



## Editorial Policy

# IPSO Reporting

Annual statement:

1.1 Website for *The National* to be found at

[www.thenationalnews.com](http://www.thenationalnews.com)

1.2 Damien McElroy

1.3 A London-based newsroom that produces news and content for publication on The National website and associated platforms for international and local audiences.

Factual information about the Regulated Entity:

The National FZ LLC

Note: A news website with UK edition operating as a branch of an overseas company.

2. Attached in a separate file is the Editorial Policy handbook, including an introductory page with links to the Editors Code and other IPSO material.

## Our Editorial Standards:

### Compliance

3. The compliance process established at The National is as follows:

Complainants raising concerns that, in the view of the publication, appear to raise a potential issue under the Editors' Code of Practice should be informed by the responsible person of the existence of the Editors' Code of Practice.

Complainants raising concerns should be told that the publication is regulated by IPSO and provided with relevant contact details.

3.1 The commissioning, desking and sub-editing process is all based on ensuring compliance with the Editors' Code. Information is available on our website in the about-us section, including contacts for the responsible person and IPSO itself. The Ipsos mark is displayed on our homepage. No complaints have been raised in the year but the process as advised by Ipsos is embedded in our newsroom. All staff are provided with the materials as outline and follow-up discussions and training is offered. This training is ad hoc and by arrangement with the individual reporter or editor concerned.

**3.2 No such adverse findings have been made. Note will be taken of any dismissed complaints by the responsible person.**

**3.3 Staff are distributed the Editorial Policy handbook once a year and a follow-up, all staff meeting is held to discuss the importance of this code to our work and consult on any training of staff that may be necessary.**

**Awareness activities:**

**The guidelines set out below are circulated to all newsroom staff.**

# IPSO GUIDELINES

Please find the Editors Code and other essential guides to our work under IPSO.

- The [Editor's Code of Practice](#)
- Subscribe to our [newsletter](#) to receive updates on latest rulings and case studies
- Resources and [guidance](#) for journalists and editors
- The [Journalists Whistleblowing Hotline](#) for journalists to confidentially register their concerns or seek advice

This pack sits alongside the editorial policy of *The National* and ensures reporters and editors follow best practice in all our work.

Please ensure that you familiarise yourself with the above links, including any amendments. Should the industry change its code, you will be notified.

We undertake to provide guidance to the members of the newsroom of *The National* on a regular basis to ensure compliance and adherence to its true spirit.

## INTRODUCTION

*The National* is committed to providing its readers with fair, balanced and accurate information that reflects and preserves the public's confidence in a publication that has been one of the essential components of the international media scene for more than a decade. We at *The National* recognise our respective roles and responsibilities towards the journalism profession in general, and towards this specific publication and its sponsors in particular. This document contains the guidelines, policies, principles and recommended practices that guide us to maintaining and safeguarding our readers' trust.

*The National* has organised its operations as well as its content, whether in print or digital versions, to provide for appropriate separation of sections from an editorial perspective. This editorial policy applies to all platforms and to all sections therein. These guidelines are mostly addressed to our staff of content editors and should be read and understood.

We are aware that our actions reflect on the news organisation, IMI, and the journalism profession. We hold ourselves accountable for our actions and may find ourselves in the awkward position of having to question the conduct of colleagues. Concerns about breaches of these guidelines should be brought to the Editor-in-Chief or Deputy Editor-in-Chief who will deal with each situation confidentially. We realise that these guidelines are not the final word on this matter, and that the standards of conduct herein are not for every possible situation. This document is therefore in a perpetually dynamic state. That said, violations are considered serious actions and could lead to disciplinary action, including dismissal, in accordance with the HR policy.

## INDEPENDENCE

We recognise the importance of maintaining a clearly independent editorial process. *The National* employs editorial professionals who assume conscientious responsibility for content selection and development. *The National* refrains from using any materials that could compromise the independence of the publication's content, or that could be perceived as advertising or as influenced material. We will not be held as obliged or committed to any news source, newsmaker, advertiser or any third party whatsoever. We will never accept honoraria for any of our editorial activities under any circumstances.

We will sidestep any potential conflicts of interest and clear out any inappropriate authority, control or influence on our content. In this context, all editorial staff should not have a vested interest or be engaged with outside interests, investments or business relationships that may result in questioning the fairness and independence of our reporting. In particular, editorial teams covering

their respective sections must not have any direct investments, interests or collaboration with the organisations, stocks or markets they cover.

If we participate in any type of paid content partnership led by the commercial team, it will be clearly defined and labelled for our readership.

