
State of Internet Freedom in Zambia 2016

Charting Patterns in the Strategies African
Governments Use to Stifle Citizens' Digital Rights

December 2016



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State of Internet Freedom in Zambia | 2016

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Credits

This research was carried out by the Collaboration on International ICT Policy for East and Southern Africa (CIPESA) as part of the OpenNet Africa initiative (www.opennet africa.org), which monitors and promotes Internet freedom in Africa.

The report presents the findings of a study on what the government in Zambia is doing to inhibit citizens' access to ICT, for example content blocks, censorship, filtering, infrastructure control, law-making, court cases; using ICT activity and data to monitor citizens; and how government bodies and functionaries are using propaganda, impersonation, threats, cloning, and other tactics to shape online content in their favour. Other country reports for Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, Tanzania, Uganda and Zimbabwe as well as a regional State of Internet Freedom in Africa 2016 report, are also available.

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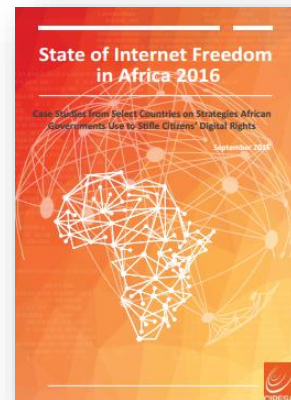
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1. Introduction

Zambia has witnessed growth in the use of mobile phones, the internet, and other forms of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) which have acted as enablers for citizens to advance their right to freedom of expression and access to information. Though internet use is on the rise with citizens and civil society organisations (CSOs) venturing into digital activism to demand for good governance, majority of Zambians do not have access to the internet, especially those in rural areas, due to high illiteracy levels and high costs of access.

In August 2016, the country held presidential elections that saw the re-election of Edgar C. Lungu of the Patriotic Front (PF) government into power under the 2016 amended constitution. The amended constitution guarantees the right to freedom of expression under Article 20, however retrogressive laws such as the Electronic Communications Act limit the enjoyment of online expression and privacy by sanctioning surveillance.

There has been rising interest by the Zambia government in citizens' online activities. Cases of banning and blocking of websites critical of the state, intimidation and arrest of journalists and other online human rights activists have been recorded. The mandatory SIM card registration for all phone users, which started in 2012, is also viewed with suspicion as information collected from this exercise may be used by the government to snoop on citizens given the absence of a comprehensive law on privacy and data protection.

In order to promote internet freedom in the country, there is a need to understand what the state of internet freedom is, what the obstacles are, which stakeholders are most at risk, and the tactics used to curtail internet freedom. This report therefore discusses the factors influencing ICT use in Zambia and how laws and policies affect internet freedom. It focuses on the controls initiated by the government to inhibit citizens' access to ICT, and concludes with a series of recommendations.

The report focuses on recent legal and policy developments, as well as on abuses and violations of internet freedom over the 12 months period to November 2016. However, in order to establish trends on strategies of information controls used by the government of Zambia, the study takes an interest in practices over the last five years.

2. Methodology

This study involved a detailed review of relevant literature on general ICT and internet freedom in Zambia. These included laws and policies, media and freedom of expression reports by human rights organisations, online and offline newspaper articles.

Key informant interviews were also conducted with a total of 12 purposively selected individuals based on their knowledge, role and interest in internet freedom issues in Zambia. These included online journalists, editors, officials from Zambian Internet Service Providers (ISPs) as well as representatives of the Zambia Information and Communication Technology Authority (ZICTA).

