (Habtamu, 2021).

2.11. Theoretical Framework: Situational Crisis Communication Theory

Situational crisis communication theory (SCCT) is a theoretical approach developed by W. Timothy Coombs, Ph.D. an associate professor at Eastern Illinois University in the Department of Communication Studies in 2004 to describe a two-step process for crisis managers (Verschoor, 2014). There are two factors are identified to describe organisational behaviour in previous crises: consistency and specificity. Consistency relates to crisis history; the likelihood that the organisation has faced similar situations in the past. The uniqueness reflects the connection between history and reputation and shows how appropriately the organisation has dealt with its stakeholders in similar crisis situations (Verschoor, 2014).

SCCT consists of three core elements, namely the crisis situation, the response strategies, and the organizational system aligning the situation and the strategy. It is believed that the effectiveness of communication strategies depends on the characteristics of the crisis situation. By understanding the crisis situation, a crisis manager or a crisis response team can select the most appropriate response. SCCT is an attempt to understand, explain and provide prescriptive measures in crisis communication (Coombs W. T., 2004; 2007b).

Briefly, Coombs (2007b) describes a two-step process for crisis managers to assess the threat of a crisis: determine crisis responsibility to the extent to which stakeholders believe and describe organisational behaviour in relation to the previous experience in crises. In relation to the organisational behaviour consistency and specificity are the two factors that must be identified. Similarly, Coombs (2007b) distinguishes three types of reaction strategies, namely denial (little crisis responsibility), reduction (diminish evidences of crisis) and reconstruction (image rebuilding).

From the SCCT perspective the Crisis in the Northern Ethiopia should be studied in line to this. SCCT implemented for situational crisis management. The main reason for the war between FDRE and TPLF is political interest. It is shown that the conflict was limited by a condition. The study has three questions those are: First what are the roles and responsibilities of PR practitioners in MoP's on the Crisis at the Northern Ethiopia? Second what are the actual practices of PR practitioners in MoP's to promote peace and stability regarding on the Crisis at the Northern Ethiopia? Third what is the strategic crisis communication tools deployed to communicate during the Crisis at the Northern Ethiopia? From the above research question SCCT answered the second question and the researcher used situational crisis communication theory to compare and contrasts the theory and the actual practice of PR practitioners in MoP's to promote peace and stability regarding on the Crisis at the Northern Ethiopia.

Chapter Three: Methodology

The focus of this chapter is presenting the methodology used to conduct the study. First, the research design is described and its use justified. The next section deals with the target population and the selection of the respondents. The data collection tools are then described in this part. This is followed by an explanation of the techniques and analyses the data.

3.1. Research Design

Research design is primarily about research goals, uses, purposes, intentions and plans within the practical constraints of place, time, money and the availability of other resources in the hands of the researcher (Hakim, 2000). The purpose of a research design is to provide a plan of action to address the research questions that the researcher aspires to conduct. It is the overall plan that lays out the strategies the researcher used to develop concise, objective, and interpretive information (Brink & Wood, 1998). A research design is used to structure the research and show how all major activities of the research including the sample or population idea and opinions incorporates, programs, and project methods work together to attempt to answer the central research questions. In relation to research design, Creswell (2007) mentioned that researchers need to think about the knowledge claims and theoretical perspectives they bring to any research. You need to think about the strategies you want to use in your study, which in turn will influence your methods, and you have wondered how you will collect and analyse information.

By using analytical framework the researcher developed new ideas that are more believable by combing numerous minute details. The analytical investigation is what explains why a claim should be trusted. Finding out why something occurs is complex. You need to be able to evaluate information critically and think critically. This kind of information aids in proving the validity of

a theory or supporting a hypothesis. It assists in recognizing a claim and determining whether it is true.

Due to the theoretical framework guidance and the research questions, the researcher used analytical design with qualitative approach for professional Public Relations practice in MoP. The researcher collects data from the interview and the existing document. The data is analysed and interpreted thematically.

3.2. Research Approach

According to Wimmer and Dominick (2006, pp. 405-408), “Qualitative approach has seen growing popularity in PR research. Qualitative methods are becoming more common in public relations research”. Qualitative research methods are particularly important if one intends to study people, groups, organisation and societies (Vanaken, Berends, & Bij, 2007). In qualitative study, research is carried out in “real life settings” building an understanding of people’s behaviour, thoughts and action to illuminate their social meanings (Henn, Weinstein, & Foard, 2006, p. 150). Qualitative research approach is important because a problem or issue needs to be explored (Creswell, 2007), p. 39). Qualitative methods can be used to explore substantive areas about which little is known or about which much is known to gain novel understandings (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The qualitative approach involves theory construction rather than theory testing (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 150).

In this study, qualitative research has employed to investigate the public relations practice in MoP to see the issue from the perspective of the actual context of the practice and explore from the actual points of view the sources of information. Perspectives and actual practices in the public relations department in the Ministry did not measured in terms of numbers, rather is

qualified thematically. Thus, the study was qualitative and the data obtained for this study were employed qualitative data collection methods.

By its nature, qualitative research is focused on capturing people's feeling and views rather than experiment. If responses don't fit the researcher expectation that's equally useful qualitative data to add context and perhaps explain something that numbers alone are unable to reveal. And also if useful insights are not being captured researchers can quickly adopt questions change the setting or any other variable to improve responses. That's way the researcher used qualitative approach for this study.

3.3. Study Population and sample of the study

The study of the population was PR practitioners who work on the MoP. There are eleven staff members who are working at the department of public relations and communications department of the MoP. From eleven staff members public relation professionals are four in number. Therefore the population size of the study encompassed all profession from the staff members.

The researcher used availability sampling technique to collect data. When applying availability sampling method, the researcher considers the key experiences, knowledge and prominence of the informants in the public relations practices. The data is collected through interviews and retrieving existing documents communicated by the MoP during the Northern Ethiopia Crisis. From 2020-2021 ministry of peace published three internal magazines, which are a collection of day to day news and distributed by different channel. Mop PR practitioner production is first distributed on different channel and then the day to day news collected and published with three months on internal magazine. The researcher used the all production which related to the federal government and TPLF conflict. The sample population for this study consisted of eleven staff

members working in the PR department as communication experts, support staff, and leaders in MoP. The researcher has conducted interviews with the acting Director of Public Relations and other three professional practitioners to obtain relevant and adequate data. Document analysis of selected files was also performed using text analysis for the existing file like news which broadcasted on different media, magazine which is produced by PR practitioner for internal public, press conference, press release and social media post sourced from MoP during the Northern Ethiopia Crisis.

The researcher applied interview and documents to collect data. By using availability sampling technique the researcher conducted interview with PR acting director and all the experts (four in number) in the Ministry to collect data. The availability sampling technique was also used to retrieve document like news, internal magazine, press conference, press release social media post etc. as a source of data.

3.4. Data Collection Tools

The data collection tools the researcher employed in this research were primary and secondary Sources. For the primary data, the researcher has employed interview and document analysis was used for the secondary data. These sources of information are preferred to complete the study. Secondary sources offer summaries, critiques, opinions, and analyses, and are written by people who did not witness or have a direct part in the event or events they are describing. Based on the accounts of primary sources this type of source is the author's interpretation of the event or subject matter they are writing about. Primary sources gave an opportunity to understand how events influenced people feelings and how they thought about them at the time. And also it helped the researcher to see the past from different perspective by revealing information about

the culture at the time of the event. Secondary sources were important for identifying others ideas, supporting the researcher arguments and understanding changes to the subject over time and gave the researcher a fuller view of the subject. These data collection tools were most important to address the basic research questions of the study.

3.4.1. Interview

The interview creates friendly relationship between the source and the researcher that helps to create a deep interaction; they share their experiences, thoughts, and feelings without a doubt. During the interview, people provide further clarifications on sensitive issues and complexities related to individuals' beliefs, perceptions and practices (Caroiyn & Palena, 2006).

To do this the researcher used semi structure interview format. Semi-structured interviews are characterized by open-ended questions and the use of an interview guide (or topic guide/list) in which the broad areas of interest, sometimes including sub-questions, are defined. The pre-defined topics in the interview guide can be derived from the literature, previous research or a preliminary method of data collection. Both the interviewer and the interviewee can ask questions, which allows for comprehensive discussion of the pertinent topics. Because of interactivity the interviewee may feel more comfortable expanding on techniques and experience that well highlight the traits that make them a good fit for the position. In this study, the researcher employed interview as a means of data collection that enables personal interaction with the PR experts. Key informant interview using semi-structured interview approach was employed to get qualitative data. The interview guide for in-depth interviews consisted open-ended questions that gave an opportunity to ask follow up questions and explanations of the practice of a PR professionals in MoP. The total number of interviews conducted for this study

was 4 (four), as shown in Appendix II. In this interview, the director, the team leader and the experts are included.

