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Final Regional Report on Law and Policy Environment for Civic Space: Sub-Saharan Africa

Today, CLD is releasing its fifth and final regional report in its series on the law and policy environment for civic space globally, covering seventeen countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. It highlights legal restrictions which pose more serious risks to the ability of civil society to operate freely in each country, with the goal of providing a guide for where reform is needed.

This series represents the public launch of law and policy reviews commissioned by Transparency International last year covering five regions: Asia Pacific, Europe and Central Asia, Latin America, Middle East and North Africa, and Sub-Saharan Africa. The earlier reports in the series are available online: [Asia Pacific](#), [Europe and Central Asia](#), [Latin America](#) and [Middle East and North Africa](#).

The report identifies the following general trends across the region:

- Regulatory regimes for non-governmental organisations are typically overly complex or unclear, and many include burdensome reporting requirements or grant broad discretion to authorities to refuse to register or dissolve organisations.
- Despite a welcome trend of decriminalising defamation, criminal reputation offences remain in many countries, along with other problematical content restrictions (such as on sharing false information).
- Cyber laws introduce new restrictions on speech, including some instances of effectively re-criminalising online defamation. Government authorities have improperly broad authority to block the Internet or specific websites.
- Media regulators are not independent, despite having significant regulatory powers.
- Some countries require prior authorisation before organisers may hold demonstrations and some even require notice of any public meeting.
- Limited oversight of security institutions, combined with expansive definitions of seditious or terrorist acts, pose a risk to peaceful civil society activities.
- Whistleblower protection laws in the region are rare, while five countries also lack right to information laws.

The Sub-Saharan Africa regional report is available at: <https://www.law-democracy.org/live/final-regional-report-on-law-and-policy-environment-for-civic-space-sub-saharan-africa/>.

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