3. Country context

The ICT sector is regulated by the Zambia Information and Communication Technology Authority (ZICTA), which was established under the Information and Communication Technologies Act of 2009.¹ The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Services oversees ZICTA's activities.² About 5.1 million people in Zambia have access to the internet while telephone subscriptions stand at 12 million, representing a 75% penetration rate.³ There are three telecom companies, namely the state-owned Zamtel, MTN Zambia, and Airtel Zambia, and up to 16 active Internet Service Providers.⁴ Third Generation (3G) mobile broadband services have been launched while national fibre networks are being rolled out.⁵

There are 96 radio stations in operation, four of which are state-owned while the rest are commercial or community owned. Out of the 33 licensed television stations, three are state-owned while the rest are privately owned. Zambia has five daily newspapers of which two are state-owned and three privately owned.⁶

Despite the absence of an access to information law, there has been an increase in demand for information, including through the use of ICT, to enhance citizen participation. Social media is a popular means for communication between citizens and between citizens and the state. A 2015 ICT survey by ZICTA found that internet users in the country spend their time online primarily on social networking sites.⁷ Zambia was the first country in Africa to implement Facebook's internet.org (now called Free Basics) initiative in 2014 in partnership with Airtel. The platform enabled access to prescribed online sites including basic Facebook content and its instant messaging service, Wikipedia, Google search, AccuWeather, as well as local health and jobs services including Go Zambia Jobs, Mobile Alliance for Maternal Action and Women's Rights App.⁸

However, access to ICT and the internet is still a challenge to many Zambians due to the high illiteracy levels – adult literacy stands at 63%.⁹ High poverty levels also impact on ICT and internet use, as 40.8% of the country's population reportedly lives in poverty¹⁰ yet ICT access remains costly.

Zambia is a relatively peaceful country with no major political instability registered in the last five years. The country has held seven successful democratic elections since 1991 with the most recent held on

¹ Zambia Information and Communication Technologies Act of 2009, https://www.zicta.zm/Downloads/The%20Acts%20and%20SIs/ict_act_2009.pdf

² Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Services, <http://www.mibs.gov.zm>

³ ZICTA, 2016 ICT Indicators, <http://onlinesystems.zicta.zm:8585/statsfinal/>

⁴ Zambia Active ISPs as of 2016, <http://onlinesystems.zicta.zm:8585/statsfinal/ICT%20Indicators.html>

⁵ Zambia Internet and Telecommunications, <http://internetworldstats.com/af/zm.htm>

⁶ Ministry of Information and Broadcasting Services, Media Institutions, http://www.mibs.gov.zm/?q=media_institutions

⁷ ZICTA, 2015 ICT Survey Report - Households and Individuals, <http://www.zicta.zm/Views/Publications/2015ICTSURVEYREPORT.pdf>

⁸ Facebook's New Mobile App Offers "Free Basic" Internet Services in Zambia, <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2014/jul/31/facebook-internet-org-app-zambia>

⁹ UNESCO, Zambia Education Policy Review: Paving the Way for SDG 4 – Education 2030, <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0024/002464/246408e.pdf>

¹⁰ 40.8% of Zambians Living in Extreme Poverty, <https://www.lusakatimes.com/2016/04/28/40-8-zambians-living-extreme-poverty/>

August 11, 2016 under the guidance of the amended constitution ratified on January 5, 2016.¹¹ President Edgar Lungu was re-elected. However, reports of vote rigging, voter intimidation, arrests of opposition leaders and media were reported during the 2016 elections.¹²

A referendum seeking to amend the constitution by asking citizens whether they agreed to the proposed changes to the Bill of Rights and Article 79 of the constitution was held to coincide with the 2016 elections. However, the results were nullified following low voter turnout 44%, which was below the required 50% threshold required to validate the vote.¹³

Digital activism has caught up in Zambia with civil society actors using ICT to engage government, advocate for law reforms and sensitise citizens on their civic rights and duties.¹⁴ During 2016, civil society actors launched the “Zambia Elections Information Centre” to provide timely information about the elections through use of ICT-based platforms.¹⁵ Other citizen e-participation platforms included *Know Your Candidate*¹⁶ and the *Scorpion Facebook* page,¹⁷ which were used to discuss candidates vying for presidential and parliamentary seats. The Know You Candidate platform was mainly used to introduce candidates vying for different political positions to the would-be electorates while Scorpion provided a platform for the public to know what the candidates promised to offer to the Zambian populace politically, socially and economically. Both offered an opportunity for a cross-section of society to debate issues that were raised by candidates in their manifestos and for the candidates to interact with the electorate.

