



### THE RELATIVE VALUE OF HUMAN LIVES: NIGERIAN NEWSPAPERS' FRAMING OF RELIGIOUS KILLINGS IN NEW ZEALAND AND SRI LANKA

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#### **Abstract**

*Historically, religious is a potentially volatile issue across the world many wars have been fought because of it. Today, religion-motivated killings are*

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*of huge concern across the globe with varying*

#### **INTRODUCTION**

Religion is a sensitive issue across the globe. Many nations have gone to war in order to safeguard their religious freedom or expand the frontiers of their religious groups or sects. It is fundamental to human relations in Nigeria. Many Nigerians relate with people of opposing faiths with suspicious caution. The mutually suspicious relations among the Nigerian Christian and Muslim communities has partially caused the series of ethno-religious crises which have rocked the country in recent times. Nigerians are arguably among the most religious people on earth even though the country is

*reactions depending selected Nigerian the two incidents were on the individual or newspapers on the studied using a group involved. This two acts of terrorism. qualitative design. study examines the Two newspapers were Critical Discourse framing of two recent purposively selected Analysis is the specific terrorist acts on for the perceived methodology used for worshipers in dominance of a the analysis. The study mosques and churches religion on their concludes that the in New Zealand and Sri editorial boards. Daily editorial comments of Lanka respectively by Trust was selected to Daily Trust on both two Nigerian represent the Islamic acts of terror were newspapers. Based on perspective and The aimed at protecting the tenets of agenda Sun was selected to Islam and not setting and framing represent the interest humanity. The Sun on theories, the study of Christianity. the other hand was evaluates the Editorial comments of more humanistic in its comments of the both newspapers on editorial comments.*

officially secular. Consequently, international events affecting Christians and Muslims in other parts of the world tend to resonate strongly with Nigerian Christians and Muslims often leading to actions with grave consequences for the nation's peace and development. It is common to hear Nigerian Christians praying for Israel because the Bible urges them to do so. Similarly, many Nigerian Muslims believe that the city of Mecca (and the country of Saudi Arabia) should be preserved and protected from religious contamination. The implication of this paradigm on the geo-culture of Nigerians is the westernization of the largely cosmopolitan South and the Islamization/Arabization of the largely Muslim North.

The media is a tool of socio-cultural influence. Nigerian media have largely performed this role with their surveillance and correlation of socio-cultural issues. One of the socio-cultural issues which influence the operations of the media in Nigeria is religion. To this end, the religious culture of the environment in which a newspaper is published as well as the religious disposition of the publisher would reflect on the editorial output of such newspaper. For instance, Media Trust Limited (publishers

of Daily Trust, Weekend Trust and Sunday Trust newspapers) is published in the northern part of Nigeria by a northern Muslim. Therefore, it is expected that the newspaper would uphold Islamic values in the wider secular Nigerian society. Similarly, *The Sun* newspaper which is published in southern Nigeria by a southern Christian is expected to reflect and preserve Christian values in the midst of national secularism. It is therefore expected that their framing of religious issues.

Religion plays a fundamental part in global terrorism. International “terrorists” and terrorist organizations like Osama bin Laden, Abubakar Al Baghdadi, Ibrahim Shekau, Islamic State (IS), Islamic State in West African Province (ISWAP) and Boko Haram, claim to be acting in the wider interest of their faith. Before them were Christian terrorist organizations like the Irish Republican Army (IRA). Whenever there is a terrorist attack, newspapers are quick to condemn the acts either in a defensive or offensive tone. For example, when a Muslims commit acts of terror, Christian reporters/publications are likely to see it as an act to erode Christian values and entrench Islamic values by force in the affected area. Muslim reporters on the other hand would rush to dissociate the perpetrators from Islam reminding us that Islam is a religion of peace and that the terrorists are lone actors. If the terrorist is a Christian on the other hand, Muslim reporters/publications would rush to amplify it focusing on the religion of the terrorist while Christian reporters/publications would refer to the terrorists as gunmen.

It is against this background that this work seeks to examine the framing of two recent international acts of terrorism by two Nigerian newspapers. The first event happened on March 15, 2019 in Christchurch, New Zealand while the second one happened on April 21, 2019 in three Sri Lankan cities (Colombo, Negombo and Batticaloa). Both acts of terrorism were committed against worshippers in places of worship.

