The murky space of cyberspace - Knowing your Digital Rights

[00:00:00] **News Clip:** Welcome back. The world, including South Africa, is facing a cybercrime catastrophe. It's according to a report by Surf Shark. The report has highlighted South Africa ranking sixth in the world regarding cyber crime density. The South African National Editor's Forum, that's SANEF has come out in support of journalist Karyn Maughan. Meanwhile, media solidarity in support of Maughan is growing. The editor's forum is picketing outside the courthouse. Africa is growing exponentially in terms of internet connectivity, but at the same time lags behind on cybersecurity. This is a major concern for many stakeholders and was the main theme during the first Africa Cybersecurity Summit organised in Togo's capital this week.

[00:00:48] **Masechaba Masemola wa-Mdaka:** The murky space of cyberspace. This episode forms part of a 2 part episode series taking an in depth look at the importance and often, overlooked topics of digital rights, digital security, anti-censorship technologies…and more personally, protecting the civic space. When last did you have a personal digital rights hygiene check?

[00:01:15] **Masechaba Masemola wa-Mdaka:** Another welcome back to episode three, season four of the Let's Talk Human Rights Podcast. I am your host, Masechaba Masemola wa-Mdaka and I am excited that you are listening in again. Today, we are…well, virtually and literally everywhere. Let's look at some examples that are commonly expressed or you can relate to - Think about the last time you registered or applied for something online-

[00:01:48] **Masechaba Masemola wa-Mdaka:** how does that speak to the protection of your personal information or the threat of identity theft? [00:02:00] Online cyber crimes in the form of scamming. Cyberbullying- what do you do when you are or know someone who is the victim? Your WhatsApp conversations and calls? Your right to privacy or the understanding of what encryption speaks to, what does it all mean?

[00:02:14] **Masechaba Masemola wa-Mdaka:** And what about internet shutdowns by governments to curb freedom of expression during critical times of political expression? The list is extensive.

[00:02:41] **Masechaba Masemola wa-Mdaka:** In a recent publication commissioned by the United Nations in partnership with the Alliance for Universal Digital Rights in February 2023 entitled "Securing our human rights in our digital world", it notes, and I quote –" imagine a future in which all citizens of the digital eco-system, no matter who they are, or where they live, can enjoy equal rights to safety, freedom and dignity. Because the digital environment, like the natural environment, transcends borders." Sounds really good on paper, but how does this translate into our everyday lives?

[00:03:08] **Masechaba Masemola wa-Mdaka:** In this episode journey, I am joined by Wakesho and Helen, both from Internews. I would be doing you a great disservice if I do not introduce Internews and the great work they do not just across the world, but on targeted interventions on the African continent. Internews is an international media support nonprofit working in 100+ countries. For 40 years,

[00:03:35] **Masechaba Masemola wa-Mdaka:** they have helped partners reach millions of people with trustworthy information that saves lives, improves livelihoods, and holds institutions accountable. They address a wide range of issues, including -confronting propaganda and corruption, protecting a free and open internet, educating citizens on media and data literacy, and strengthening health and environmental systems.

[00:04:03] **Masechaba Masemola wa-Mdaka:** To introduce my guests today, Wakesho is the Africa Coordinator, Digital Rights, Greater Internet Freedom (GIF) Project at Internews. She serves as a member of the Law Society of Kenya Public Interest Litigation and Legal Aid committee. Wakesho was named Civil Society Lawyer of The Year 1st Runners Up in 2019 and Top 35 under 35 Youth Advocate of the Year in 2020.

[00:04:30] **Masechaba Masemola wa-Mdaka:** She is an advocate of the High Court of Kenya and has a postgraduate diploma in Law from the Kenya School of Law. Since 2021 Helen has been working as the Community Manager - Safe Sisters program at Internews. Safe Sisters trains women human rights defenders to use digital safety in their work and to support their community navigate the challenges of Tech

Facilitated Gender-Based Violence. Her professional background is in education, training, and facilitation using the adult learning methodology. Her interests are science, technology, and space

[00:05:00] **Masechaba Masemola wa-Mdaka:** Both my guests join me remotely from Kenya and Uganda respectively. Wakesho and Helen, welcome, and indeed a pleasure to be having this important exchange with you today.

[00:05:24] **Helen Nyinakiiza:** Oh wow. The pleasure is mine. Hi.

[00:05:26] **Wakesho Kililo:** Thank you, Helen. Thank you, Masechaba.

