

Guide for reporting on violent extremism



1. Use facts and avoid bias

Journalists must ensure that the reporting is objective, accurate, impartial, inclusive, fact-based and independent. Journalists must report professionally and in line with the codes of journalism ethics, and challenge any influences originating from political narratives. Exaggerations, propaganda, fake news and reporting of stories without prior verification of the sources of information is also to be avoided, and the subject matter should be treated fairly through a transparent reporting process.

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2. Know the proper terminology related to violent extremism

It is crucial for journalists to know the terminology and use it correctly in their reports. Learn the concepts of radicalization and violent extremism before you report about them. Make sure that your audience understands concepts related to violent extremism. Awareness of the audience's perception and proper contextualization of these concepts are both important to ensure professional and unbiased reporting.

3. Base reporting on ethical and humanitarian values

Humanitarian values are a cornerstone of ethical journalism. It is also important that journalists do not frame the coverage in such a way that it is oversimplified to fit into a humanitarian narrative without the inclusion of the proper context. Additionally, journalists should avoid victimization as this also can strip the covered subjects off any agency they have. This also includes victimization of suspects or perpetrators of violent extremism.

4. Include all voices

The journalist should ensure that all voices are included, especially voices of marginalized groups or non-majority communities. Journalists should ensure that the information obtained from the self-appointed spokespersons of these communities is verified in order to avoid misrepresentation and generalization; this includes spokespersons from the Islamic Community or other religious communities. Journalists should warrant a balanced representation that reflects the opinions of a group or community to the greatest degree possible by diversifying and increasing the representation of informants.

5. Avoid inflammatory content when reporting on violent extremism

Journalists must ensure that they do not publish inflammatory content as it may produce serious consequences and negative effects that could lead to a misinterpretation of the violent extremism phenomena, a lack of understanding and increased potential for hatred and conflict. Terminology related to violent extremism and terrorism should be used with caution and indiscriminate use of words such as "extremist", "terrorist" and "jihadist" should be avoided.