In the New Zealand incident, a Caucasian man named Brenton Tarrant stormed a mosque during Friday service and opened fire on the worshippers. He killed fifty worshippers and injured scores of others. He streamed his act of terror live on social media for the world to see. The terrorist, a 28 year-old is from Australia and he has been described as a white supremacist. The government of New Zealand has unequivocally

condemned the terrorist act and steps have been taken to prevent a reoccurrence of such events.

On Easter Sunday, April 21, 2019, another set of terrorists struck in a coordinated attack on Christians in Sri Lanka. The attacks took place in three cities (Colombo, Negombo and Batticaloa). Bombs were detonated in three churches while worshippers were having the Easter service. International hotels and resorts where people often gather for picnics during festive periods were also targeted. So far, reports reveal that 290 people have died and over 500 people are battling with injuries sustained from the acts of terror.

### **Statement of Problem**

There is an asymmetry in the coverage of international religious terrorism by Nigerian newspapers. Following the terrorist attack on Muslims in New Zealand, both *Daily Trust* and *The Sun* newspapers covered the issue extensively. Both newspapers wrote editorial opinions on the terrorist act using different frames.

In contrast following the terrorist attack on Christians in Sri Lanka, *Daily Trust* newspaper wrote an editorial absolving Islam from blame in the attacks while *The Sun* newspaper did an editorial condemning the act. The relative depth of coverage given to both acts of terror by both publications indicate differences in the religious dynamics within the editorial board of each medium as well as the dominant religious paradigm in the environment hosting the publications.

It is important to say that all lives matter. Humanity should come before religion and evil actions should be condemned irrespective of our religious or ideological proximity to the perpetrators. Similarly, good deeds should be applauded without recourse to the religion, ethnicity or race of the person(s) doing it. It is problematic that newspapers escalate or downplay acts of terror depending on the religious affinity of the perpetrators or the victims to the publishers or members of the editorial board.

### **Objectives of the Study**

This study seeks to achieve the following objectives:

1. To compare the narratives used by *Daily Trust* and *The Sun* newspapers on the terrorist attack in New Zealand.

2. To compare the narratives employed by *Daily Trust* and *The Sun* newspapers on the terrorist attack in Sri Lanka.

### Research Questions

Based on the study objectives of this study, the following are the questions which this study seeks to answer:

1. Are there differences in the narratives used by *Daily Trust* and *The Sun* newspapers on the terrorist attack in New Zealand?
2. What are the differences in the narratives employed by *Daily Trust* and *The Sun* newspapers on the terrorist attack in Sri Lanka?

### Theoretical Framework

This study is situated on the theoretical foundations of the Agenda Setting and Framing theories. They are discussed below:

#### Agenda setting theory

The Agenda setting theory is an explanation of the relationship between the importance given to news items/events by the media and the importance which the audience attach to same. There is a suggestion that the importance given to issues by the media directly affects the importance given to same by the audience (Nayyar, 2007, p. 99). The theory was propounded by Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw in 1972. The theory states that “the ways that news media coverage can prioritize issues, or set the agenda, for the public” (Littlejohn & Foss, 2009, p. 31). There is an attribution great powers to the media by the theory. However, the power is not absolute because the media only tell “people not what to think, but what to think of” (Nayyar, 2007, p. 101).

In relation to this study, the relative importance attached to the two terrorist attacks in New Zealand and Sri Lanka by *Daily Trust* and *The Sun* newspapers could influence the importance which their readers would attach to the attacks. However, this may not be totally true because the average media consumer relies on a number of media for information on a daily basis. So, if the newspapers had not reported the news, their readers would have gotten the news from other media especially the social media on which the New Zealand terrorist live-streamed his attack on

worshippers in a Christchurch mosque. In other words, the coverage of the terrorist acts by the two newspapers is a reflection the huge human interest in the incidents. The human interest was facilitated by globalization. Other local and international media as well as social media reported the news. So the importance attached by the readers of *Daily Trust* and *The Sun* newspapers to the terrorist attacks under review may not be a direct product of the coverage given to the issues by the two newspapers.

