

2024

# CATALYST

*Igniting Change Through Stories and Ideas*

## SUCCESSSES

Celebrating academic success in 2024

## PERSONAL LOSS

The loss of JF was deep and personal

## TECH ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Events Gear in the Offing

2025

# A FRESH START

Dr. Job Mwaura



780198 601838

# TABLE OF CONTENTS


---

02	<i>Reflecting on 2024</i>
05	<i>Publications and Research</i>
07	<i>Innovapp Technologies</i>
09	<i>Exploring the world</i>
10	<i>Personal Loss</i>
12	<i>The Year Ahead - 2025</i>
12	<i>The Year Ahead - 2025</i>

---

## REFLECTING ON 2024

# A YEAR OF GROWTH, LOSS, AND NEW BEGINNINGS



I have had a very unique 2024—a year filled with countless wins, moments of immense joy, and achievements that have pushed me to new heights. But it has also been a year marked by profound lows, challenges that tested my resilience, and decisions that changed the trajectory of my life. It has been a year of extremes—of triumphs and losses, of learning and unlearning, of standing at crossroads and choosing paths that felt both daunting and exhilarating.

As I reflect on this whirlwind of a year, I find myself compelled to pause and take stock. In this blog, I'll explore into the highlights of my 2024—from academic accomplishments and career transitions to personal loss, enriching travels, and the bold leap into tech entrepreneurship. This is not just a review but a deeply personal account of a year that has shaped me in ways I never imagined. Join me as I take a journey through the defining moments of a truly transformative year.

*read on*





## Academics: A Year of Impact and Innovation

As some of you may know, I have been in the academic space for quite some time now. Over the past two years, I have been affiliated with four prestigious academic institutions. I am a Research Fellow at the Wits Centre for Journalism, my PhD alma mater (University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa), which holds a special place in my heart. Witwatersrand is one of Africa's top universities, and I am incredibly proud to be associated with it. Additionally, I serve as an Affiliate Faculty member at the Carter School of Peace and Conflict

Resolution at George Mason University, where I supervise a PhD student researching peace and social media in Kenya. I have also been an adjunct fellow at Strathmore University's Institute for Public Policy and Governance and a faculty member at another local University in Kenya, where I have played a key role in establishing the Media and Communication program.

I mention this background not to boast, but to provide context and address any doubts about my qualifications and the breadth of my experience. These affiliations reflect my commitment to academia and my dedication to fostering meaningful research and mentorship. At the same time, for personal reasons, I have been exploring opportunities to transition from traditional academic roles to industry and research-focused positions—a space that has always been my first love.

# PUBLICATIONS AND RESEARCH

This year, I further solidified my research profile with several significant publications. Over the course of the year, I authored or co-authored a total of eight peer-reviewed journal articles and book chapters, alongside two policy briefs and impactful blog pieces.

These works have focused on diverse yet interconnected areas, including citizen journalism, media ownership in Africa, digital inclusion, and ethical AI governance. Notably, after receiving a major grant last year from the Social Science Research Council on the role of AI in society, I continued to explore this critical area, examining its implications for crime control, peacebuilding, and societal transformation.

My ongoing interest in AI's societal role led to invitations to speak at prominent conferences, including the Peace and Development Research Conference in Machakos and the African Studies Annual Meeting in Chicago. Among my works, the most intriguing has been my blog article on the Gen Z movement in Kenya, which was translated into several languages and has amassed over 34,000 reads to date, alongside hundreds of shares and republications.

Seeing the reach and impact of this piece makes me immensely proud, as it not only highlights the power of digital activism but also underscores the global interest in Kenyan youth movements.

Many people have, of course, asked me how I managed to have all these publications. The truth is, some of these works were old manuscripts from previous years that all reached publication stages this year.

