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ARMENIA DEBATES CRACKING DOWN ON 'FAKE NEWS' AND HATE SPEECH

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The legislative efforts come after long struggles between the government and a hostile media, much of which is controlled by figures close to the former regime.

Armenias government is taking steps to rein in the countrys media, much of which has adopted an adversarial – and, to many, an irresponsible – approach to the post-Velvet Revolution authorities.

One member of parliament has introduced a law that would punish spreading false information by up to a two-year prison term. Another group of legislators is working on a proposal to expand a law prohibiting hate speech. Others have proposed the creation of a press regulation agency, either connected with the state or independent, to police media ethics.

The legislative measures are the governments first systematic attempts to tackle the countrys rambunctious press, much of which is owned or controlled by figures loyal to the regime that the current government toppled in the spring of 2018. The measures also seek to regulate social media, where most of Armenias political discussions take place and where unknown actors with murky motives can spread harmful or false information. Actors on both sides of the political spectrum hurl vitriol that the recipients perceive as hate speech.

While fake news can take many forms Coffee Cures Cancer! the government proposals focus especially on its political manifestations.

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