

Seba Dereja Media and Communications PLC

Editorial Policy

COMPANY ADDRESS DETAILS

Addis Zeybe
Seba Dereja Media and Communications PLC
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INTRODUCTION

Established in 2018, Seba Dereja Media and Communications PLC is an online Ethiopian media outlet whose goal is enriching the journalistic tradition of Ethiopia through truly independent and fair news. It has two platforms, Gobena Street and Addis Zeybe, through which it reaches both English-speaking and Amharic-speaking audiences. Ethiopia's culture of journalism, particularly in the last two decades, has been marred by repression, government censorship, and frequent social media and Internet shutdowns. Seba Dereja seeks to provide a news source to the public that is reliable, relevant, and independent; it is therefore not aligned with any political, religious, or ethnic organization. It operates an online platform that discusses a wide range of topics related to urban spaces including politics, the economy, culture, and more, while continuing to be active on various social media outlets. Seba Dereja is working in a challenging, complex, and dynamic media environment, but this Editorial Policy seeks to establish a guiding set of principles for our journalists. By adhering to these values, Seba Dereja will strengthen its presence and reputation as an independent, free, and fair news outlet for all Ethiopians.

POLICY GUIDELINES

The following section lays out the philosophies, frameworks, and modes of operating that fuel Seba Dereja. Through these values, we highlight the fundamental set of ideals at the core of our news site. Our journalists will acknowledge these values so that they may inform the reporting they conduct.

Vision and Mission Statement

1. Gobena Street and Addis Zeybe will be the most reliable news and information dissemination digital outlet in Ethiopia, focusing on both local and state issues.
2. Our mission is to play to the role of the media in the democratization process of Ethiopia by reporting on all local news nation-wide. This will help the prosperity of Ethiopians regardless of their sex, religion, ethnic, or any other division.

Core Values

1. To focus on originality and creativity in the ways Gobena Street and Addis Zeybe report on a variety of issues.
2. To encourage an honest and independent system of media in Ethiopia.
3. To remain non-aligned from political, religious, economic, ethnic or other identifications in our reporting. In this way, Seba Dereja Media places value on inclusivity and nation-building.
4. To represent all urban spaces in Ethiopia.
5. To remain committed and available to tell otherwise neglected stories.
6. To provide an accessible news outlet to the Ethiopian public that is relevant, reliable, and independent.
7. To emphasize passion, quality, and a striving for constant improvement in our work.
8. To encourage a media setting of true Freedom of the Press in Ethiopia.

Social Obligations

1. Seba Derejas' coverage is intended for each and every human being.
2. Its reporting will be non-partisan, non-religious, and non-discriminatory towards any group, in its nature.
3. Coverage will focus on cross-cultural issues, urban agendas, and local politics from a variety of locations nation-wide.
4. In light of this, Seba Dereja will report on many viewpoints of an issue, as well as cover a variety of topics that relate to various peoples in Ethiopia.
5. One of the ways Seba Dereja will achieve this is through a mobile journalism program that connects journalists from at least ten urban centres in Ethiopia to the news outlet based in Addis Ababa. This will increase the national coverage to be more regular and consistent from across Ethiopia, rather than intermittent discussions during an event as is the typical structure presently.
6. Through our various platforms (see below under "Format and Design" for more information), we will seek to reach a mega-audience that will bring our coverage of issues to a wide swath of the Ethiopian population.

Professional Obligations

1. Seba Dereja will always maintain the highest standards of professionalism in its work, to encourage an overall more professional environment for journalists in Ethiopia.
2. Coverage will always be thoughtful and contribute to greater public knowledge of events, politics, economics, and social systems in Ethiopia.
3. Proper grammar and professional journalistic style will always be used.
4. Seba Dereja will create a suitable workplace environment for efficient content generation.
5. Seba Dereja seeks to achieve financial sustainability to have a larger degree of freedom for storytelling.

Format and Design

1. The news will always be updated firstly on the online platform, <http://en.gobenastreet.com> and <http://addiszeybe.com/>
2. Seba Dereja will also utilize social media platforms to expand its reach as well (see below under “Social Media Presence” for more information).
3. All of our digital platforms will be competent, regularly updated, and well-polished.
4. All of our publications and updates will be reliable and timely.
5. By using diversified, consistent, and reliable online content, Seba Dereja will allow for wider access to the news across the country.
6. These multiple online platforms will contribute to the goal of establishing brand awareness and recognition.
7. With the use of online platforms, Seba Dereja will use intensive digital marketing and monetization to increase its outreach within Ethiopia.

