



“Honor Charter”

Professional and Ethical Standards for Media Workers in Syria

Recognizing the pivotal role of media in safeguarding freedom of expression, upholding the public’s right to information, promoting civil peace, and preventing incitement and hatred—and believing that press freedom is inseparable from professional and ethical responsibility—

In accordance with the Constitutional Proclamation of the Syrian Arab Republic, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; and consistent with the charters of specialized global organizations, particularly regarding journalistic ethics, diversity, combating hate speech, and the responsible use of technology,

The undersigned of this document affirm their commitment to the following professional standards and ethical duties:

Objectives of the Charter:

- Contribute to creating a balance between freedoms and responsibilities and enhancing public trust in Syrian media.
- Improve the quality of produced content and the reliability of information.
- Establish ethical and professional standards that facilitate compliance with media work regulations.
- Promote the positive role of media in combating hate speech and fostering societal peace.
- Support the advancement of freedom of opinion, the public’s right to access information, and the rights of media workers to perform their work in accordance with humanitarian, professional, ethical, and human rights obligations.

Sources and Foundations of the Charter:

- The Syrian Constitutional Proclamation (Article 13 / Clause 1).



- Relevant international charters, covenants, and declarations concerning media.
- Focused discussions with a group of independent media experts.
- Consultations with media workers across all regions of Syria.

Provisions of the Charter:

First:

Commitment to the rule of law and prioritizing societal and public interest responsibly, refraining from producing, publishing, or republishing any content that undermines civil peace, weakens social cohesion, or erodes public trust in the media sector.

Second:

- Media institutions are responsible for all content published on their platforms, in addition to complying with applicable national laws.
- A commitment not to publish unverified accusations against media workers or rely on them, while allowing for journalistic investigation and inquiry according to professional practices, granting the concerned parties the right to respond and comment within the context of the investigation.
- Media workers have the right to critique or object to laws, as long as this does not conflict with the public interest.
- Legal definitions of crimes must be respected without interpretation that restricts freedoms or imposes arbitrary measures, while ethical responsibility may exceed the legal minimum when required to protect public interest and safeguard rights.

Third: Human Rights

- Signatories commit to respecting human rights and protecting the most vulnerable groups according to UN classifications in their media practices.



- Adherence to charters, covenants, and agreements ratified by the Syrian Arab Republic.
- Respect for freedom of expression, publication, and access to information for all, without discrimination.

For the Most Vulnerable Groups:

Regarding the most vulnerable groups, signatories commit to the following:

- Consider the best interests of the child and involve them in media content in ways appropriate to their age, with clear consent and careful assessment of the short- and long-term implications of their participation.
- Protect the dignity and privacy of children and avoid exploiting them to increase views or engagement in ways that violate their rights.
- When it is necessary to use content involving children, all information or images that could reveal their identity must be hidden or blurred.
- Do not treat famous children as public figures; they should be regarded as children.
- Avoid publishing any content that diminishes the abilities of persons with disabilities, obstructs their rights, undermines their social acceptance, or exposes them to discrimination or bullying.
- Do not use persons with disabilities as symbols for sympathy or sensationalism.
- Advocate for women's issues and ensure fair representation in media content related to politics, economics, healthcare, and education.
- Do not produce or publish content that reinforces stereotypes or discrimination against women.



- Do not produce or publish any content that perpetuates violence against women, justifies it, or facilitates it in any way.
- Filming inside hospitals is only permitted when there is a clear journalistic necessity, with the approval of administrative staff and patients, fully respecting privacy, and not revealing identities unless the information is of verified public interest.
- Do not display content that is shocking or degrading to patients or victims except in extreme necessity, and in such cases, all facial features and identifying information must be obscured.
- Refrain from publishing moments of intense grief or unconscious reactions unless informed consent is obtained and only when absolutely necessary.
- Respect the dignity of individuals living in exceptional circumstances and avoid turning their suffering into a spectacle, sensationalism, political or economic promotion, or profit from their hardship.
- When involving the poor or those in coercive circumstances in media content, ensure informed consent, avoid stereotyping, commodification, or assigning blame for their situation, prevent humiliating conditions, and provide them space to express themselves without any coercion, inducement, or embarrassment. Avoid humiliating scenes such as queues, thanking donors or organizations, or tragic footage used for promotion.

Fourth: Ethical Duties and Standards

Combating Hate Speech and Promoting Civil Peace

Forms of hate speech: discrimination; denigration/reproach/slander; racism/exclusion; stereotyping and stigmatization; dehumanization; incitement/threat reversal/blame-shifting; distortion/cancellation/denial.

