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Implemented by:
KFW

Media Toolkit

for practitioners to better implement the

“Journalists’ Pact for Strengthening Civil Peace in Lebanon”



Overview

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The analysis and the policy recommendations of this report do not necessarily reflect the views of the United Nations Development Programme.

For ease of reference, the 18 Articles of the PACT are reproduced as part of this toolkit. The Thomson Reuters Foundation did not participate in the creation of the PACT and takes no responsibility for its contents, including any political views expressed therein.

This toolkit was finalised upon receiving feedback of participant media outlets.

Lebanese media play a major role in fostering understanding and peace building but they can also contribute to fueling conflict during sensitive periods.

In 2013, the **United Nations Development Programme in Lebanon** produced the “Journalists’ Pact for Strengthening Civil Peace in Lebanon” in collaboration with the Ministry of Information. The Pact — a result of an extensive participatory approach that engaged 32 national media outlets — aims at strengthening media capacity to contribute to dialogue, conflict sensitive reporting and social cohesion in the country.

To build on the recommendations of the Pact’s media monitoring studies, the **UNDP**, with the generous funding of **Germany**, partnered with **Thomson Reuters Foundation (TRF)** to develop a media toolkit — a practical training application of the Pact. The objective is to help media outlets implement the Pact and incorporate it at an institutional level.

Over the course of 2019, TRF trained professionals at media institutions monitored under the Pact. The Foundation will offer practical applications and recommendations for using the toolkit. This is in addition to producing a monitoring and evaluation report to identify any gaps in the skills and knowledge of training participants.

Toolkit Objectives

1. Help journalists find practical applications for the “Journalists’ Pact for Strengthening Civil Peace in Lebanon.”
2. Practice reporting on issues in a way that overcomes divisions, provides solutions and develops stronger bonds between all members of the community.
3. Familiarise journalists with news assessment techniques that follow a systematic and scientific approach to measure story quality against journalistic values and potential impact on civil peace.

The Pact’s 5Ws & H

What?

A Journalists’ Pact for Strengthening Civil Peace that includes 18 articles

Where?

Lebanon

When?

2013

Who?

Launched by UNDP Lebanon in partnership with the Ministry of Information endorsed by 32 media institutions, National Council for Audiovisual Media, press and editor’s syndicates

Why?

To support the role of the media in strengthening civil peace in Lebanon

How?

By enabling greater ethics in the practices of Lebanese media, focusing on the principles of accuracy, fairness and humanity in reporting

18 Articles

1. Journalists shall respect the rule of law and handle issues related to the security and stability of the country or constitutional constants with personal, corporate, and national responsibility. They shall reject the supremacy of personal interests over public interest, or the inappropriate use of any media institution, when handling security or judicial issues, if likely to jeopardise the security or breach the national unity.
2. Journalists shall commit to strengthen national unity and coexistence, respect religions, refrain from instigating sectarian or confessional strife, and reject violent disobedience movements, crime and abasement.
3. The Lebanese media shall reject racial discrimination and refrain from directly or indirectly offending the dignity of people, and from interfering in their personal or private matters or marring them.
4. The Lebanese media shall act with professionalism and social responsibility when broadcasting a live coverage of events, violent scenes, or the immediate reaction and behavior of journalists that may influence the public opinion.
5. Journalists shall ensure that the families of the victims and the injured- prior to announcing their names- have already been informed of the event. They shall use multiple reliable sources to confirm the identities of the victims together with the relevant authorities, and handle the information related to the victims with accuracy, clarity and appropriateness. Journalists shall take into account the feelings of the victims' families and those of the citizens in general when

transmitting any footage or voice recordings of the victims. These images or voice recordings shall not be used to serve any purposes other than the truth.

6. Journalists shall safeguard their right to obtain -from various sources-, analyse, publish, and comment on information, news and statistics that are of prime importance to the citizens. They shall also safeguard their right not to disclose the source of confidential news as such disclosure would expose the source to danger, or silence it gradually or completely, thus lead to a weaker flow of information in the future.
7. Journalists shall refrain from resorting to illegal means in order to obtain news, pictures, documents or other pieces of information. They shall preserve the confidentiality of the sources, unless otherwise required in cases that threaten national security. Unsupported slander or accusation is considered a blatant breach

of the profession ethics; consequently, any information proved wrong shall always be corrected.

8. Journalists shall refrain from publishing off-the-record information while keeping the use of this information informally is possible upon verification of its accuracy and reliability or publication without indicating the source.
9. Journalists shall apply the highest levels of objectivity when "associating" published materials to their sources and mentioning the source of every piece of information. "Associating" information to unidentified sources shall not be allowed unless in cases where access to information is otherwise impossible.
10. Journalists shall commit to applying accuracy and objectivity in the drafting, editing, directing, and diffusion of information, documents, images, and scenes on all subjects related to the press

and to the audiovisual and electronic media, without distorting the facts.

11. Journalists shall regulate the tone used in newspapers editorials, TV and radio breaking news, in addition to talk shows of the audiovisual media, in compliance with the principles and basics of journalism. Journalists shall also refrain from spreading a spirit of violence and strife.

12. Media institutions shall commit to presenting news and programs related to parliamentary, municipal, union, or student elections with fairness, equality, and impartiality, and with the highest level of justice in order to give equal opportunities to all candidates. They shall also commit to educating citizens on democracy and elections through the dissemination of information on elections and their importance in democratic systems, the principles and standards of holding elections, as well as the role, rights, and duties of the voter.

13. Media institutions shall avoid making mistakes or using expressions of libel, slander, defamation, discrimination, or bias (except from matters related to the Arab-Israeli conflict). They shall ensure the delivery of the information to the public in an objective, reliable and clear way that safeguards the authenticity, accuracy, and credibility of the information as well as the transparency of its sources following the provisions of the Constitution, the law and the intellectual property rights that reflect the civilised aspect of Lebanon.

