

## **Statement by Unwanted Witness on the Cancellation of RightsCon 2026 in Zambia**

Unwanted Witness expresses its solidarity with Access Now, the RightsCon community, and all stakeholders affected by the abrupt cancellation of **RightsCon 2026**, which was scheduled to take place in Lusaka, Zambia.

RightsCon is globally recognized as one of the most important convenings on human rights in the digital age, bringing together civil society, governments, technologists, and businesses to engage on critical issues such as privacy, freedom of expression, and internet governance. Its cancellation, just days before it was set to begin, has disrupted not only logistics and participation, but also an essential space for open dialogue and collaboration.

We acknowledge the efforts of Access Now and partners who worked tirelessly to organize this important gathering, as well as the many participants who had committed time, resources, and energy to shaping the conversations that would have taken place.

This development raises broader concerns about the shrinking civic space and the growing challenges faced by digital rights communities across Africa. Spaces like RightsCon are vital not only for advancing policy and practice, but for strengthening trust, cooperation, and collective action across borders.

Unwanted Witness stands in solidarity with all those impacted and reaffirms the importance of protecting open, inclusive, and safe spaces for dialogue on digital rights. We remain committed to working with partners across the continent to advance a rights-respecting digital future.

**Unwanted Witness**  
5th May 2026