



**UNWANTED  
WITNESS**

"Amplifying Voices, Changing lives"

## **UNWANTED WITNESS WELCOMES CITIZENS' DEMAND FOR TELECOM ACCOUNTABILITY OVER UNFAIR DATA DEPLETION PRACTICES AND CALL FOR REGULATORY ACTION.**

**Kampala April, 2nd 2024**, Unwanted Witness is applauding a move by Ugandans to demand for respect of their internet rights and freedoms by seeking accountability over the rampant unfair data depletion practices by major telecom service providers.

The online uproar from Ugandans through the hashtag **#DataTheftExhibition** signifies the importance of the internet to citizens' livelihoods. The exhibition rightfully raises the critical matter of data depletion, sluggish internet speeds, and the ensuing frustration experienced by telecom customers. In 2016, Unwanted Witness raised similar concerns of fraudulent charges by service providers to the regulator, calling for an urgent investigation. Unfortunately, the regulator, UCC has never heeded to this public outcry. Similarly, in 2019, Unwanted witness petitioned the telecom regulator, Uganda Communication Commission (UCC) demanding for an immediate investigation into the telecommunication's weak internal policies and terms of service.

**Section 5 (b) of Uganda Communications Act 2013**, mandates UCC to monitor, inspect, license supervise, control and regulate communication services in the country. UCC's regulatory oversight is indispensable in ensuring the proper regulation of rates and charges for communication services, protecting consumers from exorbitant tariffs, preventing unfair competitive practices, and investigating complaints concerning data depletion.

Unwanted Witness urges UCC to take decisive and expeditious action to address the systemic issues highlighted by the **#DataTheftExhibition**, thereby safeguarding the interests of both consumers and operators alike and upholding the quality standards of communication services within Uganda.

Unwanted Witness continues to unequivocally stand in solidarity with the citizens who have been adversely affected by the data depletion tendencies. The revelation of these practices is a stark reminder of the dire need for accountability and consumer protection within the telecommunications sector.

In light of these revelations, we call upon MTN and Airtel to provide a comprehensive explanation for their actions and to take immediate steps to rectify the harm caused to consumers. Transparency and accountability must be upheld as fundamental principles in the provision of telecommunications services, and it is incumbent upon these companies to prioritize the interests of their customers above all else.

In conclusion, Unwanted Witness reiterates its unwavering commitment to advocating for the protection of digital rights and consumer interests. We stand ready to collaborate with all stakeholders to ensure that telecom companies are held accountable for their actions and that measures are implemented to safeguard the rights and well-being of consumers in Uganda's telecommunications landscape.

Signed

Dorothy Mukasa  
**Executive Director,  
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## **About Unwanted Witness**

Unwanted Witness is a Civil Society Organization founded in 2012 to promote online freedoms and protect digital rights in Uganda. The organization aims to create a safe and secure digital environment for citizens and promote the responsible use of technology.

Unwanted Witness has become a leading voice in advocating for internet freedoms, and digital rights, particularly the right to privacy, digital identity, digital inclusion, and freedom of expression. The organization aims to empower citizens to use technology in a safe, secure, and effective manner while holding public and private entities accountable for digital rights violations.

The organization achieves its mission through research, advocacy, and capacity building. Unwanted Witness conducts research to identify digital rights violations, trends, and threats, and uses this information to advocate for policy and legal reforms. The organization also provides digital security training and support to human rights defenders, journalists, and vulnerable groups to help them protect themselves online.

In addition, Unwanted Witness Uganda engages in public education and awareness campaigns to promote digital literacy and responsible online behavior. The organization also monitors internet shutdowns and other forms of digital censorship and responds to them by raising awareness and advocating for the restoration of access to the internet.

For more information: [www.unwantedwitness.org](http://www.unwantedwitness.org)