14. In the context of strengthening civil peace in Lebanon, Lebanese media institutions and their staff shall emphasise, promote, and encourage the initiatives, projects, and activities started by individuals or organisations to reject violence and discrimination and strengthen civil peace in Lebanon. This can be achieved by allocating ample time and space to shed light on issues that

bring the Lebanese citizens together, and focus on values and morals that all religious communities agree upon, such as respect for the homeland. Media institutions shall carefully select the guests that they host and the writers that they recruit, as these shall enjoy a decent level of thinking and a high spirit of citizenship.

15. Journalists who supervise the content of news bulletins and political programs in the audiovisual media, the press, and the electronic media shall commit to applying personal and corporate responsibility and complying with professional principles and values, as well as relevant codes of conduct and management policies.

16. News anchors and presenters of political programs shall enjoy a high level of neutrality and professionalism and shall refrain from blatantly and provocatively showing their personal political position by practicing self-censorship in their work.

17. A journalist shall not use his/her position to promote or support any idea that directly or indirectly serves any political side. A journalist shall always be aware that his/her personal opinions that he/she posts on social media websites do not reflect the opinion of the media institution to which he/she belongs.

18. A journalist shall be fully aware of his/her responsibility for professional mistakes that result in material or moral damage to third parties. Therefore, practicing journalism in a way that contradicts the applicable laws and regulations is considered a violation of the professional duties and a breach of its ethics and rules, hence the subjection of violators to legal accountability.

Role of a Journalist in Strengthening Civil Peace

- Explaining economic, social and political trends
- Scrutinising the work of the government, the courts and business to highlight failures and successes
- Rooting out corruption and the abuse of power
- Exposing official negligence or incompetence
- Giving a voice to sectors of society without one
- Educating the public about the electoral process
- Explaining complex issues that affect the way we live
- Serving as a representative of the reader, viewer or listener who cannot be there
- Entertaining the reader in a responsible way, without doing harm



**ARTICLES
1, 2, 3**

**Respect rule
of law, people
and religion**

A woman and a man take a selfie as they celebrate a Christmas festival in Beirut, Lebanon.
REUTERS/Jamal Saidi

Taking Ethical Decisions

The 10-Second Rule

- Don't risk rushing to publication with an incomplete story. Take 10 seconds to ask yourself the following questions: **“What do I know?”** and **“What do I need to know?”**
- If you conclude that you need more information, do more reporting to have a solid story.
- An obvious example is in reporting about people. Asking **“What is my journalistic purpose?”** can guard against reporting a person's religion when it has no relevance to the story and thereby avoid causing harm to other followers of that faith.

At what point do you start identifying ethnic or religious groups?

- Reporters shouldn't rush into conclusions about the possible sectarian nature of any given violence. It might be still too early in the news cycle.
- Emphasis on sources and their credibility should always be evaluated.
- Conflict is very dynamic and it's a journalist's role to provide sustained coverage through updates, follow-up stories and deep analysis. It shouldn't be like a one-off event.
- Crime and conflict reporting require particular care with reporting race and religion. Any such information must be strictly relevant and journalists need to be mindful of the **risk of implying guilt by association**. For example, a story about an attack carried out in the name of a religion should not cast suspicion on all followers of that creed.
- Think carefully about the journalistic purpose of reporting these attributes. Language should be neutral and natural – and the best stories “show” rather than “tell”.

The People

- With coverage of crime, security and medical problems, aim to offer ample context to help readers assess the risk to their own health or safety, mindful of the danger of inflating public fears through sensationalism.
- Avoid causing harm to the public. Provide the complete facts, all sides of an argument, and the relevant context in neutral prose.
- Keep digging and questioning if the facts are not there yet. When access to information is restricted, or a piece of the puzzle is missing, say so.

Rule of Law

- Don't put news above the protection of lives.
 - If you receive a telephone warning of a bomb in a shopping mall, your first obligation is to alert authorities. The threat will not be news at all if the warning turns out to be a hoax.
- Don't let your news organisation become a publicity vehicle for violent/extremist groups.
 - Handle statements and other messages claiming responsibility for violent acts with great care.
 - Notes, and if possible a recording, should be made of telephone calls.
 - Treat authenticated statements with grave reserve.
- Obtain sensitive information legitimately and not under false pretences. Stealing data or documents, telephone tapping and computer hacking are all illicit methods of obtaining information.
- In straight news reporting, journalists should NOT employ methods popularly associated with "undercover" journalism, such as the use of hidden cameras or posing as someone.
- Act within the law, but this does not mean you should not challenge it by legal means in places where censorship applies or laws are used to suppress the truth.

Exercises

Consider the following hypothetical situations and decide if there is more than one “right” answer. Involve colleagues and discuss your reasons. You can also use examples from your own experience.

1. You are covering the annual Arab ministers conference. On the day you are expecting to receive the final communiqué, you see papers poking out from under the doors of bedrooms at the ministers’ hotel. The papers could be a draft of the communiqué. Do you take one?
2. You discover that the explosives used in a refinery bombing are of the same type as those used in two earlier bombings claimed by an anarchist group. Police ask you not to publish these details because they could prejudice their investigation. Do you agree?
3. A fighter plane that belongs to your country’s army has crashed in enemy territory. A military spokesman you know well tells you off the record that the pilot is alive. He asks you to publish a story saying the pilot is dead to improve the prospects for a rescue mission. He says that if you agree, you’ll get the rescue story as an exclusive. Do you accept the deal?

Exercises Cont’d

4. The press office of Lebanon’s national mobile operator offers you an interview with the CEO but says you can only ask about the company’s CSR initiatives and must allow the press office to vet the CEO’s quotes before publication. What do you do?
5. During your interview, the CEO leaves the room for a moment to take a telephone call and you see a document on his desk that says the company will file for bankruptcy. What do you do?
6. Environmental activists called to let you know they are planning a spectacular protest (that may involve breaking the law). They invited you to come and film it. Would you inform the authorities?
7. A group of 12 soldiers were killed in an attack near the border. You have a list of their names but authorities asked you not to publish until they inform the families first. Would you publish their names anyway? Authorities also asked you not to report details of how the soldiers were killed? What would you do?
8. A group holding foreign hostages called to give you exclusive access to an interview with them. What would you do?

