

# SA government joins Partners Against Piracy

Justice and Correctional Services Minister Ronald Lamola committed the South African government to fighting content piracy at the launch of Partners Against Piracy (Pap).



Source: [www.unsplash.com](https://www.unsplash.com)

Pap is an initiative to combat piracy and raise awareness of this existential threat to the global creative industry.

The launch saw a coalition of South African creative workers, media professionals and activists come together under the theme "Building a safe and fair creative economy in South Africa".

Delivering the keynote speech, Lamola said the creative-arts industry had immense potential to grow and attract investment. He said the South African Cybercrimes Act of 2020 empowered law-enforcement agencies to protect the industry by acting against piracy and allowed for harsher sentences on content pirates.

"We are constantly improving our systems and working to arrest the ringleaders of organised cybercrimes such as content piracy," he said. "We look forward to working with Pap to wage a coordinated war against piracy."



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Delegates at the event heard that there were a total of 345.4 million visits by users to the top 10 piracy sites in just three months last year. Users in five major African territories made around 17.4 million visits, of which more than 5 million were from South Africa, according to figures from software security and media technology company Irdeto.

“Content piracy is about the theft of intellectual copyright,” said Copyright Coalition of South Africa (CCSA) chairperson Chola Makgamathe. “Piracy robs content creators and rightsholders of the compensation they’re entitled to.”

Makgamathe said that content piracy threatened the very survival of content industries across Africa, as content workers would leave their industries if they could not earn a living from their work.

“This is a big monster with its tentacles across the world,” said Makgamathe. “It takes place across multiple jurisdictions. That is why we need partners like the Department of Justice and Correctional Services, business, civil society, and other NGOs. We call on everyone with a stake in the war against piracy to join us.”



Film producer Anant Singh receives business award from Pres Ramaphosa

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Jotam Matariro, CEO for CAPASSO (Composers, Authors and Publishers Association) told delegates at the event that of all music downloaded or streamed via digital platforms, it was estimated that only 37% was extracted legally.

“In South Africa, this means that an estimated R691m in revenue is lost to piracy,” he said. “The situation is getting worse. We need laws that hold internet platforms liable for internet piracy that happens on their platforms.”

Refiloe Hlabioa, production and development coordinator at the National Film and Video Foundation (NFVF), said filmmakers went to great lengths to finance their projects, sometimes going so far as to put up their own houses as surety. “If a film doesn’t make money due to piracy, filmmakers stand to lose the very roof over their head,” she said.

## About Partners Against Piracy

Pap is a pan-African campaign to fight piracy, working to support content industries and protect the continent’s creatives from job losses due to piracy.

The initiative was first launched in 2018 and has a presence in Kenya, Ghana, Tanzania, Angola, Mozambique, Botswana, and Malawi, among other territories.

The event drew delegates from industry organisations including the SA Music Rights Organisation (Samro) under the umbrella of the Copyright Coalition of South Africa (CCSA), the IAB advertising body, the National Film and Video Foundation (NFVF), as well as copyright-law specialists and leaders from major content businesses.

Trademark attorney Stephen Hollis, of Adams & Adams Attorneys, said the war against piracy was not one that the private sector could address alone.

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The show must go on: How to protect media content





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“Intellectual property rights must not just exist in statute. They must be enforceable,” he said. “Government and the private sector must engage to ignite the industry as a key economic driver of South Africa’s rebound from the pandemic.”

Launching Pap South Africa, Makgamathe said South Africans, legislators, law enforcers, businesses, and decision-makers could take a stand against piracy by respecting copyright law, following ethical business practices and participating in legislative, policy and enforcement processes.

“We must build an industry that supports legitimate content platforms, ensures creators get what they’re entitled to, and which creates opportunities,” she said. “When we pay fair prices for content, we grow the industry, and South African audiences get more content that is relevant to them and their lives.”

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