Special Issue: *Citizen Journalism Revisited*

## Citizen journalism revisited: A case study of Kenya's kibera news network

Journalism  
2024, Vol. 0(0) 1–19  
© The Author(s) 2024  
Article reuse guidelines:  
[sagepub.com/journals-permissions](https://sagepub.com/journals-permissions)  
DOI: 10.1177/1464884924127901  
[journals.sagepub.com/home/jou](https://journals.sagepub.com/home/jou)  

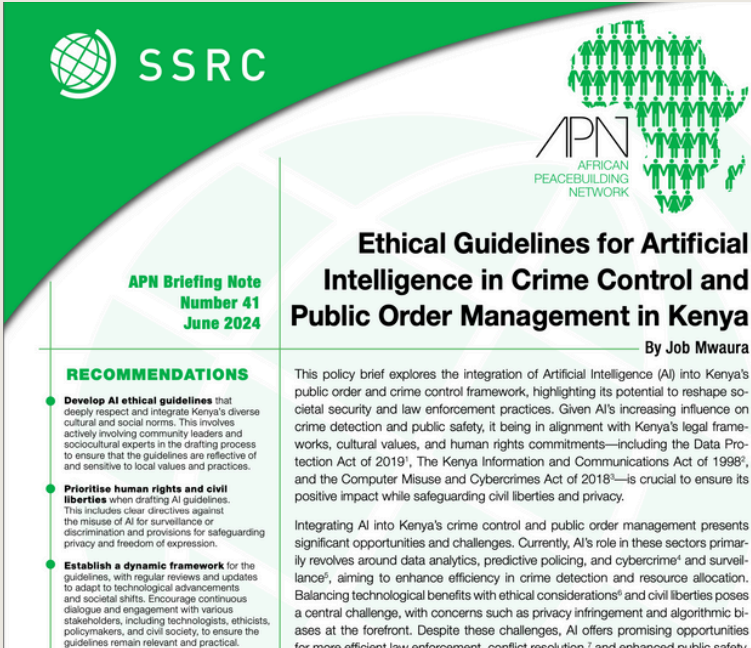

**Meghan Sobel Cohen**   
Regis University, Denver, CO, USA

**Job Mwaure**   
University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa

**Karen McIntyre**   
Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, VA, USA

### Abstract

In an evolving media landscape, the prominence and influence of citizen journalism has