Take the test

The following test, developed by the Ethical Journalism Network and based on international standards, highlights questions in the gathering, preparation and dissemination of news and helps to place what is said and who is saying it in an ethical context.

Source: Ethical Journalism Network 5-Point Hate Speech Test:

<https://ethicaljournalismnetwork.org/resources/infographics/5-point-test-for-hate-speech-english>



Syrian refugee Hana al-Ali, 30, sits with her children in Bar Elias town, in the Bekaa valley, Lebanon July 19, 2018. REUTERS/AZIZ TAHER

ARTICLES
4 & 5

Don't
sensationalise
or prey on the
weak

Dealing with Vulnerable Sources

- Treat victims of trauma with sensitivity. Avoid adding to your interviewees' distress, causing needless pain and offence.
- Cross-check details: remember that people who've had a painful emotional or physical experience do not always remember details accurately. They may exaggerate some elements or erase others from their account.
- Interviewees must be aware that their comments and identities may be widely publicised.
- Ask yourself how you would feel if you were the subject of your story.
- Don't get dragged into the numbers game. When reporting on refugees and migrants, go beyond the numbers, provide full context and humanise your stories to clear any misconceptions.
- Treat all sources as equal and avoid any discrimination by gender, ethnicity, race, religions, etc.

Dealing with Children

- Children are particularly vulnerable and many countries have laws that prohibit identifying children below a certain age or taking photographs without permission.
- Proceed with caution when interviewing children, especially trauma victims and children involved in criminal proceedings.
- Make sure the interview is crucial enough to the story.
- Avoid exposing a minor to harm.
- Take permission of the appropriate authority such as a parent, guardian or school to interview or photograph a child.
- There are severe restrictions on talking to children involved in criminal proceedings in most jurisdictions and in identifying minors in such cases. Remember that identifying adults involved in such cases can, in some circumstances, lead back to the child.

Exercises

Consider the following hypothetical situations and decide if there is more than one “right” answer. Involve colleagues and discuss your reasons. You can also use examples from your own experience.

1. A bar which is popular with foreigners has been bombed. Police tell you that they have detained a 15-year-old who is being questioned but has not been charged. They tell you his name, and that he is a member of an anarchist group which mostly attracts holders of a minority religion. Which of these details would you report? What else would you want to know?
2. A major real estate developer announces that it has named a woman as its new chief executive officer. She is one of the first female CEOs in your country. She has three children aged four to 12 and her ex-husband is a former politician who was kicked out of his party over corruption allegations. How much of that is newsworthy, in what context and why?

Exercises cont'd

3. A popular singer has been campaigning to ban the sale of alcohol to youths under the age of 21. A police report comes in revealing that a 19-year-old woman has been charged with drunk driving. The report identifies her as the singer's daughter. Do you report this? How? Who would you want to interview?
4. You are assigned to cover a trial for sexual abuse of a teacher in a small village school with only one kindergarten class that has eight students. The judge bans publication of the defendant's name. In court one day, you meet a mother and her son. She tells you her son was in the man's class. Do you interview the boy?

Exercises cont'd

5. A famous talkshow airing on a Lebanese channel produced segments claiming that 'one economy can't support two people', blaming Syrians for Lebanon's economic problems. The clip went viral on social media. You manage the social media channels of your newspaper and you're tasked with reporting on what's trending. Would you share the video on your newspaper's social media channels?
6. Members of the right wing Greek party, Golden Dawn, were on an official visit to Lebanon. One member told reporters: "Like Athens, Beirut's streets have been occupied by Syrians. They are a threat to our safety, security and people's wellbeing. I see nothing but potential terrorists. They should all be deported immediately." Would you quote him?

Exercises cont'd

7. Examine the following numbers carefully:
 - 68.5 million people are currently displaced in the world.
 - Forced displacement is expected to affect 138 million by 2050 as a result of climate change alone.
 - Over 200 million women and girls across the world have been subjected to female genital mutilation,
 - 1.5 million Syrian refugees are currently in Lebanon
 - Are the figures accurate? What's your source? What attribution would you use in your story? In what context would you use such figures?

Dealing with Sources

- Protect your source. Divulging confidential information can harm a source in many ways. It can even cost lives.
 - People who make the news are vulnerable to the impact of the stories about them. In extreme cases, their lives or their reputations could be at risk.
- References to gender, ethnicity, appearance, religion, age, and sexual orientation can add context and value to stories but they should not be used gratuitously.
- Use confidential, unnamed sources only when the information is in the public interest and efforts to obtain it on the record have failed.
 - It is often possible to tell readers how a source knows something, or what authority the source has. “A cabinet minister who has seen the strategy document”, for example, does not reveal a source’s identity but it does give the reader more information with which to assess how credible the story is than the vague “official source”.

ARTICLES
6, 7, 8

Protect your
sources

A protester and a cameraman (R) cover their faces as they are affected by tear gas fired by security forces in Martyr square, downtown Beirut, Lebanon October 8, 2015. REUTERS/Aziz Taher

Dealing with Sources cont'd

- Resist showing a complete, unpublished story to a source. You, and your news organisation, should always retain ultimate control of what is or isn't published. You may want to check the accuracy of a person's remarks before running an interview – although a digital or tape recorder and careful written notes are the best way to do this.
- Rigorous sourcing is essential to credibility. Presenting one source as two, or allowing a source to say one thing on the record and the opposite off the record – a practice known as “double dipping” – deceives the public.
- Establish diversity. Talk to officials and laypeople, men and women, people from different religions, ages, ethnicities, professions, and political affiliations, among others.

Sourcing

- Accuracy entails honesty in sourcing.
- A journalist is always the best source on a witnessed event.
- A named source is always preferable to an unnamed source.
- Never quote a source saying one thing on the record and something contradictory on background, or cite sources in the plural when we have only one. Anonymous sources are the weakest sources.
- Use named sources wherever possible because they are responsible for the information they provide, even though we remain liable for accuracy, balance and legal dangers.
- Press your sources to go on the record.
- Use unnamed sources only where necessary when they provide information of market or public interest that is not available on the record.
- Cross-check information wherever possible. Two or more sources are better than one.
- Talk to sources on all sides of a deal, dispute, negotiation or conflict.
- Carefully examine the need to identify a source's nationality, religion, ethnicity or race in a story. Be fully aware of the risk of stigmatisation.

