

CODE OF ETHICS

Journalistic Code of Ethics

Introduction

Members of this profession are one professional family devoted to pursuing the truth, and retain their dignity from their adherence to national principles and the defense of the nation's freedom. We adhere to integrity, honour, justice and accuracy. Freedom of expression is a basic condition for a successful medium, a civilized gain achieved through long-term struggle and an important article in the international declaration of human rights. However, responsibility is a basic condition for the practice of this freedom, so that it does not cross the boundary into other individuals' freedoms, and so that this freedom can abide with the constitution's principles and texts which allow journalists to carry out their mission with liberty, expressing the ebbs and flows of public opinion within the framework of international covenants, namely Article 19 of the International Declaration of Human Rights and Article 10 of the European Convention for Human Rights, in admission of the reader's right to comment on published material, without using it for purposes of libel, blackmail or the doing of any personal harm and with the publisher's awareness of their duties that preserve the rights of individuals without pressure, coercion, prejudice or insult to any of the members of this organization, whether they are subordinates or superiors. To these ends, a Code of Ethics has been established to which all members of this foundation must adhere in action and in spirit. Please note that the code of ethics also applies for photographers and cartoonists.

General guidelines

Press freedom is part and parcel of the nation's freedom and journalism follows the international principles of freedom of expression, human rights and democracy, and develops the culture of citizenship in every individual, without differentiating between people or ridiculing them. This profession rises above hatred and bias, as such democracy and journalism both embrace the notion of merging, reject the notion of isolating, encourage open and free discussion of citizen's interests and do not believe in isolationism.

Writing news reports centres around respecting the truth; people have the right to knowledge, which is the core of journalism and its goal and it is what necessitates eliminating any obstacles that stand before publishing of truth and knowledge, or before the reader's ability to comment, respond and correct. Journalism has a special responsibility towards maintaining general protocols, rights of humans, including women, families, children, minorities, and intellectual rights.

Qatari journalists are unified and support each other and complete each other's work. They respect codes of conduct and principles of dealership with one and other as they do avoiding all which may tarnish the reputation of journalism or those who work in it regarding all that is connected to the pursuance of truth, honesty, justice, integrity, accuracy, and the adherence to collegueship duties, professional ethics, and solving problems within.

Preliminary guidelines of the code of ethics

- 1- A journalist may not use his profession or the means of publishing available to him/her to accuse citizens, organizations or leaders without evidence, to fabricate details from their personal lives, or taint reputations for personal gain. In the case that a citizen's personal behaviour has a material effect on the interest of the public, due coverage shall be given utilizing facts and figures and without resorting to rumour and heresy. Moreover, every effort should be instilled to preserve the personal privacies of subjects, publishing only that which pertains to issues of honour, honesty, without touching the subject's human rights or their freedom.
- 2- Professional and ethical responsibility dictate that phrasing of news must not be affected by personal interests or personal and political convictions. Phrasing also may not be biased towards or influenced by any third party, be it an individual, business, or organization, political or otherwise. Conflict of interest, encouragement of racism, bigotry, challenging of others' faiths or other calls for hatred or distinction between sectors of society are not permissible. Journalists must present stories in a balanced manner that reflects all points of view concerned equally.
- 3- News is to be presented in news pages and news columns only, in an objective and fair manner, and deliberate deviance from the truth is not permissible. Headlines must accurately reflect the content of their respective stories, so must photos provide the accurate image taken from the story with which they are placed.
- 4- Reporters must access original documents and photos, i.e. those which have not been tampered with, summarized, or otherwise edited. No material not pertaining to original sources will be published.
- 5- If published content is to be proven incorrect, inaccurate or inappropriately harmful journalists are to publish the corrected information as soon as they have been notified of the error. Corrections must be published in the same place and format as the original story and are not to be hidden in a place in the paper where they will not be clearly identified. Corrections and responses are a right to all the reporter's subjects, provided that the response or correction are within the framework of the original article and do not violate the law or the rules of public conduct and also that they maintain the reporter's right to comment.
- 6- Journalists must respect difference of opinion in society. Journalists are to avoid the use of terms or phrases which insinuate libel or target any insult towards any race or group of people. Stories must include the qualities and shortcomings in ideas and suggestions and not deliberately attack specific persons. Lies, unproven accusations or rumours are not to be treated as fact in news stories or opinion pieces, for the harm they may cause to individuals once published. Journalists must make every effort to cover different points of view of citizens and expatriates pertaining to an issue or topic, including members of different religions, genders and cultures.

Journalists are to avoid stereotypes and biases towards any religion, gender or culture in their coverage.