The role of ownership in agenda setting must be highlighted here. The interest of the owner is protected in the choice of stories to cover as well as the wording of each report. It is therefore possible that the members of the editorial board of *The Sun* newspaper did not deem it fit to do an editorial on the New Zealand mosque massacre because a thorough analysis of the issue and the terrorist would indirectly cast aspersion on Christianity which is the religion of the publisher. In the same vein, doing a comprehensive report on the Sri Lanka church bombings by *Daily Trust* could indirectly cast aspersion on Islam which is the religion of the publisher and most of the editorial staff of *Daily Trust* newspaper. It must be stated that Christianity and Islam are seemingly in a direct competition with each other across the globe.

### **Framing**

This theory is a second level agenda setting. It challenges the position of the Agenda Setting theory that the media gives us what to think about and not what to think. Framing believes that the media indeed tells us what to think and does not merely give us what to think about. The theory suggests that the media directly shape our opinion on issues through their presentation of the news. Media owners, through media workers, can shape the opinion of their audience by “presenting content in a way as to guide its interpretation along certain forced lines” (Nayyar, 2007, p. 101). In relation to this study, the two newspapers under review are likely to frame the incidents in ways that would protect the dominant religions on their respective editorial boards. Although they may not agree in principle with acts of terrorism committed by people who share the same faith with them, they may not dwell heavily on such reports because it could portray

their religions in bad light. They could also publish commentaries about the events in ways that would dissociate their faiths from acts of terror. This explains why *Daily Trust* newspaper did an editorial on the terrorist attack in New Zealand and *Vanguard* newspaper did not do the same even though both of them had extensively covered the event.

### **Methodology**

This study employs a qualitative design. The method of study is Critical Discourse Analysis. This is because the method investigates the underlying motives behind the texts used in social interaction. Critical Discourse Analysis is an analytical paradigm that is interested in the demystification of ideologies “and power through the systematic and reproducible investigation of semiotic data” (Wodak & Meyer, 2008, p. 3). Semiotic data in this regard refers to writings or recordings. Researchers using CDA freely take clear positions reflecting where their interests lay without neglecting the scientific methodology (Onifade, 2015, p. 64). According to Teun Van Dijk, Critical Discourse Analysis is a dissident research which allows analysts and researchers to take “explicit positions” in their quest to “understand, expose, and ultimately resist social inequality” (Van Dijk, 2001, p. 352). This approach would help us investigate and expose the inequality in the reportage of the two terrorist act under review by the two newspapers under consideration.

CDA is a method of research which primary focuses on “the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context” (Van Dijk, 2001, p. 352). It focuses on how language influences power and how power influences the use of language within a social context.

By focusing on the relationship between power and language use, CDA “reveals the way discourses are used ... for the development of new knowledge” (Taiwo, 2007, p. 219). The two newspapers are powerful tools and sites of cultural production and they exercise their powers through their coverage and framing of issues. The readers’ perception of the terrorist acts as well as their perception of the newspapers under review are new knowledge brought about by the use treatment of the issues by both newspapers.

### Population and Sample

All the national newspapers published in Nigeria have reported the two issues under consideration to some extent. However, *Daily Trust* and *The Sun* newspapers were purposively selected for this study because they are arguably bastions of Islam and Christianity respectively. The editorials of each of the newspapers on the two acts of terrorism are the sample. In all, there are four entries. Two entries were taken from Daily Trust newspaper while another two entries were taken from The Sun newspaper.

### Data Analysis

The data for this study are texts from the editorials of the two newspapers under examination. They are analysed below:

#### Analysis of the Christchurch Mosque Attack

The first entry for this incident is from Daily Trust newspaper. It is titled "New Zealand's evil mosque attacks" and it was published on March 21, 2019; six days after the terrorist act in Christchurch.

The dastardly attack on two mosques in the New Zealand city of Christchurch on Friday last week caused shock and revulsion around the world and was one of the worst episodes of hate crime, terrorism and mass murder witnessed in recent times. Fifty people died and another 50 were injured when Brenton Tarrant, a 28-year-old Australian white supremacist and neo-Nazi, attacked two mosques in quick succession during Friday prayers.