Exercise: Measuring Diversity

Select a random sample of stories from your newspaper, website, TV or radio. Examine each story carefully and count the following:

- Total sources used per story
- Unnamed sources
- Named sources
- Women sources
- Men sources
- Official sources (e.g., government, politicians, etc.)
- Laypeople
- Ethnic/religious groups
- Political groups
- Professionals (e.g., teachers, doctors, lawyers, etc.)
- Blue collar workers

When you're done counting, calculate the percentages of each of the aforementioned variables. Do you see a pattern? Are your sources diverse enough? Do you maintain gender balance in sourcing? What do you need to improve?



Residents cover their noses as they walk past garbage piled up along a street in Beirut, Lebanon August 26, 2015. The British firm chosen to export the rubbish to Russia for disposal, Chinook Urban Mining, failed to obtain documents proving Russia had agreed to accept the waste by Friday's deadline, annulling the deal, government agency the Council for Reconstruction and Development (CDR) said. REUTERS/Mohamed Azakir

ARTICLES
9, 10, 11

Maintain clear attribution, accuracy, balance, fairness and respect for human rights

Reuters 10 Absolutes

1. Always hold accuracy sacrosanct
2. Always correct an error openly
3. Always strive for balance and freedom from bias
4. Always reveal a conflict of interest to a manager
5. Always respect privileged information
6. Always protect their sources from the authorities
7. Always guard against putting their opinion in a news story
8. Never fabricate or plagiarise
9. Never alter a still or moving image beyond the requirements of normal image enhancement
10. Never pay for a story and never accept a bribe

Trust in
Media 44%

Digital News Report 2018, Reuters Institute

“Our data show that consumer trust in news remains worryingly low in most countries, often linked to high levels of media polarisation, and the perception of undue political influence. Adding to the mix are high levels of concern about so-called ‘fake news’, partly stoked by politicians, who in some countries are already using this as an opportunity to clamp down on media freedom.”

Source: Digital News Report 2018, Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism.
<http://media.digitalnewsreport.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/digital-news-report-2018.pdf?x89475>

'7 verification tools for better fact-checking'

1. Reverse Image Search

- TinEye
- Google Reverse Image Search

2. Mapping

Google Street View and Yandex Maps help pinpoint a location to compare it to footage.

3. Big InVID Fake News Debunker

This browser plugin verifies whether content is original by identifying location and time of social media videos.

Source: Wilks-Harper, Ella. "7 verification tools for better fact-checking." Reuters.com.
<https://agency.reuters.com/en/insights/articles/articles-archive/7-verification-tools-for-better-fact-checking.html>

'7 verification tools for better fact-checking' cont'd

4. Inteltechniques.com

Open-source website for tracking information on individuals/groups on social media.

5. Amnesty International YouTube DataViewer

Captures thumbnail images of YouTube videos and provides reverse image search to examine whether a video has been previously uploaded.

6. Jeffrey's Image Metadata Viewer

Shows stored data of images (i.e., camera model, date, time).

7. Weather Underground

Offers historical weather data to help verify images or videos by comparing what the weather appeared to be like.

More Verification & Investigation Tools...

Identifying Bias

OSINT Landscape v.1 February 2018
Open Source Intelligence (/OSINTV – Open Source Investigation)

COVERT SHORES *bellingcat*
www.hisutton.com

Social Media Platforms: Facebook, Weibo, Twitter, Qzone, Instagram, Odnoklassniki, LinkedIn, VK, Snapchat, YouTube, Periscope. Tools: stalkscan, FBDOWN, Signal, Tweetbeaver, twXplorer, LWBESTIA, picodash, socilab, PHOTO MAP, savefrom.net, Youtube DataViewer, frame by frame, storyful, Scoopedown.

Sharing & Publishing: flickr, Pinterest, Google+, ProBoards, Squarespace, Joomla!, ghost, weebly.

Blogging, Forums & other communities: STRAVA, tumblr, LIVEJOURNAL, classmates, Medium, WORDPRESS.ORG, Blogger, Wix.com.

Internet Search: Google, Yandex, Bing, Wayback Machine, DuckDuckGo, NAVER, Baidu, 搜狗搜索, goo, Rambler/kakao, YAHOO!, archive.today, PimEyes.

Geospatial Data: GeoNames, Free GIS Data, OpenRailwayMap, MAPS.M, Mapillary, Wikimapia, Google Maps, Bing maps, Maps, here, Yandex.

Satellite Imagery: Google Earth, Descartes Labs, TERRA server, AIRBUS GeoStore, Zoom Earth, planet, unitar, HARRIS, USGS EarthExplorer, esa, opernicus, DigitalGlobe, NOAA, EARTHDATA, esa Earth Owl, DigitalGlobe, SENTINE.

Maritime Movements: MarineTraffic, Vessel Finder, Shipfinder, AISHub, AIS Data Exchange, shipfinder, Lloyd's List Intelligence, SHIPSPOTTING.COM, COAA, AISDECODER, SHIPAIS, ShippingExplorer, BoatNerd, OpenSeaMap, SHIPALS.

Radio: RadioReference, Broadcastify, Radio Garden, SDR.HU, VOICED Tuners, ProScan, MilScanners.

Webcams: pentopia, Insecam, SHODAN, EarthCam, Webcams.travel, PICTIMO, wetter.com, lookr, wisuki.

Image / Vid / Doc Forensics: GET-METADATA, Jeffrey's Image Metadata, metapicz, FotoForensics, Forensically, halford / Spiderpig, exifdata, ExifTool, izhif, InVID.

Aviation Movements: AirNav, RadarBox, LiveATC.net, ADS-B Exchange, GVA Dictator Alert, FlightAware, PLANESPOTTERS.NET.

