

Freedom on the Net 2025



header1 Key Developments, June 1, 2024 – May 31, 2025

The environment for internet freedom in Libya remained repressive, as people continued to practice self-censorship or risk arrest and harassment for their posts on sensitive topics. Persistent obstacles to users' rights included restrictive laws that imposed harsh penalties for online speech, a pattern of arbitrary detentions targeting peaceful expression, and some cases of physical violence in reprisal for online activity.

- A localized internet shutdown was reported in Tripoli in May 2025 amid antigovernment demonstrations. The protests, which spread to other major cities in western Libya, featured outbreaks of violence, and armed forces used live ammunition to disperse demonstrators who were calling for the resignation of the Tripoli-based Government of National Unity (GNU).¹ The internet shutdown lasted for around 12 hours, and while most service providers experienced only partial bandwidth reductions, at least one reported a total service outage (A3 and B8).²

- In July 2024, the GNU-affiliated Presidential Council issued Decision No. 14 to establish the Public Morality Protection Agency. The new body was given broad, vaguely defined powers to police social media for content that could be deemed immoral or harmful to Libyan values.³ According to human rights groups, the move threatened to infringe on Libyans' freedom of expression online while also hindering online privacy and encouraging self-censorship (B4 and C5).⁴
- Journalists, bloggers, and activists continued to face arbitrary detention and enforced disappearances in retaliation for their online content. In January 2025, Faisal Rajab al-Shikhi was arbitrarily detained in Benghazi by armed men from the Libyan Arab Armed Forces (LAAF), a coalition of militias that controlled eastern Libya. According to the nongovernmental organization Libya Crimes Watch, he was forcibly disappeared because of a video he had posted years earlier on the social media platform Facebook that was critical of LAAF commander Khalifa Haftar. His whereabouts remained unknown at the end of the coverage period (C3 and C7).⁵

header2 Political Overview

Libya has been racked by internal divisions and intermittent civil conflict since a popular armed uprising in 2011 deposed longtime dictator Mu'ammar al-Qadhafi. The country remains split between rival administrations, legislatures, and military factions, and international efforts to bring them together in a unity government have repeatedly failed, preventing long-overdue national elections. A proliferation of autonomous militias, the presence of foreign mercenaries and extremist groups, violations of an arms embargo, and interference by regional powers have all contributed to ongoing insecurity. More than a decade of violence has displaced hundreds of thousands of people, and human rights conditions have generally deteriorated.

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 1.00-6.00 pts0-6 pts

Do infrastructural limitations restrict access to the internet or the speed and quality of internet connections?	3.003 6.006
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A2 1.00-3.00 pts0-3 pts

Is access to the internet prohibitively expensive or beyond the reach of certain segments of the population for geographical, social, or other reasons?	1.001 3.003
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A3 1.00-6.00 pts0-6 pts

Does the government exercise technical or legal control over internet infrastructure for the purposes of restricting connectivity?	3.003 6.006
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A4 1.00-6.00 pts0-6 pts

Are there legal, regulatory, or economic obstacles that restrict the diversity of service providers?	1.001 6.006
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A5 1.00-4.00 pts0-4 pts

Do national regulatory bodies that oversee service providers and digital technology fail to operate in a free, fair, and independent manner?	0.000 4.004
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B Limits on Content

B1 1.00-6.00 pts0-6 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?	6.006 6.006
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B2 1.00-4.00 pts0-4 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?	3.003 4.004
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B3 1.00-4.00 pts0-4 pts

Do restrictions on the internet and digital content lack transparency, proportionality to the stated aims, or an independent appeals process?	2.002 4.004
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B4 1.00-4.00 pts0-4 pts

Do online journalists, commentators, and ordinary users practice self-censorship?	1.001 4.004
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B5 1.00-4.00 pts0-4 pts

Are online sources of information controlled or manipulated by the government or other powerful actors to advance a particular political interest?	1.001 4.004
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B6 1.00-3.00 pts0-3 pts

Are there economic or regulatory constraints that negatively affect users' ability to publish content online?	3.003 3.003
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B7 1.00-4.00 pts0-4 pts

Does the online information landscape lack diversity and reliability?	2.002 4.004
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B8 1.00-6.00 pts0-6 pts

Do conditions impede users' ability to mobilize, form communities, and campaign, particularly on political and social issues?	3.003 6.006
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C Violations of User Rights

C1 1.00-6.00 pts0-6 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?	1.001 6.006
C2 1.00-4.00 pts0-4 pts	
Are there laws that assign criminal penalties or civil liability for online activities, particularly those that are protected under international human rights standards?	1.001 4.004
C3 1.00-6.00 pts0-6 pts	
Are individuals penalized for online activities, particularly those that are protected under international human rights standards?	2.002 6.006
C4 1.00-4.00 pts0-4 pts	
Does the government place restrictions on anonymous communication or encryption?	2.002 4.004
C5 1.00-6.00 pts0-6 pts	
Does state surveillance of internet activities infringe on users' right to privacy?	2.002 6.006
C6 1.00-6.00 pts0-6 pts	
Does monitoring and collection of user data by service providers and other technology companies infringe on users' right to privacy?	3.003 6.006
C7 1.00-5.00 pts0-5 pts	
Are individuals subject to extralegal intimidation or physical violence by state authorities or any other actor in relation to their online activities?	1.001 5.005
C8 1.00-3.00 pts0-3 pts	
Are websites, governmental and private entities, service providers, or individual users subject to widespread hacking and other forms of cyberattack?	2.002 3.003

Footnotes

- 1“Libyan ministers resign as protesters call for government to step down,” Al-Jazeera, May 17, 2025, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/5/17/libyan-ministers-resign-as-pro...>; “Pressure builds up on Dbeibah as protests rage on across Libya,” The Arab Weekly, May 5, 2025, <https://the arabweekly.com/pressure-builds-dbeibah-protests-rage-across-...>; Human Rights Watch, “Libya, Civilians Caught in Militia Clashes,” May 20, 2025, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2025/05/20/libya-civilians-caught-militia-clas...>
- 2“Protestors Face Internet Shutdown in Libyan Capital,” Libya Review, May 16, 2025, <https://libyareview.com/55698/protestors-face-internet-shutdown-in-liby...>; David Belson, “Shutdown season: the Q2 2025 Internet disruption summary,” Cloudflare, July 22, 2025, <https://blog.cloudflare.com/q2-2025-internet-disruption-summary/>.
- 3“إشأن إنشاء جهاز حماية الآداب العامة” [Resolution No. 14 of 2024 AD regarding the establishment of the Public Morals Protection Authority],” Law Society,

July 25, 2025, <https://lawsociety.ly/legislation/%D9%82%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%B1-%D8%B1%D9%82....>

- ⁴Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies, “Libya: New Morality Measures Will Impose Authoritarian Hegemony over Society,” November 21, 2024, <https://cihrs.org/libya-new-morality-measures-will-impose-authoritarian...>; Asma Khalifa, “Libya’s Morality Police: Political Theater in the Face of Crises,” Arab Reform Initiative, March 28, 2025, <https://www.arab-reform.net/publication/libyas-morality-police-politica....>
- ⁵Libya Crimes Watch, “REPORT: HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN LIBYA DURING JANUARY 2025,” February 2, 2025, <https://lcw.ngo/en/blog/human-rights-violations-in-libya-during-january....>