FIGHTING INTERNET SHUTDOWNS AROUND THE WORLD
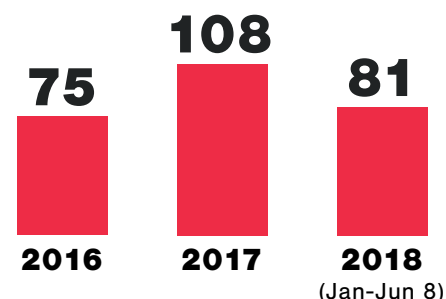
#KeepItOn

An internet shutdown is...

An intentional disruption of 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.

Internet shutdowns happen when governments order companies to disrupt networks and cut off access to communications tools—like Twitter, SMS, or Facebook. Unfortunately, companies like telcos and ISPs nearly always comply with these government orders, which can be legally binding.

Documenting the impact of internet shutdowns through the lens of personal narratives and numbers is an indispensable tool for organizing against disruptions. This is why we at Access Now launched the **Shutdown Stories Project** and the **Shutdown Tracker Optimization Project (STOP)**. We hope to contextualize the harm brought to global netizens by the increasing numbers of internet shutdowns, and evoke actions and remedies to put an end to internet disruptions.

THE **STOP** SHOWS INTERNET SHUTDOWNS ARE ON THE RISE

75 2016
108 2017
81 2018 (Jan-Jun 8)

SHUTDOWNS HARM EVERYONE

Emergency services / Human rights defenders / Journalists / Businesses / Schools / Hospitals / Demonstrators / and many more...

SHUTDOWNS SLOW DOWN GLOBAL ECONOMY

$2.4 billion
Global economic loss in 2016
Source: Centre for Technology Innovation at Brookings

SHUTDOWNS HAPPENED IN 41 COUNTRIES WORLDWIDE
(01/2016-06/2018 source: STOP)

India:159
Pakistan:19
Iraq:8 Syria:8 Turkey:7
Ethiopia:5 DRC:5
Iran:4 Egypt:3 Chad:3

Vietnam:2 Uganda:2 Philippines:2 North Korea:2
Morocco:2 Mali:2 Indonesia:2 Equatorial Guinea:2
Cameroon:2 Brazil:2 Bangladesh:2 Algeria:2
Zimbabwe:1 Yemen:1 Uzbekistan:1 Ukraine:1 Togo:1 South Korea:1
Sri Lanka:1 Somalia (Somaliland):1 Sierra Leone:1 Saudi Arabia:1
Russia:1 Montenegro:1 Libya:1 Gambia:1 Gabon:1 Côte d'Ivoire:1
China:1 Belarus:1 Bahrain:1

With our documentation, we also found that in many cases, governments did not give any reason for their orders. For the cases where an explanation was given, the most common justifications were:

1. **Public safety**
2. **Stop rumors and dissemination of illegal content**
3. **School exams**
4. **National security**
5. **Sabotage/third-party**
6. **Technical problems**

However, our records show that the most common suspected actual causes of internet shutdowns are:

1. **Stop protests**
2. **Unknown**
3. **Quell political instability**
4. **Control elections**
5. **Control information**
6. **Lobbying from telcos**
7. **Government officials' visits**

The personal story Sophie told us reveals the tremendous impact that internet shutdowns have on people's lives. Such disruptions do not help victims, restore order, or protect rights. They make things worse, and have occurred in every region around the world. Shutdowns also slow economic development—draining $2.4 billion from the global economy last year.

OPPORTUNITY

The **U.N. General Assembly** has unequivocally condemned measures in violation of international human rights law that intentionally prevent or disrupt access to or dissemination of information online and offline, and called upon all States to cease and refrain from these measures.

Companies like Facebook, Google, and Microsoft have also weighed in, speaking through the **Global Network Initiative**, with a strong statement that was also endorsed by telecommunications companies such as AT&T, Vodafone, and Orange. Thirty governments of the **Freedom Online Coalition (FOC)** spoke out against shutdowns, as have the **GSM Association** and the **African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights**.

In November 2016, Access Now partnered with Lush Cosmetics in launching a global petition demanding that government leaders publicly commit to keep the internet on. One month later, we delivered **45,927 signed petitions** from **148 countries** to 30 governments of the FOC at the Internet Governance Forum (IGF 2016) in Guadalajara, Mexico.

In April 2017, the FOC declared their commitment to fight internet shutdowns in an official statement issued at RightsCon Brussels 2017. The FOC includes member countries as diverse as France, Tunisia, Ghana, the United States, and Australia.

WHO'S PUSHING BACK

#KeepItOn

The **#KeepItOn campaign** unites and organizes the global effort to end internet shutdowns. The coalition is growing rapidly, and so far 160 organizations from 65 countries around the world, ranging from research centers to rights and advocacy groups, detection networks, foundations, and media organizations, have joined the movement.