Commercial Registries: opencorporates, infobel, ICI OFFSHORE LEAKS DATABASE, Investigative Dashboard Search, eSUSPECT.

This landscape shows data sources (mostly platforms, tools or apps) that provide publicly available data which may be of use in OSINT. Some tools may charge for data access. It is intended to be extensive, but not exhaustive, and may be updated periodically.

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To detect bias, journalists and editors need to start asking the following questions:

- Who is missing from the story?
- How many sources are interviewed from one side compared to the other?
- Do sources reflect the purpose of the story?
- Do sources possess credibility on the subject?
- Do sources hold equal position/title/status?
- Do sources emphasise pre-existing stereotypes?
- Does the story use biased language?
- Does the story use generalisations or assume that some professions/jobs are only held by certain genders, ethnic groups, social classes?
- Does the story use religion, gender, ethnicity or race to unnecessarily identify a certain group?
- Does the story fuel an “us against them” narrative?

Bellingcat’s Digital Toolkit: Open Source Verification and Investigation Tools and Methods.
<https://www.comsuregroup.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Bellingcats-Digital-Toolkit.pdf>

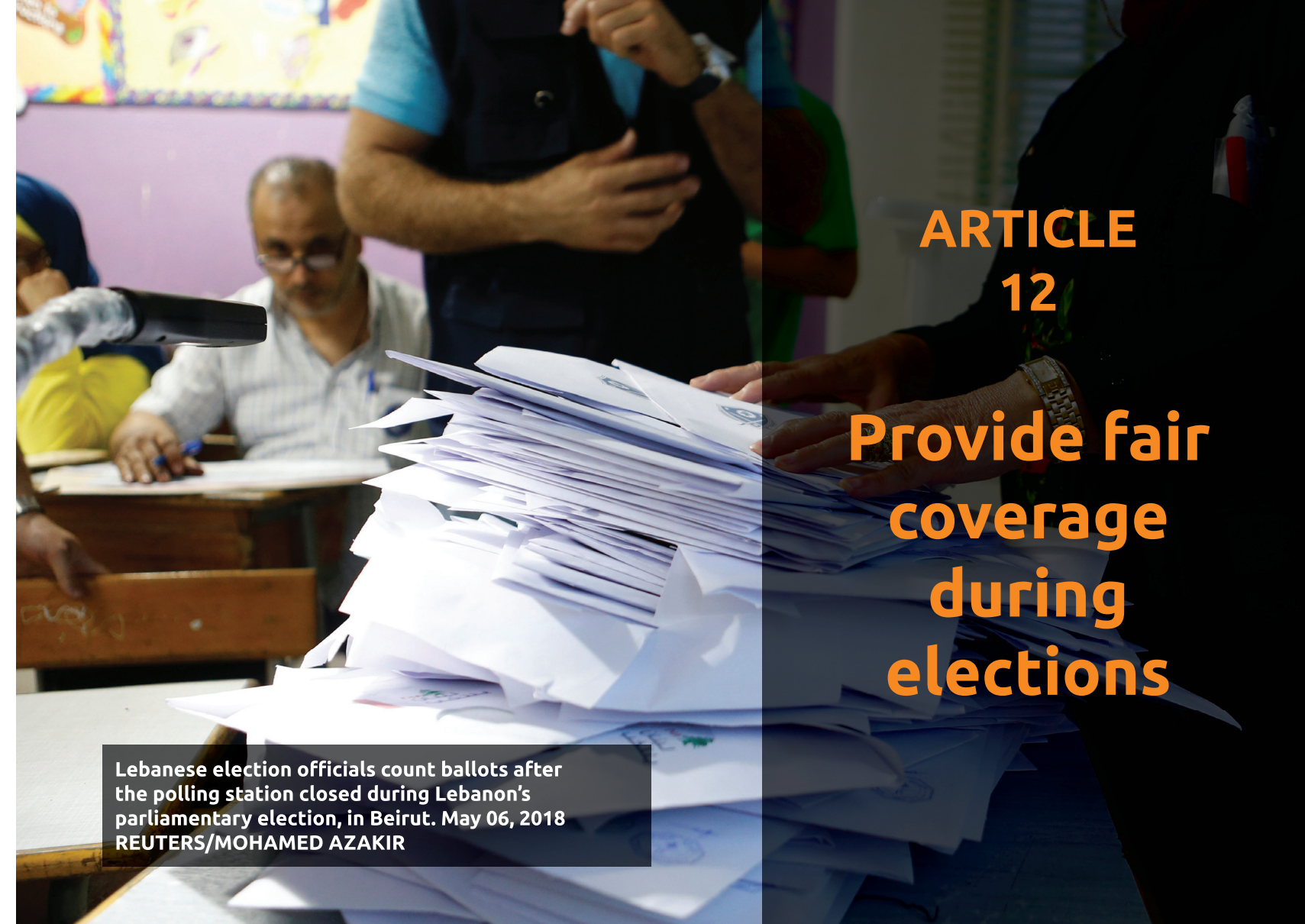
Exercise

The following is a hypothetical scenario:

- You are a producer working for a privately-owned TV channel
- You see a tweet from a verified activist reporting that 25 people were killed and 50 were injured in clashes between residents of a remote area in your country
- The area is home to a minority ethnic group
- Thirty minutes later you hear about the same clashes from a news flash on the official radio
- In a span of two hours, footage and images from clashes flood social media
- Your field reporter reaches the scene after two hours and sends the first footage
- A major foreign channel reports later that the violence is sectarian in nature
- The Ministry of Interior issues a statement mentioning the number of casualties without naming any names or referring to sectarian violence
- An activist on Twitter says police used force to end the clashes, injuring many and arresting scores of people.

Discuss the previous scenario with your editor or colleagues.

- What information would be in your first news flash?
- Would you identify the violence as sectarian?
- Rank the sources according to importance and credibility.