Signatories commit to:



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- Refrain from producing, publishing, or republishing any content that involves hatred, incitement, discrimination, stereotyping, or dehumanization.
 - Avoid any discrimination among audiences and treat all individuals humanely, particularly in matters involving victims.
 - Do not favor or discriminate against any component of Syrian society under any pretext, nor silence the voices or interests of specific societal groups.
 - Ensure non-discrimination throughout content production, guarantee the right of reply and correction for all, and allow objective criticism of parties or professional groups without generalizing negatively about individuals, inciting against their safety, or depriving them of rights.
 - Refrain from publishing insults, defamation, or unverified accusations.
 - Avoid collective condemnation, generalizing negative traits, or distorting or excerpting statements out of context with the intent to harm or insult.
 - Refrain from producing, publishing, or republishing content that causes psychological, physical, or financial harm, or damages public interest.
 - Avoid any speech or action that reinforces superiority or inferiority, incites, or obstructs rights based on affiliation.
 - Do not publish or produce calls for exclusion, isolation, deportation, or deprivation of rights, nor associate a crime with a particular origin, ethnicity, or societal group.
 - Avoid generalizing behaviors or assigning attributes to a societal group that diminish their dignity or reinforce negative or stereotypical perceptions.



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- Prohibit depicting groups as “less than human” or as outsiders to justify violence or exclusion.
 - Do not distort threats to justify violence under the pretext of “self-defense,” nor hold a group responsible for social, economic, health, or cultural crises.
 - Do not deny serious violations, minimize them, or reframe facts to reduce accountability.
 - Do not insult memory, distort the experiences of victims, glorify perpetrators, or justify the continuation of discrimination.
 - Refrain from fabricating events or statements and attributing them to others without basis, and do not accuse anyone of a crime without justification.
 - The promotion of false or misleading news is prohibited, as is the disclosure of personal data, and opposing opinions that do not violate the Code of Ethics must not be silenced.
 - When professionally necessary to report speech that violates the Code, such offensive speech must be presented in a clearly critical context, with explicit rejection, and must not be normalized or repeated without professional justification.
 - Signatories commit to adopting discourse that strengthens social cohesion, prevents discord, and rejects the glorification of violence, revenge, or exclusion.

Respect for Religious Beliefs, Culture, and Social Sensitivities:

- Refrain from offending, mocking, or showing contempt toward beliefs, rituals, symbols, customs, or clothing.
- Religious topics and beliefs must be covered respectfully and objectively, with careful choice of words and consideration of the sensitivity of images and terminology. Customs and traditions



should be respected as part of identity, highlighting cultural and linguistic diversity as a historical and social accumulation.

- Present customs and beliefs respectfully and within a framework that promotes social cohesion.
- Avoid attributing societal backwardness to any custom or provoking emotions through derogatory criticism of established norms. Address harmful practices through awareness campaigns and carefully planned methods.
- Consult local experts or researchers when necessary, incorporate multiple perspectives, and avoid reducing a community to a single viewpoint.
- Respect the sanctity of places and rituals, and the privacy of holidays and ceremonies.

Conflict Coverage and Transitional Justice:

- Provide space for victims from all sides, highlighting their humanity without harming justice processes or reducing victims to statistics.
- Do not publish information or images of witnesses, victims, or perpetrators, while always clarifying the reasons regardless of the cases being tried.
- When publishing images of detainees, protect any information that could reveal their identity or put them or their families at risk of persecution or revenge, while respecting the right to legal retribution and the responsibility of the judicial system.
- Respect the presumption of innocence until a final judgment is issued during trial coverage.
- Do not use media as a tool to pressure the course or outcome of trials.



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- When covering crime scenes, journalists must not tamper with or interfere at the site, nor affect evidence in any way, while respecting judicial procedures and the integrity of investigations, limiting their role to responsible journalistic documentation that does not obstruct justice or endanger those involved.
 - When handling testimonies of rape or other sexual violations in prisons, maintain the confidentiality of victims, protect their identity, and present the information sensitively, focusing on the truth and the legal and social impact rather than sensational details.
 - When covering mass graves, respect the dignity of victims and their families, avoid publishing images or information that could cause shock or psychological harm, and focus on providing accurate, verified information while emphasizing the historical and human context of the case.
 - Do not touch evidence or rearrange the site for any reason.
 - Respect the trauma of victims during media coverage, consider their emotions, and avoid publishing content that increases their suffering or exposes them to humiliation, focusing on sensitive and responsible reporting.
 - Respect the timing of interviews with victims, choosing moments that do not exacerbate their trauma or hinder recovery, allowing them the option to pause or withdraw at any time.
 - Use photos or videos only for journalistic clarification, avoiding emotional exploitation or sensationalism.
 - Commit to coverage that reinforces values of stability, avoids polarization or incitement during conflicts, and does not promote reclaiming rights by force.
 - Do not justify violence as the only solution; emphasize initiatives for dialogue, reconciliation, humanitarian efforts, and positive stories of coexistence.



