

An important message about New Mandala comments

New Mandala has always taken a democratic approach to reader comments, in the belief that the opinions of readers are as valuable as those of authors. We're appreciative when readers take the time to write up thoughtful responses to posts, and we thank all those who've done so over the years. You're part of what makes *New Mandala* such a valuable part of discussion and debate on Southeast Asia.

It's no secret, though, that too often these constructive contributions are drowned out by argumentative, irrelevant, and downright inane comments. Our editors have long faced dilemmas in comment moderation: we never like to prevent someone from having their say, even when it's meant cutting people a lot of slack when it comes to tone and content.

From now on, we're taking a harder line. In a spirit of transparency, we'd like to refresh everybody's understanding of our comments policy and flag that it is going to be enforced more rigorously.

Our comments policy is as follows:

Comments that are published are:

Brief. Make your point in as few words as possible.

Relevant. Address the article and the ideas and arguments in it.

Respectful. Don't attack an author, our editorial team, other commenters or the website. This means using courteous, civil language, and playing the ball and not the player.

Rigorous. Correct inaccuracies, errors and misjudgments, but make sure that you hold your comments to the same standard.

Comments will be deleted if:

- They are spam.
- Off topic or irrelevant.
- Libelous, defamatory, abusive, threatening, offensive, clearly false, sexist, misogynist, racist, homophobic or are considered to bring down the standard of debate and community at New Mandala.

The New Mandala editorial team reserves the right to delete comments submitted to the website at any time without notice – this includes if a comment is approved in error. We will not enter into discussion about any decisions or actions taken in regard to comments.

Starting immediately, we will not be approving comments that don't strictly adhere to the policy. This means comments that:

- Contain *ad hominem* in any amount.
- Are not directly relevant to the content of posts.
- Are gratuitously strident or sarcastic.

This is **not** about censoring critical comments about the opinions *New Mandala* publishes. If you think a particular author's argument is wrong, then great! Our readers should hear why. You just have to make your point in a smart, mature, and respectful way. Our contributors take the time to put their opinions out there without compensation. Out of respect to them, their work should be engaged with intelligently. Likewise, it's out of respect to readers, who come to *New Mandala* to inform themselves about Southeast Asia, that we want to ensure that the comments section is a place for enlightening discussion.

So, when drafting your next comment, keep the above rules in mind. Our editors **will not** entertain complaints from commenters who can't conform to them.

Cheers and happy commenting,



Liam Gammon

Editor, *New Mandala*