

## **Sri Lankan Perspectives on “Fighting the Lie”; Criminalizing Online Falsehoods**

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In ancient times, war was wholly militaristic and physical in nature, where troops protected borders. However, at present war has changed from physical space to virtual space. Social media is the biggest platform utilized by extremists, terrorists, profit and politically motivated individuals to attain illegal motives. Disinformation, misinformation, falsehoods, online manipulations and hate speech have become apex threats to Sri Lanka’s national security. The research problem is the need to criminalize online falsehoods. The research methodology utilized is a non-doctrinal research, which is also known as socio-legal research. The rationale behind non-doctrinal research is, to seek answers from a multi-disciplinary approach. The paper goes beyond legal analysis and also looks from a national and strategic security perspective. The research will shed light on what are online falsehoods, Sri Lanka’s experiences as a victim of online falsehoods, laws relating to online falsehoods, freedom of expression and the gaps, lacunae and weaknesses prevalent in the laws curbing online falsehoods. Further, the research will evaluate the Singapore’s Protection from Online Falsehoods and Manipulation Act 2019, for purposes of comparative analysis. The paper has identified the necessity to introduce legislation to criminalize online falsehoods. Consequentially, the paper has provided a plethora of recommendations on preventing and mitigating online falsehoods.

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