- Avoid framing narratives as absolute victim versus absolute perpetrator, and instead focus on peace narratives and the historical, social, economic, and political context.

Fifth: Professional Rules

- **Accuracy and Verification:**
Signatories commit to collecting, verifying, and publishing information honestly and faithfully, confirming it through reliable and multiple sources, avoiding false, misleading, or selective reporting or exaggeration, and correcting errors promptly, transparently, and publicly.
- **Independence and Serving the Public Interest:**
Signatories maintain complete independence from political, economic, or ideological pressures, prioritizing public interest and the audience's right to know over any personal or institutional gain.
- **Balance, Fairness, and Impartiality:**
Signatories commit to maintaining a professional distance from all parties involved, representing all relevant substantive opinions, and avoiding exclusion or bias, allowing the audience to form opinions freely.
- **Objectivity and Separation of Opinion from News:**
Signatories clearly separate facts from opinions or analysis, clearly define the nature of content, and refrain from inserting personal or political positions into news materials.
- **Contextual Reporting and Avoiding Selective Presentation:**
Signatories present events within their full context, linking them to causes and consequences, and avoid isolating facts or taking them out of context in ways that mislead the audience.
- **Avoiding Sensationalism and Misleading Content:**
Signatories refrain from using misleading or exaggerated headlines, exploiting shocking images, or manipulating emotions at the expense of truth, accuracy, and professional responsibility.



- **Protecting Sources and Confidentiality:**
Signatories protect the identity of information sources, avoid revealing any connection to other parties, respect professional confidentiality, and ensure transparent attribution to sources whenever possible without putting them at risk.
- **Integrity and Avoiding Conflicts of Interest:**
Signatories reject gifts, benefits, or pressures that compromise independence, disclose any potential conflicts of interest, and refrain from coverage that undermines objectivity.
- **Transparency and Professional Accountability:**
Signatories acknowledge and publicly correct mistakes, respect the right of reply and correction, and provide clear channels for receiving public complaints.
- **Clear Distinction Between Editorial and Advertising Content:**
Signatories explicitly separate advertising from journalistic content, avoiding the misrepresentation of ads or sponsored material as news.
- **Respect for Intellectual Property:**
Signatories protect copyright and authorship rights, credit materials to their owners, and refrain from plagiarism or presenting others' content as original work.

Sixth: Privacy and Data Protection

- The collection or publication of personal data (addresses, medical records, financial information, family details, etc.) is prohibited without a professional justification that serves the public interest and outweighs potential harm, following a careful assessment of risks.
- Sensitive information must not be shared without explicit informed consent, with the purpose of publication or recording clearly explained.



- Disclose any political or commercial objectives unrelated to journalism when collecting data, and prohibit the use of data outside the scope of legitimate media work.
- When it is necessary to publish private information, carefully balance potential harm against public interest, and minimize harm wherever possible.
- Respect the privacy of public figures; exceptions are allowed only when information directly relates to their official duties or responsibilities, or exposes corruption, abuse of office, or conflicts of interest. Humorous or satirical commentary is permitted within this framework, provided freedom of expression is respected and exceptions are not used for personal attacks or defamation.

Seventh: Digital Responsibility and Social Media

- **Unified Standards Across Traditional and Digital Media:**
Signatories commit to applying the same professional standards to content published on social media, personal accounts, and professional platforms.
- **Addressing Digital Misinformation and Hate:**
Signatories must not publish or promote false news, rumors, misleading content, or incitement, and must not treat digital popularity as a measure of truth.
- **Managing Interaction and Comments:**
Media organizations must establish clear policies for managing comments and live broadcasts, prohibiting incitement, defamation, and bullying.

Eighth: Artificial Intelligence and Technology

- **Responsible Use of AI:**
Signatories commit to using AI as an auxiliary tool, not a substitute for human decision-making, and retain full editorial responsibility for content.



- **Transparency and Preventing AI Misuse:**

Signatories must disclose the use of AI when it has a significant impact, and prevent its use for misinformation, defamation, incitement, or privacy violations.

Closing Clause:

Attached to this document is the “*Code of Professional and Ethical Conduct for the Media Sector in Syria*,” serving as an explanatory and complementary guide, including detailed definitions, practical standards, and mechanisms for compliance and accountability.

Signing this document represents a voluntary and professional commitment by all media sector workers to its provisions and those of the attached Code, to operate in accordance with them, and to contribute to building a free, responsible, and professional media that combats misinformation and hate speech and promotes civil peace.

Name:

Position:

Organization / Platform:

Date:

Signature: