



MEDIA ETHICS OBSERVATORY OF ARMENIA

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EXPERT OPINION OF MEDIA ETHICS OBSERVATORY

Regarding the complaint submitted by Yoosang Han, a citizen of the Republic of Korea and YSU master's student, against 5 TV Channel

A. FACTS

1. On January 7, 2026, Yoosang Han, a citizen of the Republic of Korea and a master's student and researcher at Yerevan State University, submitted a complaint to Media Ethics Observatory (MEO) regarding what he described as ethical violations in the January 6, 2026 issue of "Haylur" news program aired on "5 TV Channel." "My image and face were used for the purpose of political manipulation and targeted in an offensive context ("caravan," "camels"), resulting in the spread of racist attacks and hate speech against me on social networks," Han stated in his complaint. Along with his complaint, he provided the controversial videos (1, 2), a [Facebook post](#), in which he addressed the issue, and the comment by "5 TV Channel" left under that post. The complainant requested that the case be examined not as a technical error, but as a deliberate media attack on human dignity. He also notified MEO that he had reached out to the Korean Embassy in Moscow and the RA law enforcement bodies regarding the matter.
2. MEO accepted the complaint for review and contacted "5 TV Channel" in writing, requesting clarifications regarding the issue. In response, the TV company's Executive Director, Harutyun Harutyunyan, expressed his readiness to take part in the MEO session and personally answer the questions raised by the MEO members. At the MEO session of January 14, 2026, Harutyunyan reiterated the clarification earlier provided on behalf of the TV company under Yoosang Han's Facebook post, stating that the report did not target Han personally in any manner, and that the TV company's camera had captured him in the footage, alongside hundreds of other individuals attending the public event. Harutyunyan told that the TV company's ethics committee had also held a session on the issue. At that session, they asked the journalist who produced the report and the cameraman whether anyone - specifically Yoosang Han - had asked that they not film or broadcast footage including him. The response from both of them was negative.
3. MEO examined the videos submitted by the complainant and established, in particular, that at the 00:05 timestamp of the [first video](#), Yoosang Han can be seen standing in the crowd, while the accompanying voice-over contains the introduction to the report with the following text: "The march of Pashinyan's religious caravan, accompanied by defrocked priests, people who have replaced their "Dukhov" caps with crosses, and a megacross." In the [second video](#) provided by the complainant, Yoosang Han can again be seen standing among dozens of other people at the 2:47

timestamp highlighted by him. The journalist's voice-over accompanying this part of the footage discusses the participants of the event: "... Pashinyan's speech is listened to mainly by prominent "Civil Contract" members, his partner, defrocked priests, and people who have replaced their "Dukhov" caps with crosses..." Moreover, in the same frame where Han appears, the cross on the cap of another participant in the event is enclosed within a red circle. MEO also analyzed the comments left under the corresponding videos published on the Facebook and YouTube pages of "5 TV Channel."

4. MEO analyzed the supplementary materials submitted by the complainant, specifically a Facebook post made by a user named Eduard Mkrtchyan on 6 January. In the post, Mkrtchyan shared a screenshot from the TV5 report in which the image of Yoosang Han is enclosed within a red circle, accompanied by the following caption: "The Chinese leader has also joined Nikol)." Under the post, numerous mocking and racially discriminatory comments were made. Notably, Eduard Mkrtchyan is not an employee of "5 TV Channel."

B. LEGISLATIVE AND ETHICAL NORMS

I. Constitution of the Republic of Armenia Article 44. Freedom of Assembly

1. Everyone shall have the right to freely participate in and organize peaceful and unarmed assemblies.

II. RA Law "On Freedom of Assembly" Article 6. The Right to Participate in Assemblies

1. Everyone (citizens of the Republic of Armenia, foreign nationals and stateless individuals) has the right to participate in assemblies.

3. An assembly participant is defined as any individual who is present at the site of the assembly at the time the assembly occurs for the purpose of taking part in the event.

4. Individuals present at the assembly site during its occurrence for the purpose of exercising their powers, performing their work duties, engaging in creative or other legally or contractually mandated activities, as well as media representatives attending to cover the event, are not considered to be participants in the assembly.

III. Code of Ethics of Armenian Media and Journalists 5. Respect for Representatives of Different Groups and for Universal Values

This principle entails the following obligations for editors and journalists:

5.1. to avoid prejudice against people on the ground of their race, sex, age, religion, nationality, geographic origin, sexual orientation, physical handicap, external look or social status;

5.2. not to promote in any way ethnic or religious hatred and intolerance, or any discrimination on political, social, sexual, and language grounds, exclude hate speech;

IV. MEO Regulations

5.3. Complaints regarding the publications by non-member media of the Self-Regulation Initiative can be reviewed with the media's consent.

