

MIGRATION REPORTING GUIDELINES

FOR THE PAKISTANI MEDIA



Be Accurate

Facts and data are at the heart of responsible reporting on migration. The **United Nations**, **World Bank**, ICMPD, IOM and ILO all have resources and tools to provide accurate and relevant data. Local sources include the **Pakistan Bureau of Statistics** and the **Bureau of Emigration & Overseas Employment**. Be transparent about the source of information. Where information is not available, tell the audience.

Know the Law

Be fully knowledgeable of both national and international legislation that is relevant to migration. The Emigration Ordinance of 1979 is a well-established broad legal framework which governs labour migration and emigration in Pakistan. The Foreigners Act 1946 regulates entry and departure for foreign nationals into Pakistan. International migration law has no one legal instrument but covers the legal definitions and regulations related to migrants in areas such as regional arrangements, human trafficking and people smuggling, human rights, labour laws and maritime law.



Use the right terminology and language

It is important to become familiar with the right language when reporting on migration. Consider the differences between emigration versus immigration. There are differences between a refugee and an asylum seeker. Climate migration and economic migration are both common phenomenon in Pakistan which require explaining. Also consider what an Internally Displaced Person (IDP) is compared to a stateless person.



Avoid sensationalism and stereotypes

It is important to check the negative impact of stereotyping and consider how it might encourage hate speech and racism. Migrants are often viewed, at best as undereducated or criminals, at worst terrorists. Not only should these perceptions be avoided but they should be actively challenged.





Provide context and background

It is vital to consider and describe the circumstances that are driving people to leave their homes. When reporting on a migration event, consider the whole process and various aspects of migration as well the historical context and how this might have contributed to the situation. Afghan migrants are often fleeing insecurity and persecution in their home country, hence their movement into Pakistan. In Pakistan, internal migration is also an important and under covered story.

Include all perspectives in the stories

Be sure to include official sources but also the voices of citizens and of course the migrants themselves. It is important to tell a migrant's story with humanity. Remember migrants can be sources. They are also your audiences. Migrants are women, children, of different ethnic and religious origin whose voices should all be heard. Consider all of the different angles from which a migration story can be told.



Remember that migration stories intersect with news

Although migration is an important topic in its own right, it is also important to think about where migration might intersect in other news stories. The Covid-19 pandemic has had a substantial impact on the living conditions and prospects of migrants and immigrants in Pakistan. Labour migration and migrants to the Gulf has also been shaped by the pandemic and the impact of both on the Pakistani economy are all important stories.

Tell positive stories that focus on human rights

Focus on the strengths and solutions that are being offered rather than just on the problem. Migrants bring many skills and talents into a country as well as bringing back knowledge and expertise when they return to their home countries. Migration is a stimulus for economic growth. Work closely with NGOs, CSOs and academia to include a rights perspective.

