

Punitive laws are failing to curb misinformation in Africa | Nieman Journalism Lab

By Peter Cunliffe-Jones, Alan Finlay, and Anya Schiffrin

June 30, 2021

Concern about the effects of misinformation on individuals and society has grown globally since 2016. In Africa, interest in the subject grew in particular after news emerged of disinformation campaigns run by Bell Pottinger, the British PR firm, on behalf of the Gupta family that stirred up racial tensions in South Africa in 2016 as a counter-narrative to the growing public anger at the family's central role in grand corruption and state capture.

In Nigeria, concern about disinformation rose after news emerged of the role that disinformation orchestrated by the UK political consultancy Cambridge Analytica played in its 2015 election. In Kenya, when the firm supported the campaign of President Uhuru Kenyatta in elections two years later.

With concern rising among politicians and the public, governments around the world have since 2016 passed a flurry of laws and regulations penalizing the publication or broadcast of what is deemed to be "false information."

[...]

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