

Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale

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Freedom on the Net 2025 - Nigeria



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

Internet freedom held steady in Nigeria during the coverage period. While an activist long jailed for a social media post was released from prison, authorities continued to crack down on protesters, online activists, and journalists who published content that negatively portrayed powerful individuals. Infrastructural challenges persisted and hampered access to the internet.

- Over 30 network disruptions occurred in May 2025, most of which were related to fiber cuts, blackouts, vandalism, and theft of infrastructure (A1).¹
- Nigerians used the hashtag #EndBadGovernance on social media to mobilize offline protests against the high cost of living in August and September 2024. Police arrested or detained hundreds of demonstrators.² Isaac Bristol, thought to lead a social commentary account on X, went missing for around three weeks before police disclosed that he had been arrested and charged with promoting the #EndBadGovernance hashtag, among other crimes (B8 and C3).³
- Humanist activist Mubarak Bala, who had initially been sentenced to 24 years in prison in 2022 on charges including blasphemy for insulting the prophet Muhammad in a Facebook post, was released in August 2024 (C3).⁴
- Online users continued to face arrest during the coverage period. A TikTok user was arrested in December 2024 for allegedly spreading false information that aimed to provoke the public against the police. Formally accused of cyberbullying and cyberstalking, bail was set at a disproportionate 2 billion naira (\$1.3 million).⁵ Four journalists, two of them news site publishers, were charged in September 2024 under the Cybercrimes Act and Criminal Code after reporting on alleged fraud by the chief executive of a bank (C3).⁶
- In July 2024, the Nigerian Data Protection Commission (NDPC) fined Meta \$32.8 million for violating data privacy laws. The Federal Competition and Consumer Protection Commission (FCCPC) additionally imposed a \$220 million fine, citing anticompetitive practices, and also ordered the company to obtain authorization before transferring users' personal data out of the country. Upon appeal, Meta was ordered to pay these and another fine (\$37.5 million from the advertising regulator, related to unapproved advertising) by June 2025.⁷ While they threatened to pull Facebook and Instagram out of Nigeria, Meta had not done so by October 2025, after the coverage period (C6).⁸

Political Overview

While Nigeria has made significant improvements to the quality of its elections since the 1999 transition to civilian rule, balloting has continued to be marred by irregularities. Corruption is endemic in the petroleum industry, and security challenges—including insurgencies, kidnappings, and communal and sectarian violence in the Middle Belt region—threaten the basic rights of millions of Nigerians. Military and law enforcement agencies often engage in extrajudicial killings, torture, and other abuses. Civil liberties are undermined by religious and ethnic bias, while women and LGBT+ people face pervasive discrimination. The vibrant media landscape is impeded by criminal defamation laws as well as the frequent harassment and arrest of journalists who cover politically sensitive topics.

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

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|---|--------------|
| Do infrastructural limitations restrict access to the internet or the speed and quality of internet connections? | 3 / 6 |
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A2 0-3 pts

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| 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 |
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A3 0-6 pts

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| 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

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| Are there legal, regulatory, or economic obstacles that restrict the diversity of service providers? | 5 / 6 |
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A5 0-4 pts

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| 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

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| 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 | 4 / 6 |
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| | |
|---|-------|
| standards? | |
| 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? | 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? | 3 / 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

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| 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? | 1 / 4 |
| C3 0-6 pts | |

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| Are individuals penalized for online activities, particularly those that are protected under international human rights standards? | 2 / 6 |
| C4 0-4 pts | |
| Does the government place restrictions on anonymous communication or encryption? | 2 / 4 |
| C5 0-6 pts | |
| Does state surveillance of internet activities infringe on users' right to privacy? | 3 / 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? | 2 / 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 |

Footnotes

- **1**Aayushya Ranjan, "Nigeria's Telecom Networks Hit by Over 30 Outages in May 2025," TechAfrica News, May 21, 2025, <https://techafrikanews.com/2025/05/21/nigerias-telecom-networks-hit-by-....>
- **2**Timothy Obiezu, "Nigerian Authorities Hold Emergency Meeting on Planned Protests," Voice of America, July 24, 2024, <https://www.voanews.com/a/nigerian-authorities-hold-emergency-meeting-o...>; Freedom House, "Freedom in the World 2025: Nigeria," February 2025, <https://freedomhouse.org/country/nigeria/freedom-world/2025>.
- **3**Human Rights Watch, "Nigeria: Protesters Charged with Treason," September 6, 2024, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/09/06/nigeria-protesters-charged-treason>.
- **4**Humanists International, "Cases of Concern: Mubarak Bala," April 29, 2025, <https://humanists.international/case-of-concern/mubarak-bala/>.
- **5**Akinjide Adebawale, "Police Slam 'Outrageous' N2bn Bail on TikToker Detained for Cyberbullying," Foundation for Investigative Journalism, January 11, 2025, <https://fij.ng/article/police-slam-outrageous-n2bn-bail-on-tiktoker-det...>; A Slice of Naija, @asliceofnaija, "Police Arrest Content Creator for Alleged Spread of Fake News, Disinformation, Warns Bloggers To Fact Check Their Claims," Instagram, January 12, 2025, <https://www.instagram.com/asliceofnaija/reel/DEuLQtVNCyB/>.
- **6**Committee to Protect Journalists, "Nigeria Police Charge 4 Journalists with Cybercrimes for Corruption Reporting," October 3, 2024, <https://cpj.org/2024/10/nigeria-police-charge-4-journalists-with-cyberc...>; Taiwo Bankole, "NUJ Condemns Ogun Journalist's Arrest, Demands His Immediate Release," Punch, September 26, 2024, <https://punchng.com/nuj-condemns-ogun-journalists-arrest-demands-his-im...>

- ⁷Chiamaka Enendu, “Meta Threatens to Cut Off Facebook in Nigeria Over Huge Fines - Report,” BBC, May 2, 2025, <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/ckgrwxp5r15o>.
- ⁸“Meta Agrees to \$32.8 Million Data Privacy Settlement with Nigeria,” Africanews, October 7, 2025, <https://www.africanews.com/2025/10/07/meta-agrees-to-328-million-data-p...>