



ARTICLE¹⁹

International Annual Report 2019

Defending Freedom of Expression and
Information in Eastern Africa

Acknowledgements

ARTICLE 19 Eastern Africa is very grateful to all persons who contributed to the production of this report.

We would like to express our deep appreciation to individuals, groups of people, and institutions who participated in the research and shared information including universities, media houses, journalists, and media associations.

ARTICLE 19 Eastern Africa would like to thank the staff and Mugambi Kiai (Regional Director) for their comments on the initial drafts, and also to ARTICLE 19 International for reviewing and giving comments on the final report. ARTICLE 19 Eastern Africa appreciates the generous funding support of our core funders, who not only enabled the research and production of this report but also ensure our continuous engagement in pushing for greater freedom of expression in the Eastern African region.

ISBN: 978-9966-084-16-3

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ARTICLE 19 Eastern Africa would appreciate receiving a copy of any materials in which information from this report is used.



Community-based artists depicting the dynamics of protests at the #FreeToProtest concert at the Dandora Social Justice Center. (Photo: ARTICLE 19 Eastern Africa, 3 August 2019)



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Kenyans call for greater transparency in the wake of dubious tender deals and massive corruption scandals (Photo: Allan Muturi/SOPA Images, 31 May 2019)

From the Regional Director: Mugambi Kiai



“There are formidable challenges to Freedom of Expression across the region and we are determined to continue defending these rights with strength, vibrancy, and resilience.

2019 was a very challenging year for Article 19 Eastern Africa. Most prominently, it saw the departure of two key leadership figures at the secretariat in troubling circumstances: Henry Maina as Regional Director and Richard Anyega as the Finance and Administration Officer. These departures not only created an inevitable gap in the leadership of the team, but also caused considerable tension and angst in the office.

Another colossal challenge last year was the discovery of significant irregularities in the management of the office finances. This ultimately led to the commissioning of a forensic audit report by an independent audit firm, Crowe Erastus and Co Ltd, to determine the nature, extent, and impact of these irregularities.

Despite these difficulties, the team has stayed steadfast towards the achievement of our goals. There is a lot to be proud of given the continued robust engagement towards the promotion and protection of the freedom of expression and access to information.

The digital rights and policy team has actively worked to enhance protections of the right to privacy in the public policy and legal domains. We raised grave concerns about the proposed Kenya Information and Communication (Amendment) Bill 2019, which called for regulating social media platforms, bloggers, and group administrators in a manner that would have been stifling, including for example, the proposal that bloggers should be subjected to government approval. We highlighted how these measures would contradict constitutional and international law guarantees to the freedom of expression and the right to information and the bill was ultimately rejected by the Committee on Communication, Information and Innovation of the National Assembly.

ARTICLE 19 Eastern Africa was an active participant of the co-creation of the third national action plan of the Open Governance Partnership (OGP). The plan highlighted several priority areas for the government, including improving transparency, accountability, and responsiveness; namely beneficial ownership, open contracting, open geo-spatial data for development, public participation, improvement of public sector performance through governance indices, and building open government resiliency. ARTICLE 19 was appointed as both the civil society organisations' (CSO) co-convener of the OGP as well as the CSO lead on Commitment 6: Building open government resiliency.

A key result of ARTICLE 19 Eastern Africa's technical support to the African Commission's Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression and Access to Information was the submission of the Declaration of Principles of Freedom of Expression and Access to Information in Africa for consideration by the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights during the 65th Ordinary Session. This document vastly improves on its 2002 predecessor and significantly strengthens the normative continental architecture on issues of freedom of expression and access to information. Notably, as adopted, it retains the provisions on data protection and privacy as recommended by ARTICLE 19.

Numerous other examples of the work done in 2019 are highlighted in this report. Going forward, our attention and focus will be to ramp up and deepen this work. Naturally, 2020 will also concentrate on re-stabilising the organisation and instituting stronger measures to prevent a recurrence of the internal problems that confronted us. There are formidable challenges to freedom of expression across the region and we are determined to continue defending these rights with strength, vibrancy and resilience.

From the Chair of the Board: Patricia Munabi



“People are targeted, prosecuted, and attacked by the police merely for exercising their democratic and constitutional rights. ARTICLE 19’s #FreeToProtest campaign is building sustained pressure to mend restrictive laws, challenge police brutality, and improve public perceptions about protest, thus protecting this crucial right for all.”

2019 was a busy year for ARTICLE 19 Eastern Africa, with monumental changes for freedom of expression. This enabling right remains a key indicator of political, economic, and social stability in the region.

Key positive developments in the region include Ethiopia finally permitting the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Freedom of Opinion and Expression, David Kaye, to visit the country. This marks the first visit by a UN Special Rapporteur since 2006, as previous governments have repeatedly refused access. This visit was crucial in ensuring active steps are taken to move away from the country’s oppressive past.

ARTICLE 19 Eastern and West Africa also contributed to revising the Declaration of Principles on Freedom of Expression and Access to Information in Africa. Our recommendations were adopted, and the Declaration now recognises the need to expand freedom of expression protections online. Moreover, where the right to privacy was not explicitly referenced in the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights, the revised declaration now addresses this.

These monumental advances will move human rights reforms forward. It remains clear that regional and international experts play a crucial role in ensuring core rights are protected and promoted across the region.

Despite these positive advancements, the situation in Tanzania is dire. Freedom of expression continues to reel under President John Magufuli, who brooks no criticism. This has created a climate of fear and censorship as repression steadily mounts. Magufuli’s government has adopted, and continues to enforce, a raft of repressive laws that stifle independent journalism and severely restrict the activities of non-governmental organisations and the political opposition. Magufuli’s government should repeal all oppressive laws being used to clamp down on dissent, and urgently end human rights violations.

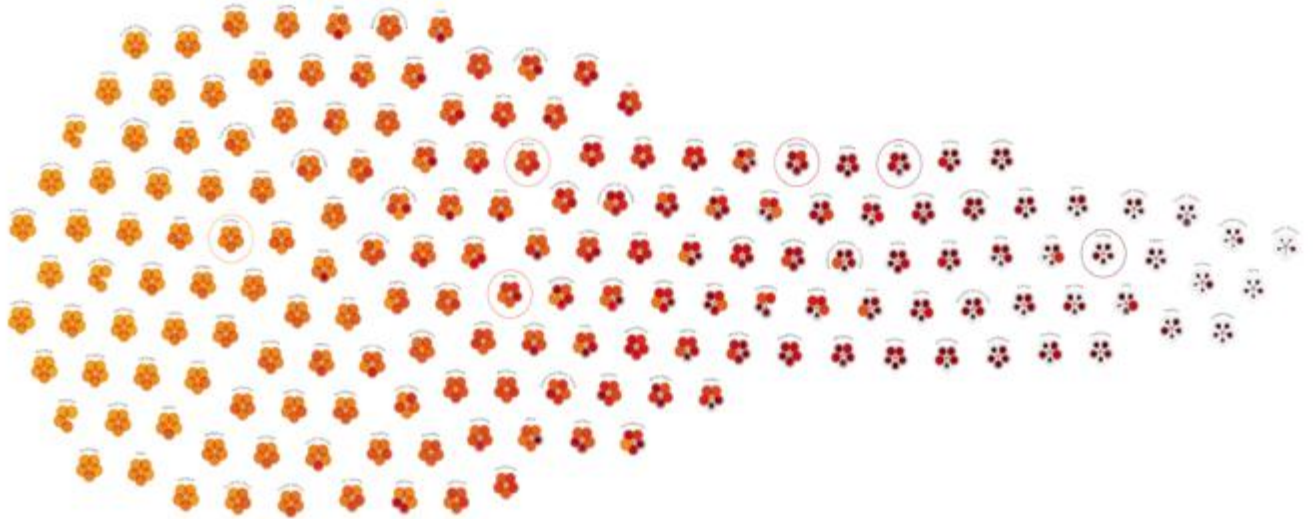
In Uganda, the government continues to use domestic laws to repress criticism of the President on the Internet. Specifically, offences such as cyber harassment and offensive communication in the Computer Misuse Act (2011) have been used to detain activists for online and offline communication, including Stella Nyanzi, a former Makerere University lecturer and human rights activist.

