

# Session 5: Freedom of Expression

25 November, 2020; 5:30 - 7:30 AM UTC

This unit seeks to familiarize participants with the different laws protecting freedom of speech and expression across South Asia, and the restrictions on freedom of expression that are common in these legal systems. Particular attention will be provided to laws addressing hate speech, sedition, blasphemy and defamation in online spaces. The session will also look at the brief history of these laws and restrictions, and how they surface both off-line and on-line in contemporary times.

## Reference Materials

*\* Tables are hyperlinked, please click on the text to access*

- **Table 3: Laws and regulations governing the ICT ecosystem**
- **Table 4: Resources/databases on ICT and jurisprudence**
- **Table 5: International human rights law landscape**
- **Table 2: Constitutional guarantees**

## Reading Materials

**Suggested readings:**

1. Association for Progressive Communications, *Unshackling Expression: A Study on Laws Criminalising Expression Online in Asia*, GISWatch 2017

2. Divya Srinivasan, Gayatri Khandhadai, *Jurisprudence Shaping Digital Rights in South Asia* (November 2020) (Section on Freedom of Expression)

#### **Additional readings:**

1. [Video] Media Matters for Democracy, Pakistan, *A Democratic Fundamental: Making the case for free speech and expression*
2. Gayathry Venkiteswaran, *"Let the mob do the job": How proponents of hatred are threatening freedom of expression and religion online in Asia* (September 2017)
3. Body and Data, Nepal, *Unshackling Expression: A study on criminalisation of freedom of expression online in Nepal* (November 2020)
4. Bhamati Sivapalan and Vidyun Sabhaney, *In Illustrations: A Brief History of India's National Security Laws* (July 2019)
5. Wired.com, *The Quest to Topple Science-Stymying Academic Paywalls* (April 2019)
6. DailyMirror, *Arrest of writer Sathkumara sparks debate on freedom of expression* (April 2019)
7. *"Ardha"(Half): The Controversial Sinhala Short Story by Shakthika Sathkumara That Landed Him In jail* (August 2019)
8. Nepali Times, *Blasphemy Charges in a Secular State* (September 2012)
9. Columbia Journalism Review, *Infection and Repression* (September 2020)
10. International Press Institute, *Rush to pass 'fake news' laws during Covid-19 intensifying global media freedom challenges* (October 2020)

## **Session Presentation**

### **Session Summary**

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