Day 2 Session 1: Freedom of expression

Time: 5:00 UTC - 6:30 UTC

Objective: This session is aimed at exploring the laws protecting freedom of expression across the South Asian region, while also examining the restrictions placed on this right within different legal systems. Participants will look closely at laws addressing hate speech, sedition, blasphemy, and defamation in their regional contexts. The session will further provide a brief historical overview of these laws and restrictions, tracing how they continue to surface in both offline and online spaces today.

Session plan:

The session will aim to cover questions such as:

- What are the provisions that cover freedom of expression in international human rights law and national legislation in South Asia?
- What does international law say regarding conditions for restrictions on freedom of expression, and how does it compare to the kinds of restrictions we see in South Asia (hate speech, sedition, blasphemy, defamation and mis/disinformation etc.)?
- What kinds of laws are being passed in South Asia in relation to freedom of expression online? How does this differ from how freedom of expression is regulated offline?
- What is the role of platforms with respect to freedom of expression online? What impact does the current policy approach towards platforms in South Asia have on freedom of expression online? What needs to change?

**Reading materials are hyperlinked, please click the text to access*

Reading Materials:

- Global Information Society Watch 2017 special edition: Unshackling expression - A study on laws criminalising expression online in Asia
- Unshackling Expression: The Philippines Report
- Virtual Verdicts: A study on the criminalisation of online expression in Sri Lanka
- Unshackling Expression: The Nepal Report
- Freedom on the Net 2025

- Intermediary Liability 2.0
- Jurisprudence Shaping Digital Rights in South Asia
- Social Media and Hate Speech in India
- Content Take Downs on the World Wide Web - A Global Reality

Presentation Slide

Revision #5
Created 2025-11-18 09:18:41 UTC by Cho
Updated 2025-12-01 06:51:46 UTC by Cho