

From: [REDACTED]
To: [News_Ch_Mail](#); [News_AK_Mail](#); [News_Wn_Mail](#)
Subject: Middle East reporting
Date: Tuesday, 7 May 2024 2:31:44 pm
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[image002.png](#)
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Importance: High

Kia ora koutou,

We have been doing a good job of reporting on the recent conflict in the Middle East for many months now. However, I wanted to take the opportunity to reinforce the key principles that should be informing our reporting on the conflict.

This guidance can and should be applied to all our reporting but must always be front of mind when covering what is happening in Israel and Gaza:

Stick to the facts. Stories about the current Israel/Gaza conflict don't require embellishment. Keep the information accurate and understandable.


Language matters. Avoid using words that pass judgement – for example, describing any action as “justifiable, indefensible, unreasonable, legitimate” is not our call to make. Also take out any emotive pointers like “sadly” or “tragically”. It is for our viewers to decide how they feel about a story.

Attribution is vital. It is very hard to get verified information from the conflict area, especially within Gaza itself. We rely on our media colleagues at AP, BBC and Reuters for verified information and also the United Nations. However, figures from either the Israeli Government or IDF and Hamas agencies should be attributed so our audience can understand the context.

For **local commentators**, be wary of reporting assertions from pro-Palestinian or pro-Israeli groups without challenge – it is our responsibility as journalists to be informed of the story and where specific allegations are made against individuals or organisations, either counter those, ensure it is clearly identified as opinion if it cannot be verified or give those facing the allegation an opportunity to respond.

Do not **over-represent** or **under-represent** views. And think about the vision you use – consider, are we fairly representing both sides visually? Also be mindful of cutting down overseas content for time that balance isn't compromised.

More generally, **acknowledge your own feelings** on a story and work to be impartial. Coverage from Gaza is shocking and can be troubling to report on it, but our job is not to pass judgement or advocate for any group.

Please do remember if you have a public/professional **social media account** to be mindful of what you are seen to be supporting. As a journalist you of course have personal opinions but do consider if a reasonable person would consider your professional account shows a bias to one side or another. More details can be found in the  [Online Engagement Guide](#).

While we can expect to get **complaints** about our work, I am confident our reporting meets the high editorial standard we expect. However please engage constructively with any complaints made about a story. That said, no one needs to be **harassed or attacked** for reporting on a story and I'd really like to know if this occurs – it's something we are monitoring across all our people to make sure we form a clear view of any online harassment you may experience.

Lastly, our key principle in NCA is always **REFER UP** so please talk through story angles, talent choice, wording and background with a senior leader if you have concerns, or even if you don't – it's always important to have a second or third set of eyes across a story.

If you have any questions or concerns please don't hesitate to come and have a chat.

Ngā mihi,




Editor Newsgathering

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