Role of Social Media

1. In line with its online platform, Seba Dereja will also maintain a strong presence on social media.
2. These platforms will be used to provide the public further access and awareness of Seba Dereja Media’s reporting and activities.
3. All commentary made on social media platforms by Seba Dereja accounts and those of its employees will be in line with the Seba Dereja character and policies.
4. Social media will allow access and engagement with its audiences, meaning a variety of populations. All such engagements should remain courteous and professional, while still upholding journalistic intentions to bring awareness of issues to the public.

Staff Development

1. All staff of Seba Dereja will be trained with regards to the journalistic standards and policies of the news outlet, with any further necessary trainings and updates ongoing.
2. All staff will be respectful of each other and respect diversity within the office.
3. Seba Dereja will devise a mechanism for talent acquisition and development to provide emerging journalists with opportunities as well as training.

EDITORIAL OBJECTIVES

Editors are charged with maintaining the goals of Seba Dereja. Journalists are likewise expected to adhere to these guidelines, but editors are the guardians of these policies above all. The character of the newspaper is determined by the editorial decisions made, and therefore editors have the duty of protecting the goals of Seba Dereja in the following ways.

Organizational Structure

1. The managing editor will be responsible for the overall editorial and administrative issues of the company.
2. The editorial board of Gobena Street/Addis Zeybe will be the highest body, which is composed of editors, digital media journalists, creative personnel, is responsible for content generation activities.
3. Digital media journalists will be under the supervision of Content and Online editors.

4. The editorial team will get assistance from creative arts team for each story element published in the platforms
5. The managing editor will establish marketing, financial, administrative and technical teams to provide all the necessities to do the primary task of the company.

Role of Editors

1. It is the responsibility of the journalists and editors to uphold the character and philosophies of Seba Dereja.
2. Editors will be responsible for preventing uncharacteristic or misrepresentative news from being published.
3. Editors are to lead the team in content and decisions relating to coverage.
4. Editors are to ensure any criticism is grounded in fact and will include it in Seba Dereja whenever necessary.

Retractions and Errors

1. In the interest of accuracy and reliable information, all reporting should be based in fact and dependable sources.
2. In the case that an error is found, it is the duty of the editor to issue a retraction or correction as soon as possible to rectify it.
3. If changes are made to an online story that are not clear in the story's text, the edit will be indicated somewhere on the same webpage.
4. Corrections will only be issued when there is evidence to suggest that some aspect of the reporting is indeed false.

Content Decisions

1. Editors make final decisions related to all content and materials that are published.
2. A wide variety of topics will be encouraged. However, all published content should be related to the Seba Dereja categories of editorials, politics, economy, culture, education, and history. It should also represent information and coverage that is of public interest to Ethiopians.
3. Topics and content should not be selected based on how it will positively or negatively affect an individual or group.
4. Content may include a combination of text, photos, and videos. Whenever multiple formats are utilized, they should all be representative and accurate to the main topic and not misleading.
5. Editorials will represent topical content, ideas, and opinions of Seba Dereja journalists and editors.
 - a. Any editorials published must also be of public interest and well-researched, in addition to the opinions that they represent.
 - b. Editorials will not act as a basis for divisive, partisan, or ethnonationalist discussion. Rather, they will invite intelligent discussion on important topics.
 - c. In the case that the editorial is controversial, the opportunity for relevant parties to reply will be respected (see below under "Opportunity to Reply" for more information).

Editorial Disagreements

1. In the case of disagreement between editors and/or journalists over content to be published, the managing editor must make the final decision.
2. All arguments in a disagreement must be taken seriously. In the end, the decision should relate back to Seba Dereja goals and philosophies of being free, fair, and independent news for all Ethiopians.

Censorship

1. Editors will strive to avoid censoring content and voices as much as possible.
2. Relevant content should always be encouraged, and editors should never dissuade a journalist from certain reporting.
3. Cases of expletives/obscenities, disturbing or graphic content (including text, photographs, and videos), will be considered amenable, but all efforts should be made to keep the content as faithful to the original state as possible.

Social Media Presence

1. As a digital media outlet, Seba Dereja will also be active on multiple social media platforms including Twitter, Facebook, and others. The Managing Editor will oversee these platforms, or will designate a reporter to head these.
2. The content posted to social media pages should endeavor to support the main Seba Dereja page and its published materials.
3. The content posted to social media pages will also adhere to the editorial policies and goals of Seba Dereja.