**APN Briefing Note  
Number 41  
June 2024**

### Ethical Guidelines for Artificial Intelligence in Crime Control and Public Order Management in Kenya

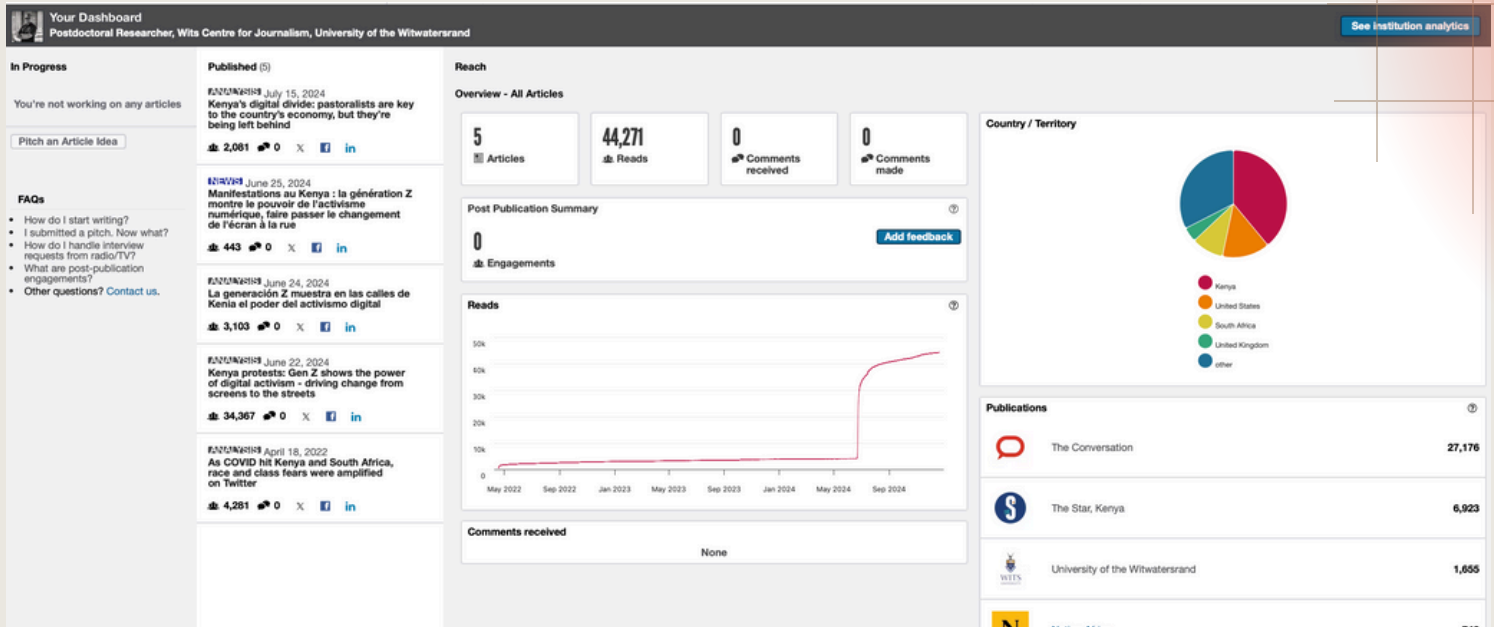
By Job Mwaure

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- **Develop AI ethical guidelines** that deeply respect and integrate Kenya's diverse cultural and social norms. This involves actively involving community leaders and sociocultural experts in the drafting process to ensure that the guidelines are reflective of and sensitive to local values and practices.
- **Prioritise human rights and civil liberties** when drafting AI guidelines. This includes clear directives against the misuse of AI for surveillance or discrimination and provisions for safeguarding privacy and freedom of expression.
- **Establish a dynamic framework** for the guidelines, with regular reviews and updates to adapt to technological advancements and societal shifts. Encourage continuous dialogue and engagement with various stakeholders, including technologists, ethicists, policymakers, and civil society, to ensure the guidelines remain relevant and practical.

This policy brief explores the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into Kenya's public order and crime control framework, highlighting its potential to reshape societal security and law enforcement practices. Given AI's increasing influence on crime detection and public safety, it being in alignment with Kenya's legal frameworks, cultural values, and human rights commitments—including the Data Protection Act of 2019<sup>1</sup>, The Kenya Information and Communications Act of 1998<sup>2</sup>, and the Computer Misuse and Cybercrimes Act of 2018<sup>3</sup>—is crucial to ensure its positive impact while safeguarding civil liberties and privacy.

Integrating AI into Kenya's crime control and public order management presents significant opportunities and challenges. Currently, AI's role in these sectors primarily revolves around data analytics, predictive policing, and cybercrime<sup>4</sup> and surveillance<sup>5</sup>, aiming to enhance efficiency in crime detection and resource allocation. Balancing technological benefits with ethical considerations<sup>6</sup> and civil liberties poses a central challenge, with concerns such as privacy infringement and algorithmic biases at the forefront. Despite these challenges, AI offers promising opportunities for more efficient law enforcement, conflict resolution,<sup>7</sup> and enhanced public safety.



Additionally, I have received numerous invitations to publish—some of which I have accepted, while others I have had to decline to maintain focus and balance. This confluence of factors has made 2024 an extraordinary year for my scholarly output. Through these accomplishments, I have felt deeply inspired to continue bridging the gap between academic research and societal impact.

Looking onto 2025, I already have a number of publications lined up that I am truly excited about. Together with my friend,

Associate Professor Prinola Govenden from the University of Johannesburg, we are co-editing a special issue on Decolonizing the Internet in Africa, which will be published by Communicatio. Additionally, I am collaborating with Professor Admire Mare, also from the University of Johannesburg, on a book project focused on digital activism in Africa. Beyond these, I have a book chapters and a journal articles scheduled for release early in the year.

What drives me the most is the hope that my work can extend beyond academia—not just to inspire but to translate into tangible change in society. While my scholarly output this year has been significant, I've often reflected on how these accomplishments came to fruition. Some were the culmination of years of effort, old manuscripts finally reaching the publication stage. Others were the result of invitations to contribute, some of which I've gratefully accepted, while others I've had to turn down to maintain balance. As I look ahead, I am determined to ensure that my research continues to connect with real-world challenges, fostering progress and meaningful impact.