160 MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS

65 COUNTRIES

#BRINGBACK OURINTERNET
#KeepItOn

In January 2017, the government of Cameroon ordered the disruption of the internet in the Southwest and Northwest administrative regions of the country following protests and unrest surrounding service delivery. The #KeepItOn member organizations rapidly mobilized with local advocates and tech entrepreneurs to pressure the government to turn the internet back on. After **93 days**, the government of Cameroon restored internet access in the Anglophone regions of the country.

A conservative estimate pegs economic losses from the shutdown at a minimum of **U.S. $4.5 million**, in a country with a per capita income of around **$1,200**. This does not account for losses due to disruptions of supply chains, lack of investor confidence, and human costs. Yet the government failed to learn from this shutdown, and in October 2017 began another disruption in anglophone regions that lasted **136 days**.

Governments ///

Publicly commit not to take measures in violation of international human rights law that intentionally disrupt internet or electronic communications.

Telcos ///

Follow clear guidelines and best practices to combat internet shutdowns, and build transparency and accountability norms. (See: Access Now's Telco Action Plan and Telco Remedy Plan)

Organizations ///

➡ **Join the fight** against internet shutdowns at **accessnow.org/keepiton**.

➡ **Report a shutdown** to us at **shutdowns@accessnow.org** so we can gather critical information.

➡ **Document any evidence of a shutdown**, such as through screenshots of 404 pages or official announcements.

➡ **Develop contingency plans** in case you cannot rely on the internet. Some basic circumvention advice is available at **accessnow.org/KeepItOn-circumvention-methods.**

Everyone ///

Contact us
Report to us if you find any sign of internet shutdowns.

Email us:
shutdowns@accessnow.org
(PGP Encryption available)

Get help
Experiencing a shutdown? Contact our Digital Security Helpline, a free-of-charge resource for civil society around the world. We offer real-time, direct technical assistance and advice to activists, independent media, and civil society organizations.

Email us:
help@accessnow.org
(PGP Encryption available)

Share a story
If you have a personal story about internet shutdowns, please share it with us, or if you know someone who has experienced a shutdown, encourage them to do so.

Learn more:
accessnow.org/ shutdown-stories-project/

Share your feedback
We are actively seeking feedback on the STOP database to make the indicators clearer and more accurate, as well as any information to enrich this database.

Download the database:
accessnow.org/ keepiton-shutdown-tracker/

RESOURCES AND TOOLS

Shutdown Tracker Optimization Project (STOP)
Access Now's contextual tracker of internet shutdown instances around the world

Shutdown Stories Project
Access Now's database of documented personal narratives from people who are impacted by the disruptions of communications and access to information (accessnow.org/keepiton)

Who Owns What? The WOW telco database
Access Now's catalog of GSM Association (GSMA) member mobile operators in countries with shutdown issues

Joint letter on keeping the internet open and secure
A model advocacy letter developed within the #KeepItOn Coalition

Internet Shutdown Economic Impact Calculator
Two methods developed by Deloitte and Brookings Institution to assess the economic impact of internet shutdowns

Open Observatory of Network Interference (OONI)
A free software, global observation network for detecting censorship, surveillance, and traffic manipulation on the internet (ooni.torproject.org)

The Cost of Shutdown Tool (COST)
NetBlocks' data-driven online tool that enables users to quickly and easily estimate the economic cost of internet disruptions (launching in summer 2018)

internetshutdowns.in
An online tool built by Software Freedom Law Centre, India to monitor internet shutdowns in India with a reporting platform

Kill Switch in Pakistan
Bytes for All's active monitor of internet shutdowns in Pakistan (killswitch.pk)

Measurement Lab (M-Lab)
A consortium of research, industry, and public-interest partners dedicated to providing an open, verifiable measurement platform for global network performance, hosting the largest open internet performance dataset on the planet, and creating visualizations and tools to help people make sense of internet performance

Internet Intelligence (Dyn)
Global internet research covering issues that impact internet performance

Internet Outage Detection and Analysis (IODA)
An operational prototype system that monitors the internet in near-real time, developed by Center for Applied Internet Data Analysis (CAIDA)

Akamai Real-Time Web Monitor
Monitoring the global regions targeted by the greatest web attack traffic, cities with the slowest web connections (latency), and geographic areas with the most web traffic (traffic density)

Transparency Reports
Companies like Google, Facebook, Vodafone, Telia, Millicom, and more disclose data and innovate new metrics to report on disruptions and their impacts on products, services, and people worldwide.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

WEBSITE

https://www.accessnow.org/keepiton

CONTACTS

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Access Now defends and extends the digital rights of users at risk around the world.

Ⓦ **accessnow.org**

Ⓣ **@accessnow**

Ⓕ **facebook.com/accessnow**

Updated on Jun 12, 2018. Contains data from Jan 2016 to Jun 2018.