





# Digital Rights Programme for Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) Regional End-of-Programme Meeting

25–26 October 2024 Johor Bahru, Malaysia

	<b>Day 1   25 October 2024</b> Venue: N3.23 & N3.04 Small Lecture Theatre, University of Reading Malaysia	
8:30 AM	Registration & Morning Coffee	
9 AM	<ul> <li>Opening Remarks</li> <li>Dr James Gomez, Regional Director, Asia Centre</li> <li>Assoc. Prof. Anne Vergis, Head of Law, University of Reading Malaysia</li> </ul>	
9:15 AM	<ul> <li>MoU Signing Ceremony with Asia Centre</li> <li>Digital Rights Nepal</li> <li>European Values Center for Security Policy</li> <li>Hashtag Generation</li> <li>SAFEnet</li> </ul>	
9:30 AM	<ul> <li>Roundtable Discussion: A Year in Review: The Digital Landscape in 2024 Moderated by Dr James Gomez, Regional Director, Asia Centre</li> <li><u>Discussants</u> <ul> <li>Aoi Horiuchi, Japan NGO Center for International Cooperation (Japan)</li> <li>Dulanjaya Mahagamage, Hashtag Generation (Sri Lanka)</li> <li>Sokunthea Chhan, Cambodian Centre for Independent Media (Cambodia)</li> <li>Marcin M. Jerzewski, European Values Center for Security Policy (Taiwan)</li> <li>TEN Leu-Jiun, "Whistleblower" (Singapore)</li> </ul> </li> <li>Guiding Questions <ul> <li>Outline key regulatory developments that are hampering free expressions and mobilisation online</li> <li>How do online surveillance, hacking and spyware tools affect digital interactions?</li> <li>Evaluate the impact of information operations such as doxxing and disinformation campaigns on activists.</li> <li>What efforts can be taken to mitigate online security risks?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	







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10:30 AM	Refreshments Venue: Foyer	
11 AM	<ul> <li>Session 2: Key Developments in Online Regulation in the Region Moderated by Kevin McGahan, Independent Researcher</li> <li>Speakers <ul> <li>Celito Arlegue, Council of Asian Liberals and Democrats (Philippines)</li> <li>Nenden Sekar Arum, SAFEnet (Indonesia)</li> <li>Kumaran Pillai, The Independent Singapore (Singapore)</li> <li>Kunthika Nutcharut, Human Rights Lawyer (Thailand)</li> <li>Tusher Nabi, University of Dhaka (Bangladesh)</li> </ul> </li> <li>Guiding Questions <ul> <li>What are the most pressing threats in the region, and how do they intersect with issues in specific countries?</li> <li>What is the current state of play in digital activism in the Asia-Pacific?</li> <li>How have governments in the Asia-Pacific adapted their strategies to deal with digitally organised protests, particularly in their attempts to censor or control information related to protests?</li> <li>What digital tools are being used by electoral candidates and political parties for campaigning and voter engagement?</li> <li>How are different countries in the Asia-Pacific region approaching online content regulation and censorship, and what impact is this having on freedom of expression and digital activism?</li> <li>What emerging digital trends and technologies could impact the future of activism in the Asia-Pacific?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
12:30 PM	Lunch Venue: Foyer	
1:30 PM	Session 3: Digital Security in Asia Pacific Facilitated by Lina Sakina Salim, Programme Coordinator, Asia Centre, Kartini Sunityo, Programme Manager, Asia Centre & Kunthika Nutcharut, Human Rights Lawyer (Thailand)	







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	This 90-minute interactive workshop, including an information session, introduces the latest initiative from Asia Centre in collaboration with Google APAC which aims to enhance participants' awareness of current trends and digital security threats facing the region in particular in East Asia, South East Asia and South Asia countries, as well as the digital resources available to advance their online protection.	
	The primary objective of the workshop is to impart knowledge and strengthen the digital resilience of individuals, institutions, and organisations vulnerable to online threats in the region. At the end of the workshop, participants will gain a deeper understanding of digital security and resilience by learning to identify various types of online threats and strategies for staying safe online.	
3 PM	Refreshments Venue: Foyer	
3:30 PM	Session 4: Malaysia: Holding Tech Companies Accountable Moderated by Prof Andrew Harding, UoRM/Asia Centre	
	<ul> <li>Speakers</li> <li>Anne Vergis, Head, School of Law, University of Reading Malaysia</li> <li>Joseph Ramanair, Universiti Malaysia Sarawak</li> <li>S. Maartandan Suppiah, Universiti Utara Malaysia</li> <li>Thomas Fann, Chairman, Engage, Malaysia</li> <li>Oon Jin Xuan, Tunku Abdul Rahman University of Management and Technology</li> </ul>	
	<ul> <li><u>Guiding Questions</u></li> <li>What is the state of internet freedoms in Malaysia and how do current laws affect it?</li> <li>To what extent civil society is able to safely use the internet and social media to pursue issues related to public accountability?</li> <li>To what extent should tech companies be responsible for cyberbullying on their platforms?</li> </ul>	







