ARTICLE 19 is an international think–do organisation that propels the freedom of expression movement locally and globally to ensure all people realise the power of their voices.

Together with our partners, we develop cutting-edge research and legal and policy analysis to drive change worldwide, lead work on the frontlines of expression through our nine regional hubs across the globe, and propel change by sparking innovation in the global freedom of expression movement. We do this by working on five key themes: promoting media independence, increasing access to information, protecting journalists, expanding civic space, and placing human rights at the heart of developing digital spaces.

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Front cover photos (clockwise from top)
Photo 1:
Civil society activists demonstrating against gender-based violence to mark International Women’s Day in downtown Nairobi, March 8, 2022.
(Photo: REUTERS/Monicah Mwangi)

Photo 2:
A protester attends a rally calling for an end to ethnic tensions and civil conflict in Khartoum, Sudan, on 26 July 2022.
(Photo: REUTERS/Mohamed Nureldin Abdallah)

Photo 3:
A voter casts her ballot during the general election in Nairobi, Kenya, on 9 August 2022.
(Photo: REUTERS/Thomas Mukoya)

Back cover photo
An activist from the Social Justice Centres Working Group participates in a demonstration in Nairobi, Kenya on 7 July 2022, asking the government to lower costs of living ahead of the general elections.
(Photo: REUTERS/Monicah Mwangi)

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Abbreviations

ACHPR  
African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights

CSO  
Civil society organisation

ICT  
Information and communication technology

IEBC  
Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (Kenya)

KNBS  
Kenya National Bureau of Statistics

LGBTQI+  
Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and intersex

NGO  
Non-governmental organisation

NIR  
National Identification Register (Uganda)

OGP  
Open Government Partnership

PROTECT  
Protecting Rights, Openness and Transparency Enhancing Civic Transformation

SDG  
Sustainable Development Goal

UN  
United Nations

UNESCO  
UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
Help us to build a free, open, and inclusive Eastern Africa

ARTICLE 19’s Global Expression Report data for 2022 makes for grim reading: more than two-fifths (42%) of countries in Eastern Africa – home to 89 million people – are classified as In Crisis, and not a single country in the region is classified as Open.

We used the data in the report to call for urgent action in our national, regional, and international advocacy throughout 2022, and the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics showcased the report as an example of best practice in citizen-generated data.

Despite governments’ attempts to silence their populations, people across Eastern Africa continued to bravely make their voices heard, as the inspirational stories in this report show.

In the run-up to Kenya’s general election in August 2022, we pulled out all the stops to ensure people could access the information they needed to make informed decisions. One of our biggest achievements of the year was our collaborative project with TikTok to help young people identify online electoral disinformation. Due to its success – 23,000 people viewed our videos – TikTok is now adopting the project globally.

After an election period marred by the authorities attempting to prohibit protests and using brutal force against peaceful protesters, we launched the #FreeToProtest campaign in Kenya, calling on the police to end brutality, the media to humanise protesters, and the government to reform laws. With our partners, we are now heavily involved in amending the Public Order Bill to make protest safe for all.

Social media continues to be a double-edged sword in the region. That is why we launched #SocialMedia4Peace, a new project to ensure social media companies listen to local communities and consider context when moderating users’ content. As part of this work, in early 2023 we created a coalition to bridge the gap between global tech giants and local communities. We look forward to continuing this work throughout the year.

Our PROTECT (Protecting Rights, Openness and Transparency Enhancing Civic Transformation) project also went from strength to strength, showing the power of partnership working to deliver real change in Kisumu, Mombasa, and Nairobi. Our results so far are impressive – from co-creating a public participation policy to developing a model sexual harassment policy that, to date, five media houses have adopted.

We are, as ever, deeply grateful to our partners and donors for supporting us to defend expression: the lifeblood of democracy.

But with more resources, we could do so much more.

Invest in expression today and help us build a free, open, and inclusive Eastern Africa.

Despite governments’ attempts to silence their populations, people across Eastern Africa continued to bravely make their voices heard.

Mugambi Kiai
Regional Director, ARTICLE 19 Eastern Africa

Support us to defend expression: the lifeblood of democracy.
Civic space is shrinking – but there is still cause for hope

At the time of writing (May 2023), the Sudan Armed Forces and Rapid Support Forces have been fighting for a month. As is so often the case in armed conflict, freedom of expression was one of the first casualties – yet it is precisely during times of conflict that this fundamental right must be vigorously defended.