These challenges have only bolstered ARTICLE 19 Eastern Africa’s resolve. The team has worked across the grassroots, national, regional, and international levels to engage with governments head-on, and push back tirelessly.

We launched the #FreeToProtest campaign and published a report magnifying every person’s constitutional right to protest. The report noted that civil and political rights are significantly undermined by restrictive legislation on public order, police brutality, and negative perceptions of protesters perpetuated by the mainstream media. People are targeted, prosecuted, and attacked by the police merely for exercising their democratic and constitutional rights. The first year of the campaign revealed that constitutional protections will remain insufficient without persistent efforts to ensure their practical protection. On the ground, this meant improving public perceptions about the right to protest and lobbying of government officials, building sustained pressure.

Amid these challenges and moments of hope, ARTICLE 19 Eastern Africa remains determined to stand up to repressive actions, laws, and policies that threaten the right to freedom of expression. We appeal to the public and our partners to support our mission in Eastern Africa, and to boldly speak the truth in government and corporate corridors of power.

Global Expression Report 2018/2019



“We must protect and exercise our freedom of expression to breathe life and legitimacy back into our governments.”

**Thomas Hughes, Executive Director
2013–2019**



In the 70th year since the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, our [Global expression report 2018/2019](#) produced the most comprehensive global analysis yet of a key human right: freedom of expression.

The *Global expression report 2018/2019* offered rich insights into the state of the right in **161 countries**. Working with our annual partners, the [V-Dem \(Varieties of Democracy\) Institute](#), we analysed data from **39 indicators** (up from 32 in 2018) to create an **Expression Agenda (XpA) score** – a unique and innovative metric that enables us to measure freedom of expression – for each country and for each of our five pillars of freedom of expression:

1. Civic space
2. Digital
3. Media
4. Protection
5. Transparency

Our approach interrogates not only the rights of journalists and civil society but also how much space there is for all of us, as individuals and citizens, to express and communicate – be that posting online, marching, teaching, or simply accessing the information we need.

The *Global expression report 2018/2019* found that global freedom of expression is at its lowest for a decade.

In Eastern Africa, the following trends are contributing to the erosion of freedom of expression:

- Violence by security forces;
- Authorities shutting down the Internet around protests and elections;
- Threats, attacks, and lawfare against land-rights defenders;
- Ageing leaders pushing through constitutional term limits;
- Censorship of political hip-hop lyrics;
- Politicians smearing and attacking journalists – sometimes with deadly results;
- Legislation restricting the activities of civil society organisations (CSOs); and
- Violent oppression, sometimes encouraged by government leaders, of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and intersex (LGBTQI+) communities.

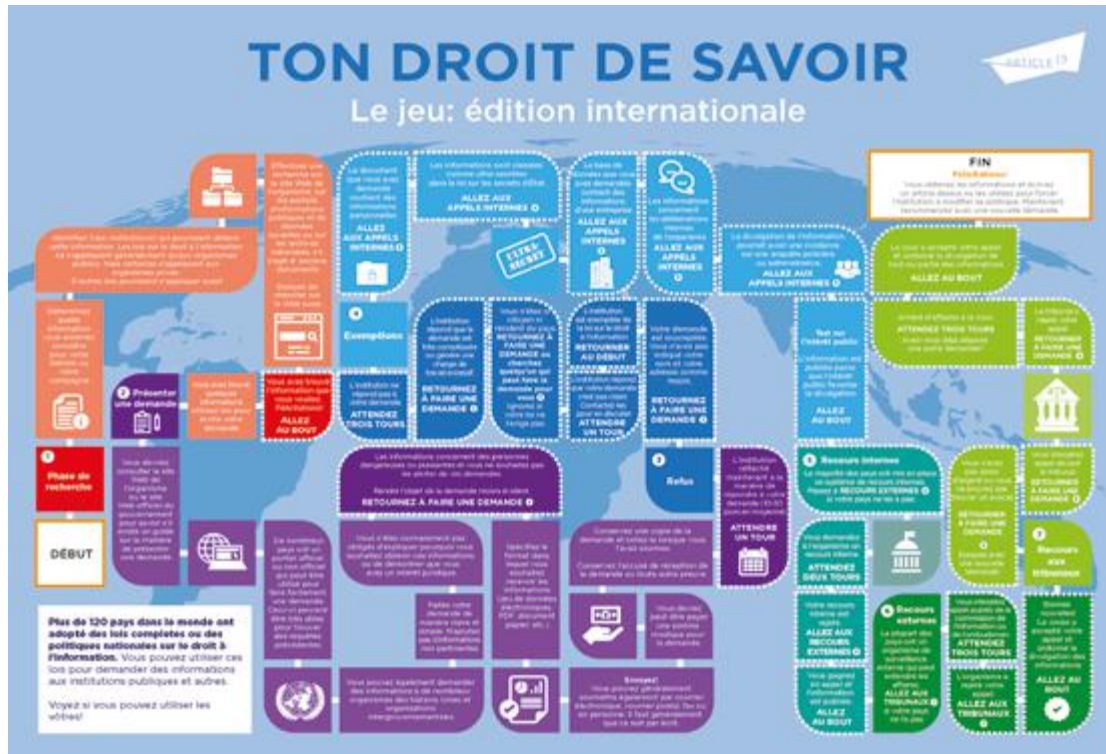
The lowest XpA scores in Africa – and some of the worst in the world – were found in Eastern Africa:

Country	XpA Score (out of 1)
Eritrea	0.01
South Sudan	0.02
Burundi	0.06
Sudan	0.09

Yet our report also found grounds for hope. Some Eastern African countries' courts have pushed back against violations of freedom of expression. Political unrest has led to the blossoming of national movements to drive change, and solidarity with journalists and communicators has, at times, been swift and emphatic.

Researching Rights

ARTICLE 19 publishes original research and insightful reports – monitoring, exploring, and shedding light on freedom of expression issues. These reports not only form the basis of advocacy projects but also tackle impunity by creating visibility around violations against freedom of expression worldwide.



The French edition of ARTICLE 19's "Your Right to Know" game, which aims to help civil society, journalists, activists, and others learn to use right to information laws to guarantee their rights, gain knowledge, and challenge governments and institutions on key issues.

Two Steps Forward, One Step Back: "Your Right to Know" Game

The right to information (RTI) gives every person the right to obtain information, documents, and data from public bodies and others without having to give reason. Over 120 countries around the world have adopted comprehensive RTI laws or national policies. This means **90% of the world's population now lives in a country with an RTI law or policy.**

However, where these laws exist to embed international standards in domestic legal systems, actually using them to make requests can be challenging:

- Who do you ask?
- How long do you have to wait?
- Do you have to pay a fee?
- What do you do if the information is classified as top secret?

