

Reference: ISOC/2025/001

Date: 23rd January 2025

SUBJECT: RESPONSE TO SUMMARY BLOCKAGE OF ALL SOCIAL MEDIA SITES WITHIN THE TERRITORY OF SOUTH SUDAN.

The Internet Society South Sudan Chapter is a collection of technologists and members of South Sudanese society who are dedicated to strengthening access to the internet and fostering its openness. This chapter is a part of **The Internet Society**, which is an international Non-profit organization founded in 1992 with its headquarters based in Reston United States and the other in Geneva Switzerland with a total of 83 Organization members, over 117,000 individual members and more than 100 chapters globally. Our primary purpose is to promote a safe and secured internet, an open development, evolution, and use of the Internet for the benefit of all people throughout the world more, so in South Sudan.

Reference is made to a letter dated 22nd January 2025 with Reference number RSS/NCA/25/00057, in which the Director General of the National Communication Authority (NCA), The telecom sector regulator of the Republic of South Sudan invokes the provision of section 9(g)(f) and 34(6) of the National Communication Act 2012, directing all internet service providers to block access to all social media accounts effective from the midnight (00.00hrs) of 22nd January 2025 for a minimum of 90days.

ISOC is deeply concerned about the recent decision by the South Sudan government to ban social media platforms for up to 90 days. While we understand the intention to curb the spread of violent content, this blanket ban poses significant challenges to communication, digital rights, and the free flow of information. Below we highlight the several benefits that social media platforms have brought to young and adult South Sudanese.

1. Social Media platforms are used by NGO's, Government institutions and civil society to promote messages of peace and reconciliation, notwithstanding the Tumaini Initiative currently taking place in Kenya and the dissemination of the 2018 peace agreement.
2. Platforms like Facebooks, Instagram, TikTok, Instagram Chat and Facebook Chat are platforms that are widely used for sharing news, personal updates, business transactions and keeping connected with family members locally and with our brothers and sisters abroad.
3. Social media platforms are the heart of many businesses, not only are they being used as a channel to inform, market, and advertise products and services, for some it is actually the business itself. Freelancers and e-commerce businesses use these platforms to earn a living; by taking that away you are sending these businesses to a failure.
4. Blocking social medial platforms diminishes revenue for telecommunication companies and Internet service providers who are big contributors of tax and development of the internet ecosystem.



5. Social media platforms are an integral part of the music and entertainment industry. Many artists, musicians, comedians, promoters, DJs, event organizers use such platforms to promote their content and also mobilize for their events, hence this is their source of income to feed their families, taking that away is detrimental to the sector.
6. Educational institutions and government institutions use social media to share learning materials, announce programs and engage with students.

While we understand the negative impacts of social media, we urge the government to reconsider this decision and explore more targeted measures to address the issue of harmful content without compromising the fundamental rights of its citizens. We believe that a balanced approach, which respects both public safety and digital rights, is crucial for fostering a healthy and inclusive digital environment.

We also urge that with the unfolding of these events the National Communication Authority and the Transitional National Legislative Assembly can fast track the tabling and enactment of the Cybersecurity and Crimes Law to assist in exploring more targeted measures to address harmful content without applying a blanket approach hence compromising the foundational rights of citizens.

ISOC remains committed to promoting digital inclusion and ensuring that all individuals have the opportunity to participate in the digital world. We will continue to advocate for policies that support open communication and the protection of digital rights in the Republic of South Sudan.

We are available to discuss on ways to foster the development of the internet in South Sudan.

Yours sincerely

Joseph A. GAMA
President,
Internet Society South Sudan Chapter



CC

- National Communication Authority (NCA).
- Transitional National Legislative Assembly
- Zain South Sudan
- MTN South Sudan
- Digitel South Sudan