

Freedom on the Net 2025 - Colombia



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

Internet freedom declined slightly during the coverage period. Persistent challenges included the ongoing threat of violence against digital journalists. The Constitutional Court continued to issue rulings in defense of online freedom of expression and access to information.

- In January 2025, the Constitutional Court ruled that social media platforms were a key arena for public debate, and that a regional government’s decision to block a journalist from its official account on the X platform amounted to a form of censorship.¹ In May 2025, the court banned the practice of zero-rating, in which providers offer a limited form of internet service without charge. In addition to its potential to restrict the content to which certain people have access, critics of the practice had also raised concerns about the ways in which internet service providers (ISPs) used personal data to create and market zero-rating packages (A2, C1, and C6).²
- At least two ISPs blocked the social media platform Reddit for several days at the start of the coverage period. The blocking was reportedly ordered by Colombia’s gambling regulator,³ adding to accusations that the government body has operated without sufficient transparency and imposed disproportionate restrictions (B1 and B3).⁴
- In May 2025, nine officers from various military intelligence units were disciplined for ordering, coordinating, and executing open-source intelligence activities.⁵ The investigation began after two reports published by the magazine *Semana* in 2020 had revealed the use of sophisticated technology and open-source intelligence to illegally spy on politicians, magistrates, generals, social leaders, activists, and journalists in 2019 (C5).⁶
- Violence against journalists persisted during the coverage period. In June 2024, a community journalist who managed a Facebook page about the La Gabarra community was killed, reportedly in connection with his work.⁷ In October 2024, a digital journalist survived a shooting while working as a taxi driver; the assailants allegedly told him that he was being attacked “because you’re a snitch” (C7).⁸
- Cyberattacks against news outlets were apparently on the rise. In its 2025 report, the Foundation for Press Freedom (FLIP) noted that 35 percent of surveyed journalists said their outlets’ websites had been hacked in order to restrict access or capture information, compared with 24 percent in 2023 (C8).⁹

Political Overview

Colombia is among the longest-standing democracies in Latin America, but one with a history of widespread violence and serious human rights abuses. Public institutions have demonstrated the capacity to check executive power, and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), the country's main left-wing guerrilla group, signed a peace accord with the government in 2016. Nonetheless, Colombia faces enormous challenges in consolidating peace and guaranteeing political rights and civil liberties outside of major urban areas.

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
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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
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A3 0-6 pts

Does the government exercise technical or legal control over internet infrastructure for the purposes of restricting connectivity?	6 / 6
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A4 0-6 pts

Are there legal, regulatory, or economic obstacles that restrict the diversity of service providers?	4 / 6
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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?	2 / 4
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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?	4 / 6
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Score Change: The score declined from 5 to 4 because the social media platform Reddit was blocked for several days during the coverage period.

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? | 2 / 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? | 3 / 4

B4 0-4 pts

Do online journalists, commentators, and ordinary users practice self-censorship? | 3 / 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? | 2 / 3

B7 0-4 pts

Does the online information landscape lack diversity and reliability? | 3 / 4

B8 0-6 pts

Do conditions impede users' ability to mobilize, form communities, and campaign, particularly on political and social issues? | 5 / 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? | 4 / 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? | 2 / 4

