

A Free Press Matters

BEST PRACTICES GUIDE

Q2, FY 2024 edition

[**SharePoint: Best Practices Guide**](#)

GALAXY/WEBSITE: MEDIA-->HELP-->NEWS STANDARDS & BEST PRACTICES



Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION	6
THE VOA CHARTER	6
ACCOMPANYING POLICE OR THE MILITARY	7
ADVANCE DISCLOSURE	7
ADVOCACY	7
ATTRIBUTION AND ANONYMITY	8
BALANCE IN INTERVIEWS.....	9
BYLINES AND DATELINES	10
CLANDESTINE RECORDINGS.....	11
CLASSIFIED AND LEAKED DOCUMENTS	11
COPYRIGHT & FAIR USE.....	12
CORRECTIONS	12
CREDITING THE NEWSFEED PROVIDERS.....	13
DEATHS IN OFFICIAL CUSTODY	15
DEFAMATION/PRIVACY/FALSE LIGHT	15
DIGITAL MEDIA.....	15
DOMESTIC DISTRIBUTION OF VOA CONTENT	16



EDITING, ATTRIBUTION, AND SOURCING17

EDITORIAL INDEPENDENCE AND THE “FIREWALL”20

ELECTIONS21

ETHICS.....22

FILMING IN PUBLIC VS. PRIVATE PLACES23

GUESTS APPEARING ON VOA PROGRAMS23

HOSTAGE/BARRICADE SITUATIONS.....23

IDENTIFICATION24

IDENTIFYING AND INTERVIEWING MINORS.....24

INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL BY VOA STAFF24

INTERVIEWS WITH HIGH-LEVEL OFFICIALS25

JOURNALISM PRIZES25

LIVE SHOTS, STAGING, RE-CREATIONS, AND SIMULATIONS25

MASS SHOOTINGS26

METADATA.....26

MUSIC27

NAMING PEOPLE INVOLVED IN CRIMES27

OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT OR PUBLIC APPEARANCES.....28

PLAGIARISM29

POLITICAL ACTIVITY30



PROOF OF INSURANCE30

PROTESTS.....30

PSEUDONYMS & PEN NAMES31

PUBLIC FIGURES32

RECORDING OF INTERVIEWS32

SAFETY IN CONFLICT ZONES.....33

SATIRE AND HUMOR33

SENSITIVE & GRAPHIC MATERIAL OR PROFANITY.....33

STATE-RUN MEDIA35

STEREOTYPING37

SUBPOENAS OR REQUESTS FOR TESTIMONY OR DOCUMENTS.....38

SUICIDE38

TERRORISM38

THREATS TO YOUR SAFETY39

TRADEMARK.....40

USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE – GENERATIVE A.I.....40

USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA.....41

USER-GENERATED CONTENT42

USING VOA EMPLOYEES, FRIENDS OR RELATIVES IN STORIES.....42

VERIFICATION.....43



VIDEO NEWS RELEASES (VNRS).....43

VOX POPS – PERSON ON THE STREET INTERVIEWS44

WAR45

WRITING FOR YOUR AUDIENCE45



INTRODUCTION

This guide defines current editorial standards and best practices for Voice of America personnel. It applies to all employees, Personal Service Contractors, other contractors, and stringers. This is what we expect all VOA journalists to do, in the United States and in all the countries we cover.

As professional journalists, we expect that you will learn and follow these editorial standards and best practices. They are central to the process of producing content that meets VOA's goals of accuracy, objectivity and comprehensiveness. Please stay current on all policies and procedures, including those contained in this guide and any linked to SharePoint within the guide or sent separately. VOA has great training resources; use them and stay up to date.¹

These standards and best practices are not all-encompassing. VOA personnel are also required to follow the policies laid out in VOA's SharePoint website, the USAGM Broadcast Administrative Manual, the PSC Handbook (for PSCs), and directives from the Office of Government Ethics and USAGM's Ethics Counsel.²

This document is revised annually but may be revised more frequently. The most recent updates will be announced via VOA in-house email and will be posted on USAGM's SharePoint site, online, and in Galaxy/Webspace.

THE VOA CHARTER

The VOA Charter, signed into law July 12, 1976, protects the independence and integrity of VOA programming. Our journalistic standards derive from the Charter's principles ([Public Law 94-350](#)):

The long-range interests of the United States are served by communicating directly with the peoples of the world by radio. To be effective, the Voice of America must win the attention and respect of listeners. These principles will therefore govern Voice of America (VOA) broadcasts:

1. VOA will serve as a consistently reliable and authoritative source of news. VOA news will be accurate, objective, and comprehensive.
2. VOA will represent America, not any single segment of American society, and will therefore present a balanced and comprehensive projection of significant American thought and institutions.

¹ All VOA journalists must take Best Practices, Balanced and Bias-Free Reporting, and Copyright Usage training every two years and annually review the VOA Charter and Best Practices Guide and acknowledge in writing that they have done so.

² Failure to adhere to VOA standards and policies may result in disciplinary action, up to and including removal from Federal Service or contract termination, as applicable.



3. VOA will present the policies of the United States clearly and effectively and will also present responsible discussions and opinions on these policies.

VOA's mission is to provide accurate news and information. To facilitate that mission, VOA journalists are expected to remain neutral in all public appearances and public spaces, including social media. That means that you should avoid conduct or activity that would call into question your neutrality as well as the neutrality of VOA.

The accuracy, quality and credibility of the Voice of America are its most important assets. They rest on our audiences' perception of VOA as an unbiased and reliable source of news and information. VOA is only as strong as its connection to its audiences and to the principles under which it was established.

ACCOMPANYING POLICE OR THE MILITARY

On occasion, VOA may have the opportunity to accompany the military or law enforcement on arrests or investigations. These situations can imply that VOA is working on the side of the authorities. Such activities require advance approval from your division director.

ADVANCE DISCLOSURE

While VOA is arranging an interview, the subject may wonder what questions will be asked or how the interview will be presented. It's OK to outline in advance the general subject area and points of interest you intend to cover. But:

- Do not promise how subjects will be treated on the air
- Do not provide actual questions to be asked.
- Do not promise to restrict your questions to the area(s) you have outlined in advance without the approval of VOA senior management.
- Do not promise that VOA will air part or all of an interview.
- Do not promise the medium or format in which a completed interview may appear.

ADVOCACY

There is no place at VOA for advocacy journalism, which we define as presenting -- or censoring -- news in order to advance a particular viewpoint or agenda. Such actions create the impression of bias and of a lack of editorial independence. You can be a journalist or you can be an advocate – but never both.

VOA journalists must be non-partisan and impartial. Do not favor any one group. Do not take any action or make any statement that might give the appearance of partisanship on politics or controversial public issues, either on the job or away from work. Do not criticize or praise the subjects of VOA news coverage. Do not campaign, solicit money, or organize events for political candidates. Do not display political signs, bumper stickers, lapel pins, symbols, clothing designs or color schemes while on the job or representing VOA that would lead people to believe you support any policy, political party or ideology.



Journalists must avoid advocating for a social, political, policy, or judicial outcomes or taking sides – or appearing to take sides – on issues in a manner that would lead a reasonable observer to doubt the fairness or reliability of the Agency’s reporting. VOA journalists are expected to maintain their neutrality in public, including on social media, regarding any issues they cover or may be expected to cover as part of their work.

Accurately present all relevant positions as they relate to the story you are covering, even if no comment from the other side is made. Do your homework by knowing background of the issue before you cover it. Be prepared to include factual information that bring in the other side’s position in the questions you ask, in the interviews you conduct, and in the finished stories.

- **Example:** *VOA repeatedly contacted Zimbabwe’s information minister, Jenfan Muswere, for comment but has not received a response. But on Monday, he said that no one in the country was above the law, and anyone who commits an offense would meet the wrath of the law.*
- **Example:** *Calling the Chinese police station’s operation in New York a “flagrant violation of our nation’s sovereignty,” U.S. Attorney Breon Peace of the Eastern District of New York, said the three cases cast a spotlight on China’s “transnational repression activities.” The cases “shed further light on the extent of the PRC government’s efforts to project its authoritarian worldview on the residents of this city and this country,” Peace said. The embassy of China in Washington did not respond to a VOA request for comment. But China’s foreign ministry in the past has described the stations as “service centers” catering to its citizens around the world.*

ATTRIBUTION AND ANONYMITY

The following are degrees of attribution:

- **On the record.** All information is suitable for publication and attributable to the source by name and title.
- **Off the record.** Such material is not directly usable, but the information can be used to focus the direction of a story or to confirm information obtained elsewhere.
- **On background.** The information can be used, provided it is attributed to a generic source. *“A senior administration official said on background that the election was flawed.”*
- **Deep background.** Such information is normally provided with the understanding that it will not be sourced directly in any way. Acceptable wording might be, *“It was learned that the delegates agreed to a second meeting on Tuesday.”*



The attribution of content from anonymous sources in completed stories must be approved in advance by the Standards Editor, and only if there is no other way to get the information on the record. Whenever possible, a source should be on the record – someone who is willing to be named and quoted.

Do not couch your personal views in the guise of “sources close to.” Do not use vague terms such as “unnamed sources” or “unidentified sources,” “informed sources,” “authoritative sources,” “well-placed sources,” or “reliable sources.” Be as specific as possible:

- **Example:** *A senior U.S. defense official, speaking to reporters on condition of anonymity ahead of the talks, said the call between Austin and Dong was an “important step” in keeping lines of communication open between the two military powers.*

In reporting using anonymous sources, your copy should tell the audience why the source cannot be named.

- **Example:** *“We have 90 seconds to take cover when we hear the warning sirens,” said Santos, another Myanmar resident living in Tel Aviv whose real name has been withheld for his safety.*

Before granting anonymity, you must be convinced the person knows what s/he is talking about, and you should ask for factual evidence to support any claim or comment. Be sure that the person is actually confirming the information from his or her knowledge of a particular situation and is not simply hearing it from you and agreeing that it is plausible or just repeating something that the source has heard from someone else. Any story using anonymous sources should have at least one other source to confirm the information.

