

LAWS OF SOUTH SUDAN



MEDIA AUTHORITY CODE OF CONDUCT FOR THE PRACTICE OF JOURNALISM IN SOUTH SUDAN - 2021

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MEDIA AUTHORITY
Code of Conduct for the Practice of Journalism
in South Sudan

Table of Content

Arrangement of Sections

PREAMBLE

Chapter I

Preliminary Provisions

- 1.** Title and Commencement
- 2.** Purpose
- 3.** Authority and Application
- 4.** Interpretations

Chapter II

General Rules on Code of Conduct for Practices
of Journalism

- 5.** Seek the Truth and Report
- 6.** Minimize Harm
- 7.** Independence
- 8.** Accountability and Transparency

9. Gender Discrimination
10. Victims of Sexual Violence
11. Hate Speech
12. Violence
13. Covering Ethnic, Community, Religious and Sectarian Conflict
14. Taping, Recording, Interviewing and Telephone Conversation
15. Advertisement
16. Responsibilities of Editor
17. Innocent Relatives And Friends
18. Confidentiality of Sources

PREAMBLE

The Press and Broadcast Complaints Council of the Media Authority:

- Believe that public enlightenment is the forerunner of justice and the foundation of democracy.
- Ensure media development and press freedoms are consistent with constitutional and international guarantees of freedom of expression.
- Works to promote ethical standards

among journalists in accordance with the provisions of Media Authority Act.

- Aware of Journalism professional responsibilities to maintain high standards of the profession.
- Adopt code of conduct to govern the practice of journalism.

1. Title and Commencement

This Code shall be cited as “Code of Conduct for the Practice of Journalism” in South Sudan, and shall come into force on the date of its signature by the Managing Director of Media Authority.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this Code is to provide guideline for professional conduct for journalism.

3. Authority and Application

- (1) This Code is formulated in accordance with the provisions of section 21(6)(a) of Media Authority Act.

- (2) This Code shall apply to all journalists in South Sudan.

4. Interpretations

“Ethical Journalism” means taking responsibility for ones work and explaining decisions to the public.

“Practice of Journalism” means gathering, processing and disseminating information through appropriate channels such as broadcast, print and online media.

5. Seek the Truth and Report

A journalist shall:

- (1) Be honest and courageous in gathering, reporting and interpreting information.
- (2) Take responsibility for the accuracy of their work, verify information before releasing and use original sources whenever possible.
- (3) Remember that neither speed nor format is an excuse for inaccuracy.

- (4) Provide context, take special care not to misrepresent or oversimplify in promoting, previewing or summarizing a story.
- (5) Gather, update and correct information throughout the life of a news story.
- (6) Be cautious when making promises and keep the promises.
- (7) Identify source of information clearly, that is in the interest of the public to judge the reliability of the information.
- (8) Reserve secrecy of the source that may face danger, retribution or other harm and explain why secrecy is reserved.
- (9) Diligently establish contact with subjects of news coverage to allow them to respond to criticism or allegations of wrongdoing.

- (10) Avoid undercover methods of gathering information unless traditional, open methods will not yield information vital to the public.
- (11) Give voice to the voiceless.
- (12) Support the open and exchange of views, even views they find repugnant.
- (13) Recognize a special obligation to serve as watchdogs over public affairs to ensure that public business is conducted in transparent manner.
- (14) Provide access to source material when it is relevant and appropriate.
- (15) Tell the story of diversity and magnitude of human experience and seek sources whose voices are not heard.
- (16) Avoid stereotyping, examine the ways their values and experiences

may shape their reporting.

- (17) Clearly Label advocacy and commentary.
- (18) Not deliberately distort facts or context, including visual information and clearly label illustrations and re-enactments.
- (19) Not copy always attribute.

6. Minimize Harm

A journalist shall:

- (1) Balance the public need for information with the potential harm or discomfiture, pursuit of the news is not an excuse for arrogance or undue intrusiveness.
- (2) Show compassion for those who are affected by news coverage.
- (3) Use sensitivity when dealing with juveniles, victims of sexual crimes who are unable to give consent.

- (4) Consider cultural differences in approach and treatment.
- (5) Recognize that legal access to information differs from an ethical justification to publish or broadcast.
- (6) Realize that citizens have a greater right to control information about themselves than public figures and others who seek power, influence, attention or weigh the consequences of publishing or broadcasting personal information.
- (7) Avoid pandering to lurid curiosity, even if others do.
- (8) Balance the right of the suspect to a fair trial with the right of the public to know and consider the implications of identifying criminal suspects before they face legal charges.
- (9) Consider the long-term implications of the extended reach

and permanence of publication and provide updated and more complete information as appropriate.

