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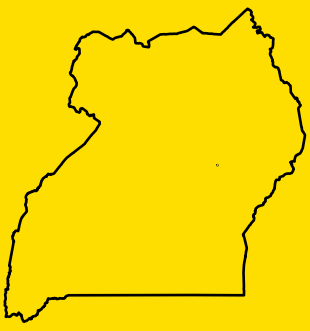
ENVIRONMENTAL LAWYERS COLLECTIVE FOR AFRICA



# SLAPP
*suits*
in African Jurisdictions

A toolkit for
Activists, Lawyers and
Campaigners in

# Uganda




STAY
ALIVE

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# FOREWORD



**Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation (SLAPP suits)** and other forms of judicial harassment designed to limit popular participation in democratic processes are on the rise, both globally and on the African continent. This toolkit assesses the strength of relevant legislative provisions related to SLAPP suits and judicial harassment in Uganda, focussing on specific SLAPP cases that have informed Uganda's jurisprudence in this novel area.

The toolkit provides key recommendations on how to confront SLAPP suits and provides information on organisations that specialise in representing victims of SLAPP suits, as well as key information on workshops, webinars, training manuals and other similar resources where SLAPP suits are considered.

The findings call for the development and adoption of specific anti-SLAPP legislation in Uganda as well as the development of a uniform and binding anti-SLAPP directive/resolution from the African Union (AU).

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The toolkit was developed as a response to the increase in the use of **SLAPPs against lawyers, activists, journalists, and academics in Africa**. The toolkit and related work on SLAPP suits constitute a partnership between **SurgeAfrica** and **Natural Justice** and is intended to **empower campaigners** with the knowledge and tools they need to defend their rights and confidently participate in matters of public interest. As such, the toolkit aims to **strengthen the broader movement for environmental justice across Africa**. We wish to thank the following organisations who were integral to the drafting of this document:

ENVIRONMENTAL LAWYERS COLLECTIVE FOR AFRICA

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# DISCLAIMER

The toolkit (including any of its attachments) has been drafted for the sole use and benefit of promoting access to information on SLAPP suits and is intended for educational purposes only. The use of any information outlined in the toolkit is upon the reader's own risk. The reader assumes full responsibility and risk of any loss resulting from the use of the content contained therein.

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# INTRODUCTION TO SLAPP SUITS
## AND OTHER FORMS OF JUDICIAL HARASSMENT



## 1.1 Democracy's role in environmental governance

Democracy has been defined as 'a system which works towards the full inclusion and participation of citizens in critical decisions and policies of the state.'[1] Democracy should allow for both supportive and critical voices to be heard and should safeguard the rights of those who speak out against injustices, including environmental ones.

However, while laws and adjudicative processes are established to realise democracy and ensure justice, fairness and equality amongst all persons, there are instances where laws and judicial processes are used to subvert those very same principles which they are meant to realise and protect. This can be through unjust laws, haphazard enforcement of legal rules, or policies that favour the powerful. The harsh reality is that there are many instances where laws, lawmakers, and the judiciary, are 'weaponised' (often referred to as 'lawfare') to entrench the interests of political elites and large commercial entities at the cost of popular participation in democratic processes.

## 1.2 The Rise of the SLAPP suit

One way in which the law is being increasingly 'weaponised' in Africa is via Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation (SLAPP suits). SLAPP suits are expensive legal confrontations (usually in the form of defamation cases or interdicts) instigated by powerful parties, such as state actors or companies, against lawyers, campaigners, journalists, and academics who, either during their vocation or activism, threaten to expose potential injustices caused by powerful parties. They are pursued with the aim of intimidating and silencing critiques and represent an abuse of the intention of legal processes. In recent years, they have become one of the most significant risks facing activists and lawyers engaged in climate and human rights work in Africa.[2]

An authoritative legal definition of a SLAPP suit came from the Supreme Court of Canada in 2020 which described them as:

> ***"Lawsuits initiated against individuals or organisations that speak out or take a position on an issue of public interest … not as a direct tool to vindicate a bona fide claim, but as an indirect tool to limit the expression of others … and deter that party, or other potential interested parties, from participating in public affairs."[3]***

[1] Makaye, P. & Dube, B., 2014, 'Zimbabwe: the challenge of Democracy from below, 1980 to 2013', International Journal of Political Science and Development, 2(10), p. 229.

[2] Puentes Riano, A., Chowdhury, J., Masiye-Moyo, N. & Sansico, L., 2023, 'Evaluating impacts of strategic corporate accountability and human rights litigation', Consultoria en Justicia Climatica & Natural Justice, June, https://media.business-humanrights.org/media/documents/Evaluating_Impacts_of_Strategic_Corporate_Accountability_and_Human_Rights_Litigation.pdf Accessed 16 May 2026.

[3] Supreme Court of Canada, 2020, 1704604 Ontario Ltd v Pointes Protection Association 2020 SCC 22 449 DLR (4th) 1 (Pointes) para 2. https://decisions.scc-csc.ca/scc-csc/scc-csc/en/item/18458/index.do. Accessed 4 June 2026.

**In general, SLAPP suits tend to have several common characteristics:**

1. The lawsuit is filed against individuals or organisations speaking on matters of public interest and importance.
2. The lawsuit is filed disguised as a legitimate claim – often exaggerated or baseless - but with the intention to intimidate individuals and/or organisations.
3. The lawsuit is lengthy, drawn out and expensive and has the result of laying emotional, financial and labour burdens on the defendant.
4. The lawsuit is filed by parties that have significant financial and/or political power (e.g. a large corporation or the state) against opponents who have little to none (a community activist).
5. Litigants in SLAPP suits do not necessarily expect to win the case. The aim is rather to intimidate, discourage or exhaust critical speech or the actions of activists and to ultimately shut down any form of opposition.
6. SLAPP suits do not only exist as civil lawsuits and can also be used as criminal claims.[4]

The mere possibility of a SLAPP suit can have a 'chilling effect' on the ongoing activities of individuals and organisations. When faced with potentially significant legal fees opposing a SLAPP, let alone the emotional, reputational and labour burdens of doing so, individuals and organisations can engage in self-censorship. This may include withdrawing or failing to implement legal cases, taking an overly cautious approach to campaigning, or deciding not to campaign at all. This has the effect of supressing vital public discourse, which is precisely the aim of SLAPP suits and those entities which pursue them.[5]

**An Example of a Typical SLAPP Suit**



In 2021, a large South African property developer claimed damages of R197 million from a small nature organisation and its chairperson for alleged costs associated with building delays caused by their legitimate opposition to its development. The nature organisation and its chairperson had legally appealed a decision to allow the development to take place near important wetlands outside Johannesburg. While the developer typically did not pursue the case, its legal actions were clearly designed to intimidate and silence anyone opposed to the development.[6]

Given the 'chilling effect' that SLAPP suits can have on public participation in decision-making, jurisprudence to counter them is developing in various parts of the world. However, such jurisprudence needs to be cognizant of the fact that most rights can be limited by law. Few constitutions provide for rights that cannot be suspended, limited or restricted, including the rights to freedom of expression and/or assembly/association.