ARTICLE 19 Eastern Africa condemns the attacks in Sudan and calls for the protection of journalists, the restoration of internet connectivity, and an end to both sides peddling disinformation.

Across the Eastern Africa region more broadly, civic space continues to shrink:

• **In Ethiopia**, police arrested 18 journalists in two days in May and suspended three non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

• **In Kenya**, the authorities used brutal and lethal force against peaceful protesters, and LGBTQI+ people suffered vicious attacks.

• **In Rwanda**, the Rwandan Patriotic Front continue to target those perceived as a threat to the government.

• **In Somalia**, the Al-Shabaab terrorist group killed yet more journalists.

• **In South Sudan**, journalist Diing Magot was jailed for eight days after covering a peaceful protest in August.

• **In Uganda**, the NGO Bureau banned the prominent LGBTQI+ organisation Sexual Minorities Uganda – part of a vicious crackdown culminating in the passing of an anti-LGBTQI+ bill that allows for the death penalty, which ARTICLE 19 Eastern Africa strongly condemned.

Yet despite the grim news, there is also cause for hope.

In Kenya, we worked on a successful legal challenge that led to the High Court overturning Section 66 of the Penal Code (which criminalised false publication), and the Saba Saba protests on 7 July 2022 passed with no confrontations between police and protesters or unlawful arrests for the first time in several years: a testament to our sustained advocacy.

During times of conflict, freedom of expressions must be vigorously defended.

Patricia Munabi
Chair of the Board
Our UN advocacy led to Zimbabwe, Uganda, and South Sudan accepting the majority of our recommendations during their Universal Periodic Reviews. We look forward to working with the government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo – which formally joined the Eastern African Community in 2022 – to extend freedom of expression across the region.

And in response to growing authoritarianism, we launched our new Free Expression Platform to grow the movement for expression throughout the region. It is early days, but already the communities we have worked with in Isiolo, Siaya, and Nakuru in Kenya are forming networks to advocate for their own needs and champion human rights.

Indeed, the stories throughout this report are a testament to ARTICLE 19 Eastern Africa’s relentless work to ensure everyone in the region – whoever and wherever they are – can realise the power of their voices.

"The stories throughout this report are a testament to ARTICLE 19 Eastern Africa’s relentless work."
Global Expression Report 2023:  
89 million people in Eastern Africa are living in an expression crisis

ARTICLE 19’s Global Expression Report measures how free each and every person is to express themselves, communicate, and participate in society, whether posting online, taking to the streets, or investigating the information needed to keep leaders accountable.

Using a unique metric (the GxR), the report examines trends at the global, regional, and national levels related to the measurable aspects of freedom of expression, and seeks to inform advocacy for civil society worldwide. Since 2020, the GxR score has incorporated 25 indicators for 161 countries.

In Eastern Africa in 2022:

- More than two-fifths (42%) of countries – home to 89 million people – were classified as In Crisis;
- Kenya was the only country in the region classified as Less Restricted;
- Not a single country in the region was classified as Open.

Figure 1: Global Expression Report classifications for countries in Eastern Africa in 2022.
Our data also allows for comparison of both short- and long-term changes in expression scores, providing a broader view of trends in freedom of expression (see Tables 2 and 3).

For example, while both Tanzania and Burundi saw advances in their scores between 2021 and 2022 (+6 points and +4 points, respectively), these were not enough to compensate for declines in their scores over the past decade (−11 points and −14 points, respectively).

Table 1: Global rankings for countries in Eastern Africa in 2022.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Global ranking 2022 (out of 161 countries worldwide)*</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madagascar</td>
<td>81</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tanzania</td>
<td>93</td>
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<tr>
<td>Democratic Republic of the Congo</td>
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<tr>
<td>Somalia</td>
<td>116</td>
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<td>Ethiopia</td>
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<td>Uganda</td>
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<td>Sudan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rwanda</td>
<td>129</td>
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<tr>
<td>Burundi</td>
<td>131</td>
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<tr>
<td>South Sudan</td>
<td>147</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eritrea</td>
<td>156</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

* Each country is ranked from 1 (best) to 161 (worst).
Note: The data does not cover Comoros, Djibouti, or Seychelles.
But while leaders across the region attempt to silence people’s voices, people—from protesters in Kenya to journalists in South Sudan to LGBTQI+ groups in Uganda—continue to bravely speak out for what they believe in, as the inspirational stories in this report show.

