



DEVELOPING MEDIA COMMUNICATION CULTURE AMONG INTERNAL AFFAIRS OFFICERS IN INTERACTION WITH BLOGGERS AND MASS MEDIA: ISSUES OF PREVENTING CONFLICT SITUATIONS

Ummatov Mukhammadrasul Tursunovich

Professor of the Department of Specialized and Professional Sciences of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Doctor of Philosophy in Legal Sciences, Professor
<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.22305072>

ARTICLE INFO

Qabul qilindi: 27-avgust 2026 yil
Ma'qullandi: 29-avgust 2026 yil
Nashr qilindi: 31-avgust 2026 yil

KEY WORDS

internal affairs bodies, police, bloggers, mass media, media communication, communication culture, conflict prevention, public trust, transparency, professional ethics, United Kingdom, law enforcement.

ABSTRACT

The development of effective communication between internal affairs bodies, bloggers and mass media has become an important component of modern law enforcement activities. The rapid development of digital technologies and social networks has fundamentally changed the traditional model of communication between law enforcement agencies and society. Today, information concerning the activities of internal affairs bodies can be disseminated to a wide audience within a very short period of time, while a conflict between an officer and a journalist or blogger may rapidly develop into a public issue. In this context, the communication culture of internal affairs officers becomes an important factor in preventing conflicts, ensuring transparency and strengthening public trust. This article examines the legal and organizational foundations of communication between internal affairs officers, bloggers and mass media in the Republic of Uzbekistan and analyzes relevant foreign experience, particularly the practice of the United Kingdom. The study focuses on professional courtesy, lawful communication, information openness, emotional self-control, conflict de-escalation, crisis communication and mechanisms for correcting inaccurate information. Based on the comparative analysis, the article proposes the introduction of a specialized media communication standard, a conflict communication algorithm, practical training involving journalists and bloggers, media-risk assessment mechanisms and institutional procedures for analyzing problematic interactions. The study concludes that media communication culture should be considered an integral element of the professional competence of internal affairs officers.

The development of information technologies and the transformation of the modern media environment have fundamentally changed the nature of relations between law enforcement agencies and society. The traditional model, under which information about the activities of internal affairs bodies was primarily communicated through official statements, press conferences and traditional mass media, is gradually being replaced by a much more dynamic communication environment. Social networks, blogs, video platforms and other digital communication channels have created conditions in which any incident involving a police officer may immediately become the subject of public discussion. As a result, the professional behaviour and communication style of an individual officer may have consequences that extend far beyond the particular situation in which the interaction occurred.

In the contemporary information environment, an internal affairs officer may encounter not only a professional journalist but also an independent blogger, citizen journalist or social media content creator. Such persons may record events using mobile devices, ask questions concerning police actions, request information or publish their own interpretation of an incident. These developments require internal affairs officers to possess not only legal and operational knowledge but also a sufficiently developed culture of professional communication. The ability to remain calm, explain legal requirements clearly, distinguish between information that can and cannot be disclosed, and prevent an emotionally difficult interaction from becoming a conflict is becoming an increasingly important professional competence.

The relevance of this issue is directly connected with the constitutional guarantees of freedom of expression and mass media in the Republic of Uzbekistan. The Constitution establishes freedom of thought, speech and conviction, as well as the right to seek, receive and disseminate information. It also provides that mass media are free and operate in accordance with the law, while guaranteeing their right to seek, receive, use and disseminate information [1]. These constitutional principles create an important legal basis for communication between public authorities and representatives of mass media. At the same time, freedom of information is not unlimited. Legislation establishes restrictions concerning state secrets, personal data, information protected by law and other legitimate interests. Therefore, the task of an internal affairs officer is not simply to provide information or refuse access to it, but to determine the legal boundaries of communication and explain them in an appropriate professional manner.

The Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On Internal Affairs Bodies" defines the main tasks of internal affairs bodies, including the protection of citizens' rights, freedoms and legitimate interests, the protection of public order and security, and the prevention and suppression of offenses [2]. These tasks demonstrate that interaction with citizens and society should not be regarded as a secondary aspect of police activity. Communication itself may influence the degree to which citizens perceive law enforcement institutions as legitimate, professional and socially oriented. Accordingly, communication culture should be considered within the broader framework of effective law enforcement.

The Law "On Public Oversight" is also significant in this context because it recognizes mass media among the subjects of public oversight [3]. Public oversight may be exercised through appeals and requests, public discussions, hearings, monitoring and other forms of participation. This means that communication between internal affairs bodies and the media has a broader institutional significance. Journalists and bloggers, within the limits established

by law and depending on their status and circumstances, may contribute to informing society about issues of public importance and drawing attention to problems that require institutional consideration.