This means that during SLAPP suits, the party bringing them may claim that rights such as expression, assembly and association can be limited, particularly when balanced with other rights - such as a party's reputation and rights over property.

[4] For an example of a journalist facing criminal charges via a SLAPP suit see, Hawker, D., 2023, 'Slapp suit: Media freedom vindicated in Zuma private prosecution verdict', Daily Maverick. 7 June. https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2023-06-07-slapp-suit-media-freedom-vindicated-in-zuma-private-prosecution-verdict/. Accessed 19 May 2026.

[5] Preston, J., 2014, 'Participation from the deep freeze: "Chilling" by SLAPP suits', Environmental and Planning Law Journal, 31(1).

[6] Yeld, J., 2025, 'Massive SLAPP suit against environmentalists withdrawn - Gauteng property developers were suing environmentalists for alleged costs from delays to their projects caused by objections', GroundUp, 24 Jan., https://groundup.org.za/article/massive-slapp-suit-against-environmentalists-withdrawn/. Accessed 19 May 2026.

The principles of legality, legitimacy and proportionality are, therefore, permissible limitations that are often abused by SLAPP suits under the guise of upholding the law or maintaining order. Thus, SLAPP lawsuits, to the extent that they criminalise expression or public participation in protests, are disproportionate and represent a perversion of the limitations of these freedoms undermining laws and public policies that rely on public participation.

Much depends on a country's specific legal environment. Some legal environments can be fertile ground for SLAPP suits, depending on how high legal costs are, the elasticity of laws targeting free speech (especially defamation), and rights over protest and association.[7]

## 1.3 Judicial Harassment Beyond SLAPP Suits

SLAPP suits are far from the only mechanism used to curtail or silence the public's right to freedom of expression, assembly and protest. In many African countries state sanctioned police surveillance and violence, and arbitrary arrest and detention, are used to close civic spaces and curtail public discourse. In most instances the use of such instruments are further examples of the law being 'weaponised' against public protest. Lastly, activists – especially environmental defenders - have been silenced by being murdered for their public advocacy.

Some legal scholars have argued, therefore, that the term SLAPP suit should be expanded 'to embrace within its ambit any legal proceedings which are brought to enervate critics, in order to accommodate the versatility of the threat faced by critics in different jurisdictions.'[8] This wider definition of SLAPP suits to include other forms of judicial harassment is adopted in this report.

**In short, SLAPP suits and other forms of judicial harassment have three essential aims:**

| | |
|---|---|
| **To Change the Focus of Dispute** | SLAPP suits and other forms of judicial harassment deliberately shift focus away from the issue of wider public interest to a much narrower form of dispute. |
| **To Change the Forum of Debate** | SLAPP suits and judicial harassment oftentimes take debate outside of the public realm and into more elitist and inaccessible spaces, such as courtrooms. |
| **To Change the Role of the Rights Defender** | SLAPP suits and judicial harassment recast the role of rights defenders from being active participants in civil society to being defendants under threat.[9] |

**The following section explores key SLAPP cases that have informed Uganda's jurisprudence in this novel area.**

[7] Bord-Barthet, J. Lobina, B. & Zabrocka, M. 2021. The Use of SLAPPs to Silence Journalists, NGOs and Civil Society. Policy Department for Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs Directorate-General for Internal Policies. European Union.

[8] Emmamally, Z., 2022, 'Slapping Down SLAPP Suits in South Africa: The Need for Legislative Protection and Civil Society Action', South African Law Journal, 139(1), p. 3. The Coalition Against SLAPPS in Europe defines them as 'abusive lawsuits filed to shut down acts of public participation, including public interest journalism, peaceful protest or boycotts, advocacy, whistleblowing, academic comments, or simply speaking out against the abuse of power. SLAPPs target anyone who works to hold the powerful to account or engage in matters of public interest: so-called 'public watchdogs.' This broad category includes journalists, activists, rights defenders, whistleblowers, campaigning organisations, unions or trade associations, and academics.' See, 'SLAPPs: Increasingly Threatening Democracy in Europe', 2023, The Coalition Against SLAPPS in Europe, Aug., p. 7.

[9] Chamberlain, L., 2021, 'SLAPPing back: A new legal remedy for targets of corporate bullying', South African Journal of Human Rights, 37(3), pp. 411 - 412.

# UGANDA CASE STUDY



## 2. Introduction

Criminal charges and unlawful arrests are an emerging trend of SLAPP suits in Uganda, currently evidenced by the recent and widely publicised arrests of environmental activists involved in the StopEACOP campaign - a campaign aimed at preventing the construction of the East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP).[10] These arrests, often seen as a blatant abuse of legal process to silence and intimidate environmental activists, appear to be undertaken with the collusion of state machinery and business entities. While environmental activists are detained and prosecuted on charges of unlawful assembly, public nuisance, and cyber harassment, most of these cases are subsequently dismissed due to a lack of evidence.

## 2.1 Ugandan Laws that Promote Activism

The categorisation of legal instruments in this toolkit as laws that "support" or "censure" activism is intended as an analytical starting point rather than an absolute classification. Legal instruments may have both enabling and restrictive dimensions, and their effects on activism may vary depending on their substantive provisions, interpretation, implementation and the context in which they are invoked. Accordingly, the categorisation reflects the predominant or most significant effect of each instrument identified in the case studies, while recognising that the same legal framework may create opportunities for activism in some respects while constraining it in others.

### The Ugandan Constitution, 1995 (as amended)

***Freedom of expression is a fundamental human right enshrined in the Constitution of Uganda, specifically in Article 29.***[11] This provision guarantees the right to express oneself without restriction, encompassing various forms of expression, including written, spoken, and artistic communication. In addition, ***Article 29 also entrenches the right to freedom of association.*** These rights are crucial because they play a vital role in fostering democracy by encouraging open dialogue and by allowing public demonstrations. These Articles enable individuals to participate fully in societal discussions which are essential for holding authorities accountable and promoting governance that reflects the will of the people.

