
JOURNALISTIC CODE OF ETHICS

The mission of Middle East Broadcasting Networks is to broadcast news and information that is consistently accurate, authoritative, balanced and comprehensive. MBN strives to serve as a model of the free marketplace of ideas and a free press in the American tradition, promoting freedom, democracy and human rights, including freedom of religion. Additionally, MBN has a mandate to present the policies of the United States government in a clear and effective manner through news reporting and responsible discussion.

The Journalistic Code of Ethics applies to all MBN Journalists, defined as those individuals who assign, write, report, edit, post, produce and broadcast news on any of MBN's platforms, including radio, television and digital media. The Journalistic Code of Ethics applies to all content broadcast on television or radio, or posted on any digital platform.

ACCURACY AND SOURCING

MBN's Journalists should ensure that all broadcasts and digital posts are factually accurate.

- The information included should be based on reliable, recognized and authoritative sources. In the event the information is not based on such sources, it must be properly attributed.
- All video or audio obtained from any third party (other than one of MBN's licensed wire services or video providers) should be authenticated.

No report on any MBN platform should be based on rumors, unsubstantiated or outdated information, or unreliable sources. It is more important to be accurate than to be the first to report information.

IMPARTIALITY/AVOIDANCE OF ADVOCACY

MBN's Journalists should present news and information on all MBN platforms in a factual manner that enhances understanding of the events and issues and provides clarity. MBN's Journalists should present opposing or differing views accurately and in a balanced manner. When those whose views are important for balance decline to comment, it is appropriate to note this in the story.

MBN is independent from all political parties, ruling or opposition groups or organizations, émigré organizations, commercial or other special-interest organizations, and religious bodies. MBN does not, explicitly or implicitly, endorse or advocate any specific political, economic, or religious viewpoint. No report broadcast or published by MBN should do so.

COVERAGE OF TERRORISTS

MBN does not provide a platform for terrorists or those who support them. This has long been the policy of all United States international broadcasting organizations. MBN does not broadcast live speeches or interviews with persons designated as terrorists unless the broadcast has been expressly approved, in advance, by the President or the President's designee.

MBN's Journalists should not use material created by terrorist groups (including photos and video) unless approved by the President or the President's designee.

ANONYMOUS SOURCES

Unless approved in advance by the President or the President's designee, persons appearing on MBN's broadcasts or being quoted in MBN's reports should be identified by their real names and, as appropriate, their titles or positions. MBN's Journalists may not promise anonymity or confidentiality to anyone unless they have obtained permission from the President or the President's designee. Such permission will rarely be granted, and generally will be granted only in instances where, for example, the masking of a subject's identity is necessary to protect his or her personal safety.

MBN's Journalists should not include derogatory information in their broadcasts and reports that is based on anonymous sources. Where broadcasts or reports include derogatory comments, these comments should be brought to the attention of the person(s) against whom they were made, and the replies of those persons sought.

MINORS

Minors (anyone under the age of 18) should be interviewed only when their views are important to the story. Where an interview could have safety or legal consequences for a minor, consent from his or her parents or legal guardians should be sought. Questions about obtaining consent should be addressed to the General Counsel.

PROHIBITION OF PERSONAL OPINION/ANALYSIS AND COMMENTARY

Content on all platforms should contain sufficient background information and explanation to enable viewers, listeners or readers to better understand the significance and consequences of the news and information being reported. Background material and explanation is often provided by third parties, and may take the form of analysis or commentary.

* Analysis provides authoritative views on an issue or event from a particular point of view, but states no personal opinion on the part of the speaker. Analysis is preferred over commentary.

* Commentary is analytical in content and judicious in tone but reflects the personal judgment or opinion of the speaker on a particular issue.

MBN's Journalists may occasionally provide Analysis; where they do, it should clearly be labeled as such. MBN's Journalists should not insert their personal opinions in any report on any platform at any time and should not provide Commentary.

TONE OF MODERATION AND RESPECT

MBN's Journalists should conduct their newsgathering (including interviews), broadcasts (including talk shows and debates), and interactions on MBN's branded social media platforms in a calm and professional tone and should project a model of civilized, reasoned discourse, as well as respect for the human rights of all persons. MBN's Journalists and guests should not make religious, racial, ethnic, socio-economic or cultural slurs upon any person or groups or feature material which could be construed as an incitement to violence.

EDITING AND PRODUCTION STANDARDS

MBN's Journalists should ensure that news and information being reported by them on any platform reflects fairly and honestly and without distortion what was said to, or heard or learned by them and/or recorded by MBN's cameras and microphones.

INTERVIEWS

Interviews must be unrehearsed, but it is permissible to have discussions with the interviewee prior to the interview about the purpose of the interview and the general subjects to be covered. All recorded interviews are subject to editing; MBN's Journalists should not represent to any interviewee that the interview will be carried in full.

Interviews should be edited in a straightforward manner, preserving, even in short sound bites, the sense of the interview. Answers may not be taken out of context or edited together in a manner that changes their meaning. The narration leading to a sound bite should reflect the question that elicited the response.

Raw or edited footage or recordings and drafts of stories containing interviews may not be shown, played for or read to an interviewee in advance of broadcast or publication, nor may the interviewee participate in the editing process. It is acceptable to reach out to an interview subject to clarify unclear statements made by him or her.

REQUESTS FOR COPIES, RAW FOOTAGE, DRAFTS OF REPORTS

Requests for copies of stories appearing on any MBN platform should be directed to the Director of Communications. Requests for raw footage or drafts of stories should be sent to the General Counsel. MBN's Journalists may not provide any of these materials to any third party without the permission of the Director of Communications or General Counsel, respectively.

