

## Updates (March 2021)

- **Incorporated data** from
  - Majority of our data is sourced from news and media outlets.
  - <http://internetshutdowns.in/> (to date)
  - <https://moseskaranja.com/tracking-internet-shutdowns-in-africa/> (2016 and 2017)
  - [https://cipesa.org/?wpfb\\_dl=252](https://cipesa.org/?wpfb_dl=252) (2016 and 2017)
  - <http://killswitch.pk/> (2016 to 2020)
  - @InternetIntel (2018)
  - <https://transparency.facebook.com/internet-disruptions> [2018 to 2020]
  - IODA - <https://ioda.caida.org/>
  - OONI <https://explorer.ooni.org/search?until=2020-03-10>
  - Oracle <https://map.internetintel.oracle.com/>
  - Google Transparency Data - <https://transparencyreport.google.com/traffic/overview>
- **Discrepancy in number:** due to the methodological difference, there are slight variations in number between trackers. As the tracker keeps updating, new retrospective information and discoveries may also change the number of shutdowns as well as the duration of them.
- **Unconfirmed shutdowns and grey area:** to avoid confusions or skewed analysis result, this tracker does not include shutdown instances that are not yet verified through the #KeepItOn Coalition or other trusted sources. This tracker does not record network/service disruptions caused by factors beyond our scope, such as natural disaster, technical issues, etc.
- **“Curfew” style shutdowns:** these kinds of shutdowns present frequent disruption instances of one or multiple networks/services within a period of time, in which each instance takes place for several hours. In scenarios like India, we followed the approach in <http://internetshutdowns.in> to record such kind of shutdowns individually, as each of them may be caused by standalone government order. In other scenarios, such as Iraq and Syria during school exams, we recorded consecutive shutdowns as one instance, as they are often caused by one conglomerate government order during the exam period.

## Shutdown Tracker Optimization Project (STOP)

The #KeepItOn Shutdown Tracker Optimization Project is created and maintained by Access Now as part of the #KeepItOn campaign toolkit. This tracker aims to document and contextualize internet shutdown cases around the world under the definition developed by the #KeepItOn coalition for policy advocacy purposes. To date, the current tracker contains data

from the years 2016 to 2020. **We try for this tracker to be as comprehensive as possible but the constraints of our methodology mean it is not exhaustive and numbers are likely to change if and when new information becomes available.**

## Methodology / How our shutdown tracker works

1. Our tracker uses both quantitative and qualitative data to record the number of internet shutdowns in the world in a given year and to characterize the nature of the shutdowns, including their magnitude, scope, and causes. Sometimes we can confirm an internet shutdown through means such as technical measurement, while at other times we rely upon contextual information, such as news reports or personal accounts. We also work hard to document how a particular shutdown was ordered, and how it impacted society, including why and how it happened.
2. An internet shutdown is defined as an intentional disruption of the internet or electronic communications rendering them inaccessible or effectively unusable, for a specific population or within a location, often to exert control over the flow of information. This definition was created in 2016 with the help of technologists, policy makers, and activists.
  - a. This tracker includes full network shutdowns, bandwidth throttling, and service-based blocking for **two-way communication platforms**.
  - b. Instances in which it is unclear whether the disruption was intentional may be included in the tracker until it can be confirmed or denied that the disruption was due to technical problems. Those instances included in a separate tab in titled “Unconfirmed (Year)”
  - c. We do not limit our tracker to shutdowns involving governments; we include those disruptions solely caused or executed by non-state actors.
3. A **shutdown instance** refers to a disruption event lasting longer than one hour, or a series of disruption events that we attribute to the same or similar circumstance (i.e. protest, election, exam), justification, method, and perpetrator. An instance can continue even if internet services are restored and subsequently shut off again; if different services are suspended at various points throughout the shutdown; or if the scope of the shutdown expands or contracts during the shutdown. An example would be a “digital curfew” of shutting down the internet during the same hours every night for several days in a row. This determination, while grouping together disparate technical events, enables us to achieve policy and advocacy goals like attribution, media attention, mitigation, and remedy.

4. The recorded instances of shutdowns include events reported through local or international news sources which are included in the document, from local actors through Access Now's Digital Security Helpline or the #KeepItOn Coalition email list, or directly from telecommunication and internet companies.
  - a. If the shutdown was not caused by a particular event or was in response to a larger political struggle without a particular triggering event, each shutdown is recorded as a distinct instance once the service has been restored for a period of 24 hours or more before it is shut down again.

