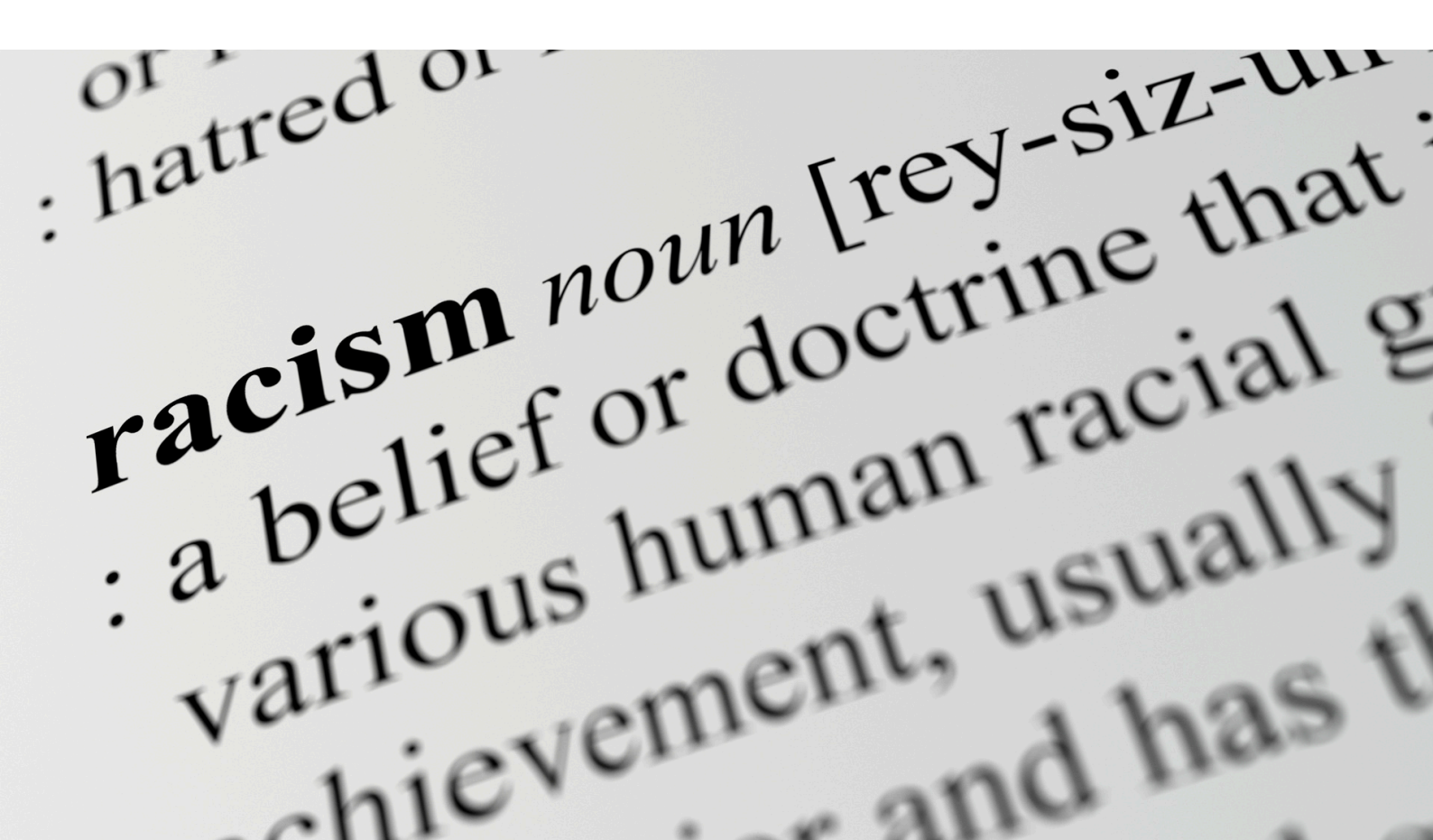




# Anti-racism Guidelines

## Overview

One of the measures that Malta was expected to implement as part of its anti-racism strategy was the drawing up of a code of practice that sets standards for journalists when reporting on issues relating to minority groups, racism and intercultural initiatives. In the absence of such a code, the civil-society-led **Anti-Racism Platform** and the **Institute of Maltese Journalists** drew up guidelines to help journalists combat racism and Islamophobia, both overt and systemic. This code guides journalists in responsible reporting that reflects the diversity of the communities they serve. By committing to this ethical framework, journalists can foster a media landscape that challenges harmful stereotypes, amplifies marginalised voices, and supports social justice.



# Recommendations

## For journalists/reporters/editors

- In Malta it is assumed that, when a person's nationality isn't specified, the person is Maltese. However, nationality tends to stick with readers, and could give the impression that some nationalities are more likely to commit crime. To prevent perpetuating stereotypes, journalists should avoid mentioning nationality, religion or race when it has nothing to do with the issue that is being reported on, including in court reports. If a media house would rather always report the nationalities of the persons that committed a crime, then it is encouraged that the media house mention nationality in all police and court reports, including when the person is Maltese.
- Refrain from overusing the words 'foreign/er/s' as they perpetuate an 'us and them' mentality
  - Example: 'The artist opened a gallery in Sliema' vs 'The foreign artist opened a gallery in Sliema'. The first version is less sensational and keeps the nationality as a secondary detail.
- Rather than opting for a universal word to refer to people of colour, be aware of phrases and words that should NOT be used, such as 'coloured', 'half-caste', 'dark-skinned', 'illegal migrant', 'boat people'. The phrase 'ethnic minorities', if race is relevant to the issue being reported, is most preferred, as is 'mixed heritage' for biracial people.
- Ask the interviewee/s how they would like to be identified
- When a crime/issue is racially motivated, but the ethnicity of the person is unclear, avoid saying 'dark-skinned' in the headline and use alternatives, such as 'racially motivated'.
- Encourage representation when it comes to interviewing experts/getting reactions to issues that are not related to race.
  - Example: If a journalist needs comments from a health expert, try including people of colour.
- Ensure images used in articles covering issues of migration, racism, diversity, or interviews with people of colour are truly representative of the issue and do not reinforce misinformation and stereotypes.
  - Example: If the report is about migrant workers, do not always publish photos of Black people on construction sites. There are migrant workers who are not Black, and there are Black migrants who work at barbershops, grocery stores, law firms, businesses and schools.
  - Example: If a media organisation usually uses stock photos of court buildings in its court reporting, stick to this practice when a person of colour is being charged. There is a tendency of 'parading' people of colour/migrants at the court entrance, while others, mostly Maltese, are often taken to court from the back entrance.

# Recommendations

## For newsroom managers/heads of media organisations

- Encourage diversity in the newsroom and engage people of colour as journalists, reporters and editors. This would not only bring a fresh perspective to newsrooms but also a fairer and more sensitive reporting approach on issues linked to racism. Additionally, a person who faces racism/prejudice/discrimination and is afraid of speaking to the media could be more willing to speak to a fellow person of colour.
- National media organisations should support community-based media/journalists and, if possible, identify and liaise with them. Most often, they are a platform for minority voices and stories. They have a stronger focus on diverse representation and can provide more balanced coverage of minority issues.
- Engage in training on migration to better understand the ever-evolving topic and be able to provide more accurate and knowledgeable information.
- Promote media literacy and critical thinking skills among online content creators/citizen journalists/individuals who are active within minority communities.

