

Backlash over social media tax regulations

Uganda's new tax on social media access limits basic rights and harms business, according to a petition filed by activists to the Constitutional Court. A **Business Day** report notes that Ugandans pay R0.68 a day to access Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, YouTube, Skype and other phone apps under the tax introduced on Sunday. The government says the revenue will help fund energy, transport and other projects. **The social media tax is unconstitutional, according to Daniel Bill Opio, a lawyer who filed the petition with the Kampala-based Cyber Law Initiative** nonprofit organisation, and others. 'Youths are taking on initiatives toward innovation and technology mostly using these ... online platforms,' he said. Meanwhile, a poll reveals that Ugandans are devising ways of evading the infamous tax. A **Daily Monitor** survey reveals that several respondents had resorted to Virtual Private Network (VPN) to bypass paying the daily excise duty charge on Over-The-Top services. It revealed that 19% of respondents said they would stop using social media while 70% said they would resort to using VPN. The new tax compels every Ugandan visiting any social media platform to pay \$0.05 daily, \$0.36 weekly, or \$1.56 monthly as excise duty.