



10 December 2017 – Yangon, Myanmar

## Myanmar: Groups Plan to Reform Digital Content Restrictions

The Myanmar Media Lawyers' Network (MMLN) and the Centre for Law and Democracy (CLD) organised a workshop with civil society groups and lawyers from across the country on 9 December to discuss reform of laws which restrict freedom of expression online, including the Electronic Transactions Law, Official Secrets Act, Telecommunications Law, News Media Law and certain provisions of the Penal Code. Numerous cases have been brought under these laws, most of which were brought for political purposes.

*"A wide range of actors have long recognised the need to reform these laws,"* said Toby Mendel, Executive, CLD. *"This workshop was important inasmuch as we are moving forward to develop concrete reform proposals."*

Participants, including leading local and international legal experts, discussed concrete proposals for reforming these laws. Some of the proposals were far-reaching in nature, including repeal of most of the 1923 Official Secrets Act. The proposals will be further refined for future advocacy work aimed at getting government and parliament to move forward to amend the laws.

*"Lawyers from MMLN have defended several of those who were charged in recent years under the provisions we discussed today, such as section 66(d) of the Telecommunications Law,"* said Than Zaw, Secretary of the Myanmar Media Lawyers' Network. *"Reforming these laws is essential to protect freedom of speech."*

A detailed legal analysis of the problematical provisions is available in English and Burmese at: <https://www.law-democracy.org/live/myanmar-groups-plan-to-reform-digital-content-restrictions/>

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