### Access to Information Act, 2005

While this law establishes the ***right of individuals to access non-confidential public information*** held by public institutions, public access to information has been increasingly restricted in Uganda since the passing of the Act. In 2011, long overdue regulations to the Act increased the financial and administrative burden of accessing information which, observers argue, represents a ***'downward trend of limiting the right of Ugandan citizens to access government-held information.'***[12] In April 2026, Transparency International stated that access to information implementation in Uganda, ***'remains weak due to secrecy provisions, lack of awareness, and absence of an independent oversight body'.***[13]

[10] '11 StopEACOP activists unlawfully arrested in Kampala while peacefully opposing KCB's EACOP financing', 2025, Banktrack, 24 April, https://www.banktrack.org/article/11_stopeacop_activists_unlawfully_arrested_in_kampala_while_peacefully_opposing_kcb_s_eacop_financing. Accessed 29 June 2026.

[11] Section 29(1) of the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda, 1995.

[12] Larsen, G. & Excell, C. & Veit, P. 2011. 'Uganda's Access to Information Regulations: Another Bump in the Road to Transparency', World Resources Institute. 30 June, p. 1.

[13] Prusa, V. & Banoba, P. 2026, 'The Right to Information and Anti-Corruption in East Africa', Transparency International, p. 21.

### Whistleblower Protection Act, 2010

While the Whistleblower Protection Act is supposed to encourage the disclose of impropriety by protecting whistleblowers from victimisation, in reality it provides very little protection for whistleblowers effectively discouraging transparency and accountability. A recent research report drew attention to ***'insufficient mechanisms for protection of whistle blowers' in Uganda within the context of an 'utter lack of political will to fight corruption'.***[14]

## 2.2 Ugandan Laws that Censure Activism

### The Penal Code, 1950 (as amended)[15]

Section 162 of the Penal Code Act stipulates that, ***'any person who, by print, writing, painting, effigy or by any means otherwise than solely by gestures, spoken words or other sounds, unlawfully publishes any defamatory matter concerning another person, with intent to defame that other person, commits the misdemeanour termed libel.'***

Section 52 of the Penal code provides for the limitation of the freedoms to association and expression by offering several definitions of what it describes as 'unlawful society.' For example, section 52(2)iv says a society is unlawful if it supports ***'subverting or promoting the subversion of the Government or of its officials.'***

### The Public Order Management Act, 2013

The Public Order Management Act seeks to regulate public meetings by establishing the duties and responsibilities of the police and participants at public meetings. It also prescribes safeguarding measures during demonstrations. This Act defines a public meeting as a gathering, assembly, procession or demonstration in a public place conducted for purposes of discussing, acting upon, petitioning or expressing views on a matter of public interest. ***This Act is problematic because it prohibits the public from meeting or discussing matters of public interest without following the relevant protocols.***

Section 6 of the Act requires that the organisers of a public demonstration or meeting inform the Inspector General of Police in writing of any public meeting they are planning to organise. This provision was designed to ensure peaceful public meetings where the police play a protective role over activists or participants. The police have, however, misconstrued this requirement to mean that their permission is required to hold such public gatherings.[16]

### The Computer Misuse Act, 2011

This Act focuses on issues related to internet usage. The Act addresses unauthorized access to computer systems and extends into the realm of online speech, imposing restrictions on speech deemed harmful or offensive. The Act has raised concerns among rights groups, who argue that ***its ambiguous definitions can lead to the suppression of legitimate expression.***[17]

[14] Ngabirano, D. 2023, 'Assessing the Status of Implementation of the Whistle Blowers Protection Act & the Leadership Code Act (as amended)', Anti-Corruption Coalition Uganda, p. 32.

[15] Uganda Penal Code Act 1950. See, https://ulii.org/en/akn/ug/act/ord/1950/12/eng@2024-12-23.

[16] Delaney, S., 2018, 'Supporting Assembly Rights in Africa', WoMin (African Women Unite Against Destructive Resource Extraction), p. 6.

[17] 'Uganda: Scrap draconian law aimed at suppressing freedom of expression online', 2022, Amnesty International, 14 Oct., https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2022/10/uganda-scrap-draconian-law/. Accessed 22 June 2026.

## The Anti-Terrorism Act, 2002

Introduced in 2002, and revised in subsequent years, this Act is designed to combat terrorism but has implications for free speech for the definition of what constitutes ***'terroristic speech'*** under this Act often poses a threat to political dissidence and criticism of the government.[18]

## The Press and Journalists Act, 1995

This Act regulates media operations in Uganda. It mandates accreditation for journalists and ensures that media outputs align with government standards, thereby exerting control over the news cycle. Amendments to this law have often sought to tighten restrictions further, limiting the press's ability to operate independently and transparently.[19] Research indicates that state intimidation, harassment and fears over personal safety have resulted in journalists in Uganda ***'engaging in self-censorship, thereby giving biased or limited information to the public'*** which obviously has serious implications for the creditability of journalism in Uganda.[20]

## The Non-Governmental Organisations (the NGO Act), 2015

The NGO Act is deeply problematic because it places onerous obligations on NGOs to register and renew their registrations, particularly in relation to foreign NGOs operating in Uganda. The Act grants a National NGO Bureau broad powers to refuse the registration of organisations or the renewal of permits which has the potential to limit the right to freedom of association. This limitation to the right to freedom of association is worsened by vague special obligations that must be adhered to by NGOs, exposing NGOs and defenders to harsh penalties if they are contravened.[21] ***In recent years, thousands of NGOs have been closed down in Uganda using this Act, while those still operating lament ongoing harassment by the State.***[22]

## The Protection of Sovereignty Act, 2026

This recent law strengthened the government's control over NGOs and foreign persons working in Uganda. The Act strengthens regulatory control over NGOs by forcing them to declare funds received over UGX400 million (US$ 110 000) and orders that people working ***'as agents of foreigners'*** need to be registered. The Act introduces the crime of ***'economic sabotage'*** which is considered to be any act ***'that weakens, undermines, or damages the economic system or viability of Uganda.'*** This particular 'crime' is deeply concerning because it is obviously open to extremely wide interpretation.[23]

[18] Bossa, S. & Mulindwa, T., 2004, 'The Anti-Terrorism Act, 2002 (Uganda): Human Rights Concerns and Implications', International Commission of Jurists, 15 Sept.