"Your Right to Know" is an innovative game to help people learn how to use RTI laws to guarantee their rights, gain knowledge, and challenge governments and institutions on key issues.

Originally piloted in 2018 (see last year's [International annual report](#)), in 2019 we launched the International Edition of the game. We released it in four new languages, including French and Portuguese, in September.

The Right to Protest in Kenya

“Increasingly, there are many actors lobbying for policy reforms in the area of right to protest. What remains unexplored is how to stem the tide of negative narratives on protests and protesters as performed through media reportage that is not human-rights sensitive. It is this area that ARTICLE 19 should now focus more leveraging on the networks it has already established nationally, regionally, and globally.”

Churchill Ongere, Programme Officer,
Civic Space, ARTICLE 19



In response to the growing trend of violence against protesters in Kenya, ARTICLE 19 Eastern Africa released a report in 2019, [Right to protest in Kenya](#), examining the country's laws, policies, and practices around the right to protest. This followed our 2018 survey into people's perceptions of the right to protest in Kenya, which found that:

- **7 in 10** respondents said that when they hear about a protest they are afraid protesters will use violence;
- **43%** feared this violence could result in injury or death; and
- Nearly **3 in 10** feared the police would use violence.

Our report revealed that people in Kenya frequently take to the streets to protest against a wide range of issues – from education to sexual violence, and corruption to environmental degradation. But although organisers take appropriate legal measures to set up peaceful protests, law-enforcement officers often violate protesters' rights, which has resulted in deadly violence.

We used the report to make proposals for public order legal reform in Kenya. At different forums, while having short bilateral discussions, we shared it with the Office of the Attorney General in Kenya, National Police Service Spokesperson, Kenya National Commission on Human Rights, African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, and the UN.

ARTICLE 19 Eastern Africa monitored media reports of protests in Kenya between January 2018 and July 2019. Of the 152 protests identified:

- Police responses contravened international human rights obligations in around 20% of protests, including using excessive force, resulting in deaths and injury;
- Security officials used force in 31 cases, including at 18 peaceful protests in which no one appeared to engage in violence, mostly by firing tear gas and/or live ammunition; and
- At least 21 protesters and/or bystanders were injured and 7 were killed due to excessive use of force by police. The majority of these cases were never independently investigated, and victims did not receive a remedy.

See our [Campaign Update](#) for more information.

Our report recommended that the Kenyan Government should:

- Ensure domestic law and practices related to the right to protest – particularly the Public Order Act, the Penal Code, and related procedures – comply with its obligations under the constitution and international human rights laws and standards;
- Ensure law enforcement fully complies at all times with international human rights law and standards on policing, in particular the African Commission Guidelines on Policing of Assemblies, the UN Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials, and the UN Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials;
- Ensure public order management procedures, manuals, training, and practice are reviewed and brought to compliance with the constitution and international human rights law and standards;
- Ensure the police oversight bodies develop expertise and procure equipment to facilitate professional investigations into unlawful use of firearms, including for securing and examining potential crime scenes, ballistics and other forensic tests, and autopsies and medical examinations;
- Implement its commitments to fulfil freedom of association and assembly, as articulated in the 2016 Universal Periodic Reviews (UPR) implementation plan; and
- Work closely with the UN Special Rapporteurs, and accept and support their outstanding visit requests.



A young community-based artist using graffiti to relay messages on the Right to Protest at the #FreeToProtest concert at the Dandora Social Justice Center. (Photo: ARTICLE 19 Eastern Africa, 3 August 2019)

Intergovernmental Work

ARTICLE 19 shapes standards at international bodies, informing our advocacy through the local and national priorities of our regional offices and partners. In turn, our national work uses international commitments and obligations to drive local change.



Opening of 40th Session of the Human Rights Council. (Photo: UN Photo/Violaine Martin, 2019)

United Nations Safeguarding the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy

ARTICLE 19 undertook significant work on counter-terrorism at the UN in 2019, including safeguarding the integrity of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and the mandate of the UN Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights while countering terrorism.

In March, we mobilised to prevent attempts to dilute and distort the mandate of the Special Rapporteur, whose work has been essential to highlighting the global trend of states' misuse of overbroad counter-terrorism measures to restrict civic space. ARTICLE 19, together with the International Court of Justice, undertook extensive advocacy to prevent amendments to the mandate's work, proposed by Egypt, from being adopted.

In September, we again mobilised to prevent new attempts to undermine the work of the mandate, and to push for the UN Human Rights Council to renew its focus on the need to curb human rights violations perpetrated in the context of counter-terrorism, restoring essential human rights language to the Resolution. We raised our concerns in a [joint letter](#) to the UN General Assembly, questioning the role of Egypt – where abuse of counter-terrorism measures to suppress civil society is rife – in co-leading the Resolution.



Kenya Abusing Counter-terrorism Measures to Silence Blogger

ARTICLE 19 [called for](#) the immediate and unconditional release of blogger Robert Alai following his arrest on 18 June 2019. Alai was arrested for allegedly posting pictures on social media of Kenyan police officers killed in a terror attack in Wajir. Despite having taken down the pictures at the request of the police, Alai was arrested and charged with disclosure of information in relation to terrorist activities under Section 19 of the Prevention of Terrorism Act 2012.

Alai's arrest followed a warning, issued by National Police Service spokesperson Charles Owino, that posting pictures of terror-related killings was "not only unpatriotic but equally uncouth and unacceptable" and would not be tolerated. The National Cohesion and Integration Commission similarly called Alai's actions unpatriotic and illegal, and said they could be interpreted as war propaganda, which the Kenyan Constitution does not protect.



Robert Alai, Kenyan blogger, Internet entrepreneur and cyber-activist. (Photo: Alai Robert, 2020)

ARTICLE 19 responded that, in fact, Alai's arrest contravened Article 34(2) of the Kenyan Constitution, which protects the freedom of the media. Alai was the first Kenyan to be charged under the anti-terror law. Such laws violate the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, to which Kenya is a party. The arrest of bloggers and social media users undermines the government's obligation to uphold these laws, and sets a chilling precedent, enabling authorities to control journalists' activities and free expression online.

“Alai's arrest under the anti-terror law violates his constitutional right to publish and disseminate information or contents in any medium, and his right to freedom of expression under international human rights laws. While seeking to deal with acts of terrorism in the country, authorities should not rely on security laws in a blanket manner to silence reporting in this way.”

Sandra Musoga, Senior Program Officer, ARTICLE 19 Eastern Africa



UPRs of Egypt and Kenya

UPRs assess the extent to which countries have implemented the human rights recommendations they accepted during their previous UPRs. They also raise outstanding human rights concerns and make recommendations to governments.

ARTICLE 19 made numerous UPR submissions to the UN in 2019, including on Egypt and Kenya.

Ethiopia Hosts UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Freedom of Opinion and Expression

From 2–9 December 2019, at the invitation of the Ethiopian Government, Eastern Africa had the pleasure of hosting the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Freedom of Opinion and Expression, David Kaye. In his preliminary mission statement, he hailed the Ethiopian Government for ending the state of emergency; releasing journalists, activists, and opposition figures from prison; legalising CSOs; halting rampant government censorship; and hosting World Press Freedom Day in May 2019 – unthinkable just a year earlier.

