

Access to quality information needed

Media freedom is undermined by a lack of information infrastructure as well as skills and literacy to access and critically evaluate information. The ability to access vital information, especially government information, makes it difficult for media practitioners and the general public to accurately report on issues that concern them.

[World Press Freedom Day](#) was celebrated on 3 May and to mark this occasion, the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) launched its annual state of media freedom report, *So this is Democracy*, under the theme "Difficulty in the Access of Information Undermines the Media". Some of the issues in the report are related to access to and freedom of information.

"A pattern of governments reneging on their pledges to promote access to information is clear in the report," says the regional director of MISA, Zoe Titus.

MISA also stated that within the self-regulatory framework of the media, those who sit in media/press councils/tribunals will have to create some critical distance between themselves and the media they regulate, in order to gain confidence from both the public and those who criticise them.

The institute, through its African Platform on Access to Information (APAI), seeks to advocate for legislation that allows citizens to freely access public information, in a bid to foster public accountability.

MISA believes that democracy is about empowering citizens so that they are able to actively take ownership of their own growth and development objectives.

"It is our strongest belief that information is power only when it can be productively used by the public and gives citizens the greatest opportunity to make decisions that enable them to question the sincerity and honesty of those who have been trusted with positions of power," the institution said in a statement.

Source: [allAfrica](#)