Bylines and Crediting

1. All credit to sources and any other contributions to content should be appropriately noted.
2. Source anonymity will be respected when necessary and requested (see below under “Anonymity and Confidentiality” for more information).
3. All journalists will be recognized through a byline for their pieces.
4. All photos, videos, and other supplemental content will similarly be recognized with a byline.

Photography and Videography Policy

1. Photography and videography that is published alongside text content or standalone will also follow the editorial guidelines and philosophies of Seba Dereja.
2. The impression or message endorsed through a photograph or video will be representative, not misleading, of the content to which it is meant to relate.
3. Publishing a photograph or video requires consent of the included parties.
4. If any photo is edited or altered in any way before publishing, this must be indicated.

CODE OF CONDUCT

There are certain standards of conduct that journalists and editors alike must adhere to uphold the standards of professional journalism and Seba Dereja. The following is a set of guidelines to help direct the writing style and reporting done by Seba Dereja.

Validity of Information

1. Foremost important in reporting is to ensure that all reported information is valid and reliable.
2. Accuracy in reporting maintains Seba Dereja status as a dependable and trustworthy news provider.
3. No information reported should be misleading or misrepresentative of reality.
 - a. In this way, quotes, surveys, photos, and any other content format may not be altered or presented in a limited way so as to imply something alternate from the truth.
 - b. Intentionally hiding information that could implicate or exonerate a relevant party is unethical and will not be tolerated.

Identifying Oneself

1. When gathering information, reporters must identify themselves as a member of Seba Dereja.
2. Exceptions to this are only for cases where identification would lead to danger for the journalist or would prevent factual reporting, but to do so must be approved beforehand.

Recording Interviews

1. In cases where a journalist is recording an interview or phone conversation by audio device, the interviewee must be informed and give consent.
2. Notes should always be taken to ensure that the story later is factual, no pieces of information are withheld, intentionally or unintentionally.
3. In cases where there is no audio recording, journalists must ensure that the quotes they take down are accurate.

Bribery and Payments

1. Journalists and editors should not personally benefit from the coverage of a certain issue.
2. Accepting a bribe for or against any publication is unethical and goes against the fundamental idea of free and fair journalism.

Working with Children and Other Vulnerable Groups

1. When journalists are working with children or victims of violence and other traumas, they should take extra caution for the feelings of those individuals.
2. In the case of children, any quotes of theirs, or photographs or videos including them must be consented to by their parents or guardians.
3. Vulnerable groups, including marginalized populations, victims of physical/emotional violence, and impoverished persons must be treated with equal respect and dignity that anyone else would be afforded.
4. Privacy of children and vulnerable groups is of utmost importance, unless specific consent is given.

Sourcing and Transparency

1. Always quote and report information from sources truthfully and accurately.
2. Be honest regarding the pathways that led to the information that is being reported, respecting confidentiality when needed.
3. Whenever relevant, highlighting any possibility of a conflict of interest is important. This may include any kind of relationship the reporter or editor has with any relevant parties to a story, including those discussed or any sources. If something were to be revealed later after something is published, it may appear that the news outlet is hiding something.

Anonymity and Confidentiality

1. Any source that wishes to remain confidential will have their identity protected. Confidentiality of sources is fundamental to free and fair journalism, and therefore helps both the sources' protection and Seba Dereja' integrity.
2. Sources that speak in a public forum using their name may be identified.

Opportunity to Reply

1. Because Seba Dereja deals with high-level politics, social issues, economics, and more, it is important to allow all parties relevant to a story the opportunity to discuss their point(s) of view and experience(s). The opportunity to reply will always be honored when serious criticism against an individual or group is raised.
2. In all cases, Seba Dereja Media must be honest and fair to all relevant parties in order to remain impartial.
3. All effort should be made before a story is published to reach out to any relevant parties. In the event that the journalist is unsuccessful, there may be a request post-publishing for a reply. In this case, the editor should determine how relevant the response is and whether to publish it.

Plagiarism

1. Plagiarism is not tolerated.
2. All ideas must be original and anything that influences content in any way must be properly recognized, including but not limited to bylines, copyright, or quotes.

Tone and Language

1. Topics covered may be serious, contentious, or inflammatory in nature. Therefore, it is incredibly important to remain impartial and not appear preferential towards any party.
2. Derogatory, biased, or obscene language will not be allowed unless it is from a source and considered crucial to the story.
3. Sexist, racist, ethnonationalist, ableist, anti-religious, and other offensive language will not be allowed.

CONCLUSION

Seba Dereja Media and Communications PLC will regularly review and update these policies as necessary, but the goals of the outlet remains the same. These policies will continue to guide the reporting and journalism that fuels the work that Seba Dereja undertakes.