

## Disinformation works: Anti-biotechnology activists in Kenya succeed in undermining food security

In October last year, the East African nation lifted a decade-long ban on the cultivation and importation of GM crops, partly in response to the worst drought to ravage the Horn of Africa region in 40 years which has left millions hungry.

A Nairobi high court later blocked the decision, pending a ruling on a lawsuit brought by a farmers' lobby group which argues that the government move was unlawful.

But the lifting of the ban has triggered a wave of disinformation off- and online.

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In Kenya, the GMO debate is “based on people and not fact”, according to Joel Ochieng, the lead agricultural biotechnology researcher at the University of Nairobi.

“We have politicians in Kenya whose main business is to fight each other. Because the current president has said it is safe, the game (of the opposition) is normally to oppose,” he told AFP.

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Festus Kavita, a farmer in Machakos, about 65 kilometres (40 miles) southeast of Kenya's capital Nairobi, said he was worried that the political mud-slinging was standing in the way of addressing the country's real problems.

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“It's a lose-lose debate in my opinion because it misses out on actual solutions,” he told AFP.

[\*\*This is an excerpt. Read the original post here\*\*](#)