He also raised concerns over violent conflict across ethnic lines, and – amid allegations of social media’s role in allowing or exacerbating it – added that such outbreaks threaten public confidence in governance and reform. He noted that the government had shut down the Internet a reported eight times in 2019, and that the media remains under-developed, still suffering from the trauma of the previous regime. All these issues, he said, will become increasingly salient in advance of the national elections scheduled for May 2020.

African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights

New Freedom of Expression/Information Principles Adopted

In 2019, the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights (ACHPR) approved an updated set of freedom of expression/information principles. ARTICLE 19 worked with the ACHPR Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression and Access to Information in the revision of the 2002 ACHPR Declaration of Principles on Freedom of Expression and Access to Information in Africa. New additions, which ARTICLE 19 recommended and welcomed, included provisions on data protection and privacy.

The ACHPR adopted the revised principles in November at the 65th Ordinary Session of the ACHPR in Banjul, The Gambia. ARTICLE 19 looks forward to continuing to work with the ACHPR in popularising the revised declaration.

Engaging with Regional Human Rights Mechanisms in Uganda

In June 2019, ARTICLE 19 Eastern Africa convened a group of 14 human rights defenders from across the region in Kampala, Uganda, to strategise for meaningful engagement with regional human rights mechanisms. Participants discussed the challenges they faced and celebrated their successes.

At the session, ARTICLE 19 also developed a Resolution, in partnership with Burundi CSOs, calling on the ACHPR to establish a special mechanism to document human rights violations in Burundi. The Resolution was adopted by the Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO) Forum and forwarded to the main session.

African Union

Working Group on Safety and Protection of Journalists in Africa

ARTICLE 19 is a CSO representative in a group set up by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), to work on the establishment of an African Union Working Group on Safety and Protection of Journalists in Africa.

In October–November 2019, at the 65th Ordinary Session of the ACHPR, ARTICLE 19 participated in a consultative meeting between the Working Group and the ACHPR Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression and Access to Information to discuss (among other things) the Working Group's mode of operation. We look forward to continuing to participate in this Working Group and to working closely with the ACHPR in 2020 and beyond.

Revised Freedom of Expression/Information Principles

The African Union is also revising its freedom of expression/information principles. New additions include data protection and digital rights.



The 33rd African Union (AU) summit of heads of state and government held at the AU headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. (Photo: Michael Tewelde/Xinhua/PA Images, 14 February 2020)

Legal Advocacy

ARTICLE 19 Eastern Africa analyses national laws, submits expert opinions to courts, and shapes standards on freedom of expression and information.



Successful Legal Challenge Against Abortion Restrictions

When a 14-year-old girl in Kenya conceived after being raped by an older man, she procured an abortion at a local pharmacy, but was not provided with any pre- or post-abortion care. As a result, she developed complications, including excessive bleeding and kidney failure. She was taken to a dispensary and two other hospitals, all of which said they lacked the personnel or equipment to treat her. Finally, she was taken to Kenyatta Hospital in Nairobi where she received treatment but was unable to cover the costs.

This young girl's case followed the withdrawal of the 2012 [*Standards and Guidelines for Reducing Morbidity and Mortality from Unsafe Abortion in Kenya*](#), and the National Training Curriculum for the Management of Unintended, Risky and Unplanned Pregnancies. These changes effectively criminalised the use of a key training manual for health professionals in cases of abortion, denying them the tools to deal with such situations.

In June 2019, ARTICLE 19 Eastern Africa and others (including Federation of Women Lawyers, East Africa Center for Law & Justice, and Women's Link Worldwide) staged a legal challenge.

We argued that the withdrawal of the *Standards and Guidelines* and the training manual undermined:

- Freedom of information for women, girls, and health professionals;
- The right of citizens to access information on medicines and treatments available for safe emergency abortion treatments;
- The ability of trained healthcare providers to train and gain knowledge on the use of Medabon for the purposes of providing safe abortion services; and
- Women's and girls' ability to procure emergency abortion treatment during pregnancy.

We further argued that individuals need access to reliable and accurate information about both public health and their individual health from health practitioners, and that human rights monitors need to be able to scrutinise the state's implementation of its obligations on the right to health.

The court found that the withdrawal of the *Standards and Guidelines* and the training manual, and the criminalisation of their use, violated women's and adolescent girls' rights to access information and freedom of expression.



Court Overturns "Obscene" Tweeting Charges

Back in 2018, Cyprian Andama Nyakundi was charged under Section 84D of the Kenya Information and Communication Act (KICA) for publishing obscene information in electronic form. He was faced with three charges for three tweets, in which he questioned the use of public resources and criticised public officials.

Section 84D of KICA makes it a crime for anyone to publish (or cause to publish), in electronic form, any material that is "lascivious or appeals to the prurient interests and its effect is such as to tend to deprave and corrupt persons." The crime incurs a fine of KSh 200,000, up to two years' imprisonment, or both.

ARTICLE 19 Eastern Africa supported Cyprian Andama Nyakundi, as an Interested Party, to challenge his charges. The petition challenged Section 84D of KICA on the grounds that it violates freedom of expression under Article 33 of the Constitution of Kenya, as well as international human rights standards that Kenya is party to. Our submission focused on the three-part test on restricting free speech. We argued that the provision failed to meet this test as it was ambiguous, overly broad, and unnecessary in a democratic society.

The court declared the provision unconstitutional and barred the government from proceeding with the prosecution of the petitioner in the three cases.

Campaign Update: #MissingVoices

Although social media platforms offer valuable spaces to connect, they also hold immense power over the information we see online.

By using algorithms and human moderators, both of which are prone to mistakes and bias, they are removing large amounts of content in error, silencing millions of people. This impacts women, LGBTQI+ people, and minorities in particular, who are already often denied a voice in society.

Censorship by social media platforms reduces dialogue, shrinks public knowledge for everyone, and prevents us all from holding those in power to account.

ARTICLE 19 is speaking up for these missing voices – from journalists to artists, activists, and marginalised groups.



Our Demands

We have two simple demands for **Facebook** (which has 2.2 billion active users – nearly 75% of the world's population), **YouTube** (2 billion), and **Twitter** (330 million):

- **Right to appeal:** Give users the right to challenge decisions when their content is removed – and clearly explain how to do so.
- **More transparency:** Publish data on the number of content removals, the types of flaggers, reasons for removal, number of appeals received, and the outcome of the appeals.

These demands will mean that companies are more transparent and accountable to users for what they do and that better safeguards exist to protect free speech online.

“#MissingVoices humanises the work we are doing on freedom of expression. It builds on our policy work by bringing in new voices and sharing people's stories. This approach has enabled individuals in similar situations to those whose stories we share to get in touch with ARTICLE 19. We are reaching a new audience with this campaign – individuals who are directly affected and marginalised by content takedowns.”

Barbara Dockalova, Senior Campaigner, ARTICLE 19



“Community Standards Should Involve the Community”

– Shikoh Kihika, Executive Director, Tribeless Youth, Kenya

“When my content was pulled down it was because it never sat well with the political class.

“I run a young organisation called Tribeless Youth. I have been a digital influencer for the last five years or so. I use social media quite often; basically, my life revolves around social media. I use social media for activism and also digital marketing. Facebook and Twitter have been my platforms to communicate with and engage people. I have a total of 37,700 followers on Twitter and my Facebook profile has around 5,000 friends.

