

Myanmar's anti-press laws

Telecommunication Law's Section 66 (d)

Extorting, coercing, restraining wrongfully, defaming, disturbing, causing undue influence or threatening to any person by using any Telecommunications Network

Maximum sentence: Three years in prison, or a fine

2004 Electronic Transactions Act, Section 33 (a,b)

Using electronic transactions technology for doing any act detrimental to the security of the state or prevalence of law and order or community peace and tranquility or national solidarity or national economy or national culture;

Receiving or sending and distributing any information relating to secrets of the security of the state or prevalence of law and order or community peace and tranquility or national solidarity or national economy or culture

Maximum sentence: Seven years in prison

2004 Electronic Transactions Act, Section 34(d)

Creating, modifying or altering of information or distributing of information created, modified or altered by electronic technology to be detrimental to the interest of or to lower the dignity of any organization or person

Maximum sentence: Three years in prison

1923 Official Secrets Act, Sections 3, 5(1), 5(2)

Spying by making, receiving, or communicating any document that is calculated to be, might be or is intended to be directly or indirectly useful to a foreign country; receiving or disseminating a broad range of documents and information, particularly government documents

Maximum sentence: 2 and 14 years in prison respectively

2014 Printing and Publishing Enterprise Law

Publishing matters that can tarnish ethnicity, religion or culture of an ethnic group or a citizen and matters that can undermine national security, the rule of law, community peace and tranquility or the equality, freedom, justice and rights of every citizen

Maximum sentence: Fine

News Media Law

Writing or publishing that deliberately affects the reputation of a person or organization or that disrespects their human rights, unless the writing is in the public interest

Maximum sentence: Fine

1908 Unlawful Association Act Section 17(2)

Managing or assisting in the management of an unlawful association, or promoting or assisting in promoting a meeting of any such association, or of any members thereof as such members

Maximum sentence: Five years in prison and a fine

Criminal defamation (sections 499 & 500 of the Penal Code)

Using words, spoken or written, or any signs or visible representation, making or publishing any imputation concerning a person intending to harm, or knowing or having reason to believe such imputation will harm the reputation of such person

Maximum sentence: Two years in prison

Sedition Section 124(a)

Using any words, spoken or written, or any signs or visible representation that can cause hatred or contempt, or excites or attempts to excite disaffection toward the government

Maximum sentence: Life imprisonment

Section 505(b) on public tranquility of the Penal Code

Making, publishing or circulating any statement, rumor, report with intent to cause, or which is likely to cause, fear or alarm to the public, or to any section of the public whereby any person may be induced to commit an offense against the State or against the public tranquility

Maximum sentence: Two years in prison

Sections 295(a) and 298 on hurting religious sentiment of the Penal Code

Using language with deliberate and malicious intention of outraging the religious feelings of any class of persons resident in the Union...insults or attempts to insult the religion or the religious beliefs of that class; and with the deliberate intention of wounding the religious feelings of any person

Maximum sentence: Two years and one year (respectively), and fine

Contempt of Courts Act

Speech or writing that disgraces or is likely to disgrace the court, by any means diminishes the public trust in an honest and independent judicial inquiry or criticizes, writes, prints or distributes any matter that falls within the jurisdiction of the court prior to the verdict

Maximum sentence: Six months in prison and fine

Sources: Myanmar Constitution and Penal Code

[EDITOR'S NOTE: This sidebar has been updated to reflect the correct section of the law as Telecommunication Law's Section 66 (d)]