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	• Is the argument by tech companies that the proposed cyberbullying law imposes undue burdens on the industry justified?
5 PM	Dinner & Networking Venue: Rizwan by Nasi Lemak Cincai, Mall of Medini

• •	Day 2   Date 26 October 2024 Venue: GF & 2F, Asia Centre Media Hub	
9 AM	Registration & Morning Coffee Venue: GF, Asia Centre Media Hub	
9:30 AM	<ul> <li>Welcome to Asia Centre Media Hub</li> <li>Dr James Gomez, Regional Director, Asia Centre</li> </ul>	
9:45 AM	<ul> <li>Session 5: Roundtable Discussion: Revisiting the Project's Impact Moderated by Kartini Sunityo, Programme Manager, Asia Centre</li> <li>Speakers <ul> <li>Aoi Horiuchi, JANIC (Japan)</li> <li>Dulanjaya Mahagamage, Hashtag Generation (Sri Lanka)</li> <li>Nenden Sekar Arum, SAFEnet (Indonesia)</li> <li>Sokunthea Chhan, Cambodian Centre for Independent Media (Cambodia)</li> <li>Tanka Aryal, Digital Rights Nepal (Nepal)</li> </ul> </li> <li>Guiding Questions <ul> <li>What were the key takeaways from our online and in-person meetings? Are these insights still relevant and applicable today?</li> <li>What effective strategies have emerged from both in-person and online regional meetings for tackling online content regulation challenges?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	







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Day 2   Date 26 October 2024 Venue: GF & 2F, Asia Centre Media Hub		
	<ul> <li>How can these strategies be leveraged to enhance digital rights activism in the region?</li> <li>What lessons have we learned from this project?</li> <li>How would you revise your advocacy approach based on these lessons?</li> <li>How can we further sustain the networks of CSOs and their partners working on digital rights that have been established?</li> </ul>	
11 AM	Refreshments Venue: 2F, Asia Centre Media Hub	
11:30 AM	<ul> <li>Session 6: What's Next? Facilitated by Lina Sakina Salim, Programme Coordinator, Asia Centre and Representatives of CSOs</li> <li><u>Discussion</u> In groups of four, participants will reflect on the following questions: <ul> <li>What ongoing or emerging online issues are likely to pose challenges in the future?</li> <li>What immediate actions are needed to address these issues?</li> <li>What resources and networks are essential for tackling these challenges effectively?</li> <li>What is the future direction of this initiative moving forward?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
1 PM	Closing Remarks & Lunch Venue: 2F, Asia Centre Media Hub	
2 PM	JB Iskandar Tour Tour stops: - Palace Gate - JB Heritage Walking Tour - Forest City - Educity - Kota Iskandar	







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Day 2   Date 26 October 2024 Venue: GF & 2F, Asia Centre Media Hub	
	- Puteri Cove
6 PM	Dinner & Networking Venue: 27 @ Cove, Puteri Cove Quayside

Asia Centre







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### Speakers Profile

Aoi Horiuchi Senior Advocacy Officer Japan NGO Center for International Cooperation (JANIC) Aoi Horiuchi is Senior Advocacy Officer of Japan NGO Center for International Cooperation (JANIC), as well as Deputy Director of THINK Lobby. Aoi is an active member of Development Unit, Japan Civil Society Network on SDGs, and has participated many international fora such as UN General Assembly, UN High-Level Political Forum, past G7 and G20 Summits etc., for advocacy purposes. Aoi served as co-secretariat for civil society platform on G7 Ise-Shima Summit in 2016, and C20 (Civil20) Sous-Sherpa in 2019, and C7 (Civil7) Steering Committee member in 2023-2024.
Professor Andrew Harding Professor of Law, Faculty of Law University of Reading Malaysia Professor Andrew Harding is a leading scholar in Asian legal studies and comparative constitutional law. He is a former Head of the Law School at SOAS, University of London; a former Director of the Centre for Asian Legal Studies (CALS) at the National University of Singapore (NUS), and founding editor of the book series, Constitutional Systems of the World (Hart/ Bloomsbury), which has produced 36 volumes covering most of the world's important constitutional systems, and has pioneered the use of contextual analysis. His own volume in this series, The Constitution of Malaysia: A Contextual Analysis, is now in its second edition (2022), and is widely read by Malaysian law students, scholars, lawyers, and judges. He is the author or editor of 25 books and more than 200 academic publications







