



MYANMAR MEDIA LAWYERS' NETWORK



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## Workshop for Myanmar Lawyers on Staying Safe Online

Although just 12% of the population of Myanmar has access to the Internet, online speech is becoming an increasingly important theme in debates around freedom of expression. On 3<sup>rd</sup> September, the Myanmar Media Lawyers' Network (MMLN), the Centre for Law and Democracy (CLD), FOJO Media Institute and International Media Support hosted an event for lawyers to discuss ongoing challenges to digital freedom in Myanmar.

*"Today's policies are setting a tone for online speech that will be increasingly important as more people connect,"* said Michael Karanicolas, Senior Legal Officer of CLD. *"It is important to have a regulatory structure in place which promotes a vibrant online discourse, with all the human rights benefits that bestows."*

The workshop, which was attended by 45 lawyers, featured a presentation from Robert Sann Aung, a well-respected human rights defender who has represented defendants charged under the country's problematic Electronic Transactions Law for statements made online. Yadanar Tun, of the Myanmar ICT Development Organisation, followed with a discussion about digital security, introducing participants to the basics of how to stay safe online.

*"Myanmar's lawyers have an important role to play in the discussion about regulating freedom of expression online,"* said Than Zaw, Secretary of the MMLN. *"However, as human rights advocates, we are also potential targets for online attack. It is important for lawyers to understand how to protect themselves."*

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