ARTICLE 12

**Provide fair
coverage
during
elections**

Lebanese election officials count ballots after the polling station closed during Lebanon's parliamentary election, in Beirut. May 06, 2018
REUTERS/MOHAMED AZAKIR

The Basics

- As soon as an election is announced and campaigning begins, newspapers should carry essential information on how many candidates are involved, how many parties, the number of eligible voters, the total of constituencies, etc.
- It important to get this information out early to the electorate, so they can prepare to digest the barrage of information they will receive over the next few weeks.
- Media should also advise the public on how to register as voters, and remind them of their rights and responsibilities in the political process.

Elections Checklist (Qs reporters should be asking themselves)

- Was the pre-election day 24 hour electoral silence respected?
- Is the electoral commission organising the poll independent of the government and balanced/neutral in its composition?
- Have all candidates seeking to stand been allowed to register. Does the electoral law discriminate against any individual or group?
- Is the registration process easily accessible to all and free of restrictions related to race, gender, or political or financial status?
- Are the numbers of voters in each electoral district more or less equal? Could the authorities have changed boundaries for political advantage?
- Does the media have unrestricted access to all candidates/parties? Any sign that government is using state-run media to attack opposition candidates or restricting their exposure on radio/TV?
- Are political parties state financed? Is there a limit to business/private donations and must parties declare them?

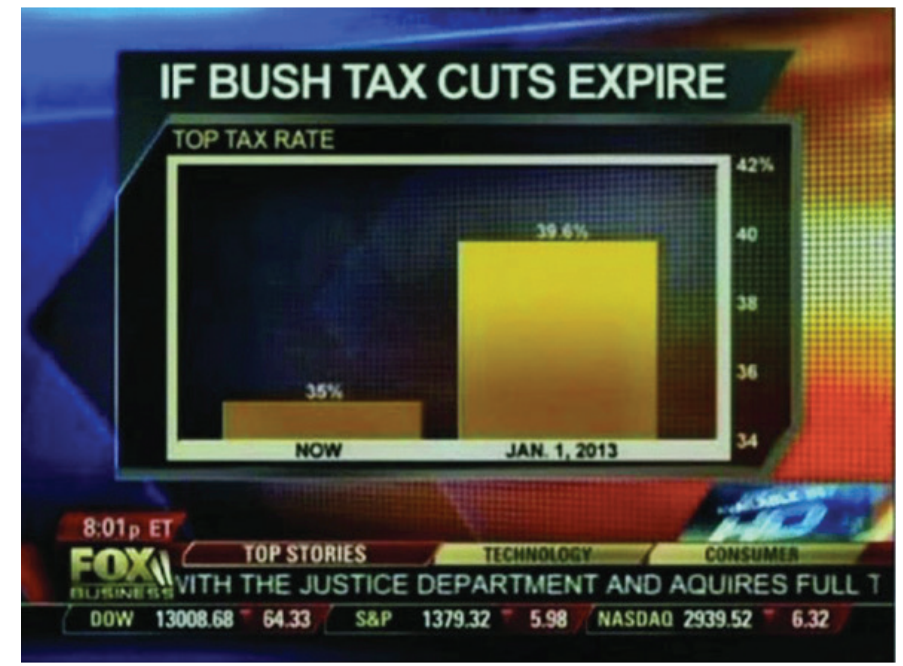
Media coverage during elections should...

- Inform the public about all matters relevant to the elections
- Give parties or candidates equal right to airtime/print space in a fair and non-discriminatory basis
- Give a voice to voters from all walks of life
- Maintain balance and impartiality at all times
- Assess credibility of opinion polls and evaluate their significance

Polls & Insights

Assess the following:

- Poll source
- Poll funding
- Sample
- Margin of error
- Questions/language
- Data visualisation/manipulation

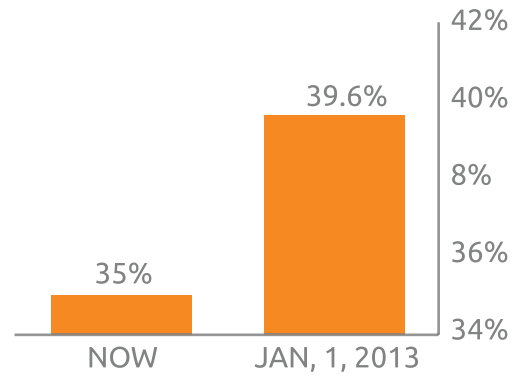


Source:
Nussbaumer Knaflic, Cole (2015). *Storytelling with Data: A Data Visualization Guide for Business Professionals*. Wiley

Revisualising the data

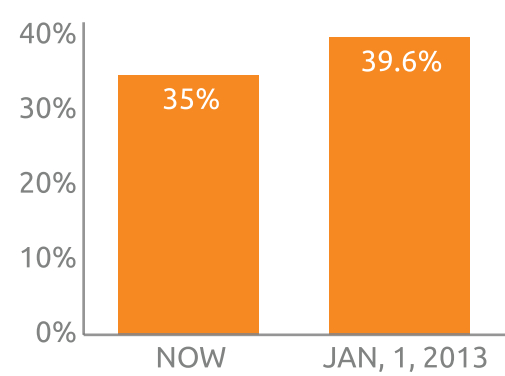
Non-zero baseline: as originally graphed

IF BUSH TAX CUTS EXPIRE
TOP TAX RATE



Zero baseline: as it should be graphed

IF BUSH TAX CUTS EXPIRE
TOP TAX RATE



Source:
Nussbaumer Knaflic, Cole (2015). *Storytelling with Data: A Data Visualization Guide for Business Professionals*. Wiley



ARTICLE
13

Avoid libel,
slander,
defamation

Protesters with their faces blackened, walk carrying broomsticks covered in garbage bags during a demonstration against what they said was political corruption and the government's failure to resolve a waste disposal crisis, on Lebanon's Independence Day in Beirut, Lebanon November 22, 2015. The Arabic words on the T-shirts read, (R-L), "Corrupt minister, leader from 60 years, bribe." REUTERS/Aziz Taher

Freedom of Expression

Freedom of expression and freedom of information are anchored in international sources of law:

- The Charter of the United Nations (the Charter), even if it is not expressly defined in it.
- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR).
- International treaties, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR).