“When I realised the path I was taking, which was more of governance and where I wanted to question things as they are being done, I chose to use my Facebook page and profile and my Twitter platform as places to share all this information.


“A year ago, after the elections, there was a road in my area that was quite messed up, and I took photos of it because it had sewage all over – and our kids playing. I took some photos and shared it on Facebook. This content was pulled down. What hurts

is that the same road, to this day, has never been mended. The same area still suffers from sewer busts every day.

“I have never recovered this content. Well and good. But how do we get these leaders accountable if the little space, the only space we have where we can voice these things, is being shut?

“The takedown affected me directly because so many people I know felt like I was not being authentic. I had no political interest; the only interest I had politically was knowing where my taxes are being taken. I did not know I could appeal until last month; after the purge, when I went to dig deep on Google, so if I'm not literate enough to use digital tools, then I would not find out I could appeal such things.

“Community standards should involve the community. When you are doing it, make it an open process. Make sure that people can access this information, because you're serving people, not bots.”



Shikoh Kihika, CEO Tribeless Youth. (Photo: Shikoh Kihika/
ARTICLE 19 Eastern Africa, 11 September 2019)

Civic Space

Civic space is where individuals realise their rights: it can be a physical, virtual, or legal place.

It is the space where we engage and participate in politics, and exercise our freedoms to speak and to protest. It is the cornerstone of democratic and accountable society.



Mathias Shipeta, a protester, is whisked away by police during the cargo protests in Mombasa. (Photo: Laban Walloga/Daily Nation Media Group, 7 October 2019)

#FreeToProtest in Kenya

“The real strength from this campaign has been building coalitions, and witnessing the power of movements and causes coming together and benefiting from this work.”

Patricia Meléndez, Head of Civic Space, ARTICLE 19



ARTICLE 19 launched and ran a dynamic new [campaign](#) in Kenya in 2019. Using research to understand public attitudes towards protest and protesters, and capitalising on social media interaction using the hashtag #FreeToProtest, we:

- Raised awareness of the right to protest;
- Warned about restrictions that threaten that right;
- Destigmatised protests and protesters; and
- Emphasised the positive social impacts of protest.

We worked with numerous partners, including Social Justice Centres, on campaign activities – from live awareness-raising concerts to petitions for the police to stop using violence against protesters. In doing so, we built a collaborative space in Kenya that encouraged learning and opened doors to engagement with various stakeholders.

Protests are vital to democracy because they empower those who are isolated, marginalised, or otherwise silenced to collectively ask for fair and equal treatment. We plan to continue campaigning on such fundamental issues in the future.

In Figures

Campaign Achievements in Kenya

#FREETOPEST



People reached on campaign launch
15 Million
using the #FreeToProtest hashtag



Reached between
38,000-130,000
viewers through blog posts
on campaign's website



Six awareness-raising events
attended by
1,200
people



Campaign reached
3 Million
Twitter users

“People have been mobilised and are ready to challenge the system.”

Barbara Dockalova, Campaigns Lead

“In Kenya, we undertook a lot of media monitoring and found that newspapers almost always present protests in a negative light. When you type ‘Protests are ...’ into Google, the automated text is always negative; ‘Protests are brutal’, for example.

“The campaign in Kenya has been able to reach places, people, and expertise that we usually couldn’t. We collected over 700 signatures in three weeks; people have been mobilised and are ready to challenge the system. I’m really proud of the coalitions we have built, and also our media interactions – it’s incredible the amount of people we have reached and mobilised.

“Social media is a really good means of communication in places like Kenya, where everyone, whether they live in a big town or a tiny village, uses social media to access diverse news that isn’t controlled by the government.”

Ethiopia: Draft Hate Speech Proclamation Falls Short

“Civic space in Eastern Africa continues to shrink with increased government censorship, de-legitimization of freedom to protest, clampdown on civil society and dissenting voices as well as the introduction of laws that regulate both online and offline civic space. ARTICLE 19 and the larger CSO community must continue to expand this space by engaging meaningfully with policy shapers, policy makers, policy implementers, and the general public in decision making.”

Muthuri Kathure, Senior Programme Officer, Civic Space, ARTICLE 19



In October, we published a comprehensive [legal analysis](#) of the *Draft Proclamation to Prevent the Spread of Hate Speech and False Information* of Ethiopia for its compliance with international freedom of expression standards. The Ethiopian Government drafted the proclamation earlier in 2019 amid growing concern about ethnic tensions.

Although we welcomed the Ethiopian Government's efforts to tackle discrimination and ethnic intolerance, our analysis found that the Draft Proclamation failed to comply with international human rights standards by:

- Defining “hate speech” and “false information” too broadly;
- Imposing criminal sanctions on anyone who publishes, disseminates, or possesses content that falls under these expansive definitions; and
- Exceeding the permissible limitations on freedom of expression set out by international and regional freedom of expression standards.

In both our legal analysis and our [statement](#) accompanying it, ARTICLE 19 highlighted the importance of integrating a freedom of expression approach – one that complies with international human rights law – into Ethiopia's Draft Proclamation. Otherwise, the opportunities for political and social change are likely to not only fail but also worsen the situation of minorities and marginalised ethnicities.

We called on the government to withdraw the Draft Proclamation and instead initiate a participatory process to develop adequate measures to confront violence, hate, intolerance, and discrimination, and to ensure all its legislation complies with international human rights standards. We remain ready to assist the government with this process.

UN Special Rapporteur Warning: Ethiopia's Draft Proclamation Threatens Freedom of Expression

David Kaye, the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Freedom of Opinion and Expression, visited Ethiopia in December 2019. He stated that addressing intolerance must involve a commitment to Ethiopia's obligations under international human rights law. However, he warned that the Draft Proclamation would threaten freedom of expression. As constructed presently, he said, it could reinforce rather than ease ethnic and political tensions.

Digital

Digital rights are human rights; the right to freedom of expression and information exists in networked spaces just as it does offline. The exercise of human rights online depends on an open and free Internet.



A man uses Tecno mobile phone in downtown Nairobi, capital of Kenya. (Photo: Sun Ruiibo/Xinhua News Agency/PA Images 9 May, 2017)

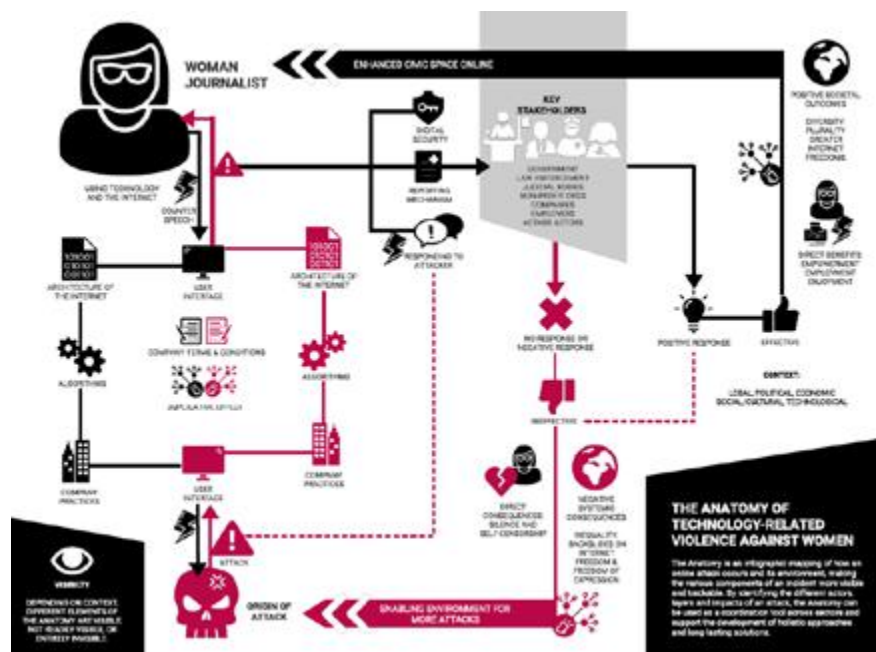
#SpeakingUp About Tech-related Violence Against Women

Our #SpeakingUp project, launched in 2019, aims to enhance freedoms by combating tech-related violence against women (VAW) through strong online feminist counter-speech and safety and solidarity apps.