3.4.2. Document Analysis

Document study (also called document analysis) refers to the reviewing of written materials by the researcher. These can include personal and non-personal documents such as archives, annual reports, guidelines, policy documents, diaries or letters (Russell & Gregory, 2003). The goal of this document analysis, employed in this study, was to understand what is contained in the MoP and other media. Such as press conferences, press releases and the department's information flow reengineering study. This helps the researcher to compare with their practice and to analyse the problem from different perspectives to get a complete picture of the problem under study. Any document that added value in answering the research questions was subject to analysis. To do this, the researcher has used all documents that communicated by MoP PR practitioners in different channels. In MoP PR department the all productions published on internal magazine which distributed on different channels. The researcher used the all production which related to the federal government and TPLF conflict.

3.5. Data Analysis Method

The researcher used qualitative data analysis method that helps the researcher straightforwardly to interpret the data so that the researcher doesn't leave anything out that could help them derive insights from it. The interview data typically begins with a set of transcripts of the interviews conducted. The document analysis data also analysed using the qualitative data analysis method. The researcher analysed using thematic analysis in a way that gave the researcher an opportunity to understand the role of the PR practitioner's crisis management strategies. Thematic analysis

allowed the researcher to determine precisely the relationships between concepts and compare it with the available data gathered through interview and document analysis.

The data analysis procedure was: 1) transcribe the collected data to manuscripts, 2) identify the major themes and sub-themes, 3) import the transcriptions to the themes, 4) Merging the transcripts thematically, and 5) export the output of the themes. After these phases, the researcher presented and analysed the coded data qualitatively and then discuss in relation to the previous studies, literatures, and theoretical frameworks. Finally, the researcher revealed the findings based on the analysed data.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

Ethical issues that centre on the interpersonal relationships between the researcher and participants refer to an “ethics of care” (Ellis, 2007 as cited in Leavy, 2007). The purpose of this study is to investigate the practice of public relation on crisis communication in Ministry of Peace during federal government and TPLF conflict. The study gives respect to the norms and characters of the organization (Creswell, 2014). During interpersonal relationship between the researcher and participants in collecting data, the researcher respectfully discussed the purpose of the study and how data would be used.

The researcher took into consideration about ethical issues in avoiding leading questions, not disclose sensitive information, correction, and enacting the agreed upon informed consent points (Creswell, 2014), ethical issues were considered in gathering data (Leavy, 2007). Researcher provides rewards for participants for their participation when leaving the site (Creswell, 2014). In analysing reported data, the researcher was respectful to the privacy and anonymity of participants and avoided disclosing information that may harm participants (Creswell, 2014).

During the in-depth interview except few, many of them are audio records. All interviewee have the right to cancel their conversation. In order to ensure privacy the key informants' name is replaced with codes. These codes are a combination of letters and numbers. This means, Acting Director for the PR Directorate= MoP D1, PR relation practitioner= MoP PR1, Documentary producer= MoP P1, Public relations practitioner= MoP PR2.

Chapter Four: Data presentation and Analysis

4.1. Introduction

This chapter is all about data presentation and analysis. The main purpose of this part is to analysis the role of Public Relation in Ministry of Peace on crisis management by focusing North Ethiopian Crisis from 3 November 2020 to November 2022. Qualitative research approach is employed to achieve the objectives of the study stated in chapter one. Interview and document analysis were the main data collection instruments to get essential data. The researcher conducted four interviews.

4.2. Data Presentation and Discussions

4.2.1. Roles and responsibilities of Public Relation at Ministry of Peace

4.2.1.1. The practice of Public Relation at Ministry of Peace

A public relation department of Ministry of peace organized with eleven employees including the director. The employees have different professional background and experience. Their academic background is from journalism and communication, political science and international relation, foreign language and literature. The key informant interview participants have more than six years' experience.

The experts in the Ministry understand as public relations serves as a bridge between the Ministry and its internal and external publics According to the respondent, Public relations is conceptualized as:

Public Relation is a profession that serves as a bridge between the organisation and its public in order to get mutual benefit. Public Relation practitioners disseminate messages related to all activities of the organisation at the same time he/she collect complaints and grievances from the public and feed to the management of the ministry. It serves the organisation as a mouthpiece of the ministry to build reputation and image in a positive way (An interview with AD1 of MoP, April 2023, Addis Ababa: Translated by the researcher).

The respondent understanding about concept of Public Relation is related to this explanation, Public Relation is “the management function that identifies establishes and maintains mutually beneficial relationships between organisations and the various publics on whom its success or failure depends” (Cutlip & Broom, 2000). As the key informants understand the concept of public relations from different ways, they fundamentally relate the concept to their job description such as organizing public events, addressing public inquires, dispatch messages, and also consolidate media relations.

According to most of the key informant interview, Public Relation is defending as it is defined by Tench & Yeomans (2009), they state public relation is operates under different names. Except the names, there is no significant difference in practice among these terms. Steyn (2002) concluded that there is no theoretical difference between corporate communication and PR. Van Ruler and Vercic (2014) also confirm that communication management and corporate communication are accepted as alternative terms for public relations. In line with this, the respondents of the interview also perceive as they are communicating as a corporate function for the internal and external publics of the ministry. As a corporate function they believe that they

are serving to connect the ministry with its relevant stakeholders using different public relations tools.

Similar to the scholars' argument on the understanding of public relation its practice is to serve the organisational mission. It may build organisation image, make reputation manage crisis without losing the reputation and organisational etc. In general, public relation perceives as “Teamwork so that Ministry of Peace Public Relation practitioner works on co-ordinately. We facilitate media coverage for our organisation practice in order to address all public; we write news for social media post; we produce documentary and also we publish internal magazine”.

4.2.1.2. Roles and responsibilities of Public Relation practitioners at Ministry of Peace

The role and responsibility of the Public Relation practitioner is serving the organisation. One of the respondents stated the role and responsibilities of MoP PR practitioner as follows: “We act as a bridge to link our organisation with the public. We work with the government and private media. When Ministry of Peace prepare news release and organize press conference and other activates, our department facilitate media coverage in order to disseminate the institute activities as we produce our own production for online media” (An interview with P1 of MoP, April 2023, Addis Ababa: Translated by the researcher).

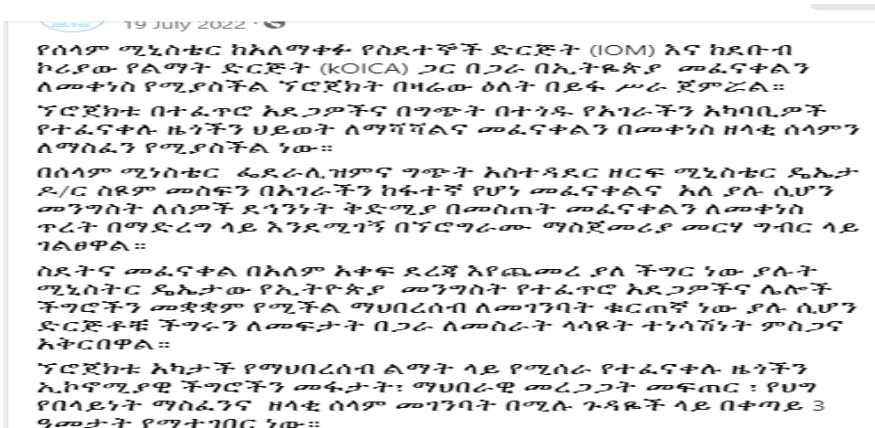


Figure 4.1. Screenshot document from MoP Facebook page, The public relations department of MoP prepared contents for social media



ድሬዳዋ፣ ታህሳስ 15/2013(ኢ.ዜ.አ) በዩ.ኤ.ኤ. የሚገኘው ህብረተሰብ የህግ የበላይነት በማስፈን ዘላቂ ሰላም ለማረጋገጥ የሚደረገውን ጥረት በመደገፍ የድርሻውን እንዲወጣ የሠላም ሚኒስቴር አሳሰበ።

Figure 4.2. The PR officers in MoP organizes public forums (Source, ENA)

ሰላም ሚኒስቴር የ10 አመት መሪ እቅድ ላይ እየተወያየ ነው

3



አዲስ አበባ, መስከረም 22/2013 (ኢ.ዜ.አ) የሰላም ሚኒስቴር የ10 ዓመት መሪ እቅዱን ለህዝብ ተወካዮች ምክር ቤት የግብርና፣ የኦሪጎቶ አደር፣ አካባቢ ጥበቃ፣ ለውጭ ግንኙነትና የሰላም ጉዳዮች ቋሚ ኮሚቴዎች አቅርቦ ውይይት እየተካሄደ ነው።

Figure 4.3. The PR office facilitates internal stakeholders meetings and discussions on the internal plan (Source, ENA)

As figures 4.1, 4.2, and 4.3 showed the public relations officers of MoP are working to address public information for the concerned body, In order to do this, they are preparing social media contents, organize public forums with the general public as well as facilitate internal discussions. Here, in these activities the roles and responsibilities of the PR office is from planning to evaluate the impact of the communication through feedback analysis. In line to this, the data through interview showed that public relation office is a key in the process of public forums that is organized by the ministry. The participation is from planning to post-event evaluation and feedback analysis.

