

## Kenya's cybercrimes law restricts media freedom

The Washington-based thinktank, Freedom House, has strongly condemned Kenya's new cybercrimes law, saying it is a "step backward for media freedom and online expression" in Kenya.



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Said Morris Odhiambo, regional project director for East and Horn of Africa at Freedom House: "By criminalizing the publication of 'false' information, the government has overstepped its bounds and become an arbiter of truth on the internet. The law's broadly worded provisions and possible jail terms are ripe for abuse by public officials looking to silence critical reporting online.

"This move is particularly troubling in light of recent developments in Kenya that include the temporary shutdown of three media groups in January and multiple instances of authorities ignoring court orders, such as the order to immediately reopen the three media outlets," Odhiambo said. "President Kenyatta ignored well-founded concerns raised by civil society and media groups, including the Media Council of Kenya, and chose to limit rather than protect free speech."

Kenya is rated Partly Free in Freedom in the World 2018, Partly Free in Freedom of the Press 2017, and Free in Freedom on the Net 2017.



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