_expression is the lifeblood of democracy. It is time to reclaim it for everyone in Eastern Africa._

<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Madagascar (+9 points)</td>
<td>Tanzania (-11 points)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethiopia (+12 points)</td>
<td>Uganda (-11 points)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sudan (+7 points)*</td>
<td>Burundi (-14 points)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eritrea (+1 point)</td>
<td>South Sudan (-8 points)</td>
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* The data here covers 2012–2022 only. Sudan’s score therefore does not account for the war that broke out in April 2023.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>1-year advances in expression (2021–2022)</th>
<th>1-year declines in expression (2021–2022)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Tanzania (+6 points)</td>
<td>None in region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burundi (+4 points)</td>
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</table>

Table 2: Statistically significant changes in long-term (2012–2022) GxR scores in Eastern Africa.

Table 3: Statistically significant changes in short-term (2021–2022) GxR scores in Eastern Africa.

The _Global Expression Report_ empowers us with the data we need to make an evidence-based case for change.

New for 2023: Our new website—featuring interactive maps, visuals, and analysis—allows you to explore the data, track key trends, and compare countries: www.globalexpressionreport.org/
ARTICLE 19’s research advances free expression for all by influencing decision-makers and power-holders worldwide.

In 2022, ARTICLE 19 Eastern Africa partnered with the Kenyan Government to incorporate the data from the Global Expression Report into Kenya’s reporting on progress towards the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular SDG 16, which focuses on peace, justice, and strong institutions.

The Kenyan Government does not comprehensively report on the indicators that demonstrate progress towards SDG 16, resulting in a knowledge and evidence gap on civil and political liberties. To address this gap, it is working hand-in-hand with civil society through the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS) to vet citizen-generated data.

The data has been well received as it integrates development methodology with a human rights approach and demonstrates the country’s progress while also highlighting areas that need work.

As a result, ARTICLE 19 Eastern Africa is now working with the KNBS to validate and operationalise these datasets for use in official reporting on Kenya’s implementation of its SDG commitments and development of evidence-based policies.

This official recognition of the quality of ARTICLE 19’s analysis will be invaluable — not only for marking Kenya’s progress but also for our broader advocacy with governments throughout the region.

After evaluating the Global Expression Report against its stringent quality criteria and against the data of 15 other organisations, the KNBS showcased our report as an example of best practice and included it as an official annex to the government report.
Defining a new digital era for all
#SocialMedia4Peace: A new approach to content moderation in Kenya

In 2022, as part of #SocialMedia4Peace (a project run by UNESCO and funded by the European Union), ARTICLE 19 launched new research investigating how people’s content is moderated on major platforms in three post-conflict countries – including Kenya.

Our research found that social media companies do not listen to local communities and fail to consider context – cultural, social, historical, economic, political – when moderating people’s content. This can increase polarisation and the risk of violence.

ARTICLE 19 proposed a solution that would help bridge the gap between global tech giants and local communities: local coalitions on freedom of expression and content moderation.

Such a coalition was launched in Kenya in early 2023 to forge links between civil society organisations (CSOs), academia, content creators, media houses, social media companies, and regulators. We look forward to continuing this work throughout the year.

Catherine Muya
Digital Programme Officer, ARTICLE 19 Eastern Africa

How can social media companies moderate content if they don’t even understand our language properly?
During wartime, freedom of expression and the free flow of information should be vigorously defended: both are vital to ensure accurate reporting, address human rights abuses, and promote peace.

Disinformation and state propaganda can vilify certain groups and distort the information that civilians desperately need. While this is nothing new, social media’s targeted advertising, amplification of extremist content, and inadequate content moderation add extra layers of complexity to contemporary conflicts.

In July 2022, ARTICLE 19 submitted a response to the UN Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression addressing these issues, including in the Eastern Africa context.

The Special Rapporteur’s final report, delivered to the UN General Assembly in August 2022, reflected many of our concerns.