Media freedom in Zambia continues to face challenges, despite clear provisions in the constitution including Article 20 which provides for the right to freedom of expression, the freedom to seek, receive and impart information and that of the press.¹⁸ However, draconian legislation such as the Penal Code Act 2012¹⁹ contain provisions that criminalise public scrutiny of the president and government, publication of information likely to cause “fear and alarm to the public.”²⁰ In August 2016, the Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA) suspended broadcasting licences for Muvi TV, Komboni Radio and Itezhi Tezhi Radio for alleged “unprofessional conduct posing a risk to national peace and stability”.²¹

¹¹ Electoral Commission of Zambia, General Elections 2016,

https://www.elections.org.zm/general_election_2016.php

¹² Zambia arrests 133 protesters after contested election, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/08/zambia-arrests-133-protesters-contested-election-160816080236912.html>

¹³ Electoral Commission of Zambia, 2016 Referendum, https://www.elections.org.zm/results/2016_referendum

¹⁴ Triple V Campaign and Grand Coalition, <http://www.osisa.org/pt-br/hiv-and-aids/zambia/triple-v-campaign-and-grand-coalition>

¹⁵ Zambia vote, <http://zambivote2016.org/about-us/>

¹⁶ Zambia – Know your Candidate, https://web.facebook.com/KYC2021/?_rdr

¹⁷ Zambia Scorpion, https://web.facebook.com/groups/sidiquegelloo/?_rdr

¹⁸ Zambia Constitution, <http://www.wipo.int/edocs/lexdocs/laws/en/zm/zm041en.pdf>

¹⁹ Penal Code Act, 2012.

<http://www.parliament.gov.zm/sites/default/files/documents/acts/Penal%20Code%20Act.pdf>

²⁰ See, Section 60, 67 and 69.

²¹ Muvi TV & Komboni Radio Licences Revoked For Alleged Misconduct,

<https://zambiareports.com/2016/08/22/muvi-tv-komboni-radio-licences-revoked-for-alleged-misconduct/>

4. Laws and Policies Affecting Internet Freedom

Article 20 (1) of the Constitution of Zambia amended in 2016 provides for the right to freedom of expression, and the right to privacy. It states that “Except with his own consent, no person shall be hindered in the enjoyment of his freedom of expression, that is to say, freedom to hold opinions without interference, freedom to receive ideas and information without interference, freedom to impart and communicate ideas and information without interference, whether the communication be to the public generally or to any person or class of persons, and freedom from interference with his correspondence.”

However, the right to privacy is threatened by the mandatory registration of SIM cards as provided for under the Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) Act No.15 of 2009 and the Statutory Instrument on the Registration of Electronic Communication Apparatus No. 65 of 2011. Registration requires subscribers to provide their personal details and identity cards.²² Whereas such registration per se may not present a threat to citizens’ data and privacy, in a context such as Zambia’s where there is no data protection and privacy law, and no safeguards to protect the data collected by telecom service providers, it is not farfetched to express fears about such data being mishandled and misused.

Additionally, mandatory registration of all persons based in Zambia providing cryptography services and products is provided for under Section 22 (4) of the Electronic Communications and Transactions Act, which states that “A person who intends to provide a cryptograph service or product shall apply to the Authority for registration in the prescribed manner and form upon payment of the prescribed fee.” Those who fail to register with the Authority are liable upon conviction to a fine or to imprisonment for a period not exceeding seven years, or to both.²³

Although Zambia does not have a data protection law, there are provisions under the Electronic Communications and Transaction Act No. 9, 2009²⁴ that repealed the Computer Misuse and Crimes Act, 2004, which provide for data protection and privacy. Part VII, Sections 41 and 42 of the Act provides for the protection of personal information and lists principles governing the collection of personal information. Section 42 states that a collector must disclose in writing to the data subject the specific purpose for which any personal information is being requested, collated, processed or stored.²⁵