VOA cannot guarantee that an anonymous source will stay anonymous. In establishing the extent of anonymity for interviews, describe to the interviewee the process you will use to disguise his/her identity – blurring faces, digitizing the voice, videotaping in shadow, limiting identifying information – but do not guarantee a particular result. Inadequately disguising an interview subject or a misunderstanding over the agreed-upon steps to disguise the subject can result in their inadvertent identification. Upon request, disclosure of a source’s identity to VOA senior management and to the Office of General Counsel may be required to clear the sourced information for air. When discussing anonymity with a source, explain the possibility of this limited disclosure within VOA and the possibility that the source’s identity may be revealed in the course of a legal proceeding, should it be ordered by a court.

BALANCE IN INTERVIEWS

An interview with a prominent figure does not always require that opposing views be presented in full in the interview format. But if a relevant alternate view exists, it should be acknowledged and summarized briefly by the interviewer and the interviewee should be asked to respond. In the absence of a corresponding interview with someone on the other side of the



issue, other means of conveying differing viewpoints should be used as appropriate for each platform, such as:

- Include introductory paragraphs providing context. For broadcast, set up the interview with a video or radio explainer focused on the main discussion topic(s), with other viewpoints incorporated in the introductory explainer.
- Weave in a key opposing view
- Note where and when related interviews can or will be found (including their availability on other VOA media).
- Cover additional viewpoints in a separate story that immediately follows the interview in broadcasts or that is linked to the interview story.

During interviews, interviewees may make comments that require clarification or more context, including but not limited to a reference to an event not necessarily familiar to all VOA audiences or the nickname of a colleague or official. Interviewers should probe for clarification or themselves provide a brief explanation.

- **Example:** *Bergman: In 2008, we were able to convince then-Prime Minister Ehud Olmert to release the women and children and the Hamas parliamentarians to Fatah [formerly the Palestinian National Liberation Movement] outside of the deal. But then-Prime Minister Olmert still could not get himself to agree to 1,100 prisoners. It was [current Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin] Bibi Netanyahu that came to power who agreed to that.*

Reporters should indicate when interviews have been edited for clarity and length, and if the interview has been condensed from more than one conversation.

- **Example:** *This interview had been edited for brevity and clarity.*

If an interview is part of a series, say when and where related interviews can be found.

BYLINES AND DATELINES

A byline is given when a story contains original reporting or when a reporter or stringer is physically present, and gathering original material where a story is occurring, or had direct contact with a news source by phone, Skype, email, direct message, or social media. Bylines should be given to reporters who had direct contact with a source or were on the scene. When stringers or reporters on location are supplying material to a writer/editor, they should receive a byline with first billing, even if they do not write the story.

- **Example:** *(Watching a news event live on TV and combining that with a press release does not get a byline.)*

By VOA News: The new Boeing Starliner has lifted off with NASA astronauts headed to the International Space Station, or ISS.



- **Example:** *(If the writer/reporter contacts a source for additional information that is included in the published story, that writer/reporter gets a byline.)*

By Anjana Pasricha: In Dharamshala, where the Tibetan government in exile is based, the visit of the U.S. lawmakers brought hope. “It is a jubilant moment for all Tibetans,” Tenzin Lekshay, spokesperson for the Central Tibetan Administration, told VOA.

Double bylines (a person voicing another journalist’s work) should be attributed in the lead-in to stories, but not in the sign-off.

- **Example:** *The destruction of the Kakhovka dam a year ago [June 2023] in southern Ukraine put the water supply of hundreds of thousands of people at risk, including residents of Kushuhum in the Zaporizhzhia region. With the region now in Ukrainian hands, Kushuhum officials say people are returning to their homes and making water issues worse. Eva Myronova has the story, narrated by Anna Rice. Camera: Oleksadnr Oliynyk*

Datelines should indicate the location where the event occurred. When writing analytically, datelines should indicate the location of the reporter.

- **Example:** *KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia — Malaysia's Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim on Tuesday reiterated that state energy firm Petronas will continue to conduct oil and gas exploration activities in Malaysia's exclusive economic zone in the South China Sea, despite objections from China.*
- **Example:** *WASHINGTON — China and Myanmar are tied for the worst internet freedom environments in the world, as digital freedoms decline globally for the 14th year in a row, according to a Freedom House report published Wednesday.*

CLANDESTINE RECORDINGS

VOA journalists should not intercept or record any private conversations without the permission of the participants. The Office of General Counsel should be consulted when a VOA journalist receives intercepted conversations from a third party or if the interception and broadcast or publication of intercepted material is contemplated. Any use of that material must first be approved by VOA management and OGC.

CLASSIFIED AND LEAKED DOCUMENTS

A number of U.S. laws and regulations, including several criminal statutes, regulate access to, and transmission of, classified information. VOA has a specific protocol in place regarding its reporting on classified documents in the public domain, such as classified documents released by WikiLeaks in 2010. VOA Standards should be consulted before you begin any assignment relating in any way to classified material, even if the classified documents are publicly available



on a website such as WikiLeaks. Consult the VOA Standards SharePoint site for any additional guidance.

Leaked documents, however, are fair game, if they do not contain classified information, or if they are not stolen. Contact VOA Standards for guidance when you have obtained leaked material.

COPYRIGHT & FAIR USE

Copyright is a form of protection provided by law to the authors of original artistic works. Artistic works include photographs, video, audio, music, motion pictures, commercials, written products, as well as footage from other news outlets.

Do not use copyrighted work in your content unless (1) you have permission to use it, whether via VOA’s news agency contracts or through another negotiated license agreement, or (2) your use of the work falls under the “fair use” doctrine as reviewed and verified by VOA Standards.

Just because a video or audio clip is newsworthy does not automatically make VOA’s use of it “fair.” The fair use doctrine is highly fact-specific and requires a case-by-case analysis and a review by VOA Standards. A Fair Use Self-Help Guide with Frequently Asked Questions is available on the agency’s SharePoint site.

Works in the public domain are not protected by U.S. copyright laws and may be used without permission from the owner. As an example, works created by a U.S. federal government employee are typically in the public domain, including photos, maps, or video found on whitehouse.gov, state.gov, nasa.gov, cia.gov, and other U.S. government websites. You must check the Copyright or Terms of Use/Terms of Service pages of these and other websites before using any content. Work with VOA Standards if you have questions about whether a work is in the public domain.

Copyright training every two years is required of all VOA employees and PSCs, and so you are expected to utilize the training to comply with copyright and fair use laws without assistance.

CORRECTIONS

Every news outlet makes mistakes. Correcting errors strengthens our trust with our global audience and will be done in a clear and timely manner, giving corrections the same prominence that the incorrect material had. If your reporting contains a factual error, it should be corrected as quickly as possible.

Major errors are those that put the credibility of VOA at risk. They include those that change facts or understanding of a story. Minor errors are those that do not change facts or understanding of a story.



Errors should be corrected upon being discovered, with the correction disclosed in a transparent manner for our audience.

When made, your correction should deal directly with the error.

- **Example:** *Editor's note: This article has been updated to clarify Pannun's citizenship status.*
- **Example:** *This story has been updated to correct the list of countries issuing a joint statement objecting to the trophy ban.*

Minor errors such as spelling and punctuation should be corrected in text presentation and at the story level, but are not required to be corrected in broadcast program content.

- **Example:** *Editor's note: This story has been updated to correct the spelling of the U.N. spokesman's name in the third graph.*
- **Example:** *Editor's note: This story has been updated to correct the spelling of Cheryl Bader's last name. VOA regrets the error.*

Deletions of published content requires management approval. Never delete any content on any platform without first consulting your supervisor or Service Chief, who will then consult the division director.

CREDITING THE NEWSFEED PROVIDERS

Our news agency providers – Agence France-Presse, Associated Press and Reuters – supply VOA with audio, video, photos, and text that can be a building block for your stories. It is good practice to rewrite newswire copy whenever possible. Our newswire contracts require that newswires be given credit in certain circumstances, detailed below, but sources cited within newswire copy should be identified if used. VOA journalists should give appropriate credit to the newswires as provided below:

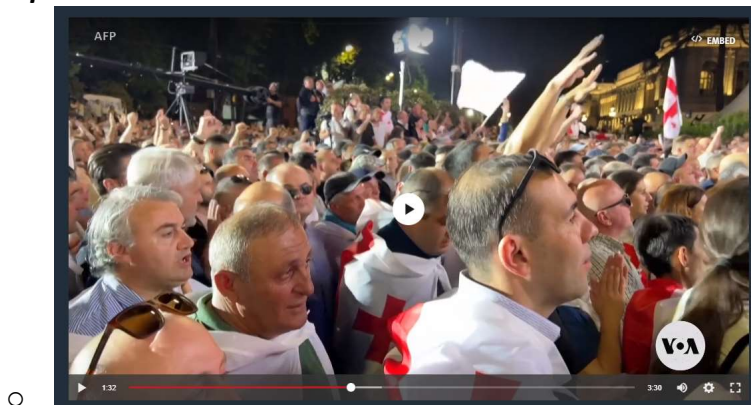
Radio

- AFP, AP and Reuters news copy can be used within VOA broadcasts without verbal attribution or credit. All three agencies consider this “standard use” of their material, and not plagiarism.
- If a wire service has an exclusive interview or information, it should be given verbal credit in the broadcast.

Example: *Top officials at the United Auto Workers union met on Thursday to discuss their concerns about Biden's candidacy, the Reuters news agency reported, attributing the information to three sources familiar with the matter.*

Video

- AFP, AP and Reuters news copy can be used within VOA TV broadcasts without verbal attribution or credit. All three agencies consider this “standard use” of their material, and not plagiarism.
- Verbal credit to the news agencies is not required for video reports, unless the video is exclusive and is noted as such in the agency’s video advisory or script.
- All agency-supplied videos should credit the respective news agency, either with a burned-in ID logo super supplied by the news agency or one added by the reporter and video editor in cases where no burned-in ID logo is supplied. Cut sheets for video stories should indicate the time segments when agency video is used and the logo is to be added.
- **Example**



Website And Social Media

- VOA websites and social media posts should credit the appropriate news agency when using their stories in whole or in part.

