

Profile: The 'Flower Speech' movement

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The Panzagar (Flower Speech) campaign was launched in April 2014 as part of attempts to quell a growing tide of online hate speech in Myanmar.

Although groups such as women and the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender communities have come under attacks online, the majority of the speech has been aimed at Myanmar's Muslim community. As reported in a story on pages 26 and 27 of Frontier this week, a recent report on the ICT sector by the Myanmar Centre for Responsible Business found that almost 90 percent of all online hate speech it reviewed was aimed at the Muslim community.

The Panzagar campaign was founded by Nay Phone Latt, executive director of Myanmar ICT for Development Organization, who was himself sentenced to more than 20 years in prison in 2008 for blogging about the 2007 Saffron Revolution, but was released in 2012. It aims to promote the responsible use of social media and raise awareness of the implications of online behaviour.

MIDA has partnered with local graphic designers and Facebook to create a set of positive 'digital stickers' that users can share on the social media platform. The movement has led to some users posting photos of them holding flowers to further spread the message.

In September, it was also announced that Facebook's community standards are being transferred into Myanmar language for the first time. The standards will be sent to users mostly through promoted posts that Facebook hopes will lead users to think twice before they share content that could be deemed inflammatory.



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