4.2.1.3. The practice of PR on crisis management at MoP

The work of Public Relation is the collection of different activates such as news writing and reporting, documentary production, capturing pictures for internal magazine production. In relation to the practice of PR, one of the respondents of the interview state

The PR department in general and every expert in the department tried to use maximum effort to build positive peace in the publicity. The experts are very selective and use proper and attractive words as well as quality pictures for news writing for the Ministry's social media channels, internal publications (An interview with PR1 of MoP, April 2023, Addis Ababa: Translated by the researcher).

Sometimes, the ministry message is conveyed using different literary works such as poems, and storytelling. As a data from the document analysis, from the internal magazine published on August 2020 showed that the PR office uses poem to convey message that promotes peace.

ተምሳሌት

(ደረጃ ጀምሎ)



ጓዴ አንቺምስሚሰምተሽ አሰሚ

አንተምስማሰምተህ አሰሚ

ባለሰስት እግሩ በርጩሚ

ተምሳሌት ነውለኛ ዓለማ :

ጥንካሬ ወብት ጌጤ

ለራስ ቆሞሚስቀሚጤ

ፍጹምጥምረት ባይኖር ወስጤ

አንዱ እንደን ባይደግፈው፤

ተወላግዶ ወዳቂ ነው፤

ከሚወደቁ ሰውሚጥሉ፤

Since the conflict is terrible, if it's possible the Ministry invites different interest groups to discuss and informs to the public about the destructive roles of the crisis. It destroys the respect between the societies and creates suspicion and makes it difficult to live in peace. Conflict was the causes of destruction in the community. It destroys many basic development and all activities. In short the Ministry tries to remind the society as there is no gain from war and instability via different media platforms (An interview with AD1 of MoP, April 2023, Addis Ababa: Translated by the researcher).

Similar to the above respondent, another interviewer in the ministry stated:

The media relation of MoP is strong. The PR department invites media to report on new updates on the Northern Ethiopia Crisis. New insights and updates are feed to the media. The mainstream media channels and the internal PR communication channels of the Ministry are used as a way to address the public message. For example, the Ministry of Peace Facebook address has about two hundred thousand followers that the Ministry uses to convey public messages regularly and timely (An interview with PR2 of MoP, April 2023, Addis Ababa: Translated by the researcher).

The other role of the PR department in the Ministry of Peace is media monitoring. The Public relations department monitors the mainstream and also the online media in relation to the peace and conflict situations in the country and then feed to the management of the ministry for their action and decision. For example, the public relation practitioners monitor media in their media monitoring time on Jan.05/2020

የ ሚዲያ ስም	የ ሚዲያ ዓይነት ወይንም ድምር	የ ሚዲያ ስም
The Finni nne Interc ept Mesk erem Abera BBC News Amha ric Aljaz eera	የ ፖለቲካ እስረኞች ሳይፈቱ የ ሚዲያ ማርጫ በጀት ከሚፈጸሙት ያለፈ ፋይዳ አይኖረውም።	https://www.facebook.com/FINFINNEINTERCEPT/
	በአሁኑ ወቅት ኢትዮጵያ ውስጥ እጅግ አደገኛውን ገር አሚራ ሆኖ ማኘት ነው	https://www.facebook.com/meskerem.abera
	"በፓርቲዎች ምዘገባ ወቅት የሀውላትም ጉዳይ ይታያል" ማርጫ ሰርድ	https://bbc.in/3rtEQwi
	War forces thousands of Ethiopians into Sudan	https://www.aljazeera.com/gallery/2020/12/22/in-picture-war-forces-thousands-of-ethiopians-into-sudan
Fana Broad castin g Corpo rate		ጠ/ሚ 0 ቢይ በቤኒ ሻንጉል ጉሙዝ ከሙተክል ዞን ነዋሪዎች ጋር ተወያዩ
Mesk erem Abera	ስለቤኒ ሻንጉል ጉሙዝ የሚገቡት ነገሮች	https://www.facebook.com/meskerem.abera

From the MoP PR department telegram group

The above media monitoring sample is the one practice of public relation during the Crisis in the Northern Ethiopia at the same time they never post anything about the Crisis they simply post development stories of their organisation.

‘Selam’ Magazine is one of the communication channels that prepared by the PR department of the Ministry. In this Magazine the PR works in line with the missions of the Ministry. In the Magazine,

ሰላም ሙጽ ሐቴት ከመስከረም እስከ ጥቅምት (2013ዓ.ም) እገዛ ገበታ ለሀገር፣ እቅድና አፈጻጸም አባይ ለኢትዮጵያውያን፣ የብሄራዊ መታወቂያ ዝግጅት ይፋ ሆነ፣ የወሰኝ ኩነት ምዝገባ እና ስታቲስቲክስ አመታዊ ቀን፣ 12ኛው መደበኛ የኢትዮጵያ የሀይማኖት ተቋማት ጠቅላላ ጉባዔ፣ በተለያዩ ሀገራት የሚኖሩ ኢትዮጵያውያን ወደ ሀገራቸውተመለሱ)

ሰላም ሙጽ ሐቴት ነሐሴ(2012 ዓ.ም) ህብረተሰብ-ዓቀፍ የምክክር መድረክ፣ የሰላም መክፈርና ሲቪክ ማህበራት ጥምረት፣ ሰላም ሜስቴርና አለም ባንክ ግሩፕ፣ የቆላ አካባቢዎች ፕሮጀክት፣ ከራስ በላይ ለህዝብና ለሀገር፣ አለም አቀፍ የስራ ድርጅት።

The English translation version

According to Aug. (2020) internal Magazine help chart for country, planning implementation, Nile for Ethiopians, the preparation of national identity was announced, important event registration and statistic anniversary date, the 12th general assembly of Ethiopian religious institutions, Ethiopians in different countries returned to their country. According to Sep-Nov. (2020) internal magazine Society-wide consultation forum, Ministry of Peace with civic societies, Ministry of Peace and World Bank group, and lowland areas project, from self to people and country, international labour organisation). Respectively those are some part of translated magazine news content during Crisis period.

According to Coombs (2007) SCCT there is three types of response strategies, namely denial, diminish and rebuild. Denial should be used when there is a low crisis responsibility (e.g. a rumour). Diminish should be used when there is evidence of crisis responsibility. In that way, the organisation tries to reduce the negativity in order to protect the organisational reputation. Finally, rebuild should be used when there is high crisis responsibility. Based on the theory during pre-crisis period Ministry of Peace try to practice diminishes response it facilitate negotiation and mediation program within the two interested group. The mediators are indigenous elder and peace mother. This practice was address through Public Relation practitioner During North Ethiopian Crisis. Ministry of Peace Public Relation practitioner follow denial crisis response strategies on the two years' Crisis there is no press release, press conference report even published material regarding the North Ethiopian Crisis rather financials and material support included blood donation and visited injured defence force. They simply post other developmental news. The three internal Magazines also contained collection of developmental news which is similar to posted on their social media page. On post crisis period, Ministry of Peace uses rebuild response strategies. In this stage, Ministry of Peace uses its effort to rebuild the destructed region like facilitate psychological training and counselling; it try to rebuilding of the destructed infrastructures. Public Relation practitioners facilitate media coverage and produce their own production for the Ministry social media coverage and for internal Magazine production.

4.2.1.4. The roles and responsibilities of PR during the Crisis

The country instability has been eroded the community peace and unity. According to Fishel (2008) peace, in the sense of the absence of war is of little value. Peace can only last where human rights are respected, where people are fed, and where individuals and nations are free.

From his point of view, the absence of peace is snatching the basic need of peoples. Because of North Ethiopian Crisis many peoples snatch their basic needs. One of the respondents during interview state the role and responsibility of public relation on affected people during conflict.

I think it's not only the responsibility of Public Relation practitioner but also the responsibility of the all citizen to collaborate and work on the post crisis rehabilitation works. Anyway we have responsibility to help the people affected by the conflict. However, the nature of North Ethiopian conflict is sovereignty for Ethiopia. Because of this during Crisis we support Ethiopian National Defence Force in different ways like blood donation, material support, financial support, moral treatment for injured Defence force members (An interview with PR1 of MoP, April 2023, Addis Ababa: Translated by the researcher).

