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DIGITAL RIGHTS AND INCLUSION IN AFRICA REPORT



ZIMBABWE

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Zimbabwe

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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The growing internet penetration in Zimbabwe has led to rising discourse online and efforts to govern and restrict the cyber environment. This report evaluates the state of digital rights and inclusion in Zimbabwe and the attendant barriers to enjoying digital rights. To ensure evidence-based information on Zimbabwe's digital rights landscape in 2023, the research assessment involved a comprehensive desk review examining relevant documents such as country reports, demographic datasets, digital rights situation analyses, legislation and national report assessments. The research findings developed a comprehensive report with valuable and reliable information on Zimbabwe's digital rights gaps and progress in 2023. This report is significant as it seeks to demonstrate the state of digital rights in Zimbabwe and make recommendations for policies and actions by civil society and government. The report will inform evidence-based interventions centred on improving access and use of the internet in Zimbabwe.

The year under review was characterised by the enactment of contested¹¹¹¹ laws such as the Criminal Law (Codification and Reform) Amendment Act (no. 10 of 2023) with repressive patriotism provisions. During the reporting period, Zimbabwe conducted its general elections in August 2023, and the digital space was marred by disruptions that violated the general public's access to the

Internet. This is notwithstanding civil society organisations and individuals pushing back against digital rights violations. During the electoral year, Zimbabwe's internet landscape became a hive of information disorders peddled by both the ruling party and opposition supporters. Information disorders limit the rights of the electorate to access credible information. The report discusses Zimbabwe's strides in data protection and cybersecurity, providing evidence of the work being conducted by the Postal and Telecommunications Regulatory Authority of Zimbabwe (POTRAZ) which was bestowed the powers of the data protection authority. The report makes reference to the enactment of the Data Protection Act in December 2021 and how POTRAZ has been conducting stakeholder meetings to raise awareness of the Act and subsequent measures. The report further discusses the Universal Service Fund (USF) and outlines the challenges that the fund experiences, the progress achieved and makes recommendations for the governing of the USF. Overall, the report takes a deep dive into three thematic areas, which include internet access and disruptions, the USF and data protection and cybersecurity.

Introduction

Zimbabwe's 2022 Population and Housing Report¹¹¹² reveals that Zimbabwe has 15,178,957 people, with geographical data showing land area as 390,757 square meters. Human rights are guaranteed by the Constitution of Zimbabwe Amendment (No. 20) Act, 2013 (Act No. 1 of 2013)¹¹¹³. According to Freedom House's Freedom in the World 2023 rankings, which provide numerical rankings and descriptive text on political rights and civil liberties, Zimbabwe's Global Freedom Score is pegged at 28/100, a rating that shows that the country is not free. Its Internet Freedom Score is 51/100 showing that it is partly free¹¹¹⁴. Moreover, despite the enactment of the Cyber and Data Protection Act in 2021, Zimbabwe has not yet ratified the African Union Convention on Cyber Security and Personal Data Protection (Malabo Convention).

In 2021, Zimbabwe adopted a National Development Strategy (NDS1)¹¹¹⁵, which prioritises the use of ICT for the improvement of the digital economy. Through the strategy, the government aims to entrench ICTs across all national development strategies to achieve universal access by 2030. The government set targets to increase the internet penetration rate from 59.1% in 2020 to 75.4% by 2025 and increase the mobile penetration rate from 94.2% to 100% by 2025. This is despite independent data that shows minimal percentages of people with access to the Internet, as will be outlined in the report.

1112 Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency (ZIMSTAT) 'Zimbabwe 2022 Housing and Census Report' https://www.zimstat.co.zw/wp-content/uploads/Demography/Census/2022_PHC_Report_27012023_Final.pdf (Accessed 7 December 2023).

1113 Parliament of Zimbabwe 'Constitution of Zimbabwe Amendment no 20' <https://parlzim.gov.zw/constitution-of-zimbabwe/> (Accessed on 12 December 2023).

1114 Freedom House 'Freedom in the World 2023 Zimbabwe Report' <https://freedomhouse.org/country/zimbabwe/freedom-world/2023> (Accessed on 9 December 2023).

1115 Veritas Zimbabwe 'National Development Strategy' https://www.veritaszim.net/sites/veritas_d/files/NDS.pdf (Accessed on 10 December 2023).

