

LONDA 2025

DIGITAL RIGHTS & INCLUSION IN AFRICA REPORT

Democratic Republic of Congo

Country Report



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DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

By Noël Kabeya

Executive Summary

For several years, the Democratic Republic of Congo has placed its successful transition to a high-tech society at the heart of its government action. This has led to legislative and institutional reforms aimed at filling legal gaps and strengthening the institutional framework to foster the digital economy in all aspects.

This annual report draws on quantitative and qualitative research, document analysis (public policies and legal instruments) and interviews with key players in

the Congolese digital ecosystem. These resources enabled the monitoring of digital rights protection and inclusion in the country. This assessment focused on internet access, freedom of expression online, personal data protection, content censorship and moderation, access to information, AI and emerging technologies, digital inclusion and the Universal Service Fund.

This report examines the digital, legal and institutional frameworks through the

lens of legislation harmonisation and the establishment of various independent administrative bodies tasked with regulating and managing the digital sector, as stipulated by the Digital Code. It then addressed the implementation of the National Digital Plan, assessing its progress as it reached its 2025 deadline and is now being replaced by a more ambitious one.

From another perspective, the report highlighted some progress in promoting and protecting digital rights in the country. It also identified initiatives undertaken to foster digital inclusion and the proper administration of justice. However, the monitoring revealed certain weaknesses

in the framework protecting digital rights. The greatest concerns relate to freedom of expression online, particularly in a context marked by the armed conflict in the east of the country. Based on the research findings, this report concludes that the framework protecting digital rights and inclusion is generally deficient in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Faced with this deficit, the report makes recommendations to the government, parliament, civil society actors, the media, universities, telecommunications companies, and citizens, with the hope of contributing to better protection of digital rights in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Introduction

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is the second-largest country in Africa, with an area of 2,345,000 km². Its population is approximately 115,403,027,000 inhabitants, according to estimates by The World Factbook¹. The country has a relatively low mobile internet penetration rate compared to the continental average. Following the general elections of December 20 2023, and after the Constitutional Court confirmed his re-election on January 9 2024, with 73.47% of the vote, the

incumbent president, Félix Antoine Tshise-keki, was sworn in on January 20 2024, for a second five-year term.

The first government of President Tshise-keki's second term, led for the first time in the country's political history by a woman, Judith Siminwa, was approved by the National Assembly on June 11 2024, based on a programme that included several initiatives aimed at promoting digital rights and inclusion.

Framework for Digital

Regulation

The Telecommunications Law and the Digital Code are the two main legal documents that make up the DRC's regulatory framework for digital technologies.

1. Law No. 20/017 of November 25, 2020, which addresses information and communication technologies and telecommunications.

This law is regarded as the most significant framework law governing the nation's ICT and telecoms industries². In contrast to the 2002 framework law, which it repeals, it addresses concerns pertaining to information and communication technology in addition to telecoms. In this regard, it provides the Democratic Republic of the

Congo with a more thorough and contemporary approach to regulation³.

2. The Digital Code

The promulgation of Ordinance-Law No. 23/010 concerning the Digital Code was hailed as a significant step in the development of digital sector regulation in the country. The Digital Code is considered the legal lever for the DRC's digital transformation, as it positions itself as an instrument for the development and diversification of the national economy⁴. In fact, at least in theory, it seeks to advance a rights-based digital transformation. This law aims to close the legal gap and open the door for improved digital rights protection in the nation⁵.

However, the many obstacles to the Digital Code's successful implementation should not be overshadowed by its applicability, innovations, and declared commitment to strengthening the framework for defending digital rights and inclusion

1. [Congo, Democratic Republic of the - The World Fact Book](#)
2. [Paradigm Initiative, LONDA 2023 REPORT ON DIGITAL RIGHTS AND INCLUSION IN AFRICA SUMMARY Democratic Republic of Congo DRC-Londa-Report-FR.pdf](#)
3. [Jordy PANZA and Brozeck KANDOLO, The history of digital technology and its regulatory challenges in the Democratic Republic of Factbook](#)
4. [Paradigm Initiative, LONDA 2023 REPORT ON DIGITAL RIGHTS AND INCLUSION IN AFRICA SUMMARY Democratic Republic of Congo DRC-Londa-Report-FR.pdf, Op.cit.](#)
5. [The Protection of Digital Rights in Light of the New Digital Code in the DRC \(Analysis by Michèle CALENGA TSHASEKELA and Hortense NINDA MUHIMUZI/ICDH\) – Deep Congo](#)
6. [Paradigm Initiative, Protecting digital rights at the dawn of the new digital code in the Democratic Republic of Congo - Paradigm Initiative](#)

in the DRC⁶. This is also the case for various implementing measures not yet in effect (taken), as well as for the various institutions and regulatory authorities it establishes. This includes, in particular, the National Digital Council, the Digital Regulatory Authority, the National Electronic Certification Authority, the Data Protection Authority, the National Cybersecurity Agency, and the DRC Digital Portal.

Government

commitments to digital

rights and inclusion

The Congolese government's biggest commitment in 2025 was the simultaneous launch of the National Digital Plan 2026-2030 and the first National Artificial Intelligence Strategy.

Internet Access

In 2025, the number of mobile subscrip-

tions increased from roughly 56.26 million in 2024 to roughly 60.3 million, or 54.3% of the total population⁷. The digital divide is still substantial even if both the number of subscribers and the penetration rate have been rising substantially in recent years. According to the regulatory authority (ARPTC), the mobile penetration rate is close to 30% while the overall penetration rate rose to 61.8%⁸. However, inequalities in internet availability and usage between urban and rural areas continue to be a defining feature of the DRC. The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is among the countries targeted by the new Global Coalition for Mobile Phone Affordability. Launched in July by the GSMA (Global System for Mobile Communications Association), this initiative aims to facilitate mobile phone ownership among people in low - and middle-income countries (LMICs), generally located in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, in order to promote internet usage.

In Africa, mobile phones are currently the primary, and often the only, means of accessing the Internet, according to

7. [With 60.3 million active mobile connections, the DRC is projected to reach a penetration rate of 54.3% by 2025 - LePoint.cd](#)

8. [T2-25 Rapport ARPTC 29-OCT-2025.pdf](#)

GSMA. In the DRC, 29.98 million people have mobile internet access compared to 16,000 for fixed internet, representing penetration rates of 31.5% and 0.017%, respectively, according to the Congolese Regulatory Authority for Information and Communication Technologies (ARPTIC). In a country where the Government considers the digital economy an asset for development, promoting mobile access can increase internet usage and generate revenue growth for internet service providers (ISPs).⁹

On March 14 2025, a major project, co-financed by the French Development Agency (AFD) and the World Bank to the tune of US\$500 million, to strengthen internet connectivity across the country was launched¹⁰. This project aims to provide internet access to 30 million Congolese people, thus making the service more financially accessible¹¹.

The project is yet to be successfully executed in order to fully assess how this project will affect the nation's efforts to safeguard and advance digital rights.

Internet shutdowns

The United Nations reports that when the Rwandan-backed M23 armed movement took control of the cities of Goma and Bukavu in North and South Kivu¹², there were frequent internet outages brought on by both the Kinshasa government and the movement's leaders¹³.

On January 25 2025, as the M23 attacked and advanced on Goma, authorities reportedly ordered the Internet to be shut down¹⁴. According to the #KeepItOn coalition and media outlets, the social media platforms X and TikTok were scheduled to be blocked beginning February 1 2025.

9. [Muriel EDJO, Mobile Internet in the DRC: a global coalition to change the game <https://www.agenceecofin.com/internet/1307-120283>]
10. DRC – France: Two loan agreements signed to finance digital transformation - Rtn (accessed February 14, 2026)
11. The French Development Agency (AFD) grants a \$500 million loan to modernize digital infrastructure in the DRC - LePoint.cd (accessed February 15, 2026)
12. UN report: Rwanda deploys up to 7,000 troops in support of the M23 in eastern DRC
13. <https://paradigmhq.org/communique-de-presse-la-net-rights-coalition-condamne-la-coupure-dinternet-a-goma-en-rdc/?lang=fr>; Statement from the Internet Society Chapter of the Democratic Republic of Congo on the Internet shutdown in Goma - ISOCRDC
14. Escalation of the conflict in eastern DRC: censorship, internet shutdowns and attacks against journalists and human rights defenders - Civicus Monitor

On February 3 2025, NetBlocks reported that based on its data, access to the Google Play Store had been restricted, presumably to prevent users from downloading VPN services to circumvent the restrictions on X and TikTok¹⁵.