Example:

June 27, 2024 1:01 AM
By Associated Press

2 pandas en route from China to US under conservation partnership

The appropriate news agency should also be credited at the end of a post, even if the wire service is credited in the body of the story.

Example: *Some information for this report came from The Associated Press, Reuters.*

- Agency photos used on VOA websites and on agency-maintained social media pages must include an agency burn on the video or image.

Example:



Questions about restrictions in VOA’s licensed newswire usage and audio/video feeds should be directed to VOA Archives Senior-Archivists@voanews.com.

DEATHS IN OFFICIAL CUSTODY

If someone dies after being taken into custody by police, refer to that person as someone who “died while in police custody.” Until there is a trial verdict, a person was not “killed by police,” did not “die at a cop’s hand,” etc. S/he wasn’t “killed” until there is a ruling from the coroner, at minimum. Use attribution to tell your audience what people close to the story think happened.

- **Example:** *The recording was published on the same day as the funeral of the late Russian opposition politician Alexey Navalny, who died in unexplained circumstances two weeks ago in an Arctic prison.*
- **Example:** *The issue came to the forefront when a Black man, George Floyd, died in late May while in police custody in Minneapolis, Minnesota ...*

DEFAMATION/PRIVACY/FALSE LIGHT

Under U.S. law, the central question in an action for defamation or invasion of privacy is whether the statements in question are true or false. Truthful publication or broadcast of matters pertaining to legitimate public interest should generally not expose VOA to liability in the United States, especially if VOA’s reporting concerns a public figure. However, VOA may be liable for invasion of privacy in certain situations for the publicizing of private facts or falsehoods.

In addition, other countries’ defamation and “insult” laws are not as protective of the press, so broadcasts that are legal in the U.S. may still expose VOA to liability overseas. Check with VOA Standards if you have any doubt.

DIGITAL MEDIA

Social media videos should not be primary sources for video packages. Use caution and common sense and avoid using videos from YouTube and other social media. Your use of them without permission may violate someone’s copyright.

For same-day video, **ALWAYS** check the ABC NewsOne, AFP, AP and Reuters folders in Galaxy and their websites first. If necessary, contact the Senior Archivists (senior-archivists@voanews.com) for assistance. The VOA Video Library has extensive file video available; check with the Senior Archivists before relying on YouTube for file video.

Use of social media videos should be cleared through VOAStandards@voanews.com.

If approved, the credits, chyron information and other on-screen information in the video should not be obscured or deleted. In the case of YouTube, the actual YouTube logo **MUST** be burned into the video and remain on-screen throughout the clip:



DOMESTIC DISTRIBUTION OF VOA CONTENT

The U.S. Information and Educational Exchange Act of 1948 and the Smith-Mundt Modernization Act of 2012, together and commonly known as the Smith-Mundt Act, regulate U.S. government-funded international broadcasters such as Voice of America.

Under the law (as revised in 2012), VOA cannot “push” its content to U.S. audiences but audiences within the U.S. are allowed to access VOA content. The law also does not prohibit “incidental exposure” of VOA content to U.S. audiences, as long as those audiences are not being targeted by VOA.

VOA personnel have an affirmative obligation to take all steps to ensure that U.S. audiences are not being targeted. That means that VOA cannot advertise or spend funds to target or develop audiences who live in the U.S. It also cannot syndicate VOA content within the United States. Review the full Smith-Mundt guidance on the USAGM SharePoint site.

Under the law, VOA journalists can engage in limited public activities in the U.S.:

- Participating, as a speaker or moderator, in U.S.-based outreach and engagement events and activities. If you attend a journalism or media conference or similar event, and someone from a domestic U.S. news organization asks you about VOA’s work, you can freely talk about the content VOA produces every day.



- Providing VOA content upon request. The law authorizes individuals and organizations to request one-time use of VOA content. Requests should be directed to Usage-Requests@voanews.com. Requests by media organizations for ongoing use of VOA content should be sent to the USAGM Business Development Office: BusinessDevHQ@usagm.gov.

EDITING, ATTRIBUTION, AND SOURCING

All stories should be read and approved by someone designated as an editor by management prior to publication/broadcast. The “second set of eyes” is required in order to ensure published and broadcast material meets Voice of America's standards. This second set of eyes does not relieve a journalist from ensuring that their presented work meets VOA standards. In case of disagreement between journalist and editor, an additional editor or supervisor will make the final decision.

Attribution is required in VOA stories. VOA’s main sources of news are our own correspondents and stringers, and the news wire services via our agreements with Agence France-Presse, the Associated Press, and Reuters. We also get our information from other news organizations, press releases, official government sources, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and witnesses and/or affected individuals (“real people”).

VOA requires two independent sources of confirming information for most stories. We allow exceptions when reporting is about something VOA journalists witness themselves or when taking material from organizations that also employ the two-source rule, such as the Associated Press, Reuters, and Agence France-Presse.

- **Example:** *Kandahar, Afghanistan's second-largest city, was "in the process of falling," the official said, although the Taliban claimed late Thursday to have taken the city, according to wire services.*
- **Example:** *In a short verbal statement witnessed by a VOA reporter Monday, two members of the high court announced the acquittals of Khan and Qureshi as it accepted their appeals against the convictions.*

On a breaking news story, AFP, AP or Reuters may quote a single source such as a police official or a government spokesperson, or itself be a single source of information. In those cases, our copy will attribute the information to the wire service and its source.

- **Example:** *Foreign Minister Peter Szijjarto told Reuters on Wednesday that Hungary believes a second Trump presidency would boost hopes for peace in Ukraine.*

Information that comes directly from the U.S. government – the White House, State Department, Pentagon or Congress – is considered reportable on its own, but with attribution.



- **Example:** *“We are increasing the risk for financial institutions dealing with Russia’s war economy ...,” Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen said in a statement.*
- **Example:** *However, a senior administration official told reporters Thursday that the U.S. is willing to front the full \$50 billion.*

When you interview someone for a particular news story or topic, indicate that the person was speaking to VOA.

- **Example:** *Mark Warner, chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee, told VOA that he is worried about Beijing potentially utilizing AI for disinformation.*
- **Example:** *In an interview with VOA on Thursday, PDF (Mandalay) spokesperson Osmond emphasized the importance of capturing Nawngkhio, highlighting its strategic military value and the potential to shift the balance of power in the region.*

If you are using other sources to provide perspective, disclose if they have a stake in the issue or are partisan on one side or another.

- **Example:** *“Anything that one could do to reduce meat consumption in men would have a greater impact, on average, than among women,” said Christopher Hopwood, a professor of psychology at the University of Zurich and one of the authors of the paper. The work drew on surveys funded by Mercy for Animals, a nonprofit dedicated to ending animal agriculture. Hopwood said he is not affiliated with the organization and is not an advocate.*

Make sure, however, that the “expert” source you use has experience and expertise in the subject, and disclose that context in his/her introduction.

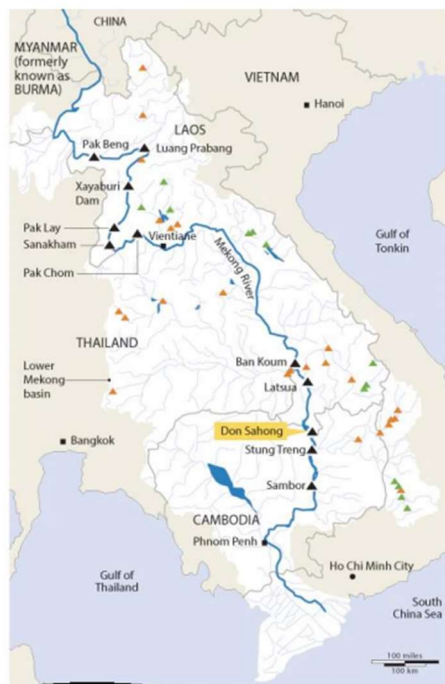
- **Example:** *Chieh Chung, a military researcher at the National Policy Foundation in Taiwan, said the remarks show that “Xi wants to emphasize the importance for the military to be loyal to the party and his leadership while signaling his concerns about how corruption affects the military” and its capabilities.*
- **Example:** *Bruce Bennett, a senior defense analyst at the Rand Corporation, told VOA’s Korean Service on Tuesday that it is difficult to see the U.S.-South Korea alliance as a “nuclear alliance.”*

When using statements by an individual at a news conference or in other public settings, indicate where and how the statement or quote was made.

- **Example:** At a news briefing following the meeting with Lai, Michael McCaul, the Republican chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, said the U.S. remains committed to supporting Taiwan’s efforts to strengthen its defense capabilities as China increases military pressure on the island.
- **Example:** “Obviously more is needed and it’s needed now,” Kirby told journalists during a phone briefing with journalists.

Information or statistics provided by think tanks, NGOs, government agencies or other third parties must be credited in scripts and in any graphics, whether supplied by the entity or created by VOA.

- **Example:**



Source: Mekong River Commission

When VOA uses information or interviews/quotes from sources outside of our contracts, or uses quotes from editorials, opinion pieces or social media posts, it is mandatory to credit the media organization, NGO or other outlet.

- **Example:** CNN reported that rally attendees allegedly spotted a suspicious character outside of the rally, holding a rifle, prior to the shooting. Local law enforcement had also seen the individual and reportedly alerted the Secret Service.



- **Example:** *The international advocacy group Human Rights Watch reported in September that Bazoum filed a petition with ECOWAS, citing violations of his and his family's human rights during his detention.*

Reporting should not use unverified information. In cases when a generally known rumor or speculation is having a tangible impact (stocks falling, deploying police, etc.), you must seek out responsible officials to respond and use their comments as your entry to the story. Do not use rumor or speculation as the content of news items without approval of your editor.