Internet Access

Zimbabwe's internet penetration rate is 34.8% and POTRAZ's second-quarter report of 2022¹¹¹⁶ forecasts that the mobile penetration rate is expected to increase to 75.4 % by 2025. According to the POTRAZ third quarter report of 2023¹¹¹⁷, the internet penetration rate increased by 4.9% to reach 70.1% from 65.2%. While official figures from POTRAZ reflect a high percentage, independent researchers note that internet penetration stands at 34.8%¹¹¹⁸ of the 16.49 million population. In the third quarter of 2023, mobile subscriptions stood at over 14 million, translating to a mobile penetration rate of 97.5% from 91.9% recorded in the second quarter of 2023. Considering these statistics show a growth in mobile penetration in Zimbabwe, access to quality internet in remote areas is limited, with approximately 31% of Zimbabwe's primary and secondary schools having access to the internet¹¹¹⁹. Median Country Internet speeds for mobile released by Ookla's Speedtest Global Index¹¹²⁰ in November show that the average download speed is 32.41Mbps, an increase from 10.88 Mbps in the same time in 2022, upload speed is 14.95 Mbps, an increase from 6.06 Mbps. To handle any online activity, fast download speeds should reach at least 100Mbps, and upload speeds should be at least 10Mbps.

In March 2023, following a call issued by the International Telecommunications Union for submissions of policy makers' views, ideas and experiences, under the overall theme of "Regulatory and economic incentives for an inclusive sustainable digital future", POTRAZ submitted¹¹²¹ that it sees the adoption of novel proposals which include the use of free spectrum in underserved areas to attract investors of infrastructure as a gateway for encouraging the private sector to continue investing in rural, isolated, and non-profitable areas. In this regard, the submission by POTRAZ indicated developments that have been undertaken by the regulator which include allowing the refarming of the 900MHz spectrum to be deployed as U900 for the provision of broadband networks in rural and remote areas. In low to middle-income countries globally, mobile operators are shifting from 900MHz to U900¹¹²² in order to boost mobile broadband coverage, ramp up user experience and accelerate return on investment. POTRAZ indicated that this shift will enable rural areas to be at least covered by a 3G network. 800MHz is also reposed for 4G/LTE deployment, thereby allowing LTE to be accessed in rural areas and work towards repossession of 700MHz is underway.

Internet disruptions

Digital rights were restricted in Zimbabwe at the height of elections when the Internet was throttled, slowing down internet speeds for mobile network companies such as Econet, NetOne, TelOne, Telecel, and the Liquid technology company. The throttling of the Internet limited access

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1116 Postal and Telecommunication Regulatory Authority of Zimbabwe (2023) 'Second Quarter Abridged Sector Performance Report' <http://www.potraz.gov.zw/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/2022-Second-Quarter-Abridged-Sector-Performance-Report.pdf> (Accessed on 14 December 2023).

1117 Postal and Telecommunications Regulatory Authority of Zimbabwe 'POTRAZ Third Quarter Sector Performance Report' <http://www.potraz.gov.zw/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/POTRAZ-Sector-Performance-Report-3rd-Quarter-2023.pdf> (Accessed on 18 January 2024)

1118 Data Reportal 'Digital 2023: Zimbabwe' <https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2023-zimbabwe> (Accessed on 7 December 2023).

1119 Giga.Global 'Sub Saharan Africa Zimbabwe Two Pager' <https://s41713.pcdn.co/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Zimbabwe-Giga-2pager.pdf> (Accessed on 14 December 2023).

1120 Speedtest Global Index 'Speedtest Global Index' <https://www.speedtest.net/global-index/zimbabwe#fixed> (Accessed on 14 January 2024)

1121 International Telecommunications Union 'Contribution from POTRAZ- Zimbabwe GSR-23 Best Practice Guidelines Consultation' https://www.itu.int/itu-d/meetings/gsr-23/wp-content/uploads/sites/20/2023/03/GSR-23_Contribution_POTRAZ-Zimbabwe.pdf (Accessed on 5 December 2023).

1122 Huawei 'Industry Perspective' <https://carrier.huawei.com/en/trends-and-insights/emsite/racing-ahead-with-u900> (Accessed on 12 December 2023).

to information to at least 5.74 million who have internet access in Zimbabwe¹¹²³. A Netblocks report¹¹²⁴ revealed that internet service was degraded in Zimbabwe on the eve of the elections. Access to platforms such as Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, and Facebook was limited, thus depriving the general public of much-needed information on the eve of the election.

