
Editor's Note

This is the second installment of articles from the *Journal of International Media & Entertainment Law's* symposium, entitled *In the Shadow of Territorial Conflict: Legacies of Soviet-era Media Control and Speech Norms*. Much has happened in the post-Soviet sphere since we convened in 2023. The Russia-Ukraine conflict has become a war of attrition. Russia is deploying North Korean troops, and Ukraine is seeking missiles that will land deeper into Russian territory. Unrest has broken out in the Republic of Georgia, as its government questions closer ties to the European Union. Even more consequential to many who attended the symposium, the Republic of Artsakh, an ethnic Armenian enclave in Nagorno-Karabakh, was overrun by forces from Azerbaijan. The fall of Artsakh was swift and unexpected, effectively ending an ethnic Armenian presence in the mountainous region. Throughout all this, war reporting, government censorship, and social media information—and disinformation—continued to abound in the post-Soviet space, even if some in the West turned their attention to the Middle East.

This issue begins with *Fatullayev as a Model of Post-Soviet Media Control in the Shadow of Armed Conflicts* an essay by Dr. Andrei Richter, research professor at Comenius University in Bratislava. Adapted from his keynote address at the symposium, the essay asks whether media control in the region is a Soviet-era legacy adapted to modern times. Richter's principal focus is the court case of *Fatullayev v Azerbaijan*, which led to a judgment of the European Court of Human Rights in 2010 and in 2022.

In *Consequences of Inaction: An Inquiry into International Criminal Liability of Social Media Companies for Artsakh 2020*, Rajika L. Shah, shares her research into the potential liability of social media companies in the Nagorno-Karabakh war and how negative social media posts can lead to real-life hate crimes against Armenian communities. Shah is a professor at Loyola Law School in Los Angeles, where she directs the Justice for Atrocities Clinic

Weaponization of Social Media: The Cause of the Conflict Between Azerbaijan and Nagorno Karabakh, by Robert Avetisyan, addresses strategies to mitigate disinformation and hate on social media in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict by promoting information literacy and demanding adherence to the criminalization of dissemination of stigma, prejudices, and

other dangerous speech that incites violence. Ambassador Avetisyan has served as the Permanent Representative of the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic (also known as the Artsakh Republic) to the United States.

Russell L. Weaver's symposium contribution, *Social Media, Propaganda, and the Ukrainian Conflict*, examines how Russia has used the internet to try to manipulate and control public opinion regarding the Ukraine War. Weaver cites instances in which Russia planted falsehoods on official news outlets as a way of blurring the facts, defining false narratives, and manipulating audiences. He is a Professor of Law and Distinguished University Scholar at the University of Louisville.

Completing this issue is *Media Coverage and State Propaganda in Armed Conflicts: An International Law Perspective at the Armenian-Azerbaijan "Propaganda War,"* by Ines Gillich. The author presents a stark contrast between news coverage of the conflict by international media and reporting by regional sources and examines media issues under the lens of public international law. Gillich is Associate Professor of Public Law, European Law and Public International Law, at the University of Cologne.

My thanks to our faculty peer reviewers, and to our hard-working student editors, led this year by Daniella Ashouri. As always, the *Journal* welcomes feedback from its readers.

Professor Michael M. Epstein
Supervising Editor