- **Example:** *Ugandan officials are rejecting reports that China could take control of the country's only international airport because of a failure to honor a loan agreement. China's embassy in Uganda also dismissed the report.*

Research to identify the best possible source(s). Does this person broadly represent others in a particular situation? What qualifies this person, in experience or expertise, to comment? Check backgrounds online and elsewhere before including the person's comments.

EDITORIAL INDEPENDENCE AND THE "FIREWALL"

While Voice of America is government-funded, VOA managers and staff are expected to make editorial decisions independently of pressure, either positive or negative, from government officials outside of the newsroom.

This "firewall" is designed to protect the impartiality of VOA's coverage and the integrity of its content decisions and, in so doing, to maintain the credibility of reporting by U.S. international journalists. It protects the editorial independence of VOA and other U.S. Agency for Global Media networks from interference by those outside the networks' newsrooms. This protection arises from the [International Broadcasting Act](#) (IBA), the agency's governing statute.

The firewall does **not** prevent VOA journalists from interviewing government officials. The firewall does **not** bar a supervisor or editor from requesting or making appropriate editorial changes in a story. If another **U.S. government agency, or U.S. government official, including the CEO and Secretary of State**, tries to influence our work by pressuring either a VOA journalist or VOA, or takes any other action that may undermine the journalistic credibility or independence of VOA personnel, please contact VOA senior management and USAGM's Office of General Counsel.

Example of potential firewall violations:

- U.S. State Department personnel demand that a reporter alters coverage or gives a specific slant to a VOA news story.

Pressure from a foreign government is not a firewall violation. Nonetheless, do not let it influence your coverage.



Firewall issues are complex; **do not** try to address them yourself. If you suspect there is a firewall concern, immediately notify your supervisor and VOA Standards at VOAStandards@voanews.com. VOA senior management, in consultation with the Office of General Counsel as appropriate, will determine the agency's appropriate response.

ELECTIONS

Your coverage of elections must be objective and non-partisan. It must accurately describe the election process, especially when reporting about U.S. elections. It must treat bona-fide candidates in a way that presents their activities with balance. Your election and campaign stories should provide facts (the appearances, the day's charges and rebuttals) and context (forward-looking analysis that is impartial).

- **Example:** *Biden says Black voters got him elected four years ago, and he needs their help again. ... Four years ago, just eight percent of Black voters chose Trump. Pew Research polling in this campaign shows 18 percent of Black voters backing Trump, a jump that could make a difference in close races in swing states including Michigan.*
- **Example:** *Republican Sam Brown overcame a crowded field of primary opponents to win Nevada's GOP U.S. Senate primary Tuesday, setting up a fierce general election battle against incumbent Democratic Sen. Jacky Rosen that could decide which party controls the U.S. Senate. ... Brown, a retired Army captain making his second try in two years for the U.S. Senate, emerged from a field of 12 Republicans to challenge Rosen, a first-term moderate in a presidential battleground state and one of the GOP's top targets in 2024. Democrats are defending far more Senate seats than Republicans this year as they look to maintain their narrow Senate majority.*

You must provide specific attribution if a candidate distorts what occurred or makes unsubstantiated charges. As required in reporting on claims or controversies, if a candidate, politician, or partisan claims that their opponent is distorting facts, you must first verify the accuracy of the allegation before reporting it.

Do not report the results of political polls as if they are established facts. In reporting on the results of political polls, first consult with VOA Research for help assessing the sample, screener, and accuracy of a political poll. Also provide context by recapping other relevant polling information.

- **Example:** *Ahead of the November election, a Washington Post/Ipsos poll shows Biden continues to enjoy the support of the majority of the Black community. However, lower stated interest in voting relative to 2020 and a slightly narrower gap in standing present some warning signs for the Biden campaign. ... Meanwhile, Black voter support in national and state polls for Trump has been "surprisingly robust," according to research by the University of Virginia's Center for Politics.*



- **Example:** A Harvard CAPS-Harris Poll last month showed U.S. voters see crime and drugs as among the top issues facing the country, more important than health care, terrorism and climate change ... even though the latest FBI data shows that violent crime in the United States dropped last year across the country in both large cities and small.

Do not “call” the winner of elections, whether in the U.S. or abroad. Do not speculate or project “likely victories” in an election. Do not report media claims of victory based on exit polling, even when conducted by “reputable” news organizations. Attribute any declaration of victory in an election. Once votes are being counted, do not refer to a candidate as more than an “apparent” or “projected” winner until polls are closed in all jurisdictions and election results certified (something that may take days).

ETHICS

Ethics safeguard VOA’s credibility as a fair and impartial news organization.

You must not accept monetary payment, gifts or privileges from any individual, interest group or political organization. Do not pay for or offer to pay for interviews.

The performance of work for other employers outside of VOA is strictly regulated. This so-called “outside work” requires advance written approval, both from a government ethics and journalistic ethics perspective. Approval forms can be found on USAGM SharePoint.

If you have a personal interest in any issue — whether political, financial, or ideological — you should not report on it. Disclose it to your supervisor so someone else can be assigned. With the approval of senior management, however, you *may* be allowed to present clearly-labeled, first-person analysis in which your personal involvement is disclosed:

- **Example:** VOA Correspondent Kane Farabaugh has covered the life and legacy of Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter for nearly 20 years. After attending the former first lady’s funeral on November 26, Farabaugh shares his personal reflections of Rosalynn Carter, who helped redefine the role of first lady in and out of the White House.
- **Example:** The lady at the National Public Health Laboratory answered my question as she handed me the certificate from my COVID-19 test: “You tested negative, so you don’t have to know what happens if you test positive.” Her remark was not entirely reassuring, but it was a relief to know I was not infected and would finally be able to travel home to Kenya.

Use your official time and agency equipment (computer and phone) for official duties only and government email and messaging applications solely for work communications. Do not use or permit the use of your agency name or federal title in connection with any crowdsourcing campaign. Seek guidance from the Ethics Office before offering financial assistance to, or soliciting or accepting financial assistance from co-workers.



FILMING IN PUBLIC VS. PRIVATE PLACES

Generally, news media have the right to be in public places and on public property to gather information, photographically or otherwise. However, VOA journalists should be aware of rules, permits, or prohibitions on filming or taking of photographs at certain meetings, sporting events, or in private spaces such as businesses and shops. VOA journalists should seek permission from an owner or occupant (even if the occupant is not the owner) before entering private property or a residence.

GUESTS APPEARING ON VOA PROGRAMS

VOA does not pay for news interviews and guests. Instead of booking paid commentators, your interviews and programs should feature news analysts, knowledgeable officials and “real people” who – in interviews and discussions – can shed light on issues and their impact.

Live interviews with a controversial or potentially hostile guest must be pre-approved by division management, who will retain authority to decide on the best approach for such interviews, which may include recording the interview in advance so that it can be edited and presented to the audience with balance.

- It is the program’s anchor’s or host’s responsibility to research the guest and the subject matter in preparation for an interview, even if a segment producer is involved in the setup and production of the guest interview. All potential guests should be pre-interviewed to get a sense of what to expect during the actual interview.
- If a guest starts making unsubstantiated accusations or questionable statements, the anchor or host must challenge the guest by asking for clarification about the source of those statements or refuting them with accurate information.
- If a guest uses language unsuitable for air (cursing or insulting language, racial or sexual slurs), the host should immediately halt the conversation, apologize to the audience, and instruct the guest to watch their language. If it is repeated, the interview should be immediately ended.

HOSTAGE/BARRICADE SITUATIONS

When covering hostage situations, do not speculate about the hostage taker, his or her motives, demands or state of mind. If a source speculates about these issues **on the air**, the host or reporter should point out that VOA has not verified that statement and shift the conversation.

DO NOT put yourself in a position where you could influence the incident. VOA staff should **never** attempt to communicate with a hostage or a hostage taker, or with individuals in a barricade situation. This could endanger a hostage, generate potentially inaccurate information, and interfere with rescue efforts.



During a barricade situation, do not describe or show the actions or movements of law enforcement officers. Doing so could change the outcome.

IDENTIFICATION

When working in their official capacity, federal employees and PSC contractors should identify themselves as working for VOA. Purchase Order Vendors, including stringers, may identify themselves as a “VOA contributor” or as a journalist “on assignment for VOA” in connection with their work. Purchase Order Vendors should not, however, state or create the impression that they are employees, agents, or representatives of the agency.

IDENTIFYING AND INTERVIEWING MINORS

In most countries (including the United States), VOA defines minors as persons under the age of 18, but the age of majority is as young as 9 and as old as 21 in the many countries we serve (link: [Age of Majority by Country 2024 \(worldpopulationreview.com\)](https://www.worldpopulationreview.com/age-of-majority-by-country-2024)). VOA requires parental consent before interviewing those who are younger than the applicable age of majority.

VOA should not name, show images or play audio of a “minor” (as locally defined) who is a suspect in a crime, or is arrested and charged with a crime. Exceptions may be made if a minor is charged as an adult, but in those cases you should wait until the accused has been formally charged, not just arrested.

Minors who are victims of a crime should not be identified on screen or in text. Images must be blurred.

You may record images of minors in a public space without permission, but must get permission from a parent or guardian before interviewing them. When photographing or recording audio/video in non-public, official settings, such as a school, get permission from the official in charge (e.g., classroom teacher) before you conduct interviews with minors. Never use photographs of identifiable minors to illustrate stories which talk about victimization of children or teens (e.g., using generic kid video when doing a story on children being abused).

Obtain permission from a parent or adult guardian when seeking to interview minors when wrongdoing, criminal activity, or private, potentially embarrassing or other sensitive situations are involved. Permission should be in writing, where possible. The appearance release form is available on SharePoint. If things are too hectic to get written approval, record audio or video of the parent/guardian giving consent.