Nevertheless, if such consent is not granted, MEO reserves the right, after reviewing complaints regarding publications by non-member media, to adopt and issue an expert opinion or statement.

C. EXPERT OPINION

Media Ethics Observatory,

guided by the RA Constitution, relevant legislation, the [Code](#) of Ethics of Armenian Media and Journalists, and the [MEO Regulations](#), having reviewed the complaint submitted by Yoosang Han, a citizen of the Republic of Korea and a master's student at Yerevan State University, against “5 TV Channel,” along with the attached supporting documents, and having received clarifications from Harutyun Harutyunyan, the Executive Director of “5 TV Channel,”

notes the following:

- The report aired on January 6, 2026 within 5 TV Channel's “Haylur” news program contains no violation of ethical principles in the sense that the media had no intention to target complainant Yoosang Han, his image was not highlighted through any special audio or visual means, and his face was shown alongside numerous other participants (individuals present) of the public gathering. In this regard, it is essential that individuals participating in a public gathering or those present due to certain reasons (service, research, mere curiosity, etc.) be aware that they may be filmed, and if this causes discomfort, they may refrain from attending the gathering. When someone is filmed, they may request that the footage showing them not be published. In such cases, the media may accommodate the request, though they are not obliged to do so. In the situation under review, the 5TV team received no such request from Yoosang Han to refrain from filming or using footage in which he appeared.
- No discriminatory or offensive comments from third parties were identified on the social media pages (Facebook, YouTube) of “5 TV Channel,” which implies that no such comments were made or the editorial team moderated (removed) them.
- While noting that Yoosang Han was not directly targeted in the “5 TV Channel” report, MEO nevertheless highlights its ironic and disrespectful tone toward the participants of the gathering. In situations like this, individuals whose appearances differ (whether by nationality, race, clothing or other characteristics) may draw attention and become vulnerable, especially when the footage is combined with accompanying text. In this regard, the discriminatory Facebook post by user Eduard Mkrtchyan, along with the large number of comments under it containing racial discrimination and insults addressed to Yoosang Han, is particularly noteworthy. Accordingly, MEO calls on media to act with maximum delicacy and caution to ensure that individuals who stand out in appearance and may be at risk of becoming vulnerable are not harmed as a result, even unintentionally. In the description of the already published piece, a note can be added indicating that a complaint has been received regarding the content. Additionally, the opinion of the editorial team (the media's ethics committee, ombudsman, and/or Media Ethics Observatory) regarding the complaint may be attached.

- MEO urges the ethics committee of 5TV to discuss the incident involving Yoosang Han in light of this Expert Opinion and develop specific recommendations for the TV company's journalists to prevent such undesirable situations to the greatest extent possible.
- MEO expresses its regret to Yoosang Han over such unpleasant developments. To prevent similar problems in the future, MEO will initiate consultations among journalists.
- Taking into account the fact that Yoosang Han also submitted to MEO materials addressed to the RA law enforcement bodies, along with correspondence with the state bodies of the Republic of Korea regarding his concerns about his personal safety, MEO underlines that the complaint was reviewed exclusively in the context of compliance with the general principles of journalistic ethics and, in particular, the Code of Ethics of Armenian Media and Journalists.

***Adopted on February 6, 2026
by the following MEO composition:***

Davit ALAVERDYAN, Chief Editor of “Mediamax” news agency
Narineh AVETISYAN, Executive Director of Vanadzor “Lori” TV Company
Suren DEHERYAN, Founding Editor of “Ampop.am”
Arsen KHARATYAN, Founder of “Aliq Media” news and analytical website
Ara GHAZARYAN, Lawyer
Ashot MELIKYAN, Chairman of Committee to Protect Freedom of
Expression
Margarita MINASYAN, Director of “Tsayg” TV Company
Gnel NALBANDYAN, Chief Editor of “Newmag” Publishing House
Boris NAVASARDIAN, Honorary President of Yerevan Press Club
Ara SHIRINYAN, Member of the Council of Public Broadcaster of Armenia
Arevik SAHAKYAN, Executive Director of “Factor TV”
Nouneh SARKISSIAN, Managing Director of Media Initiatives Center
Vigen SARGSYAN, Chairman of the Commission on Professional Ethics of
Yerevan Press Club
Anzhela STEPANYAN, Editor of Armavir “Alt” TV Company

[Media Ethics Observatory](#) has been established by the media that have joined the Self-Regulation Initiative, which counts 100 members as of today. MEO is guided by the Code of Ethics of Armenian Media and Journalists, adopted on March 10, 2007 and revised at the May 18, 2024 general meeting of the Self-Regulation Initiative.