## **HONESTY**

*The National* staff members obtain content using only legal, transparent and honest methods. We do not alter the facts or resort to illegal means to obtain them.

Readers trust us to present facts and photos honestly. As such:

- We carefully abide by the accuracy section that follows when it comes to editable content.
- Any photographs we use are only minimally adjusted for colour and minimally cropped for space or to edit out sensitive content, with oversight from a photo editor. It is against our principles to insinuate through photo editing any misrepresentation of the facts. All photo illustrations are labelled as illustrations and approved by the Creative Director.

## **ACCURACY**

*The National* staff are dedicated to the truth. Every member of the editorial process carries the responsibility to strive for accuracy at each step of the editorial process. In this context, our staff work along the below guidelines:

### **PRECISION**

We strive to create content that tells the truth as accurately and fairly as possible. In this context:

- Exercise care in writing headlines and ensure we do not stretch beyond the facts of the story.
- Any quotes and sources or information we use are real and factual, not fictitious or contrived. We do not make assumptions, guess at facts or spellings. We always ask a source for verification.
- We are aware that information attributed to a source may, in fact, turn out to be incorrect, and as such, establishing the credibility of the person being quoted shall always supersede the urgency of publishing the actual news piece in terms of importance.
- We carefully go over stories several times, watching especially for errors of context and balance as well as for spelling and other basic mistakes.
- We shall remain especially vigilant when quoting figures, technical terms, statistical and mathematical computations, crowd estimates and poll results.
- We continuously work to improve our note-taking, and may use tape recorders to back up our field-gathering of notes when sources know that their statements are being recorded.
- We use past library clippings with full awareness that they may contain uncorrected errors.

- We develop checklists of troublesome or frequently used names, streets, titles, etc. and share them across the organisation through our content management systems in order to minimise reporting errors.
- We work to develop our own expertise in the subject matter we are reporting, understanding the areas being investigated and working to develop specialisation in certain contexts.
- We strive to seek for errors in our monitoring for accuracy. We always consider using

“accuracy checks” whereby published stories are sent to sources or experts asking for comment on accuracy, fairness or other aspects.

## **ATtribution**

- We only use the words, photos or illustrations of another person or publication following full permissions and with clear citation or attribution.
- We are careful with attributing within the body of the story any information that comes through the wires and other media and that is not confirmed by a second source. This does not apply for those events on which we bear witness, or on information considered as common knowledge or information confirmed by multiple sources.
- We will always consider revising all or parts of an especially complicated story with primary sources or with third party experts, and we continuously work to ensure that we never actually surrender editorial control in the process.
- All material in our print or digital editions that we present as our own is either created by us or is obtained from content providers whose editorial processes we have evaluated, have found to be acceptable, and have duly cited. Material we create is written either by our staff writers, our contractual staff or by freelance writers whom we commission. Our content is always evaluated by in-house editors, and all submitted content is reviewed for fairness, balance and reliability.
- Quotation marks shall mean that the words of a speaker will follow. Quotes are not altered in any way at *The National* except to mark with ellipses parts not used and to correct grammar mistakes, slang or dialect for clarity.
- We endeavour not to use unidentified sources at *The National*, for this is considered potentially detrimental to our credibility. When essential information is impossible to obtain, *The National* staff shall apply the below guidelines:
  - Anonymous sources are to be informed that their identity should be known to the editor attributing information to them anonymously in the newspaper, and that their identity will be revealed if the information they provide proves to be false or unfounded.
  - Sources should be persuaded to agree to a very low level of confidentiality, a level that is to be well understood by the source and the editor or reporter.
  - It is the section head’s responsibility to approve the identity of any unnamed source, to check the source’s reliability, and to cross-check the accuracy of obtained information through research documentation or a second source. Single confidential sources without further support in the story are only cited when the section head is confident that the information presented is based on first-hand knowledge and is

authoritative. This principle also applies to the use of confidential documents where the section head must be satisfied that the documents are authentic, reliable, trustworthy, and can be traced to identifiable parties and to their originators.

- ○ *The National* staff shall cite anonymous sources only as a very last resort, and only to report facts that are considered to be high on the agenda of news importance. Anonymous speculation in any shape or form is not considered acceptable. Editors must realise that there is a potential cost in terms of reader trust when anonymous sources are quoted or used in any way. The section head must sanction the use of such anonymous sources as the only possible way of obtaining a piece of information that is considered to be of very high importance so as to justify the broader possible cost in reader trust. This responsibility is critical and should be assumed with utmost care by all.
- ○ The section head should directly participate in any agreements between reporters and anonymous sources in what relates to the timing and circumstances of obtaining information, and when and how such information will be used in the publication.
- ○ While unnamed sources should be described as precisely as possible, utmost care should be exercised so as not to reveal their identity to the public. Further, reporters and editors should establish to the public the credibility of the source on the subject matter in question, and explain their reasons for maintaining anonymity.
- ○ When citing wire reports or other media, information should be attributed to the appropriate organisation, citing its description of the anonymous source.