We look forward to continuing our policy and advocacy work to ensure that people's right to free expression does not become yet another casualty of war – including in Sudan, where attacks on expression have increased since war broke out in April 2023.

Learning from the past to build a better future

ARTICLE 19 has worked at the complex intersections of free expression, propaganda, and conflict, and how they affect people during wartime, since the Rwanda Genocide in 1994.
We engaged in strategic litigation at the intersections of digital rights and free expression throughout 2022.

In January, ARTICLE 19 Eastern Africa and our partners lobbied the Kenyan parliament regarding the Huduma Bill, which sought to provide a law on civil registration and legal identification management and to establish a digital identity system that, we cautioned, would negatively impact Kenyans’ rights to privacy and data protection.

As a result of our advocacy, MPs proposed amendments to the Bill that reflected our recommendations.

As the primary means of identifying eligibility for social and economic services, Uganda’s digital identity system – the National Identification Register (NIR) or Ndaga Muntu – also raised significant red flags for free expression.

In March 2023, despite objections from the Attorney General and the NIR Authority, Uganda’s High Court admitted ARTICLE 19 Eastern Africa, CITA (Community Initiative for Transformative Action), and Access Now’s amicus brief as part of a legal case challenging the NIR. We look forward to working on the case throughout 2023 to ensure that Ugandans’ rights to data protection, digital inclusion, and privacy are protected.
Recent years have seen major telecommunications companies in Kenya – including Airtel, Safaricom, and Telcom – threatening to disconnect people from their mobile phone and internet services unless they provided personal biometric data, such as photos. While these companies claimed that such data was required under the Kenya Information and Communications (Registration of SIM-Cards) Regulations 2015, this is a gross misrepresentation of the law and puts users at risk of privacy violations, data breaches, and identity theft.

In 2022, ARTICLE 19 Eastern Africa sent freedom of information requests to companies who were collecting people's personal data, asking why they were doing so. We also took part in a Twitter Space to raise public awareness about the issue and its lack of basis in law.

As a result of our work, in April 2022, the Director General of the Communications Authority of Kenya announced that photos were not mandatory for SIM registration.
We were deeply concerned when, in May 2022 – ahead of the August elections – Twitter suspended the accounts of Kenyan social justice movements and activists who had participated in the #NjaaRevolution online campaign. The campaign protests against soaring prices of food and other basic commodities in Kenya, as well as against poor governance, which has a devastating impact on the country’s economy and people.

Twitter suspended 22 accounts belonging to the Social Justice Centres Working Group, six Social Justice Centres, and their members – including #NjaaRevolution campaign leaders. The suspension messages from Twitter alleged that some of these accounts had been suspended because the users appeared to have exhibited ‘suspicious’ behaviour, which it did not define.

For accounts that were permanently suspended, Twitter did not state why, but instead gave a blanket reason of ‘breaking Twitter rules’.

ARTICLE 19 Eastern Africa called on Twitter to immediately restore these accounts. As a result, five accounts were restored on 31 May 2022.

However, Twitter later suspended at least 20 more accounts, either temporarily or permanently. We continue to call for social media platforms to integrate due process into their content moderation processes and to respect users’ online expression.

As a result of our advocacy, the Twitter accounts of five activists were restored.

ARTICLE 19 has repeatedly raised alarm over the impact of poor content moderation practices restricting free expression in Africa. To date, these tech platforms fail to provide content rules in local languages and effective complaint redress mechanisms and remedies to their users.

Mugambi Kiai
Regional Director, ARTICLE 19 Eastern Africa
Complementary access solutions (local networks, community operators, and alternative service providers) are essential to enable people in rural and remote areas to get online, express themselves, and access vital information.

In 2022, ARTICLE 19 secured resolutions on connectivity at the International Telecommunications Union that acknowledged – for the first time – the importance of these solutions for rural and remote communities.

ARTICLE 19 also worked with community implementers to establish their needs, priorities, and how we can best support them – locally, regionally, and internationally. The result of this process was a new approach, Local to Global – and Back, which will guide our Digital team’s work over the next four years.

As part of this work, ARTICLE 19 held workshops in Eastern Africa for local CSOs, building their capacity to engage with infrastructure providers.

