

Sea Jay Foundation

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Fundamental Freedoms including freedom of Expression

Human Dimension Implementation Meeting

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The Sea Jay Foundation recommends:

- that the “necessary restrictions” on free speech be paired back drastically and
- that the whole concept of “hate speech” be recognized as unworkable.
- that to restore public civility, there needs to be a return to the Golden Rule.

Documentation begins with one paragraph affirming the basic right. Then comes the inevitable “HOWEVER”.¹ Then page after page of “necessary restrictions” are piled on, until free speech is basically a dead letter.

A key assertion is that “hate speech” leads to violence². Therefore, shutting down “Hate speech” should shut down violence. But the concept has been turned on its head. Last week in Barnsley Town Center Yorkshire, a hijab-clad woman chased pedestrians with a machete shouting “kill! Kill! Kill!”³ Yet the police spent most of their time going after those who tweeted about it, prosecuting them for “creating a hate incident”! The police mantra was “Hate Hurts!!” But wait: is this about hurt feelings? Prosecuting tweeters instead of machete wielding individuals? Prosecuting hate speech doesn’t stop violence retroactively. The damage is done.

The most dangerous aspect is the power that resides with those who define “hate speech”. Recently Face Book banned a video of the Star-Spangled Banner as “hate speech”⁴. One can see the vast potential for abuse in this area. The guidelines must be revised to give freedom of speech the highest priority.

¹ Freedom of Expression and Hate Speech, Mihajlova, Bacovska, Shekerdjiev, OSCE Mission to Skopje, December 2013, page 5

² <https://www.russellsage.org/news/when-hate-speech-leads-violence>

³ <https://www.breitbart.com/london/2018/09/12/uk-police-force-doubles-down-non-crime-hate-incidents-social-media-backlash/>

⁴ <https://www.thegatewaypundit.com/2018/08/facebook-censors-star-spangled-banner-video/>