## **BYLINES, DATELINES AND TAGLINES**

Bylines and taglines inform readers about story contributors and writers, while datelines provide them with the most accurate account of where information for a story was obtained. Datelines are used on single byline stories at *The National* only if the reporter was at the cited location. In fact, datelines are only used at *The National* where there is substantial contributions from a reporter at the scene. In the case of stories with multiple bylines, at least one person cited in the byline must be on site in order for the dateline to be used. We do not permit pseudonym bylines except in rare instances where revealing a contributor's identity may put them in danger. These cases will be known to, and approved by, the section editor commissioning the work.

## **PUBLISHING THIRD-PARTY CONTENT**

Our editorial staff review most content from outside sources for reliability, accuracy and balance before publishing it on our sites or in the print edition. Where a complete review is not possible, spot-checking along with an evaluation of sources of information and of the editorial procedures used by the information provider shall be undertaken by the assigning editor prior to accepting the publication of third-party contributions in the online or print edition.



## LINKING TO OTHER SITES

We primarily link to our own content, but may also link to original reports or supporting documents from established institutions. Any editorial links shall not be placed in a context that implies *The National*'s approval or recommendation of these entities. If *The National* does make a recommendation or enter into a partnership, it shall be clearly stated as a fact in connection with any logo or link. *The National* designs its website to be clearly distinguishable from any other, such that when the user leaves our site for another, the advertising, editorial policy, privacy policy and terms of use would all be clearly different from *The National*'s terms to the user.

## OUTSIDE ACTIVITIES

Our focus on and allegiance to *The National* should supersede any other activity. Our journalistic independence is of utmost importance and should not be compromised through any activities that we engage in outside of work. In this context:

### SOCIAL MEDIA

Social Media channels and their usage are a huge part of modern life, and while we encourage employees, correspondents and contributors to use these platforms, caution should be applied in a number of areas. While not wishing to overly restrict the use of social media, we must all remember we are ambassadors of *The National* and the company and, as such, should not act in a way that would bring disrepute on *The National*, the company or ourselves.

All employees, correspondents and contributors are advised to:

- Use their common sense.
- Ensure it is made clear that personal accounts or statements do not represent the company.
- Employees, correspondents and contributors should never state or imply that their personal opinions and content are authorised or endorsed by the company. We advise using a disclaimer such as all "opinions are my own" to avoid misunderstandings, although it is important to recognise that this does not justify the publication of content that could be seen to be inappropriate.
- Intellectual property such as copyrights, patents and trademarks may not be used or shared on a personal account without prior approval.
- Avoid any defamatory, offensive or derogatory content in all social media posts, whether regarding company or personal matters. Such conduct may be considered as a violation of the

company's values, if directed towards colleagues, clients or partners and in certain circumstances could amount to a criminal offence.

• Here are some tips to consider for any account you have that is public facing:

- Firstly, consider whether you want your account to be open or private, but be aware that posting content on private accounts that would be deemed as inappropriate should also be avoided.
- Stating that "all views are my own" is not a licence to post any material. While reasoned views and opinions are welcome, content that could be seen as inflammatory or unsavoury should not be posted -- even on private accounts.

- ○ Be careful when discussing subjects where emotions can run high (e.g. politics and religion) and show respect for others' opinions.
- ○ Retweeting or reposting inappropriate material is the same as posting it originally yourself.
- ○ Do not engage in rows or arguments with anyone online. General debate is permissible, but negative or aggressive conversation must be avoided.
- ○ Proper copyright and reference laws should be observed by employees, correspondents and contributors when posting online.
- ○ Employees, correspondents and contributors are not allowed to disclose any confidential information, including but not limited to information that is financial, operational and legal in nature, as well as any information that pertains to clients and customers.
- ○ Employees, correspondents and contributors must ensure they are fully aware of the latest legal developments regarding social media in the UAE.
- ○ If you are sourcing content through social media try to do so with discretion and not overtly look as though you are capitalising on something someone has posted online.

