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## **Tanzania: Analysis of Media Services Act**

The Centre for Law and Democracy (CLD) has prepared a detailed Analysis of Tanzania's Media Services Act 2016, along with a Note on the regulations which need to be adopted under it, which show that, although the Act has a number of positive features, many of its main regulatory systems fail to conform to international standards. A key problem with the Act is the licensing systems for both print media and journalists, both of which represent steps backwards from the 1976 Newspapers Act, which the new Act repeals. Furthermore, the bodies which oversee these licensing processes – the Director of Information Services Department and the Journalists Accreditation Board – are not independent from government.

*"We welcome the idea of updating the regulatory environment for the media in Tanzania", said Toby Mendel, Executive Director of CLD. "But unfortunately some of the main rules in the Act give the government unacceptable control over the media."*

Key problems with the Act, in addition to those noted above, are as follows:

- Its scope, at least based on a formal reading of the definitions, is far too broad and would define many social media users as journalists who need a licence to operate.
- The system of sanctions for breach of some of the rules is unduly harsh, among other things because it includes minimum prison sentences.
- The Act contains a number of oppressive both positive content obligations and restrictions on content.
- The system of promoting professionalism should be more clearly based on the code of ethics and the Independent Media Council should bear sole responsibility for developing and applying the code.

CLD calls on the authorities to minimise at least some of these problems by adopting a progressive set of regulations, the next step in the implementation of the Act.

The CLD Analysis and Note are available at: [ADD URL](#).

***For further information, please contact:***

Toby Mendel  
Executive Director  
Centre for Law and Democracy  
Email: [toby@law-democracy.org](mailto:toby@law-democracy.org)  
+1 902 431-3688  
[www.law-democracy.org](http://www.law-democracy.org)  
twitter: @law\_democracy