Section 61 allows persons to request for take down of any data or activities infringing their rights, unlawful materials or activities. Meanwhile, Section 62 (1) bars service providers from active monitoring of users’ activities while subsection (2) gives the Minister powers to issue a statutory instrument to prescribe procedures for service providers to “inform the competent public authorities of alleged illegal activities undertaken, or information provided, by recipients of their service; and communicate to the competent authorities, at their request, information enabling the identification of recipients of their service.”

Unlawful interception of communications is prohibited under Part XI, section 64 of the Electronic Communications and Transactions Act, 2009 and is punishable by imprisonment for a period of 25 years. The law calls for the establishment of a Central Monitoring and Coordination Centre managed, controlled and operated by the department responsible for Government communications. It is under this centre that

²² ZICTA, Sim Card registration, [https://www.zicta.zm/Views/Articles/Sim%20Registration%20\(FAQ\)%20.htm](https://www.zicta.zm/Views/Articles/Sim%20Registration%20(FAQ)%20.htm)

²³ Section 23 of the Electronic Communications and Transactions Act No 21 of 2009,

²⁴ Zambia Electronic Communications and Transaction Act No. 9 of 2009, <http://zambialaws.com/Principal-Legislation/electronic-communications-and-transactions-act.html>

²⁵ Article 42 of the Electronic Communications and Transactions Act No 21 of 2009

lawful interception is permitted by only law enforcement officers who can do so upon issuance of a court order.

Under Section 77, service providers are mandated to ensure that their electronic communication systems are technically capable of lawful interceptions. They are also required to install hardware and software facilities and devices to enable the interception of communications when so required by a law enforcement officer or under a court order; and to provide services that are capable of rendering real-time and full-time monitoring facilities for the interception of communications. Furthermore, service providers are required to provide all call-related information in real-time or as soon as possible upon call termination; provide one or more interfaces from which any intercepted communication shall be transmitted to the Monitoring Centre; transmit intercepted communications to the Monitoring Centre through fixed or switched connections; and provide access to all intercepted subjects operating temporarily or permanently within the service provider's communications systems, and where the interception subject is using features to divert calls to other service providers or terminal equipment, access to such other providers or equipment.

Service providers who fail to comply with these requirements are liable upon conviction to a fine or to imprisonment for a period not exceeding five years, or to both. Meanwhile Section 79 calls for service providers to "provide services which has the capability to be intercepted; and store call-related information". Online users can, however, use encrypted communication as provided under Section 85 of the Electronic Communications and Transaction Act, 2009. It states that "A person shall use an encryption, regardless of encryption algorithm selected, encryption key length chosen, or implementation technique or medium used."

Part XIV of the Electronic Communications and Transaction Act, 2009 also permits online monitoring of information, where it calls for the appointment of cyber inspectors by the communication authority. Under Section 94(1), these inspectors who may work with a law enforcement officer are mandated to among others "monitor and inspect any website or activity on an information system in the public domain and report any unlawful activity to the appropriate authority." These inspectors have the power to inspect, search and seize property at any reasonable time, without prior notice, and on the authority of a search warrant issued by court. A person who refuses to co-operate with or hinders a cyber inspector from conducting a lawful search or seizure under this section commits an offence and is liable, upon conviction, to a fine or to imprisonment for a period not exceeding one year, or to both.

Zambia does not have a right to information law, making it hard to access information in the hands of government ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs).

