

28 January 2019 – Yangon, Myanmar

## [Myanmar: Media Law Reform Discussions with the Press Council](#)

The Myanmar Press Council (MPC), established by the 2014 News Media Law, has been discussing amendments to its founding legislation. Over the past week, the Centre for Law and Democracy (CLD), as part of its collaboration with International Media Support (IMS) and FOJO Media Institute, held two roundtable meetings with members and senior staff of the MPC to discuss the changes that are needed to bring this Law into line with international standards, in particular relating to freedom of expression.

*“When it was first adopted, the News Media Law represented an important step forward for Myanmar, in particular because it was part of the process of repealing the repressive 1962 Printers and Publishers Registration Law,”* said Toby Mendel, Executive, CLD. *“Nearly five years later, however, it is time to align it more fully with international human rights guarantees.”*

The discussions at the roundtables focused on an analysis that CLD had prepared of the News Media Law and the Printing and Publishing Enterprises Law, which were adopted on the same day in 2014. The analysis called for both enhancing the structural independence of the MPC and positioning it as the main regulatory body for the print media. Some of the other key points in the analysis included the following:

- The scope of the law should be set out clearly and narrowly and cover only professional news media outlets, while also allowing other entities, in particular online news disseminators, to opt into its provisions.
- The law should set out stronger positive protections for the rights of media outlets and workers.
- The vague and broad content restrictions in the current law should be replaced by a system which empowers the MPC to adopt and apply a detailed code of conduct.
- The law should require anyone with a professional complaint against the media to complain first to the MPC before they may initiate a court case about the matter.
- The MPC should have fewer members (there are currently 29) and the proportion of media representatives should be reduced in favour of more public representatives.

The analysis is available at: [https://www.law-democracy.org/live/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Media-Law-and-PPEL-Note.Jan19.final\\_.pdf](https://www.law-democracy.org/live/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Media-Law-and-PPEL-Note.Jan19.final_.pdf).

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