At the same time, the legal recognition of media freedom does not eliminate the possibility of conflicts. On the contrary, the combination of public interest, rapid dissemination of information, operational sensitivity and different professional priorities may create conditions for disagreement. Journalists and bloggers are generally interested in obtaining information as quickly as possible, while law enforcement officers may be required to protect confidential information, ensure the integrity of investigations, safeguard personal data or avoid compromising operational activities. The existence of these different priorities is not itself a problem. The problem arises when such differences are managed through emotional confrontation rather than professional communication.

One of the most important factors contributing to conflict is the communication style of the officer. Even where an officer has a legitimate legal basis for refusing to provide information, an aggressive or disrespectful response may create the perception that the police are attempting to avoid public accountability. Conversely, a journalist or blogger may ask provocative questions or use emotionally charged language. However, such behaviour should not automatically determine the officer's response. Professionalism requires the officer to separate the content of the question from its emotional form and to respond to the substantive issue within the limits of the law.

Another significant factor is the increasing use of video recording. In public places, interactions between police officers and citizens may be recorded and subsequently distributed through social networks. Consequently, an officer should recognize that his or her words and behaviour may become part of a much larger public narrative. This does not mean that officers should act artificially or avoid legitimate enforcement actions. Rather, it emphasizes the need for professional self-control and awareness that communication is itself an element of public policing.

In this respect, the experience of the United Kingdom provides an important comparative example. The College of Policing has developed detailed professional guidance concerning police relations with media organizations. Its 2026 professional standards emphasize the importance of establishing successful working relationships between the police and media. According to the guidance, effective media engagement may contribute to solving crimes, protecting communities, informing the public and strengthening the legitimacy of policing. The guidance emphasizes that the foundation of communication should be mutual respect, professional courtesy and cooperation [5].

The importance of this approach lies in the fact that media relations are treated not simply as an institutional public-relations function but as part of professional policing. Communication with journalists is therefore expected to be conducted within a framework of defined professional standards. This principle is particularly relevant to the development of the Uzbek system because it demonstrates that effective communication cannot depend solely on the personal qualities or individual experience of particular officers.

The British experience also demonstrates the importance of differentiating between different forms and levels of information disclosure. Professional guidance distinguishes between reportable, non-reportable, embargoed and non-attributable briefings, each of which

has specific purposes and limitations [5]. Such differentiation reduces uncertainty and helps police officers and media representatives understand the boundaries of communication. It also demonstrates that transparency does not necessarily mean unrestricted disclosure of information. Rather, transparency may be achieved through clear procedures that explain when information can be provided, what form it should take and which information must remain restricted.

Another important aspect of British practice concerns inaccurate or misleading media coverage. The College of Policing recommends that inaccuracies should initially be addressed through professional communication with the journalist or media organization. Where necessary, police institutions may use their own communication channels to provide corrections or seek appropriate regulatory remedies [5]. This approach is significant because it replaces personal confrontation with an institutional mechanism for correcting information. For Uzbekistan, this principle may be particularly useful in the context of social media, where direct disputes between individual officers and bloggers can rapidly attract public attention and potentially damage the reputation of both parties.

The United Kingdom has also placed considerable emphasis on communication during major incidents. Media briefings may be used to provide information in the public interest, reassure communities, clarify misinformation, support crime prevention and improve the accuracy of reporting concerning complex investigations [6]. This demonstrates the importance of proactive communication. If law enforcement institutions do not provide verified information during a high-profile incident, unofficial interpretations may fill the information vacuum. Such circumstances can increase public uncertainty and create additional pressure on officers.

The British model also pays attention to the changing nature of journalism. Professional police guidance distinguishes accredited media from non-accredited individuals, including citizen journalists and social media content creators, and recommends that interactions with such persons be considered on a case-by-case and risk-based basis [5]. This approach may be useful for Uzbekistan because the modern information environment makes it increasingly difficult to apply a simple distinction between “journalist” and “non-journalist.” At the same time, this does not mean that every blogger automatically has the same professional status or access rights as an accredited journalist. Rather, the officer must assess the circumstances of the interaction, the information requested and the applicable legal requirements.

The adaptation of this experience to Uzbekistan requires consideration of national legislation and institutional characteristics. It would therefore be inappropriate simply to copy foreign standards. Instead, the most useful elements should be incorporated into the existing legal and professional framework. In our view, one of the first steps should be the development of a unified “Media Communication Standard for Internal Affairs Officers.” Such a standard could establish basic principles applicable when officers interact with journalists, bloggers and other persons seeking information about police activities. These principles should include legality, respect, neutrality, clarity, timeliness, confidentiality, emotional self-control and conflict prevention.