This led to ARTICLE 19 being the first CSO to participate in a meeting of the Africa Top Level Domains Organization. As a result of this discussion, we secured a commitment from the KeNIC – Kenya Network Information Centre, the internet registry for the .ke and .africa domains – to conduct human rights impact assessments of their operations and policies.

This was a crucial first step towards normalising the consideration of human rights among not only global but also regional and local internet infrastructure providers – and, ultimately, towards connecting the unconnected.

We secured a commitment from KeNIC to conduct human rights impact assessments of all their operations and policies.
Safer communities, stronger voices
#FreeToProtest:
New campaign in Kenya to make protest safe for all

Across time and history, in every country and society, protest movements have been central to social change. When people unite to demand justice, the power of our voices can change the hearts and minds of millions.

Yet many governments are attacking and silencing people who march and using weak laws to prevent us from coming together. Alarmingly, authorities and the media have begun to demonise people who march in an attempt to stigmatise the very act of protest. Worst of all, this repression is growing more violent, with an increase in police brutality and arrests of protesters.

These trends negatively affect all those who protest, but especially groups who are ignored or silenced in society, for whom collective action can be the only way to make themselves heard.

I find courage in the sense that someone got to stand for what is right. And that person is me.

Paul (pseudonym)
Human rights defender, Nakuru County

Activists from the Social Justice Centres Working Group demonstrate against rising living costs ahead of the general election, Nairobi, Kenya, 7 July 2022.
(Photo: REUTERS/Monicah Mwangi)
End police brutality at protests.

Humanise protesters in the media.

Reform laws to make protest safer for all.

In Kenya, ARTICLE 19 Eastern Africa launched the #FreeToProtest campaign in November 2022 – a four-year global campaign to ensure all people, especially those who face discrimination, feel empowered to use their right to protest. This was particularly vital after an election period in August marred by the authorities attempting to prohibit protests and using brutal force against peaceful protesters.

We are now heavily involved in amending the Public Order Bill – working with the Civic Freedoms Forum, Independent Policing Oversight Authority, Kenya Law Reform Commission, Kenya National Commission on Human Rights, and National Council on the Administration of Justice – to make protest safe for all.

We look forward to reporting impacts from the campaign in 2023.

Our campaign was informed by our new research, *Kenya: Restricting the right to be heard*, which found that – despite Kenya's 2010 Constitution and ratification of international and regional treaties that safeguard the right to protest – the state commonly infringes this right at all levels.

"[T]he police have become more high-handed. They use batons and tear gas. This has caused suffering for many people ... the trend has been to use excessive force, especially in poor neighbourhoods."

Mary (pseudonym)
Human community justice centre coordinator,
Nairobi County
Defying expectations, she raises her voice:
Halima’s story

When Halima Bakari raises her voice for communities in Kenya, she has to work hard to be heard.

Halima’s response? She turns the volume up.

The 24-year-old businesswoman coordinates the Al Qamar Justice Centre in Nairobi, which co-organised the 30th anniversary of the Saba Saba March for Our Lives on 7 July 2020. She and her fellow protesters were tear-gassed at the march. In the chaos that ensued, Halima fell and dislocated her leg, which still has not healed.

During Ramadan in 20 April 2020, she led a protest for clean water for the informal settlement of Soweto in Kayole. She and... People have seen the importance of doing a protest and being in such spaces.

Halima Bakari
A Kenyan activist tries to guard herself against being beaten by police officers during a protest in Nairobi, 7 July 2021. (Photo: Daniel Irungu/EPA-EFE/Shutterstock.com)

her fellow protesters followed the rules but, she told ARTICLE 19, the police still ‘confronted us violently and arrested us,’ locking them up for nine hours.

**Nevertheless, the protest had made its point:** ‘Three days later we not only got water but clean water.’

With each win comes greater acceptance, especially with the people who matter most: the communities Halima works with.

**Because when women’s voices are listened to, entire communities benefit.**

> In protests, the police consistently tell me that I should be at home cooking for my husband and not in the street making noise. Being a woman, and Muslim for that matter, subjects me to police ridicule.

**Halima Bakari**

Find out how you can help us make protest safe for everyone in Kenya.