C3 0-6 pts

Are individuals penalized for online activities, particularly those that are protected under international human rights standards?	5 / 6
C4 0-4 pts	
Does the government place restrictions on anonymous communication or encryption?	3 / 4
C5 0-6 pts	
Does state surveillance of internet activities infringe on users' right to privacy?	2 / 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?	3 / 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“Corte Constitucional colombiana protege derechos de un periodista bloqueado en redes sociales por la Gobernación del Cesar [Colombian Constitutional Court protects the rights of a journalist blocked on social media by the Cesar Governorate],” *Diario Constitucional*, January 13, 2025, <https://www.diarioconstitucional.cl/2025/01/13/la-corte-constitucional-...>
- 2Fundación para la Libertad de Prensa, “Resolución de la Corte contribuye a la protección de los derechos humanos en entornos digitales [Court ruling contributes to the protection of digital human rights],” May 31, 2025, <https://flip.org.co/pronunciamientos/resolucion-de-la-corte-contribuye-...>
- 3Fundación Karisma, “Bloqueo de reddit.com por Coljuegos en Colombia [Reddit blocked by Coljuegos in Colombia],” June 3, 2024, <https://obi.karisma.org.co/2024-06-03-colombia-bloqueo-de-reddit-por-co...>; Jeffrey Ramos González, “Movistar y Claro restablecen el acceso a Reddit tras bloqueo ¿Por qué se restringió la página? [Movistar and Claro restore access to Reddit after block. Why was the site restricted?],” *Enter.co*, June 4, 2024, <https://www.enter.co/colombia/por-que-razon-la-app-y-la-pagina-de-reddi...>
- 4Fundación Karisma, “Coljuegos en racha: bloqueos a Bitcoin y The Independent [Coljuegos on a roll: Bitcoin and the Independent blocked],” December 11, 2024, <https://web.karisma.org.co/coljuegos-en-racha-bloqueos-a-bitcoin-y-the-...>; Carolina Botero Cabrera, “MinTIC expide (otra vez) orden desproporcionada para bloquear páginas web [MinTIC issues disproportionate order to block websites (again)],” *El Espectador*, November 30, 2024, <https://www.elespectador.com/opinion/columnistas/carolina-botero-cabrer...>

- 5Fundación para la Libertad de Prensa, “Procuraduría sanciona a nueve miembros del Ejército por su responsabilidad en la vigilancia ilegal a periodistas [The Attorney General’s Office has sanctioned nine army members for responsibility in the illegal surveillance of journalists],” May 13, 2025, <https://flip.org.co/pronunciamientos/procuraduria-sanciona-a-nueve-miem...>
- 6“Chuzadas Sin Cuartel: La Persecución A SEMANA [Strikes without quarter: The persecution to SEMANA],” Semana, January 12, 2020, <https://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/persecucion-espionaje-y-amenazas...>; “Chuzadas Sin Cuartel [Strikes without barracks],” Semana, January 13, 2020, <https://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/chuzadas-por-que-se-retiro-el-ge...>; Committee to Protect Journalists, “Colombian magazine Semana alleges military spied on its journalists,” January 13, 2020, <https://cpj.org/2020/01/colombian-magazine-semana-alleges-military-spie...>; IFEX, “Unnecessary, disproportionate and widespread: The normalization of surveillance in Colombia and Latin America,” May 27, 2020, <https://ifex.org/unnecessary-disproportionate-and-widespread-the-normal...>
- 7Fundación para la Libertad de Prensa, “Bajo todos los fuegos: periodismo y nuevas guerras en Colombia [Everything under fire: Journalism and new wars in Colombia],” February 9, 2025, <https://flip.org.co/publicaciones/informes/periodismo-bajo-todos-los-fu...>; CIVICUS, “Violence targets journalists and human rights defenders without end,” November 22, 2024, <https://monitor.civicus.org/explore/violence-targets-journalists-and-hu...>
- 8Fundación para la Libertad de Prensa, “Periodista en Soledad, Atlántico fue víctima de un atentado [A journalist in Soledad, Atlántico, was the victim of an attack],” November 2, 2024, <https://flip.org.co/pronunciamientos/periodista-en-soledad-atlantico-fu...>; José David Rodríguez, “Petro solicitó investigar ataque contra periodista y líder social en Atlántico al que le dispararon en la cara [Petro requested an investigation into the attack against a journalist and social leader in Atlántico who was shot in the face],” Infobae, November 3, 2024, <https://www.infobae.com/colombia/2024/11/03/petro-solicito-investigar-a...>
- 9Fundación para la Libertad de Prensa, “Cómo se vive y se sobrevive al periodismo en Colombia [How to live and survive journalism in Colombia],” May 2025, https://cms.flip.datasketch.co/uploads/FLIP_informe_encuesta_Cifras_y_c....