Similarly, in a magazine content the Ministry conveyed a message as follows:

በሀገራችን በውስጥ ጭንቀቶችና በውጭጠላ ቶቻችን ጥምረት ኢትዮጵያን ለመፍረስ በተፈጠረው ጦርነት ምክኒያት ዜጎቻችን ሞተዋል፣ ሀብትና ንብረታቸውን አጥተዋል፡፡ ለዘመናት በብዙ ድካምና ወጪ የተገነቡ ማሰረተ ልማቶች ወድመዋል፡፡ ይህን ጠላት ያደረሰብንን ጥቃት ለመመካትና ሀገራችንን ከመፍረስ ለመታደግ የተለያዩ የተሳትፎ ተግባሮች ተፈጥረዋል፡፡ በመሆኑም “ድር ቢያብር አንበሳ ያስር” እንዲሉ ሁሉም ኢትዮጵያዊ በአንድ ተሞ የህልውና ዘመቻውን ደግፏል፡፡ የሰላም ሚስቴር አሚራር፣ ሰራተኞች እና የብ/በ/ጎ ፍቃድ መጠቀሚያ በገንዘብ፣ በቁሳቁስና በሃሳብ ከመደገፍ ጀምሮ የመከላከያ ሰራዊታችንን ተቀላቅለው የህይወት ዋጋ ለመክፈል ጭምር ዝግጁነታቸውን አሳይተዋል፡፡ ስለሆነም የተቋሙ አሚሮችና ሰራተኞች ያደረጉትን ድጋፍ በሪፖርት አቅርቦ

ሁሉም በግልጽ እንዲያውቀውና ለበረከቱት አስተዋጽዖ ማምከንን ተገቢ በመሆኑ የህዝብ ግንኙነት ክፍሉ ይህንን ሪፖርት ከጥር እስከ የካቲት 2014 ዓ.ም በሳተማይት ውስጥ ማጽሐፍት ይፋ አድርጓል፡፡

English translated version

Our citizens have died and lost their wealth and property due to the war that was created in our country by the alliance of our internal juntas and our foreign enemies to destroy Ethiopia. Infrastructure that were built with a great effort and expense over the centuries have been destroyed in order to resist the attack of this enemy and to save our country from destruction, various participation activities have been created. Therefore, all Ethiopians supported the survival campaign to say that 'Threads fused together can bind a mighty lion'. The leadership staffs of the Ministry of Peace and the national volunteer youth have shown their readiness to join our defence forces and pay their lives. Therefore, it is appropriate to report the support provided by the leaders and employees of the Ministry, so that everyone is clearly aware of it and thank you for your contribution, so the public relation department published this report in the internal Magazine published from Jan.-Feb.2022 (Translated by the researcher).

In the similar vein, Public Relation practitioner reported voluntary activities communicating through their own Facebook page. The respondent state their voluntary activates as follows:

In addition to Ethiopian National Defence Force, we support affected people at Debre Brehan. We coordinate with women representative and collected material including used clothes, from the institute employee and provided to affected people. Our institute also

supports Afar and Amhara region internally displaced people (Jan.-Feb.2022 internal Magazine report.



Figure 4.4. Screen shoot of the ministry of the social media report on during crisis communication (Source, Ministry of Peace Facebook Page)

As it is shown from the above figure and the respondent of the interview, the public relations experts are working beyond their actual job descriptions during the crisis. Meanwhile, they are supporting then ENDF who are struggling for their sovereignty and also coordinate efforts to support internally displaced people found in shelters at different areas of the country, particularly in Afar and Amhara regions. In line with this, the roles of the public relations is towards coordinating, supporting, planning, and implementing community relations to support, and reach to the victims of the crisis.

As the data from the interview and the document showed public relation practitioner work on the all program of the Ministry to address the public. First, they report the Ministry’s contribution to ENDF and they document the events and forums organized by the Ministry. Second, they report

the contribution of Ministry on the rehabilitation of affected regions mainly for Amhara and Afar regions the Ministry support 35 and 15 billion Birr respectively. On the process of such organisational missions, the public relations practitioners write news and capture picture address the message to their publics through the mainstream media and also own page. Therefore, the MoP public relations practitioners act as a pro-peace rehabilitation volunteers to treat the trauma happened during the Crisis because the operations destroys people's life and their properties. In relation to this, an interviewee who asked to address question regarding the organisational structure of the Ministry in relation to the activities of public relations states:

Our organisation has two sectors, Peace and national consensus sector and Federalism and crisis management sector. Peace and national consensus sector has many tasks on pre-crisis and after crisis. We work with this sector to give psychotherapy trainings and counselling for people who was affected by the law enforcement operation. After the Pretorian Peace Deal in between the Ethiopian Government and TPLF, public relation practitioners facilitate psychotherapy trainings and counselling at Dessie. This practice is continues to other affected regions of the country. Public relation practitioners facilitate media coverage rather to help the people who have affected on the conflict. They inform the internal and external public what's going on in the Ministry. The all psychotherapy and counselling program was documented on our department.



Ministry of Peace የሰላም ሚኒስቴር
28 February 2022 · 🌐

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ዛሬ የካቲት 21 ቀን 2014 ዓ.ም በደሴ ከተማ ከህወሓት ጋር በተደገው ጦርነት ጉዳት ለደረሰባቸው የማህበረሰብ ክፍሎች የሰነ ልቦና ድጋፍ ስልጠና እየተሰጠ ይገኛል።

ስልጠናው በጦርነቱ ለተጎድ ወገኖች መሠረታዊ የሰነ ልቦና ድጋፍ አሰጣጥ ላይ ያተኩራል።

በህልውና ዘመቻው ወቅት ከቤት ንብረታቸው የተፈናቀሉና በሰነ ልቦናዊና ኢኮኖሚያዊ ቀውስ ውስጥ የሚገኙ ወገኖችን የሚያግዙ የማህበረሰብ ደጋፊዎችን ለማፍራት ያለመ ነው።

በሰነ ልቦና ድጋፍ መሠረታዊ ስልጠናው ከ 200 በላይ ከደቡብ ወሎ ዞን ወረዳዎች የተውጣጡ ተሳታፊዎች በመሳተፍ ላይ ሲሆኑ ሰልጣኞች ከገጠማቸው የሰነ ልቦና ቀውስ እራሳቸውን አላቀው ሌሎች ወገኖች ወደ ቀደመው የተረጋጋ የኑሮ ሁኔታቸው እንዲመለሱ የሚያግዙ ናቸው።



Figure 4.5. A public relations of MoP organizes Psychotherapy forums at Dessie (Source the Ministry Facebook page)

On the similar vein, psychotherapy trainings and counselling program facilitated on North Gondar Debarke Woreda including other affected environment those activities are presented on the public relation department weather their own page or other public relation tools.



Ministry of Peace የሰላም ሚኒስቴር
24 February 2022 · 🌐

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የሰላም ሚኒስቴር ከየካቲት 12 ቀን 2014 ዓ.ም ጀምሮ በሰሜን ጎንደር ደባርቅ ወረዳ፣ በሰሜን ወሎ ወልድያና አካባቢው በህወሓት ወረራ ለተፈናቀሉ ወገኖች የሰነ ልቦና ህክምናና ድጋፍ ስልጠና በመስጠት ላይ ይገኛል።

ስልጠናው ከቤት ንብረታቸው ለተፈናቀሉና ከጦርነቱ በኋላ በሰነ ልቦናዊ ቀውስ ውስጥ ለሚገኙ ወገኖቻችን ለሚያግዙ የማህበረሰብ ደጋፊዎችን ለማፍራት ያለመ ነው።

በሰነ ልቦና ድጋፍ መሠረታዊ ስልጠናው ሰልጣኞች ከገጠማቸውን የሰነ ልቦና ቀውስ እራሳቸውን አላቀው ሌሎች ወገኖች ወደ ቀደመው የተረጋጋ የኑሮ ሁኔታቸው እንዲመለሱ የሚያግዙ ናቸው።

የማህበረሰብ ደጋፊዎች ከሰነ ልቦና ስልጠናው በኋላ ባገኙት ዕውቀት በዙሪያቸው የሚገኙትን ማህበረሰብ ክፍሎችን የመደገፍ ስራ የሚሰሩ ይሆናል ።

ከወራሪው ህወሓት ጋር በተደረገው ጦርነት በሰሜን ወሎና አካባቢው እንዲሁም ደባርቅ ወረዳ የሚገኙ በርካታ ዜጎች ከቤት ንብረታቸው መፈናቀላቸውና ለአካላዊ፣ ኢኮኖሚያዊና የሰነ ልቦና ቀውሶች መዳረጋቸው ይታወሳል።

የማህበረሰብ ደጋፊዎች የሰነ ልቦና ህክምናና ድጋፍ ስልጠናው በሌሎች በጦርነት ላይ በቆዩ ከተሞችም ቀጥሎ የሚሰጥ ይሆናል።

Figure 4.6. A public relations of MoP organizes a forum at Debrak (Source from Facebook page)

According to the data collected through in-depth interview and document analysis, the public relations practitioners activities after the Pretoria Agreement is advocating peace and reconstruction in collaboration with national rehabilitation commission on facilitating media coverage, providing press release, write news, facilitate community and public forums, and publicize to the larger audience through different internal and external media channels. This activity is not a one-time activity rather they are a continuous process to maintain peace and transform the crisis into long-lasting peace. According to Coombs (2007a) there is important follow-up communication on the post crisis period. First, crisis managers often promise to provide additional information during the crisis phase. The crisis managers must deliver on those informational promises or risk losing the trust of public wants the information. Second, the Organisation needs to release updates on the recovery process, corrective actions, and/or investigations of the crisis. The amount of follow-up communication required depends on the amount of information promised during the crisis and the length of time it takes to complete the recovery process. If you promised a reporter damage estimate, for example, be sure to deliver that estimate when it is ready. Coombs (2007a, 2007b) believes how mass communication systems can be used as well to deliver update messages to employees and other publics via phones, text messages, voice messages, and e-mail. Personal e-mails and phone calls can be used too. The FDRE central government signed agreement with TPLF during the time FDRE promised for Tigray people to rehabilitation and reconstruction. The implementation of the promise is on-going and the PR department of the MoP has its own roles and responsibilities, in line to this, an interviewee of the study stated:

Ethiopia established national rehabilitation commission that works on rehabilitation of citizens to be disarmed and enable them to reintegrate with the civilians. Besides, the commission is providing uninterrupted humanitarian support such as basic humanitarian service, disarmament and maintenance of infrastructures are among the main point of the peace agreement signed by FDRE and TPLF in Pretoria, South Africa and endorsed at Nairobi, Kenya. Hence, the government has been providing humanitarian assistance, rebuilding infrastructure, restoring electricity and telecommunications restoring transport service and other basic public service. Moreover, basic consumer goods and commodities such as edible oil, sugar and flour are being provided to Tigray region. In addition to this, the commission has a role to organize discussion platforms to facilitate the disarmament, reintegration, and reconstruction tasks in the region. In all these activities, the public relation practitioners facilitate forums and media coverage's consolidating the media relation of the MoP and the commission aimed to reach the community, the Mekele discussions is one example. Ministry of Peace work on positive peace, this is to establish peace while discussing around the table without any distraction or loss (Interview with AD1 of MoP, April, 2023, Addis Ababa: Translated by the researcher).