In Eastern Africa, the #SpeakingUp project is being implemented in Kenya and Uganda. In 2019, our international project team, including our Kenya office, participated in RightsCon Tunis to present cross-regional work on tech-related VAW from a freedom of expression standpoint. We also held a meeting with parliamentarians in Kenya at the National Dialogue Combating Tech-related VAW.

Two flagship initiatives characterise the project:

- The Anatomy, a comprehensive overview of all aspects of tech-related VAW; and
- Circulo, a safety app for women journalists.



"The Anatomy of technology-related violence against women"

The Anatomy: What We Talk About When We Talk About Tech-related VAW

In December 2019, ARTICLE 19 launched the Anatomy – an infographic that maps how an online attack occurs and its environment, making the various components of an incident more visible and trackable. By identifying the different actors, layers, and impacts of an attack, the Anatomy can be used as a coordination tool across sectors and to support the development of holistic approaches and long-lasting solutions.



“The purpose of the Anatomy is to clarify what we’re talking about when we talk about tech-related violence against women – to show what actually happens and how severe it is. In some spaces, it’s trivialised as just women being sensitive or unable to handle jokes online. Now, when we go to the UN, we can show them the Anatomy and say, this is what we’re talking about.”

Judy Taing, Head of Gender and Sexuality

Circulo: A Safe Online Space for Women Journalists

In November 2019, we launched the mobile app Circulo in Mexico City. Circulo provides women journalists who are facing attacks with a safe space online. Created in collaboration with the Guardian Project and Tech4Good, it was adapted from Circle of Six, an app created to tackle sexual violence on university campuses in the US. Circulo is open source, encrypted, and secure, and we worked very closely with women journalists in its development to make it relevant, meaningful, and safe for them. Following this successful pilot, we are working to expand and improve Circulo, including taking it to other regions.

Digital Rights in the Dock

As part of a Ford Foundation project (2017–2019), ARTICLE 19 Eastern Africa was either enjoined as an Interested Party or supported our partners in five digital rights court cases. These took place in Kenya and Uganda at the High Court and Court of Appeal levels, and were on issues including:

- The legal and constitutional validity of the Kenyan Government’s decision, through the Communications Authority of Kenya, to secretly acquire capability for spying on the population by tapping the networks of mobile phone providers;
- Kenya’s Computer Misuse and Cyber Crimes Act violating the right to freedom of expression/information and attempting to reintroduce criminal defamation; and
- Uganda’s Internet shutdown in 2016 violating the rights to freedom of expression/information and access to telecommunications services.



Women leaders giving their personal experiences in tech-related VAW during the 2019 International Women’s Day. (Photo: ARTICLE 19 Eastern Africa, 2019)

Training on Digital Rights and Threats

In 2019, we trained more than 200 CSOs, media workers, and lawyers in Eastern Africa on privacy and the digital rights and threats inherent to technology. We also supported the training of CSOs in Eastern Africa, along with ARTICLE 19 International colleagues, at the Kenya and East Africa Internet governance forums.

Regional Coalition for Internet Rights

ARTICLE 19 Eastern Africa continued to play an active part in the Africa Internet Rights Alliance (AIRA) throughout 2019. AIRA pushes for the adoption of regional standards on data protection, and for the Kenyan Government to ratify the African Union's Convention on Cyber Security and Personal Data Protection and to adopt the African Declaration on Internet Rights and Freedoms.



“The protection and promotion of digital rights in Eastern Africa is a call which many individuals, organisations, and coalitions have taken up. Despite attitudinal strides by users, corporate entities, and governments and the internalisation of the ‘digital rights are human rights’ maxim, there are still numerous instances of wanting legislative and policy drafting, wrongful interpretation, rights-violations, and the use of criminal rather than civil penalties by governments across the region. These instances reveal the need for multi-stakeholder responses to an ever-changing and multi-faceted arena.”

Sigi Mwanzia, Digital Policy Consultant, ARTICLE 19

Media

For meaningful freedom of expression and information, we need the broadest possible diversity of sources, information, and ideas; this enables individuals to inform themselves, participate in society, and hold the powerful to account.



The South Sudanese Government has attempted to restrict local newspapers' ability to cover the ongoing political crisis in Sudan. (Photo: Adriane Ohanesian/Reuters, 18 January 2019)

Social Media Councils: Protecting Freedom of Expression in the “Online Public Square”

“National SMCs are a way to empower actors who currently feel totally powerless in relation to these huge California tech companies. For example, when I meet journalists from certain African countries, they understand their work is being impacted by social media to a very dramatic degree, but they complain that they have absolutely no way to even talk to Facebook, who may have one representative for a whole continent. The same is true of lots of civil society organisations.

“A national SMC would give people an open and transparent forum where they have a chance to regain some control over something that has lots of impact on their business, lives, and capacity to act as informed citizens.”

Pierre François Docquir, Media Lead



Social media companies’ content-moderation practices have a huge impact on public debates and on users’ human rights, including freedom of expression, but are often opaque and unaccountable.

That is why ARTICLE 19 is calling for the creation of Social Media Councils (SMCs): a transparent, inclusive, independent, and accountable mechanism to address content-moderation problems on the basis of international human rights law.

Our work on SMCs is starting to bear fruits. Facebook has acknowledged the problem of a lack of oversight; in January 2019, they published a [Draft Charter](#) on a proposed international Oversight Board. ARTICLE 19 believes national SMCs to be a stronger approach to protecting human rights in content moderation. Operating at the local level (rather than internationally, which Facebook prefers), their decisions would be informed by an in-depth understanding of the complexity of local context.



Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg leaving The Merrion Hotel in Dublin after a meeting with politicians to discuss regulation of social media and harmful content. (Photo: Niall Carson/PA Archive/PA Images, 2 April 2019)

Building Consensus on Media Self-regulation in South Sudan



A young newspaper vendor in Juba, South Sudan. (Photo: Adriane Ohanesian/Reuters, May 2019)

South Sudan, the world's youngest state, has been ravaged by human rights violations. ARTICLE 19 has widely condemned these war crimes and crimes against humanity, with a specific focus on how violations of freedom of expression contribute to a cycle of violence and erode nascent peace-building efforts.

Media freedom is an essential component of peace-building and democratic development. We have advocated for self-regulation as a legitimate means of governing the media in South Sudan – one that can ensure media rights are respected in accordance with international guarantees.

As part of this work, in 2019 ARTICLE 19 Eastern Africa produced a guide on media self-regulation in South Sudan, which has been adopted by key stakeholders.