[00:05:28] **Masechaba Masemola wa-Mdaka:** To start off my line of questioning, I would like to speak about definitions and legal frameworks. Keeping up with the lexicon alone has found its way to slang, and some of us become completely lost. Wakeshi, I'll begin with you. What are digital rights and why is there a growing emphasis on the need and right to know?

[00:05:54] **Wakesho Kililo:** Simply stated, digital rights are human rights in the digital realm. They are the same fundamental human rights [00:06:00] as those enjoyed offline, but adapted to a new age of technology. So technology and the internet have transformed the way we communicate, the way we engage in public activities and how we conduct ourselves, um, leaving very few areas of our lives unaffected.

[00:06:17] **Wakesho Kililo:** Of course, in addition to this, the COVID 19 pandemic increased our reliance on digital technology. Now, the use of these technologies and digital spaces has also implicated the way we enjoy and exercise our human rights such as the right to freedom of expression, the right to education, the right to access information, just to name a few.

[00:06:43] **Wakesho Kililo:** Let me begin with the right to freedom of expression online. So this refers to the ability of individuals to express themselves online without fear of censorship or punishment by governments or other entities. Advocates such as myself and digital rights advocates in general work to ensure that individuals are able to express themselves freely and safely online through advocating for

policies that protect online privacy, that combat censorship and surveillance, and promote free speech.

[00:07:19] **Wakesho Kililo:** Now in the current data-driven era, the right to privacy has gained increasing recognition as a fundamental right both in itself and as an enabler of other rights. It enables a right to freedom of expression, for instance, by allowing individuals to share views anonymously in circumstances where they may be, uh, you know, they may be afraid to be censored for those views, for example.

[00:07:44] **Wakesho Kililo:** By allowing whistleblowers to make protected disclosures or also allowing and enabling members of the media and activists to communicate in a secure manner beyond the reach of unlawful government interception.

[00:07:58] **Masechaba Masemola wa-Mdaka:** I know that in your line of work, [00:08:00] specifically speaking to issues of research, training and also the campaigns that you run. You know, you speak about the responsibility to speak to policies that obviously then speak to the legal framework, which is so important. Can we actually talk about in the African context on the African continent, do we even have cases that we can refer to as best practice?

[00:08:24] **Wakesho Kililo:** So Mastechaba, I would say that unfortunately what we are seeing is that a lot of these laws and legal frameworks are quite repressive and infringe on, you know, the right to freedom of expression and the freedom of the media.

[00:08:39] **Wakesho Kililo:** And again, what we are seeing is that many of our African governments are you know, in the habit of copy-pasting laws from each other. So, and again, you find that, um, you know, some of these laws and, you know, laws contain provisions that are not good. So we then see that, uh, you know, one country ruling, you know, this law [00:09:00] that again, as I've mentioned, did not have, uh, you know, good provisions, so to speak.

[00:09:04] **Wakesho Kililo:** So what we try to do is, uh, when these countries and governments call for public participation on these laws, we then come together, you know, with experts on board, analyze these laws, and then give recommendations to governments and say, for example, we understand that you're trying to regulate disinformation,

however the offenses that you are including in this particular law are too tough.

[00:09:27] **Wakesho Kililo:** You know? How about, um, you know, looking at it in a different way or trying to reduce that particular offense? So we then come in during that point of public participation to give better recommendations to the particular laws. And of course, um, you know, I would say that, you know, other times those recommendations are not taken into consideration.

[00:09:48] **Wakesho Kililo:** Other times they are in fact taken into consideration and that is why we just continue to forge forward. And then the other thing that I would maybe then call upon to other civil society [00:10:00] actors and non-governmental organizations is to then maybe think through creating model laws, right? Model laws that would contain the provisions that we would want to see or that, you know, better provisions that we would want to see in these legislations.

[00:10:15] **Wakesho Kililo:** And also trying to engage with parliamentarians and policy makers from the onset and not, um, you know, wait for these laws to be passed and therefore, you know, they're more reactionary measures.

[00:10:27] **Masechaba Masemola wa-Mdaka:** So in that light, Helen, I would like to bring you in here. Wakesho has touched on, um, several points around recommendations, and I would like us to go into discussing digital security considerations within the civic space and, um, how this actually potentially plays itself out.