Evidence Based Library and Information Practice

Research Article

**Championing Inclusivity: Underrepresentation of Women in African Academic Leadership and Scholarly Journal Management**

Dr. Job Mwaura  
Postdoctoral Research Fellow  
Wits Centre for Journalism  
University of the Witwatersrand  
Johannesburg, Gauteng, South Africa  
Email: [job.mwaura@wits.ac.za](mailto:job.mwaura@wits.ac.za)

Dr Dinesh Balliah  
Director  
Wits Centre for Journalism  
University of the Witwatersrand  
Johannesburg, Gauteng, South Africa  
Email: [dinesh.balliah@wits.ac.za](mailto:dinesh.balliah@wits.ac.za)

Received: 5 Oct. 2023

Accepted: 22 Apr. 2024

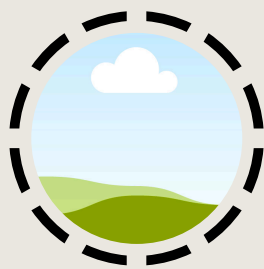


**INNOVAPP TECHNOLOGIES:**

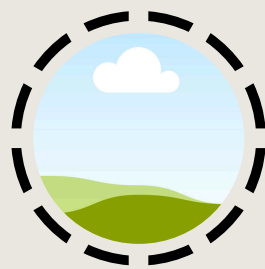
*A bold step into tech entrepreneurship*



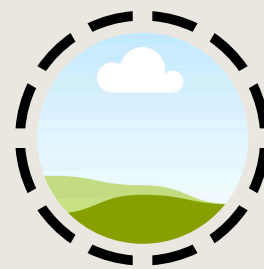
1



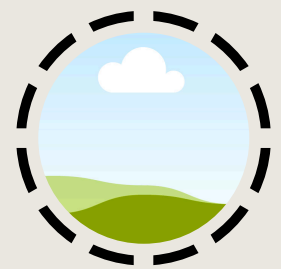
2



3



4



5

This year marked an exhilarating new chapter as I ventured into tech entrepreneurship with the launch of Innovapp Technologies Limited. The idea took root in 2023 during a tech entrepreneurship conference at New York University, where I also linked up with my co-founder, Winnie Nyambura. We began envisioning solutions for challenges in niche markets through technology. For me, this was more than just a business endeavour; it was an opportunity to channel my excitement for tech into real-world applications.



## Events Gear

Events Gear, will be the flagship app of Innovapp Technologies, is set to revolutionize the event planning industry by bridging the gap between event organizers and vendors. Using advanced AI algorithms, the app will provide personalized vendor recommendations based on specific event requirements, ensuring quality and reliability.

The app eliminates the guesswork and inefficiencies often associated with traditional referrals, offering a streamlined solution for event planning. Currently in the final stages of testing, Events Gear is scheduled for launch in the first quarter of 2025, promising to transform how events are organized and executed in Kenya and beyond.







Building Innovapp Technologies has been a deeply rewarding experience. It has blended my passion for problem-solving with a drive to contribute to economic empowerment. 2025 promises to be a pivotal year as we bring these ambitious ideas to life and continue to innovate for a better future.

Like any startup, the journey has not been without its hurdles. Early in the year, we faced steep learning curves, particularly with app development and building the right team. However, these challenges became invaluable lessons. Today, we feel more confident in understanding the nuances of starting and scaling a tech company.

Innovapp Technologies is based in Kenya and is committed to bridging gaps between vendors and customers in ways that mainstream platforms often overlook.

As we prepare to roll out this product in Kenya and neighbouring regions, I am energized by the potential to create meaningful change in the event planning industry and beyond.



# Events Gear

Event Essentials Simplified

@EventsGearKenya

@EventsGear\_ke



"With Events Gear, my sound services have never been more visible. It will be the perfect platform to reach new clients and grow my business effortlessly!"

**SOUNDGIC**  
Perfect Sound for Every Occasion

*Follow -US-*

"I am thrilled with the innovation by Events Gear. As a private chef, I've struggled with visibility on major social media platforms. With Events Gear, I am confident my business will become much busier moving forward."  
— Chef Martha

**DJ MICERE**

"Events Gear will connect me with clients who truly value quality sound. It will take my DJ business to the next level!"  
— DJ Micere

*Over 70 events related vendors and millions of events organizers will find Events Gear App timely*

# Exploring the World: Enriching Travels

2024 was a year of travel and exploration, bringing academic insights and cultural enrichment. These journeys have not only broadened my horizons but also reinforced my belief in the power of global collaborations and connections.