The extract above is the opening paragraph of *Daily Trust's* opinion on the Christchurch massacre. The paragraph rightly describes the event as a sad moment in human history. It also describes the terrorist as a white supremacist and neo-Nazi.

He first attacked Al Noor Mosque in Christchurch... He killed three people near the entrance and many others inside a larger room...The terrorist then went to his car, retrieved another weapon, returned to Al Noor mosque and killed more people.

As he left, he killed a woman near the footpath as she pleaded for help. He shot other people in the pathway before he drove out at high speed to Linwood Islamic Centre, five kilometres away... Some of the worshippers

carried out many heroic acts of bravery...Tarrant killed 42 people at Al Noor mosque and another seven at Linwood while one person later died in hospital. The victims included nationals of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Jordan, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia and they ranged in age from 2 to 71.

In the extract above, the editorial paints a gruesome picture of how the attack took place while also commending the bravery of some of the victims. It also gives a list of the nationalities of some of the victims. The mode of presentation has the potential to stir resentment in the heart of Muslim readers and this could lead to immediate or future attacks on Christians across the world. The countries of origin of the victims like Saudi Arabia, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Bangladesh are hotbeds of radical Islam and it would be a miracle if there are no reprisal attacks on Christians in those countries. Interestingly, the terrorist is not a Christian but a white supremacist and neo-Nazi and this fact may be lost on uneducated Muslims who may want to retaliate. On the home front, the framing of the extract above may push some radical Muslims in the northern part of Nigeria to take up arms against Christians in the North. It is good to recall that this has happened in the recent past.

This Australian terrorist received some inspiration from US President Donald Trump, whom he described in the manifesto as “a symbol of renewed white identity and common purpose.” President Trump kind of justified the praise because when he was asked if he thought white nationalists were a growing threat around the world, he said, “I don’t really. I think it’s a small group of people that have very, very serious problems. It’s certainly a terrible thing.”

In the extract above, the editorial links the terrorist to President Trump of the United States of America on the ideological level. Indeed Donald Trump rose to power on white supremacist rhetoric and his success has led to the growth of right wing extremist politics across the world especially in Eastern Europe. President Trump seemingly hates Muslims and he has blamed them for global terrorism while making efforts to shut them out of the United States of America. Linking his to the terrorist acts of right wing extremists and white supremacists amounts to paying him back in his own coin.

Prime Minister Ardern, who has received praise for her response to the attacks, described it as an “act of extreme and unprecedented violence” and said it was “one of New Zealand’s darkest days.” This incident caused outrage and revulsion around the world and has been condemned all over the world.

We join the rest of the world in expressing outrage and in condemning this and all other terrorist violence by state and non-state actors throughout the world. It is irrational, demonic, satanic, cruel, ungodly, reprehensible and abominable. Experts have warned that more copycat attacks of this kind could yet occur in other parts of the world and we therefore call on authorities in all countries to take measures to avert a likely recurrence. Hate crimes have not solved and will never solve any problems and all humanity must come together to help extinguish them.

Although the newspaper admits that the Prime Minister of New Zealand has received praise for her response to the attacks, the newspaper did not deem it fit to special mention her to the readers. This is arguably because she is a Christian. Her response to the attacks is exemplary worthy of emulation by other leaders of the world. She has facilitated speedy amendment to the laws of the country in order to sooth the pain of the Muslim world and to show that she values human lives irrespective of faith, colour or creed. No Muslim country would have given the same reaction if the situation had been the other way round. The newspaper reiterated its view on the attacks and called on all humanity to help in extinguishing the flames of hate crime.

### **Terror in New Zealand**

The second entry is from The Sun newspaper and the title is “Terror in New Zealand”. It was published on March 24, 2019. Below is a critical examination of the opinion of the newspaper. The title reflects the thought of the editorial board on the dastardly act.

We join millions all over the world in condemning the savage, heinous and unprovoked massacre of innocent worshippers in two mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand on March 15. The Australian coward who perpetrated this outrage has been described as a far-right extremist, an Islamophobist, a vermin of the worst kind. We appeal to Muslims all over

the world not to succumb to the natural first instinct and the temptation to revenge but to exercise calm and understanding in the face of obvious and extreme provocation.