5. Results

5.1 Website blockages and content removals

One of the first documented acts of official censorship of online content in Africa is believed to have taken place in Zambia in February 1996 when the government succeeded in the take down of content from the online edition of *The Post* newspaper after threatening to prosecute the country's main Internet Service

Provider (ISP), Zamnet.²⁶ The content was banned under the Preservation of Public Security Act because it allegedly contained a report based on leaked documents that revealed secret government plans for a referendum on the adoption of a new constitution. A presidential decree warned the public that anyone caught with the banned edition, including the electronic version, would be liable to prosecution.²⁷

Later in July 2013, government blocked four independent online news websites - Zambia Watchdog and its partner websites, Zambia Reports²⁸, Barotse Post, and Radio Barotse²⁹ over publication of information critical of the Patriotic Front (PF) ruling party under former president Micheal Sata. The Zambia Watchdog blamed the PF government for the shutdown including a denial of service (DOS) attack which caused inaccessibility to the news site for close to eight hours. The international company which hosts the Watchdog and other news websites said this was the most complex attack that they had seen in size and complexity.³⁰ Tests by the Open Observatory of Network Interference (OONI) confirmed presence of deep packet inspection (DPI) equipment inside Zambia which caused the inaccessibility of the websites within Zambia.³¹

At the time of reporting, the Zambia Watchdog domain name remains blocked on some networks in the country, although the website can be accessed outside of Zambia. In an interview, an ISP official speaking anonymously told OpenNet Africa that they had blocked the website upon instructions of the communications regulator. However, Zamtel denied blocking of the site which remains inaccessible on their network. "That issue is not for us, we know it is government and the ZICTA. We only block when the client is not paying their dues but when it is something to do with the state, it is not us but the authority," he said.³²

Government has also reportedly attempted to manipulate online content to steer discourse in its favour. Fake Facebook pages purporting to belong to opposition leaders or leaders in the ruling party have been created in an effort to erode public confidence by posting false content or content aimed at damaging reputations. In 2014, then a Junior Minister and Patriotic Front (PF) Secretary General, Edgar Lungu fell victim to the fake Facebook charade after a fake account *Edgar Lungu for 2016* was purporting to promote his presidential ambitions.³³

Meanwhile, in August 2016, internet connectivity interruptions were reported during the election period but these could not be verified as deliberately orchestrated by the state or service providers.³⁴

²⁶ Sally Burnheim, The Right to Communicate, Internet in Africa. Censorship and control: obstacles to growth, Article 19, <https://www.article19.org/data/files/pdfs/publications/africa-internet.pdf>;

²⁷ Ibid

²⁸ Reporters without Borders publishes articles censored by Zambian government, <https://rsf.org/en/news/rwb-publishes-articles-censored-zambian-government>

²⁹ Zambia blocks third website: Barotse Post, <http://www.zambaiawatchdog.com/zambia-blocks-third-website-barotse-post/>

³⁰ Technical details on how PF tried to take down the Watchdog, <https://www.zambaiawatchdog.com/technical-details-on-how-pf-hacked-the-watchdog/>

³¹ Zambia, a country under Deep Packet Inspection, <https://ooni.torproject.org/post/zambia/>

³² Interview with T.D., an official of ZICTA, August 2016

³³ [Lungu Slams Fake Facebook](http://allafrica.com/stories/201410020114.html), <http://allafrica.com/stories/201410020114.html>

³⁴ Internet outage reported in parts of Zambia, Tech Trends, August 18, 2016, <http://www.techrends.co.zm/internet-outage/>

5.2 Online Surveillance

Article 64 of Zambia’s Electronic Communications and Transactions Act 2009 provides for the lawful interception of communication upon presentation of a court order. The Act also calls for the establishment of the Central Monitoring and Coordination Centre, under Article 65, which is responsible for aggregating all authorised interceptions of communication.³⁵ Service providers are also required by law³⁶ to install hardware and software facilities and devices that enable the “real-time” and “full-time” interception of communications upon request by law enforcement agencies.

