

# Social media and authoritarianism in Southeast Asia

Is social media driving a trend towards authoritarianism in Southeast Asia? How are influence operations on social media organised, and what can civil society do to resist such campaigns? This panel brings together three scholars to discuss the deepening entanglement between social media platforms and authoritarian consolidation across Southeast Asia.

Drawing on fieldwork and comparative research from Myanmar, Cambodia, Indonesia, the Philippines, and Thailand, the speakers explore how governments and political elites have learned to weaponize the very platforms once celebrated as tools of democratic opening.



**Date** : 28 May 2026  
**Time** : 15.30 – 17.00 PM (CET)  
**Venue** : KITLV & online via Zoom  
**Registration** : [kitlv.nl/event/panel-discussion-social-media/](https://www.kitlv.nl/event/panel-discussion-social-media/)



**Speaker**  
**Mai Van Tran**  
Northern Illinois University



**Speaker**  
**Janjira Sombatpoonsiri**  
Chulangkorn University  
German Institute for Global & Area Studies



**Speaker**  
**Kris Ruijgrok**  
University of Amsterdam



**Moderator**  
**Ward Berenschot**  
KITLV  
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More info:

