

# The Trajectory of Data Privacy and Protection in East Africa: Lessons for Uganda

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In the wake of this digital era, East Africa has embraced data protection laws and we clearly see a shift from paper to actual application in practice. This week we shall look at the decision of Kenya's Office of the Data Protection Commissioner (ODPC) in **Julian Rowa (suing on behalf of a minor) V The Nairobi Academy, Complaint No. 1597 of 2025**.

The ODPC in this matter, found that the Nairobi Academy, the respondent, unlawfully disclosed and caused the publication of a minor's personal data, the information was the name and examination results. This information was obtained without the consent of the parents or any other lawful basis. The disclosure occurred through a newspaper publication under an advertising feature. Nairobi Academy was held liable for violating the right to privacy under the Data Protection Act, 2019 (Kenya) and ordered compensation of KES 637,500 to the complainant for both material and non-material damage and this includes distress.

Although this determination arises from Kenya, its implications are highly relevant to Uganda's data protection regime.

## Implications for Uganda's Data Protection Landscape

Similarly, Uganda's Data Protection and Privacy Act, Cap 97 provides strong protections for personal data and imposes serious obligations in respect of sensitive personal data and this includes and is not limited to children's data, health information and so on. The Act mandates that processing is lawful, fair and transparent and places accountability on the controllers and processors.

The Kenyan decision reinforces a critical regional trend, regulators are determined to move beyond guidance and to impose consequences for non-compliance. Ugandan organisations therefore ought to ensure data protection compliance is embedded in governance structures, operational processes, and staff awareness, rather than treated as a purely administrative exercise.

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## Sensitive Data Requires Heightened Care

The unlawful disclosure of sensitive personal data, especially that of children, presents a high risk of harm. As the region embraces enforcement mechanisms, organisations must be vigilant about consent management, purpose limitation, data minimisation, and publication controls. The cost of non-compliance carries legal, reputational, and financial consequences.

## Compliance Support

For organisations seeking to assess their data protection compliance, strengthen governance frameworks, or manage data protection risks, particularly in relation to sensitive personal data, the TMT / IP & Sustainability Team at KTA Advocates provides specialised advisory support. The team offers guidance on regulatory compliance, policy development, training, risk assessments, and emerging issues at the intersection of technology, data protection, and sustainability.

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Please feel free to reach out to KTA Advocates at [tmtandip@ktaadvocates.com](mailto:tmtandip@ktaadvocates.com) to discuss your specific needs.