Peace builds internal and external rest of human being. As Fishel (2008) the absence of peace is snatch the basic need of peoples. On the two years' Crisis in the Northern Ethiopia all citizen has been affected directly or indirectly, especially on the North part of Ethiopia. They loss everything whatever it's everyone has moral responsible to rehabilitate those who affected due to the crisis. Moreover, the Ministry of Peace works in one or another way to rehab affected region.

The Ministry has been providing financial support; psychotherapy training and counselling it also build positive peace within the society. Ministry of Peace public relation practitioner works on the rehabilitation program by providing information for public. For their event they facilitate media coverage and they produce their own production for the institute page.

The Ministry of Peace promotes the value of peace rather than conflict. According to the respondent of the interview for this study, the Ministry of Peace used its own effort to prevent conflict between but it's not successful however on the two years duration Ministry of Peace invite the two groups to discussion. In peace making process, the MoP also had a great contribution. One of the respondents describes their contribution to the Pretorian Peace Agreement as follows:

Ministry of Peace work effectively on during-crisis and post-crisis period, especially on the Northern Ethiopian Crisis all most all rehabilitation program run by Ministry of Peace and its commission. It showed drawbacks on the preventive role of crisis management before the outbreak of the crisis. In addition, the Ministry attentively works on positive peace building programs with the principle of ensuring peace in the country by using this opportunity created as a result of the agreement. The national rehabilitation commission plays its own role to rehab affected environment. This community has been led by our Minister and it consist all sector Ministers. After the agreement the rehabilitation program runs by the commission. The public relation department facilitates media coverage to promote each and every activities of the commission. Publics inform about our institute through internal Magazine and our social media (Interview with PR2 of MoP, April, 2023, Addis Ababa: Translated by the researcher).

Crisis damage everything, for instance the two years Crisis in the Northern Ethiopia back to ten years the national economy on the researcher tiny prediction. According to Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (2021) report, From Nefas Mewcha Primary Care Hospital, medical equipment, medications and mattresses were looted. The hospital's windows, office furniture and patients' beds were smashed. Similarly, Lay Gayint Woreda Administration offices have been looted and the buildings and furniture smashed. In another incident, government agencies in Ata Kebele confirmed that a local church was damaged by shelling. The two years Crisis result is this and other damage. In line to such type of destruction, the public relations office at the MoP communicates messages to minimize the atrocities and civilian attacks. The respondent of the interview states:

Ministry of Peace works with different sector to keep Pretoria agreement by facilitating different discussion forums with religious leader, youth, elite elders etc. Ministry of Peace discuss with elders about indigenous crisis management knowledge, discussion with religious leader about the creation technique of sustainable peace and stability. Peace is the initial point of everything that's way Ministry of Peace work on changing societies attitude in order to preserve Pretoria agreement in this case the all activities disseminated through our department (Interview with P1 of MoP, April, 2023, Addis Ababa: Translated by the researcher).



ባህር ዳር፤ ግንቦት 9/2013(ኢ.ዜ.አ) በሃገሪቱ ዘላቂ ሰላም ለማስፈን በተደራጀ አግባብ በቁርጠኝነት መስራት እንደሚገባ የሰላም ሚኒስቴር አሳሰበ።

የገለልተኛ አማካሪ ቡድንና የማህበረሰብ ደህንነት ቅኝት የምክክር መድረክ ዛሬ በባህር ዳር ከተማ ተጀምሯል። በሰላም ሚኒስቴር የህግ ማስከበር ዘርፍ ሚኒስትር ዴኤታ ወይዘሮ ፍሬዳላም ሸባባው በመድረኩ እንዳሉት፤ አሁን ላይ አንገብጋቢው ጉዳይ የሃገሪቱን ሰላም አስተማማኝ ማድረግና ዜጎች ያለ ስጋት ሰርተው ሃብት ማፍራት እንዲችሉ ማመቻቸት ነው።

Figure 4.6. A PR department at the MoP facilitates forums on peace building (Source, ENA)

According to the respondent and media news coverage the main role of Ministry of Peace is to build positive peace. To preserve Pretoria peace agreement, the Ministry of Peace establishes national rehabilitation commission and work with them to rehab the affected citizens economically, psychologically, and morally affected peoples during conflict. Public Relation department promote their work on social media and invite mainstream media to report the institute activity.

4.2.2. Strategic crisis Communication at MoP

4.2.2.1. Designing crisis communication strategy

Tench and Yeomans (2009) explained that at the age of information in which information gets priority as an important asset, crisis needs to understand in a different perspectives. It is decisive to aware the role of communication plays and particularly the role of the internet. Cornelissen (2014) also suggested the importance of developing communication plans for crisis scenarios and establish key responsibilities for communication practitioners before a crisis actually

happens. This includes The identification of the organisation's key contact person; CEO, executive directors, and PR directors; establishing a crisis communication team and in major crises a press office to address media inquiries and to handle the release of information; establishing safe crisis locations where the media can meet and be briefed in the event of dangerous situations; and identification of contacts at relevant external agencies (e.g., police, fire services) who may need to be contacted in case of a crisis. One of the respondents during the interview states the nature of their crisis communication strategy that the MoP deployed:

The Experts were trained on how to collect crisis clue information. The Ministry never takes force to stop conflict during the crisis. It works on pre and post crisis time. In pre-crisis every morning the PR department experts collect information from the system in every district and records what happen today, if there is a trend of conflict it is immediately reported to relevant body. On post crisis period, the PR experts promote the all rehabilitation activity. After North Ethiopian conflict the PR department tried to prepare crisis communication strategy, however, it's not implemented yet (Interview with AD1 of MoP, April, 2023, Addis Ababa: Translated by the researcher).

As the data collected through interview showed, crisis communication practice runs in a different way in the Ministry of Peace Public Relation department. Frist, they train how to collect crisis clue information. Second, they monitor daily information from different districts and report for policy makers. Third, recommend possible solutions and actions towards the reported incident. Although this practice has been practiced as a routine activity in the PR department, the Ministry of Peace does not have a crisis communication strategy that the public relation practitioner applied systematically.

4.2.2.2. Strategic communication to promote peace and stability

Changing uncomfortable zone into comfort zone is not short time action, it takes a long time. Positive peace means a state of tranquility, calm, repose, quietness, harmony, friendship, amity, concord, peaceful or friendly relation, public order, pacification, spiritual content, reconciliation, serenity, security, social justice and bliss (Kin, 2008). From this point of view, positive peace is making life stable within the environment. As the data from the interview show, making positive peace was a priority process in Northern Ethiopia Crisis. The key informant in the interview explains:

Peace and national consensus sector tries to make positive peace all over the country. In order to do this the public relation practitioners work on society's attitudinal change. Peace is an abstract thing that exists in everyone, not something that can be taken as an element. Since peace is a fundamental idea that goes with thinking, so that there is an interpretation of peace in everyone's mind. It's the PR department's primary duty to facilitate conditions for all platforms to get media coverage like research symposiums and experience sharing in other countries. Religious leaders, Ababa Gedas and country's elders are used to resolve the conflict in different area. It means promote indigenous traditional conflict resolution methods. On the other hand, national consensus is a broad concept. Among the issues that do not agree with us are history, constitution, flag, language, and etc. literally the issues are not the problem by itself. Some groups and individual's create stereotypes on the above issue then ordinary people fight each other. The national reconciliation commission collects the problem from community and discuss with them to reach solution. Finally, the commission

design policy proposal from the problem to reconcile as a national idea (Interview with P1 of MoP, April, 2023, Addis Ababa: Translated by the researcher).

In relation to this, the MoP plays a constructive role in addressing the crisis and builds the consensus of peace. To do this, the public relations department employs some sort of communication strategies such as using elders' and religious leaders to pursue peace in the nation. The data from the document showed that the Ministry used to employ the social fabric of the society to manage crisis happen in the Northern Ethiopia Crisis.