In January, internet outages caused by the M23 persisted for over six weeks in places under its occupancy,¹⁶ especially the city of Goma and its environs.¹⁷

According to both international human rights legislation and the Declaration of Principles on Freedom of Expression in Africa,¹⁸ these internet shutdowns violate the right to free speech.¹⁹

Digitalisation

By decree, the Prime Minister established, in March 2025, the implementation of a computerised and digitised management of judicial procedures for the benefit of commercial courts²⁰.

The Decree provides for the implementation of an integrated, computerised, and digitised system for managing judicial procedures, covering the entire judicial process from the opening of cases to their archiving.

This system consists of a set of tools and applications enabling the paperless management of judicial files, from opening to closing²¹.

15. <https://www.isocrdc.org/Declaration-ISOC-RDC-coupure-internet-au-Nord-Kivu.php>

16. <https://beroyafm.net/goma-la-coupure-dinternet-a-paralyse-les-medias-freine-le-commerce-et-isole-la-population-en-pleine-crise-securitaire/>

17. <https://rtvh.net/nord-kivu-la-societe-civile-denonce-la-coupure-des-reseaux-de-telecommunications-par-le-m23-a-masisi/>

18. African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR), Declaration of Principles on Freedom of Expression in Africa DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES ON FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION French 2020.fm

19. Article 19 of The Universal Declaration of Human Rights; Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights | OHCHR

20. Decree No. 25/12 of March 24, 2025, establishing a computerized and digitized system for managing judicial procedures for the benefit of commercial courts | Leganews Pro

21. Article 2, paragraph 4, Decree No. 25/12 of March 24, 2025, states that the functionalities of this system include: the digitization of the judicial case management process; the computerized and digital communication of procedural documents (court writs, orders, communication of documents and pleadings, notifications, service of process, etc.); the automated and random allocation of cases to judges and/or chambers, based on objective criteria (workload, specialisation, etc.); the use of digital tools for case tracking and the management of hearings and deadlines; secure access for stakeholders to the online interface for information on their cases; the payment of court fees and the online publication of decisions; and the archiving of case files.

This represents a significant step in the modernisation of the Congolese judicial system, introducing computerised and digitised procedure management within commercial courts.

One of the innovations of this decree is the creation of the Permanent Monitoring and Evaluation Unit (CPSE) for the implementation of computerised and digitised judicial procedure management in commercial courts. This is a major advancement, as this Unit, if it functions effectively, will ensure the sustainability of the system. Its role will be crucial in identifying shortcomings and proposing necessary adjustments to the computerised and digitised management of judicial procedures.

Freedom of expression

online

In 2025, in a context marked by the intensification of the armed conflict in the eastern

part of the country, freedom of expression and opinion, including online freedom, has suffered several violations, both in the part under government control and in the areas occupied by the AFC/M23.

After prohibiting media outlets from broadcasting debates on Congolese army operations without the presence of at least one “expert on the subject”²² and advising against open-phone broadcasts on military operations, the High Council for Audiovisual and Communication (CSAC), the media regulatory authority, suspended Al Jazeera from broadcasting for 90 days as a precautionary measure due to content deemed “subversive”.²³

Following the same logic, the CSAC recommended that media outlets no longer “broadcast information related to the rebellion in eastern DRC without referring to official “government” sources.”²⁴

In addition, the CSAC prohibited any media coverage of former President Joseph Kabila or his party for 90 days due to his

22. [Press release No. CSAC/002/B/02/2024 of February 23, 2024 Security crisis in eastern DRC: CSAC calls on Congolese media to demonstrate patriotism](#)

23. [CSAC Decision of January 13, 2025 Al Jazeera suspended in the DRC for subversive content: the CSAC takes strong action](#)

24. [Recommendation from the CSAC Plenary Session of April 4, 2024](#)

remarks regarding the unrest in the country's east^{25 26}.

Subsequently, the CSAC changed this prohibition into a “general recommendation” for all media organisations, asking them to act professionally by not airing or publishing stories that would undermine the DRC's military²⁷.

A recommendation like this shows that the Congolese government intends to limit freedom of the press, freedom of expression, and freedom of opinion. It violates both international²⁸ and regional standards²⁹³⁰ on freedom of expression that the DRC has adopted, as well as constitutional safeguards.

Further, in the occupied areas, journalists and activists³¹, civil society,³² and human rights defenders³³ have been subjected to intimidation and threats, including death threats and several other violations of their rights, in the context of the escalating conflict in eastern DRC³⁴.