The text above is the opening paragraph of the editorial and it unequivocally condemns the act of terrorism. It reiterates the classification of the terrorist as an Islamophobist. The editorial board had a premonition that there would be reprisal attacks by Muslims and then made an attempt to pacify Muslims all over the world from making retaliatory attacks on non-Muslims. That premonition would come to pass a month later when Muslim terrorists would bomb Christian worshippers and lodgers Sri Lanka on Easter Sunday.

This incident has now further confirmed, if the world ever needed a confirmation, that right-wing terrorism has become the greatest menace, a growing but a most pernicious threat to international peace and security. The world has spent the last three decades obsessed with and engrossed in fighting Islamic terrorism. But keen observers of the field of violence have been warning since the last 10 years that right-wing terrorism is the new danger.

In the extract above, the newspaper submits that right-wing terrorism has become a greater threat to world peace and security than radical Islam. This is a noble gesture from an editorial board than is predominantly Christian. It is also a noble expression because Christianity and Islam seem to be in direct competition in Nigeria. A board of bigots would have downplayed the actions of the terrorist and perhaps rationalized it within the context of Islamic terrorism.

... Now these forces have now multiplied from the United States through France, to Austria, Poland, Hungary and now New Zealand threatening race and religious war and violence against innocent, destitute immigrants who actually need and deserve help. The biggest victims have been Muslims, Africans and, even, Jews...

The growth of fascists and neo-Nazis across Europe and America is alarming and they have been emboldened by the apathy exhibited by world leaders. The newspaper believes that the biggest victims are Muslims, Africans and possibly Jews. This is an indication that the editorial board respects the views and interests of Muslims.

What happened in Christchurch has shown that the world has become too complacent about racism, bigotry, and white supremacist ideology which clearly produced the Christchurch tragedy. The West has got its priorities wrong in this matter, stashing up billions upon billions to fight a vanishing Islamist terror while ignoring the clear and present danger of white supremacist violence that is obviously going to kill thousands very soon.

In the extract above, the newspaper emphasizes that the world has got its priorities wrong in the search for peace. It stated that Islamic terror is vanishing and thus there is no need to spend outrageous sums of money chasing after spent forces. Rather the greater danger involves white supremacists, bigots and racists who are members of political parties and social movements across Europe. Their potential for violence is greater than the potential of Islamic Jihadists. This is a strong defence of Islam by a predominantly Christian editorial board.

The hero from Christchurch is no less a personage than the New Zealand Prime Minister, Mrs. Jacinda Ardern, who lamented “the worst day in New Zealand history.” ... She ordered that the legislation be drafted to ban military style semi-automatic and assault weapons, high capacity magazines. She did not mince her words; the legislation would likely be passed in the next two weeks. That is leadership. We commiserate with the families of the deceased and urge the world to rise up to this growing danger.

The concluding paragraph which is presented above and it eulogises the Prime Minister of New Zealand for putting up a good fight and helping the survivors. She also demonstrated the political will to control access to weapons in the country. The editorial board of *Daily Trust* did not deem it fit to single her out for recognition even though we could argue that she was only doing her job. However, we must understand that many leaders especially in the developing world would not have tackled the challenges head on. They would have delegated their subordinates to the affected area instead of appearing in person and condoling with their people.

### **Analysis of the Discourse on the Sri Lanka Bombing**

The editorial opinion of *Daily Trust* and *The Sun* newspapers on the Sri Lanka bombings are discussed below. The first entry is from *Daily Trust* and it is titled “Sri Lanka’s Easter Day terror”.

The world was horrified by the terror attacks on churches and five-star hotels across Sri Lanka on Easter Sunday, leaving over 200 persons dead and over 500 others wounded.

Though Sri Lanka has been enmeshed in religious conflicts, as Sinhala Buddhist nationalism overrides other religions, including Islam, Christianity and Hinduism, terror attacks by Jihadists on Christians and churches in the South-East Asian country are a new phenomenon. Previously, there used to be Sinhala Buddhist nationalist attacks on Muslims, Christians and Hindus, worsening the living conditions of non-Buddhists in a country that prides itself as a state destined “to protect and foster” Buddhism.

