

Freedom on the Net 2025 - Vietnam



Key Developments, June 1, 2024 – May 31, 2025

Internet freedom remained restricted in Vietnam, as the ruling Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV) enforced stringent controls on the country's online environment and punished people for expressing their views online.

- Three of the five active submarine cables that connected Vietnam to the global internet suffered from technical problems for much of the coverage period, meaning connections to foreign servers remained slower or poorer in quality as repairs continued (A1).¹
- In February 2025, the Ministry of Public Security assumed control over MobiFone, the country's third-largest mobile service provider, which had been overseen by the State Capital Management Committee.² The shift further consolidated the dominance of the security services in the telecommunications sector; the two largest service providers, Viettel and the Vietnam Posts and Telecommunications Group (VNPT), were controlled by the military and the Ministry of Finance, respectively (A4).³
- In May 2025, the Ministry of Information and Communications ordered internet service providers to block Telegram, as authorities alleged that the messaging platform had enabled criminal activity as well as the dissemination of antigovernment content by opposition groups (B1).⁴
- The government issued an expansive new internet regulation, Decree 147, in November 2024. It imposed strict requirements that obliged service providers to actively search for and remove illegal content on their platforms, confirm user identities with official documents or local mobile numbers, and retain and hand over user data to the authorities with few safeguards against abuse (B3, C4, and C6).⁵
- Authorities imposed draconian prison sentences on activists and bloggers for their online expression. For example, video blogger Thái Văn Đường was sentenced to 12 years in prison in October 2024 over his criticism of the CPV on social media; he had allegedly been abducted in Thailand and brought back to Vietnam to face charges in April 2023 (C3).⁶

Political Overview

Vietnam is a one-party state, dominated for decades by the CPV. Although some independent candidates are technically allowed to run in legislative elections, most opposition is banned in practice. Freedom of expression, religious freedom, and civil society activism are tightly restricted. Even by Vietnam's authoritarian standards, in recent years, and particularly in 2024, the authorities have engaged in one of the widest-ranging crackdowns on dissent in decades.

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For additional background information, see last year's [full report](#).

A Obstacles to Access

A1 0-6 pts

Do infrastructural limitations restrict access to the internet or the speed and quality of internet connections? 4 / 6

A2 0-3 pts

Is access to the internet prohibitively expensive or beyond the reach of certain segments of the population for geographical, social, or other reasons? 2 / 3

A3 0-6 pts

Does the government exercise technical or legal control over internet infrastructure for the purposes of restricting connectivity? 4 / 6

A4 0-6 pts

Are there legal, regulatory, or economic obstacles that restrict the diversity of service providers? 2 / 6

A5 0-4 pts

Do national regulatory bodies that oversee service providers and digital technology fail to operate in a free, fair, and independent manner? 0 / 4

B Limits on Content

B1 0-6 pts

Does the state block or filter, or compel service providers to block or filter, internet content, particularly material that is protected by international human rights standards? 2 / 6

B2 0-4 pts

Do state or nonstate actors employ legal, administrative, or other means to force publishers, content hosts, or digital platforms to delete content, particularly material 0 / 4

that is protected by international human rights standards?

B3 0-4 pts

Do restrictions on the internet and digital content lack transparency, proportionality to the stated aims, or an independent appeals process?

0 / 4

B4 0-4 pts

Do online journalists, commentators, and ordinary users practice self-censorship?

1 / 4

B5 0-4 pts

Are online sources of information controlled or manipulated by the government or other powerful actors to advance a particular political interest?

0 / 4

B6 0-3 pts

Are there economic or regulatory constraints that negatively affect users' ability to publish content online?

0 / 3

B7 0-4 pts

Does the online information landscape lack diversity and reliability?

1 / 4

B8 0-6 pts

Do conditions impede users' ability to mobilize, form communities, and campaign, particularly on political and social issues?

2 / 6

C Violations of User Rights

C1 0-6 pts

Do the constitution or other laws fail to protect rights such as freedom of expression, access to information, and press freedom, including on the internet, and are they enforced by a judiciary that lacks independence?

0 / 6

C2 0-4 pts

Are there laws that assign criminal penalties or civil liability for online activities, particularly those that are protected under international human rights standards?

0 / 4

C3 0-6 pts

Are individuals penalized for online activities, particularly those that are protected under international human rights standards?

0 / 6

C4 0-4 pts

Does the government place restrictions on anonymous communication or encryption?

1 /
4

C5 0-6 pts

Does state surveillance of internet activities infringe on users' right to privacy?

1 / 6

C6 0-6 pts

Does monitoring and collection of user data by service providers and other technology companies infringe on users' right to privacy?

0 /
6

C7 0-5 pts

Are individuals subject to extralegal intimidation or physical violence by state authorities or any other actor in relation to their online activities?

1 /
5

C8 0-3 pts

Are websites, governmental and private entities, service providers, or individual users subject to widespread hacking and other forms of cyberattack?

1 /
3

Footnotes

- 1 “Vietnam Restores IA Undersea Cable, APG Repairs to Be Completed by April,” Submarine Telecoms Forum, March 4, 2025, <https://subtelforum.com/vietnam-internet-infrastructure-on-the-mend/>; “Three of Vietnam's five undersea internet cables are down,” Reuters, June 17, 2024, <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/three-vietnams-five-undersea...>; “Undersea cable problems affect Vietnam's Internet connections,” Vietnam Plus, March 1, 2025, <https://en.vietnamplus.vn/undersea-cable-problems-affect-vietnams-inter....>
- 2Bình An and Thúc Kháng, “The Revamped Ministry of Public Security under General Secretary To Lam,” The Vietnamese, March 19, 2025, <https://www.thevietnamese.org/2025/03/the-revamped-ministry-of-public-s...>; Hai Yen, “Pubic [sic] Security Ministry takes over Vietnam's third largest telecom firm MobiFone,” The Investor, February 27, 2025, <https://theinvestor.vn/public-security-ministry-takes-over-vietnams-thir....>
- 3See “Vietnam,” in Funk, Vesteinsson, Baker, Brody, Grothe, Agarwal, Barak, Loldj, Masinsin, Sutterlin eds. Freedom on the Net 2024, Freedom House, 2024, <https://freedomhouse.org/country/vietnam/freedom-net/2024>.
- 4Vu Lam, “Why Is Vietnam Blocking Access to Telegram?,” The Diplomat, June 2, 2025, <https://thediplomat.com/2025/06/why-is-vietnam-blocking-access-to-teleg...>; Francesco Guarascio and Phuong Nguyen, “Telegram 'surprised' as Vietnam orders messaging app to be blocked,” Reuters, May 23, 2025, <https://www.reuters.com/sustainability/society-equity/vietnam-acts-bloc....>
- 5Decree No. 147/2024/NĐ-CP, https://www.qtsc.com.vn/uploads/files/2024/12/30/147_2024_ND-CP_636187-....
- 6“Vietnam Sentences Blogger Duong Van Thai to 12 Years After Alleged Kidnapping in Thailand,” The Vietnamese, October 31, 2024, <https://www.thevietnamese.org/2024/10/vietnam-sentences-exiled-blogger-....>