ከሀገር ሽማግሌዎችና ከባለድርሻ አካላት ጋር በተደረገው ውይይት ሀገር በቀል የግጭት አፈታት ስረዓት አውጥታዊ እሴቶች ሀገርን በማንባት ሂደት ከፍተኛውን ሚና ከሚጫወቱ ፖለቲካዊና ኢኮኖሚያዊ እቅድዎች ባሻገር ለዘመናት እንደህዝብ፣ እንደሀገር፣ አጋምደውና አስተሳስረው ያቆዩን ሀገር በቀል የሆኑ ባህላዊ ሀብቶቻችን ናቸው፡፡ ባህላዊ ሀብቶቻችንን ለይተን በሚላማትና ለሚደረግ እድላችን፣ ለነገ ተስፋችን፣ ለእርቅ ሰላም ለአንድነት፣ ለሁልተናዊ ብልጽግና ልናውለው በምንችለው ሚዲኦ አዳብረን ጥቅም ላይ ማዋል ይጠበቅብናል (አምባሳደር እሸቴ ደሴ 18/06/2015)፡፡

The above content of document is translated as:

In the discussion with the elders and relevant stakeholders, the fundamental social values of the country to conflict resolution systems are our indigenous cultural resource, apart from the political and economic activities that play a major role in the process of building the country it is important for us to develop and use our traditional resource in the way that we can use them for our tomorrow's hope,

peace, unity sovereignty and prosperity (Ambassador Eshete Dessie, 25 June 2023

(Translated by the researcher)

As a strategy, the public relations of MoP employ different digital and social media platforms to reach to the public. These digital platforms are can be used to the people who have different preferences and accessibilities. Due to these, the Ministry of Peace as an office and the leaders in the Ministry use Facebook, Twitter, Telegram, and others to communicate the messages produced by the PR department of the Ministry. The messages they conveyed through telegram or any other social media are crucial to manage the crisis and maintain peace. In the media relations, the Ministry works closely with the media to foster the role of social capital of the public to manage the crisis and build peace and stability.



ድሬደዋ መስከረም 05/2015 (ኢ.ዜ.አ) ዘላቂ ሰላም ለመገንባት የሃይማኖት አባቶች እና የሀገር ሽማግሌዎች ሚና የጎላ እንደሆነ የሰላም ሚኒስቴር ገለጸ።

ሚኒስቴሩ ከኢትዮጵያ ሃይማኖት ተቋማት ጉባኤ ጋር በመሆን "ሃይማኖት ለሰላም" በሚል መሪ ሐሳብ በድሬደዋ እየመከረ ነው።

በምክክር መድረኩ የሰላም ሚኒስቴር አመራሮች፣ የሃይማኖት አባቶች፣ የሀገር ሽማግሌዎች አባ ገዳዎች፣ ኡጋዞች እና የተለያዩ የማህበረሰብ ክፍሎች ተገኝተዋል።

Figure 4.7. PR departments works on managing the crisis through social capital strategies (Source, ENA)

As Figure 4.7 showed indigenous crisis management strategies are important for the developments of positive peace. These indigenous crisis management strategies are necessarily use local wisdom for the developments of nation rather than political and economic issue. Everything has basement due to that the basement of human being is indigenous knowledge that's way Ministry of Peace use indigenous knowledge to bring sustainable peace and stability.

Ministry of Peace has facilitated panel discussions for higher educational institute elites who are historian. They discussed on Ethiopian history to get common understanding and make curriculum for students learning material. In the same way, MoP invites different religious leaders to discuss about peace. They discussed based on each religious sect doctrine about peace to get common understanding. Finally, the religious leader agrees with them to learn their priests about the importance of peace and solve problem through mediation and reconciliation when problem arise. In line to this, the public relation practitioners send press release for media and facilitate for journalists to attend and report discussions and publicize for the larger publics (Interview with PR2 of MoP, April, 2023, Addis Ababa: Translated by the researcher).

Some of the messages conveyed in public forums organized by the public relations department of MoP and reported by Ethiopian News Agency looks like the following:

የሃይማኖት አባቶች ወገን ተኝነትን ሳይዙ በጎ ተግባራትን በመካወን የግጭት መንስኤ የሆኑ ችግሮችን በመለየት አጥፊዎችን በመግሰፅና በመጥካር በህይወት

ተምሳሌትን ት በመምራት የሀይማኖት ተከታይን በበጎ ምግባር ማገድ ይገባል (አምሳኛደር እሸቴ ደሴ 16/07/2015) : : ወጣቶችን በቤተ እምነቶች ተከትኩተው ታላላቆቻቸውን የሚያከብሩና የሚያግዙ ሀገር ተረካቢ አድርገን ማገድ የሁላችንም ሀላፊነት ሲሆን የሚያጋጥሙ ችግሮችንም ለመቅረፍ ሁላችንም ግዴታችንን ልንወጣይገባል (አፈወርቅ አጥናፍ ዶ/ር 16/07/2015) : :

The English translation version

Religious leaders should do good activities without being biased by identifying the problems that cause of conflict, punish and advise the offenders, led by example in life and educate the religious leaders in good manners (Ambassador Eshete Dese). it is the responsibility of all of us to build a country that respects and helps young people by religion, and to do this it is expected from all to do the respected duty to overcome the problems face as a nation (Afewek Atinaf PHD) (translated by the researcher)

The above statements show that religious doctrine is important to build positive peace. It changes people's attitude especially youth's attitude and presumptions is shaped by religious doctrine. And also if the religious leaders have good character that the youth easily accepted them without hesitation.

Positive peace is to make a person understand about peace and bring about change in attitude. Therefore, the public relation department is to enable the work of the institution to reach the general public. This means that the ministry of peace can't reach every citizen either through training or discussion, so a few people attended the forum and presented what was discussed to the media, enabling the general

public to learn from the forum(Interview with P1 of MoP, April, 2023, Addis Ababa: Translated by the researcher).

Peace begins with the inner part of individuals and it grows up into neighbors and community then reaches to the country level. Inner peace is peace of mind or soul. It is a state of calm, serenity and tranquility of mind that arise due to having no sufferings or mental disturbances such as worry, anxiety, greed, desire, hatred, ill-will, delusion and/or other defilements. Peace can never obtain in the outer world until everybody make peace within Fishel (2008). Based on this understanding, positive and inner peace is understood from the Ministry of Peace perspective as a way to restore positive and inner peace of the affected societies. Sustainable peace and stability building need the all sector participation from the government up to the ordinary people. On the process religious leader, indigenous elder's elite and ordinary peoples included especially. From the data both in the interview and the document, the researcher understand indigenous knowledge and religious doctrine play a vital role for managing crisis and building positive peace. Those practice address to public through Ministry of Peace public relation practitioner.

4.2.2.3. Challenges to deploy strategic crisis communication

To implement Public Relation practice most of the time resource allocation is a big challenge. Adjusting the need for financial and resource allocation ahead of starting implementing the plan. Searching for core funding from donors as a source of external budget is an action of wise PR (Books, 2002). As the interview data revealed, in the MoP the public relations face a challenge to deploy strategic crisis communication during the Crisis at the Northern Ethiopia, in line to this, the interviewee stated:

The problem with all communication office is lack of resource to manage the media and also to produce in-house media contents. As a result of this, the department mainly depends on mainstream media. We always request for media coverage although we have our own production and content we face a shortage of materials and airtime. On the moment we agree with Walta TV to produce our production. But we are still in the process to make our material (Interview with AD1 of MoP, April, 2023, Addis Ababa: Translated by the researcher).

Public Relation professionals should work to modify the public`s erroneous opinion on Public Relation efforts by showing practically they stand equally for their organisation and public mutual interest (Johnston, 2017).

Budget and resource constraints are internal challenges. However, the PR experts in MoP also face external challenge. The external challenges are related to the public attitude towards the government and the government peace-building efforts. In line to this, the interview data showed as the external challenges are related to the distorted image of the ministry before the public.

Our challenge is lack of acceptance on the society. The attitude of the societies about Ministry of Peace is sub-optimal; it is perceived as it is the only institution that can bring peace and the people expected that any kind of conflict could manage by the Ministry though the reality on the ground is not. Therefore, communicate the concept of peace from the Ministry of Peace perspective to the community is the biggest challenge for the public relations department. In the past, the Ministry of Peace works in collaboration with the federal police, National Information and Security Service (NISS), Information and National

Security Agency (INSA) etc. at that perceived as the Ministry has the potential to take force to maintain peace (Interview with AD1 of MoP, April, 2023, Addis Ababa: Translated by the researcher).

As a result of this misconception, the public relations face a challenge to brought attitudinal change on the society regarding the duties and powers of the Ministry of Peace. In line with this, the interviewee states:

Communicating the duties and powers of the Ministry of Peace differentiating the peace building techniques is a challenge to create attitude change on the society. The society perceives as there is a problem here, why don't you take action, but the primary task of the Ministry of Peace is to prevent conflict and to bring sustainable peace after conflict. Our department tries to inform to the society about ministry of peace mission and vision on social media page as much as possible. On the other hand irresponsible social media owners have affected the works of the Ministry. Taking complex ideas and disseminating information without considering its consequence on the community has become a challenge to maintain peace for the community (Interview with PR1 of MoP, April, 2023, Addis Ababa: Translated by the researcher).