According to Reporters Without Borders (RSF), from January 2024 to January 2025, RSF recorded 52 violations of press freedom in North Kivu alone, the most affected province. These included the looting of at least 26 community radio stations, at least 10 of which were directly attacked by the M23. Often, before the armed group arrives, radio stations close their doors, either by force or as a precaution,

25. [Joseph Kabila and the PPRD banned from DRC media | Radio Okapi](#)

26. [Lewis Mudge, A refusal of media coverage that is damaging to the former president of the DRC | Human Rights Watch](#)

27. [Media in the DRC: The ban on covering the activities of Kabila and his party has been converted into a “recommendation” - RFI](#)

28. [In the Democratic Republic of Congo, freedom of expression in the digital sphere is governed by several legal texts, including the constitution \(Articles 23 and 24\). The 2023 press law regulates online content and freedom of expression. Furthermore, the Digital Code reinforces these provisions by adding sanctions against disinformation and sexist remarks online.](#)

29. [African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights \(ACHPR\), Declaration of Principles on Freedom of Expression in Africa DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES ON FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION French 2020.fm](#)

30. [International human rights instruments ratified by the Democratic Republic of Congo, Official Gazette of the DRC, Special Issue, April 1999](#)

31. [DR Congo: Rwanda-backed M23 targets journalists and activists | Human Rights Watch](#), See also [DRC: Alarming repression against journalists and activists - AfrikActus](#)

32. [Carole Assignon, critical voices in the crosshairs of the AFC/M23 DRC: Critical voices in the crosshairs of the AFC/M23](#)

33. [DRC. Endemic human rights violations attributable to the M23 armed group call for concerted international action - Amnesty International](#)

34. [Press freedom in peril: repression intensifies in areas occupied by the M23/AFC – B-one television](#)

and journalists receive threatening messages or calls.

According to figures from the National Union of Congolese Press (UNPC), approximately 90 journalists were forced to flee the region, and some were even pursued by the M23³⁵.

We can also mention the imposition of a blackout on all information coming from territories under government control and the prohibition on all media outlets from relaying negative comments or statements about the M23 movement.³⁶

Digital Identity

The Congolese government has signed an agreement with Tridentity Digital Tech Holdings Ltd for the deployment of the National Digital Identification System.

This is a preliminary agreement intended to operationalise the comprehensive digital identification and authentication platform project in the DRC.³⁷

The partial implementation of the National Digital Plan “Horizon 2025” and the launch of the National Digital Plan “Horizon 2026-2030”

The National Digital Plan “Horizon 2025” has come to an end with an estimated execution rate of 60%.³⁸

While its performance remains unsatisfactory,³⁹ the National Digital Plan “Horizon 2026-2030” has been launched, with more ambitious objectives than the previous plan.⁴⁰ Its stated goal is to improve internet access, modernise public services, and develop local technological talent. Beyond the enthusiasm it has generated, however, implementation is still necessary to assess whether it achieves its objectives⁴¹.

35. [Escalation of the conflict in eastern DRC: censorship, internet shutdowns and attacks against journalists and human rights defenders - Civicus Monitor](#)

36. [JED, Eastern DRC: War Crimes Committed Against the Press, 2025 Report RAPPORT-JED-2025-en-RDC_V1-1.pdf](#)

37. [Trident Digital Tech Holdings Ltd Signs Agreement with DRC Ministry for National Digital Identity System Deployment | Nasdaq](#)

38. [Evaluation Report on the Implementation of the National Digital Plan “Horizon 2025” \(PNN\): Progress and Challenges in Laying the Foundations for a Digital Economy in the Democratic Republic of Congo – ADN](#)

39. [See Paradigm Initiative, LONDA DRC 2024 Report, page 5 Londa-24-DRC-FR.pdf](#)

40. [DRC DIGITAL NATION 2030: President Tshisekedi announces a new digital plan and mobilizes key players in the sector – ADN](#)

41. [The National Digital Plan “Horizon 2026-2030” is based on 4 pillars \(Infrastructure and connectivity, Digital plat-](#)

Data protection and privacy

In the DRC, personal data protection is characterised by a disorganised regulatory framework and a deficient institutional framework⁴². To date, the Data Protection Authority stipulated by the Digital Code has not yet been established⁴³.

