

# South Asia Council for Security Policy

## Publications Guidelines

*For Authors and Contributors — March 2026*

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### 1. Editorial Mission and Independence

South Asia Council for Security Policy (SACSP) is committed to producing independent, non-partisan, and analytically rigorous research on South Asia and its intersections with global affairs. Our publications are guided solely by evidence, scholarly integrity, and policy relevance — not by the positions of funders, governments, or institutional affiliates. We do not advocate for predetermined conclusions. Authors are expected to follow the argument where the evidence leads, present competing perspectives with intellectual honesty, and clearly distinguish analysis from opinion. Contributions that reflect political advocacy, promotional intent, or undisclosed conflicts of interest will not be considered for publication. All research published under our name undergoes editorial review to ensure it meets these standards before release.

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### 2. The Use of Artificial Intelligence in Research

SACSP recognises that AI tools can meaningfully support the research process when used with discipline and transparency. We permit the principled use of AI for research augmentation - that is, to sharpen, challenge, and stress-test analysis produced by human researchers. This includes using AI to survey and synthesise large bodies of literature, identify gaps or inconsistencies in a draft argument, generate counterpoints and alternative framings for the author to evaluate, and assist with structural editing or clarity of expression.

What we do not permit is the use of AI to generate substantive text, arguments, or analytical conclusions that are then submitted as the author's own work. The intellectual contribution - the framing of the question, the interpretation of evidence, the normative and contextual judgment, and the conclusions drawn - must originate with the human author. AI is a research instrument in this framework, not a co-author. Authors who use AI tools in any part of their research or drafting process must disclose this in their submission, specifying which tools were used and for what purpose. Undisclosed AI use will be treated as a breach of our editorial standards.

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### 3. Publication Formats

We publish in two primary formats, differentiated by scope, depth, and intended audience. Authors should identify the appropriate format at the point of submission.

### 3.1 Short-Form Commentary

**Indicative length:** 800 – 1,500 words

A Short-Form Commentary is a timely, argument-driven piece responding to a current development, policy debate, or analytical question of relevance to South Asia or its broader strategic environment. It should be accessible to an informed general reader while meeting the standards expected by a specialist audience. Commentaries are expected to move beyond description - they should offer a clear analytical position, grounded in evidence, with a discernible contribution to the policy or scholarly debate.

**Structure:** Authors are encouraged to provide a clear opening argument, a concise evidential or analytical body, and a closing section that draws out policy or strategic implications. Subheadings may be used but are not required.

**References:** All factual claims, data, and quoted material must be referenced. References should be provided as hyperlinks embedded within the body of the text. Where a source is not available online, an endnote in Chicago Author-Date format should be provided as an alternative.

### 3.2 Long-Form Policy Brief or Research Paper

**Indicative length:** 1,500 – 5,000 words

A Long-Form Policy Brief or Research Paper provides a sustained analytical account of a public policy issue, strategic question, or research problem of national or international significance. It should be comprehensible to both specialist and informed general readers. Long-form pieces are expected to situate the argument within the relevant scholarly and policy literature, develop the analysis with appropriate depth and evidential rigour, and arrive at clear conclusions or recommendations.

**Structure:** Long-form submissions should include an abstract of no more than 150 words, a clear introduction establishing the research question and argument, a structured analytical body with subheadings, and a conclusion. Tables, figures, and graphics are encouraged where they strengthen the analysis.

**References:** Endnotes are required for all long-form submissions, formatted in Chicago Author-Date style. Where sources are available online, authors should also embed hyperlinks in the body of the text at the point of citation, in addition to the endnote.

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## 4. Formatting and Style

### 4.1 Font and Size

- Font: Times New Roman throughout
- Body text: 12pt
- Subheadings: 13pt, bold
- Title: 16pt, bold
- Abstract (long-form only): 11pt, italicised
- Footnotes and endnotes: 10pt

### 4.2 Spacing and Margins

- Line spacing: 1.5 throughout the body; single spacing for footnotes and endnotes
- Paragraph spacing: one line space between paragraphs; no first-line indent
- Margins: 2.54cm (1 inch) on all sides
- Alignment: justified

### 4.3 Referencing

- All online sources must be hyperlinked directly in the body of the text at the point of citation
- Hyperlinks should be embedded on the relevant word or phrase, not displayed as raw URLs
- Where a source is not available online, an endnote in Chicago Author-Date format is required
- Long-form submissions require endnotes in addition to in-text hyperlinks
- All hyperlinks must be verified as active at the time of submission
- Authors should avoid over-reliance on any single source and are expected to engage with a range of primary and secondary materials

### 4.4 Author Biography

All submissions must be accompanied by a short author biography of no more than 80 words, written in the third person. The biography should include the author's current institutional affiliation, relevant expertise, and any disclosure of conflict of interest.

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## **5. Editorial and Review Process**

### **5.1 Submission**

Submissions should be sent to [admin@sacsp.org](mailto:admin@sacsp.org) with the subject line indicating the format (Commentary or Policy Brief/Research Paper) and the tentative title. Authors should include a brief covering note of no more than 100 words.

### **5.2 Editorial Review**

All submissions are reviewed by the Director of Research, who holds editorial sign-off authority over all publications issued under the organisation's name. Short-form commentaries undergo internal editorial review. Long-form submissions are subject to review by at least one additional expert, which may be an internal Director or an external specialist. Reviewer comments are shared with the author for revision where required.

### **5.3 Plagiarism**

All submissions are checked for plagiarism prior to publication. Extensive self-citation and the reproduction of previously published material without attribution are discouraged. Any material found to be plagiarised will be rejected and the author notified.

### **5.4 Timeframes**

Authors should expect an initial editorial response within ten working days of submission. The full review and publication process for long-form submissions may take up to six weeks depending on reviewer availability and revision requirements.

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## **6. Rights, Attribution, and Disclaimer**

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