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Africa - South Africa

Welcome veto

President refuses to sign draconian bill into law

12 September 2013

Reporters Without Borders hails today's decision by President Jacob Zuma to refuse to sign the Protection of State Information Bill (POSIB) into law and instead send it back to the National Assembly for reconsideration.

Adopted by the National Assembly on 25 April, the bill was widely criticized by the opposition, local media and international human rights organizations because of the danger it posed to investigative journalism.

The bill provided for heavy penalties for journalists who would have revealed "State secrets", including a prison sentence up to 25 years for "divulging classified information". [In a press release on 26 April](#), Reporters Without Borders had urged Zuma not to give his assent to the bill.

"Jacob Zuma's veto is a major victory for freedom of information in South Africa," Reporters Without Borders said. "We hope the country's parliamentarians will follow the lead set by their President and abandon the law."

[More information on the POSIB bill.](#)

Photo: South African President, Jacob Zuma (Alexander Joe / AFP)

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