When considering whether to identify a minor in a breaking news situation, consult with your editor.

INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL BY VOA STAFF

VOA personnel must report all personal and official overseas travel to the Office of Security at least 14 days in advance. The form is available via SharePoint.



While U.S. government employees typically must obtain a “country clearance” from the State Department before official government travel abroad, VOA staff traveling to cover the news travel as ordinary business travelers. VOA personnel should contact their supervisors and the Travel Office before planning travel overseas.

INTERVIEWS WITH HIGH-LEVEL OFFICIALS

While VOA journalists are empowered to interview individuals and officials as they wish, the intent to conduct one-on-one interviews with certain high-level U.S. officials requires advance coordination with senior management. They include the President and Vice President of the United States, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Cabinet-level officials, and Presidential-level officials from other countries. Carbon duty-eds@voanews.com . Also copy the appropriate News Center beat correspondents when making interview requests with the White House spokesperson, senior officials on the National Security Council, and members of Congress.

JOURNALISM PRIZES

Work that is done for VOA belongs to VOA. You cannot use or otherwise adapt it for other media or other employers.

You may, however, submit your VOA work for approved outside journalism awards, with prior approval of division management

There are federal ethics laws governing whether VOA employees and/or contractors can accept cash awards. You must notify management if a cash award is involved, and the General Counsel’s Office will determine on a case-by-case basis how such awards will be handled.

VOA may fund travel to award ceremonies for winning entrants, depending on the availability of funds and the “prestige” involved in the award. Those decisions will be made by the Director of Programming on a case-by-case basis.

LIVE SHOTS, STAGING, RE-CREATIONS, AND SIMULATIONS

VOA has invested in technology allowing live reporting from the scene of news. “Live shots” should faithfully represent the scene as it exists at that moment. Do not present something as occurring live when it is not.

There will be occasions when the event will be concluded by the time of the broadcast. Do not represent a taped report to be live, either as you present it from the field or as the taped report is being tossed to by the anchor. Reports that contain material that was recorded live (correspondent reaction at the passing of a parade, for example) should specifically reference in the lead-in that the material was recorded earlier.



“Double boxes” in video effects should not be used to introduce taped reports. Anchor talkbacks with correspondents recorded prior to broadcast should be referenced in the introduction as having been recorded earlier.

Staging, simulating or recreating a news event is unacceptable within a news broadcast. Staging and recreations for purposes of explanation may be used in documentary or long-form programming, but only with the prior consent of senior management and VOA Standards, and must be clearly labeled as a recreation.

You may allow subjects in a news story to demonstrate something that happened to them or something that they normally do, so long as you acknowledge to the audience in the narration that this is a recreation.

- **Example:** *The [Coast Guard] plane circles back and swoops in for a closer look. Sometimes the passengers give themselves away. ... This one --- and other sightings--- are nothing of concern. Had they been, the pilot would radio someone on the water.*

MASS SHOOTINGS

Name the shooter only when his or her name is critical to helping your audience understand what happened.

- **Example:** *The Crumbleys are the first parents in the U.S. to be convicted in a mass shooting caused by their child. Late last year, 17-year-old Ethan Crumley received a life sentence after pleading guilty to 24 charges, including first-degree murder.*
- **Example:** *A court in the U.S. state of Missouri announced Friday that two juveniles have been charged in connection with the mass shooting that left a woman dead and 22 others injured during a parade this week celebrating the Kansas City Chiefs' Super Bowl victory.*

Do not use superlatives like “the deadliest mass shooting ever” in teases, tweets and other formats where context is absent. Use them only where you can bring more context, such as interviews, the text of stories and produced packages.

- **Example:** *At least 38 people, including 24 children, were killed in a gun and knife attack Thursday at a child care center in northern Thailand. It was the country's deadliest ever mass shooting carried out by an individual.*

METADATA

VOA journalists must add metadata notations to their stories. Story script headers have fields that allow tracking of the individual contributors to stories. Writers and editors must complete this information prior to filing the story. :



((PLAYBOOK SLUG:
HEADLINE:
TEASER:
PUBLISHED AT: (date)
BYLINE:
CONTRIBUTOR: (reporters or stringers who provide key information for a report but are not involved in its writing)
DATELINE:
VIDEOGRAPHER:
VIDEO EDITOR:
SCRIPT EDITORS:
VIDEO SOURCE (S):
PLATFORMS (mark with X): WEB ___ TV ___ RADIO ___
TRT:
VID APPROVED BY:
TYPE:
EDITOR NOTES:

MUSIC

Except for incidental use (generally, less than five seconds in duration), do not use music captured at events in your stories or use any parts of songs and other music that you get from the internet or recordings. Both are copyrighted and protected by U.S. law when it comes to broadcast and web distribution. Do not add music to daily “hard news” news stories to “set a mood” or otherwise make an editorial or creative “point.” You may, however, use music in documentaries and features within these guidelines. VOA does license music “libraries” for use if music is needed. But do not misrepresent music selected from the libraries as actually being played at the event.

VOA does have the rights to use recorded music and popular songs licensed by the music publishers ASCAP and BMI on its radio broadcasts. We do not, however, have rights to use music when it appears with video.

NAMING PEOPLE INVOLVED IN CRIMES

Identification of victims of crimes should not be part of VOA reporting unless the name will be meaningful to the audience: a celebrity or politician, for example.

Never name a victim of molestation, rape or other sexual assault, except upon the individual’s request. If victims are of the age of majority, named in a legal proceeding, testify in a court case, or are otherwise in the public record, talk with your editor whether using the names is appropriate.

Be cautious with descriptive details so that the victim’s identity is not inadvertently revealed.



Whenever possible, names of victims must be obtained “on the record” from authorities. If authorities are not releasing the name and you nonetheless learn it from other sources, attribute the source.

Do not name or show images of suspects in investigations who have not been charged or arrested. That includes people identified as a “person of interest” in a case. “Person of interest” is not a legal term. Even if law enforcement officials identify someone as a “person of interest,” do not name that person unless s/he is charged or arrested.

- **Example:** *Irish police said they weren't treating the case as terror-related, and that a man in his 50s, who was also hospitalized with serious injuries, was a "person of interest."*
- **Example:** *A "person of interest" was in custody, Waukesha Police Chief Dan Thompson said, but he gave no details about the person or any possible motive.*

If you want to identify an arrested person by name in the absence of an official statement or if multiple news outlets are identifying the individual, get your editor’s permission first.

When someone has been charged with a crime, simply say so. Do not imply guilt or innocence. Similarly, if someone originally identified as a suspect is subsequently not charged with a crime, make that known as soon as possible in a follow-up story.

- **Example:** *As Sullivan visited India, an Indian national, Nikhil Gupta, charged with trying to hire a hitman to assassinate a Sikh separatist leader in the U.S., appeared in court in New York Monday following his extradition from the Czech Republic.*
- **Example:** *Salis was elected to the European Parliament during her time under house arrest in Hungary, where she is on trial and faces charges for allegedly assaulting far-right demonstrators.*

OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT OR PUBLIC APPEARANCES

VOA has stringent restrictions against outside employment while employed at VOA. Both federal employees and personal services contractors may do no outside work without receiving advance approval in writing from VOA. This includes work for the executive, legislative, or judicial branches, as well as corporations or grantees owned or controlled by the federal government.

VOA journalists should not perform media training, outreach, media advocacy, or similar work for private sector, nonprofit, or commercial entities, either paid or unpaid. VOA journalists should not provide advice to candidates for public office, whether in the United States or abroad.



NEVER WORK AS A TRANSLATOR FOR SOMEONE WE ARE LIKELY TO COVER. THAT INCLUDES THE STATE DEPARTMENT, DEFENSE DEPARTMENT AND OTHER FEDERAL AGENCIES REGULARLY COVERED BY VOA NEWS.

Any requests for outside employment or public appearances, including outside teaching, speaking, , non-affiliate live hits, or writing activities must be approved in advance via the Outside Request form, available on SharePoint.

Stringers and other Purchase Order Vendors do not need VOA approval for outside employment or teaching, speaking, or writing activities, but should be aware that activities that VOA feels will undermine their journalistic neutrality and/or the credibility of the Agency will jeopardize continued performance on their current contract, or their ability to obtain a follow-on contract.

If, in an approved outside appearance or in approved outside employment, including teaching, speaking, and/or writing, you will be identified as a VOA employee, you must include a disclaimer that the views expressed are your own and not those of VOA, USAGM, or of the U.S. Government.

VOA staff are not authorized to publicly speak on behalf of VOA. If you are approached for a statement, forward the request to VOA PR. **Only VOA PR or the VOA Director speak on behalf of VOA.**

PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism occurs when a person presents, as their own work, another person's words, ideas or images. Plagiarism can involve reproducing entire articles, short passages, memorable phrases, images, parts of images, or sets of arguments that are the work of other people. Directly translating work into another language without attribution constitutes plagiarism; you must include the original byline or credit.

Do not plagiarize. It is not plagiarism to cite facts that others have cited, but you may not pass someone else's work off as your own through the use the phrasing or images that were used in their descriptions.

When you wish to use information or interviews/quotes from sources outside of our newswire contracts, or quotes from editorials, opinion pieces or social media posts, you must credit the source, whether media organization, NGO, corporation, or other outlet

Plagiarized content will not be tolerated at VOA. Content thought to be plagiarized will be removed for analysis. Content found to be plagiarized will be permanently removed and personnel found to have been responsible for its inclusion may face disciplinary action up to and including removal or termination of contract. If you have questions about a story you have written, consult with your editor. If you suspect there is plagiarism in a story you encounter, immediately notify your editor and VOAStandards@voanews.com.



POLITICAL ACTIVITY

VOA personnel are not permitted to campaign for or to organize events for political candidates under terms of the Hatch Act, a federal law prohibiting government employees in the Executive Branch from engaging in partisan political activity while on duty.