In 2013, then president Michael Sata was reported to have authorised the Office of the President Special Division to interfere or tap phone conversations and any other internet services including emails of anyone living in Zambia if ordered to do so by the Attorney General.³⁷ Prior to that, it had also been reported that the government had engaged Chinese ICT experts to install a secret internet monitoring facility in the country,³⁸ with the main aim of enabling back door access to communications targeting mainly opposition politicians and diplomats.³⁹ There were also reports of government’s purchase of sophisticated spyware known as Remote Control System (RCS) from the Italian company Hacking Team, which sells intrusion and surveillance technology.⁴⁰

During the 2013 by-elections, reports of unsolicited political messages in some parts of the country drew criticism from the public.⁴¹

In June 2015, two individuals sued Airtel for divulging to third parties text messages that were sent through their networks between 2013 and 2014.⁴² The two claimed that the mobile company tapped their phone conversations as well as that of other opposition MPs and handed them over to government. The two cited section 64 of the Electronic and Communication Transactions Act, which states that a person shall not intercept, attempt to intercept or procure another person to intercept or attempt to intercept, any communication. In August 2016, prosecution of the former directors of the company commenced with the first court hearing scheduled for September 27, 2016.⁴³ The directors who had since then resigned from the company for reasons not related to the court case included Khan Farhad Noor Mohamed (a South African national), Dipak Kumar Atmaram Patel (Zambian) and Christophe Claude Gabriel (French).

³⁵ OONI, Zambia Election Monitoring, <https://ooni.torproject.org/post/zambia-election-monitoring/>

³⁶ Article 67 of the Electronic Communications

³⁷ Sata Signs Order for OP to Tap Phones, Emails, <https://www.zambiawatchdog.com/sata-signs-order-for-op-to-tap-phones-emails/>

³⁸ Zambia: Chinese Experts to Monitor Internet?, <https://advox.globalvoices.org/2013/02/23/zambia-chinese-experts-to-monitor-internet/>

³⁹ PF govt to crack on internet users, targeting ZWD and Diplomats, <https://www.zambiawatchdog.com/pf-govt-to-crack-on-internet-users-targeting-zwd-and-diplomats/>

⁴⁰ Freedom House, 2015. Freedom On the Net Zambia Report, <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-net/2015/Zambia>

⁴¹ PF using details of sim registration to campaign, distributing cash, <https://www.zambiawatchdog.com/pf-using-details-of-sin-registrion-to-campaign/>

⁴² Journalists Petition Airtel Over Illegal Spying, <https://zambiareports.com/2015/06/16/journalists-petition-airtel-over-illegal-spying/>

⁴³ Airtel Directors Face Criminal Prosecution For Wiretapping Journalists, <https://zambiareports.com/2016/08/28/airtel-directors-face-criminal-prosecution-for-wiretapping-journalists/>

5.3 Use and Abuse Courts of Law to Stifle Internet Freedom

In 2013, freelance journalists Wilson Pondamali, Thomas Zgambo and media trainer Clayson Hamasaka were arrested for alleged links to the *Zambian Watchdog* although later different charges were laid against them.⁴⁴ Each was arrested separately in morning raids of their homes, with computers and data storage devices confiscated and screened while the accused were in detention. Pondamali was charged with four counts of theft, escape from custody, and possession of military books contrary to county's Defence Act. Meanwhile, Zgambo and Hamasaka were separately charged for forgery and possession of obscene content. Only Hamasaka has been acquitted of the charges after two years of trial.⁴⁵ The state entered a *nolle prosequi* to discontinue the case against Thomas Zgambo.

On December 11, 2015, the offices of *The Post* newspaper, which also maintains an online version at <https://www.postzambia.com>, were raided and equipment such as desktop computers, laptops, and servers were confiscated over allegations of evading tax.⁴⁶ However, the newspaper argued that this was a veiled attempt to shut it down.

6. Discussion and Recommendations

6.1 Discussion

The right to freedom of expression especially online still faces various challenges in Zambia. Over the years, the government has deployed a series of tactics aimed at frustrating online rights including press freedom, freedom of expression and access to information.

There have been repeated incidents of government-initiated blockages of websites with content considered to be critical of the state. Frivolous charges have also been instituted against some journalists and online activists because of their online activity, thus curtailing press freedom and freedom of expression. Many have turned to the use of online anonymity to continue voicing their concerns.

