For writers

Editorial Policy

Last updated: **14 October 2026**

The editorial policy of the Alrai Alrashid Center for Studies rests on one central principle that sums up its approach to content: "From news to understanding, from information to analysis, and from knowledge to sound judgement."

1. Introduction

As a research and intellectual institution dedicated to producing knowledge and analysis and offering insights and assessments that help people understand public issues and bring reason to the debate around them, the Alrai Alrashid Center for Studies sets out this editorial policy to define the framework governing its content and to explain its direction, standards and publishing rules.

The policy does not aim to restrict researchers or writers, but to build a clear identity for the Center, maintain the quality of its output, and keep a clear distinction between research, analysis, opinion and institutional position.

It applies to the studies, papers, reports, assessments, articles, positions, media material and digital content issued by the Center or published on its official platforms.

2. Identity and editorial direction

1. A research centre, not a news organisation

The Center does not compete with the media and news agencies on the speed of reporting events, and publishing news is not an editorial aim in itself.

The value the Center seeks to offer lies in answering the questions that come after the news:

Why did it happen? What does it mean? What are its implications? Where could it lead? And what options are there for dealing with it?

2. Knowledge before position

The Center's work starts by understanding an issue before taking a position on it, and by gathering and analysing information before reaching conclusions.

Research should not start from a predetermined conclusion and then look for support, but from a question or problem examined with a method that allows findings which may or may not match initial assumptions.

3. The state as the frame of reference

In approaching Iraqi affairs, the Center starts from a concern for state-building, the rule of law, effective institutions, justice, partnership, social balance and the protection of the public interest.

This does not mean defending the performance of governments or institutions; it makes assessing and criticising public policies and practices part of the Center's role when the facts call for it.

4. Independence from alignments

The Center's platforms do not become a space for promoting any party, figure or political group, nor are they used to settle political or personal scores.

Positions on policies, decisions and events are judged by their substance and effects, not by the identity of those behind them.

5. Siding with issues, not individuals

The Center may take a clear position on a public issue or a specific policy when there are sound knowledge-based and professional grounds for it, provided that this position rests on argument, information and an analysis of outcomes, not on support for or hostility towards individuals.

3. Content and publishing priorities

1. Iraq comes first

Iraqi issues take priority in the Center's editorial policy, particularly those related to the state, society, politics, the economy, security, local administration, social change, the future of institutions and decision-making.

2. The regional and international environment, according to its impact

The Center covers regional and international issues when they bear directly or indirectly on Iraq or the region, or when they represent a strategic shift worth studying and following.

3. Added value is a condition for publication

A subject being important or widely discussed is not enough for the Center to publish on it.

The material must add one or more of the following:

- Information or an angle that has not received enough attention.
- A deeper explanation of the event.
- Connections between several variables.
- A reading of the effects and implications.
- Future scenarios.
- Policy alternatives or options.
- Recommendations open to discussion or implementation.

4. No publishing just to follow trends

The Center does not take up an issue merely because it is circulating in the media or on social media.

The criteria for choosing topics are importance, impact and the knowledge value the Center can add.

5. Attention to what lies ahead

The Center's role is not limited to explaining what has happened; it seeks to monitor early trends and shifts and to anticipate issues that may become influential in the future.

4. Editorial approach

1. Analysis before commentary

Material should go beyond describing an event to understand its context, causes, the actors involved, their interests and its likely consequences.

2. Separating fact from assessment

Material issued by the Center distinguishes between:

- **Fact:** information that can be verified.

- **Claim:** information or an account attributed to a source or party that has not been independently confirmed.
- **Analysis:** an interpretation based on a set of facts and indicators.
- **Assessment:** a reading of what is likely to happen based on the available evidence.
- **Scenario:** a possible path, not a certain prediction of the future.

Analysis or assessment may not be presented as established fact.

3. No artificial neutrality

Balance does not mean treating documented information and an unproven claim as equal, or giving different views the same weight when the strength of their evidence differs.

Opposing views are presented according to their relevance to the issue and the strength of their arguments and sources.