[00:10:46] **Masechaba Masemola wa-Mdaka:** Um, I'm thinking more specifically here in line with misinformation, disinformation, and malinformation. How are organizations working in the best interest of safeguarding rights and [00:11:00] protecting this phenomena from prevailing?

[00:11:02] **Helen Nyinakiiza:** Well, I think that there's work being done by different organizations. People have different approaches, and I think that there isn't just one way of doing it.

[00:11:13] **Helen Nyinakiiza:** There's a kind of co-sharing of the responsibility, the civic partner, uh, the community itself, and then the

platforms that enable this thing to happen. So it's a little bit confusing because it's something that's not new, it's just that it's been propelled onto a platform that just by its creation, speeds things up, speeds the movement of information.

[00:11:40] **Helen Nyinakiiza:** So you can just imagine us communicating as a species for all these years. And you hear something, and by the end of the day, you sometimes can decide whether it's true information or if it's not. So I think that organizations need to help the [00:12:00] community like us to figure out how to make those changes and to know which is what.

[00:12:07] **Helen Nyinakiiza:** Information as an environment is so uniquely important to preserve it because it's full of individuals, organizations, and all these human beings at work collecting, processing, and sharing information. Sometimes even having to be the ones to act on the information, which that's why civic partners are very, very important.

[00:12:33] **Helen Nyinakiiza:** I think that disinformation just because it's such a very large threat. It's one of those things that when you think of the far future, uh, it could go various ways, but I think that putting some concerns on the forefront would be good. Putting those concerns on decision making tables, why should people care?

[00:12:58] **Helen Nyinakiiza:** For example, [00:13:00] the issue of climate change. So 20, 30 years we have evidence there's climate change. The scientists are in agreement, at least most of them, a big percentage of them. So what's missing? So where's the gap between that data that has been collected and acting on it so that we can preserve the planet that we're on for future generations?

[00:13:25] **Helen Nyinakiiza:** That's also an issue. I think part of the issue is that we see ourselves quite distant from that. So if you have a social media site, right, and you have a following and you have the mindset, the disbelief of climate change, you could create something really catchy and, and it's going to discredit, it's going to create crisis speculation and fear.

[00:13:48] **Helen Nyinakiiza:** And when it comes to the leaders, even the leaders themselves, I feel in several cases, um, they [00:14:00] too need

information about climate change. So how does disinformation, for example, how can we push it to the forefront in things? One more thing, maybe Covid happened recently. We also, what happened?

[00:14:15] **Helen Nyinakiiza:** We also, what information was coming through? Um, I mean, at this point, um, surely there's something has to change before the next, uh, crisis. I think some solutions that we could also push for as civic organizations is just like, support, good trusted information collection and circulation.

[00:14:43] **Helen Nyinakiiza:** When you have good information, you have a thriving information ecosystem and that helps to filter out and to identify when something looks, even if it looks like it's true, that it's not true.

[00:14:58] **Masechaba Masemola wa-Mdaka:** Helen, thank you for that because you [00:15:00] speak about co-sharing responsibilities and you know, we, we've just touched on the issue of stakeholders.

[00:15:05] **Masechaba Masemola wa-Mdaka:** And how everybody has this responsibility. I mean, the architecture and the governance. Strategic lawsuits against public participation, also known as slap suits. One would even wonder in a world where we are supposed to be coexisting, co-sharing responsibilities, how does this in the true sense of the word even exist, and how is it even legal?

[00:15:27] **Masechaba Masemola wa-Mdaka:** I asked this specifically in the case of holding each other accountable and where there's supposed to be a shared responsibility around issues of looking at misinformation, disinformation, or malinformation.

[00:15:39] **Wakesho Kililo:** Thank you Masechaba for that question. And, um, indeed we are seeing slap suits gaining popularity, um, in the recent years.

[00:15:48] **Wakesho Kililo:** So let me first begin by, um, you know, for the sake of our audience who may not be familiar with the idea, slap suits generally refer to lawsuits that are filed by, [00:16:00] say, you know, companies or corporations, public officials, or any other powerful entity, right? Against, um, non-governmental organizations.

[00:16:09] **Wakesho Kililo:** They could be against journalists, they could be against, uh, civil society actors, activists, researchers, or even the members of the public who express critical positions with their intent to silence and harass these critics. Right? So the essence here of this slap suit is that they're filed not to seek justice, but to intimidate people and make sure they drain their financial resources, defending these suits.

