



I'LAM

MEDIA CENTER FOR ARAB PALESTINIANS IN
ISRAEL

THE MEDIA CHARTER

THE MEDIA CHARTER AND ITS ETHICS

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THE MEDIA CHARTER

THE MEDIA CHARTER AND ITS ETHICS

1. The freedom and professional responsibility of the press

- Journalists and newspapers are bound by principles of 'the freedom and independence of the press, as found within the academic approach, by providing the public with a professional service and publishing the news and opinions in an accurate, fair and responsible manner.
- Journalists and newspapers must tackle political, social and economic pressures with courage, honesty and integrity. Advertising material must be clearly indicated as such.
- Journalists must refrain from giving preference to social, political or economic considerations, ties, loyalties or interests over professional journalistic considerations.
- Journalists and media institutions must refrain from publishing and /or from barring the publication of news items or any other journalistic material of real media value on the basis of social, political or economic ties, loyalties or interests.
- Journalists and media institutions must not disregard or kill an important news story merely because it may not be welcomed by a segment of the 'viewers, readers, listeners'.
- Journalists must refrain from taking on any journalistic assignment which conflicts with his or her personal convictions or professional ethics.

2. Objectivity and human rights

- Journalists and newspapers must differentiate between a news article and their own views in such a manner that this differentiation is made clear to the reader, listener, viewer'.
- The views of journalists must not affect their duty to provide accurate information without being selective and without distortion.
- In their coverage, journalists must rely on general, universal values and on human rights, which are considered to be a part of journalists' objectivity and the responsibility of the profession.
- Objectivity, as a supreme professional value, is consistent with human rights, human freedom, human dignity and other such values.
- Journalists and newspapers must refrain from, and indeed resist, the publication of anything that contains incitement or encouragement to racism or division and discrimination on the basis of national or factional belonging or sex.
- Journalists are to devote great efforts to uncovering all manifestations of racism and discrimination, wherever they may occur.

3. The commitment to the truth, and to probe and investigate the facts

- Newspapers and journalists are not to publish, with prior knowledge or through negligence or carelessness, any false or inaccurate, misleading, misconstrued or implausible material.
- Declarations or speech are not to be attributed to a particular person except as a direct and accurate quotation, in his or her own voice or words, or written in some kind of hand-written document.
- Prior to the publication of a particular news item, journalists and newspapers must probe and investigate the facts and ascertain their authenticity using the most trusted and knowledgeable of sources and employing the greatest degree of caution, according to the needs of the publication.
- “Shortness of time”, “the desire for rapid publication” or “the timeliness or immediacy of publication” do not constitute, in any circumstance whatsoever, a factor exempting journalists or newspapers from carrying out the aforementioned checks and inquiries.
- Even if a piece of information, any piece of information, has been published previously, any person who wishes to rely on it, or to rely on it in the future, is not exempted from reexamining it or making certain that it remains correct.
- Journalists must treat with suspicion information that comes from a party that has an interest in the information, and must make redoubled efforts to carry out journalistic investigations of a high professional standard with regard to all issues of substantial political or social significance.
- Journalists must not contrive non-existent disagreements between the parties being covered merely in order to win a journalistic scoop or for purposes of provocation.

4. The view of the journalist

- Journalists are entitled to express their own views in the material that they publish, but must comply with the following conditions:
 - a. Judgments should not be passed unless they draw upon a clear basis of information within the news item itself.
 - b. The reader should be able to distinguish easily between the information within the news article and the judgments and views of the journalist.

5. Sources of information, accuracy or confidentiality

- Journalists and newspapers must strive to mention the source of each piece of news or opinion. A press release should not be attributed to the editors of the newspaper or to a media outlet unless it has been superseded by deeper and more extensive coverage carried out by the same journalist.
- A source should not be mentioned solely for reasons that relate to the private affairs of the source itself.
- When a source refuses to reveal his or her identity, the motivations and justifications given must be investigated. If these are found to be unsuspecting, his or her wish must be respected, while implying in some way that the source is credible.

- Journalists must not expose their sources to dangers, harassment, persecution or interrogation. Thus they must conceal and protect their sources when revealing them would cause them to experience difficulties.

6. The journalistic scoop

- A journalistic scoop must not lead to damage to the standards of journalistic performance; moreover, a journalistic scoop is not a goal in and of itself, but rather a means of fostering fair competition.

7. Feedback on electronic websites

- Freedom of expression for individuals and groups via the press is the other face of media responsibility. Feedback can be considered to be a translation of this freedom and of the right to self-expression. Freedom of the press and the individual imposes the following rule upon us: the duty to publish responses, even those that do not conform to the approach of the website. Furthermore, journalistic professionalism prescribes the following two rules: a. the duty to not to publish responses that are unrelated to the subject; and b. the duty to not to publish responses that contain defamation or inflict personal harm on the author or on anyone else.

