

POLICY FORUM

∞ Meta

June 6, 2023

Recommendation: Violent and Graphic Content in Human Rights Abuse Contexts

Core Policy Team

**WARNING:
VIOLENT AND GRAPHIC CONTENT**

VGC in Human Rights Abuse Contexts

Overview

Issue Statement:

We prohibit extremely graphic videos to safeguard the dignity of those depicted, avoid normalization of violence or other abuses by bad actors, and limit the risk of psychological trauma to users who view the content. However, some graphic videos may be shared to raise awareness about potential human rights abuses or other atrocities.

Status Quo Examples

Status Quo:
Remove



Video depicting dismemberment of several body parts including heads.
Country: Unknown

Status Quo:
Remove
(Allowed with warning label based on additional context)



Video showing dismemberment of the eye of a civilian victim of violence.
Country: Sudan

VGC in Human Rights Abuse Contexts

Methodology

Methodology

- **Research:** Public opinion research with 23,400 adults across 13 countries; synthesis of internal research and academic literature.
- **External Outreach:** 119 stakeholders from NORAM, AMET, LATAM and Caribbean, and APAC.
- **Human Rights Assessment:** Analysis under UN Guiding principles, our Corporate Human Rights Policy, ICCPR, and other regional instruments
- **Internal working groups consultations** with 63 internal stakeholders

VGC in Human Rights Abuse Contexts

External Engagement and Research

External Engagement

Key Points:

- Several factors should be considered when assessing the importance of discourse around violent and graphic content, such as:
 - **trauma** to viewers,
 - **safety risks** for the individuals depicted,
 - likelihood of **adversarial behavior**
- There was **no consensus on a general definition of “human rights abuse context”**
- Vast majority of stakeholders agree that if videos shared to highlight human rights abuses are allowed, they should be **behind warning screens**.

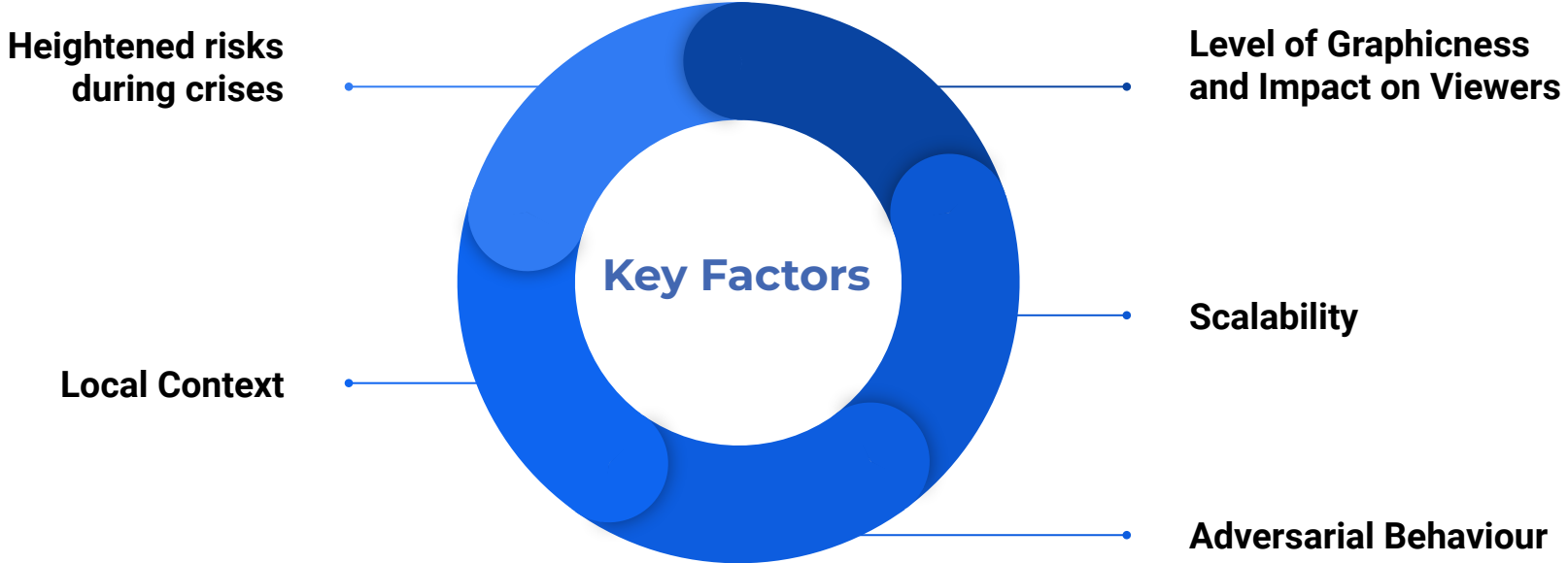
Research

Key Points:

- **Viewing graphic content can be associated with short-term psychological distress**, though these effects may be mitigated via warnings and context-setting.
- Across the 13 countries surveyed, **a majority (79%) supported keeping human rights abuse content on FB** that was perceived to be the most disturbing—an amputated hand, charred bodies, visible innards— either with a warning label (59%) or without (20%).
- In the same survey, **4 out of 5 people said that allowing this content would raise awareness** about human rights abuses.

VGC in Human Rights Abuse Contexts

Internal and External Takeaways



VGC in Human Rights Abuse Contexts

Options Overview

Option 1 (Status Quo):
Remove by default + Allow with a warning label with additional context
[Recommended]

Remove videos in a non-medical setting depicting

- Dismemberment
- Visible innards
- Charred bodies
- Throat-slitting

Allow with a warning label based on additional context
under newsworthy allowance

- Case-by-case
- Scaled allowances in crisis situations

Option 2:
Allow with a warning label by default +
Allow with a warning label with
additional context

Allow with a warning label when **shared in an awareness raising context** videos depicting

- Dismemberment
- Visible innards
- Charred bodies

Allow with a warning label based on additional context
under newsworthy allowance

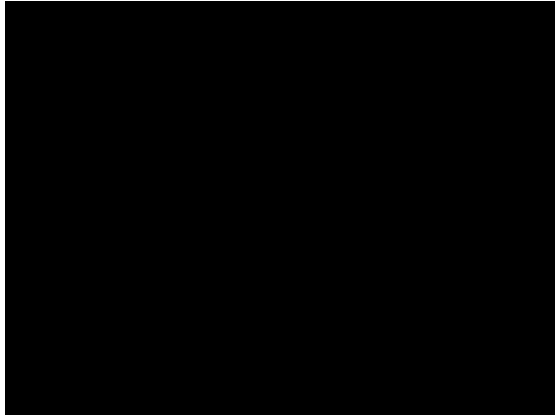
- Decapitation
- Throat slitting

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Examples

Ukraine - Throat Slitting



Caption:

No caption was present

Option 1: Status Quo	✗
Option 2: Allow with warning label	✗

Unknown - Dismemberment



Caption:

This is horrible, why are people doing this??

Option 1: Status Quo	✗
Option 2: Allow with warning label	⚠

Afghanistan - Visible Innards



Caption:

ISIS cowards taking innocent lives.
Nothing disgusts me more

Option 1: Status Quo	✗
Option 2: Allow with warning label	⚠

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