National NewsMedia Council

2025-38: Henderson v National Post

July 31, 2026

The National NewsMedia Council (NNC) has dismissed a complaint alleging inaccuracy and inappropriate sourcing in a June 18, 2025 opinion column published by the National Post.

The complainant, David Henderson, alleged that the piece contained inaccuracies, and pointed to two statements. In particular, the complainant raised concern with the statement, “They [the Islamic regime’s morality police] punish women whose public dress and behaviour do not strictly conform to Sharia law. Iranian women cannot show their hair. They cannot dance. They cannot sing.” The complainant argued that while this may have been the case in the past, a number of news reports point to the fact that practices have changed more recently.

The complainant also raised concern with the accuracy of the statement, “Unlike Israel, Iran’s bombardment didn’t seek to target only military sites or leaders. Its ballistic missiles targeted the only truly democratic nation in the Middle East with complete disregard as to whether they landed on civilian targets or not.” The complainant pointed to the fact that Israel had not just targeted “military sites” but had also “bombed media organizations,” citing an Associated Press article that reported on the attack.”

The complainant also takes issue with the inclusion of information from the Institute for the Global Study of Antisemitism (ISGAP). The complainant pointed to the fact that the think tank had received significant funds from the Israeli government.

On this point, the article states, “Activist groups like Palestine Solidarity Campaign do not appear to be concerned about unreported money flowing into universities globally from Qatar, which the Institute for the Global Study of Antisemitism and Policy (ISGAP) suggests is being used to promote anti-democratic and antisemitic ideologies on campuses.”

The column clearly attributes the information to the specific source and includes a hyperlink to the report in question for readers to learn more about the claim in context. Further, the use of the term “suggests,” rather than, for example, “proves,” indicates to readers that the claim is possible based on material from the particular source.

The NNC understands some readers may wish to see more information about the source in question, or different sources used. While including more information about sources may help readers better understand the issues at hand, not including such information does not necessarily indicate a breach of journalistic standards in an opinion piece. Importantly, the statement is phrased as a claim and attributed to its source with a hyperlink for readers to learn more. For these reasons, the NNC did not find grounds to support a complaint about a breach of journalistic standards related to attribution.

In reviewing the complaints about accuracy, the NNC found that the column appeared to be expressing a general opinion about the laws in place. While the complainant makes the point that the consequences of violating such laws have changed in recent years, widely available information supports the fact that repercussions for violating the law remain a possibility, even if the levels of compliance or enforcement are significantly less consistent or visible than in the past. For this reason, the NNC did not find grounds to support a complaint about accuracy.

Regarding the second concern over accuracy, the NNC asked the news organization for a response to the concern raised by the complainant about the statement that compared Iran and Israel's military activities.

The news organization stated, "The TV station is controlled by the regime, a 'communications centre of the Iranian regime' as Israel put it. One person was killed, illustrating that it was a targeted attack, not an indiscriminate bombing. The example, in our view, reinforces the point being made, rather than countering it." The news organization cited a BBC news article that reported on the attack.

The NNC reviewed the published statements and relevant materials submitted by parties. In reviewing the statement and preceding paragraphs in the opinion article, the NNC observed that the column was commenting on the public response to Israel's "series of preemptive strikes on Iranian senior officials, as well as military and nuclear infrastructure," while drawing a comparison between the two countries' military action. The statement included a hyperlink to a social media post from the Israeli Defense Forces that showed a graphic comparing the two countries' intended targets.

In reviewing the matter, the NNC observed that a number of news articles at the time reported on the initial impact of Iran's "retaliatory airstrikes," stating that many were intercepted while some impacted residential areas in Israel. Similarly, the BBC article, cited by the news organization in its response to the complaint, states that the attack "came after Iranian missiles

struck four different areas in the northern and central Israel overnight, killing at least eight civilians, according to the military." As the news organization noted, the BBC article includes statements from an Israeli military spokesperson, who said the television station was "a communications centre of the Iranian regime, which served Iran's armed forces."

When reporting on complex and devastating situations such as violent conflict, including relevant context and multiple perspectives in a news article provides readers with a more complete picture of situations as they unfold. For example, the BBC news article noted above, as well as the AP piece cited by the complainant, included other perspectives and context, such as reporting that 224 people were killed and more than 1,200 were injured in Iran from Israeli airstrikes, according to Iran, and at least 24 people were killed and more than 500 injured in Israel, according to Israel, during the same period.

The NNC recognizes that readers may be skeptical of government communications, particularly those conveyed via social media posts, in cases of highly-charged political conflict and interstate violence. That said, opinion writing is not necessarily required, nor expected, to present all sides of an issue. While news reporting includes relevant context and multiple perspectives, opinion writers may choose to argue a particular perspective, based on widely available information, as a way to offer alternative views or make sense of the issues at hand.

An ordinary reading of the column in this case offers a criticism of the public reaction to Israel's military action in Iran, arguing that the latter was less discriminate in its military action. In this way, the statement appears to reflect a specific rationale that was communicated and reported on. It is understandable that readers may disagree with the nature and precision of each country's attacks, for example, based on the locations or differences in the total number of people affected by each country's actions. While the NNC recognizes that readers may come to different conclusions than those drawn in the piece, the statement in question expresses a particular perspective on the intentions and impact of the two countries' actions, which falls within the latitude of opinion writing.

The NNC also recognizes that the complainant took issue with the focus and construction of the argument, stating that the column was relying on "straw man" tactics to make its point. The role of opinion writing is to present readers with a range of perspectives on issues of public concern. While readers may disagree with the overall approach of an opinion piece, and feel that another line of reasoning would produce a stronger argument, that in itself is not indicative of a breach of journalistic standards.

For the reasons outlined above, the NNC did not find grounds to support a breach of journalistic standards in this case and dismissed the complaint about accuracy.