4. Criticising policies without personalising disagreement

Material focuses on ideas, policies, decisions and outcomes, and avoids turning criticism into personal hostility or using descriptions that target individuals and are not directly related to the subject.

5. Context is part of the truth

Figures, statements and events are not presented selectively in a way that could change their meaning.

Where understanding a piece of information depends on its historical, political or legal context, the necessary amount of that context should be provided.

6. Dealing with uncertainty

When information is incomplete or contradictory, this should be made clear to readers rather than filling the gaps with assumptions.

Where needed, expressions such as these are used:

"according to the available information", "cannot be independently verified", "current indicators suggest", and "one possible scenario".

5. Position, opinion and independence

1. Distinguishing the Center's outputs

Editorial standards vary with the nature of the material, so a clear distinction is made between:

- **Studies and analyses:** structured research into an issue or phenomenon that examines its elements, causes and interrelations, using an appropriate method and sources to reach a documented explanation or findings. Its central aim is to understand and analyse the issue.
- **Policy paper:** an analysis of a public problem from the angle of decision-making and response that identifies the possible alternatives, compares them by their effects and feasibility, then recommends an option with practical recommendations. Its central question: what is the most suitable decision or action?
- **Strategic assessment:** an assessment of the trajectories of an issue with strategic impact over the medium or long term that analyses its trends, underlying factors and the interaction of the forces shaping it, and builds scenarios to estimate its outcomes and repercussions. Its central question: where is the issue heading, and what is the impact of its trajectories?
- **Situation assessment:** an analysis of a current event or development that explains it in context, assesses the positions, interests and capabilities of the parties involved, then estimates its outcomes and the most likely developments. Its central question: what does this development mean, and what may follow from it soon?

- **Opinion article:** an argumentative treatment of a specific issue in which the author puts forward a clear thesis or position and supports it with facts, examples and reasoning, in language suited to the general reader. Its central question: what is the author's view, and what is the argument for it?
- **Position:** a formal statement of the Center's institutional position on a specific issue.

2. An author's view is not necessarily the Center's position

Articles and views published under the names of researchers or writers are not automatically an expression of the Center's official position.

Where needed, this is stated explicitly in the published material.

3. Official positions follow a different process

Positions and statements issued in the Center's name require institutional approval, and no researcher or editor may on their own attribute a political or intellectual position to the Center.

4. Research is not a political statement

The findings of studies and research may not be subordinated to a prior political position of the Center.

If a study, following its method and sources, reaches findings that do not match earlier views, research integrity takes priority.

5. Diversity of views has knowledge value

The Center makes room for independent thinking and disagreement among researchers and writers, as long as disagreement respects the standards of research, argument and respect and does not conflict with the professional and legal rules of publishing.

6. Sources and verification

1. Verifiable sources come first

Priority is given to original documents, official data, statistics, peer-reviewed studies, research sources, recognised institutions and direct sources whenever they are available.

2. Anonymous sources are the exception

Anonymous sources are not used as an easy substitute for named sources.

When professional necessity requires using them, their reliability should be assessed and the information checked against independent sources or evidence.

3. Claims are attributed to those who make them

When material includes a disputed accusation or claim, it must be clearly attributed to the party that made it, and not presented as a fact established by the Center.

4. Multiple sources

On sensitive and contested issues, essential conclusions should preferably not rest on a single source whenever additional independent sources can be found.

5. Numbers need context

Publishing a figure is not enough; where necessary for understanding it, its source, date, the period it covers and what it measures should be stated, avoiding misleading comparisons between figures that do not measure the same thing.

7. Language and headlines

1. The Center's language

The Center uses clear, measured and direct language that combines depth with ease of understanding, avoiding unnecessary academic complexity as well as media oversimplification.

2. A calm tone is not a weak position

Even on heated issues, the Center avoids insults, accusations of treason, defamation, incitement and exaggeration.

At the same time, a calm tone is not used as an excuse to avoid naming a problem or offering clear criticism when the facts support it.

3. The headline does not go beyond the material

Headlines must reflect the content of the material accurately and must not be more categorical or sharper than the information in it supports.

Misleading or sensational headlines are not used to attract views at the expense of accuracy.