[00:16:39] **Wakesho Kililo:** Because you see, um, you know, these people or persons who have been faced with a slap suit would spend a lot of their time, whether, you know, time and resources, whether financially, emotionally, defending these baseless suits and, um, you just a bit of statistics here.

[00:16:58] **Wakesho Kililo:** The business and human rights center once released a [00:17:00] report in 2021 that was based on, um, research they had conducted that found 355 slap cases initiated by business actors in the period between 2015 and 2021 and, um, these were against individuals and groups and they were related to either their defense of human rights or their environment.

[00:17:23] **Wakesho Kililo:** You know, let me give an example. Using a company that say, files a suit against an NGO that has released a statement condemning that particular organization or corporation for human rights abuses. So you find that, of course, the NGO probably has conducted research. They've found that there actually are human rights violations happening, whether in a particular factory, for example.

[00:17:48] **Wakesho Kililo:** And so when they release that statement away, or when they condemn that corporation, then this corporation then retaliates by filing this slap suit. Again, as I've mentioned, they [00:18:00] are an abuse of justice systems. And, um, of course, uh, maybe just also to point out, not many countries have anti-slap suits legislations.

[00:18:10] **Wakesho Kililo:** Many countries also shy away from over-legislating. You know, you have a lot of legislations that, um, you know, probably protect people or protect their freedom of expression, right? And so they have not necessarily delved into creating legislations that would protect people against anti-slap suits. However, just because we do not have, or many countries do not have anti-slap suit legislation, we are seeing communities world over joining hands to push back against them.

[00:18:40] **Wakesho Kililo:** Right. We are also seeing campaigns pushing against slaps and organizations are also in many places now coming together to push back against slap suits. For example, there's a coalition against slaps in Europe, and the sole objective of this coalition is to protect the rights of those who speak out and [00:19:00] advocate for comprehensive, uh, you know, protective measures.

[00:19:03] **Wakesho Kililo:** And, you know, reform against these slap suits. So maybe just to encourage our listeners today, not to shy back from coming out to, you know, to call a corporation, to call a government official to account that is very well within their right and, you know, to express themselves in the event this unfortunate situation of a slap suit would happen.

[00:19:25] **Wakesho Kililo:** There are, you know, there are resources and there are people who would come together to join hands and, you know, protect that individual or organisation.

[00:19:31] **Masechaba Masemola wa-Mdaka:** Most definitely. And I would like to just take our, our, our mind to not necessarily, uh, specific examples because I think it can speak generally to issues of elections, for example, political expression from from the will of the people, and speaking specifically to influencing narratives which have dangerous outcomes.

[00:19:55] **Masechaba Masemola wa-Mdaka:** The Institute for Security Studies recently held a webinar entitled [00:20:00] 'The Impact of Digital Influence on Africa's Elections, lessons from Kenya'. Now, when we speak to some of these examples or the context that you've been giving, where do we see gaps, for example, in terms of where building digital awareness for citizens?

[00:20:19] **Masechaba Masemola wa-Mdaka:** And what roles should or could platforms play in this regard? Maybe even to circumvent repercussions or sort of these, these repercussions that really don't suit anyone to no end or sometimes they are protective.

[00:20:32] **Wakesho Kililo:** One of the things that, uh, we saw, and I'm sure this is not just, you know, specifically to the Kenyan situation because again, as we, you know, started from the beginning, a lot of us, you know, have access to the internet.

[00:20:46] **Wakesho Kililo:** We have access to mobile phone technologies. We are on social media, so of course during moments of elections, there's a lot of information that is being thrown, left, right, and centre. You know, with that, we are seeing [00:21:00] a lot of forms of disinformation that are coming out, whether that be deep fakes, you know, WhatsApp messages containing incorrect information.

[00:21:10] **Wakesho Kililo:** And so of course these are spread through social media. And so again, you find that many people, you know, people are innocent. They do not know the sources of this information. They do not know whether this information is true or not, but they continue pushing it forward and spreading it right? So what I would say here as a gap one is in terms of digital literacy. Many of our citizens are not able to determine whether a certain piece of information is actually true.

[00:21:38] **Wakesho Kililo:** Again, many of us do not even have fact checking skills. So that is, uh, you know, you know, one thing that I'm seeing as a gap. Um, the other thing, when we look at platforms, all of this information passing, and a lot of this information, again, as I said, is happening across social media platforms. This also brings to light the issue of content moderation.