ERRORS AND COMPLAINTS

Factual errors – whether on-air or in print – should be corrected as quickly as possible after their discovery.

Serious errors (*e.g.*, reporting the death of someone who is, in fact, alive) demand immediate correction on-air and/or online. Errors of fact that do not significantly affect a story should nevertheless be corrected on the same program on which they were first broadcast – or on the same site as they were originally published -- as soon as it is practical to do so. All errors should be brought to the attention of the President or the President's designee.

Errors having potential legal consequences should be brought to the attention of the General Counsel before being corrected. Complaints from sources or persons described in a broadcast or story should be referred to the General Counsel. All calls or correspondence from attorneys should be referred to the General Counsel.

ETHICAL CONDUCT

MBN's Journalists shall maintain the highest ethical standards in all conduct, taking particular care to avoid any conflict of interest, or the appearance thereof, in their relations with individuals, groups and/or political or commercial organizations. MBN's Journalists must remain free of associations, activities or conduct that could, or could appear to, compromise their integrity, damage their credibility or jeopardize their journalistic independence.

- MBN's Journalists must refuse gifts, favors, fees, free travel, entertainment (including tickets), accommodations and meals.
- MBN's Journalists should not: accept secondary employment, engage in political campaigns or organizations, hold public office and/or serve in community organizations to the extent any of these could compromise – or appear to compromise -- their journalistic independence or integrity. Permission for all such employment or involvement must be secured from Human Resources before any participation begins.
- MBN's Journalists must not use their employment at MBN for personal gain.
- MBN's Journalists must adhere to the letter and spirit of MBN's Social Media requirements (as set forth below).

MBN's Journalists may not, absent the express advance written permission of the President or the President's designee *and* the General Counsel: (a) appear on radio or television programs, in print, or in commercial advertising; (b) write (under their own names or pseudonyms) for publication (electronic or otherwise) on any topic; or (c) serve in any capacity in any political or advocacy group.

USING MATERIAL BELONGING TO OTHERS

MBN's Journalists use a variety of sources to report and illustrate their reports. The use of material belonging to or created by third parties requires appropriate permission and/or appropriate attribution.

- *Permission:* Some sources for news (e.g., AP, Reuters) are available to MBN's Journalists through subscription agreements paid for by MBN. These sources should be used judiciously (first-hand reporting by MBN staff is always preferable to wire services) but their use does not require additional permission. Other sources (e.g., CNN, *The New York Times*, YouTube) may only be used with a specific license *or* consistent with the principles of Fair Use. The fact that a story, video or photograph is available on-line does not mean that it can be made part of a television or radio broadcast or digital report without either the approval of the rights holder (in the form of a written license agreement) or the permission of the General Counsel. All other uses are strictly prohibited.
- *Attribution:* Material created by third parties (including text, video and graphics) should not be used without proper attribution and credit. MBN's Journalists should use quotation marks around sentences they did not write, and should inform viewers, listeners and readers who wrote them. Maps, graphs, video and charts created by third parties must be properly credited. Using other people's work without attribution constitutes plagiarism, and is strictly prohibited.

All questions about the use of material belonging to others should be addressed to the General Counsel.

SOCIAL MEDIA

It is essential that MBN's Journalists do nothing to damage their credibility, as that could undermine and jeopardize MBN's journalistic mission. Accordingly, MBN's Journalists should not write or repeat anything on any social media site that MBN could not defend as a news organization.

Professional or “Branded” Accounts (When you are representing MBN)

In addition to its websites, MBN has multiple branded accounts – including official Facebook pages, Twitter accounts, YouTube channels, other social media properties, and Professional Accounts (authored by MBN Journalists) -- all of which are designed to promote MBN’s programs and content.

Professional Accounts are created by MBN and are the property of MBN. MBN Management has access to Professional Accounts on a 24/7 basis and may edit, monitor, promote or delete Professional Accounts and/or specific posts thereon.

- Professional Account holders incorporating links or other material from outside sources (including, but not limited to, YouTube, Twitter, Google, Facebook and news providers) should do so judiciously and within the bounds of Fair Use. Questions should be directed to the General Counsel.
- Professional Account holders should not forward content (*e.g.*, Retweet or provide a link) where such forwarding could be viewed as MBN’s endorsement of a cause, policy, campaign or point of view.
- When posting, Professional Account holders are responsible for following the entire Journalistic Code of Ethics, as well as any other applicable policies or procedures at MBN. Accordingly, all posts on all Professional Accounts must be accurate, correctly sourced and fair.
- Inquiries from the press about anything posted on a Professional Account should be sent to the Director of Communications, with a copy to the President or the President’s designee.

Personal Accounts

When online, all MBN Journalists are representatives of MBN and should always be mindful of how their words and links reflect on MBN.

- The Journalistic Code of Ethics applies to all personal social media accounts of all MBN Journalists.
- MBN Journalists who identify themselves as MBN employees on their personal social media accounts *must* state on their biography page that the views expressed are theirs and not those of MBN.
- MBN Journalists are responsible for everything appearing on their personal social media pages; inflammatory or otherwise inappropriate material from third parties must be deleted immediately.

Using Social Media to Gather Information

These rules and policies apply to the use of social media as a reporting tool. Information gathered on social media should be based on reliable, recognized and authoritative sources. To the extent it is not, it must be properly attributed. Journalists must:

- Identify themselves (using their real names) and the purpose of their questions or comments.
- Adhere to all provisions of this Code.
- Properly attribute the platforms or sites used.

VIOLATIONS OF THIS POLICY

Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.