

Active Citizens' Lawsuits against #TwitterBan



On June 4, 2021, Nigerians woke up to the reality that Twitter had been banned owing to the deletion of President Muhammadu Buhari's tweet of June 2, 2021, in which he evoked memories of the civil war and vowed to punish people in the southeastern region after attacks on public infrastructure.

This action violates the freedom of speech of Nigerians. However, some civil society organisations (CSOs) and active citizens have refused to remain silent. They have led lawsuits

This aga	mat the	e federal government aı	na telecomm	unication companies to	cnallenge the	e # I witterBan in Nigeri	ian and	ECOWAS COURTS.		
1	SEI	RAP and 176	VS	Federal Repu of Nigeria		ECW/CCJ/APP/23		ECOWAS Community Court of Justice Abu	ja June 8, 2021	
-	COI	ncerned Nigerians		PRAYER				JUDGEMENT		
		A declaration that the suspension of Twitter or any other social media application without an order from a competent court is unlawful. A declaration that the act of the Defendant in mandating its agent to commence and continue to regulate social media amounts to restriction and censorship. A declaration that the directive 'advising' broadcast stations to deactivate their Twitter accounts and discontinue its use is a breach of the citizens' right to freedom of expression, and access to information. A declaration that the threat on Nigerians and other people who use Twitter and/or other social microblogging applications in Nigeria with criminal prosecution violates the principle that there is no punishment without law, and the right to fair hearing, and is therefore, null and void. An order setting aside the suspension, ban, sanction or other punishments whatsoever imposed on Twitter, Nigerians, media houses, and broadcast stations. An order directing the Defendant and its agents to immediately revoke, withdraw and/or rescind their suspension or ban of Twitter and/or any other social media service provider(s) in Nigeria.						June 22, 2021 The Court restrained the government of President Muhammadu Buhari and its agents from unlawfully imposing sanctions or doing anything whatsoever to harass, intimidate, arrest or prosecute Twitter and/or any other social media service provider(s), media houses, radio and television broadcast stations, the Plaintiffs and other Nigerians who are Twitter users, pending the hearing and determination of this suit which was fixed for July 6, 2021. July 6, 2021 The court agreed to consolidate all four suits - ECW/CCJ/APP/29/21,ECW/CCJ/APP/23/21, ECW/CCJ/APP/24/21 and ECW/CCJ/APP/26/21 related to the issue. This will afford the court the opportunity to give one judgment in the matters that were similar in nature and character. Media Rights Agenda (MRA) did not oppose, and the two other parties were absent. Sitting adjourned to July 9, 2021. July 9, 2021 The ECOWAS adjourned to September 29, 2021, for a hearing to enable all parties to organise themselves for trial. September 29. 2021 The case is fixed for judgement on January 20, 2022.		
2	One	Love Foundation V	/S Feder	al Republic of Nigeri	a EC	CW/CCJ/APP/24/21	EC	COWAS Community Court of Justice Abuja	June 8, 2021	
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3	SERAP vs National Broadcasting Commission [NBC], Director-General, NBC & Minister of Information FHC/ABJ/CS/496/2021						2021	Federal High Court Abuja	June 18, 2021	
		Direct	tor-General, N	PRAYER	ition			JUDGEMENT		
		Mohammed and any oth operations and contents	er persons fro s by broadcast ide the directiv	aining the government of m censoring, regulating, l stations, and activities o we by NBC and Mr Lai Moh	icensing and c f social media	ontrolling the social med service providers in Nige	lia eria.	No date has been fixed for the hearing of the suit.		
l			Constitutional	and unlawful.	_	broadcast stations to sto	ор			
4		PIN vs					ор	Federal High Court Abuja	June 18, 2021	
4		PIN V		NBC, FGN PRAYER		CS/493/2021	ор	Federal High Court Abuja	June 18, 2021	
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interfering with Twitter and any other social media platform.

PRAYER

the rights to freedom of expression and an injunction restraining all respondents from blocking or

A declaration that the respondents blockage of Twitter access was unlawful, unconstitutional and against







JUDGEMENT

No date has been fixed for the hearing of the suit.