Source: Defence Handbook for Journalists and Bloggers on Freedom of Expression and Freedom of Information Principles in International Law, 2015. Thomson Reuters Foundation, Reporters Without Borders and Paul Hastings LLP.

Freedom of Expression vs. Reputation and Defamation

- Freedom of expression, although considered a fundamental right, can be limited when it conflicts with other rights such as an individual's right to reputation and honor.
- The individual's right to reputation and honor, which falls within the scope of the right to privacy, is protected by defamation laws.
- To ensure that defamation laws comply with the right of freedom of expression, these laws should impose the narrowest restrictions necessary to protect the reputation of individuals.
- Restrictions to freedom of expression only apply if they are provided by law, serve an expressly recognised legitimate aim and are necessary and proportionate.

Source: Defence Handbook for Journalists and Bloggers on Freedom of Expression and Freedom of Information Principles in International Law, 2015. Thomson Reuters Foundation, Reporters Without Borders and Paul Hastings LLP.

4 types of expression states are required to prohibit by International laws

1. Child pornography;
2. Incitement to genocide;
3. Advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence;
4. Incitement to terrorism.

Source: Defence Handbook for Journalists and Bloggers on Freedom of Expression and Freedom of Information Principles in International Law, 2015. Thomson Reuters Foundation, Reporters Without Borders and Paul Hastings LLP.

6 requirements for a libel action



Publication



Identification



Nature of the story



Proof of falsity



Proof of fault



Actual damage to reputation

Source: Itule & Anderson, News writing and Reporting for Today's Media

Advice for potential libel defendants

- Be courteous and polite.
- Do not admit an error when a person initially claims that he or she has been libeled.
- Agree to look into the matter.
- If an attorney calls you about the potential libel, refer the call to your attorneys.
- Notify your editor or attorney at the first mention of libel.

Source: New York State Newspapers Foundation, cited in Itule & Anderson, News writing and Reporting for Today's Media

Exercises

1. Assume that you have just written a story critical of a parliament member in your area. You misinterpreted the facts on which you based the story. There is no doubt; the story is not accurate. You made a mistake—but it was not intentional. The story contains a defamatory falsehood. This is extremely unfortunate because the parliament member is your personal friend. You are embarrassed, and he is irritated. Friendship aside, he sues you and your newspaper for libel. What would be possible defenses? Would you have a good chance of successfully defending against the libel action?
2. Assume your newspaper is sued for \$100,000 in damages by Adam Ayache, M.D., who claimed that the newspaper had published an article stating that he is the only physician at General Hospital who has been successfully sued for malpractice during the past two years. In fact, however, Dr. Ayache is the only physician at the Hospital who has not been sued successfully for malpractice during the past two years. In the complaint, he wrote that he has a sound reputation as a medical doctor, as evidenced by having been honoured by the American Medical Association for outstanding contributions. He claimed that the wholly false statement is libelous and caused him to suffer “deep pain, anguish and humiliation.” Does the doctor have a good case? Discuss your local laws.

Source: Itule & Anderson (2006), News writing and Reporting for Today's Media



**ARTICLES
14, 15, 16**

**Cover
initiatives that
promote civil
peace**

A man prepares decorations ahead of the birthday of Prophet Mohammed in Sidon, south Lebanon, December 19, 2015. REUTERS/Ali Hashisho

Photo Quiz

Where are the following images located?



Shanghai, China

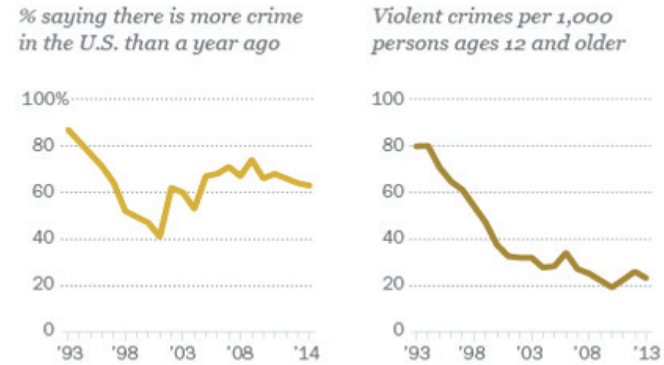
A farmer works on a drought-hit paddy field in the outskirts of Chongqing municipality in this March 24, 2009 file photo.
Stringer Shanghai / Reuters

Alexandria, Egypt

Photo credits: jaguarjj, www.istockphoto.com

How Media Affect Public Perception

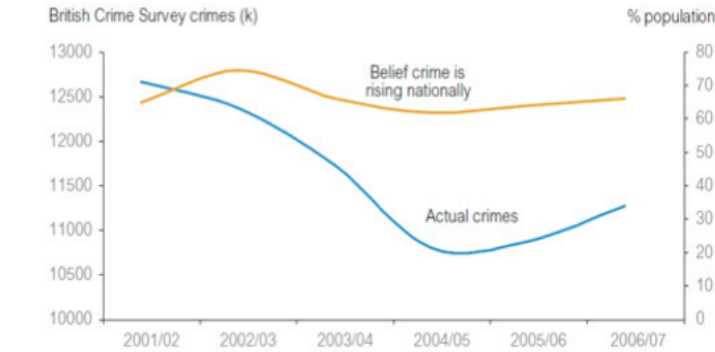
Public Perception of Crime Rate at Odds with Reality



Note: 2006 BJS estimates are not comparable with those in other years.
Source: Gallup, Bureau of Justice Statistics

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GAP BETWEEN ACTUAL CRIME AND THE BELIEF THAT CRIME IS INCREASING



Source: Nicholas, S., Kershaw, C. and Walker, A. (2007) 'Crime in England and Wales 2006/07 Home Office Statistical Bulletin 2nd Edition' Crown Copyright

- People often associate negative or positive images with specific places due to excessive media coverage of either side, distorting reality and public perception.
- Misrepresentations are perceived as reality, creating a mean world syndrome where the real world feels more dangerous and gloomier than it actually is. Focusing on the positive as well as the negative aims at providing a balanced, non-distorted picture.

