

Human Rights Compliant Communications in Times of Crisis

This guide is mainly intended for journalists and other media professionals.



UNITED NATIONS
HUMAN RIGHTS
OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER

“Everyone shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of his [or her] choice...”

*...Any advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence shall be prohibited by law.**

AS A MEDIA PROFESSIONAL, AT ALL STAGES OF CRISIS



YOUR AIM IS TO be among those who provide important information reaching the highest possible number of people, to help them make adequate decisions regarding the crises.



YOU FOCUS ON official data, views of experts, voices of affected people, national and international good practices.



YOU MUST provide accurate, evidence-based, timely, regular and transparent information at all stages of the crisis.



YOU ANALYZE to which extent your communications piece contributed to a change in behavior or practice in the context of the crisis.



YOU STOP, THINK and ENSURE human rights compliant communications to make your information available, accessible, acceptable, accountable and of the highest standards - respecting and considering the rights and needs of all, including those of the most vulnerable and marginalized people.



YOU ADHERE to the highest ethical and professional standards when reporting on the crises, including by reporting about the crises without bias, using fact-checking, avoiding stereotyping, and without unnecessarily referring to such factors as race, ethnicity, nationality or religion.

** International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) - Adopted and opened for signature, ratification and accession by General Assembly resolution 2200A (XXI) of 16 December 1966; Entry into force 23 March 1976, in accordance with Article 49. Moldova has ratified the ICCPR in 1990.”*



YOUR READERS NEED TO KNOW:

- How they can protect themselves during the crisis.
- What has been or is being done to prevent the crisis or prevent it worsening.
- How the situation is being assessed, or evaluated.
- What services and help can they get, such as support and treatment in case of need.



EVERYONE RECEIVES YOUR MESSAGES, IF:

- Your communications piece is accessible in all languages, including minority languages spoken in Moldova.
- Your communications piece is adapted for people with specific needs, including visually- and hearing-impaired, and reaches those with limited or no reading abilities.

MAKE YOUR MESSAGES HUMAN RIGHTS COMPLIANT:

- A crisis can generate a wave of stigma and discrimination against certain individuals - push back against it and promote equality and zero-tolerance for stigma, stereotypes and discrimination.
- Your communications piece must not contain messages, which might incite stigmatization, discrimination, hostility or violence against any individuals or groups of people.
- Make sure that your communications piece does not make any individual or group of population, including indirectly, more vulnerable to stigmatization and discrimination.
- Your information must be gender-sensitive, with a view to empowering women to take adequate prevention measures.
- Make sure that your information does not disclose any personal data or confidential information, unless you have the individual's informed consent.



KEEP IN MIND:



- The dissemination of accurate, clear and evidence-based information and awareness-raising campaigns are the most effective tools against discrimination and xenophobia, which feed misinformation and fear.
- Efficient public information and education campaigns should aim to address stigma and stereotypes; push on with positive messages. Bust the myth, don't feed the myth.
- The focus should be on messages that are unifying, and take a positive stance, emphasizing the future and the measures that must be taken, as opposed to a retrospective stance, which focuses on the past accompanied by blaming and pinpointing those allegedly at fault.

FOR MORE INFORMATION SEE:

- **OHCHR Terminology Guide For Mass-Media in Communication with and about Groups Vulnerable to Discrimination** at: <https://moldova.un.org/ro/45502-ghid-terminologic-pentru-mass-media-comunicarea-cu-si-despre-grupurile-vulnerabile>
- **OHCHR's guidance on COVID-19** at: <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/COVID19Guidance.aspx>
- **"A Crisis Communication Guide for Public Organizations"** at: http://www.crisiscommunication.fi/criscomscore/files/download/GUIDE_for_Public_Organisations.pdf
- **United Nations Guidance Note on Addressing and Countering COVID-19 related Hate Speech** <https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/documents/Guidance%20on%20COVID-19%20related%20Hate%20Speech.pdf>

