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FREEDOM ON THE NET 2025

Ecuador

PARTLY FREE

63
/100

A. <u>Obstacles to Access</u>	17 /25
B. <u>Limits on Content</u>	24 /35
C. <u>Violations of User Rights</u>	22 /40

LAST YEAR'S SCORE & STATUS

63 /100 **Partly Free**

Scores are based on a scale of 0 (least free) to 100 (most free). See the methodology and report acknowledgements.



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

Conditions for internet freedom remained largely unchanged in Ecuador during the coverage period. Amid broader concerns about criminal violence in the country, digital journalists and other prominent online figures continued to face severe threats to their physical safety, especially when covering elections and politically sensitive topics such as corruption, environmental issues, and drug trafficking. ¹ While the government did not engage in technical censorship, internet users sometimes came under pressure from both state and nonstate actors in response to their online activity.

- Internet connectivity was significantly disrupted by widespread electricity outages, which were the result of drought and inadequate maintenance of hydroelectric power plants. In September 2024, scheduled blackouts increased to 14 hours per day nationwide and remained in place for at least two months (A1). ²
- Copyright law was used to censor politically sensitive content, especially at the municipal level. In December 2024, for example, the social media platform Facebook removed several posts published by three media outlets due to accusations of copyright infringement. The posts contained reporting on alleged corruption in Morona Canton, and two of the outlets' Facebook pages were removed entirely (B2). ³
- Coordinated campaigns to spread false and misleading information proliferated online during the February 2025 general elections and an April presidential runoff; the operations made use of paid advertisements, automated “bot” accounts, and content generated with artificial intelligence tools. ⁴ Both of the presidential runoff candidates were targeted with narratives—often amplified by networks of inauthentic profiles—that focused on xenophobia against Venezuelans, rumors of changes to Ecuador's currency policy, and alleged links to drug trafficking and organized crime (B5). ⁵
- Electoral candidates filed lawsuits against online journalists during the coverage period. In February 2025, a legislative candidate lodged a criminal

complaint of “discredit or dishonor” against Boris Sarango, a journalist for the digital outlet Primer Reporte. The outlet had published a collaborative investigation into the backgrounds of more than 2,000 candidates (C3). **6**

- Journalists continued to face threats and other forms of harassment. In September 2024, the founders of a digital media platform that investigated corruption announced that they had fled the country and were seeking asylum (C7). **7**

Political Overview

Ecuador holds regular, competitive elections, but the influence of organized crime and related violence have increased significantly in recent years, affecting the functioning of state institutions and the security of ordinary citizens. Due process violations, attacks on journalists, human rights abuses, and official corruption are ongoing challenges, and the new government of President Daniel Noboa Azín has engaged in practices that further threaten civil liberties.

*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?

4/6

Score Change: The score declined from 5 to 4 because widespread electricity outages interrupted internet connectivity and telecommunications services over at least a two-month period.

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?

1/3

A3 0-6 pts

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

6/6

A4 0-6 pts

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

4/6

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?

2/4

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?

5/6

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?

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?

2/4

B4 0-4 pts

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

2/4

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?

6/6

Score Change: The score improved from 5 to 6 because users were able to advocate and form communities online without significant restrictions.

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?

3/6

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?

4/6

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?

2/5

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

1/3

Footnotes

- 1 Fundamedios, “Candidatas de grupo político abren acceso y usan datos de una gigantesca filtración de las comunicaciones de más de 150 periodistas [Candidates from Political Movement Provide Open Access to and Use Data from a Massive Leak Containing the Communications of over 150 Journalists],” November 09, 2024, <https://www.fundamedios.org.ec/alertas/candidatas-de-grupo-politico-abr...>; Reporters Without Borders, “Ecuador: RSF condena el asesinato del periodista Patricio Aguilar y exige una investigación urgente [Ecuador: RSF Condemns the Murder of Journalist Patricio Aguilar and Demands an Urgent Investigation],” March 05, 2025, <https://rsf.org/es/ecuador-rsf-condena-el-asesinato-del-periodista-patr...>
- 2 “Con los cortes de luz el internet también se interrumpe, ¿por qué? [When Power Goes Out, the Internet Also Goes Down. Why?],” El Comercio, November 12, 2024, <https://www.elcomercio.com/actualidad/negocios/por-que-internet-depende...>; Xime Yauca, “Ecuador Grapples with 14-Hour Blackouts, Climate Change, and Alleged Corruption,” Global Voices, November 19, 2024, <https://globalvoices.org/2024/11/19/ecuador-grapples-with-14-hour-black...>
- 3 Observatorio Latinoamericano de Regulación, Medios y Convergencia, “Facebook elimina contenidos periodísticos de varios medios digitales regionales de Ecuador [Facebook Removes Journalistic Content from Several Regional Digital Media Outlets in Ecuador],” December 06, 2024, <https://www.observacom.org/facebook-elimina-contenidos-periodisticos-de...>
- 4 Paola Simbaña, “La narrativa del fraude toma fuerza como herramienta de desinformación [The Fraud Narrative Gains Strength as a Disinformation Tool],” Ecuador Chequea, April 16, 2025, <https://ecuadorchequea.com/la-narrativa-del-fraude-toma-fuerza-como-her...>; Observatorio Latinoamericano de Regulación, Medios y Convergencia, “Menos moderación, más

desinformación: el impacto de las nuevas políticas de Meta en las elecciones de Ecuador [Less Moderation, More Misinformation: The Impact of Meta's New Policies on Ecuador's Elections],” May 14, 2025, <https://www.observacom.org/menos-moderacion-mas-desinformacion-el-impac...>; TikTok, “Covert Influence Operations,” accessed July 2025, <https://www.tiktok.com/transparency/en/covert-influence-operations>.

- 5 Andrés Jaramillo, Carolina Bazante, and Alfredo Velazco, “Engañósfera electoral. Un acercamiento a la influencia de la desinformación en las elecciones generales de Ecuador – 2025 [Electoral Deception: A Closer Look at the Influence of Disinformation in Ecuador's 2025 General Elections],” Content Manager Ecuador, Lupa Media, and Usuarios Digitales, 2025, [https://drive.google.com/file/d/17bNXvLaJ-Zzv85e9SJl5aOwATo5eMTd3/view?....](https://drive.google.com/file/d/17bNXvLaJ-Zzv85e9SJl5aOwATo5eMTd3/view?...)

More footnotes



On Ecuador

See all data, scores & information on this country or territory.

See More >

Country Facts

Population

18,000,000

Global Freedom Score

64/100 **Partly Free**

Internet Freedom Score

63/100 **Partly Free**

Freedom in the World Status

Partly Free

Networks Restricted

No

Social Media Blocked

No

Websites Blocked

Yes

Pro-government Commentators

Yes

Users Arrested

No

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