9 Tips for Covering Positive Stories

1. Build relationships with civil society organisations; this will help you focus on how social problems are being dealt with using innovative methods developed by individuals or communities.
2. Broadcast and disseminate positive information and reports (while avoiding superficial optimism that is counterproductive).
3. Provide successful narratives about the future instead of the traditional catastrophic rhetoric.
4. Don't shy away from putting positive stories high on the news agenda in absence of crisis news.
5. Avoid hunting for a negative story simply to get traffic, viewership or readership.
6. Stay away from clichés that keep reminding people of the gloomy past.
7. Put positive news stories in the right context and give them value. Do not restrict them to the entertainment section.
8. Be more constructive. Focus on researching the problem as well as its solutions.
9. Report facts without exaggeration.

Source: Monitoring Positive News Coverage in Lebanese Media, Maharat Foundation, UNDP Study.
<http://www.lb.undp.org/content/dam/lebanon/docs/CrisisPreventionRecovery/PeaceBuilding/Maharat/UNDP%20study%20positive%20initiatives%20.pdf>

It's important to maintain balance in overall coverage, reporting the negative as well as the positive. But beware of instilling false hope with talk about “miracle cures” and “scientific breakthroughs”.

Source: Ethics Handbook for Journalists, Reuters
<https://tmsnrt.rs/2DZbsrZ>

Exercise: Measuring Positive Stories in Media Coverage

- Select two different daily newspapers
- Read all stories carefully
- Provide each story's headline and section/page
- Count the following based on what you've read in the previous slides:
 - Positive stories (stories which focus on initiatives, solutions to social problems, etc.)
 - Negative stories (the usual “when it bleeds it leads” stories)



ARTICLES 17, 18

Avoid conflict of interest

Lebanese protesters are sprayed with water during a protest in Martyr square, Downtown Beirut, Lebanon October 8, 2015. REUTERS/Mohamed Azakir

How to Avoid Common Conflicts of Interest

Financial

- If you or a close relative, own shares in a company you're covering, it can create a perception of bias and self-interest.
- Dispose of holdings in companies or industries you cover.
- File voluntary annual statements of your investments to your employer for transparency.
- State in your business opinion pieces whether you have interests in the companies or markets you're writing about.
- Do not use non-public information about companies, such as embargoed releases on earnings, for personal financial gain.

Political

- It is important for your audience to know that your political views don't influence your news coverage.
- Be fair to all sides in your news coverage.
- Avoid being politically active. If you are, let your editor know and agree what areas you should avoid covering.
- Take special care not to allow your opinions to unbalance the stories you write.
- Readers and viewers need to know whether what they are seeing is independent, unbiased news or PR. "Advertorials" and "video news releases" from PR agencies or official bodies should always be clearly labelled as such.

Exercises

Consider the following hypothetical situations and decide if they present a conflict of interest. Discuss your reasons with colleagues and decide how you might resolve the conflict.

1. You are the political news editor and your marketing department calls to say that a leading political party wants to place a half-page ad in the newspaper. The only condition is that no stories about other parties can appear on the same page or facing page. Do you agree?
2. You work for the leading local newspaper, where you have broken a big story about corruption on the city council. The news director at your national TV station calls and invites you to appear on the weekly current affairs show to talk about the story. He offers you payment. What do you do?
3. Your investments include \$50,000 in shares in Lebanon's second biggest bank. You've done well in your job covering the transport industry and now your editor offers you a promotion to the financial services beat. Do you tell your editor about your shares; sell the stock; do both or do nothing?
4. Elections in Lebanon are underway and you need to decide who to assign to cover the main opposition party. One of your sports reporters is the daughter-in-law of the party's leader. Do you assign her the beat?

10 Tips for Strengthening Civil Peace in Reporting

Challenge	existing stereotypes
Give	a voice to the marginalised in society
Provide	a balanced, non-sensational interpretation of issues
Use	diversified sources
Avoid	making minorities synonymous with specific labels (e.g., associating political or religious groups with terrorism etc.)
Stop	the 'us and them' rhetoric
Explain	the (political, cultural, economic, social and historical) background and context of story
Tell	both sides of the story
Cover	life and concerns of ethnic, social, religious or other minorities in a balanced manner
Be Sensitive	to requests for anonymity from minority groups; consider that some might be afraid of stereotyping, negative coverage, public hostility

Exercise: Measuring Civil Peace in Media Coverage

Select a random sample of stories, read them carefully, and assess coverage using the table on the following slide (1 is the lowest rating and 3 is the highest).

For each story, provide:



Full Headline



Publisher's name



Date of publication

	1 - Low	2 - Average	3 - High	Score
Headline	misleading and irrelevant	irrelevant	strong and relevant headline	
Lead	weak lead that doesn't hook the reader	average lead that somehow hooks the reader	excellent lead that hooks the reader	
Background	background research is missing	several gaps in background information	sufficient and solid background information	
Sources	required sources are missing	some of the required are provided	all required sources are provided	
Accuracy	serious factual errors, discrepancies in numbers...etc.	few factual errors...etc.	no factual errors, etc. Reporting is very accurate	
Quotes	no quotes	few weak quotes	sufficient strong quotes	
Attribution	no attribution	insufficient attribution	adequate attribution	
Context	info taken out of context	some info taken out of context	all info is in context	
Tone	overly negative or positive	slightly negative or positive	mostly neutral or balanced	
Overall quality of writing and reporting	below standard	approaching standard	at standard	calculate the mean average of the scores provided above
How do you rate Civil Peace in this story's coverage?	media amplify tension, hate speech, and cover only the country's political system and institutions with no reference to the cultural, ethnic or religious diversity of the country	media refer to cultural, ethnic or religious diversity in an abstract or general way	media give priority to the value of cultural, ethnic and religious diversity	compare the Civil Peace score with the overall assessment score above

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- Monitoring Positive News Coverage in Lebanese Media, Maharat Foundation, UNDP Study.
- Hate Speech Test, Ethical Journalism Network



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