

# Kenyan court throws out challenge aimed at blocking GM crops

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A Kenyan court on Thursday, 12 October, threw out a case challenging the importation and cultivation of genetically modified (GM) crops, saying the government had taken appropriate measures to regulate their use.



Samuel Wathome 65, a small-scale farmer inspects his crop at his maize farm where he plants indigenous seeds at Kyeleni village of Machakos, Kenya December 13, 2022. REUTERS/Monica Mwangi/File Photo

In October 2022, Kenya lifted a 10-year ban on GM crops in response to the East African region's worst drought in 40 years. Authorities hoped removing the ban would improve yields of maize (corn), as well as strengthen food security.

## Kenya holds off on GM crops after ban lift

In January, the Law Society of Kenya challenged the decision, saying the government had failed to seek public input.

A GM crop contains genetic material that is not naturally found in the plant, to better protect against disease for example. Farmers have widely adopted them in some countries like the United States, but critics say their safety for human health and the environment is unproven.

Kenya's decision to lift the ban of GM crops prompted farmers' groups to say it was rushed and failed to address health concerns.

Farmers were also concerned that reliance on GM crops would lead to dependence on seeds from big foreign companies that own patents to them.

In its ruling, the Environment and Land Court said the Law Society had not proven Kenya's laws about GM crops violated its constitution.

The court said while it had not been required to rule on whether or not GM crops were safe, there were enough government institutions in place to check on their safety.

The Law Society could not be immediately reached for comment.

Separately, the same court nullified a government order lifting a 2018 ban on logging in forests countrywide, saying authorities failed to consult the public before giving the order in July.

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