**LAWS AND REGULATIONS**

**REPEAL SECTION 4 OF THE PROTECTED FLAG, EMBLEMS AND NAMES ACT**

Civil society and international agencies need to push Malawi’s government to repeal Section 4 of the colonial-era law, which makes it a crime to ‘insult, ridicule or show disrespect to the President’.

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**REPEAL SECTION 181 OF THE PENAL CODE**

Government should repeal or amend Section 181 of the Penal Code, which reads makes it a crime for anyone in any public place to conduct themselves ‘in a manner likely to cause a breach of the peace’. Section 181 is too broad and often abused to suppress dissent.

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**SET A DATE FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ATI ACT**

The Minister of Information and Communications Technology needs to set a date for the commencement of the Access to Information (ATI) Act, which was passed into law in February 2017.

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**REVIEW THE CYBER SECURITY ACT TO PROMOTE ONLINE FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION**

Parliament should amend the 2016 Act, which regulates online communication. It contains several clauses that are open to abuse, allowing the government to limit online expression.

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**PROMOTE UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO ICT SERVICES**

MISA and the broader ICT sector should lobby government to put in place strategies promoting universal access to ICT services. Currently, low levels of computer literacy, high cost of Internet services, poor infrastructure and erratic power supply limit ICT advances.

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**SAFETY OF JOURNALISTS**

**STOP ATTACKS ON JOURNALISTS**

Police topped the list of those responsible for assaults against journalists in 2018. All stakeholders should respect constitutional provisions on media freedom, which includes the right to gather and disseminate information.

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**INVESTIGATE AND PROSECUTE CRIMES AGAINST MEDIA WORKERS**

Law enforcers should bring to book all those that attack journalists. MISA Malawi and all relevant stakeholders should condemn attacks on journalist and call upon relevant authorities to act on such attacks.

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**STOP TURNING PRESS CONFERENCES INTO POLITICAL RALLIES**

Government and political parties should stop holding press briefings in the presence of their political supporters. This creates a hostile environment and deters journalists from asking hard questions.

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**STOP GAGGING THE MEDIA THROUGH COURT INJUNCTIONS**

The private sector and other relevant players should desist from obtaining injunctions stopping the media from publishing stories of national interest, including exposing corruption and other malpractices.

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**REVIVE THE MEDIA COUNCIL OF MALAWI TO ALLOW FOR MEDIA SELF-REGULATION**

MISA Malawi, Media Owners Association and other stakeholders need to work together to resuscitate the Media Council of Malawi and explore ways of sustaining its operations. Otherwise the government may push for statutory regulation of Malawi’s media.