[19] For a detailed account of press freedoms in Uganda see, Cohen, M. & McIntyre, K., 2020, 'The State of Press Freedom in Uganda', International Journal of Communication. 14.

[20] Walulya, G. & Nassanga, G. 2020, 'Democracy at Stake: Self-Censorship as a Self-Defence Strategy for Journalists', Media and Communication. (8)1, p. 5.

[21] Musila, G. 2019, 'Freedoms Under Threat: The Spread of Anti-NGO Measures in Africa', Freedom House, pp. 8 -9.

[22] Mwesigwa, A. 2019, 'Uganda bans thousands of charities in 'chilling' crackdown', The Guardian, 21 Nov. https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2019/nov/21/uganda-bans-thousands-of-charities-in-chilling-crackdown & Environmental Defenders, 2026, Uganda's Suspension of Human Rights NGOs Is Part of a Long Pattern of Shrinking Civic Space and Targeting of Environmental and Land Rights Defenders. 20 Jan. https://watetezi.org/ugandas-suspension-of-human-rights-ngos-is-part-of-a-long-pattern-of-shrinking-civic-space-and-targeting-of-environmental-and-land-rights-defenders/. Accessed 24 June 2026. Also see, International Center for Not-for-Profit Law, 2022, 2021 Civil Society Organisation Sustainability Index: Uganda. Nov.

[23] ALN Uganda, 2026, Legal Alert: The Protection of Sovereignty Act 2026, p. 4.

## 2.3 Examples of SLAPP suits and Judicial Harassment in Uganda

### Stella Nyanzi Vs Uganda Criminal Appeal No.79 of 2019

Dr Stella Nyanzi, an anthropologist and a former Research Fellow at Makerere University in Kampala, was charged with two offences - ***the offence of cyber harassment contrary to Section 24(1), (2) (a) of the Computer Misuse Act, 2011 and offensive communication contrary to Section 25 of the Computer Misuse Act, 2011.*** These charges were brought for allegedly abusing and attacking the person of President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni in a poem she shared online.

***Dr Nyanzi was convicted of the offence of cyber harassment contrary to Section 24(1), (2) (a) of the Computer Misuse Act, 2011 and sentenced to eighteen months in custody. She appealed against the conviction and sentence in the High Court of Uganda which held that the lower court had violated the Appellant's non-derogable right to a fair trial leading to the acquittal of all charges levied against her.***[24]

### Uganda Vs Ntabazi Imran and 8 others CRB 1665/22

On the 5 October 2022, nine student activists were arrested on their way to Parliament to deliver a petition supporting the European Parliament's resolution to halt the construction of the East African Crude Oil Pipeline. They were brought before the Chief Magistrate's Court and charged with the offense of public nuisance. ***The case was dismissed for want of prosecution, due to failure on the part of the prosecution to present any evidence.***

### Uganda v Kajubi Maktum and 3 others CR 893/23

On 15 September 2023, 50 students peacefully marched to the Ugandan Parliament to deliver a petition requesting MPs to use their legislative and oversight powers to end fossil fuel investments in Uganda. ***Police officers denied them access to Parliament and physically assaulted four students who were later charged with public nuisance. The case was dismissed for want of prosecution.***

### Uganda v. Kabuza John & 6 Others CRB 1142/23

On 24 November 2023, seven student activists were arrested and detained for peacefully marching to the Ugandan Parliament to deliver a petition calling for the cessation of EACOP. ***They were detained for more than 28 hours, charged with incitement to violence and remanded to a maximum-security prison. The matter was subsequently dismissed for want of prosecution.***

### Arrest and Detention of Kenyan Activists in Uganda

In September 2025, Ugandan security forces arrested two Kenyan political activists who were attending a rally supporting Ugandan opposition leader Bobi Wine. It has since emerged that the two were ***detained for five weeks in Uganda before being handed over to the Kenyan authorities***. Ugandan President, Yoweri Museveni, is reported to have dismissively stated that they were ***'experts in riots' who had been placed 'in the fridge for some days.'*** This particular case raises the spectre of cross border SLAPPs and judicial harassment.[25]

[24] 'Uganda v Stella Nyanzi (Criminal Appeal No. 80 of 2019) [2020] UGHCCRD 2 (20 February 2020)', 2020, High Court of Uganda, https://ulii.org/en/akn/ug/judgment/ughccrd/2020/2/eng@2020-02-20. Accessed 29 June 2026.

[25] Wertheimer, T. & Zane, D. 2025. Uganda president admits Kenyan activists were arrested and held in 'the fridge', BBC News, 9 Nov., https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cn8v9vkkjm0o. Accessed 19 June 2026.

### Arrest and Ongoing Intimidation of Opposition Figures

*Opposition leader, Bobi Wine, and his supporters and family, continue to face ongoing police and security force harassment in Uganda. This harassment has continued for nearly ten years and has included arbitrary arrests and imprisonment, alleged beatings, and house arrest. Recently Wine and his family fled Uganda fearing for their lives.*[26]

## 2.4 Conclusion

The lack of anti-SLAPP legislation in Uganda, together with the operational context of private prosecution law creates a breeding ground for SLAPP suits in Uganda. The filing of unlawful assembly suits, public nuisance suits, and cyber harassment suits, among others, have been utilised by powerful individuals, businesses, and government to target journalists, activists, and civil society organisations. In particular, research suggests that actions by the State, especially during election periods, result in activist self-censorship, placing severe limitations on their rights to freedom of expression and assembly.[27] While the specific concept of SLAPP suits is not formally codified in Ugandan laws, the use of legal action to suppress dissent, free speech, and public participation is deeply concerning because such actions undermine the democratic principles of free expression and open discourse, silencing critics and discouraging public engagement.

This ongoing threat to democracy has been recognised by the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights which released a statement in late 2024:

> *Condemning the use of the judicial system to pursue questionable and vague criminal charges against activists, including incitement of violence, common nuisance or obstruction of a police officer, to harass and intimidate them, and effectively criminalizing legitimate protest activities*

The Commission called on the government of Uganda to, among other things, 'ensure full respect for the rights to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly, protest, and association as guaranteed by the Ugandan Constitution, regional, and international human rights law'.[28] There is, however, little sign that the present government is open to such criticism, stressing the need for legal reforms to protect activists and defenders against both judicial harassment and extra-legal activities.

[26] Jones, T., 2026, 'Uganda's Bobi Wine says he has fled the country', DW, 15 March & Byaruhanga, C., 2018, 'Uganda's Bobi Wine crisis: The president and the pop star', BBC, 25 Aug.

[27] Murray, D. et al., 2024, 'The Chilling Effects of Surveillance and Human Rights: Insights from Qualitative Research in Uganda and Zimbabwe', Journal of Human Rights Practice. 16.

[28] African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, 2024, Resolution on the Situation of Human Rights Defenders Working on Environmental Issues in Uganda - ACHPR?res. 613 (LXXXI). 2024. https://achpr.au.int/en/adopted-resolutions/613-human-rights-defenders-working-environmental-issues-uganda-achprres613. Accessed 3 June 2025.

# OPPOSING SLAPP SUITS IN AFRICA – WHAT CAN BE DONE?



## 3.1 International Anti-SLAPP Laws

To counter legal frameworks which facilitate SLAPP suits, legal safeguards such as anti-SLAPP statutes need to be in place. Anti-SLAPP jurisprudence is most advanced in the United States, where the first anti-SLAPP law was passed in 1992. To date, 38 American states have passed anti-SLAPP laws.[29]

The European Union passed an anti-SLAPP law in 2024.

> ***In March 2024, the European Union adopted a Directive to end 'abusive court proceedings against public participation….which are not brought to genuinely assert or exercise a right, but have as their main purpose the prevention, restriction or penalisation of public participation, frequently exploiting an imbalance of power between the parties.'[30] Importantly, the Directive allows for the early dismissal of cases and for costs and penalties to be imposed on 'a claimant who has brought abusive court proceedings against public participation.'[31] This directive is the first multinational and transnational anti-SLAPP law.***

## 3.2 African Anti-SLAPP Laws

While there are no specific anti-SLAPP laws in Africa, African states are signatories to various international legal instruments that may be applicable in the defence of an activist, lawyer, journalist or academic facing a SLAPP suit or another form of judicial harassment.




[29] Keating, D., Knowles-Gardner, H. & Greenberg, D. 2025. Anti-SLAPP Statutes: 2025 Report Card. Institute for Free Speech. 25 Aug. https://www.ifs.org/anti-slapp-report/. Accessed 3 June 2026.

[30] European Union. 2024. Directive (EU) 2024/1069. Article 4.3. Also see, van Houtert, B., 2025, 'The Anti-SLAPP Directive as a Roadmap for SLAPP Targets and the Obstacles Along the Way', Maastricht University, 25 Feb., https://www.maastrichtuniversity.nl/blog/2025/02/anti-slapp-directive-roadmap-slapp-targets-and-obstacles-along-way. Accessed 24 June 2026.

[31] European Union. 2024. Directive (EU) 2024/1069. Articles 11, 14 & 15.

## 3.3 The Universal Declaration of Human Rights

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights provides, in Articles 19, 20 and 21, that everyone has the right to freedom of expression, freedom of peaceful assembly and association.[32] These rights are important participatory tools which are entrenched in international and regional legal frameworks, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (Banjul Charter).[33]

### Three specific rights are important for those facing SLAPP suits:

**01**

#### Right to freedom of association

Article 22 of the ICCPR and Article 10 of the African Charter entrench the right to freedom of association at international and regional scales. This right ensures that every individual is free to organise and to form and participate in groups, which enables effective participation in civil and political society.





**02**

#### Right to peaceful assembly

Article 21 of the ICCPR and Article 11 of the African Charter recognise and entrench the right to peaceful assembly with other like-minded persons, highlighting the importance of protest activities. This right particularly affords individuals the opportunity to express their opinions on matters of collective and public interest in a united manner. It is the conduit from which the pillars of advocacy are built, thereby ensuring that citizens can mould their respective societies in alignment with their morals, values and ideals.

**03**

#### Freedom of expression

Freedom of expression is an integral part of public participation provided for in Article 19 of the ICCPR and Article 9 of the African Charter. Freedom of expression includes the right to, seek, receive and express ideas and opinions within the law. Article 19 of the ICCPR goes further to emphasise that this freedom should be enjoyed by all without frontiers.



The 2019 Declaration of Principles of Freedom of Expression and Access to Information in Africa also affirms the rights to freedom of expression and access to information.

[32] Universal Declaration of Human Rights. 1948. United Nations. https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights. Accessed 3 June 2026.

[33] International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. 1966. United Nations. https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/international-covenant-civil-and-political-rights & African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights. 1981. African Union. https://au.int/en/treaties/african-charter-human-and-peoples-rights Accessed 3 June 2026.

## 3.4 African Legal Instruments

While African regional legal instruments specifically addressing SLAPP suits remain underdeveloped, protections can be inferred from broader human rights frameworks and judicial precedents. The African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (also known as the Banjul Charter) has passed a number of relevant resolutions:

> ***Resolution 119 (2007)*** *urges member states 'to take all the necessary measures to ensure to all human rights defenders an environment conducive to carrying out their activities without fear of any acts of violence, threats, reprisals, discrimination, pressure and any arbitrary acts by State or non-State actors as a result of their human rights activities.'*[34]

> ***Resolution 196 (2011)*** *notes that the Commission is 'deeply concerned about the difficult environment in which those who cooperate with African human rights system including human rights defenders in Africa are working in Africa which is characterized in several countries by the persistence of arbitrary arrests and detentions, acts of harassment including judicial harassment, threats and other forms of intimidation, of summary and extra-judicial executions and even acts of torture as a result of their activities.' It calls on states to 'to recognize the role of human rights defenders in the promotion and protection of rights and freedoms as recognised by the African Charter and other regional and international instruments.....to release the human rights defenders who are arbitrarily detained and to put an end to the judicial harassment and other acts of intimidation against human rights defenders.'*[35]

> ***Resolution 376 (2017)*** *essentially repeats the text of Resolution 196 noting once again that the Commission is 'deeply concerned about the situation of human rights defenders in Africa.'*

In September 2025, the Commission noted its concern with the 'growing use of strategic lawsuits against public participation.....which often have been used to curtail the work of civil society, human rights defenders and independent journalists, to drain their resources, stigmatize and criminalize them.' The Commission called on member states to 'enact anti-SLAPP legislation, authorizing early dismissal of such lawsuits and protecting civil society actors against legal harassment.'[36] Article 66 of the AU's African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights allows for supplementary protocols, thus creating a pathway for future instruments to be added which explicitly address SLAPP suits.

[34] African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, 2007, Resolution on the Situation of Human Rights Defenders in Africa - ACHPR/Res.119(XXXXII)07, https://achpr.au.int/en/adopted-resolutions/119-resolution-situation-human-rights-defenders-africa-achprres119.

[35] African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, 2011, Resolution on Human Rights Defenders in Africa - ACHPR/Res.196(L)2011, https://achpr.au.int/en/adopted-resolutions/196-resolution-human-rights-defenders-africa-achprres196l2011

[36] African Union. 2025. African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights. Joint Declaration on Protecting the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association from criminalization amid intensified existential threats. 17 Sept. https://achpr.au.int/en/news/press-releases/2025-10-29/joint-declaration-protecting-rights-freedom-peaceful-assembly. Accessed 19 May 2026.

Particularly relevant to environmental defenders and SLAPP suits was resolution 657 from March 2026, which reaffirmed 'the inseparable link between access to information, environmental rights, and the broader framework of human rights protections enshrined in the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights.' It directly addresses SLAPP suits calling on member states to:

> ***Take appropriate, legislative, administrative and judicial measures to deter and address vexatious, harassing or abusive resort to litigation that unduly restrict and chill public participation in environmental matters, including, inter alia providing targeted procedural protections such as expedited handling of cases, facilitating timely access to legal aid and other appropriate assistance to victims.***[37]

In June 2026, the Commission passed resolution 663 which speaks directly to ongoing challenges, particularly as they relate to judicial processes. It notes that the Commission is:

> ***Concerned by the shrinking of civic space, notably through the use of surveillance, both in the digital domain and in other spheres, as well as the trend towards democratic repression, including transnational repression, factors which undermine the enabling environment for the work of human and peoples' rights defenders in Africa, particularly in the run-up to presidential elections;***
>
> ***Also concerned by the resurgence of cases of abuse of judicial process imposed on human and peoples' rights defenders, characterised by the proliferation of proceedings brought against them or the organisations which employ them, including by non-State actors, as well as by the imposition of excessively high bail amounts, which are likely to unduly restrict the exercise of their activities;***
>
> ***Concerned further by the persistence of violations targeting human and peoples' rights defenders, in particular arbitrary arrests and detentions, acts of torture, enforced disappearance and murder, as well as the excessive and prolonged use of pre-trial detention, including in conditions characterised by restrictions on their rights of access to legal representation, appropriate healthcare and family visits;***
>
> ***Concerned, furthermore, by the violations of the freedoms of association and peaceful assembly of human and peoples' rights defenders, in particular through the banning of peaceful demonstrations, arrests during such gatherings, and the suspension or dissolution of civil society organisations outside any due legal process.'***

[37] African Commission on Human and People's Rights, 2026, Resolution on Access to Information and the Right to a Healthy Environment - ACHPR/Res.657(LXXXVI).

Among several demands, it called on states to 'refrain from any form of abuse of judicial process imposed on human and peoples' rights defenders, including by non-State actors'.[38]

In combatting SLAPP lawsuits, lawyers must, therefore, be innovative in their use of international rights protections, especially where there is a significant lacuna in the law with regards to anti-SLAPP legislation within a country. Some legal progress is being made towards combatting SLAPPs in Africa. For example, as has been noted, in 2022 the Constitutional Court in South Africa recognised SLAPPs 'as an abuse of process' noting that SLAPPs may be raised as a provisional defence.[39] Despite this, there is clearly a pressing need for the development of national anti-SLAPP legislation in African legal jurisdictions because as legal scholars note, 'anti-SLAPP laws act as a filter for legal proceedings by restraining abusive cases'.[40]



[38] African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, 2026, Resolution on the Situation of Human and Peoples' Rights Defenders in Africa ACHPR/Res.663(LXXXVII) 2026, https://achpr.au.int/en/adopted-resolutions/663-achprres663lxxxvii-2026.

[39] Centre for Environmental Rights. 2022. South African Constitutional Court provides new protection for activists against SLAPP suits. 15 Nov. https://cer.org.za/news/south-african-constitutional-court-provides-new-protection-for-activists-against-slapp-suits. Accessed 21 May 2026.

[40] Emmamally, Z., 2022, 'Slapping Down SLAPP Suits in South Africa: The Need for Legislative Protection and Civil Society Action', South African Law Journal, 139(1), p. 18.

## 3.5 Model Anti-SLAPP Law for Africa

As an essential starting point the African Union needs to develop and fully implement a dedicated and binding anti-SLAPP protocol for all members states. This should be accompanied by country-specific anti-SLAPP laws. While being fully cognizant that bespoke and innovative anti-SLAPP legislation is required in all African jurisdictions because there is no one-size-fits-all solution, a draft model anti-SLAPP statute for South Africa has recently been drawn up that includes four essential features which are universally applicable:[41]

### 1. Definition of SLAPP suits

The ability for judges to recognise and act against SLAPP suits is essential, thus the Model law describes them as unfounded legal proceedings which are threatened or brought against persons with the chief goal of discouraging, silencing, harassing, detracting, under resourcing, and disciplining individuals or a collective of individuals from participating openly in matters of public interest. These matters could include activities such as protest actions, campaigns building, networking publicly, criticism, academic research, journalism, or whistleblowing.

### 2. Test for Strategic Litigation Against Public Participation

The Anti-SLAPP Model Law also provides a structured test to determine whether a lawsuit qualifies as a Strategic Lawsuit Against Public Participation. This test ensures that courts can quickly identify and dismiss SLAPP cases before they impose undue burdens on defendants.

### 3. Early Dismissal Mechanism

It provides a legal process for defendants to request the swift dismissal of SLAPP suits, aimed to reduce the financial and emotional strain on those targeted.

### 4. Protective Measures

The law includes provisions to safeguard defendants from retaliatory actions, such as awarding costs and damages to those wrongfully sued (Courts could automatically award the full costs of participating in a suit to a defendant upon dismissal), thereby deterring potential SLAPP filers.

Scholars argue strongly in support of model laws because of the wider regional impact they can have on shaping 'judicial imagination to influence future decisions.'[42]

[41] Bruce, L., 2024, 'Model law for protection against SLAPP suits', Centre for Applied Legal Studies- University of the Witwatersrand, 10 June, *https://www.wits.ac.za/news/sources/cals-news/2024/model-law-for-protection-against-slapp-suits.html*.

[42] Mafusire, B., 2026, 'Civil Society as a Jurisprudential Actor: Contesting SLAPPS in Business and Human Rights Litigation in Southern Africa', American Journal of International Law Unbound, 125, p. 157.