The extract above is from the opening paragraphs of the editorial opinion of the newspaper on the Sri Lanka bombings. The newspaper rightly calls the incident a terrorist act but subtly plays down the number killed in the attacks. It rightly reports that over 200 people were killed but it should have said that over 300 was killed because the official count puts it at 359. That is closer to 500 than it is to 200.

In the next paragraph, the paper quickly moves to defend Islam by describing the attacks by Jihadists on Christians in Sri Lanka as a new phenomenon. It moves on to deflect attention from Islam by telling readers that the Buddhist majority in the country made life difficult for the Muslim, Christian and Hindu minorities. This is an indication that the editorial board of the newspaper is protective of the image of Islam around the world.

In a space of one week, so much has been achieved as many members of the extremist Muslim group, National Tawheed Jamath (NTJ), affiliated to the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS), were arrested. The terror group’s headquarters was destroyed.

The board of the newspaper commended the swift response of the Sri Lankan government and security agencies leading to the arrest of members of the terrorist group National Tawheed Jamath (NTJ) (an affiliate of ISIS) which claimed responsibility for the attacks. The group claimed it carried out the attack in response to the terrorist act against Muslims in a mosque in New Zealand a month earlier.

Perhaps one of the shocks that emanated from the Sri Lanka bombings emanates from the fact that some of the bombers came from the elite class of Sri Lankan society... the attackers appeared to be mostly middle-class... Reports said some had links to the richest families in Colombo.

Also worth commending was government's sack of defence secretary Hemasiri Fernando and Inspector General of Police Pujith Jayasundara because they failed to act promptly on an intelligence report about an impending terror attack on churches in Sri Lanka. It is unfortunate that the inaction of these individuals has led to the avoidable killings.

In the extract above, the attempt to further divert attention from the influence of Islam in the attack continues. The editorial says that some of the bombers were from the elite class of Sri Lankan society. This negates the earlier position of the board that only Buddhists constitute the top echelon of the Sri Lankan society to the exclusion of other religious groups. If they are from the middle and upper classes of Sri Lanka or if they have links to some of the richest families in Colombo, then the accusation that the Buddhists exclude Muslims from the core of society is faulty and it is a mere distraction from the issue at hand.

The paragraph also commended the government for sacking the Secretary of Defence and the Inspector General of Police for failing to act on intelligence gotten earlier on the planned attack. The newspaper found the two senior officials culpable in the act of terror. However, the sack of the officials as well as the other responses by the government of Sri Lanka shows that the government holds the citizens in high esteem irrespective of religious or ethnic affiliation.

We strongly condemn the NTJ sect members who have shed innocent blood in the name of retaliating for the killing of Muslims in a mosque in New Zealand last month... Islam does not support the kind of revenge that ISIS claimed that Sri Lankan bombers have carried out. Neither does the religion of peace approve of the killing of innocent souls who went to church or stay in hotels. What the suicide bombers did were criminal acts. We encourage the government of Sri Lanka to fish out all collaborators and ensure they are punished according to Sri Lankan laws.

The board finally condemns the act in the sixth paragraph. It reiterates that Islam is a religion of peace. Indeed Islam like all major religions preach

peace in principle but some adherents would always find reasons to be violent. The editorial board called on the government of Sri Lanka to fish out all the collaborators and punish them according to the laws of the land. This should have been the first item on the editorial piece. By being too defensive of Islam and apportioning blame to other religions and government officials, the piece raises questions on the religious composition of the editorial board of the newspaper. The members should have displayed concern for the human race first before apportioning blame or dissociating the dominant religion on the board from the terrorist act. The fact remains that the terrorists are Muslims and they carried out the attack in the name of the religion.

### **The Sri Lanka attacks**

The second entry is from the Sun newspaper and is captioned “The Sri Lanka attacks”. It was published on April 28, 2019. The editorial is analysed below:

Just when we thought the world has broken free of the murderous hold on terrorists, we were shocked into reality last Sunday, Easter Sunday, the holiest day in the Christian calendar, as nine Sri Lankan terrorists unleashed unprecedented carnage on innocent Christians worshipping in three churches, and spilled the blood of tourists in three hotels. They killed 359 souls, men, women and children and wounded more than 500. We vehemently condemn those acts and call on all men of goodwill everywhere in the world to do the same.

