

By IAN POH

SHOULD a foreigner who is overseas and publishes a blog entry that disrupts religious harmony in Singapore be prosecuted and sent to jail?

This was the hypothetical question presented to local law students taking part in the later rounds of the third Attorney-General's Cup moot competition, which held its final last night at the National University of Singapore (NUS) Moot Court.

The last two standing, out of 16 after a series of one-on-one face-offs beginning in July, had very different answers.

First prize winner Liu Xuanyi, 23, called for jail during her oral submission to a panel comprising Attorney-General Steven Chong, Judge of Appeal Chao Hick Tin and Justice Quentin Loh.

The second-year Singapore Management University student, who won \$1,000, tried making

Can a foreigner who disrupts religious harmony be jailed?

Moot competition's last two finalists come up with totally different answers

the case that the Internet postings were aimed at Singapore and therefore came under this country's jurisdiction.

Preventing the publication of the remarks would be consistent with lawmakers' intentions to maintain racial and religious harmony in Singapore, she added.

Runner-up Sim Bing Wen, 23, however, argued that the High Court had no jurisdiction over the foreigner and that he had only

been airing his religious beliefs.

The third-year NUS student, who received \$500, said: "Even if he is tried and convicted, a fine and not a jail term would be appropriate because of his low moral culpability."

The Attorney-General praised both finalists for displaying a "good command" of the law, and being "confident and composed" in the face of questions which came "fast and furious" from the

panel. In addition to the cash prizes, both Ms Liu and Mr Sim will receive internship offers from the Attorney-General's Chambers (AGC).

The hypothetical question about religious harmony was chosen because it would give both sides the chance to raise good arguments, said an AGC spokesman.

The competition, which was first held in 2011, was the brain-

child of law professor and former Attorney-General Walter Woon.

It aims to give participants an intimate understanding of criminal litigation in practice.

This year's edition was organised by the AGC in collaboration with Prof Woon and both law schools.

Moots are simulations of real-life cases where participants present oral arguments to a hypothetical court. Written arguments

are also submitted.

The two finalists enjoyed the practice.

Said Ms Liu: "I got to understand challenges facing policy-makers in today's era, where new-age issues such as cyber-crimes and shifts in societal values need to be deliberated."

Added Mr Sim: "I was exposed to important issues that weren't explored during our criminal law module, such as criminal jurisdiction and sentencing principles."

One other recently introduced initiative by the AGC that engages law students is the Law Reform Essay Competition.

It was first held last year and aims to raise awareness and interest in law reform work.

Prizes were given out last month for the second year of the competition, which this time asked students how they would improve the legal definitions of culpable homicide and murder in Singapore's Penal Code.

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