## 3.6 Recommendations

SLAPPs are increasingly being employed by powerful entities to limit free speech and discourage public participation. These legal actions target organisations, activists, journalists and legal professionals indiscriminately, saddling them with legal costs and threatening them into silence. For the effective development, adoption and implementation of anti-SLAPP legislation in African jurisdictions the following recommendations are made:

### 1. PUBLICISE SLAPP SUITS

To prevent issues which are of public interest being turned into private court cases, civil society organisations, the media and activists must work tirelessly to transform SLAPP suits into public issues via social mobilisation, media campaigns and public education (including judicial awareness).





### 2. PUBLICISE HIDDEN SLAPP SUITS

Civil society organisations and the media must recognise that many attempts to intimidate and silence do not reach the courts (legal threats communicated through confidential letters and correspondence from lawyers etc). Such threats against activists and civil society organisations must also be systematically publicised. In addition, online smear and disinformation campaigns designed to encourage self-censorship must be vigorously publicised.

### 3. MOBILISE SHAME

When facing SLAPP suits, stakeholders should work to 'mobilise shame'. Exposing unjust behaviour to public scrutiny can be a powerful mechanism to counter the vast resources (power asymmetry) that corporations or governments can commit to SLAPP suits. While reputational damage matters to differing degrees among corporations and governments, it is nonetheless a weakness that can be exposed.[43] This particular issue speaks to both government legitimacy and the social license of corporations to operate.

**A critical part of this process is to collect and present compelling evidence to show truth in statements and to demonstrate that an issue of serious public concern is present. This helps to ensure that the government and/or private companies/individuals who are initiating SLAPP suits are subject to scrutiny and held accountable for their actions or activities.**





[43] Emmamally, Z., 2022, 'Slapping Down SLAPP Suits in South Africa: The Need for Legislative Protection and Civil Society Action', South African Law Journal, 139(1), p. 29.



## 4. FILE MOTIONS OF DISMISSAL

In the absence of specific anti-SLAPP laws, filing a motion to dismiss based on a lack of merit to a case, or filing counterclaims for harassment or restriction of civic participatory rights, can be a useful means by which to fight back against SLAPP suits. Doing so, shifts the focus back to the SLAPP plaintiff's motives and might expose the intimidatory tactics being employed by them.

## 5. FORM ANTI-SLAPP COALITIONS

National and regional anti-SLAPP coalitions should be formed to share information and best practice. Such forums and coalitions could facilitate specific anti-SLAPP campaigns. Alliance building between the media and human and environmental rights defenders is particularly critical.





## 6. UNDERTAKE LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY

At national level, relevant civil society organisations and the media should undertake ongoing legislative advocacy to advance the promulgation of specific legal protections. This lobbying should not see the passing of anti-SLAPP legislation as the end goal but should continue so that anti-SLAPP legislation is effectively implemented. At the international level, the promotion of a binding anti-SLAPP directive from the AU should be a priority area of legislative advocacy. In addition, legislative advocacy to advance the promulgation of anti-SLAPP laws should include regional structures such as the SADC, EAC and ECOWAS.

## 7. LOCATE THE FIGHT AGAINST SLAPP WITHIN WIDER HUMAN RIGHTS STRUGGLES

The place of anti-SLAPP legislation should be seen within the wider struggle for democracy in Africa, including the critical question of judicial independence. Therefore, the challenge posed by SLAPP suits and other forms of judicial harassment cannot simply be reduced to a question of legal reform, because questions of political will are paramount because SLAPPs are 'part of the broader struggles for democratic accountability and economic justice.'[44] As analysts note, 'while we can outline the issues and shed light on the misuse of lawfare, fully resolving these deep-seated problems requires long term political commitment as well as accountability.'[45] What this means is that pushing back against SLAPP suits in Africa should be located within wider pro-democracy and rights movements.



[44] Mafusire, B., 2026, 'Civil Society as a Jurisprudential Actor: Contesting SLAPPS in Business and Human Rights Litigation in Southern Africa,' American Journal of International Law Unbound, 125, p. 154.

[45] Chawaremera, M. & Kugara, S., 2025, 'A Critical Lens into Lawfare as a Tool to Undermine Democracy and Civil Liberties,' African Journal of Law and Justice Systems, 4(3), p. 22.

Directory of organizations potentially offering legal, financial, and emotional support for SLAPP victims.

| ORGANISATION | CONTACT INFORMATION | LOCATION |
|---|---|---|
| Kenya Human Rights Commission (KHRC) | admin@khrc.or.ke | Kenya |
| Mzalendo Trust | info@mzalendo.com | Kenya |
| Twaweza | info@twaweza.org | Kenya |
| Katiba Institute | info@katibainstitute.org | Kenya |
| Justice Defenders | https://www.justice-defenders.org/ | Kenya & Uganda |
| African Environmental Defenders | https://envirodefenders.africa/ | Africa wide |
| Zimbabwe Environmental Lawyers Association | Info@zela.org | Zimbabwe |
| Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights | info@zlhr.org | Zimbabwe |
| TI Zimbabwe - Advocacy and Legal Advice Center | https://www.tizim.org/advocacy-and-legal-advice-center/ | Zimbabwe |
| Asina Loyiko | info@asinaloyiko.org.za https://asinaloyiko.org.za/ | South Africa |
| Legal Resources Centre | Info@lrc.org.za | South Africa |
| Women's Legal Centre | https://wlce.co.za/ | South Africa |
| Lawyers for Human Rights | https://www.lhr.org.za/ | South Africa |
| Centre for Environmental Rights | Info@cer.org.za | South Africa |
| Southern African Litigation Centre | Enquiries@salc.org.za | Namibia \| South Africa Zambia \| Zimbabwe |
| Centre for Applied Legal Studies | duduzile.mlambo@wits.ac.za busisiwe.kamolane@wits.ac.za | South Africa |
| Centre for Child Law | centreforchildlaw@up.ac.za | South Africa |
| Global Climate Legal Defenders | abrownell@climatelegaldefense.org | Uganda |
| Southern Africa Human Rights Defenders Network | info@southerndefenders.africa | South Africa \| Zambia Zimbabwe |
| Coalition Against SLAPPS in Africa | https://www.sarwatch.co.za/project/coalition-against-slaaps-in-africa/ | Africa wide |
| SLAPP Back | https://slappback.org.za | South Africa |
| Platform for the Protection of Whistleblowers in Africa | https://www.pplaaf.org/ | Africa wide |
| Action – Access to Information Namibia | https://action-namibia.org/ | Namibia |
| Media Institute of Southern Africa | https://misa.org/ | Southern Africa |
| Media Monitoring Africa | https://www.mediamonitoringafrica.org/ | Africa wide |
| Campaign for Free Expression | https://freeexpression.org.za/ | South Africa |
| Institute for Human Rights and Development in Africa | https://ihrda.org/en/ | Africa wide |

