

Letter from Canada, where internet is a human right

The heading is clear. There recently were some internet black-outs in some countries. This sacrilege can't happen in Canada. Internet access is considered one of the human rights that everybody must enjoy. Therefore, unless otherwise stated, there's no power whatsoever that can discretionary or out of desperation disconnect or turn the internet off for whatever purposes or reasons, except under certain circumstances provided for. Under Bill C-8, the Minister of Communication is strictly allowed to make an order to shutdown internet shall there be "reasonable grounds to believe that it is necessary to do so to secure the Canadian telecommunications system against any threat, including that of interference, manipulation, disruption or deg-

rights but also committing an offence.

Why has internet become a human right? The answer is simple. Internet isn't a choice or a favour. It's an essential part and tool of life. You can measure the health of any nation by assessing its freedom of information. People use internet to do business, communicate, study, and many more. Therefore, whoever impinges on the right to access internet adversely affects the lives and the rights of millions. So, too, internet clampdown doesn't only how primitive and unfeeling a society that does so is but also can lead to criminal and tort liabilities.

That said, Canadian leaders avoid such liabilities. If they don't, they'll foolishly lose their positions since whatever tort liabilities emanating from such a primitive act legally force the government to redress the victims. That's because nobody is in power on behalf of the citizens and the money paid for covering such wanton expenses comes from Canadian taxpayers. So, by committing such a crime, whoever does so, he automatically loses one of the qualities of leadership. Therefore, such a person or government can be shown the door for abuses of public funds, callousness, criminality, negligence, and others. No sane person does so or needs that. This is what is known as competent and good governance.

That said, in my country, Tanzania, internet was shut down during chimeric elections wherein the incumbent President won by 98 per cent! If anything, currently this save for being one of the wonders of the world, can stand as a world record of Presidential 'victory' if indeed it's won fairly and squarely, which even a little bird told me that it doubts this charade. That's because even during the one-party dictatorship, no Tanzanian President won such a hugely convoluted and tantalising 'victory'.

If there wasn't internet clampdown, it would have interfered with the win and thereby adversely affect and endanger national security, which revolves around one demigod known as President.

In Toronto, internet is a human right that needs to be feared. For it can make people ask for more rights, which can impinge on the rights of the high and the mighty.

When will cyberspace become a human right in Africa?

Internet is a human right that needs to be feared.



Nkwazi Mhango
Internet

radation."

As per the government of Canada website, "the rights and freedoms that individuals have offline must also be protected online. Canada is committed to working with international partners to protect Internet freedom, including the rights to online freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly, as well as to protect privacy online." Thus, Canadians enjoy the rights of access and protection of internet.

In Canada, it isn't the choice or the discretion of the government or any institution to censor, disconnect, or discretionary provide internet. It's like water and other essential amenities for Canadians. If anybody—be it a person or a government—denies Canadians such a right will not only be denying Canadians their

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The Editor welcomes 450-word comments on topical issues. Preference