

Freedom of Expression in Cyber Space: Protecting Right to Privacy and Public Security in Sri Lanka

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Cyber space has become the most prevalent medium to express ideas in this digital age. Freedom of expression is guaranteed and secured under the Sri Lankan Constitution as a fundamental right. Right to privacy and public security are conflicting with freedom of expression in most instances. Considering online media, this conflict is severe due to the unlimited opportunities available for public to express what they feel and share it throughout the world within a short time frame. Right to privacy has not been given sufficient attention under the Sri Lankan law whereas no specific definition provided for the term "privacy". Public security legislations contain vague terms which act as inappropriate to address the issues which connected with security of the state. In some occasions freedom of expression violates the individual privacy due to the less protection awarded to privacy rights. Public security laws are conflicting with liberty to express ideas in cyber space in most occasions where the government has to take immediate steps by strictly limiting freedom to express ideas. Right to privacy should be guaranteed as a fundamental right in Sri Lanka. Public security laws should be reasonable and special legal rules should be established to the protection of public security from the threats emerging from cyber space. This study attempts to discuss how to balance the conflict between expression, privacy and public security in cyber space as appropriate to Sri Lanka.

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