Electricity disruptions impeded internet accessibility in urban areas. Several internet freedoms remained of concern, and hyperinflation in Zimbabwe limited the public's ability to pay for internet services. Zimbabwe's inflation stood at 229% in the first quarter of 2023¹¹²⁵. As a result, mobile telecommunications providers announced increases in the cost of data, sms and voice bundles. Econet, one of the major telecommunications companies, had their rates pegged at ZWL\$18,557¹¹²⁶ which was equivalent to US\$ 20,¹¹²⁷ to get 8GB valid for 30 days in February 2023. In this period, telecommunications companies designed bundled data packages for the general public, offering internet data alongside other essential services like voice calls thus allowing the public to save costs.

Freedom of Expression and Media Freedoms

On 14 July 2023, the Parliament and the President of Zimbabwe enacted into law the Criminal Law (Codification and Reform) Amendment Act (no. 10 of 2023)¹¹²⁸ commonly referred to as the "Patriotic Bill," which several United Nations mandate holders condemned, on the basis of the adverse impacts of the provisions on human rights¹¹²⁹. The Act is overly broad and may have negative impacts on particular groups, on due process, on the right to liberty and security of persons, as well as on the exercise of freedom of opinion and expression, and freedom of peaceful assembly and of association. The Act was flagged¹¹³⁰ by international human rights organisations for its potential to limit civic participation and result in a crackdown on Zimbabwean nationals' freedom of expression, assembly and association.

In 2023, journalists and ordinary users faced arrests and threats for their online activities. On January 18, 2023, police in Masvingo arrested¹¹³¹ journalist Garikai Mafirakureva for allegedly publishing false information. According to the Criminal Law (Codification and Reform Act)¹¹³², publishing false

1123 Data Reportal 'Digital 2023: Zimbabwe' <https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2023-zimbabwe> (Accessed on 7 December 2023).

1124 Netblocks 'X-@netblocks' https://twitter.com/netblocks/status/1693997476691558644?s=46&t=M4_z9pT4YSEqFxZSt3wF-MA. (Accessed on 20 December 2023).

1125 The Chronicle 'Zimbabwe annual monthly inflation rates tumble' <https://www.chronicle.co.zw/zimbabwe-annual-monthly-inflation-rates-tumble/> (Accessed on 17 December 2023)

1126 The Chronicle 'Econet increases Data, sms bundle tariffs' <https://www.chronicle.co.zw/econet-increases-data-sms-bundle-tariffs/> (Accessed on 14 December 2023)

1127 Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe 'Rates_28_February_2023-Interbank Rate' https://www.rbz.co.zw/documents/Exchange_Rates/2023/February/RATES_28_FEBRUARY_2023-INTERBANK_RATE.pdf (Accessed on 17 December 2023).

1128 Law 'Criminal Law (Codification and Reform) Amendment Act 2023' <https://www.law.co.zw/download/criminal-law-codification-and-reform-amendment-act-2023/> (Accessed on 16 December 2023).

1129 Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights 'Mandates of the Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association; the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions; the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression and the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders' <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?glid=28304> (Accessed on December 16 2023).

1130 Amnesty International 'Zimbabwe: President's signing of the 'Patriotic Bill' is a grave assault on Civic Space' <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2023/06/zimbabwe-parliaments-passing-of-patriotic-bill-is-a-grave-assault-on-the-human-rights/> (Accessed on 19 December 2023).

1131 Media Institute for Southern Africa 'Editor to appear in court on charges of publishing false information' https://zimbabwe.misa.org/media_violations/editor-to-appear-in-court-on-charges-of-publishing-false-information/ (Accessed on 23 December 2023).

1132 The UN Refugee Agency 'Zimbabwe: Criminal Law (Codification and Reform) Act' <https://www.refworld.org/legal/legislation/natlegbod/2005/en/98050> (Accessed on 20 December 2023).

information can carry a maximum sentence of twenty years in prison and a fine¹¹³³ of up to up to level 14. As per the SI 209, the fine is ZWL\$500 000. When the Statutory Instrument 209 of 2021 of the Criminal Law (Codification and Reform) (Standard Scale of Fines) Notice was gazetted, the fine was equal to US\$4,587¹¹³⁴. On February 22, 2023, the Minister of Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs published a new Standard Scale of Fines¹¹³⁵ Notice in Statutory Instrument 14A of 2023, wherein publishing false information can carry a maximum fine of up to level 14 which amounts to US\$5, 000.

