

Nov. 13, 2019

SCOTT Ian 23OCTOBER19

October 23, 2019 Ian Scott
Orangeville, Ontario
ian@ianscottgroup.com

Dear Mr. Scott,

Thank you for your October 23, 2019 email to the Office of the CBC Ombudsman drawing our attention to a CBCNews.ca Windsor story posted on September 30, 2019 under the headline, "Maxime Bernier backs second PPC candidate who published racist, insensitive tweets".

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/windsor/ppc-candidate-sarnia-racist-tweets-bernier-1.5302918>

I have reviewed the article in question and met with the reporter/writer to discuss their approach. It is my opinion that our coverage does not properly reflect the "religion vs. racism" conversation you have pointed out in your email. You are correct citing Islam is not a race, so negatively characterizing Islam is not, technically, racism. In my opinion, we were not accurate with our own language when writing this story.

I believe "culturally insensitive" — like we have also used in the original lede line of the story — is a more appropriate reference of the cited tweets. Similarly, we could have also used terms such as "Islamophobic" or "negative stereotype". It would be different if the tweets had included the word "radical" instead of just Islam but that was not the case. The person in question claims that's what he meant, but that is not what he tweeted. Had he criticized radical Islam there would likely have been no story here. But because he characterized the entire faith, it was a generalization against all Muslim people. Again, not a race but a faith community.

The following clarifications have been made to the story:

Original headline: *Maxime Bernier backs second PPC candidate who published racist, insensitive tweets*

Adjusted headline: *Maxime Bernier backs second PPC candidate who published culturally insensitive tweets*

Original lede line: *A second People's Party of Canada candidate from southwestern Ontario is responding to racist and culturally insensitive tweets posted to his Twitter inside of a week.*

Adjusted lede line: *A second People's Party of Canada candidate from southwestern Ontario is responding to culturally insensitive tweets posted to his Twitter inside of a week.*

Original sentence in body of story: *Bernier, when asked about Essex PPC candidate Bill Capes' posts of a similar nature, said people know the PPC party is not a racist party.*

Adjusted sentence in body of story: Bernier, when asked about Essex PPC candidate Bill Capes' posts of a similar nature, said people know the PPC party is not a culturally insensitive party.

Clarification wording added to bottom of story: *An earlier version of this story referred to the cited tweets as "racist." In fact, Islam is a religion not a race, so negatively characterizing Islam is not racism.*

CBC Windsor takes its responsibility of providing fair and balanced journalism to its audiences, very seriously. I hope my reply has reassured you of the continuing integrity of our station and our news service.

I trust you feel as though your concern has been heard and appropriately addressed.

Respectfully,



Bob Becken
Executive Producer, CBC Windsor

CC: Office of the CBC Ombudsman
Office of the General Manager & Editor in Chief, CBC News