

Disinformation takes a hit from PRCA

The Right2Know campaign is pleased with the Public Relations and Communications Association (PRCA) finally coming out to condemn the actions of disinformation in eSwatini.



Source: www.pexels.com

“ We commend PRCA especially because there has been much silence on the internet shutdowns and human rights violations within eSwatini. This comes after the historic victory of South African civil society in getting Bell-Pottinger expelled by the PRCA in 2019, after which Bell-Pottinger was disbanded. We trust that this will also be a firm warning to PR companies playing a fixer for governments committing violent acts against citizens. It must be noted that human rights violations cannot be covered up with a PR show. It must also be equally noted that disinformation has now spread into different fields creating methods of tactfully hiding human rights violations, violations of democracy and manipulation of information. In South Africa, we have seen instances of misinformation resulting in the circulation of fake news many times until the South African government decided to take firm action against the spread of fake news by creating a hotline, where citizens can WhatsApp or send an email to report fake news. We have seen fake news resulting in xenophobic attacks, we have again seen fake news manipulate the recent civil unrest that resulted in a looting spree in KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng. We have seen the creation of fake news through the method of disinformation alters decision-making as any decision is based on manipulated information. It is vital to ensure that information consumed by the public is factual and remains unmanipulated to drive a specific agenda such as we have seen previously with xenophobic attacks and more recently the looting in South Africa.

It becomes important for South African society and government to take disinformation seriously especially in the wake of

upcoming elections. Manipulated information not only can cause a society to fight amongst itself, however it creates the danger of altering the public's political decisions and can result in unethical leadership. Fake news is a phenomenon that has found its way into our daily lives. Stern decisions such as the decision taken by PRCA are decisions we commend and would like to see more of especially from governments to battle fake news and ensure we have truly free and diverse media. ”

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