



*For immediate release - June 10, 2019*

The National NewsMedia Council has dismissed a complaint about accuracy and balance against the National Post.

The complainant, Jay Squalli, objected to an April 12, 2019 article that ran under the headline: "Couple's young daughters taken from Canada to child-custody limbo in Casablanca." This feature-length story examined the complex, troubled relationship between the complainant and his ex-wife, and the complexities involved in the mother's effort to regain custody of the couple's two children.

In his submission, the complainant alleged the news organization violated its editorial code of conduct, which demands honesty, accuracy, objectivity, and balance in its reporting. Moreover, he alleged the news organization included many details which he deemed were "irrelevant", and cited this as the basis for his concerns about editorial bias. He argued that omitting certain details that he deemed to be crucial ultimately violated the thoroughness, honesty, and independence of the reporting.

In its response, the news media organization stated that the article was carefully vetted before publication to ensure that the perspectives of Mr. Squalli, and those of his wife, were adequately represented. In addition, the news organization underscored that the accuracy of the facts reported in the story were supported by the Hague convention regarding parental abduction.

The NNC supports the view that widely accepted journalistic principles dictate that news reports must be based on facts supported by verifiable sources; and that the reports be balanced and accurately reflect more than one perspective on any given issue or situation.

After careful examination of the news story in question, the NNC found no breach of journalistic standards with regards to accuracy. While the NNC does not provide rulings on specific matters pertaining to family or international law, it found that, at every instance, the news organization relied on reputable sources and documentary evidence to support the reporting in the article.

With regards to the portion of the complaint dealing with the issue of balance, the NNC has, in previous decisions, supported the prerogative of the journalist to select the focus of an article. After careful consideration, the NNC was satisfied that facts included in this story were supported by proper context and other widely-accepted journalistic standards and dismissed the complaint about accuracy.

Council was of the view, moreover, that the news organization provided the complainant with adequate opportunity to present his version of events in the custody case described in the National Post. For these reasons, the NNC dismissed the portion of the complaint about balance.

Lastly, the complainant also raised concerns that the news organization exhibited a 'personal prejudice' against him based on his religion and ethnicity. The NNC declined to comment on these matters, as there was no prima facie evidence to support the allegation.