[Find out how](#)
Peaceful Saba Saba protests for first time in years

As part of our work to raise awareness of the right to protest in 2022, ARTICLE 19 Eastern Africa held concerts featuring music, dance, poetry, skits, and painting with the Dandora Community Justice Centre community. The Saba Saba protests on 7 July 2022 passed with no confrontations or unlawful arrests between police and protesters for the first time in several years: a testament to our sustained advocacy – and a far cry from Halima's experiences at the 2020 march.

“If you stand up and they realise you know your rights, they step back.”

Jackie (pseudonym)
Human rights defender and gender activist, Nairobi County

Halima Bakari at the Saba Saba protests in downtown Nairobi, 7 July 2022.
(Photography: ARTICLE 19 Eastern Africa)

Jamhuri Festival Concert organised by ARTICLE 19 Eastern Africa and Dandora Community Justice Centre on 12 December 2022.
(Photography: ARTICLE 19 Eastern Africa)
In 2022, we also launched the Free Expression Platform, a new project designed to enhance the resilience of movements and activists across Kenya.

We worked with human rights defenders in Isiolo and Siaya counties and women in media, political, and human rights spaces in Nakuru County to understand their goals, the challenges they face, and how ARTICLE 19 Eastern Africa can best support them. Following this needs assessment, we delivered training on movement-building, citizen journalism, and security.

As a result, the communities resolved to form a network to advocate for their own needs, champion human rights, and resist rising authoritarianism.
Psychosocial support for grassroots journalists

Most organisations don’t consider the aftermath to journalists after covering a story ... This knowledge has really helped me.

Freelance journalist,
Kenya

Investigative journalists shine a light into the darkest corners of society. While their work is vital, it can take a psychological toll on them. In 2022, ARTICLE 19 therefore provided group psychosocial debrief sessions and one-to-one counselling for around 100 grassroots journalists in Kenya, who reported positive impacts on their mental health.

I express my sincere gratitude for availing the one-on-one counselling session. They have been tremendously helpful, and I appreciate you for providing the platform.

Freelance journalist,
Kenya

(Photo: ARTICLE 19 Eastern Africa)
International and regional advocacy

South Sudan adopts our recommendations at the UN

In March 2022, ARTICLE 19 and Free Press Unlimited made a statement during a dialogue with the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan at the 49th Session of the UN Human Rights Council on declining freedom of expression and press freedom in South Sudan, as well as concerns regarding impunity for attacks against journalists, media workers, and other civil society actors.

The Commission supported our recommendations in its report, and South Sudan’s Government adopted the report and recommendations.

Media roundtable with UN Human Rights Committee in Kenya

In February 2022, with the Centre for Civil and Political Rights, we facilitated a media roundtable in Nairobi with Professor Hélène Tigroudja, a member of the UN Human Rights Committee.

A diverse range of media stakeholders – including media regulators, media associations, unions, academics, CSOs, and journalists – attended the roundtable, which sought to follow up on the recommendations from Kenya’s fourth periodic review on the implementation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Media roundtable co-facilitated by ARTICLE 19 Eastern Africa and the Centre for Civil and Political Rights with Professor Hélène Tigroudja, a member of the UN Human Rights Committee, Nairobi, March 2022.

( Photo: ARTICLE 19 Eastern Africa)
Advocating for journalists’ safety at the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights (ACHPR)

In October 2022, we hosted a side event on the surveillance of journalists and human rights defenders in Africa at the Forum on the Participation of NGOs in the 73rd Ordinary Session of the ACHPR in Banjul, Gambia.

Over 40 NGO representatives attended the event, which resulted in a new collaboration between ARTICLE 19 Eastern Africa, ARTICLE 19 Senegal and West Africa, Centre for Human Rights (University of Pretoria), International Center for Not-for-Profit Law, and Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights.

At the same ACHPR session, we presented a statement on freedom of expression in the Eastern African region, reminding states of their obligations under Articles 9, 10, and 11 of the African Charter to respect and promote freedom of expression, assembly, association, and access to information, whether online or offline.

The 73rd Ordinary Session of the ACHPR. (Photo: ARTICLE 19 Eastern Africa)
Information is power
Disarming disinformation to defend democracy

Free and fair elections – a cornerstone of democracy – rely on accurate information, an informed population, and transparent institutions. But social media has drastically increased the volume and reach of disinformation during election periods, leading to voter confusion, low turnout, reduced trust in democracy, and offline violence.

