

TIP SHEET FOR VERIFYING IMAGES:

It takes a long time to build up your reputation as a journalist who can be trusted – but you can easily harm credibility by sharing ‘fake news’ or photos.

SO, BEFORE SHARING, ASK YOURSELF THESE QUESTIONS:

- Do you know the intent of the person who took the photo?
- Does the photo make you sad or angry, or evoke other strong feelings? That’s often an indication that something’s not quite right.

IMPORTANT QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF WHEN TRYING TO VERIFY A PHOTOGRAPH:

01. When was the picture first used? Does it predate the use you are verifying?
 02. Do you know who took the photo? Knowing who took it means you may be able to contact them to ask for further information and context.
 03. What is the context in which it was used? Check if it was previously used in a different context, possibly even in another country.
 04. What are people wearing? Do their clothes fit the style of the country where the picture was supposedly taken?
 05. What is the weather like in the photo? Deep snow or ice in a photo taken during the northern summer suggests the picture is either old or from somewhere else.
 06. Look for road signs, shopfronts and billboards. Does the language fit the supposed location of the photo? It could also give you clues as to where it was taken.
 07. Look for distortions along the edges of people or objects. These are usually easy to spot and indicate that a picture may have been poorly manipulated.
 08. In nature, there are often slight variations in light, colour and shades. If a photo has been digitally manipulated, you should be able to see something has been added in or removed.
 09. Look out for non-standard photograph shapes or sizes. Odd shapes or crops can be an indication that the photo has been edited to remove important context.
- If you’re looking at a reasonably sharp photo with more than one person in it, look at their eyes to see if the light reflected in them is consistent.
10. If something is too good to be true, often it is untrue. Trust your gut and check – and check again – before sharing.
 11. Always be sceptical. Your default should be ‘verify, verify, verify’.
 12. The bottom line is that if you’re not sure, don’t share. You can be part of the solution to ‘fake news’ or part of the problem.

This tip sheet is, in part, based on previous fact-checking blogs by Raymond Joseph for **AfricaCheck** and **The Global Investigative Journalism Network (GIJN)**

USEFUL RESOURCES:

AfricaCheck guide to verifying photos on your smartphone: www.africacheck.org/fact-checks/guides/guide-how-verify-images-your-smartphone

GIJN: Four quick ways to verify images on a smartphone: www.gijn.org/2021/08/24/four-quick-ways-to-verify-images-on-a-smartphone/

France24, the Observers: How can I use my phone to verify photos?: www.observers.france24.com/en/20180331-verification-gui-de-factchecking-smartphone-phone-verify-photo

Full Fact: How to spot misleading images online: [www.https://fullfact.org/online/how-spot-misleading-images-online/](https://fullfact.org/online/how-spot-misleading-images-online/)

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