PR should work for a mutual benefit. They are not expected to invest all efforts to get some benefit at the expense of others i.e. to benefit the MoP or the government as a whole at the cost of the people of Ethiopia. Hence, they have to listed the opinion of the people and convey the opinion for the management for decision making. It follows that PR efforts can only be effective where the aims of the organisation are compatible with the aims of the public (Haywood, 2002).

Based on this explanation, public relation practitioner at Ministry of Peace are not compatible. Because they promote the Ministry's activities but they don't have clear public perception about Ministry of Peace similar to the above respondent. Regarding to this, the other respondent linked to the external challenges that public relations face:

Ministry of Peace work on pre-crisis and post crisis period, but the Ministry's involvement during the crisis period is limited. Particularly, on Northern Ethiopia Crisis MoP try to prevent the conflict but it's not successful. On post crisis period especially after Pretoria Peace Agreement Ministry of Peace play a vital role to build positive peace. The Ministry public relation monitors social media feedbacks and public reactions. As the result of these social media feedbacks showed there is a communication gap between the Ministry and the publics. In order to fill such gap, the public relations tried to promote the activities of the Ministry on social media and replay for some valuable comments on the social media posts (Interview with PR2 of MoP, April, 2023, Addis Ababa: Translated by the researcher).

In general, the public relations of the Ministry of Peace face internal and external challenges to communicate strategically in relation to the crisis. Internal challenges are related to lack of budget and resource to deploy strategic crisis communication tools. External challenges are related to public perception towards the Ministry and lack of public understanding on the duties and powers of the Ministry that demands the effort of the public relations ample effort to change their attitude and to secure public acceptance.

4.2.2.4. Managing crisis communication during the Crisis at Northern Ethiopia

Northern Ethiopia crisis spends two years. According to Institute of Public Administration Ireland (2009), crisis management doesn't start when a crisis arises and ends when the crisis is over. It requires actions before a crisis happens, while the crisis is unfolding, and after the crisis has ended. Crisis management practice continuously ready when different interest groups live together. According to the SCCT, the challenges facing the science of crisis management is to try to deal with crises before they occur and adopt this stage planning process; which represents the essential foundation for any effective crisis resolution (Combs 2007a; 2007b). Similar to this theoretical assumption, the interview data also showed as the MoP tried to manage the conflict before the crisis happen using indigenous conflict management techniques.

Before the crisis, the Ministry of Peace was facilitating indigenous conflict resolution technique like mediation and negotiation, for example the elite discussion of Amhara and Tigray region. Beside the political mediation of political elites, the Ethiopian Peace Mothers went to Tigray region and have discussed the importance of mediation with Tigray politicians on the presence of the regional president. There is one representative on the MoP and others are selected from each region. In this mission, the department plays a facilitation role to process their tour and media coverage on the mainstream media and the Ministry's social media platforms (Interview with P1 of MoP, April, 2023, Addis Ababa: Translated by the researcher).

On the digital era, crisis information is sensitive and it is difficult to manage it easily. In relation of this, one of the respondents states her practice during the Crisis:

During the Crisis period, information has been provided by Prime Minister Communication Office and Ministry of Defence as well as the State of Emergency command post. Because of sensitiveness of war information the public relations department never gave any information to the public about the process of law enforcement operation. As the information provided by these bodies were highly manipulated and distorted by the digital media content makers, it was introduced the State of Emergency fact checking body to identify the accuracy of the information disseminated via the social media (Interview with AD1 of MoP, April, 2023, Addis Ababa: Translated by the researcher).

According to the SCCT, (Coombs (2007a) the third stage after crisis is the stage of survival for organisations. Under this stage, organisations should have to improve and return to the normal situation or daily activities. This means after crisis the practice of organisation is vast. There are rehabilitation and reintegration programs that demand the efforts of the peace efforts. In line to this, two interviewees have points:

On post crisis period Ethiopia established the national rehabilitation commission who works to restore the life of the fighters. The rehabilitation includes psychotherapy training and counselling. The PR department works with the commission and facilitates media coverage in order to publicize the commission activities. The commission has been made discussion at Mekele at the presence of Mr. Getachew Reda. The discussion focused on how the fighter's use the basic infrastructures of the country and how they contribute to the development. National rehabilitation commission is accountable to the MoP so the PR department helps the Commission by facilitating forums and media coverage

(Interview with P1 of MoP, April, 2023, Addis Ababa: Translated by the researcher).

Based on Institute of Public Administration Ireland (2009) and Coombs (2007a; 2007b) explanations crisis management is never done within short period of time. It has different stages and treatment methods. MoP follows the three crisis management techniques during the Northern Ethiopia Crisis. During pre-crisis period it applies indigenous crisis management technique which is mediation and negotiation. During crisis it helps FDRE for sovereignty war. After crisis it facilitate different rehabilitations program. During three stages public relation department simply facilitate public forums and media coverage and address public information using the Ministry's social media platforms. As the data on the documents showed the MoP public relations department did not publish anything during the Crisis. From the two years duration the researcher used three quarterly internal magazines which published on PR department. The two Magazines published on August 2020 and September-November 2020 did not have any contents about Crisis rather developmental news. Similar to the data got from the two magazines and the data from the interview PR department also confirmed as there is no official involvement during conflict except facilitating material and financial support for ENDF.

4.2.3. Strategic communication tools at MoP

Public Relation tools are useful for the connection of organisation and its public. Similarly, Ministry of Peace public relation practitioner states their tools as follows:

We use mainstream media and social media platforms to disseminate information for public. Social media have many followers and useful for two way interactive communication. Sometimes, followers give important information for our work

based on that we facilitate press conference and improve our practice in Ministry of Peace works on awareness creation by making different discussion platform within different sector including ordinary peoples. We have quarterly Magazine which distributes only internal public (Interview with PR2 of MoP, April, 2023, Addis Ababa: Translated by the researcher).

PR tools are important for the success of organisation communication that PR professionals should always know exactly which mass media use as a tool for what message (Jefkins, 2004). If PR practitioner identifies his/her customer he/she promote their organisation by any means. According to Smith (2002), an energetic PR produces their news release which encompasses facts and supported by memorable photograph and video. Ministry of Peace Public Relation practitioners use their effort on their social media to post organisation activities. In general, the involvement of the MoP during the crisis was limited and the centralism of the information from some sources limits the communication of the MoP to deploy different communication strategies. Meanwhile, the effectiveness of the communication methods lacks consistency and also did not achieve the expected outcome due to its limited scope.

Chapter Five: Summary of Findings, Conclusion, and Recommendations

5.1. Summary of Findings

The purpose of this study was to analysis the Public Relations Practices in crisis management on the Northern Ethiopia Crisis. The Crisis in the Northern Ethiopia was active from 3 November 2020 to 3 November 2022. The operation distracted peoples' livelihood morally, socially, and economically. The public relations in the Ministry of Peace understand the roles and responsibilities of public relation in an organisation similar to scientifically proven conceptualizations. In Ministry of Peace, the public relation is perceived as the peace making force that facilitates public forms and addresses public information. Crises destruct everything even the basic needs of the public. The absence of peace snatches the basic need of a person that demands the involvement of the concerned government bodies including the public relations efforts to manage the crisis strategically before, during, and after the crisis. As a result of this, the Ministry of Peace deployed different strategies given priority for peace. Meanwhile, the department of public relations of the Ministry tried to use indigenous conflict management techniques such as '*Shimiglina*' of the elders and the Ethiopian Peace Mothers to manage the tension before the outbreak of the crisis. Unfortunately, the pre-crisis communication was not successful and the crisis is already happened. It is scientifically proven that the communication effort of the PR during the crisis has its own functions in minimizing the harm and avoiding unnecessary destructions by providing timely and periodic public information and facilitating forums that facilitate dialogue among the people. However, during the Crisis in the Northern

Ethiopia, the public relations department of the MoP could do nothing as the whole public relations activities of the government was centralized under the state of Emergency command post. As the data of the study showed, the post-crisis communication after the Pretoria Peace Agreement the focus of the public relations of the Ministry focused on supporting the National Rehabilitation Commission efforts in facilitating public forums, conferences, and give media coverage for briefings, press conferences, and media forums.

Peace and national consensus sector try to make positive peace all over the country, to do this Public Relation practitioner work on society's attitudinal change. Peace is an abstract thing that exists in everyone, not something that can be taken as an element. Since peace is a fundamental idea that goes with thinking, so that there is an interpretation of peace in everyone's mind. It's their first duty to facilitate conditions for all platforms to get media coverage. Like research symposium other countries experience, religious leaders, Aba Gedas and elders are used to resolve the conflict in different area. On the other hand, national consensus is a broad concept that expected to bring consensus on parties that do not agree with the nation's history, constitution, flag, language, and etc. The roles and responsibilities of the PR department of the Ministry of Peace focuses on avoiding crisis, maintaining the existing peace, and building peace. Therefore, the messages conveyed via the public relations are towards the missions given by the government. The public relations played a role of facilitating consensus forums in different ways.