[00:21:59] **Wakesho Kililo:** We are seeing [00:22:00] a lot of harmful speech during electoral period, you know, during the electoral period. And so this again calls upon the role of platforms as content moderators, right? And so one gap here again, is, um, around the issue of content moderation. And, uh, one thing maybe I would point out also is, again, closely related to.

[00:22:22] **Wakesho Kililo:** Citizen awareness and citizen literacy is that many people do not know that there are certain community standards that should be upheld, right? So for example, if you are on Facebook, Facebook has community standards that sort of show or rather explain what is allowed and what is not allowed in the platform.

[00:22:40] **Wakesho Kililo:** However, these community standards are not in languages that people understand. So if we do not have there community standards and guidelines in Tahita for example, or, you know, any of our local languages and people would not understand, they would not be able to interact with them. Right? The other thing also [00:23:00] is around automated moderation and human moderators.

[00:23:03] **Wakesho Kililo:** One of the thing that is also coming up clearly is, uh, of course we have a larger number of users as compared to the human moderators that platforms have, you know, whose role is to moderate content to, you know, to delete posts and take things down, you know, anything harmful posted, this should be taken down either by human moderators or automated moderation, you know, using artificial intelligence for example.

[00:23:27] **Wakesho Kililo:** But then again, the human moderators are, you know, not enough. We don't even know their exact number. And if it's automated, then you find that, uh, many times, you know, the language that the artificial intelligence is fed is again, not able to detect hateful speech or hateful utterances in our local languages. So, you know, those are the two gaps that I would say that exist.

[00:23:51] **Masechaba Masemola wa-Mdaka:** This really brings us straight to where the conversation should be going, which is the user experience, or what I would define as the user experience and [00:24:00] why it's so important, uh, for the general public to be educated, uh, and know how to be protected.

[00:24:06] **Masechaba Masemola wa-Mdaka:** Helen, we speak about digital hygiene, digital citizenry, and digital awareness. How available is the information to people? And does it only exist in the virtual space? You know, Wakesho now touches on language something that's so important in terms of identification and being able to be aware in itself. How do people self-check?

[00:24:30] **Helen Nyinakiiza:** Yeah, the language is concerning. The localisation efforts, I think, in my opinion, should be tripled so that people can access information to answer your question. Information is available. There's a lot of it. It's just going into your browser and typing in a sentence like, how can I make a stronger password?

[00:24:50] **Helen Nyinakiiza:** Or just how can I check that my digital security is up to standard? It's doing those searches and seeing what, what [00:25:00] comes up. I would suggest trying one thing at a time, because a lot of digital security, at first it might, it might seem, you know, what is this, what's happening? It's, it's my device and the software, this and this.

[00:25:15] **Helen Nyinakiiza:** Click on that. So all that can be a little bit deterring at first, so I would suggest go for one thing. Maybe it's, you've seen something, uh, on your phone, it's acting funny and just doing a troubleshoot and saying, "how can I, uh, delete or save storage on my phone?" And when you find that information, it leads you so much faster into figuring out the right thing to do.

[00:25:41] **Helen Nyinakiiza:** I would say just breaking down the task into something bite size like three, which is getting to know your device, the thing that you walk around holding. It's either your phone, your phone, or it's your laptop at home. Your computer. It's getting to know what it's, who, [00:26:00] who made that thing? How was it made, what does it need to keep functioning?

[00:26:05] **Helen Nyinakiiza:** We, you, we keep hearing software updates, so what does that mean? And then, getting to know how you surf the internet long time ago they say surf the web. What is your behavior like there when you open browsers, what do you do? What do you see? And also that can be pulled from the internet. Um, I would say, just figuring out which is the safer ones or most recommended ones, um, to use.

[00:26:36] **Helen Nyinakiiza:** So when I say browser, I mean things like Chrome, things like Firefox, things like to Top browser. And for me, it's easy for me to, because I've seen my colleagues do this work. But you for your attitude, you come into the self-check mode with you want to open your mind, you want to learn something.

[00:26:59] **Helen Nyinakiiza:** [00:27:00] And it's actually cool stuff at the end of the day because, uh, it's made by bits and pieces. So the way they make this up is different from the way they make this up, but there are very grounding similarities of how applications are made. So understanding that is also going to take you on your journey.

[00:27:20] **Helen Nyinakiiza:** To figuring out what is the best thing to do. And the very last thing I would recommend is just having a think about, so you exist in the physical realm. Um, you know, you can touch the table and things, but you also have the, the virtual realm. The virtual environment. So what is your behavior like there?