In May 2023, the Zimbabwe High Court acquitted¹¹³⁶ journalist Hopewell Chin'ono on all charges of obstructing justice that were laid against him for posting critical content on Twitter in 2022. The positive development marginally safeguarded free expression. However, this was not the case for the then Citizens Coalition for Change (CCC) opposition party spokesperson Fadzayi Mahere, who was convicted of publishing falsehoods following a video post she made on Twitter (now X). Mahere was ordered to pay a \$US500 fine or serve three months' imprisonment. Mahere later appealed the judgement.

On election day, which was held on August 23, 2023, at least 41 civil society actors were raided¹¹³⁷ by Zimbabwean authorities of their digital technologies, which comprised 93 smartphones, 38 laptops, two smartwatches, two modems, one Wi-Fi router, one external drive and other digital gadgets. Digital rights activists in the Net Rights Coalition condemned the arrests¹¹³⁸, emphasising that the arrests will stifle free expression and access to information on elections, and present opportunities for privacy breaches and state surveillance.

During the period under review, the United States of America issued a statement¹¹³⁹ citing that in accordance with section 212(a)(3)(C) of the Immigration and Nationality Act, individuals believed to be responsible for, or complicit in, undermining democracy in Zimbabwe will now be subjected to visa restrictions. These restrictions will also affect family members of such persons. The statement reinforces free expression and indirectly encourages the general public to speak out against human rights abuses in Zimbabwe.

Information disorders and hate speech

In the run-up to the 2023 general elections, which were held in August 2023, the online space in Zimbabwe became fertile ground for state and non-state-sponsored disinformation, particularly on social media platforms like WhatsApp. In a rising shift from previous years where disinformation was more prominent on platforms such as Twitter (X) and Facebook, the 2023 election period was

1133 Zimbabwe Revenue Authority (2021) <https://www.zimra.co.zw/legislation/category/47-statutory-instruments-2021?download=1309:statutory-instrument-209-of-2021-criminal-law-codification-and-reform-standard-scale-of-fines-notice-2021> (Accessed on 22 December 2023).

1134 Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe 'Rates_31_December_2023-Interbank Rate' https://www.rbz.co.zw/documents/Exchange_Rates/2021/December/Rates-31-December--2021.pdf

1135 Veritas "SI 2023-014A Criminal Law (Codification and Reform) (Standard Scale of Fines) Notice, 2023" <https://www.veritaszim.net/node/6162> (Accessed on 20 February 2024)

1136 Judicial Service Commission "Judgements HH 294-23 HC 8485/22 Ref CRB No. ACC 235/20" <https://www.jsc.org.zw/upload/Judgements/High%20Court/Harare/2023/HH%20294-23.pdf> (Accessed on 20 December 2023).

1137 BBC 'Zimbabwe election: Poll monitors arrested amid election' <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-66604659> (Accessed on 18 December 2023)

1138 Paradigm Initiative 'Press Release: The Net Rights Coalition condemns raids of digital technologies of civil society actors in Zimbabwe during the 2023 elections' <https://paradigmhq.org/press-release-the-netrights-coalition-condemns-raids-of-digital-technologies-of-civil-society-actors-in-zimbabwe-during-the-2023-elections/> (Accessed on 21 December 2023)

1139 U.S Department of State 'Visa Restriction Policy for Undermining Democracy in Zimbabwe' https://www.state.gov/vi-sa-restriction-policy-for-undermining-democracy-in-zimbabwe/?utm_source=miragenews&utm_medium=miragenews&utm_campaign=news (Accessed on 20 December 2023)

characterised by fake videos and images which moved at lighting speed on the WhatsApp platform. The electorate had no agency to effectively fact-check, a practice that should be fostered before the next Zimbabwe elections in 2028. On election day, 23 August, the country woke up to messages encouraging the electorate to boycott voting purporting to have come from the CCC opposition party leader Nelson Chamisa. The posters, which were scattered across different major cities and distributed via WhatsApp, read “Do not vote, the election is rigged” and were branded with CCC opposition party symbols and colours, with a picture of the party’s President displayed on the poster, in true election poster fashion, making the narrative believable.

The Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) initiated a disinformation campaign following a series of information disorders that implicated the Electoral Management Body. Among the many disinformation narratives, social media, in particular, WhatsApp, was awash with a press statement¹¹⁴⁰ in which ZEC was purported to have concluded that the elections were null and void.

The Universal Service Fund

Zimbabwe introduced the Universal Service Fund (USF) by establishing section 73 of the Postal and Telecommunications Act (Chapter 12:05) of 2000. Section 74(c) of the Postal Telecommunications Act (PTA) stipulates its purpose is to finance or assist in financing the extension of postal and telecommunication services to under-served areas and community centres within or outside such areas. Funds are collected from holders of licences in terms of the Act, including telecommunications operators.

Submitting its contribution for the GSR-23 best practice guidelines consultation to the International Telecommunications Union (ITU), POTRAZ indicated that it saw the adoption of novel proposals, which include extending Universal Service Fund programmes to platform-based businesses as a gateway to encouraging the private sector to continue investing in rural, isolated, and non-profitable areas. In the report, POTRAZ highlighted that the Regulator also employed Capital Expenditure (CAPEX) intervention initiatives through the usage of USF towards the purchase of Customer Premises Equipment (CPEs) and meeting network installation costs in rural areas.

In 2023, POTRAZ reported¹¹⁴¹ that it had funded the relocation of 11 towers in order to improve connectivity for underserved communities. Network operators such as Econet and NetOne relocated 10 towers and one tower, respectively. In June 2023, the Government of Zimbabwe released Statutory Instrument (SI) 110 of 2023, Postal and Telecommunications (Postal Services) (Amendment) Regulations, 2023 (No. 3)¹¹⁴² which now compels regional, domestic, intra-city, and intercity couriers to pay annual contributions of two per centum of monthly gross turnover as a direct contribution to the USF payable monthly on or before the 10th day of the following month.

On 16 June 2023, the Acting Auditor General presented the report of the Auditor-General for the financial year ended December 31, 2022, on State-Owned Enterprises and Parastatals¹¹⁴³ to the Parliament of Zimbabwe. The report provided an audited account of the Universal Services Fund as

1140 X - Zimbabwe Electoral Commission '@ZECZim post' <https://x.com/zeczim/status/1712837826524348474?s=46> (Accessed on 19 December 2023).

1141 Sunday Mail 'POTRAZ facilitates relocation of 11 network towers' <https://www.sundaymail.co.zw/new-potraz-facilitates-relocation-of-11-network-towers> (Accessed on 19 December 2023).

1142 Judicial Service Commission 'Statutory Instrument 110 of 2023: Postal and Telecommunications (Postal Services) (Amendment) Regulations, 2023 (No. 3)' [https://www.jsc.org.zw/upload/Gazette/S.I.%20110%20of%202023%20Postal%20and%20Telecommunications%20\(Postal%20Services\)%20\(Amendment\)%20Norm.pdf](https://www.jsc.org.zw/upload/Gazette/S.I.%20110%20of%202023%20Postal%20and%20Telecommunications%20(Postal%20Services)%20(Amendment)%20Norm.pdf) (Accessed on 22 December 2023).

1143 Office of the Auditor General 'Report of the Auditor-General for the financial year ended December 31, 2022 on state-owned enterprises and Parastatals' <https://www.auditorgeneral.gov.zw/phocadownload/AG%20REPORT%202022%20ON%20STATE%20-ENTERPRISES%20AND%20PARASTATALS.pdf> (Accessed on 20 December 2023).

at December 2021. The report's findings on Asset Management showed that the Fund's property and equipment at some Communication Information Centres (CICs) were not being used for the purpose of providing information to the members of the public and that the USF did not have adequate security over its assets at the CICs. This presents a gross deprivation of the right for under-served communities to access the Internet. This is also likely to result in misappropriation of the Fund's assets and financial loss due to loss of assets as there is inadequate security over the assets. The Auditor General highlighted that the USF coordinators have submitted 2022 financial statements, and audits are in progress and being finalised. Up-to-date information on the USF in Zimbabwe is not readily available and the regulatory authority should make concerted efforts to timeously and publicly avail this information to help the public track and monitor the use of the resources in their respective communities.

