

By Charles Etukuri

The Government has raised a red flag over increased cases of exposure of children to online sexual exploitation and abuse through digital content.

Dr Annette Kezaabu, the chairperson of the pornography control committee (PCC) in the directorate of ethics and integrity under the Office of the President, revealed that the situation was worrying.

“What we are witnessing is not harmless consumption. It is a quiet, dangerous normalisation of child sexual exposure in the digital space. Today, children are encountering explicit material at younger ages. Some are being groomed into sharing sexual images,” she said. Kezaabu said exposure to such content distorts a child’s natural development.

“It interferes with healthy emotional and social growth. It introduces children to premature sexualisation and harmful behaviours,” she said.

Kezaabu was addressing journalists at the Uganda Media Centre in Kampala on Tuesday over the immediate blocking of all pornographic content.

Govt raises red flag over exposure of children to online sexual abuse

She said the country is dealing with a rapidly evolving landscape and that technology is advancing faster than the safeguards.

“Much of this content exists in private, encrypted spaces. It crosses borders beyond our direct control. And awareness of these risks remains limited. This is not a simple problem. It requires a response that is measured, adaptive, and coordinated,” Kezaabu said.

Joel Wanjala, the undersecretary at the directorate for ethics and integrity, said the country has seen an escalating level of immorality, which has permeated most sections of society.

“All of us are aspiring to see a modern and prosperous country by 2040, but if we don’t deal with this issue of moral decadence, we may not live to achieve this,” he warned.

Wanjala said they had noted the following: A high level of indiscipline, violent behaviour, and destructive

tendencies cropping up among the youth in our country.

“If you look at the learning institutions, this is happening, and these are symptoms of poor parenting, broken families, drug abuse, reckless sexual style, and uncontrolled influence of social media, and all these are affecting us as a country,” he said.

Kezaabu said the Government, through the PCC and the directorate of ethics and integrity, is working together with the Uganda Communications Commission (UCC) to block pornographic websites.

“This was not a blanket action. It was deliberate. It was co-ordinated. And it was protective. It is aimed at reducing children’s exposure to harmful content and

making our digital environment safer for them. Let me be clear: this is not about restricting freedoms; it is about protecting children,” she said.

UCC spokesperson Ibrahim Bbosa said they had written to telecom companies across the country to pull down over 500 websites.

“The commission is mandated under Section 5 (10) of the UCC Act to set standards, monitor and enforce compliance in relation to content.

The commission is also mandated under section 33 to enforce minimum broadcasting standards under schedule 4 of the same act.

“These minimum broadcasting standards prohibit the broadcast of content that is contrary to morality.

These standards also require that adult-oriented programmes are appropriately scheduled,” Bbosa said.

He said there are also other laws like the Penal Code Act that provide for offenses against morality and protection of children from exploitation and exposure to pornography in any form, especially forms of mental, ethical and moral exploitation.

“Following the issuance of our notice to telecom operators on April 2, 2026, telecommunication operators have confirmed the blockage of over 500 sites that have been distributing pornography,” he said.

Kezaabu said blocking sites alone is not enough.

“The committee will strengthen school outreach programmes. We will partner with child psychologists and experts to support early detection and rehabilitation of affected children,” she said.



Fighting pornography: Kezaabu