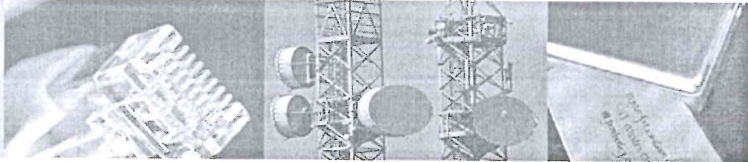




UGANDA  
COMMUNICATIONS  
COMMISSION  
*Communications For All*



## **BEST PRACTISE GUIDELINES FOR ELECTRONIC MEDIA BROADCASTERS**

**For:**

**COVERAGE AND BROADCAST OF LIVE EVENTS**



**National Association of Broadcasters**

**AGREED AND PREPARED JOINTLY BY THE UGANDA COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION, THE  
BROADCASTING COUNCIL AND THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF BROADCASTERS**

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## BEST PRACTISE GUIDELINES FOR ELECTRONIC MEDIA COVERAGE/REPORTING AND BROADCASTING OF LIVE EVENTS

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TAKING into consideration the importance and sensitivity of the electronic media for the promotion of freedom of expression, democracy, national culture, as well as social and economic development;

COGNISANT of the provisions of the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda in particular Articles 24 for the respect of human dignity and protection from inhuman treatment; Article 29 for the protection of freedom of conscience, expression movement, religion and association; Article 43 restricting such freedoms;

STRIVING to achieve and promote **independent and professional** journalism in our beloved Country;

ACKNOWLEDGING the right of the people of Uganda to information on events shaping their history, including emergencies, disasters, protests, demonstrations and riots;

**WE the electronic media houses represented by National Association of Broadcasters (NAB) together with the Regulators of the media industry, do hereby agree that the following guidelines shall apply in the presentation and transmission of broadcasts of live events:**

1. THE cardinal and cherished journalistic principles of **balance**, **fairness** and **accuracy** should at all times be taken into account when carrying out live reports for broadcasting, webcasting and group SMS media to ensure that the developing situation is truthfully and correctly conveyed.
  - (i) In the case of radio or audio stories, reporters at the scene are to describe what they are **seeing** and **hearing** and should desist from giving explanations to avoid introducing their personal opinions into the stories.
  - (ii) Reporters at the scene should at all times endeavor to cover all sides in the developing event/story.
  - (iii) Reporters at the scene and producers/editors are expected to use their judgment to avoid airing scenes that are not appropriate, in particular to minors, women and the elderly albeit if necessary a warning should be given immediately before focusing the cameras to the particular scene.

**NOTE:** It is common practice for media houses to avoid showing pictures that are considered gross, such as showing mutilated bodies *etc.* A decision to air such material is taken if the pictures will help clarify facts that are difficult to put forward. A media house should give prior notice indicating that the pictures they are about to show are disturbing.

- (iv) In the case of Television, there should always be at least one reporter and a camera man. The role of the camera men is to capture pictures that seek to cover all sides to the story. The reporter's role is to identify key factors and actors in the developing story to get their views as footage or in the form of notes. In the event that it is difficult to get all the relevant views, footage should be captured to tell the story in balanced, accurate manner.

**NOTE:** The preferred option is to always have all sides of the story come out of the actor's or "horses" mouth, but this may not always be possible and a media house should accordingly indicate this situation.

- (v) Reporters at the scene and on air personnel should remain objective at all times and avoid becoming part of the story by using terms as “we”, “us”, “them”, “those people” or any such terms that may indicate a bias on the reporter’s coverage.
  - (vi) Any story that is aired should have a lead or a cue to give purpose and direction to it.
  - (vii) A factual narrative should be provided to give back ground to the just aired story. The background should be balanced, fair and accurate. Always avoid conveying opinions from the reporters.
  - (viii) A Journalist or Reporter with a known personal involvement and/or known position in/on the developing situation should be advised not to cover the story or be cautioned before deployment to avoid letting his or her personal experience or position convey a biased broadcast, if it is deemed that his or her known position will bias or blur the truth.
2. Media houses should ensure that Producers/Editors of material to be broadcast have full supervision of their news and programming teams to minimize errors.
  3. The Regulator(s) shall not without good and lawful cause inhibit and/or prohibit the broadcast of live events.
  4. The personnel of Security Agencies of Government at all levels should be advised, cautioned and sensitized by all parties to these guidelines on the relevance, need and importance of the media in covering live events.

NOTE: This engagement should be before, during and after the event to promote and ensure that the Agencies engage in their constitutional duties of providing protection to all including Journalists and Reporters.

5. Journalist and Reporters at the scene should at all times endeavour to wear protective gear and clothing that also clearly identifies them as Journalists or members of the Press. *The idea is for the journalist to live to tell the story.*

NOTE: Media houses should endeavour to provide all possible safety equipment/measures to their journalists while in the field.

6. Media Houses, individual Journalists and Reporters and on air personnel are expected to adhere to the provisions of the Electronic Media Act and the Press and Journalists Act as a primary obligation in any broadcast or reporting.

DATED at Kampala this ..... day of ..... 2011

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
BROADCASTING COUNCIL/UGANDA COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

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CHAIRMAN  
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF BROADCASTERS