8. Detained, accused, convicted persons and suspects

- Journalists and newspapers are to respect the founding principle that an accused person is innocent until proven guilty.
- Journalists and newspapers are to refrain from publishing the name, photograph or details of a person suspected of committing a crime or an infraction prior to his or her appearance before a court, unless he or she consents to the publication or the publication serves the public's right to know.

9. The correction of errors or apologies

- Journalists and newspapers must acknowledge any publishing error or inaccuracy.
- Journalists and newspapers must re-publish the material once the error has been corrected and afford it equivalent space and importance.
- In case that a party has been injured by the error, he or she must be given the opportunity to correct or refute it.

10. Composition and treatment

- Journalists must avoid using sweeping generalizations and much employ, as far as possible, accurate descriptions.
- Journalists must respect and seek to master their Arabic language skills, in as much as this affects the quality of the media material and its standard of professionalism and has an impact on our Arab identity, which is under threat and persecution from Israeli policies.

11. Conflicts of interest

- Journalists / newspapers are to refrain from “placing themselves” or “being” in a position or situation that raises suspicions concerning “conflicts of interest” between their duties as journalists / newspapers and any other interest.
- The publisher or owner of a newspaper must publish, once per year, a presentation and a clear disclosure of his or her business and economic interests, both inside and outside of the media sphere.
- In case a newspaper has a substantial interest, economic or otherwise, within the media sphere or outside of it, that is related to a published item, a clarification of those economic or other interests must be published alongside that item.
- The names of the publisher of the newspaper, its owner and editor must be published in each edition.

12. Independence / nonpartisanship

- Journalists are to refrain from complying with directions, directives, instructions or threats that relate to his or her journalistic work that are issued by any external party, and in particular by advertisers, an official institutions, or political advertisers.

13. Exposure to pressures

- Journalists must resist and rebuff any pressure to broadcast any material that offends the ethics and honor of the profession.
- Journalists must immediately give notice of any pressure of any kind that they are subjected to. In case that a journalist perceives that the linking of his or her name to an editorial piece would be certain to cause him or her to experience difficulties, then he or she must so inform the highest editorial authority.
- The editorial board must provide the necessary protection and security to its journalists when they are exposed to pressures, and must not yield to those pressures.

14. Prohibited means

- During their attempts to obtain information, journalists / newspapers are to refrain from employing prohibited methods and means that bring the professionalism of journalism into disrepute, including violence, theft, intimidation, enticement, the violation of an individual’s privacy, illegal eavesdropping and the like, for the purpose of obtaining information in a way that breaches the trust of the public in the press and the media.

15. Property rights

- Journalists / newspapers are to refrain from “appropriating” or “transferring” the work of another journalist / newspaper. In case of citing information that has been

published by another media outlet or press agency, journalists / newspapers must cite the identity of the media outlet that was the first to publish it.

16. The relationship between journalist and editor

- Journalistic material should not be interfered with other than for purely professional editorial considerations.
- In case an editor writes off an article written by a specific journalist and prevents it from being published in his or her newspaper, he or she should not violate the journalist's right to publish it in another newspaper.
- No article should be published after its contents have undergone fundamental alteration without obtaining the approval of its author.

17. Guaranteeing ethical conditions for the profession

- The media outlet must take care to train the journalists it employs in all aspects of the ethics of journalistic work.
- The publisher / owner of the newspaper / the owner of the media outlet must provide the necessary conditions, opportunities and protection to enable journalists to work in accordance with the ethics of the profession of journalism.

18. The relationship of the editorship to advertisements and public relations

- Newspapers and journalists must separate and distinguish between advertising material and material that was written by the editorial staff in such a manner that will preclude the publication of advertising material "in the guise of journalistic material or material written by the editorial staff."
- Journalists / newspapers are to refrain from undertaking any work and from providing any service in the field of public relations, advertising or soliciting advertisements. Hence those working in this area should not partake in the provision of any kind of political or political party advertising or commercial advertisements.

19. The relationship of the publisher to the editorship

- The contemporary media is based on the principle of the separation between the authorities of the publisher or the publisher's representative within the newspaper (the board) and the editorial department, which must enjoy complete independence with regard to editorial functions.

20. Professional comradeship

- Journalists must stand alongside their colleagues in the profession and provide them with support, be it against pressures or abuses to which they are subjected by the editor in chief, the owner, society or the Israeli authorities.