[00:27:40] **Helen Nyinakiiza:** So if you are having a party and you want some people to know about that party. So how can I send that picture or

that message to only those people so that the other people who don't need to know that information don't [00:28:00] see it? So it's things like that also, looking around, looking for things that are more intimate. How, how would you share, how do you share, how do you connect?

[00:28:06] **Masechaba Masemola wa-Mdaka:** Yeah. Helen, you know, this self-check is so important and I think the guidance that you've given to really just say to people, these are the little things that you can do for yourself, which is, it's not very broad. It's literally the, the small things, as you say, the building blocks.

[00:28:24] **Masechaba Masemola wa-Mdaka:** And you mentioned earlier as we were speaking in the conversation about the speed and change of information. How does one actually, realistically keep up with all of this? Especially in line, you know, you speak about private spaces and, and people sharing personal information. How does one recognize when they are being violated or when they themselves, um, have been a violator in terms of infringing on another person's rights?

[00:28:53] **Helen Nyinakiiza:** It's setting a reminder, something as small as that is setting. So every day you have your phone, you have a [00:29:00] calendar. So set a reminder and say, oops, it's time for me to check if my soft my, uh, I've done an update on my operating system, the thing that helps my device to work. And so you remind yourself, because we are so busy and it's hard to keep up, but I think like it's a very determined, uh, sense of security, much like the one that you have when you enter your house at night.

[00:29:26] **Helen Nyinakiiza:** You close the door and you lock that door. Every single night. You probably do that. So who, who teaches you how to do that? So as you engage more and your whole life is every time we are always sending emails and everything now is is on these devices. So it might be also interesting, even just as a challenge every three months to see what have I done this quarter to figure out my security online?

[00:29:56] **Helen Nyinakiiza:** I think that recognizing that you have been [00:30:00] abused can be difficult and it's okay if you feel that way, if you've, you've been violated, but then it took you so long. And sometimes we have, we feel guilty about that. I should have seen that. I should have seen that. But really recognizing violence is also getting rid of the historical understanding of what people should take.

[00:30:25] **Helen Nyinakiiza:** Like, how can you say that to me, for example? This is clearly abuse. This is clearly a hate speech. Um, I did not want my photo to be shared that day. We were having dinner. I did not want that. You know, all those instances that make you feel unsafe, that's how you would start to recognize and also help people around you.

[00:30:50] **Helen Nyinakiiza:** If infringing on other people's rights. I think it is also quite human and civilized to think of yourself in that regard. For [00:31:00] most of us, most perpetrators will, when you study perpetrators and you ask this question, well didn't, you know, and sometimes it's not, it's not obvious, maybe due to peer pressure or just like upbringing and these cultural norms that really don't encourage human rights.

[00:31:20] **Helen Nyinakiiza:** They, they mostly just a derogatory and draconian. So we also have to like pull from that and recognize it in ourselves, and then you'll be one step farther away from infringing on somebody else's rights.

[00:31:36] **Masechaba Masemola wa-Mdaka:** I would like to talk about Helen, Wakesho, you being, you know, real keyboard warriors and why it matters to you. I'm so glad I can actually finally ask this question in a way that won't be offensive, as I feel it has such direct relevance to this topic. Often those who do advocacy through social media writeup platforms, instead of what one would [00:32:00] say directly being in the line of danger, in the physical sense, although sometimes it can translate to that, are referred to as keyboard warriors.

[00:32:07] **Masechaba Masemola wa-Mdaka:** Um, Helen, again, back to you. What is your why and why does working in this particular realm, no puns intended, mean to you?

[00:32:17] **Helen Nyinakiiza:** In my personal view, I think that a lot of work goes into being able to be that person who works in the field and in the case of journalists and people who help a healthy ecosystem of information to exist. I feel like, uh, those people are really what I look up to in this line of work and still trying to figure out how they do it and still, actually, I did want to say that when we, we invite, uh, groups, sets of, uh, activists and we are talking to them about digital safety, they do open up about their [00:33:00] realities and.

[00:33:02] **Helen Nyinakiiza:** Trying to understand what they go through. Um, I think that gives, it's a great motivator to keep on, uh, doing anything that, that is possible to enhance civic engagement through knowledge because once they have knowledge, then they know what decisions to make and then they can make the right decisions and then keep, uh, building from there and participations and also supporting institutions.

