

Editors' code of practice: Sikh Press Association Submission

The following is a submission of guidance for the Editor's Code of Practice on behalf of The Sikh Press Association.

The Sikh Press Association is a project of charity Everythings13, which empowers four Sikh community educational initiatives. Since 2015, The Sikh PA has been run as a fulltime professional independent news agency working between the Sikh community and the media. Working closely with most of the UK's biggest Sikh organisations and Gurdwaras (Southall Singh Sabha, Guru Nanak Smethwick, Khalsa Aid, Sikh Council UK etc), The Sikh PA has established itself as a reliable, consistent and authentic resource for media outlets including the BBC, Sky News, ITV, The National Scot, Birmingham Live, My London and more.

Through extensive engagement within various Sikh circles, please note the following submission is based on wider community concerns and positions.

Jasveer Singh

Sikh Press Association Senior Press Officer

Accuracy

- i- The Editors' Code requires an amendment or at least more focus on what constitutes due "care" for accuracy. The Sikh Press Association have noted non-Sikh sources (eg Wikipedia, BBC Archives) are used as sources of information on Sikh issues/practices, leading to mistakes. "Care" should constitute looking at authentic sources, not second-hand sources.

Along with this, due "care" must also include not regurgitating word-for-word reports from media where press is noted as not being free, e.g. India (150th ranked for press freedom). Any reports taken from India or anywhere akin (Russia, Afghanistan etc) must be clear they are from that country and to ensure accuracy, the press restrictions such countries should be noted. If this is not done, IPSO run the danger of letting UK Press standards slip because of the lack of standards overseas.

- ii- **Significant inaccuracy must be corrected promptly** What constitutes a "significant inaccuracy" should not be solely subjective based on an IPSO review. There needs to be consultation with relevant groups. For example, IPSO has ruled against SikhPA previously that calling Vaisakhi "The Sikh New Year" is a "significant inaccuracy". Opinions within Sikh educational circles would disagree with this ruling, and it is inappropriate bordering on discriminatory for IPSO with a non-Sikh team to dictate what is a "significant inaccuracy" regarding portrayals of the faith.

Reporting of crime

- i- The position the “relatives or friends” should not be implicated in reporting of a crime needs to be extended to communities. This will prevent reporting which maligns faith groups like the Sikhs. Headlines which have stated issues of “Sikh Gangs” by IPSO regulated UK press have associated the faith with criminality. Contrastingly, there has never been a headline of “Christian Gangs”. This is discriminatory.

Discrimination

In regards to the whole Editors’ Code section on discrimination, The Sikh Press Association once again (as has been emphasised since 2015) implore changes to allow reporting which reflects on communities to be viewed as discriminatory. Suggestions of “extremism” in a community must be included in this. Specifically for Sikhs, suggestions the Sikh identity represents “extremism” has seen Sikhs attacked and even murdered by racists across the world. Press must take due care to avoid advocating such discrimination. The aforementioned example of criminality being associated with faith (“Sikh Gangs”) must also be noted. Sikh PA highlight examples where IPSO have upheld complaints of this kind and encourage you to do the same for Sikhs in future. See-

[IPSO upholds complaint that Sun article was significantly misleading](#)

In reference to IPSO’s new aims within a five-year plan for better regulation:

- 1) **Building transparency:** Showcase which Sikh orgs/individuals you work with to ensure fair understanding of issues/practices/appropriate reporting
- 2) **Trust:** Ensure IPSO actually act upon obvious mistakes (Vaisakhi being mistakenly called The Sikh New Year)
- 3) **Changing media landscape:** Ensure self-proclaimed journalists/media outlets under the IPSO banner are accountable for social media posts too