[GB] Ofcom Fines Noor TV for Material Likely to Encourage the Commission of Crime

IRIS 2013-9:1/17

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In a decision of 21 August 2013 Ofcom (Office for Communication) has imposed a financial penalty on the broadcaster Al Ehya Digital Television Limited for breaches of the terms of its licence related to the broadcasting of material likely to incite crime or disorder, and also material lacking the requisite degree of responsibility when handling religious content.

The infringement arouse from the programme entitled Paigham-e-Mustafa broadcast on 3 May 2012 at 11:00h on the channel Noor TV. Noor TV is a satellite channel that focuses on Islam and is broadcast in numerous languages and is available across Europe, Africa, the Middle East and Asia as well as the UK.

The specific violation came about during the aforementioned programme when the presenter Allama Muhammad Farooq Nizami was answering general questions on Islam and in the course of this, and in response to a specific question, stated that it was either acceptable or the duty of a Muslim to kill those who disrespected the Prophet Muhammad. Ofcom considered that this clearly breached Rule 3.1 of the Broadcasting Code relating to the promotion of crime and disorder, and furthermore violated Rule 4.1 as it was clearly a religious programme and failed to attain the level of responsibility required.

Ofcom considered a number of factors in the weighing of the appropriate penalty including the seriousness of the offence and the continuing poor compliance record of the licensee in question. In this light a fine of GBP 85,000 was levied and an order given that the terms of Ofcom's decision be broadcast on the channel.

Ofcom's decision, Sanction 88(13), 21 August 2013

http://stakeholders.ofcom.org.uk/binaries/enforcement/content-sanctions-adjudications/noor-tv.pdf

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