That is why, in the run-up to Kenya’s general election in 2022, we pulled out all the stops to ensure people had access to the information they needed to make informed decisions.

We pulled out all the stops to ensure voters across Kenya had access to accurate information.

Participants at the CSP Summit 2022 in Nairobi, where ARTICLE 19 Eastern Africa and partners worked to secure civic and democratic space in Kenya during the approach to the General Election on 9 August.

(Photo: ARTICLE 19 Eastern Africa)
When Kenya went to the polls in August 2022, ARTICLE 19 Eastern Africa worked with TikTok on a new project, #TikTok4Peace, to help young people identify the misinformation and disinformation that proliferated online during the election period.

As part of the project, which was featured in TikTok’s general election guide, we organised three events (all live-streamed on our TikTok page) in which speakers discussed disinformation and responsible election choices. The videos were viewed by 23,000 people.

Due to its success, TikTok is now developing our project as one of its flagship programmes and has committed to implementing it globally.

Kenya
TikTok to adopt ARTICLE 19’s Kenya elections project worldwide

“The #TikTok4Peace live streams broadened my understanding of how political discourse should be done … As a young person who is active on social media, the conversations helped shed light on the steps I should take to detect and avoid perpetuating misinformation and disinformation online.”

#TikTok4Peace live stream attendee

#TikTok4Peace workshop with government stakeholders and CSOs on the dangers of disinformation, misinformation, and hate speech, Nairobi, July 2022. (Photo: ARTICLE 19 Eastern Africa)
Protecting access to information and media freedom during the elections

ARTICLE 19 Eastern Africa advocated for electoral transparency, the right to information, and media freedom at the national and regional levels in 2022.

At the national level, as part of the Kenya Media Sector Working Group, we worked with the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) to ensure journalists covering the Kenyan elections had easy access to accurate information.

Our partnership led to an improved framework for journalists’ access to information during the 2022 elections, and we trained nearly 1,000 journalists.
At the regional level, at the 73rd Session of the ACHPR in October 2022, we delivered an oral statement and facilitated a side event, ‘The Right to Information and Elections: A Glimpse of the African Experience’, which over 70 participants from more than 15 African countries attended. We also partnered with the Centre for Human Rights, University of Pretoria, to assess states’ compliance with the Guidelines on Access to Information and Elections in Africa, which the ACHPR adopted in 2017. The first draft of the assessment was finalised in December 2022, and the final report will be launched in 2023.

“[Our] collaboration with the Kenya Media Sector Working Group (KMSWG) ... enhance[d] transparency and ensure[d] quick flow of information in election reporting to the public.”

W.W. Chebukati, EGH,
Chairman, Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission

Participants at a workshop in the North Rift region, delivered by ARTICLE 19 Eastern Africa and the Commission on Administrative Justice, on the African Commission’s Guidelines on Access to Information and Elections in Africa. (Photo: ARTICLE 19 Eastern Africa)
PROTECT: Building a free, open, inclusive Kenya – together

We all want a world where we can express ourselves freely, participate in society safely, and access the information we need to make decisions about our lives.

In Kenya, the Constitution guarantees these rights to all citizens. But in practice, a complex set of challenges has prevented us from fully enjoying our rights.

Complex challenges require holistic solutions. That is why the PROTECT coalition – a diverse group of activists, journalists, NGOs, lawyers, thinkers, dreamers, and doers – came together to build a free, open, and inclusive Kenya.

Find out more on ARTICLE 19’s website, including impact stories, videos featuring beneficiaries, and more.

Celine Abuga, Station Manager, Sky FM, Kisumu (PROTECT beneficiary)

You know, there are some things that you don’t learn at school, but through this project we’ve got a lot of knowledge and information.

Judie Kaberia, Executive Director, Association of Media Women in Kenya (PROTECT partner)

I am delighted that we are making progress and there are outlets where journalists can now report sexual harassment.

