

Written Representation 9

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Title: FAKE NEWS CAN BE MANAGED BY EXISTING LAWS

Fake news is a form of deliberate misinformation by fictitious reporting or by the creation of hoaxes. They are made with an aim to libel a person or an institution, to create social unease or disorder, or to serve as click-baits on social media platforms for political, military, social, financial or personal gain.

One must not conflate fake news with reports which have inaccuracies, mistaken facts and statements that are proven wrong by later events. It is only fake news if their creators knowingly propagate falsehoods at the time of their creation to drive a dishonourable agenda.

Furthermore, not all false news are fake news. A radio station or a newspaper announcing or publishing a false story as an April Fool's Day joke is not fake news. If a company starts to propagate a false story or invent a false personality as part of an advertising or publicity stunt for its products or services, that is not false news. Wartime propaganda to confuse the enemy is also not fake news as that is a tactic of war.

Given the above clarification, we should realise that only truly fake news driven by premeditated ill-intentioned agenda need to be controlled and, if necessary, be punished. Legislation should not be used to be an instrument to arbitrate between truth and falsity. Public discernment of truth should be a maturing process best left to the market of free ideas.

Therefore, new legislation against fake news is not necessary. We just need to reinforce our pre-existing laws against rumour-mongering, sedition or fraud.

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