Fighting Media Censorship Through Public Advertising in Kenya

ARTICLE 19 Eastern Africa conducted a survey to provide baseline data on state soft censorship via public advertising in Kenya. We used this data to produce a report, in which we also reviewed the government's compliance with regional and international laws and frameworks regarding soft censorship through public advertising.

Between August and November 2019, we trained a total of 85 journalists – including bureau chiefs, middle-level editors, senior reporters, staff reporters, and correspondents – on media censorship through public advertising.



Photo: Yui Mok/PA Wire/PA Images

Protection

Worldwide, attacks on communicators and human rights defenders are perpetrated with impunity – creating a toxic cycle of intimidation and self-censorship.

Increased citizen journalism, blogging, and information activism have placed more individuals and groups on the front line than ever before: they must be supported and protected holistically, with tools, training, and effective networks with strong legal frameworks.



Young community-based artists depicting the dynamics of protests at the #FreeToProtest concert at Dandora Social Justice Center. (Photo: Tracey Ishmael/ARTICLE 19 Eastern Africa, 3 August 2019)

A Safe Environment for Journalists in Kenya



David Omwoyo, CEO, Media Council of Kenya, at a broadcast training of journalists in Naivasha. (Photo: ARTICLE 19 Eastern Africa, 6 April 2019)

A crucial part of ARTICLE 19's Protection work is ensuring there are national protection mechanisms for journalists. In November 2019, after more than a year of multi-stakeholder coordination via the Kenya Media Sector Working Group (KMSWG) – which includes media stakeholders such as CSOs, journalists, and government representatives (police, judiciary, and prosecution) – the first such mechanism was created in Kenya.

National protection mechanisms are vital to provide well-coordinated support to media practitioners and journalists, to do away with duplication, and to complement each other's efforts, with an aim of increasing the impact of existing interventions. The KMSWG also seeks to enhance monitoring Kenya's achievement of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions, and to ensure a safe and secure environment for journalists and media practitioners in Kenya through prevention of violence against journalists, protection whenever in distress, and prosecution of perpetrators.

ARTICLE 19 coordinated civil society's contributions to the KMSWG in 2019, including developing terms of reference, case-management and monitoring tools, and safety-reporting mechanisms. We are now monitoring developments closely to ensure the KMSWG is implemented effectively. In 2019, we also documented the state of similar national safety mechanisms in 22 African countries, with a view to understanding ongoing initiatives and how we can bolster their effectiveness.

Protection Training for Journalists and Broadcasters

In 2019, ARTICLE 19 Eastern Africa trained:

- **252 journalists** in Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda on safety and security risks;
- **130 female journalists and communicators** in Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda on safety and security risks, how to conduct a risk assessment, and how to stay safe online, linking with our #SpeakingUp project (see [Campaigns section](#)); and
- **30 human rights defenders, lawyers, and journalists** on safety and security tools, and on engaging with the ACHPR and East African Court of Justice.

We also conducted comprehensive risk assessments on safety and security protocols at 14 radio stations in Kenya from February to April 2019. We assessed security vulnerabilities, challenges, and opportunities for intervention. The exercise included face-to-face visits, physical inspections, and bespoke support on how to undertake in-house risk assessment, establish safety plans for staff, and create safety protocols. This work will help stations to protect and defend both their staff and freedom of expression in Kenya.

Transparency

Transparency empowers us to hold leaders accountable, ensures that human rights are being protected, and enables us to develop a fuller understanding of the world.



Kenyans call for greater transparency in the wake of dubious tender deals and massive corruption scandals. (Photo: Allan Muturi/SOPA Images, 31 May 2019)

The World Is Watching: Review of the RTI

“ The adoption of access to information legislation and various progressive transparency and accountability frameworks has been remarkable. Nonetheless, awareness on access to information as a right is still low – citizens, who are largely unaware of their right to freedom of information and that there are frameworks that provide for these rights, have not been effectively exercising this right. Public officials are also oblivious to their role in implementation and their mandate to provide information. Therefore, the promotion of access to information remains crucial for effective implementation of the law, enhancing citizens’ lives, and their accountability relations with the state.”

**Sarah Wesonga, Program Assistant,
Access to Information, ARTICLE 19**



In 2019, the UN evaluated countries’ progress on SDG 16.10 for the first time, specifically in relation to governance. We therefore worked hard to include transparency in national SDG National Action Plans.

In Kenya, ARTICLE 19 Eastern Africa:

- Facilitated two working retreats of key stakeholders, including government bodies, the Ombudsman, and the National Law Reform Commission, to draft regulations;
- Was elected co-chair of the SDG 16 Working Group under the Secretariat; and
- Convened an Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development with the SDG Kenya Forum, bringing together different partners to monitor the goal’s implementation.

Kenya was also shortlisted as a pilot country for UNESCO’s monitoring and reporting on the goal.

The Kenyan Government has volunteered to submit its second Voluntary National Report (VNR) for review at the UN High Level Political Forum 2020, the theme of which will be “Accelerated action and transformative pathways: Realizing the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development”. Ahead of the VNR, ARTICLE 19 convened three workshops to bring together different actors from government, civil society, academia, and the media who work within the scope of SDG 16’s targets. The objective was to leverage their sector experience and expertise in monitoring and accelerating action towards realising SDG 16 in Kenya.

The 2019 review of SDG 16.10 was the culmination of a very long process of working to get RTI onto the world stage – a process ARTICLE 19 has spearheaded since before the SDGs even existed.

Commemorating Universal Day of Access to Information 2019

On 25–26 September 2019, ARTICLE 19 Eastern Africa – in collaboration with UNESCO and the Journalism and Media International Center of Oslo Metropolitan University in Norway – organised a two-day workshop and gala dinner to commemorate International Day of Universal Access to Information 2019.

The workshop, titled “The role of media in development; media in realizing the Sustainable Development Goals”, aimed to sensitise and build the capacity of media stakeholders in order to realise the SDGs, particularly SDG 16.10. As such, it targeted 25 journalists from different counties in Kenya: Nairobi, Turkana, Kakamega, Vihiga,

Elgeyo Marakwet, Kisumu, Makueni, Embu, Kitui, Taita Taveta, Voi, and Kiambu County.

It culminated in a gala dinner, with the theme of “Promoting access to information as a driver for sustainable development”, held in conjunction with the Commission on Administrative Justice (the custodians of access to information in Kenya). The dinner sought to bring together relevant government bodies, civil society, private bodies, and media stakeholders and to engage them as crucial players in the formation of a vibrant community of access to information ambassadors in the country.

Kenya Sets a High Bar for Data Protection in Africa

“Kenya has joined the global community in terms of data protection standards.”

Joe Mucheru (Minister for Information, Technology and Communication), statement to Reuters



Photo: ITU Pictures, Geneva, via Wikimedia Commons

In November 2019, Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta approved the Data Protection Bill – a law that complies with the EU’s General Data Protection Regulation and is part of Kenya’s efforts to attract investment in its information technology sector.

The new law:

- Provides citizens with **legal recourse** following the breach of their personal data by individuals, state and non-state entities;
- Gives effect to the constitutional **right to privacy**;
- Provides guidance on the **handling and sharing of data** – for the first time; and
- Provides for the establishment of an **Office of the Data Protection Commission** to investigate violators.