The PROTECT consortium is made up of ARTICLE 19, the Humanist Institute for Cooperation with Developing Countries (Hivos), the International Center for Not-for-Profit Law, and Internews. We collaborate with local CSOs and state partners in Kisumu, Mombasa, and Nairobi to achieve our common goals.
Explore
PROTECT’s impact

The power of participation: Uniting residents and government officials in Kisumu County
From improving local service delivery to co-creating a public participation policy, PROTECT has made significant inroads to ensuring people in Kisumu County enjoy their right to public participation.

Going upstream: A holistic approach to sexual harassment against journalists
From supporting victims to developing a policy that five media houses have adopted, PROTECT has spearheaded a holistic, multisectoral, sustainable approach to tackling sexual harassment against journalists in Kenya.

Of, by, and for the community: Unleashing the potential of local radio in Kisumu
From enabling more people to access reliable information to improving the business viability of community radio stations, PROTECT has invested in long-term media freedom in a long-neglected community.

PROTECT
PROTECT has spearheaded holistic solutions to Kenya’s complex challenges. Our results to date are impressive – but with your help, we could do so much more.

Support us to create a free, open, and inclusive Kenya.
#PROTECTEachOther

4,206 people helped in our first 2 years

Read the case study
Read the case study
Read the case study
The Open Government Partnership (OGP) seeks to transform governments by promoting transparency, ending corruption, and involving civil society in decision-making.

In 2022, as a result of our participation in the 2022 OGP Africa and the Middle East Regional Meeting in Morocco, ARTICLE 19 Eastern Africa was elected to the OGP Technical Committee in Kenya. As part of this work, we:

- developed plans to implement Kenya’s fourth OGP National Action Plan and its access to information commitment;
- took leadership of the OGP Communication Strategy; and
- increased use of the OGP web portal.

With the help of the OGP Support Unit, our engagement in the World Justice Forum 2022 showcased how public accountability mechanisms would improve democratic renewal, transparency, and government accountability. Subsequently, we partnered with the OGP Support Unit as the main reviewer at the 10th round of the Africa Integrity Indicators, organised by the African Institute for Development Policy.
Our partners and donors

National partners

Kenya
Access Now
Association of Freelance Journalists
Association of Media Women
Bloggers Association of Kenya
Center for Reproductive Rights
Coffee Kenya
Commission on Administrative Justice
Communications Authority of Kenya
Creative Economy Working Group
Defend Defenders
East Africa Internet Governance Forum
Facebook
GROOTS Kenya
Human Rights Defenders
Institute for Social Accountability
Institute of Economic Affairs
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
Ministry of ICT
Mozilla Foundation
Mugambi Laibuta (individual)
Mzalendo
National Steering Committee on Peacebuilding and Conflict Management Network of African National Human Rights Institutions
Open Contracting Partnership
Police Oversight Authority
Reporting on Good Governance (RoGG) Kenya
Safaricom
Centre for Intellectual Property and Information Technology Law, Strathmore University
The Kenya Section of the International Commission of Jurists
Transparency International Kenya
UNESCO
Usalama Reforms Forum
Women Empowerment Link

Tanzania
East African Court
East African Law Society
Journalists Workers Union of Tanzania
Pan African Lawyers Union
Paradigm Initiative

South Sudan
#DefyHateNow
South Sudan School of Internet Governance

Uganda
Africa Freedom of Information Centre
Collaboration on International ICT Policy in East and Southern Africa
Unwanted Witness

Zimbabwe
Centre for Innovation and Technology
Gender and Media Connect
Our partners and donors

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

Collaboration on International ICT Policy for East and Southern Africa
Dialogue & Dissent
European Union
Facilitation Open Government Partnership
Ford Foundation
Friedrich Naumann Foundation
Prisoners of Conscience

Memberships and coalitions
Africa Internet Rights Alliance Coalition
African Declaration on Internet Rights and Freedoms Coalition
African Platform on Access to Information
Association for the Implementation of the UN Convention against Corruption
Civicus
Civil Society Parliamentary Engagement Network
Civil Society Reference Group
Crime Si Poa
Defenders Coalition
Kenya College of Accountancy
Kenya Human Rights Commission
Pan-African Parliament Civil Society Forum
Red Vests Movement
Social Justice Centres Working Group
Sustainable Development Goals Kenya Forum
Tribeless Youth

Regional partners
Africa Women Journalism Project
Congress of African Journalists

International partners
Free Press Unlimited
UNESCO