

26 January 2015 – for immediate release

Myanmar: Training for Media Lawyers in Mandalay

On 24 January 2015, the Centre for Law and Democracy (CLD) and the Myanmar Media Lawyers' Network (MMLN), with the support of International Media Support (IMS), carried out a training on freedom of expression for 80 lawyers in Mandalay, Myanmar's second largest city. The event introduced participants to international freedom of expression standards, focusing on issues that are of particular importance to Myanmar's democratic transition, such as regulation of the print and broadcast media and criminal content restrictions.

In addition to an international perspective, the participants discussed specific freedom of expression threats facing Myanmar, including the need for reform of the country's criminal defamation laws and laws prohibiting insults to religion, and the urgent need to put in place an independent system of broadcast regulation.

"It was wonderful to see the enthusiasm of the participants in applying their legal training to Myanmar's freedom of expression challenges," said CLD Executive Director Toby Mendel. *"We are confident that lawyers in this city have a tremendous contribution to make in support of the country's ongoing democratisation process."*

This was the first event held by the MMLN and CLD outside of Yangon, Myanmar's capital. Its organisation was made possible through strong collaborative links with prominent lawyers in that city, notably U Thein Than Oo, who played a key facilitating role. Over forty of the attendees applied to join the MMLN and many expressed an interest in participating actively in the Network.

"As the media lawyers' network continues to develop we are glad to see its reach expanding to Mandalay," said Esben Harboe, Programme Manager at IMS. *"We hope the Network will become a truly national vehicle to support reform of Myanmar's legal framework around freedom of expression."*

For further information, please contact:

Michael Karanicolas
Senior Legal Officer
Centre for Law and Democracy
Email: michael@law-democracy.org
+1 902 448 5290
www.law-democracy.org
twitter: @law_democracy

Esben Q. Harboe
Programme Manager
International Media Support
eh@mediasupport.org
+45 5210 7805
www.mediasupport.org
twitter: @forfreemedia