

**Applications invited for a Media Workshop on “Humanitarian Disasters, Human Rights Violations, and Social Media Journalism”
(Kolkata, India; 11-14 December 2013)**

The workshop will be organized by the Calcutta Research Group (CRG). It will be in the form of a media research lab insofar as the focus will be on interdisciplinary engagement with new media, digital culture and technology on issues of human rights violations and humanitarian disasters. The workshop will run parallel to the Eleventh Orientation Course on Forced Migration Studies to be held in Kolkata, India (8-14 December 2013).

From the Tahrir Square in Cairo to the Shahbag Square in Dhaka, the world, in recent times, has seen an explosion of digital culture in the organization of protests as well as in the dissemination of news. Citizen journalism has asserted itself in the social media space globally, even as the traditional media has been slow to wake up to the phenomenon. Now, gradually comprehending its social and political traction, the powers that be - the political and government establishments — too, are trying to join the social media bandwagon. At least one major media group has rededicated its prestigious “excellence in journalism” awards to social media. The CRG has decided to take advantage of this historic conjunction to debate and discuss the issue in a workshop/media research lab format. The questions that face the workshop are critically important and not easy to resolve: How empowering, after all, is social media? Has it indeed democratized news? If yes, in what modes and forms has this democratization been attained?

The CRG will attempt to engage with these questions through the optic of humanitarian disasters and human rights violations and the need to protect the victims of these disasters and violations. The workshop will endeavour to sensitize social media activists to issues of rights and protection resulting from forced migration, and, in the process of the programme, establish connect between mainstream journalists working on forced migration issues and social media activists. The participation of social media activists will be the main source of information. The various ways in which social media has been active will be documented and thus made visible. This is because even our fragmentary knowledge tells us of the important ways in which social media has been active, for instance, in the Northeast of India in humanitarian crises like the Brahmaputra floods and human-rights violations

Applications are invited from citizen journalists and social-media activists. However, since the workshop also aims at skilling traditional media-workers in the tools of social media, professional journalists may also apply. Applications from human-rights activists, policymakers, academics, media specialists, refugee activists and others working in the field of human rights and humanitarian assistance for victims of forced migration are also welcome: their contribution would add a valuable dimension to the project. The workshop would consist of several lectures on selected themes and other interactive exercises.

Applicants must have (a) experience in traditional or social media studies, or policy studies on forced migration OR, two-year experience of working in the traditional media or social media activism, AND (b) proficiency in English. Besides giving all necessary particulars, application must be accompanied by one appropriate recommendation letter and a 500-1000 word write-up on how the programme is relevant to the applicant's work and may benefit the applicant. **Applicants will have to pay a registration fee of INR 2,000 (for non-Indian participants USD 200).** In Kolkata, the CRG will provide accommodation and bear other expenses for all participants. Inquiries relating to the application procedure are welcome.

Applications, addressed to the Media Module Coordinator, should be sent by e-mail to atig@mcrg.ac.in and forcedmigrationdesk@mcrg.ac.in or by post to the following address: Mahanirban Calcutta Research Group, GC 45 Sector 3, Salt Lake, Kolkata – 700 106, West Bengal, India. Phone: +91 (33) 2337 0408. The workshop is being supported by the British Deputy High Commission, Kolkata.

All applications must reach by the August 16, 2013.