

Sacked Kenya moderators say mediation with Meta collapses

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Meta is facing several legal cases in Kenya.

Facebook content moderators in Kenya said settlement talks to resolve a lawsuit against the social media giant's parent Meta collapsed on Monday, setting the stage for a renewed court battle.

In March, 184 moderators sacked by Sama, a company contracted by Meta to review Facebook posts, brought a lawsuit claiming unfair dismissal and alleging that workers in Kenya were subjected to inhumane conditions, including forced labor and irregular pay.

A Kenyan court suspended the mass sacking in June and two months later allowed Meta and the moderators to pursue an out-of-court settlement.

"The looming court battle follows the collapse today of talks," UK-based legal activist firm Foxglove, which is supporting the case, said in a statement.

"The moderators informed the court that Meta and Sama made very little attempt to address core issues raised by the petitioners," it said, adding that they will also sue for contempt of court.

The talks—mediated by Kenya's former chief justice Willy Mutunga and a labor ministry official—were due to last for 21 days from August 23.

'Buying time'

The moderators' counsel, Mercy Mutemi, accused Meta and Sama of "buying time and not being genuine".

"We kept waiting for them to participate... only for them to keep asking for an extension of time and then come back every time to refuse to take accountability," Mutemi said in the Foxglove statement.

"As long as the respondents are serious in engaging, we are happy to engage."

Asked about the announcement, Meta told AFP in an email: "We cannot comment on this" and said queries should be addressed to Sama.

"We are disappointed that the mediation did not lead to a settlement. We have been successful in coming to a mutually agreed resolution with about 60 moderators outside of the mediation process, demonstrating our commitment and willingness to find an amicable, beneficial solution," Sama said in an email to AFP.

The California-based company said it could not comment on pending litigation as the courts had directed all parties not to talk about such issues with the media.

"We are hopeful that discussions will continue either at a later date or in parallel with the court process," it added.

"Sama continues to be in full compliance with all court orders. All moderators with valid contracts have been/are being paid as per the court orders."

Meta is facing two other legal cases in Kenya.

In 2022, a former South African employee of Sama, Daniel Motaung, filed a complaint in Kenya against Sama and Facebook.

He alleged, among other things, poor working conditions and a lack of mental health support.

Another complaint filed in a Kenyan [court](#) by a local NGO and two Ethiopian citizens accuses Meta of failing to act against online hate speech in Africa.

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