The proposed standard should establish that an officer must not interpret a difficult or critical question as a personal challenge. A journalist or blogger may legitimately raise questions concerning police conduct, even when the question is uncomfortable for the

institution. The professional response should therefore focus on the substance of the issue rather than the personality of the questioner. Where information cannot be disclosed, the officer should explain the relevant legal restriction in a concise and understandable manner and, where possible, indicate an appropriate institutional channel for obtaining information.

A second important measure would be the introduction of a "Conflict Media Communication Algorithm" into the professional training system. The algorithm could consist of several consecutive actions: listening to the question, identifying the subject matter, distinguishing facts from opinions or accusations, determining the legal status of the requested information, explaining the applicable restrictions, providing an alternative communication channel and documenting the interaction where necessary. The purpose of such an algorithm would not be to impose rigid behaviour in every situation, but to provide officers with a professional framework for responding to difficult circumstances.

For example, if a blogger approaches an officer during a public incident and demands immediate information about an ongoing investigation, the officer should first determine whether the information can legally be disclosed. If disclosure is prohibited, the officer should not simply state that "nothing can be said." A more professional response would explain that the information concerns an ongoing process and cannot currently be disclosed, while directing the person to the relevant official communication channel. This type of response reduces confrontation because it provides a reason and an alternative rather than creating a communication dead end.

Another important direction is the introduction of practical simulation training. Traditional theoretical instruction concerning media law is insufficient to develop genuine communication competence. Officers should be placed in simulated situations involving provocative questions, live video recording, accusations of police misconduct, demands for confidential information, rapidly developing incidents and misinformation on social networks. Journalists and bloggers could participate in such exercises as independent partners, creating realistic communication conditions.

Such training would also help officers develop emotional self-control. In many conflict situations, the initial disagreement may be minor, but the emotional response of one participant causes escalation. An officer who raises his voice, uses disrespectful language or responds sarcastically may unintentionally transform a routine request for information into a public conflict. Therefore, emotional regulation should be regarded as a professional skill rather than merely a personal characteristic.

The experience of the United Kingdom also demonstrates the value of regular institutional dialogue between policing organizations and media representatives. In 2026, the National Police Chiefs' Council introduced a Policing and Media Charter aimed at establishing shared principles, standards and expectations between policing and media organizations [9]. The development of common standards through cooperation between policing and media institutions is particularly relevant because many conflicts arise from mutual misunderstanding. Journalists may not fully understand operational restrictions, while police officers may not fully understand the time pressures and public-interest responsibilities of journalists.

For Uzbekistan, regular police-media roundtables could therefore be established at the national, regional and local levels. Their purpose should not be limited to discussing individual

disputes. They could serve as a platform for explaining legal restrictions, discussing expectations concerning access to information, exchanging professional experiences and developing common approaches to crisis communication. Such institutional dialogue could prevent conflicts before they arise.

An additional measure should be the creation of a media-risk assessment mechanism for high-profile cases. Before significant information is publicly released, internal affairs bodies should assess whether the information may affect ongoing investigative activities, personal data, victims or witnesses, public order or institutional reputation. At the same time, the purpose of such assessment should not be to justify excessive secrecy. Instead, it should help determine what information can safely and lawfully be disclosed and how it should be communicated.

The role of information and public relations units should also be strengthened. Frontline officers cannot be expected to resolve every complex media issue independently. A clear institutional mechanism should enable officers to quickly contact authorized communication specialists when questions concern sensitive investigations, high-profile incidents or potentially controversial matters. This would reduce the risk of inconsistent statements and unnecessary confrontation.

At the same time, excessive centralization of communication should be avoided. The British experience demonstrates that media engagement should not necessarily be limited exclusively to senior officers [5]. If only a very small group of officials is trained to communicate with media representatives, other officers may remain unprepared when unexpected interactions occur. Therefore, a balanced model is required: general communication competence for all relevant officers and specialized media competence for designated personnel.

The issue of misinformation also deserves particular attention. Social networks enable inaccurate information to spread rapidly, sometimes before official institutions have an opportunity to verify the facts. Internal affairs bodies should therefore develop procedures for identifying and responding to significant misinformation. However, the response should be factual and institutional rather than personal. Officers should not engage in public arguments with individual bloggers or users. Where correction is necessary, verified information should be provided through appropriate official channels.

An important principle that can be derived from foreign experience is that the credibility of law enforcement communication depends not only on the quantity of information provided but also on its accuracy, consistency and timeliness. Contradictory statements from different officers may create greater reputational damage than a temporary delay in communication. Accordingly, internal affairs bodies should establish internal procedures for verifying information before it is publicly communicated.