Under terms of the Hatch Act, employees **MAY NOT** engage in political activity while:

- On duty, including when you are teleworking
- In any government office
- Using a government vehicle
- Wearing an official uniform or insignia

Displaying campaign posters in the workplace is also prohibited.

In addition, the following political activities are prohibited while on duty:

- Wearing campaign buttons and/or t-shirts
- Using e-mail accounts, social media accounts or blogs to support or criticize a candidate or political position
- Using computers to make online campaign donations
- Using screensavers supporting or criticizing a candidate or political position
- Using smartphones to support or criticize a candidate or political position

Use of agency equipment in partisan political activity is prohibited at any time.

For more complete guidance on the Hatch Act and political activity, please see U.S. Office of Special Counsel's [web page](#).

PROOF OF INSURANCE

Occasionally, VOA journalists may be asked to provide a certificate of liability insurance when filming in locations where event organizers or property owners want to protect themselves against third party bodily injury and property damage claims. Unlike private sector media outlets, the U.S. government self-insures against liabilities. Therefore, the agency does not purchase liability insurance, and there is no such certificate that VOA can provide. The USAGM Office of General Counsel can provide our journalists a letter explaining the government's policy that can be sent to the appropriate parties.

PROTESTS

When covering protests or demonstrations, do not take any action that could be interpreted as taking a side. Never join in the chanting. If there is street skirmishing, try to stay apart from both protesters and police. Try not to draw attention to yourself.

Attribute any estimations of crowd size. Organizing groups or official agencies may have reasons to inflate or downplay any numbers they provide. A journalist on the scene may be able to provide a better perspective on crowd size, using specifics that are independent of numbers –



saying, for example, that “people are standing shoulder to shoulder for four blocks.” If a VOA journalist is not covering the event, it is permissible to use our wire services’ crowd estimates, with attribution.

In selecting images from demonstrations, pay particular attention to context. For instance, if a demonstration draws 200 people and one protestor shows up in a Nazi uniform, it would be misleading and editorially irresponsible for you to make that the lead image in your report without your editor’s clearance.

Do not interfere in any way with ongoing law enforcement activities. Obey orders from police or authorities, even those that seem to you to be designed to manage or deny news coverage. If you feel you have been denied access, notify your supervisor. While the agency will take appropriate legal action to protect access to the news, remember that many countries do not provide press freedom the way it is guaranteed in the United States.

PSEUDONYMS & PEN NAMES

The use of pseudonyms or pen names as bylines requires division-level approval. The main reason is that fabricating a reporter’s identity can be seen as undermining VOA’s credibility. If approved by management, journalists who have become widely known professionals by “pen names” can continue to publish stories under that name, subject to periodic review by division management.

If reporters do not wish to have their name on a story for reasons of security, using a generic “VOA News” is preferable to a pseudonym. If a reporter does not want to use his or her name in a voiced TV or radio report, the intro and the signoff should omit it, referencing only the location. Explanations should be added in radio and television lead-ins and should be added to the contributor line in web and social media stories:

- Example: “A VOA employee working in Pakistan contributed to this report but is not being identified because of ongoing threats against journalists in the country.”
- Example: “This report was prepared by a VOA Mandarin journalist whose name is being withheld because of Chinese government policies that threaten journalists and their families.”
- Example (intro): “We have this report from our West Africa bureau in Dakar.”
- Example (signoff): “VOA News, West Africa bureau.”

VOA does not allow the use of a pseudonym for a person quoted in a story, even if the story revolves around him or her. If the person is unwilling to be referred to by name, refer to them by their relationship to the story.

- **Example:** *In addition to shrouding the trial in secrecy, the friend, who is familiar with the case, said Guangzhou authorities tried to “justify” the charges they imposed on Huang and Wang by questioning 70 people connected to them.*

PUBLIC FIGURES

Information about the private lives of public figures should only be used when it is relevant to the story.

- **Example:** *[Hunter Biden is] charged with three felonies in the case that has laid bare some of the darkest moments of his drug-fueled past. Prosecutors have used testimony from former romantic partners, personal text messages, and photos of Hunter Biden with drug paraphernalia or partially clothed to make the case that he broke the law.*

When reporting on past behavior (e.g., behavior in college), identify it as such.

RECORDING OF INTERVIEWS

Permission to record is not required for in-person interviews, provided that the microphone or recording apparatus is readily visible to the interviewee. A reporter planning to record an interview when a camera or microphone is not immediately visible must first advise the interview subject that s/he is being recorded and that comments may be used in a VOA story and/or on the air. If an interview subject objects to being recorded, the reporter or producer should agree not to record it but should attempt to persuade the individual to allow the recording to be made, even if the content of the interview would only be used as off-the-record information.

Do not use hidden cameras or microphones for newsgathering without the approval of senior management. Those tools should be used only for matters of high public interest/importance and if other options for obtaining the information have been exhausted.

On occasion, a subject may ask to do his or her own recording of an interview, or make it a condition of an interview. While not desirable because it may lead to “alternate versions” of your interview being distributed, it is not something you can prevent. VOA will not provide an audio or video copy of a raw interview to an interview subject.

You must obtain your editor’s approval before attempting a so-called “ambush” interview, where a person who has refused to be interviewed is approached without notice – recorder rolling – by a reporter or producer. An “ambush” is different than a stakeout, where cameras are set up in advance to get comments from individuals who are going to or leaving meetings and/or work and are willing to talk to reporters.

Do not show your story or recorded interview to an interviewee or to non-VOA personnel in advance of its broadcast or publication. Advance screenings of news stories are not permitted without the prior approval of VOA senior management. As part of the reporting process, you can call an interview subject and review portions of a script to check facts, however. You also may show an interviewee or news source portions of other interviews or other footage to get their on-the-record comment about those comments. Record the individual watching the other interview or other footage if possible to fortify your story.



When on-camera and conducting an interview, do not show an expression that might be seen as agreement or disagreement with what the subject said during the interview. That includes nodding, even if the intent is to encourage the subject to continue speaking.

Do not edit the completed interview to separate questions from answers. For example, the 10th answer of an interview **should not** be edited as if it were the response to the 4th question, even if it seems to make the reporter's or producer's editorial point clearer.

In single camera interviews, so-called "reverse shots" may be filmed after the conclusion of an interview to allow video editors cover footage to visually condense an interview. But "reverse questions" should not be used without the approval of the Standards Editor.

SAFETY IN CONFLICT ZONES

VOA is committed to the safety of its journalists. No VOA staff member or stringer will be sent into a hazardous situation without that person's consent. VOA journalists' travel to a hostile environment or conflict zone must be approved by senior management.

VOA staff and Personal Services Contractors assigned to work in a conflict zones must first be certified through a VOA-sponsored Hostile Environment Awareness Training (HEAT) course. VOA civil service and PSC journalists assigned to travel to conflict zones or hostile environments should request a Risk Assessment Briefing from the USAGM Office of Security.

VOA journalists working in conflict zones or hostile environments should always carry an official agency ID and VOA press credential or equivalent identification indicating they are on-assignment. Depending on the assignment, VOA can require Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), a mobile tracking device or access to Life360, and/or personal security. Remember that wearing Personal Protective Equipment is not a guarantee of your safety. Stay far enough away from the action to be able to witness it without being in the middle of it.

SATIRE AND HUMOR

While under certain circumstances, satire and humor can effectively reach and communicate with target audiences, it can also backfire and alienate. VOA limits the use of satire and humor to clearly labeled programs, segments, or articles, the commissioning of which must be authorized by senior management in advance. Individual episodes or stories containing satirical or humorous content must be reviewed before broadcast or publication by the relevant Language Service Chief and either the relevant Division Director, on-duty Standards Editor, or head of Programming.

SENSITIVE & GRAPHIC MATERIAL OR PROFANITY

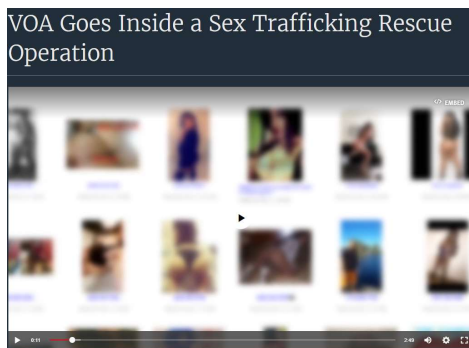
Use caution regarding material that contains graphic images or profanity. Make sure the material's news value warrants airing it. Some examples include bloody murder scenes, faces of

the dead, severed body parts, acts of war, or acts of nature, but this is not an inclusive list. Such images may require that they be blurred before they are used.

Consult with your editor for approval before using graphic, profane, racist or other objectionable video and language.

Material of a sexual nature should not run unless it is essential to the story. If approved for use by your supervisor, video of this type should be digitized before publication to obscure the specific material.

- **Example** *VOA Goes Inside a Sex Trafficking Rescue Operation*



If you decide to air or post sensitive material of these types, alert your audiences in advance. Build in a warning into the lead-in or sub-head/teaser for the story to be broadcast or posted.

- **Example (video):** *An animal welfare group in Namibia has come out against the theft of dogs in the country that end up on the plates of consumers who regard the domestic animal as a delicacy. Vitalio Angula has this story from Windhoek, Namibia. This report contains graphic images that some viewers might find disturbing. Viewer discretion is advised.*
- **Example (web copy):** *Editor's note: This story contains graphic descriptions of rape. A senior United Nations official says that it may be many months before the full scale and magnitude of atrocities being committed against women and girls in Ethiopia's Tigray region is known, as more reports of sexual violence emerge from the conflict zone.*

Do not broadcast or publish images of the moment of death without VOA senior management approval.

If graphic material is to be posted, its images should not be used as the thumbnail or cover image.



If something graphic or traumatic happens unexpectedly during live coverage, the control room producer and director should cut away from it as quickly as possible and the in-studio anchor should explain to the audience what has happened, allowing the journalist team in the field to gather material to cover the incident. Consult senior managers whether such material from live events can be replayed later.

