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PRESS RELEASE

[Supporting the Establishment of Networks of Media Lawyers in Kazakhstan, UNESCO Almaty and CLD Host a Workshop](#)

Almaty, Kazakhstan, September 15, 2021 – Today [UNESCO Almaty](#), in partnership with the [Centre for Law and Democracy](#) (CLD), hosted a virtual Workshop on Creating a Media Lawyers' Network in Kazakhstan to bring legal professionals together to deepen their understanding of and to advocate for media freedom and freedom of expression.

Supported by the Global Media Defence Fund and the [Eurasian Digital Foundation](#), the Workshop discussed the importance and benefits of forming national networks of lawyers dedicated to media defence work and promoting freedom of expression. It provided a general introduction to the concept of a media lawyers' network and the steps needed to establish one, along with a specific discussion about possible next steps in Kazakhstan. Over 30 participants from Kazakhstan attended the discussion representing media, media lawyers, civil activists, academia and international organizations.

Referring to UNESCO's work to overview international and regional legal frameworks underpinning the right to freedom of expression, access to information and safety of journalists, Krista Pikkat, UNESCO Representative in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, Director of the UNESCO Almaty Cluster Office, noted that "creating a network of media lawyers will help enhance co-operation with judicial, law enforcement and academic law institutions in overcoming knowledge or justice deficiencies in the creation, interpretation, application and enforcement of laws related to freedom of expression, press freedom and the safety of journalists."

Such networks bring together legal professionals who seek to protect media freedom and freedom of expression. They can serve as forums for professional collaboration, knowledge sharing, advocacy and capacity building.

Speaking at the webinar, Toby Mendel, Executive Director, Centre for Law and Democracy noted: "Media lawyers' networks can be crucial forums for engaging lawyers in advocating for media law freedom, building media law as a specialisation, exchanging knowledge and supporting strategic litigation."

CLD is running the project, [Promoting the Establishment of Networks of Media Lawyers Globally](#). The goal is to help lawyers working on freedom of expression and media law issues to create formal professional media lawyers' networks at the national level. Networks of that sort can be invaluable in bolstering legal protection for media freedom, building members' expertise and collaborating to provide legal defence to journalists and media.