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Friday 18<sup>th</sup> March 2011

**Your reference 111395**

Dear Mr Yip,

Thank you for your email of 18<sup>th</sup> March on our complaint concerning Melanie Phillips' blog article on Spectator blogs, "Armchair barbarism" (Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> March 2011).

With reference to your inquiry on which aspects of the Code we believe to have been breached, I am pleased to notify that in my view "Armchair barbarism" violates Article 1 Clause 1 and Article 12 Clause 1 of the Editors' Code of Practice.

Article 1 Clause 1 cautions against the use of "distorted information". In my view, the article's use of racist, anti-Arab language to denounce Arabs as a whole is a distortion of news reports that a group of people, allegedly Al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigade, carried out the murder of the Fogel family. Attributing to Arabs as a race the traits of "moral depravity," "barbarism" and "savagery" is a gross distortion which ascribes to an entire racial group, Arabs, the responsibility of a crime allegedly carried out by a very few.

Article 12 Clause 1 stipulates that the press "must avoid prejudicial or pejorative reference to an individual's race, colour, religion, gender, sexual orientation or to any physical or mental illness or disability."

Melanie Phillips' choice of language, highlighted above, qualifies in my view as "prejudicial" and "pejorative" references to a racial group, in this case Arabs.

I thank you for seeking clarification on the issue and I am happy to provide further details to assist in the handling of my complaint.

Yours sincerely,

Mohammed Asif,  
CEO