

WRITE FOR US! FOREIGN BRIEF'S STYLE GUIDE

Thank you for taking an interest in writing for Foreign Brief. We look forward to reading your draft. To speed up the publishing process, please read our style guide before you begin.

WHAT ARE WE LOOKING FOR?

Foreign Brief deals in risk analysis, not opinion. We're interested in what's happening, why it's happening, and what might happen next. Of course, some opinion filters through – if a situation may lead to war, most think this is bad, but some may have a particular interest in conflict. To avoid narrowing our audience and presupposing their interests in particular situations, we focus on the events themselves rather than their moral value.

STRUCTURE

Articles should generally follow the structure described above: what is happening, why it's happening, and what might happen next. We recommend dedicating 200 words to the first section and 300-400 words to the other two sections. Our preference – and our audience's preference – is for articles to be **no longer than 1,000 words**.

We're big fans of subheadings, which we generally use to separate the three important sections of each article. Please feel free to create your own subheadings (and a title). Our editors may suggest slight changes.

Keep your sentences and paragraphs short to help with readability. But not too short – standalone sentences should only be used if you are emphasising a very important point.

tone

We prefer a conversational tone to our articles. Most of our readers are not professionals in the field so you'll convey your point more readily using clear, simple language. That said, your article will be largely grounded in facts, which inevitably adds a degree of formality to your tone. Think of your article as needing to dress in 'smart casual' attire; serious substance presented in an easy-going, accessible style.

In practice, this means:

- Go hard and fast with the facts at the start of your piece. You want to lay down the groundwork for your article's main event (the risk analysis) as soon as possible.
- In writing the risk analysis, you're attempting to predict the future – usually the worst-case scenario. In essence, you are telling a story, so write as if you're the narrator.
- Frontload your paragraphs: if people are scanning your article, you want them to understand the points you are conveying even if they only read the first sentence of every paragraph.
- If you have space, try lightening the mood a little bit by using colloquialisms.

STYLE

- Don't use a long word when a short one will do
- Use contractions when they make sense
- Don't hesitate to start sentences with conjunctions and end them with prepositions
- Numbers under ten should be spelled out; 11 and up are numerical
- The day is January 1, 2017
- Metric measures please
- British English only
- Use an active voice to reduce your word count and complement your tone
- When discussing currency, use USD represented by \$. The latest conversion rates will do. The exception is the Euro, which you should represent with €
- Write the full form of abbreviations when they first appear unless the abbreviation is more common than its long form i.e. EU, NATO, UN. Only use the abbreviation thereafter. Only use abbreviations if the full form appears regularly.

SOURCES

As we've already discussed, facts are the foundation of your article. We don't use external links so your facts should be readily available and largely incontestable. That also help keep you focussed on the all-important risk analysis and away from opinion – you shouldn't need to defend your facts.

DISCLOSURES

Let us know of any relevant affiliations you might have, particularly financial interests.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Even though you've read the style guide, we still request you **submit a dot point plan** to our editor-in-chief (analytics) at william.baulch@foreignbrief.com. This will generate discussion around your article and identify any issues that need addressing before they even appear. It also means we know you are drafting your article and we can make a space for it in our publishing schedule.

We look forward to your contribution!