Data Protection and Cybersecurity

In 2021, Zimbabwe enacted the Cyber and Data Protection Act¹¹⁴⁴, which establishes baseline protections for personal information. The law requires data controllers to collect, use, and disclose personal information in a fair and lawful manner. In a push to operationalise the Data Protection Act in 2023, POTRAZ, in its sensitisation meetings, invited the general public to provide comments on the Draft Cyber and Data Protection Regulations, which were released in November 2022. Once approved, the regulations will facilitate the enforcement of the Cyber and Data Protection Act.

POTRAZ conducted a series of sensitisation meetings on the Cyber and Data Protection Act. The meetings targeted the general public and data controllers and were held online. Physical sensitisation meetings were conducted in Harare in June 2023. Between June 26 and August 12, 2023, POTRAZ conducted a study¹¹⁴⁵ across all 10 provinces of Zimbabwe on data privacy opinions and experiences. The study revealed that only 25% of the respondents were aware of the risks posed by 'free' online services to personal data privacy and security, and 82% reported that they did not understand laws around the use of personal information. The data also revealed that 47% are experiencing a rise in unsolicited marketing communications. 22% experienced misuse of their personal data at least once, and 72% reported that they did not know who to seek help from in case of data violations. Although the law provides for data breach notification, the data shows that there is a need for the government to raise awareness of avenues for reporting data violations.

Despite the existence of the Cyber and Data Protection Act, in April 2023, the general public received unsolicited geo-targeted messages from the ruling party - Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF), calling for the incumbent President's re-election and allaying fears of data breaches in voter data.

1144 Veritas Zim 'Cyber and Data Protection Act [Chapter 12:07] (No. 5 of 2021)' <https://www.veritaszim.net/node/5522> (Accessed on 19 December 2023).

1145 Postal and Telecommunications Regulatory Authority of Zimbabwe 'Data Privacy Opinions and Experiences' <https://www.potraz.gov.zw/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Data-Privacy-Opinions-Experiences-Infographic.pdf> (Accessed on 21 December 2023).

▶ Conclusion & Recommendations

Conclusion

Zimbabwe's internet freedom rankings are not impressive, and the government of Zimbabwe should take the necessary steps and strategies to promote, safeguard, and protect human rights online adequately. The government of Zimbabwe should urgently adopt data protection regulations to set the tone for implementing the Data Protection Act. The Regulatory Authority should prioritise providing information on the Universal Service Fund to ensure transparency on its use. The Regulatory Authority should also publish regular reports and avail them for public scrutiny.

Recommendations

Government

- » The Universal Service Fund should have a monitoring mechanism to ensure that the assets distributed to Community Information Centres (CICs) are used for the intended purposes and the approved beneficiaries.
 - » The security of assets at CICs should be enhanced to avoid loss or misappropriation of assets.
 - » Enable open and secure access to the Internet and free flow of information before, during and after elections without throttling internet speeds.
 - » On CICs that are handed over to the Zimbabwe Post (ZimPost), the onus to ensure that all assets are properly utilised and accounted for should equally rest with the POTRAZ and bi-annual spot checks should be conducted by the regulator.
 - » Auditor General's reports should be current so that positive changes can be implemented and not overtaken by events.
 - » Conducting sensitisation meetings on enacted laws should be decentralised to smaller towns and rural areas where most of the population resides.
 - » Raise awareness on avenues for reporting data violations.
 - » Allocation of resources / developing private-public partnerships to improve internet infrastructure in rural areas.
 - » Address power outages that impact internet services.
 - » Safeguard democracy and promote free expression by desisting from arresting journalists or individuals who critique the government online.
 - » Begin implementing the Cyber Data Protection Act and ensure compliance by all data controllers.
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- » Create regulatory sandboxes to allow the private sector to develop human rights-respecting technologies.
 - » Allow for new entrants in the broadband provision sector to enable high competition and reduced prices.

Private Sector

- » Develop private-public partnerships to support internet access in remote areas and improve internet speed to ensure meaningful connectivity.
- » Ensure that the development of new technology undergoes human rights impact assessments.
- » Provide affordable internet to all.

Civil Society

- » Engage in advocacy initiatives to compel the government to provide quality internet access.
 - » Monitor digital rights violations (surveillance, information disorders, attacks on online journalists and bloggers, internet shutdowns) and advocate for the respect of human rights.
 - » Conduct campaigns to counter disinformation and hate speech online.
 - » Conduct awareness campaigns on digital rights.
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