

COMMUNIQUÉ

Responsible Use of Social Media in Mauritius

Social media platforms provide an important space for communication, public debate and exchange of ideas and the exercise of the fundamental right to freedom of expression.

Freedom of expression carries corresponding responsibilities. The exercise of this right cannot defame, threaten, abuse, deceive, incite hatred or endanger public safety and national security. The public has to exercise caution and verify information before sharing content online.

The public is reminded that the Cybersecurity and Cybercrime Act 2021 provides for the protection individuals and society from harmful online conduct. These include offences relating to the misuse of fake online profiles under Section 16, cyberbullying under Section 17 and the dissemination of undesirable content through computer systems under Section 23 of the Act. Under Section 23, “undesirable content” includes online content that:

- is deceptive or inaccurate and posted with the intent to defame, threaten, abuse, or mislead the public;
- threatens public health or public safety;
- threatens national security; and
- promotes racism

The Act places a responsibility on administrators of online accounts, pages, groups and similar platforms to moderate and control undesirable content when such content is brought to their attention by a competent investigatory authority. Failure to do so may constitute an offence under the law. Upon conviction, offenders may be liable to **a fine of up to one million rupees and penal servitude for a term of up to twenty years.**

**Ministry of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation
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