The opening paragraph of the editorial reflects the dominant religion on the editorial board of the newspaper. It shows that most members of the board are Christians like the publisher of the newspaper. The board condemns the act in strong terms and calls on the rest of the world to do the same irrespective of religious or ethnic inclinations.

There have been overt insinuations that these murders were perpetrated as a reprisal to the Christchurch massacre in two mosques in Australia five weeks ago. Whether this is true or not, the carnage in Sri Lanka appears like a dastardly act. The carnage in Sri Lanka is clearly the next most destructive terrorist attack in the world since September 11, 2001. It is clearly a reminder that the struggle against terrorism must continue and,

indeed, there is an urgent need for a renewed commitment by world leaders.

The extract above buttresses the narrative that the attacks were is retaliation to the previous one which was carried out against Muslims in Christchurch, New Zealand. Interestingly, the newspaper had earlier pleaded with Muslims all over the world to resist the urge to revenge the Christchurch mosque shootings. The reaction is greater than the original sin and the victims of the retaliatory bombings do not share the same faith or nationality with the perpetrator of the first terrorist act in New Zealand. The President and Prime Minister of Sri Lanka... were expressing how sorry they were about the dereliction of duty of their security officials in sharing information which would have averted the catastrophe... Even the dismissal of the Sri Lankan police chief and defence minister does not even begin to atone for this monstrous disaster. The moral is: do not ignore any lead, or warning, no matter how tenuous.

The editorial board stressed the need for greater collaboration among security organizations in every country. It identified inter-agency rivalry as one of the reasons that led to the successful implementation of the attacks. This rivalry is a common feature in most countries and eradicating it would lead to greater collaboration and greater security of lives and properties in the world. Unlike the view of *Daily Trust* newspaper, the editorial did not gloat over the sack of the Defence Minister and the Inspector general of police as their dismissal could not atone for the terrible loss experienced by families, organizations the Sri Lankan nation and the world at large.

But massacres like last week's are clearly threats to international peace and security and must rouse the United Nations (UN) Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres, to place the issue in the UN's agenda at both the Security Council and the General Assembly. It is obvious that terrorism cannot be truly overcome without a truly global action. Peace remains the most vital element for global wellbeing and prosperity. The killings must be stopped at all costs. The world cannot pretend to be moving in the right direction when innocent people could be butchered for no reason other than their religion.

The editorial calls for greater and more decisive action against terrorism by the United Nations. It reiterates the importance of peace in the global peace, development and prosperity. Indeed failure to take action against all extremist groups irrespective of religion or geographical location would lead to the growth of terrorists all over the world killing and maiming people in the name of religion. Killing in the name of religion would not qualitatively increase or decrease any religion. Rather people are likely to cling to their faith in times of persecution.

Respect for the religious beliefs of every individual has long been accepted universally, and religious freedom is a key to the fundamental freedoms which must be protected under all circumstances. Ultimately, every religion would be judged by its contributions to the wellbeing of the human race.

In the extract above, the newspaper calls for respect for the religious beliefs of all humans at all times. It submits that the value attached to a religion would depend on its contributions to humanity and not the amount of destruction it is able to inflict on opposing faiths. This pattern of thought has the potential to promote peaceful co-existence and cooperative development in the multi-religious, multiracial and multiracial in which we live.

### **Conclusion**

In the case of the attacks on worshippers in New Zealand mosques, both Daily Trust and The Sun newspapers condemned the attacks. However, Daily Trust newspaper framed the editorial in a manner that had the potential to stir negative emotions in Muslims around the world leading to reprisal attacks. The Sun on the other hand unequivocally condemned the act and begged Muslims not to retaliate. The Sun absolved Islam of complicity in the current trend of global terrorism pushing the blame on white supremacists.

In the case of the bombing of Christians in Sri Lanka, Daily Trust was late in condemning the actions of the bombers instead it attempted to rationalize it as a product of Buddhist marginalization of the religious minorities in the country. Daily Sun also condemned the attack but it did not blame it on Islam. It however called for global action against all forms of terrorism.

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