Links to workshops, webinars, and manuals on SLAPP defences.

| TITLE | TYPE OF RESOURCE | LINK |
|---|---|---|
| **The Importance of Freedom of Expression** *(the Southern Africa Litigation Centre)* | Report | https://www.southernafricalitigationcentre.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Chapter-2.pdf |
| **Campaign for Free Expression** | Article | https://freeexpression.org.za/publications/ |
| **Legal Gaslighting – SLAPP-ing back at abusive process** | Article | https://www.hsfkramer.com/notes/africa/2023-07/legal-gaslighting-slapp-ing-back-at-abusive-process |
| **SARW/ CALS Anti- SLAPP Toolkit** *(Wits University and Centre for Applied Legal Studies)* | Report | https://www.wits.ac.za/media/wits-university/faculties-and-schools/commerce-law-and-management/research-entities/cals/documents/programmes/environment/resources/Anti-Slapp-Toolkit-email-1-2.pdf |
| **A Model Law for Protection from Strategic Litigation Against Public Participation** *(Wits University)* | Legal Resource | https://www.wits.ac.za/media/wits-university/faculties-and-schools/commerce-law-and-management/research-entities/cals/documents/programmes/rule-of-law/resources/Draft%20for%20public%20comment-%2013Dec2023-%20Anti-SLAPP%20model%20law-%20Draft%202023.pdf https://www.wits.ac.za/media/wits-university/faculties-and-schools/commerce-law-and-management/research-entities/cals/documents/programmes/rule-of-law/resources/Anti-SLAPP%20Model%20Law%20for%20web%207%20June%202024.pdf |
| **Toolkit on the right to Freedom of Association and Assembly** *(Legal Resources Centre)* | Report | https://lrc.org.za/wp-content/uploads/Toolkit-booklet-210x148-Online-version.pdf |
| **Asina Loyiko Website Launch** | Webinar | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s1MGDFmdWvI |
| **ICAR Annual Meeting - Protecting Protest: Fighting Back Against Corporate Bullies.** | Webinar | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DkG8dcTsQ04 |
| **The effects of Strategic Lawsuits against Public participation (SLAPP) on freedom of expression and citizen participation in public dialogues in Kenya** | Report | https://mzalendo.com/media/resources/Slapp.Report-2.pdf |
| **SLAPPed: A Tool for Activists - Part 7: Resources** | Report | https://www.acluohio.org/slapped-tool-activists/how-guard-against-slapp-suits/ |
| **Defending SLAPP Suits: Widening Circuit Split, Anti-SLAPP Motions, Cease and Desist Letters, Amended State Laws** *(Strafford Webinars)* | Webinar | https://www.straffordpub.com/products/defending-slapp-suits-widening-circuit-split-anti-slapp-motions-cease-and-desist-letters-amended-state-laws-2021-03-31 |
| **SLAPPed but Not Silenced: Defending Human Rights in the Face of Legal Risks** *(Vance Centre)* | Webinar | https://www.vancecenter.org/vance-centerhosts-bhr-webinar-on-role-of-lawyers-inslapps/ |
| **Anti-SLAPP Legal Guide** | Blog | https://www.rcfp.org/anti-slapp-legal-guide/ |
| **Trainings on SLAPPs and Legal Defence** | Webinar | https://cldc.org/resources/resource-library/?_sfm_resource-category=SLAPP |
| **International Senior Lawyers Project** | Anti-SLAPP Guide for Lawyers in Southern Africa | https://islp.org/7455-2/ |

## Digital Security: Protecting communications and sensitive data.

**Passwords:** In today's digital world, safeguarding personal information online is more important than ever. This of course is amplified when activists are fighting to protect their or someone else's biodiversity, livelihood, cultural etc… One of the most effective ways to protect your data is by using strong, unique passwords for every account, and enabling two-factor authentication (2FA) wherever possible.

**TIPS:**

- Make sure that when creating a new password, that it is randomised, has capital letters, lower case letters and characters – and it is longer than ten digits.
- Choose reliable security methods, such as authentication apps, security keys, SMSes
- When saving passwords, make sure to save them in a key chain app or programme. Examples of these apps/programmes are NordPass, 1Password, Keeper, RoboForm

**Phishing scams:** It's crucial to be cautious of phishing scams — avoid clicking on any suspicious links or downloading attachments from unknown sources that do not look like it is from the company that it says it is from. i.e. john@party.xzy would not be a legitimate email from the company party.

**VPNs:** Using a virtual private network (VPN) when browsing on public Wi-Fi can prevent others from intercepting your data and when traveling to a country that may have unfavourable protection of information laws it may stop such governments from accessing your information.

**TIPS:**

- When travelling to a country that won't allow you to use a VPN, make sure it is already turned on before you arrive, as this might assist.
- Use a reputable VPN company like ExpressVPN, NordVPN, Cyberghost, Surfshark.

**Emails:** Emails can be intercepted when being sent via the web. To stop this, you can use an encryption scrambling systems that only the other person will be allowed to read the email once received. Or you can use free email system like protonmail or tuta. (If using Protonmail, don't forget your password as it won't allow you to reset this.)

**Ad blocker, trackers and pop-ups:** When engaging on the web multiple organizations / people / hackers want to try and obtain as much information from you as possible or they trying to have ads pop every five minutes to sell you something or click on a website that is harmful to your computer / laptop. Installing apps like Ghostery is a great way to stop Adverts, trackers or pop-ups.

**Search Engine Tracking** – Google, Bing, Yahoo etc. track your internet activity. There are several, search engines that do not. Good options which do not track activity are DuckDuckGo (*https://duckduckgo.com/*) or Brave Search (*https://search.brave.com/*).

**Messaging Services** – While no messaging services are completely secure, it is recommended not to use WhatsApp, rather use an alternative such as Signal which tracks far less user activity.

**Cell/Mobile Phones** – Turn off location settings for apps where possible.

**Google Maps** – Be cautious of using Google Maps.

There is a useful guide to activist security here - *https://activisthandbook.org/tools/security* while the following organisation can help activists and NGOs with digital security issues - *https://www.accessnow.org/help/*.

***Remember, any information can still be accessible and you are never one hundred percent safe on the internet. Please make sure you take care when sharing sensitive information***





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