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Assoc. Professor Anne Vergis Associate Professor of Law, Faculty of Law, University of Reading Malaysia Anne Vergis, an Associate Professor of Law joined University of Reading Malaysia (UORM) in October 2014 as the Head of Law. Anne is very enthusiastic about legal education, educational leadership and management of higher education. Her passion for education brought her into academia in 1998 where she commenced her academic career as a lecturer and progressed on to hold various administrative and management portfolios. Anne has seen through many Law-related programmes from their inception to launch. She is also highly dedicated to her work in the development of quality legal education through innovative and transformational methods in teaching and learning.
Celito Arlegue Executive Director Council of Asian Liberals and Democrats (CALD) Celito Arlegue is the executive director of Council of Asian Liberals and Democrats (CALD), a regional network of liberal and democratic political parties and individuals in Asia. Apart from Celito's work in CALD, he also serves as lecturer in the Diplomacy and International Affairs Department of the De La Salle - College of St. Benilde in Manila.
Dulanjaya Mahagamage Social Media Specialist, Hashtag Generation Dulanjaya Mahagamage is a social media specialist at Hashtag Generation with a fervent passion for digital civic engagement. He brings four years of expertise in social research, data management, and analysis to his work. As a social media specialist and analyst, he meticulously monitors, maps, and scrutinises harmful conversations







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circulating on social media platforms, including disinformation, hate speech, harassment, and violent extremism.
Dr Joseph Ramanair Senior Lecturer, Faculty of Education, Language and Communication, Universiti Malaysia Sarawak Joseph Ramanair is a senior lecturer at the Faculty of Education, Language and Communication, UNIMAS and conducts research in areas related to Education, eLearning, Pedagogy, English Language Teaching and Teacher Professional Development. Currently, he teaches courses related to ICT, English language, Communication, and Translation and Interpretation on the English for Global Communication undergraduate programme. He also supervises undergraduates' Final Year Projects and postgraduate Masters and PhD research. He received his PhD (Education) in 2015 from the University of Waikato, New Zealand, MSc (TESOL) in 2003 from the University of Stirling, Scotland, and B.Ed. (Hons) Secondary Education and English Language Teaching from the University of Exeter in 1997.
Dr Kevin McGahan Independent Researcher After earning his PhD in political science at the University of Wisconsin in 2008, Dr. Kevin McGahan served as a lecturer in the Department of Political Science and Global Studies at the National University of Singapore (NUS), where he conducted research in international relations and comparative politics. He has taught both graduate and undergraduate classes, ranging from international law to global migration to Southeast Asian politics. His main research agenda involves examining state and societal responses to transnational migration in Southeast Asia. He has also written about the roles of both states and nonstate actors in shaping global governance to contemporary challenges in international relations. In addition to his research interests, Dr. Kevin has practical experience in working with







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government agencies, political consultancies, and non-governmental organisations – including serving as an international election observer in Timor-Leste.
Kumaran Pillai Publisher, The Independent Singapore Kumaran Pillai is the publisher of The Independent Singapore and is the former Chief Editor of The Online Citizen. He also runs a Startup Venture Accelerator and funds AI startups in Asia. He currently manages a portfolio of 25 startups in Singapore and India. He is currently working on a book entitled, The Smiling Authoritarian.
Kunthika Nutcharut Attorney Kunthika Nutcharut is an attorney specialising in human rights and data protection based in Bangkok, Thailand. Her area of expertise is litigation, and she is presently defending a number of lawmakers as well as young Thai activists who support the right to free speech in Thailand. Risk assessment and consulting are at the centre of her work on privacy and data protection. Through an initiative called "Privacy Now Thailand," she voluntarily offers young litigators a free training curriculum to increase their understanding of data protection and privacy. As an editor, she provides support to the most recent edition of Data Privacy Playbook: A Lawyer's Guide in the Digital Age. The Human Rights Lawyers' Association of Thailand is distributing this book at no cost to a network of practitioners and litigators. (HRLA).

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Marcin Jerzewski Head of Taiwan Office, The European Values Center for Security Policy Marcin Jerzewski is the Head of the Taiwan Office of the European Values Center for Security Policy. He also serves as an analyst contributing to the Center's research on Taiwan and the broader Indo-Pacific region. Concurrently, he is also a contributor to the China Observers in Central Eastern Europe (CHOICE) platform of the Association for International Affairs (AMO). His previous professional experience includes work at the Taiwan NextGen Foundation, the Taipei City Government, the Polish Office in Taipei, and the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington, DC. His research on comparative democratisation includes information integrity and the role of media literacy in fostering democratic resilience. Jerzewski managed projects related to information integrity and media literacy in close cooperation with Taiwanese and Eastern European CSOs.
Nenden Sekar Arum Executive Director, SAFEnet (Southeast Asia Freedom of Expression Network) Nenden Sekar Arum is the Executive Director of SAFEnet (Southeast Asia Freedom of Expression Network), focusing on digital rights and internet freedom. She advocates for online safety and supports victims of technology-facilitated gender-based violence. Nenden is also involved in the Indonesian Data Journalism Network (IDJN) and the Indonesian Journalist Safety Committee, working to protect journalists from digital attacks and enhance data-driven journalism. With over a decade of experience, her work bridges technology, human rights, and media.