- 7- Material used in news stories is to be fair, honest, accurate, unbiased and correct whereas the paper's editorial is permitted to express the paper's opinion about an issue and to take a stance on a matter or support a candidate over another, provided it explains the reasons for the paper's position. Editorials must be clearly marked as the paper's opinion, separated from the news pieces in the paper, consistently placed in the same, specified page for opinions.
- 8- Sources are to be named and fully identified in news reports whenever it is possible in order to increase trust and credibility of the source. Readers have the right to know the source of information therefore journalists must make every effort to find the most credible sources for stories, namely those sources which have experience and direct observation of an event or issue. In the event that a source insists on remaining anonymous, the journalist must endeavor to find 2 separate and independent sources to verify the facts published.
- 9- No information from an anonymous source is to be used without prior permission from the editor in charge or without their full knowledge. Journalists must protect the anonymity of their source at all costs if the publishing of the source's details will bring harm to the source. Having a reputation for source protection strengthens the paper's ability to expose corrupt and illegal behavior. A reporter must keep his promise to his/her source; if the source gives information off the record, the information remains unusable until the source gives permission for its use.
- 10- Journalists are forbidden to accept gifts or services in any form, monetary or otherwise, direct or indirect, from local or foreign foundations, in exchange for positive reviews or for neglecting negative aspects of the coverage.
- 11- Advertisements or any content that has been paid for must be clearly identified so the reader may clearly distinguish between news coverage and advertising material. A reporter may not collect or edit advertisements, nor may he/she receive any benefits or privileges, directly or indirectly, for revising, editing, or publishing advertisements, nor may he/she sign his/her name on commercial material.
- 12- Advertisements at odds with social values and codes of conduct and the message of journalism are not to be published. Editors are to maintain a clear distinction between what is news and what is commercial material and they are to abide by the internationally agreed upon page space permitted to be allocated for commercial use and not to prioritize it over news.
- 13- Journalistic production must be original, theft of articles, news or page layout from other publications is a severe professional violation.
- 14- Reporters are not to take on a false name to obtain information from a source or to mislead the readers.
- 15- Reporters are not to withhold or postpone the release of information, especially when disclosure of that information is in the public's interest.
- 16- Quoting must be accurate and exact and placed in between quotation marks. Paraphrased or summarized words are not to be placed in quotation marks. The quoted subject must be informed that they are being quoted.
- 17- Reporters may not tackle investigations carried out by the authorities or court procedures in a manner that seeks to sway the procedure or investigation. Journalists may not include in their reports the details of a crime, the names or

photos of those accused or convicted without the consent of the accused or convicted, or of their relatives, without prior consent from the relatives. Victims and child witnesses are to be dealt with carefully. Names of victims of sexual assault should not be included in reports without legal justification.

- 18-Reporters must respect every individual's right to privacy and to protect his/her reputation and image. Stories and articles pertaining to individual's private lives are not to be published unless it is in the public's interest. Reporters and photographers must also pay care when interviewing or photographing children, victims or other individuals who warrant society's protection.
- 19-Journalists, whether reporters, editors or managers, are responsible individually and collectively for preserving the profession's integrity, secrecy and credibility as they are committed to exposing any members of the foundation who harm the profession or use their writing for personal gain.
- 20-Journalists are to abstain in any of their professional relationships from slandering, bringing material or emotional harm, or exploiting positions of authority to squander the rights of their co-workers.
- 21-A reporter's responsibility is comprehensive and he/she may not place it on the Editor-in-chief claiming to have been following orders.
- 22-Journalists must refrain from publishing works of poor artistic merit and which encourage violence, vile acts and provoke sultriness, the publishing of which would be a violation of society's values. Journalists must:
 - a. Refrain from exaggerating crime reports, publishing scandals, and using inappropriate language
 - b. Discourage and refrain from publishing stories about witchcraft and imposters of spiritual figures or healers
 - c. Refrain from tampering with photos or using photos that have been tampered with.
- 23-Journalists must identify themselves when conducting interviews or dealing with any individual or foundation and refrain from using for personal gain or passing on to a third party any financial information they may acquire before publishing. Journalists may not report on stocks or bonds which they or their relatives stand to gain from.

Journalist's Rights

Journalist's have rights which are the duty of the other parties to meet and fulfill and are exemplified in the following:

- 1- Journalists have a right to be safe to report correct information and express opinions without being subjected to threats of danger. Journalists are not to be coerced into identifying their sources unless legally required to do so.
- 2- Journalists are not to be threatened or blackmailed in any way into publishing false information or any information which conflicts with their professional conduct.
- 3- Journalists have the right to obtain information and news from their sources and the right to receive responses to queries on information, statistics and news as they have the right to view all non-classified official documents.
- 4- Journalists are not to be moved to non-journalistic departments or prevented in any way from practicing their work as journalists.

- 5- Journalists are not to be barred from attending public meetings and open sessions unless access to them is legally restricted.
- 6- Insulting or assaulting a journalist on account of their work is a breach of freedom of expression and the reader's right to information and is not tolerated.
- 7- Journalists have a right to means of safety and protection whilst performing their duties in battlefields or disaster areas.
- 8- Journalists have the right to expose sources of incomplete or inaccurate information and to hold that source accountable.

Execution

In order for the requirements of this code to be respected, the following must be taken into account:

- The requirements of this code are to be applied to all kinds of journalism.
- This code applies only to those associated with a particular publication.
- Should any of the articles in this code be violated, the appropriate penalty will be received according to the publication's penalties' charter and in accordance with Article Number 14 of the Labour Law for the year 2004.
- Penalties are categorized according to the severity of the breach and to the internal charter's system into:

** Verbal warning

** Written warning

** Deduction from salary

** Suspension from work and placement under investigation

** Termination of employment based on findings of an administrative investigation