

# ARB says Fear F\*kol billboard must be changed or taken down

 By [Karabo Ledwaba](#)

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The Advertising Regulatory Board (ARB) has ruled that a billboard advertising an armoured vehicle manufacturing company, which featured the words "Fear F\*kol," must be removed or altered due to a breach of the advertising code.



The ARB ruled that children should not be exposed to the ad. Source: Supplied.

Located prominently on the N3 Highway at the Van Buuren off-ramp in Johannesburg, the billboard was a cause for concern among complainants who pointed out that it was easily visible to children passing by.

## Offensive

The complainants argued that the use of the word "f\*kol" was offensive and inappropriate for display on a billboard.

Armoured Mobility specialises in the construction, sale, and rental of armoured vehicles in South Africa. In its response to the complaint, the advertiser iCar Technologies said the term "F\*kol" in the South African context is not a swear word or demeaning word and is a colloquial word that means "nothing".



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They argued that it has been widely used across various media platforms and even by prominent figures in South African politics, including South Africa's defense minister, Thandi Modise, and ANC secretary-general, Fikile Mbalula.

## Universal view

Said the ARB: "Just as English-speaking parents are unlikely to encourage their young children to use words like "F\*ck-All" or "F\*ck", Afrikaans parents are unlikely to encourage their children to use words like "F\*kol" or "F\*k". In essence, it is considered a vulgar word, generally regarded as unacceptable for children to use, or be exposed to indiscriminately.

"The fact that some communities have (at least according to the Advertiser) adopted the Afrikaans word "F\*ko!" as a colloquial way of saying "nothing" does not automatically bring this word into the realm of generally acceptable lexicon for children. This is especially relevant when a perfectly suitable word ("Nothing") already exists. While it is possible that some households may consider "f\*ko!" an acceptable word for a child to say, it is unlikely that this is a universal view, especially in the Afrikaans community."

## ABOUT KARABO LEDWABA

Karabo Ledwaba is a Marketing and Media Editor at Bizcommunity and award-winning journalist. Before joining the publication she worked at Sowetan as a content producer and reporter. She was also responsible for the leadership page at S!Mag, Sowetan's lifestyle magazine. Contact her at [karabo@bizcommunity.com](mailto:karabo@bizcommunity.com)

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