*Ethiopia at African Union HQ*



*Zimbabwe*



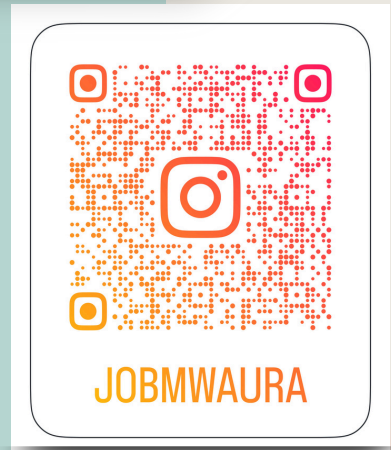
*South Africa*



*Ghana*



*Chicago, USA*



**JOBMWAURA**

Scan this to see more photos here

# A PERSONAL LOSS



*Jane Frances Njoki Angalia*  
**1966 - 2024**

Despite the many wins of 2024, the year was overshadowed by a deeply personal and heartbreaking loss: the passing of Jane Frances Njoki. I met Jane Frances in 2004 during my undergraduate years when she served as the Public Relations Officer at our university. Our paths first crossed when I was the Editor of the Student Union and spearheading the university's first-ever student magazine. Jane became a mentor and a steadfast supporter, but more than that, she became like a mother to me. At the time, I was pursuing a Bachelor's degree in English and Literature, and her encouragement inspired me to later pursue postgraduate studies in Communication and Journalism and eventually a PhD in Media Studies. Interestingly, she had walked a similar academic path, holding a BA in English Literature and an MA in Communication from Daystar University. Over nearly two decades, our bond grew stronger, built on mutual respect, shared passions, and her unwavering belief in me.

The last ten years of her life were marked by an incredibly brave battle with breast cancer. Her illness significantly disrupted her pursuit of a PhD at JKUAT and stalled her career progression, yet she never allowed these challenges to dim her spirit. Jane often referred to me as her "only son." While she didn't have children of her own, she was surrounded by an extended family of friends and countless individuals whose lives she touched through her philanthropy. Even in her sickness, she continued to serve others with grace and generosity. Reflecting on her life fills me with gratitude for the lessons she imparted, and her memory will forever be a guiding light.

Jane Frances' absence is a void that words cannot adequately capture, and I will miss her profoundly.



## THE YEAR AHEAD – 2025

### BIG CAREER MOVE AND 1ST FLAGSHIP APP

As I look ahead to 2025, the year promises to be one of transformation and exciting opportunities. A significant career move awaits as I transition from my role at the Wits Centre for Journalism to join Ludwig Maximilian University in Germany. Under the leadership of Professor Sahana Udupa in the Social and Cultural Anthropology Department, I will be based in the Media Anthropology and Digital Studies unit. My research will focus on small platforms and contentious speech, an area that holds immense potential for shaping digital discourse and societal understanding. This move, while exciting, has not been an easy decision—leaving behind a place that has nurtured my academic growth over the years is bittersweet. However, I am eager to embrace this new chapter and the intellectual challenges it brings.

Another highlight for the year ahead is the launch of our first app at Innovapp Technologies, Events Gear. With the launch scheduled for January 2025, my co-founder and I are optimistic about the potential impact of this innovation, not just in Kenya but in neighboring regions as well.

As with every year, 2025 comes with hopes, plans, and uncertainties. I know that not every goal will materialize as envisioned, but I trust the process and remain grounded in faith. My ultimate aspiration is for my efforts—both in academia and entrepreneurship—to inspire and create tangible change. As I step into this new year, I am reminded that the most meaningful journeys are those filled with purpose, resilience, and hope. Here's to a year of growth, new beginnings, and impactful contributions.

## 2024 Publications

### Journal Articles

- COHEN, M., MWAURA, J., MCINTYRE, K., (2024) CITIZEN JOURNALISM REVISITED: A CASE STUDY OF KENYA'S KIBERA NEWS NETWORK. JOURNALISM. SAGE
- MWAURA, J., & BALLIAH, D. (2024). CHAMPIONING INCLUSIVITY: UNDERREPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN AFRICAN ACADEMIC LEADERSHIP AND SCHOLARLY JOURNAL MANAGEMENT. EVIDENCE BASED LIBRARY AND INFORMATION PRACTICE, 19(3), 42-59. [HTTPS://DOI.ORG/10.18438/EBLIP30447](https://doi.org/10.18438/EBLIP30447)
- MWAURA, J. (2024). NAVIGATING THE DIGITAL HORIZON: FUTURE TRENDS AND PREDICTIONS IN AFRICA. DIALOGUES ON DIGITAL SOCIETY, 1-5. SAGE
- LUSIKE MUKHONGO, L., MWAURA, J., & OMWOHA, J. (2024). RECONCEPTUALISING MEDIA OWNERSHIP AND SHIFTING POWER RELATIONS IN AN EMERGING DIGITAL MEDIA FRAMEWORK. AFRICAN STUDIES, 82(3-4), 300-315. TYLOR AND FRANCIS