It is clear that it can never obtain peace in the outer world until everybody make peace within. Based on this perspective, Ministry of Peace create different discussion platforms with different social groups like elites, religious leader, elders, youth, and victims to build sustainable peace and stability. Ministry of Peace exhaustively works on indigenous crisis management knowledge

integrated with modern crisis management technique, which is facilitated and empowered by public relation department of the Ministry.

As a situational crisis communication theory recommends, the three crisis communication, pre-crisis, crisis, and post crisis. During pre-crisis stage, Ministry of Peace tried to prevent the crisis on mediation and negotiation. The practices address to the public through public relation department. During crisis, the Ministry of Peace move to developmental works in front of the Northern Ethiopian Crisis. Relatively, on peace environment at the same time, Ministry of Peace Public Relation practitioners publicize developmental news except supports organized for ENDF and affected region. This support programs got media coverage in the mainstream media as well as the Ministry's social media platforms. And they produce internal Magazine like report they organized picture and text about donation.

During post crisis period, the Ministry of Peace back to Northern Ethiopia to work on the rehab activities of the affected public, especially after Pretoria Peace Agreement. National Rehabilitation Commission and Ministry of Peace work collaboratively to preserve the peace agreement. They facilitate psychotherapy training and counselling to affected society and they try to rebuild distracted infrastructure. At the same time they try to build positive peace within the society. On the ground, the public relations department facilitates the forums and the media coverage.

The public relations of Ministry of Peace face internal and external challenges to deploy feasible crisis communication strategies. Internally, they face resource constraints and externally the PR of the Ministry of Peace misperceived and lack public acceptance and wrong attitude towards the

Ministry in relation to peace. Hence, the challenges demands much work to change the attitudes towards the Ministry and build good organisational image and reputation.

5.2. Conclusion

Based on the data analysis in chapter four and the findings of the study, the researcher forwarded the following conclusions:

- The Public relations of the Ministry of Peace are expected to work a lot when the ultimate responsibility of the Ministry, keeping the national peace, got a crisis. However, the study revealed that the Ministry in general and the public relations in general could not devote extra-ordinary effort, but they manage their assignments as a normal socio-politics contexts; the public relation practitioners posted developmental related stories except facilitate support to ENDF, which is part of the general call for all public and private entities during the Crisis at the Northern Ethiopia.
- It is expected that the public relations department of the Ministry of Peace are expected to deploy different crisis communication strategies at different stages of the crisis. As the data showed that the Ministry has worked on indigenous conflict resolution methods before the crisis and the public mobilization tasks to rehabilitation after the donation. During the crisis time, the public relations department keeps idle as most public information was centralized. As a result of this, the PR department back to the normal institutional duties instead of the national crisis happened in Ethiopia.
- As the study clearly disclosed that the PR department of the Ministry of Peace does not have a crisis communication strategy when they face crisis. The reason is that as the Ministry is newly established and the crisis happened in Ethiopia is not considered as the

role of the Ministry of Peace to manage but it is a duty of different organisations and their coherent effort. Hence, the Ministry PR office does not have a crisis communication strategy cohort to manage the crisis.

- The public relations of MoP pre-crisis and post crisis efforts effectiveness is sub-optimal because of the internal and external challenges the Ministry face to communicate the plans and actions effectively to the maximum. The resource constraints and the ill-communicated public perception towards the Ministry are the challenges that shackle the effectiveness of the strategies to employ to manage the crisis.

5.3. Recommendation

The researcher recommends the following remarks based on the findings of the study. The recommendations given here are for the Ministry of Peace in general and the public relations department in particular.

- Crisis demands tossing out from the normal business procedure and commitments in devoting resources that enables to manage the crisis with minimum destruction especially before the crisis has happened. Therefore, the public relations should facilitate more public forums and deploy local crisis prevention strategies regardless of the politician's commitment without considering the political correctness.
- The less effort of the public relations department during the crisis as a result of the centrality of the government command should not disassociate the Ministry from involving the peace making effort. Rather, the Ministry should work on peace-making efforts parallel to the Crisis at the Northern Ethiopia.

- Crisis communication strategies could not manage with a resource allocated for a normal business operation. Therefore, more resources are demanded to devote the expected roles and responsibilities without resource constraints. Thus, the Ministry should allocate enough financial, material, human, and time resources to work on the management of the crisis. Besides, the human resources of the Ministry should build their capacity to have the wisdom to communicate strategically during the management. Moreover, crisis management strategy should be officially tailored that has to be applied in such occasions.
- Crisis changes public attitudes towards the image of a certain entity, as such the wrong public perception towards the Ministry of Peace was a challenge to deploy effective crisis management and communication strategies during the Crisis. Therefore, the public relations department should communicate the duties and powers of the Ministry and organize numerous public forums to mould the wrong public attitude towards the right Institutional image.

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Appendices

Appendix I: Interview Guideline

1. What are the roles and responsibilities of PR practitioners in MoP's during the Crisis at the Northern Ethiopia?
 - In line with the powers and duties of MoP, what is PR?
 - What do you think about the roles and responsibilities of PR practitioners during crisis?
 - Do PR practitioners work on crisis management?
 - What are the main role and responsibility of MoP's PR on the Crisis at the north Ethiopian conflict?
2. How the PR practitioners in MoP practice strategic crisis communication to promote peace and stability during on the Crisis at the Northern Ethiopia?
 - Do PR practitioners of MoP design a strategy to communicate crisis?
 - How the Ministry as a whole and the PR and communication directorate promote peace and stability during the Crisis at the Northern Ethiopia?
 - What are the challenges faces during the promotion of peace and stability during the Northern Ethiopia law enforcement operation?
 - How effective the PR department of MoP manage the crisis in relation to the information and communication dispatch?
 - Following the Pretoria peace agreement signed by FDRE and TPLF, what are the actual practices of MoP's PR in reserving the agreements?
3. What strategic crisis communication tools deployed to communicate during the Crisis at the Northern Ethiopia?
 - Have you deployed strategic communication tools during the law enforcement operation?
 - What are those strategic communication tools?
 - What makes this strategic communication tools different from the routing PR tools in the Ministry?

- Have you evaluated those communication tools? To what extent do they are effective?

Amharic version interview

- የህዝብ ግንኙነት ማለት ለእርሶ ምንድን ነው?
- የህዝብ ግንኙነት ባለሙያ በጦርነት የተጎዱትንና በሰቆቃ ውስጥ ያሉትን ዜጎች የመርዳት ሃላፊነት አለበት ብለው ያምናሉ?
- ሰላምን በማስፈን እረገድ በሰላም ሚኒስቴር ውስጥ የህዝብ ግንኙነት ሚና ምንድነው?
- የሰላም ሚኒስቴር ህዝብ ግንኙነት በቅድመ ግጭት፣ በግጭትና ከግጭቱ በኋላ ያለው ጣልቃ ገብነት ምን ይመስላል?
- በፌደራል መንግስቱና በሕዋህት መካከል የተደረገውን ስምምነት ተከትሎ የተደረገውን ስምምነት ለማስጠበቅ የሰላም ሚኒስቴር የህዝብ ግንኙነት ስራዎች ምንድናቸው?
- በፌደራል መንግስቱና በሕዋህት መካከል የተደረገውን ስምምነት ተከትሎ የተደረገውን ስምምነት ለማስጠበቅ የሰላም ሚኒስቴር የህዝብ ግንኙነት ስራዎች ምንድናቸው?
- የነበሩትን ችግሮች እንዴት ነበር ኮሚኒኬት ስታደርጉ የነበረው?
- ግጭቶችን የምትፈቱበት የኮሚኒኬሽን ስትራቴጂ አላችሁ?
- የህዝብ ግንኙነት ስራውን ስትሰሩ በውጭም ሆነ በውስጥ የነበሩ ችግሮች ምን ነበሩ?
- ችግሮችን ለመረዳትና ለመመርመር እንዲሁም በግንኙነቱ ላይ እርምጃ ለመውሰድ ጥናትና ምርመራ ታካሂዳላችሁ?
- ሰላምና መረጋጋትን ለማስፈን የነበራችሁ እቅድና ትግበራ ምን ይመስል ነበር?

Appendix II: Profile of Interviewees

No	Name of Interviewee	Profile of Interviewee	Code
1	Tigist Mekonnen	Acting Director for the PR Directorate, BA in Foreign Language, Above 10 years working experience	MoP D1
2	Tesfahun Bazezew	PR relation practitioner, BA in Journalism and Communication, 7 years working experience	MoP PR1
3	Sintayehu Ayansa	Documentary producer, BA in Mass Communication, 6 years working experience	MoP P1
4	Enkutatash Addis	Public relations practitioner, BA in Political Science and International Relations; 9 years working experience	MoP PR2

Appendix III: Document Guideline

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<http://www.facebook.com/peaceMinistry.ETH>

<https://www.facebook.com/ethiopianwsagency>

<https://t.me/Ministryofpeacejimma/1221>

Ministry of Peace internal magazine

Ministry of Peace Public Relation department telegram group