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Oo Jin Xuan Master's Student of Communication, Tunku Abdul Rahman University of Management and Technology Oon Jin Xuan is a graduating Master's student and part-time lecturer from the Faculty of Communications of Tunku Abdul Rahman University of Management and Technology (TAR UMT). Her research area focuses on the LGBTQ minority group and their usage of non-anonymous social media. Jin Xuan also earned her Bachelor of Communication (Honours) in Media Studies at TAR UMT.
Dr S. Maartandan Suppiah Communications Lecturer S. Maartandan Suppiah is a dynamic lecturer with successful experience in the communication field of study. He has completed his Bachelor of Communication and Master of Science (Managerial Communication). He obtained his Doctor of Philosophy in Communication in 2019. He is a certified Human Resource Development Corporation trainer and Malaysia Qualifications Agency (MQA) assessor. He is also a senior associate of the Public Relations Consultant Association (PRCA).
Sokunthea Chhan Executive Director, Cambodian Center for Independent Media(CCIM) Chhan Sokunthea is currently the executive director of the Cambodian Center for Independent Media. Primary responsible for overseeing the organisation by working closely with DPs, government institutions, UN Agencies, civil societies both local and international and private sectors to promote and strengthen the FOE, FoP and Internet Freedom in Cambodia. Previously she worked for the Cambodian Human Rights and Development Association (ADHOC) from 1st April 1998 to 31th December 2020. There, she held responsibilities for International







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Advocacy Coordination. Sokunthea graduated with a Master's Degree in Public Administrative. Sokunthea has had extensive experience in advocating with government officials, civil society, international community and relevant stakeholders for the promotion and protection of human rights and democracy, including corporate respect for human rights, labour rights, gender equality and inclusion.
Tanka Aryal Co-founder and Chairperson, Digital Rights Nepal Tanka Raj Aryal, from Nepal, is a practising lawyer at the Supreme Court of Nepal, and he has been continuously engaged in promoting digital rights, the right to information, freedom of expression, civic space, accountability, and internet freedom nationally and regionally for the last 15 years. Mr. Aryal has worked as a consultant and staff with different national and international organisations including FHI 360, International Center for Not-for-profit Law (ICNL), UNESCO, World Bank, ARTICLE 19, UNDP, ISOC, UNDESA/DPADM. Mr. Aryal has served as the Secretary of the Internet Society Nepal Chapter. Mr. Aryal is a Co-founder and serving as chairperson of Digital Rights Nepal.
Ten Leu-Jiun CIVICUS' recognition of Leu-Jiun as a whistleblower highlights the retaliation she faced for exposing plagiarism at a local Singapore university. Her protracted legal battle exposed further abuses of power, perjury, and the protection of elites. Leveraging her position as a litigant, she pushed for reforms that contributed to the implementation of a framework within the 2021 Rules of Court of the Supreme Court of Singapore to improve access to appeals for those with limited financial means. Leu-Jiun advocates for and researches on rights-based issues.







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Thomas Fann Chairman, ENGAGE Malaysia Thomas was the Chairperson of the Coalition for Free and Fair Elections (BERSIH), a coalition of 60 non-governmental organisations (NGOs) that focuses on electoral and democratic reforms in Malaysia from 2018 to 2023. He is currently the Chairman of ENGAGE, an NGO he founded in 2013. In BERSIH he has served as the Southern Vice-Chair and Treasurer from 2013 to 2016 before his election as the Chair in 2018. He was active in voter registration, organising peaceful protests and spearheaded the Delineation Action & Research Team (DART) of Bersih to prepare the public to object to any unfair delineation of electoral boundaries by the Election Commission. As a social activist, he has also initiated several notable human rights projects like Freedom Fund that helped activists and citizens who were being persecuted by the previous government for expressing views that were deemed critical of the government. He also founded Citizens Against Enforced Disappearances (CAGED) to monitor the disappearances of Pastor Raymond Koh and the others.
Tusher Nabi Khan Faculty Member, Department of TV, Film & Photography, University of Dhaka Tusher Nabi Khan is an adjunct faculty member in the Department of TV, Film & Photography at the University of Dhaka. With journalism experience in print and electronic media since 2007, he has worked in news and programme and serves as volunteer at think-tank on human rights issues

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