### Book Chapters

- KASKINEN, M., & MWAURA, J. (2025). ACTIVIST CONTESTATIONS IN CONTEMPORARY SOCIO-POLITICAL CHANGE MAKING IN KENYA. IN ONODERA, H., KASKINEN, M., & RANTA, E., CITIZENSHIP UTOPIAS IN THE GLOBAL SOUTH: THE EMERGENT FORMS OF ACTIVISM IN AN ERA OF DISILLUSIONMENT. ROUTLEDGE
- MWAURA, J., (2024). PUBLISHING AS REVOLUTIONARY TOOLS FROM PRE-INDEPENDENCE TO POST-INDEPENDENCE KENYA. IN LUNGILE TSHUMA ET. AL (EDS), MEDIA, SOCIAL MOVEMENTS, AND PROTEST CULTURES IN AFRICA HASHTAGS, HUMOUR, AND SLOGANS. ROWMAN & LITTLEFIELD
- MWAURA, J., & COHEN, M. S. (2024). HARASSMENT AND THREATS FACED BY JOURNALISTS IN KENYA: IMPLICATIONS FOR PRESS FREEDOM AND INDEPENDENT REPORTING. IN L. A. TSHUMA, T. MATSILELE, M. J. MSIMANGA, & S. JAMIL (EDS.), PATTERNS OF HARASSMENT IN AFRICAN JOURNALISM (1ST ED., P. 17). ROUTLEDGE.
- MWAURA, J. (2024) SILICON SAVANNAH OR DIGITISING MARGINALISATION? A REFLECTION OF KENYA'S GOVERNMENT DIGITIZATION POLICIES, STRATEGIES AND PROJECTS. IN CHARI, T. & AKPOJIVI, U. (2023). COMMUNICATION RIGHTS IN AFRICA: EMERGING DISCOURSES AND PERSPECTIVES. ROUTLEDGE. LONDON AND NEW YORK.

### Policy Briefs

MWAURA, J. ( JUNE, 2024) ETHICAL GUIDELINES FOR ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN CRIME CONTROL AND PUBLIC ORDER MANAGEMENT IN KENYA. PUBLISHED BY THE SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH COUNCIL, NEW YORK

MWAURA, J. (OCTOBER, 2024) PROMOTING GENDER EQUITY IN SCHOLARLY JOURNAL MANAGEMENT. PUBLISHED BY THE SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH COUNCIL, NEW YORK

### Blog Articles

MWAURA, J. (2024, JULY 15). KENYA'S DIGITAL DIVIDE: PASTORALISTS ARE KEY TO THE COUNTRY'S ECONOMY, BUT THEY'RE BEING LEFT BEHIND. THE CONVERSATION. [HTTP://THECONVERSATION.COM/KENYAS-DIGITAL-DIVIDE-PASTORALISTS-ARE-KEY-TO-THE-COUNTRYS-ECONOMY-BUT-THEYRE-BEING-LEFT-BEHIND-231021](http://theconversation.com/kenyas-digital-divide-pastoralists-are-key-to-the-countrys-economy-but-theyre-being-left-behind-231021)

MWAURA, J. (2024, JUNE 22). KENYA PROTESTS: GEN Z SHOWS THE POWER OF DIGITAL ACTIVISM - DRIVING CHANGE FROM SCREENS TO THE STREETS. THE CONVERSATION. [HTTP://THECONVERSATION.COM/KENYA-PROTESTS-GEN-Z-SHOWS-THE-POWER-OF-DIGITAL-ACTIVISM-DRIVING-CHANGE-FROM-SCREENS-TO-THE-STREETS-233065](http://theconversation.com/kenya-protests-gen-z-shows-the-power-of-digital-activism-driving-change-from-screens-to-the-streets-233065)