

Freedom on the Net 2025 - Uzbekistan



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

Uzbekistan remained one of the world's worst environments for internet freedom due to arbitrary arrests of individuals who criticize the government online, routine website blocking, and excessive surveillance practices. In recent years, the government has ramped up its persecution of people who supported or participated in 2022 protests against a plan to downgrade Karakalpakstan's autonomous status.

- In December 2024, President Shavkat Mirziyoyev signed the Law on Telecommunications, which expanded the remit of the Ministry of Digital Technologies and outlined the creation of a separate, nominally independent Telecommunications Regulatory Agency. The new agency was formally established in August 2025, after the coverage period (A5).¹
- According to a January 2025 publication from the Supreme Court of Uzbekistan, 1,389 online items deemed to promote extremism and terrorism had been banned in Uzbekistan, up from 800 in January 2024. The materials include websites, which are blocked, as well as social media pages and groups (B1, B2, and B3).²
- In the first 10 months of 2024, over 30,000 people were prosecuted under defamation and insult charges in the Administrative Code, with several cases concerning online speech. More than 200 of those prosecuted were reportedly sent to prison (C3).³
- In April 2025, a court in Nukus, the capital of Karakalpakstan, sentenced Rinat Uttambetov to 2 years and 3 months in prison for “disseminating materials that threaten public security” and “encroaching on the constitutional order” in relation to a video he allegedly shared on Telegram during the Karakalpakstan protests in 2022. He was extradited from Kazakhstan, where he had been arrested in April 2024 (C3).⁴
- In February 2025, Mustafa Tursynbayev, a blogger from Karakalpakstan who was sentenced to 5 years in prison on extortion charges in a closed March 2024 trial, died in a Tashkent hospital. The Prosecutor's Office said a section of a wall had fallen on him at a construction site, where he had been working as a prisoner (C3 and C7).⁵

Political Overview

While reforms adopted since President Shavkat Mirziyoyev took office in 2016 have led to improvements on some issues, Uzbekistan remains an authoritarian state. No opposition parties operate legally. The legislature and judiciary effectively serve as instruments of the executive branch, which initiates reforms by decree, and the media are still tightly controlled by the authorities. Reports of torture and other ill-treatment persist, although highly publicized cases of abuse have resulted in dismissals and prosecutions for some officials, and small-scale corruption has been meaningfully reduced.

This report has been abridged for Freedom on the Net 2025 due to [ongoing budget constraints](#). Please consider making a [donation](#) to support future editions of this vital resource.

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?	5 / 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
--	--------------

Score Change: The score improved from 1 to 2 because the cost of mobile broadband declined, and discrepancies in coverage between urban and rural areas narrowed.⁶

A3 0-6 pts

Does the government exercise technical or legal control over internet infrastructure for the purposes of restricting connectivity?	3 / 6
---	--------------

A4 0-6 pts

Are there legal, regulatory, or economic obstacles that restrict the diversity of service providers?	1 / 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?	3 / 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 that is protected by international human rights standards?	1 / 4
---	-------

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?	2 / 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?	2 / 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?	1 / 4
---	-------

C3 0-6 pts

Are individuals penalized for online activities, particularly those that are protected under international human rights standards?	1 / 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?

2 / 3

Score Change: The score improved from 1 to 2 because there were fewer reported cyberattacks against media outlets compared to previous coverage periods.

Footnotes

- 1“Telecommunications Regulatory Agency to be established in Uzbekistan,” Gazeta.uz, August 28, 2025, <https://www.gazeta.uz/en/2025/08/28/telecommunications-regulatory-agenc...>; Vakhidov & Partners, “The Law ‘On Telecommunications’ Has Been Adopted in a New Edition,” February 6, 2025, <https://www.legal500.com/developments/thought-leadership/the-law-on-tel...>
- 2“Расширен список интернет-материалов, признанных в Узбекистане экстремистскими [The list of internet materials recognized as extremist in Uzbekistan has been expanded],” Gazeta.uz, January 8, 2025, <https://www.gazeta.uz/ru/2025/01/08/content/>.
- 3В Узбекистане в этом году более 30 тысяч граждан привлекли к ответственности за клевету и оскорбление [In Uzbekistan, more than 30,000 citizens have been prosecuted for slander and insult this year.],” Ozodlik, December 2, 2024, <https://rus.ozodlik.org/a/uzbekistan-kleveta-oskorblenie/33222658.html>; <https://upl.uz/obshestvo/46698-news.html>; International Partnership for Human Rights, “Freedoms under Threat as Uzbekistan Continues to Put Pressure on Journalists and Human Rights Defenders,” July 1, 2025, <https://iphronline.org/articles/freedoms-under-threat-as-uzbekistan-con...>; Umida Niyazova, “A Dark Cloud: No Space for Freedom of Expression in Mirziyoyev’s Uzbekistan,” The Diplomat, June 18, 2025, <https://thediplomat.com/2025/06/a-dark-cloud-no-space-for-freedom-of-ex...>
- 4International Partnership for Human Rights, “Freedoms under Threat as Uzbekistan Continues to Put Pressure on Journalists and Human Rights Defenders,” July 1, 2025, <https://iphronline.org/articles/freedoms-under-threat-as-uzbekistan-con...>
- 5International Partnership for Human Rights, “Freedoms under Threat as Uzbekistan Continues to Put Pressure on Journalists and Human Rights Defenders,” July 1,

- 2025, <https://iphronline.org/articles/freedoms-under-threat-as-uzbekistan-con...>; Reporters without Borders, “Uzbekistan: The slow death of journalism in Karakalpakstan,” July 1, 2024, <https://rsf.org/en/uzbekistan-slow-death-journalism-karakalpakstan>; Turkmen Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights, “Karakalpak blogger Mustafa Tursynbaev died in custody in Uzbekistan,” February 17, 2025, <https://tmhelsinki.org/article/5a3f6edf-4be9-472c-a988-0f92a10b904d>; Mihra Rittman, “Investigate Uzbekistan Deaths, Serious Injuries in Custody,” Human Rights Watch, February 19, 2025, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2025/02/19/investigate-uzbekistan-deaths-serio...>
- 6GSMA, “Uzbekistan’s digital policy advancements set the scene for M360 Eurasia,” May 1, 2025, <https://www.gsma.com/solutions-and-impact/connectivity-for-good/public-...>; International Telecommunications Union, “Uzbekistan, Data-only mobile broadband basket,” accessed August 2025, <https://datahub.itu.int/data/?i=34617&e=UZB>.