"We are scared to comment on matters of national interest for fear of losing our jobs more especially that we work for state media. As news editor for state media it is difficult for us to air our views on most issues and the only way out is to use social media with a different name,"

Journalist interviewed for the study.

The extent to which ISPs have cooperated with government agencies in releasing subscribers' information still remains unknown as there has been no known criminal proceedings against any citizen resulting from their online communication. However, ISPs remain enablers of website blockages following instructions from state agencies.

⁴⁴ Zambia: "King Cobra" strikes, <http://www.mediadefence.org/news/zambia-%E2%80%9Cking-cobra%E2%80%9D-strikes>

⁴⁵ Journalist Clayson Hamasaka acquitted, evidence was planted, <https://www.lusakatimes.com/2015/08/11/clayson-hamasaka-acquittedevidence-was-planted/>

⁴⁶ ZRA Is Trying To Stop The POST From Publishing, It's Not TAX They Are After – Zulu <https://www.tumfweko.com/2015/12/11/its-not-tax-they-are-after-zulu/comment-page-1/>

The absence of a privacy and data protection law has also made online users vulnerable to surveillance and intimidation, with the government having collected massive personal information during the mandatory SIM card registration exercise.

6.2 Recommendations

From the above results and discussion, a number of recommendations can be derived for government, civil society and the media, as each of these stakeholders needs to play a critical role in promoting and protecting the right to freedom of expression and the free flow of information online.

6.2.1 Government

- The government should desist from blocking or shutting down critical online news sites as this infringes on citizens' fundamental rights of freedom of expression and access to information - both fundamental ingredients in a democracy.
- Following the amendment of the constitution, the government should expedite the drafting and passage of a privacy and data protection law to guarantee the protection of citizens' data that has been collected by the government during the mandatory SIM card registrations, as well as other personal information.
- The Zambian Government should review laws that limit internet freedoms including the Electronic Communications and Transactions Act and provide for progressive laws that make it easy to use the internet securely and openly.
- The government, through ZICTA, should seek to build partnerships with the private sector and civil society to sensitise the masses on laws governing internet use for the public to appreciate and be able to use ICT more effectively to claim their rights and to improve their livelihoods.
- Government should create more opportunities for the adoption of ICT in underserved areas by effectively enforcing the Universal Service policy that should be used to bridge the digital divide (gender and rural/urban).
- Government should refrain from unwarranted surveillance of online users and where necessary, the surveillance should be done under internationally acceptable standards.
- The government should work towards the development of a dedicated law to guarantee access to information wherein the role of ICT is also recognised.

6.2.2 Civil Society

- Civil society within and outside Zambia should advocate for the respect for internet freedom by government, service providers and individuals through increased awareness creation on internet freedom issues.
- Civil society should also seek to build the capacity of citizens with the skills and tools to ensure safe digital communication practices and circumvention of blockages and surveillance.
- Civil society should increase investment in internet and related platforms that ease access to information for citizens and makes it possible for them to securely demand accountability from public office holders.

6.2.3 Media

- Media should pursue reporting which encourages increased awareness of what is entailed in defending internet freedom in Zambia. This will in the long run address emerging online challenges such as hate speech and violence against vulnerable users especially women and children.

6.2.4 Service providers

- Service providers should challenge government requests that violate internet freedom and become more transparent in their dealings with the government. This includes, among others, publishing transparency reports that indicate details such as user data requests and website blockage orders.

This report was produced by the Collaboration on International ICT Policy in East and Southern Africa (CIPESA) under the OpenNet Africa initiative (www.opennetafrika.org) which monitors and promotes internet freedoms in a number of African countries including Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Burundi, Tanzania, Uganda and South Africa. As part of the project, we are documenting internet rights violations, reviewing cyber security policies and how they affect internet freedoms, promoting information availability and conducting awareness-raising.



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