The development of media communication culture should also be linked to professional evaluation. Officers whose duties involve regular communication with journalists, bloggers and the public should periodically demonstrate competence in media law, communication ethics and conflict management. Such assessment could include both theoretical knowledge and practical simulations. The objective should not be punishment but professional development.

Based on the above analysis, several original proposals can be formulated. First, it is proposed to establish a unified "Media Communication Standard for Internal Affairs Officers"

as a methodological and professional document defining the basic rules of interaction with journalists and bloggers. Second, a mandatory practical module on media communication and conflict management should be incorporated into the professional training system of internal affairs bodies. Third, a seven-stage conflict communication algorithm — listen, identify, distinguish, determine legality, explain, redirect and document — should be introduced as a practical tool for officers. Fourth, annual police-media simulation exercises should be conducted with the participation of professional journalists and bloggers. Fifth, a media-risk map should be prepared for major incidents and socially sensitive cases. Sixth, internal affairs bodies should establish regular institutional dialogue with media representatives through briefings, roundtables and professional consultations. Seventh, mechanisms for correcting inaccurate information should be strengthened so that institutional clarification becomes preferable to personal confrontation.

The implementation of these measures would contribute to the formation of a modern model of police communication in Uzbekistan. Such a model should be based on the understanding that public trust is influenced not only by the legality of police actions but also by the manner in which those actions are explained to society. A lawful decision communicated disrespectfully may still produce distrust, while a lawful restriction explained clearly and professionally may be understood and accepted by the public.

The comparative analysis of Uzbekistan and the United Kingdom demonstrates that the development of police-media relations requires a combination of legal regulation, institutional procedures and professional communication skills. The British experience is valuable not because it can be mechanically transferred to Uzbekistan, but because it demonstrates the advantages of treating police-media communication as an institutional component of professional policing. Principles such as mutual respect, professional courtesy, lawful transparency, proactive communication, structured briefings, correction of inaccurate information and specialized training may provide useful foundations for further development of the Uzbek model [5–9].

In conclusion, the formation of media communication culture among internal affairs officers should be recognized as an important direction of professional development and institutional modernization. The contemporary information environment makes conflicts between police officers and bloggers or media representatives increasingly visible and potentially influential on public trust. Therefore, the ability to communicate calmly, lawfully, respectfully and effectively must become an integral part of professional competence.

The central objective should not be to eliminate critical questions or restrict public discussion. Rather, the objective should be to ensure that disagreements concerning police activities are managed through professional dialogue and lawful procedures rather than emotional confrontation. Internal affairs officers should be prepared to explain legal restrictions, respond to difficult questions, distinguish legitimate public interest from requests for protected information and prevent communication problems from developing into institutional conflicts.

The experience of the United Kingdom demonstrates that sustainable police-media relations are built through clearly defined professional expectations and continuous dialogue rather than through ad hoc responses to individual incidents. For Uzbekistan, the introduction of a media communication standard, conflict communication algorithm, practical training,

media-risk assessment and regular police-media dialogue could create a more systematic and professional framework for interaction.

Ultimately, effective communication between internal affairs bodies and media representatives should be viewed as part of public safety and institutional legitimacy. A modern law enforcement officer must be capable not only of applying the law but also of communicating the law. The ability to remain professional under pressure, respect the rights of media representatives, protect legally restricted information and prevent unnecessary escalation is therefore an important indicator of professional maturity. Strengthening these competencies can contribute to greater transparency, reduced conflict and stronger public confidence in internal affairs bodies

References:

- [1] Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Tashkent, 2023.
- [2] Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. O'RQ-407 dated 16 September 2016, "On Internal Affairs Bodies."
- [3] Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. O'RQ-474 dated 12 April 2018, "On Public Oversight."
- [4] Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. 541-I dated 26 December 1997, "On Mass Media" (new edition and subsequent amendments).
- [5] College of Policing. Police and the Media: Authorised Professional Practice. United Kingdom, updated 23 February 2026.
- [6] College of Policing. Media Briefings: Authorised Professional Practice. United Kingdom, 2026.
- [7] College of Policing. Media and Communications: Authorised Professional Practice. United Kingdom, 2026.
- [8] College of Policing. Corporate Communications: Authorised Professional Practice. United Kingdom, 2026.
- [9] National Police Chiefs' Council. Policing and Media Charter. United Kingdom, 17 March 2026.
- [10] Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On Principles and Guarantees of Freedom of Information."
- [11] Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On Personal Data."
- [12] Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On Appeals of Individuals and Legal Entities."