

2024-23: Mardikian v Toronto Sun

June 10, 2024 - for immediate release

The National NewsMedia Council has mediated and found that corrective action was taken to address a concern about accuracy in a March 16, 2024, opinion column published by the Toronto Sun.

The opinion column argued, “many anti-Israel initiatives [are] anything but grassroots efforts,” and pointed to a document produced by a U.S.-based organization that offered guidance “on organizing for ceasefire resolutions in local city councils” to support its argument. The original column stated that the guide was “secret” and that it had been “leaked.”

The complainant, Rose Mardikian, a member of a pro-Palestinian advocacy group, filed a complaint with the NNC stating that the guide was in fact publicly accessible and that characterizing it as “secret” was inaccurate. The complainant stated, “these are documents produced by a professional organization to help grassroots organizers with the work in their communities.”

The news organization responded by stating that the guide was “not readily or easily available on the organization’s website” at the time of the column’s publication. The complainant provided screenshots of the website captured at the time of writing to show that the guide was publicly available.

In response to the concern about accuracy, the news organization updated the column to reflect the fact that the guide was not a secret document. It included an editor’s note stating, “This opinion column has been modified to indicate the ‘toolkit’ was not a secret document. At the time of writing, it was not easily accessible to the author.”

The complainant was satisfied with the changes made to the article.

The NNC consistently supports the wide latitude afforded to opinion writers to use strong language and express unpopular views. While distinct from news reporting, opinion writing must be grounded in fact.

Care is taken to ensure that published articles are free from inaccuracies. That said, in rare cases where errors occur, standard practice is to correct errors in a transparent and consistent manner so that readers are aware of the updated information.

In light of the updates to the article and editor’s note alerting readers to the changes, the NNC considered the matter resolved due to corrective action.