STATE-RUN MEDIA

VOA is skeptical of the video, photos, audio and other content provided by state-run media outlets such as China Central Television (CCTV), North Korea’s official media, RT News (formerly Russia Today), Press TV, and others. There is no guarantee of how the content was created or if it is accurate.

Nonetheless, when it comes from areas where coverage often is otherwise unavailable, content from state-run media can be used. But it must be identified both in copy and in graphics as coming from that country’s “state-run media.”

- **Example:** *Kim Yo Jong, the powerful sister of Kim Jong Un, denied Pyongyang’s arms dealings with Moscow, according to state-run KCNA on Friday.*
- **Example:** *The Eastern Theater Command of the People’s Liberation Army will conduct drills in the Taiwan Strait ... according to China’s state-run Xinhua News Agency.*

Make it clear in your copy that your source is state-run media each time the information is used and if it differs from other reputable reporting.

- **Example:** *Vodolatskiy was quoted by the state-run Tass news agency as saying Russian forces controlled more than half the territory of the town of Vovchansk ... Reuters was unable to independently verify battlefield accounts from either side.*
- **Example:** *State-run IRNA news agency reported that the Tehran prosecutor summoned Yashar Soltani and sent him to prison. The report also said a court of appeal issued the verdict after 17 plaintiffs appealed the decision by a lower court but gave no details about the earlier case.*

Any Video or other content supplied by state-run media should be used within the context of a larger VOA-produced package. Do **not** release video or photo content from state-run media as stand-alone social media posts or stories simply because it’s available.

Note that VOA’s newsfeed providers AP and Reuters are paid by the Chinese government to distribute material provided by CCTV (Chinese State Television). Do not confuse CCTV video with authentic AP or Reuters video. Use it only when you and your editor both believe it to be essential



and only with proper attribution. Both newswires include disclaimers³, and that should be a red-flag reminder of why the material should not normally be used by VOA.

Example:



³ AP includes a disclaimer for all CCTV material: “AP is distributing the following video news release on behalf of CCTV. Material is free access all. Material is not AP content. AP does not guarantee the accuracy of this content, nor endorse any opinions reflected in it.” Reuters does not provide a video disclaimer for CCTV material, but it includes the following notice at the bottom of every script it shares from CCTV: “© CCTV. The content in this story, including video and script is provided by China Central Television (CCTV) and is copyright CCTV. Thomson Reuters does not guarantee the accuracy of, or endorse the views or opinions given in, this package.”

STEREOTYPING

Do not stereotype by race, gender, age, religion or on any other category. When choosing photos or video, make sure that the image is accurate and not perpetuating stereotypes.

Photo examples



Abortion-rights activists holds signs as they protest outside of the U.S. Supreme Court during a rally in Washington, March 26, 2024.



Supporters for Republican presidential candidate and former U.S. President Donald Trump show their support for him at a campaign rally in Rome, Georgia, March 19, 2024.

Do not use unattributed negative or positive terms. The only exceptions are when individuals and groups use those labels to describe themselves or their activities, or someone is directly quoted.

- **Example:** "The pro-abortion forces, that's one of the major things they're going to run on," said Susan Swift, president of Pro-Life Legal and a veteran anti-abortion activist.
- **Example:** Manipur Chief Minister Nongthombam Biren Singh announced the deportation of 77 "illegal immigrants from Myanmar" on his social media page, calling it the "first phase."

Do not include a physical description of an individual unless that detail is essential. A physical description may be appropriate for a feature story and may be included at the editor's discretion.



- **Example: OK:** A poster in the southern Spanish city of Seville that depicts a young, handsome, Jesus wearing only a loincloth has unleashed a storm on social media.
- **Example: Not OK:** "[I feel] fear, trembling," she says. The explosions resound at night most of the time, she says, brushing aside her sandy blond hair. But sometimes they come in the morning, too.

SUBPOENAS OR REQUESTS FOR TESTIMONY OR DOCUMENTS

If you receive a request or demand to testify in a legal proceeding on matters relating to official agency information or your official duties, or if you receive a request to produce agency records or information, contact your supervisor and the Office of General Counsel immediately.

SUICIDE

If the person is not a public figure, do not report the name unless you clear it with your editor. Ask: Is the suicide tangential to a broader story, or does it have a larger impact on the story or participants in the story?

- **Example:** South Korean actor Lee Sun-kyun, best known for his role in the Oscar-winning film "Parasite", was found dead Wednesday in an apparent suicide according to a police official.
- **Example:** Robert Card, who was wanted in connection with the shootings at Schemengees Bar and Grille and at Just-In-Time Recreation bowling alley in Lewiston, is believed to have died of a self-inflicted gunshot wound, a law enforcement official tells The Associated Press.

TERRORISM

VOA uses the words "terrorist" and "terrorism" to label terrorists and acts of terrorism.

- **Example:** Hamas 10/7/2023 (unprovoked mass civilian killings and triumphant spreading of its political and ideological message): "Terrorist act"
- **Example:** Las Vegas concert 2017 (unprovoked mass civilian killings, no claim of responsibility): Not a "terrorist act"

VOA also notes if the United States and other countries have designated an individual a terrorist or a group a terrorist organization and when the designation was made, as part of our comprehensive reporting.

- **Example:** The violence is claimed by Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan, or TTP, a globally designated terrorist organization, which Pakistani officials say is headquartered in Afghanistan.



- **Example:** *The U.S. FBI's list of most wanted men identifies Haqqani as a specially designated global terrorist who maintains close ties to al-Qaida.*

The U.S. State Department defines “terrorism” as an “activity that (1) involves a violent act or an act dangerous to human life, property, or infrastructure; and (2) appears to be intended to intimidate or coerce a civilian population; to influence the policy of a government by intimidation or coercion; or to affect the conduct of a government by mass destruction, assassination, kidnapping, or hostage-taking.”

Terrorists use violence against innocent individuals to advance their political or ideological agenda. The declaration of groups as “terrorist,” however, is sometimes politicized, so VOA differentiates between the *act* and the *organization*. You must consult with your editor to determine if labels such as “terrorism” and “terrorist” are most appropriate for use in an individual story. The editor’s decision is final.

Activities of terrorists (bombings, shootings, hostage takings) should be covered fully, accurately and as you would cover any other news story. Wherever possible, provide appropriate coverage of the victims, their injuries, and their families.

Although VOA will report on the actions of terrorists, VOA should not be used as a platform to spread terrorists’ messages. Statements from, interviews with, or video of terrorists, hostages or prisoners of war should be judged on their journalistic merits by senior editors before they are cleared for use on VOA broadcasts or websites/social media. Never air or repost a terrorist message in its entirety. Check with your editor and senior VOA managers for clearance of what portions of the message, if any, will be cleared for broadcast and websites. Those decisions should balance news value with the potential propaganda value to terrorists that publication would have. Broadcast scripts and web copy must state the source of the video or statement. If VOA is not able to independently verify the source or accuracy of the video or audio, it should not be used.

The U.S. government’s updated list of designated “foreign terrorist organizations” can be found here: <https://www.state.gov/foreign-terrorist-organizations/>

THREATS TO YOUR SAFETY

If you are physically attacked, believe your safety is threatened, or feel that you are otherwise targeted, immediately inform your editor and carbon USAGM Security (ThreatReporting@usagm.gov). They will report incidents to senior management.

USAGM privacy rules require your verbal or written confirmation before an incident report can be created. Incident reports are securely stored on USAGM systems, with access limited to a small number of individuals. Any release of identifying information from incident reports require your clear written consent and written clearance from the VOA Director.



TRADEMARK

A trademark is an intellectual property right to identify a good or service, such as a name, slogan, symbol or logo. Under the fair use doctrine, U.S. law allows the use a trademark without permission for the purpose of news reports.

When covering major sporting events, do not use official trademarks without written permission. That includes the Olympic rings/logo, the words and logo of the Super Bowl, and others. Typically, logo usage is reserved for official “marketing partners” of major sporting events, who pay for that right.

The subject of Trademark is complex and may vary with the use. Check with VOA Standards before deviating from the above guidance.

USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE – GENERATIVE A.I.

VOA journalists are responsible for the content they release to the public, including anything produced with help from generative A.I.

A.I. may be used to review VOA content for spelling and grammar without attribution. A.I. may be used for machine translations, but must be reviewed for accuracy by editors before release.

Do not use A.I. to write scripts or articles; passing off such material as a reporter’s original work is plagiarism. You may use generative A.I. to research or develop ideas for VOA content, but its use must be acknowledged in a credit, tagline or ender, or otherwise attributed in a script.

- **Sample language:** *Generative AI was used to assist in researching this story.*

A.I. may be used for voicing online scripts posted to websites in order to allow access by persons who are unable to read, provided that a human being retains full control over the journalistic content and that the use of synthetic voicing is acknowledged.

- **Sample language:** *This report is narrated by generative AI*

Do not use synthetic voices to impersonate or duplicate any individuals, including agency employees or public figures. This includes A.I.-generated content using an individual’s or employee’s likeness, image, and character.

A.I. systems are often governed by unclear or nonexistent privacy policies and have suffered data breaches. Do not feed sensitive interviews or other sensitive or confidential content to these platforms.

A.I. systems, especially those generating visual content, often do not respect copyrights. Do not use A.I.-generated imagery except when the image itself is the subject of the story, and clearly mark A.I.-generated imagery in your finished product.

Example:



Contact VOA Standards at VOAStandards@voanews.com with any ethical or other questions involving A.I.'s role in journalism.

USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

VOA and USAGM impose restrictions on social media use including work and personal accounts. Journalists are required to follow the Agency's Social Media Policy (BAM V-530) including, but not limited to, the additional rules in the policy that apply to journalists.

Remain neutral on social media regarding topics you cover or may be expected to cover. Do not do anything on social media that will undermine the VOA image or impact VOA's credibility as a fair and impartial news organization. Do not join in conversations on personal or work-related social media unless you are assigned to engage in reporting on that topic. Do not share stories or make comments that will be seen as compromising VOA's ability to cover a topic objectively. Sharing the comments of others or amplifying others' opinions by "liking" or "retweeting" them is no different than if you had written the post yourself, and implies your endorsement.