## Column indicators<sup>1</sup>

**start\_date** (count data)

*The date when the disruption began according to the sources*

**end\_date** (count data)

*The date when the disruption ended according to the sources*

### **Duration**

**Info\_source** (categorical<sup>2</sup> data)

- News Media Article
- Social Media
- Confidential
- CSO KIO Partners
- Other

**news\_link** (random vector)

*Source from news media*

**Continent** (categorical data)

*The categories below are for the use of annual reports. Raw data are generated using categories in the [Kaggle library](#).*

- Asia Pacific
- Africa

---

<sup>1</sup> The definition, criteria, and inclusion of these indicators are not finalized and remain open to discussion. These indicators were designed to generalize information about the scope, scale, and technical impact of current or past shutdown instances, to guide policy and advocacy strategies to prevent and mitigate future instances. We seek feedback on the clarity and accuracy of these indicators in particular. The next iteration of this tracker will consolidate indicators in order to most effectively reach our goal of informing target audiences of the existence and context around internet shutdowns, globally.

<sup>2</sup> Categories with categorical data entries are subject to change following community input.

- Middle East and North Africa (MENA)
- Europe
- North America
- Latin America and the Caribbean (LatAm and the Caribbean)

Sub\_region

**Country** (categorical data)

Based on [UN Country Classification 2014 edition](#)

**geo\_scope** (categorical data)

*The scope of areas that are affected by the shutdown instance*

- Level 1: Only affecting one city, county, or village
- Level 2: Affecting more than one city in the same state, province, or region
- Level 3: Affecting more than one state, province, or region

**Latitude**

**Longitude**

**area\_name** (random vector)

*Where the shutdown instance happened*

**ordered\_by** (categorical data)

*Whether it's ordered by a local or executive body of government*

- Local government
- State government
- Executive government
- Law enforcement
- Military
- Judiciary
- Non-government
- Unknown

**decision\_maker** (random vector)

*Name of the person (and position) or the governmental body who ordered the shutdown*

*Add Comms regulator*

**Shutdown Type** (categorical data)

*Whether the instance cut off the internet connection or slowed internet connection*

- Shutdown
- Throttling

## Affected\_network

*Which internet network access points were affected*

- Mobile
- Broadband
- Mobile and Broadband

## Shutdown\_event

*What sort of shutdown was it?*

- Full - means it affected the whole internet via that specific access point
- Service Specific - it affected social media platforms
- Full and Service Specific - there were attempts to block social media and also cut of access to the internet as well
- Service Specific Shutdowns affected
  - Facebook
    - True
    - False
    - Unknown
  - Twitter
    - True
    - False
    - Unknown
  - Instagram
    - True
    - False
    - Unknown
  - WhatsApp
    - True
    - False
    - Unknown
  - Telegram
    - True
    - False
    - Unknown
  - Other services\_specify
    - \_\_\_\_\_
  - SMS and Mobile
    - Yes,
    - No
    - Unknown
  - Phone calls
    - Yes
    - No
    - Unknown

## Telcos Involved (random vector)

*Which telecommunications companies were given the shutdown order*

## Telecom\_acknowledgement

- Yes
- No
- Unknown

## gov\_ack(boolean)

*Whether the government made a public statement*

- Yes
- No
- Unknown

## Telco\_ack\_source

## Telco\_ack\_quote

## Gov\_ack

Did the government acknowledge the shutdown?

- Yes
- No
- Unknown

## Gov\_ack\_source

## gov\_ack\_quote

## Gov\_Justification (categorical data)

*Official Stated Cause*

- Fake News / Hate Speech / Incendiary Content or Promoting Violence
- Illegal Content
- National Security / Counter-Terrorism
- Public Safety / Quell Unrest / Restore Public Order
- Sabotage / Third-party Action
- School Exams
- Technical Problems / Infrastructure Failure
- Unknown
- Other
- None

## gov\_just\_details

## actual\_cause (categorical data)

*Based on the source of information*

- Communal Violence
- Economic crisis
- Elections
- Exam cheating

- Information Control
- Political Instability
- Protest
- Religious holiday/anniversary
- Visits by Government Officials
- Unknown
- Other

## **actual\_cause\_details**

### **Related to Elections** (boolean)

*Whether the shutdown instance happened around an election*

- Yes
- No
- Unknown

### **Violence**

*Whether there was a violent incident during the shutdown?*

- Yes
- No
- NA

### **Human Rights abuses reported**

*Were there human rights violations reported while the internet was shut?*

- Yes
- No
- Unknown

### **Users\_notified**

- Yes,
- No
- Unknown

### **Users\_targeted**

- Ethnic minorities
- LGBTQ groups
- Religious minorities
- Others

### **Legal justifications** (boolean)

*If there was a specific law used to justify the shutdown*

- Yes
- No

- Unknown

**legal\_method** (random vector)

*Specific orders, law, or regulations that enacted the shutdown. I.e. Executive Orders, Judicial Orders, Magistrate Order, etc.*

**Economic Impact** (real-valued)

*The average daily cost in USD according to the resources*

**Event** (random vector)

*The event that triggered the shutdown*

**Access Now Links** (random vector)

*Blog post, statements, documents, or press releases published by Access Now*

**Notes** (random vector)

*Additional information*

For inquiry and comments, contact Felicia Anthonio at [felicia@accessnow.org](mailto:felicia@accessnow.org) and Sage Cheng at [sage@accessnow.org](mailto:sage@accessnow.org).