

Press Release



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FMM condemns blocking of websites

The Free Media Movement (FMM) vehemently opposes the recent action by internet service provider Sri Lanka Telecom (SLT) to block access to several news website in Sri Lanka, shortly after a communiqué was issued by the Director General of the Ministry of Mass Media and Information stating that all websites publishing news, within and outside Sri Lanka should register with the Ministry. The move follows an earlier action by the State owned SLT and the privately owned Dialog Axiata PLC to block access to Lanka E News, which continues to remain inaccessible even today.

The FMM believes the government action is a continuation of efforts by the authorities to control the new media and deny the public access to dissenting views. With the mainstream media facing constant threats and attacks, news websites have gained greater significance, often being the only avenue of news for a public starved for information.

New media has revolutionised the social, economic and political arena creating a new culture of news and information worldwide. However, no country which respects democracy has attempted to block or hamper access to websites providing dissenting views and uncensored news. Only repressive regimes such as North Korea, China and Myanmar that have no regard for human rights have resorted to such action.

The FMM believes the government action in resorting to such measure serves to highlight its tyrannical tendencies, refusal to respect the rights of the people to receive information and express dissenting opinions, and its continuing efforts to suppress media freedom.

However, the FMM wishes to point out that with the leapfrogging development in technology, attempts such as these to suppress the free flow of information are futile ventures. However, the government action – in blocking access and in trying to force the websites to register with the Media Ministry - proves it will not hesitate to abuse its powers to suppress the rights of the people and their freedom. Considering the threat posed to the freedoms of the general public and to the country's democracy, the FMM urges all those who respect democracy and value the rights it guarantees to join hands in defeating such moves by the government

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