7. Independence

A journalist shall:

- (1) Avoid conflict of interest, real or perceived and disclose unavoidable conflict.
- (2) Refuse gifts, favors, free travel and special treatment and avoid political and any other activities that may compromise integrity, impartiality or credibility.
- (3) Be wary of sources offering information for favors or money; do not pay for access to news and identify content provided by outside sources, whether paid or not.
- (4) Deny favored treatment to advertisers, donors or any other special interests, and resist internal

and external pressure to influence coverage.

- (5) Distinguish news from advertisement and shun hybrids that blur the lines between the two news reporters and shall not write commentaries, opinions and columns.
- (6) Prominently label sponsored content.
- (7) Observe the high standards of conduct to keep the independence of the profession.

8. Accountability and Transparency

A journalist shall:

- (1) Explain ethical choices and processes to the audiences and encourage civil dialogue with the public about journalistic practices, coverage and news content.
- (2) Respond quickly to questions about

accuracy, clarity and fairness.

- (3) Acknowledge mistakes and correct them promptly and prominently, explain corrections and clarifications carefully and clearly.
- (4) Expose unethical conduct in journalism, including within their organizations.
- (5) Abide by the high standards they expect of others.
- (6) Not publish or broadcast any obscene, vulgar or offensive material unless such material contains a news value which is necessary in the public interest.

9. Gender Discrimination

Women and men shall be treated equally as news subjects and sources.

10. Victims of Sexual Violence

The journalist shall not:

- (1) Identify victims of sexual assault or publish material likely to contribute to such identification. Such publications shall not serve any legitimate journalistic or public need and may bring social contempt to the victims and social embarrassment to their relations, family, friends, community and religious order and to the institutions to which they belong.
- (2) Interview or take photos of children without the consent of their parents or guardians.

11. Hate Speech

A journalist shall:

- (1) Avoid hate speech in publishing, broadcasting or disseminating statements that constitute hatred in accordance with the provisions of Media Authority Act
- (2) Be sensitive to issues of ethnic,

sectarian or racial groups concerned.

12. Violence

- (1) Journalist shall avoid presenting acts of violence, armed robberies, banditry and terrorist activities in a manner that glorifies such anti-social conduct.
- (2) Newspapers and Magazines shall not allow their columns to be used for publishing social evils, warlike activities, ethnic, racial or religious hostilities.

13. Covering Ethnic, Community, Religious and Sectarian Conflict

News, views or comments on ethnic, religious or sectarian dispute shall:

- (1) Be published or broadcasted after proper verification of facts and presented with due caution and restraint in a manner which is conducive to the creation of an atmosphere congenial to national

harmony, amity and peace.

- (2) Avoid alarming headlines or provocative speeches.
- (3) Not be written or broadcast in a manner likely to inflame the passions, aggravate the tension or accentuate the strained relations between the communities concerned and equally so, articles or broadcasts with the potential to exacerbate communal trouble shall be avoided.

14. Taping, Recording, Interviewing and Telephone Conversation

- (1) Journalist shall not tape or record anyone without the knowledge of the person except in justifiable cases, an exception may be made only if the recording is necessary.
- (2) Subject to subsection 13 (1) of this code the same standards apply to electronic media.

- (3) Before recording a telephone conversation for broadcasting live, the station shall inform the person concern of his or her intention to broadcast the conversation.

15. Advertisement

The editor shall not publish any advertisement, which is not clearly identified and is contrary to any aspect of this Code of Conduct, the editor shall be guided as may be prescribed in the Advertisement Code of Conduct.

16. Responsibilities of Editor

The editor shall assume the responsibility for all content, including advertisements, published in a newspaper or broadcast in case of rejection, this shall be explicitly stated before submission.

17. Innocent Relatives and Friends

The journalist shall generally avoid identifying innocent relatives, friends of persons convicted, accused of crime, unless the reference to them is necessary for the

full, fair and accurate reporting of crime or legal proceedings.

18. Confidentiality of Sources

- (1) A journalist shall protect the confidentiality of his or her sources of information
- (2) Editor shall ensure that protection is granted and guaranteed
- (3) Editor shall have the right to reject the use of any information
- (4) Journalist shall not Communicate or disclose any information which by its nature is classified as confidential.

**Issued by the Media Authority this day
.....^{9th}.....in the month of April in the
year 2021**



**Hon. Elijah Alier Kuai
Managing Director, Media Authority
Republic of South Sudan, Juba.**