## **WRITING OUTSIDE OF THE NATIONAL**

- All work produced by staff members for use in *The National* or while on assignment are the property of IMI and may not be sold or reproduced without the written approval of the newspaper.
- All staff at *The National* need written prior approval to write books and articles, graphics, or other content for other outlets regardless of the subject matter. *The National* retains the first right of refusal of any freelance idea by staff members.
- Needless to say, whatever we do in any of the above contexts should not be in assistance of competitors.

## **PUBLIC AND MEDIA APPEARANCES**

- All appearances on TV, even those secured through sister companies, must be approved by the Editor-in-Chief and the Marketing Manager. Just as we do when creating content, we remain as neutral and objective as possible during any outside appearance or interview.
- *The National* staff are only encouraged to participate in public or media appearances relevant to their areas of strong knowledge or expertise.

## **CONTESTS**

We may be called upon to enter contests as participants or judges. We only participate in journalism-sponsored contests that are by organisations or institutions recognised for their journalistic excellence.

## COMMUNITY ACTIVITY

- Personal opinions about social or political issues remain personal.
- Even in our private lives, we refrain from contributing to or taking part in activities that could put our integrity or credibility in a questionable context.

**This policy is in place to enable us to conduct our work with clarity and precision and strengthen us as a team. Failure to follow these guidelines may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.**

# Editorial Policy + IPSO Guidelines

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## ALIGNMENT WITH IMI'S STRATEGIC DIRECTION

The Editor-in-Chief has the right to determine whether the material submitted shall be printed or published online, and has the right to edit as needed. All writers - Opinion Editors in particular - shall exercise the utmost care to ensure alignment of written material with the strategic direction of IMI and the political views of the IMI Board. The Editor has the right to refuse to publish any content, whether written by an incumbent or a third party contributor, which in his / her opinion may be detrimental to this policy and to IMI.

## INDEPENDENCE

We recognise the importance of maintaining a clearly independent editorial process. *The National* employs editorial professionals who assume conscientious responsibility for content selection and development. *The National* refrains from using any materials that could compromise the independence of the publication's content, or that could be perceived as advertising or as influenced material. We will not be held as obliged or committed to any news source, newsmaker, advertiser or any third party whatsoever. We will never accept honoraria for any of our editorial activities under any circumstances.

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- We carefully go over stories several times, watching especially for errors of context and balance as well as for spelling and other basic mistakes.
- We shall remain especially vigilant when quoting figures, technical terms, statistical and mathematical computations, crowd estimates and poll results.
- We continuously work to improve our note-taking, and may use tape recorders to back up our field-gathering of notes when sources know that their statements are being recorded.
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## ATTRIBUTION

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- We will always consider revising all or parts of an especially complicated story with primary sources or with third party experts, and we continuously work to ensure that we never actually surrender editorial control in the process.
- All material in our print or digital editions that we present as our own is either created by us or is obtained from content providers whose editorial processes we have evaluated, have found to be acceptable, and have duly cited. Material we create is written either by our staff writers, our contractual staff or by freelance writers whom we commission. Our content is always evaluated by in-house editors, and all submitted content is reviewed for fairness, balance and reliability.
- Quotation marks shall mean that the words of a speaker will follow. Quotes are not altered in any way at *The National* except to mark with ellipses parts not used and to correct grammar mistakes, slang or dialect for clarity.
- We endeavour not to use unidentified sources at *The National*, for this is considered potentially detrimental to our credibility. When essential information is impossible to obtain, *The National* staff shall apply the below guidelines:
  - Anonymous sources are to be informed that their identity should be known to the editor attributing information to them anonymously in the newspaper, and that their identity will be revealed if the information they provide proves to be false or unfounded.
  - Sources should be persuaded to agree to a very low level of confidentiality, a level that is to be well understood by the source and the editor or reporter.
  - It is the section head’s responsibility to approve the identity of any unnamed source, to check the source’s reliability, and to cross-check the accuracy of obtained information through research documentation or a second source. Single confidential sources without further support in the story are only cited when the section head is confident that the information presented is based on first-hand knowledge and is



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- Intellectual property such as copyrights, patents and trademarks may not be used or shared on a personal account without prior approval.
- Avoid any defamatory, offensive or derogatory content in all social media posts, whether regarding company or personal matters. Such conduct may be considered as a violation of the company’s values, if directed towards colleagues, clients or partners and in certain circumstances could amount to a criminal offence.
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- Be careful when discussing subjects where emotions can run high (e.g. politics and religion) and show respect for others' opinions.
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- Proper copyright and reference laws should be observed by employees, correspondents and contributors when posting online.
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