Be fair, impartial and neutral on your and VOA's social media and in other public spaces. Do not engage in social media conversations that might create the appearance that you favor one side or the other related to topics that you may be expected to cover. Assume that everything you post can or will become public at some point on both your work and personal accounts. Disclaimers do not relieve you from your responsibilities as a VOA journalist.

VOA staff are not authorized to speak or post on behalf of VOA on social media.

USER-GENERATED CONTENT

Outside sources sometimes provide VOA with video, audio and photos. This user-generated content (UGC) can provide unique and/or timely information, particularly during breaking news in hard-to-reach locations. It also can be slanted or inaccurate. In considering whether to publish such content, VOA journalists must take every editorial precaution to ensure its authenticity. A senior News Center editor or language chief must determine whether to use a particular UGC.

Before you use UGC, you must be sure of the UGC’s newsworthiness, authenticity, motive, and ownership, and then get permission to use it in your story or program.

When releasing UGC, VOA must include a disclaimer informing audiences of the source and acknowledging that, while we have evaluated the content, we cannot be absolutely sure of its legitimacy. As with all of VOA’s reporting, transparency is key.

- **Example:** *Images posted to social media and deemed credible by VOA Persian showed opponents of Iran’s authoritarian Islamist rulers setting off fireworks in multiple locations late Sunday to celebrate the prospect of Raisi’s demise. In one video, a female narrator identifies the location of fireworks as southern Tehran.*



In another, a male narrator reacts to what he says are fireworks in the city of Saqqez in northwestern Iran’s Kurdistan province.



VOA could not independently verify the circumstances of the fireworks as it is barred from reporting inside Iran.

USING VOA EMPLOYEES, FRIENDS OR RELATIVES IN STORIES

VOA journalists should be open to story ideas from all avenues, regardless of who suggests them. But in the presentation of stories, VOA employees and/or stringers should not be used outside



of their official capacity as the subject of stories, interviewees, or to represent “real people.” Relatives or friends of VOA employees should not be used in stories without disclosing their relationship to VOA in the copy.

- **Example:** *A relative who owns a fabrics store on the street noticed my perplexed look. “I know it’s very strange,” he told me. “That’s because all stores on the right side of the street are under the control of the Syrian government. Those on the left side fall under the control of the Autonomous Administration.”*

Exceptions from disclosure can be granted by your supervisor if a relative or friend is prominent or expert in his/her own right, or was a victim or witness to a news event.

If a VOA journalist has a close personal relationship with an interviewee, another journalist should be assigned to do the interview to avoid conflict of interest.

VERIFICATION

VOA must stand by the material it presents. You must ensure that the information, video, audio, and graphic material that you publish is accurate prior to its publication.

Before using any material discovered on social media or sent from a source other than VOA or one of its newswire services, you must carefully examine its source, including the source’s social media account, how long it has existed, its post history and other pieces of forensic evidence. Verify that photos and videos are legitimate and what they represent to be. Consult with your editor before using them. Techniques for validating third-party material can be found on VOA Standards SharePoint site, under “User Generated Content Guidance”.

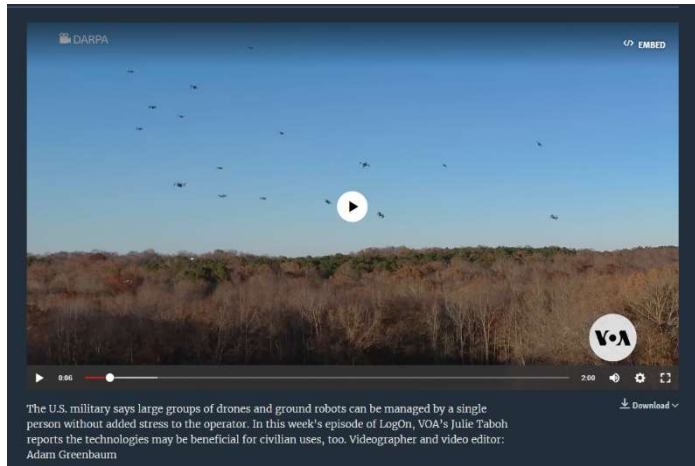
VIDEO NEWS RELEASES (VNRS)

A video news release (VNR) is a video segment that mimics a news report but has been created – by marketers, publicists, campaign strategists, government agencies, etc. – to shape public opinion, promote commercial products and services, or support other interests. VOA journalists may use VNRS when they provide content not otherwise available to us. Journalists should nonetheless be careful with that content, since we do not know how much of it was scripted or how accurately the scene is shown.

Use material from a VNR only when you and your editor both believe it to be essential and only with proper attribution. VOA SHOULD NEVER AIR A VIDEO NEWS RELEASE IN ITS ENTIRETY.

As is our practice with state-controlled media, the VNR’s source should be supered and referenced in the copy. VNRS should never be used as stand-alone, and audio from a “reporter” narration from a video news release should only be used as background information.

Video Example:



Example:

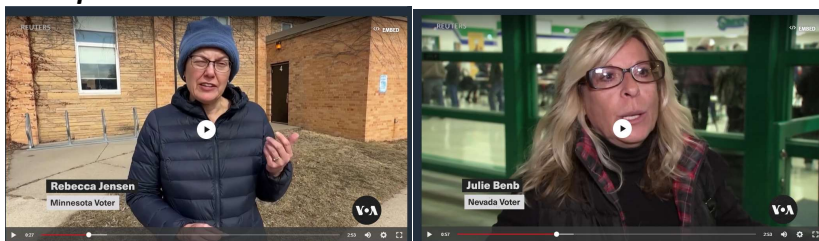
Apple unveils the latest version of the iPhone and sends out a VNR showing the latest changes in the phone and how it operates. VOA can use some of the video to illustrate its story. The script must say the video was provided by Apple, and there must be a visual credit to Apple as well.

As with fair use of video, all instances of whether to use material from a VNR will vary, so always check first with VOA Standards.

VOX POPS – PERSON ON THE STREET INTERVIEWS

Like many news organizations, VOA occasionally interviews random people to give audiences a sampling of a country's mood or opinions about issues. They should only be used sparingly and should never be presented as definitive views of public opinion.

- Example**



- Example**





When doing vox pops, for the purposes of “informed consent,” advise interviewees that they are being interviewed for use on VOA and that their comments may be seen around the world. Do not use collected or selected comments from social media to represent popular opinion or even isolated reaction. Social media users do not reflect populations as a whole, and some posts may come from trolls.

WAR

Attribution should be used in the coverage of war. Referring to attacks as “brutal” or “successful” can imply that VOA is taking sides. Those words should not be used in copy unless you’re quoting someone making those claims. Attribution **MUST** be clear and specific.

Never use “we,” “us,” and/or “our” in reporting about any side in a conflict. VOA practice is to name the country.

- **Example:** *A year of bitter battles in Ukraine has left neither the Russian nor Ukrainian side victorious and the front lines virtually at a stalemate.*
- **Example:** *On Sunday, Israel’s military announced that it would begin a daytime, 11-hour “tactical pause” in its bombardment of Hamas militants in southern Gaza to permit the increased delivery of humanitarian aid to reach famished Palestinians.*

No territory in a conflict should be referred to as “enemy territory.” The only exception is if you are quoting someone or attributing a claim to them.

Do not inadvertently play a role on one side or another in a combat situation. Do not independently report in real time about the launch of forces moving into combat or if warplanes or other forces are approaching a target. When an attack is underway, you may report it if you can get independent confirmation that bombs/missiles have hit the ground, that launches of slow-moving drones are documented, if an official of an attacking country directly tells VOA that an attack is happening, or if VOA observes the attack first-hand. Do include in your copy if VOA’s reporting is being censored or if VOA’s movements are being restricted by officials of either side.

WRITING FOR YOUR AUDIENCE

VOA covers the world for audiences around the world, but not for audiences in the U.S.

Scripts should be written with a specific audience in mind. Respect your audience. Do not talk down to them.

Under the Smith-Mundt Act, VOA cannot target or attempt to reach audiences inside the United States. There are no exceptions, even if content is in a language other than English or if the groups or individuals in the U.S. are from countries which VOA serves overseas.

Do not assume that your audience has deep knowledge of the U.S. system. Your reporting must provide context through explaining or showing the U.S. system so that your viewers, listeners, and readers can compare it to their own system of government. It must fully explain the news and provide context.

- **Example (taxes):** *Under the federal tax code, businesses involved in "trafficking" in marijuana or any other Schedule I or II drug can't deduct rent, payroll or various other expenses that other businesses can write off.*
- **Example (elections):** *Electors are people appointed to represent voters in presidential elections. The winner of the popular vote in each state determines which party's electors are sent to the Electoral College, which meets in December after the election to certify the outcome.*

Scripts and translations of stories should be accurate but versioned with words that “ordinary people” in your target audience would use, rather than “official-ese.”

- **Example:** *But, Phillips said, many advocates seek the full removal – or “de-scheduling” – of the substance from the DEA’s Controlled Substances Act.*
- **Example:** *The leaders unveiled new initiatives, including a joint lunar mission, investments in semiconductors and clean energy, and research on quantum computing and artificial intelligence. But the strongest focus is on military deterrence, enhancing cooperation not only in the South China Sea but also in the air.*

In using place names, indicate where in the U.S. they are located.

- **Example:** *Presidential candidate Donald Trump plans to campaign this week in the Midwestern state of Michigan.*
- **Example:** *Bernie Sanders, the U.S. senator from the northeastern state of Vermont, said Monday that he will run for a fourth term.*
- **Example:** *A producer of fresh eggs in the United States has temporarily shut down a plant in the southwestern state of Texas after the H5N1 strain of bird flu was detected in chickens.*

CONTACT THE STANDARDS EDITOR IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS. VOAStandards@voanews.com