[AM] Armenia adopts criteria for identifying audiovisual content containing propaganda of violence and cruelty

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On 11 September 2026, the Commission on Television and Radio of the Republic of Armenia (CTR) adopted Decision No. 111-N establishing criteria for applying the prohibition of the dissemination of audiovisual content containing propaganda of violence and cruelty.

The decision was adopted pursuant to Article 9(6) of the Audiovisual Media Act, which authorises the CTR to establish criteria for assessing compliance with the restrictions prescribed by Article 9(1)(2) of the Act.

The decision aims to ensure legal certainty and the consistent, proportionate and predictable application of the prohibition, as well as to help prevent the dissemination of audiovisual content containing propaganda of violence and cruelty.

The Act already establishes time restrictions on the broadcasting of certain categories of audiovisual content, including horror films and films containing explicit violence, which may only be broadcast between 00:00 and 06:00. In contrast, the new Article 9(1)(2) prohibits the dissemination of audiovisual content containing propaganda of violence and cruelty, irrespective of broadcasting time. The newly adopted decision establishes specific criteria for identifying such content and distinguishing it from the mere depiction of violence and cruelty.

Under these newly adopted criteria, audiovisual content containing propaganda of violence and cruelty is defined as information which, by virtue of its content, manner of presentation, means of expression and overall context, seeks to foster a positive attitude towards violence and cruelty, portraying them as acceptable, necessary or worthy of imitation, and is aimed at justifying, encouraging, glorifying or normalising such conduct, as well as inciting the commission and use of violence and cruelty.

The decision establishes six criteria for assessing whether audiovisual content contains propaganda of violence and cruelty:

1. The overall context of the programme – whether violence and cruelty are portrayed as justified, praised, encouraged or worthy of imitation, or, conversely, as conduct deserving condemnation.

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2. The purpose of the programme – whether the content is intended to inform, raise awareness, educate, analyse, discuss, document or artistically portray certain events, or to foster positive attitudes towards violence and cruelty or incite such conduct.

3. The manner of presentation – including the language used, editing techniques, visual and audio elements, selection of footage, voice-over commentary and repeated display, and whether these elements contribute to justifying, glorifying or encouraging violence and cruelty.

4. The positions expressed by the author, presenter or other participants – whether their statements express approval of, justify, encourage or glorify violence and cruelty, including the reaction of the presenter or editorial team to such statements.

5. The overall message and impact of the programme – whether the principal message conveyed to the audience promotes a positive or accepting attitude towards violence and cruelty or presents such conduct as worthy of imitation.

6. The format of dissemination – whether particular content is emphasised through verbal, visual or technical means intended to attract viewers' attention.

The decision specifies that these criteria must be assessed collectively, taking into account the particular circumstances of each case. The presence or absence of an individual criterion is not, in itself, sufficient to classify audiovisual content as promoting violence and cruelty. The CTR must assess all relevant circumstances in their entirety.

Importantly, the decision clarifies that the depiction, description or factual presentation of violence and cruelty does not, in itself, constitute propaganda of violence and cruelty if the content, manner of presentation and context do not indicate justification, encouragement, glorification, normalisation or incitement to acts of violence and cruelty.

The decision entered into force on 16 September 2026.

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