[00:33:30] **Wakesho Kililo:** Technology is part of our lives now. We live in the digital age and, um, the reason we do this, the reason we conduct research, the reason we train people, the reason we conduct again, advocacy campaigns is that one, we want people to be aware of their rights in the digital spaces. We also want to equip people to be able to advocate for and to be able to defend their digital rights.

[00:33:56] **Wakesho Kililo:** And three, also, we want to capacitate people to be able [00:34:00] to, you know, call governments to account and call corporations, to account, to ask them, um, you know, for better protection and, you know, promotion and the respect of uh, their digital rights.

[00:34:10] **Masechaba Masemola wa-Mdaka:** In closing, and to both of you reflecting on your personal journeys and purpose means that you provide and enable the spaces, not just in the civic engagement portion, but also very much, uh, participation.

[00:34:27] **Masechaba Masemola wa-Mdaka:** of the public and also supporting institutions and their governance. What are your hopes and possibly fears looking ahead to the future in terms of cybersecurity? I'll start with you, Wakesho.

[00:34:40] **Wakesho Kililo:** My hope is that we get to a point where citizens, civil society actors, human rights defenders, journalists, activists, everybody in essence, gets to a place where they're able to one, um, know and understand their rights in the digital age.

[00:34:58] **Wakesho Kililo:** And secondly also to be [00:35:00] aware of the dangers that exist as they navigate their lives online. And, um, you know, so that again, they're able to keep themselves safe.

[00:35:09] **Masechaba Masemola wa-Mdaka:** Thank you Wakesho, and Helen, your closing thoughts, please.

[00:35:13] **Helen Nyinakiiza:** Let's keep a collective eye on this information that is gendered. So, More of the inaccurate information and fake stories, uh, but intended to humiliating people from minority groups and women, especially if they're political leaders, um, any kind of public figure.

[00:35:33] **Masechaba Masemola wa-Mdaka:** Wakesho, Helen, thank you so much for this invaluable exchange on such an important topic and one that will continue. It affects all of us and we need to want and know more and also act responsibly there too. Part two of exploring digital rights as human rights will look at anti-censorship technologies and protecting the civic space.

[00:35:55] **Masechaba Masemola wa-Mdaka:** I thank you once again. Thank you. Thank you for having us. [00:36:00] Well, I can safely say there's never a point when you have or know too much information in this evolving digital era. Its vastness requires thought to action to responsibility and accountability of use. Some things that stood out to me from this conversation are:

[00:36:25] **Masechaba Masemola wa-Mdaka:** That language and localisation are key. Making sure that people understand things like community guidelines online is really important and can be a barrier to digital safety. Legislation in the digital world can be difficult and needs to evolve quickly as technology changes - more can be done in this arena, especially in terms of being able to mitigate risks for things like strategic lawsuits aimed at siliencing people online.

[00:36:52] **Masechaba Masemola wa-Mdaka:** Lastly, as citizens of the real and digital world we can take responsibility for understanding digital rights and making sure that we educate ourselves and do regular digital hygiene checks. My rights. Your rights. All right. Humanity should and continues to be for us all everywhere. This has been the third episode, Season 4 of "Let's Talk Human Rights – the FNF Africa podcast exploring various human rights issues".

[00:37:28] **Masechaba Masemola wa-Mdaka:** We trust you have been informed, and enlightened by it. Please hit the subscribe button so that you don't miss any future episodes. And if you've been listening to this podcast for a while and enjoying it - why not leave us a 5 star review?

[00:37:50] **Masechaba Masemola wa-Mdaka:** The Friedrich Naumann Foundation sub-Saharan Africa (FNF) is an independent German organisation that is committed to promoting liberal ideals and politics in Africa such as human rights, the rule of law, democracy, innovation, digitization, and free trade. By conducting campaigns, media events, seminars, workshops, study tours, cultural happenings, and training courses the foundation promotes human rights including freedom of expression, freedom of the press, children's rights, and LGBTQIA+ rights, and engages against violence targeting women and capital punishment.

[00:38:15] **Masechaba Masemola wa-Mdaka:** If you are interested in our activities, follow us on Instagram, Facebook and Twitter. Simply check for "Friedrich Naumann Foundation Africa", the links are in the show notes. activities, follow us on Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter. Simply check Forman Foundation, Africa.

[00:38:40] **Masechaba Masemola wa-Mdaka:** The links are in the show notes.