

# Punitive laws are failing to curb misinformation in Africa. Time for a rethink. | The Conversation

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Misinformation, best understood as false or misleading information whether or not it was intended to mislead, has long been recognised as a problem worldwide. Together with disinformation, which is spread deliberately to misinform or mislead, it constitutes a key part of the information disorder distorting public debate around the world.

Concern about the effects of misinformation on individuals and society has grown globally since 2016, when it was seen by many commentators as driving the political upheavals of Brexit in the UK and the election of Donald Trump in the US.

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.

[...]

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