

Uproar over Facebook Censoring Iconic 'Napalm Girl' Photo



Why is Facebook censoring 'Napalm Girl?'

Helsinki, September 12 (RHC)-- Media and politicians in Norway have accused Facebook of abusing its censoring power in its decision to delete the iconic "Napalm Girl" photo as it violated the organization's nudity policy.

The social media giant deleted from a number of Facebook pages the Pulitzer Prize winning photo from the Vietnam War showing children, including a naked girl. The photo was featured in a collection of war photos by writer Tom Egeland, whose Facebook account was subsequently suspended. Norway's biggest newspaper, Aftenposten, then used the photo in its article about Egeland's suspension weeks later. Facebook then deleted the same photo posted by Aftenposten.

Espen Egil Hansen, the editor-in-chief of Aftenposten, then published an open page letter to Facebook founder, Mark Zuckerberg. Hansen said that Zuckerberg was limiting freedom and abusing his power as "the world's most powerful editor," and was "upset, disappointed -- well, in fact even afraid -- of what you are about to do to a mainstay of our democratic society."

"The free and independent media have an important task in bringing information, even including pictures, which sometimes may be unpleasant, and which the ruling elite and maybe even ordinary citizens cannot bear to see or hear, but which might be important precisely for that reason," said Hansen.

Norway's Prime Minister Erna Solberg said that Facebook is setting a dangerous precedent and could be inviting more censorship and that it "must see the difference between editing out child pornography and editing out history."

Solberg and members of her right-wing party also shared the photo, but again it was taken down by Facebook. Solberg then protested the ban by re-posting the photo with the naked girl and other historical figures blacked out.

Zuckerberg has not responded to the criticisms but Facebook did release a statement saying: "While we recognize that this photo is iconic, it's difficult to create a distinction between allowing a photograph of a nude child in one instance and not others."

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