

Trio fined for Korat coverage

Reports of massacre ruled 'improper'

POST REPORTERS

The National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission (NBTC) has resolved to fine three television channels for "improper" coverage of the mass shooting in Nakhon Ratchasima on Feb 8.

The decision followed criticism of the live reporting of the shooting spree in the northeastern province. Some of the coverage revealed details of security operations as well as the locations of people hiding in Terminal 21 shopping mall, where the heavily armed gunman was stalking his victims.

The gunman was reportedly following the live updates as he hunted for people in the mall.

The regulator ruled the coverage caused mental anguish.

Lt Gen Peerapong Manakit, NBTC commissioner and chairman of the NBTC subcommittee for broadcast scheduling and content, said yesterday that ONE (31), Thairath TV (32)

and Amarin TV (34) were found to have violated Section 37 of the Broadcasting and Television Operations Act 2008.

He said ONE had been fined 250,000 baht while Thairath TV and Amarin TV were fined 500,000 baht each for airing content that affected security or public morality. The NBTC's actions were in line with Section 59 (3) and Section 57 (2) of the same law, he said.

The three channels were attacked for "intrusive reporting" of the shooting, in which 30 people including the gunman were killed and 58 others injured.

The channels had been accused of hampering investigators and putting lives at risk by providing details that could compromise efforts to rescue victims trapped inside Korat Terminal 21.

After the massacre, the NBTC also met digital TV operators who agreed that a code of conduct for TV channels covering crisis situations would be drafted.

The mass killing on Feb 8 began when the gunman shot dead his commanding officer, mother-in-law and a soldier before stealing war weapons at his army base. He later killed 26 people at the mall before being shot dead by police 17 hours later.