

ADVISORY

January 3, 2019

All Editors of NBA

Re: Use of Prefixes while reporting matters which are sub judice, murder, rape etc.

NBSA has noted that channels routinely describe or refer to persons who are suspected of a crime or who are being tried for a crime (particularly in relation to serious offences like murder and rape), as **“offenders”** or **“serious offenders”** or **“murderers”** or **“rapists”** even before they are prosecuted and convicted by a competent court.

A person accused of a crime is deemed to be innocent unless proved guilty and convicted by a court of law. Describing a person accused of a crime or suspected of a crime as an **‘offender’** or a **‘murderer’** or a **‘rapist’** imputes guilt even before a court finds him guilty. This agitates against the legal principle that one is considered innocent unless proved guilty. Further, it should also be remembered that more than fifty percent of persons accused of crimes are found to be not guilty after trial, and to describe them as **“offenders”** does great injustice to them apart from causing irreparable injury to their reputation.

NBSA therefore reminds editors and member broadcasters of NBA that while referring to persons who are accused of a crime or who are under trial (and who have not been convicted), the channels should employ words like **“alleged offender”** or **“accused”** or **“person accused of....”**. While referring to a person accused of murder or rape, care should be taken to avoid describing him as **‘murderer’** or **‘rapist’** even before his conviction and use the words **‘person accused of murder/rape’** or **‘alleged murderer/rapist’**.

Kindly circulate this Advisory to all editorial personnel of your channel(s) to ensure compliance for improving broadcasting standards.



For and on behalf of the
News Broadcasting Standards Authority

CC: Members & Legal Heads of NBA