4. Avoiding absolute judgements

Material avoids expressions such as "without doubt", "inevitably", "everyone", "no one" and "the inevitable end" when the evidence does not allow such certainty.

5. Terms are not always neutral

Terms with political, ideological, sectarian or legal connotations are reviewed, and the term that describes the phenomenon most accurately is chosen. This applies to terms that may carry a position or imply a judgement, such as "resistance" and "armed factions", or "occupation" and

"foreign forces". Where the context requires, the Center explains what it means by a term or attributes it to the party that uses it.

8. Sensitive issues and responsible publishing

The Center applies a higher level of scrutiny when dealing with security, sectarian and social issues, and with information that could affect people's safety or reputation or social peace.

This does not mean withholding sensitive issues, but balancing the public's right to know against unnecessary harm that the manner of publication could cause.

The Center also refrains from publishing personal, security or confidential information that has no knowledge value to justify its publication, or whose publication could expose people to unjustified risk.

9. Corrections and right of reply

1. Acknowledging mistakes

Credibility does not mean never making mistakes, but dealing with them responsibly when they are discovered.

2. Clear corrections

If an error is substantial and affects the understanding of the material, it is corrected clearly and, where needed, the material is marked as having been amended.

Errors are not quietly deleted when they have spread or affected the substance of the material.

3. Right of reply

At its editorial discretion, the Center offers a right of reply to individuals or institutions that its material addresses with accusations or substantial disputed information, provided the reply is relevant to the subject and meets professional standards.

10. Use of artificial intelligence

The Center regards artificial intelligence technologies as tools that assist research, analysis and editing, not as a substitute for the researcher or editor.

They may be used to gather ideas, organise information, edit language, compare, explore sources and data, and for other professional uses.

However, no information, figure, quotation or source generated by artificial intelligence may be relied on without verification.

Academic, editorial and legal responsibility for the material remains with the researcher, the editor and the Center, and does not pass to the tool used.

11. Editorial governance

1. Responsibility of the researcher or writer

The researcher bears primary responsibility for the accuracy of information, the precision of quotations, the soundness of conclusions, the disclosure of sources and adherence to academic standards.

2. Responsibility of the editor

The editor reviews the structure, logic, language, sources and headline, and the material's compliance with the editorial policy.

The editor's role is not limited to language correction.

3. Specialist review

Studies and specialist material undergo academic or specialist review before publication, according to their importance and nature.

4. Sensitive material

Material involving political, security, legal or social sensitivity may be referred to a higher level of review before a publication decision is made.

5. Conflicts of interest

Researchers and writers must disclose internally any professional, financial or organisational relationship that could substantially affect their treatment of the subject.

12. Publication decision guide

Before approving any material, the editor should be able to answer the following questions:

1. Why is Alrai Alrashid publishing this material?
2. Does the issue fall within the Center's scope of interest?
3. What value does the material add to what has already been published?
4. Is the essential information documented?
5. Does the material distinguish between fact, claim, analysis and assessment?
6. Does it provide the context needed to understand the issue?
7. Is there an important viewpoint the material has left out without justification?
8. Does the headline reflect the content accurately?

9. Is the language professional and free of personal attacks, incitement and exaggeration?
10. Are there legal, security or social risks that call for further review?
11. Can the researcher defend their conclusions with the information and arguments in the material?
12. Most importantly: if the author's name were removed, would the material still be worth publishing under the name of a professional research institution?

If the answer to any of the essential questions is no, the material is returned for review before publication.

Conclusion

The editorial policy of the Alrai Alrashid Center for Studies is a framework for balancing freedom of thought with responsibility in publishing, the researcher's independence with the institution's identity, and the speed of events with the rigour of analysis.

Through it, the Center aims to build content measured not by how much it publishes, but by the value it adds to understanding public issues and its ability to take readers from news to understanding, from information to analysis, and from knowledge to sound judgement.

This policy is reviewed periodically to keep pace with the development of the Center's work, its research and media output, and changes in the knowledge and digital environment.

End

From Knowledge.... to Wisdom

Follow the Center's publications on social media

www.alraialrashid.org

Tap