This is a huge success for ARTICLE 19 Eastern Africa and other CSOs, who have long [called](#) for increased data protection across Africa, particularly given [concerns](#) around tech giants’ freedom to collect unlimited user data in African countries. In Kenya, for example, digital lending apps have [accessed borrowers’ smartphone data](#) to determine whether to grant them credit and messaged their contacts if they have defaulted on a loan, and the government’s plans to store its citizens’ personal data – including DNA – have been heavily [criticised](#) for inadequate data-protection processes.



Surveillance cameras used to monitor high-rise buildings. (Photo: Costfoto/SIPA USA/PA Images)

ARTICLE 19 Eastern Africa was heavily involved in the Kenyan Government's adoption of this law from the outset. We have long advocated for the enactment of a comprehensive data-protection framework in Kenya to give further effect to the right to privacy, under Article 31(c) and (d) of the Constitution of Kenya. As part of our work on the law, we:

- **Produced three core position papers to push for the protection of informational privacy:** [*Global Principles on Protection of Freedom of Expression and Privacy*](#); [*Friend or Foe? Protecting Freedom of Expression and Privacy in the Digital Age*](#), and [*Privacy and Freedom of Expression in the Age of Artificial Intelligence*](#);
- **Were appointed as the sole CSO member of the Ministry of ICT's Task Force** on the Development of the Policy and Regulatory Framework for Privacy and Data Protection in Kenya, where we reiterated the need for an appropriate and comprehensive rights-protecting framework for informational privacy; and
- **Collated public input to the Task Force**, including through three Data Protection Awareness Forums in Mombasa, Nairobi, and Kisumu, respectively, which brought together 273 CSOs and media representatives.

As a result of our advocacy, the government incorporated some of our recommendations into the law. But although we [welcomed](#) the new law, we are calling on the government to ensure the Office of the Data Protection Commission is made operational – and operates independently – and that implementation of the Act complies with international standards. Our [legal analysis](#) raised these and other concerns.

Deepening Open Government through Women's Participation

As part of our open government work, ARTICLE 19 Eastern Africa is undertaking a research project entitled “Deepening open government through women’s participation in public contracting”. The project seeks to examine the status of open contracting among women in Kenya by evaluating the factors that enable women to contribute to and participate during public contracting processes.

This research is part of a joint project examining the extent to which open government promotes open contracting among women in Kenya, Nigeria, and South Africa. Preliminary findings were presented at the Open Government Global Summit in Ottawa, Canada, in May 2019.

Kenya Launches its Third Open Government Action Plan



Lucy Ndung'u, European Business School. The Access to Information Commissioner at the CAJ delivering the Keynote address. (Photo: ARTICLE 19 Eastern Africa, 2019)

On 28 January 2019, seven years after joining the Open Government Partnership (OGP), the Kenyan Government launched its [National Action Plan \(NAP\) III, 2018-2020](#). ARTICLE 19 Eastern Africa has been heavily involved in the OGP since Kenya joined, and facilitated the co-creation process of NAP III, with support from the OGP Multi-Donor Trust Fund.

NAP III highlighted the priority areas that the government sought to improve to ensure better transparency, accountability, and responsiveness to citizens through six commitments:

1. Beneficial ownership
2. Open contracting
3. Open geo-spatial data for development
4. Public participation
5. Improvement of public sector performance through governance indices
6. Building open government resiliency

The co-creation process was more elaborate and inclusive than previous processes, involving deeper engagement with civil society, business, and government, including one-on-one listening sessions with stakeholders and a multi-stakeholder strategic workshop in Mombasa. Deputy President Ruto presided over the January 2019 Action Plan launch event, which was attended by hundreds of people from government, civil society, the diplomatic corps, the international NGO community, the constitutional commission, and the private sector.

As the momentum for an inclusive OGP process builds, ARTICLE 19 was appointed as both the CSO co-convenor of OGP and the CSO lead on Commitment 6: Building open government resiliency. To that end, we plan to increase the awareness of crucial stakeholders to ensure their involvement in implementation. This includes outreach with the private sector, key government sectors, subnational governments, the media, and the parliament (through the National Assembly and the Senate). All of this is geared towards ensuring we make the commitment to OGP more durable by increasing political support across sectors. We will also partner with Pan-African institutions and other African OGP member states to share skills, knowledge, resources, and expertise.

We still have a long and winding journey to realise the vision of open government, and we can only achieve this with the support of a strong network of like-minded reformers.



Wilfred Olal, Pan-Africanist and a community organiser. Bunge la Mwananchi Member. Grassroots Voices Matter.

Our Partners

Ethiopia

- Ethiopian Women Lawyers Association

Kenya

- Access Now
- Association of Freelance Journalists
- Association of Media Women in Kenya
- Bloggers Association of Kenya
- Center for Reproductive Rights
- Coffee Kenya
- Commission on Administrative Justice (CAJ)
- Communications Authority of Kenya
- Creative Economy Working Group
- Defend Defenders
- East Africa Internet Governance Forum
- Facebook
- Groots Kenya
- Human Rights Defenders
- Katiba Institute
- Kenya Correspondents Association
- Kenya ICT Action Network
- Kenya Human Rights

Commission

- Kenya Internet Governance Forum
- Kenya National Commission on Human Rights
- Kenya Private Sector Alliance
- LakeHub iHub
- Lawyers Hub, Namati
- Liquid Telecom
- Local Development Research Institute (LDRI)
- Ministry of ICT
- Mozilla Foundation
- Mugambi Laibuta (individual)
- Mzalendo
- National Steering Committee on Peacebuilding and Conflict Management
- Network of African National Human Rights Institutions (NANHRI)
- Omkiya Omtatah (individual)
- Open Contracting Partnerships (OCP)
- Police Oversight Authority
- RoGG Kenya
- Safaricom
- Strathmore Law – Centre for Intellectual Property and Information Technology, Law and Business Schools

- SwahiliPot Hub

- The Institute for Social Accountability (TISA)
- The Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA Kenya)
- The Kenya Section of the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ Kenya)
- Transparency International Kenya
- UNESCO
- Usalama Reforms Forum
- Women Empowerment Link

Tanzania

- Pan African Lawyers Union
- Paradigm Initiative
- The East African Court
- The East African Law Society

South Sudan

- Defy Hate Now
- South Sudan School of Internet Governance

Uganda

- Collaboration on International ICT Policy in East and Southern Africa
- Unwanted Witness

Membership / Coalitions

- African Declaration on Internet Rights and Freedoms Coalition (AFDEC)
- Africa Internet Rights Alliance (AIRA) Coalition
- Free to Protest Coalition (CRECO, KNCHR, KHRC, CSRG, SJCWG, Defenders Coalition, KCA, Crime Si Poa, Civicus, Red Vests Movement, Tribeless Youth)
- SDG Kenya Forum
- SIDBOI consortium partners (Hivos East Africa, Kaleidoscope Trust, AMsHER, CAL, University of Pretoria, University of London)
- The Civil Society Parliamentary Engagement Network

Our Donors

Our work is made possible through grants from the following institutions:

- The World Bank Multi-Donor Trust Fund
- Africa Freedom of Information Center – Hewlett Foundation
- Journalism and Media International Centre of Oslo Metropolitan University (JMIC-OSLOMET) Norway
- Hivos
- Open Society Justice Initiative
- Wellspring
- DFID
- Ford Foundation
- US Agency for International Development (USAID)
- Omidyar Network Services LLC
- Google
- Association for Progressive Communications



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