Meanwhile, the responsibilities of this authority have been assigned to ARPTIC⁴⁴. A year and a half after this transfer, it is difficult to objectively assess ARPTIC's work in the area of personal data protection.

Furthermore, the ratification by the Democratic Republic of Congo of the African Union (AU) Convention on Cybersecurity and Personal Data Protection (Malabo Convention) on June 27 2025, deserves to

be highlighted⁴⁵. Through this ratification, the DRC, like other states participating in this convention, has committed itself to a regulatory approach to securing the digital space and protecting personal data⁴⁶.

Regulatory authority

While the Digital Code provides for the creation of several independent administrative authorities responsible for regulating the digital sector, the supervising minister, by decree of the Prime Minister⁴⁷, transferred the responsibilities of three of these entities to ARPTIC. These are the Digital Regulatory Authority, the National Electronic Certification Authority, and the Data Protection Authority.

This decision, although temporary, raises some concerns regarding the institutional autonomy of these bodies.

forms and public services, Human capital and digital inclusion, Cybersecurity and digital trust)

42. See Paradigm Initiative, LONDA DRC 2024 Report on page 6 Londa-24-DRC-FR.pdf

43. Data protection laws in the Democratic Republic of Congo - Data Protection Laws of the World (Accessed February 6, 2026)

44. Article 1 of Ministerial Decree No. CAB/MIN/PT&N/AKIM/KL/KBS/051/2024 of August 17, 2024, harmonizing the implementation procedures of Ordinance-Law No. 023/010 of March 13, 2023, establishing the Digital Code, and Law No. 20/017 of November 25, 2020, relating to telecommunications and information and communication technologies in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Official Gazette – Special Issue – September 18, 2024

45. Prosper Ntetika Mbakata, 5 things to know about the DRC's ratification of the African Union Convention on Cybersecurity and Personal Data Protection - CIOMAG (accessed February 15, 2026)

46. Enoch BULONZA, "DRC: the National Assembly ratifies the law order authorizing the ratification of the Malabo Convention", CIOMAG, April 6, 2023, online <https://cio-mag.com/rdc-lassemblee-nationale-ratifie-lordonnance-loi-autorisant-la-ratification-de-la-convention-de-malabo/> (Accessed February 14, 2026)

On the one hand, one can also question whether ARPTIC has the necessary resources and expertise to fully assume all these responsibilities⁴⁸

Conversely, the question of the institutional independence of the Data Protection Authority (DPA) is particularly pressing. Based on Article 11 of the Malabo Convention, this authority must enjoy effective institutional independence and have its own powers of investigation, control and sanction.⁴⁹

Consequently, transferring the prerogatives of this regulatory authority, known as the Regulatory Authority for Posts, Telecommunications, and Information and Communication Technologies (ARPTIC), raises whether national practices comply with international standards⁵⁰. More specifically, this situation risks impacting the independence and institutional autonomy of this authority.

Therefore, given the risks of ineffectiveness and/or functional paralysis of ARPTIC in its role as the Data Protection Authority, the requirement for regulatory consistency would be reflected in the establishment of regulatory authorities under the conditions stipulated by the Digital Code.

Another noteworthy innovation of the Digital Code is the appropriation of systems and new technologies by the Central Bank of Congo and the High Council of the Judiciary, in accordance with the relevant legislation.

Access to information

A bill aimed at guaranteeing “access to information and transparency in public life” in the Democratic Republic of Congo was tabled in the National Assembly on October 30 2024.⁵¹

47. [Articles 7 and 9 of the Congolese Digital Code 971.03.23-Ordonnance-loi-du-12-mars-2023_Code-du-numerique.pdf](#)
48. [Article 1 of Ministerial Decree No. CAB/MIN/PT&N/AKIM/KL/KBS/051/2024 of August 17, 2024, concerning the harmonization of the implementation procedures of the regimes of Ordinance-Law No. 023/010 of March 13, 2023, Official Gazette – Special Issue – September 18, 2024,](#)
49. [Article 11 of the African Union \(AU\) Convention on Cybersecurity and Personal Data Protection African Union Convention on Cyber Security and Personal Data Protection | Union africaine](#)
50. [BROZECK KANDOLO, The DRC’s ratification of the Malabo Convention: legal progress or a step backward? NEWS-JURITECH LEGAL WATCH - No. 11 - June 28, 2025, online Copy of N°10 | NEWS-JURITECH](#)
51. [Bill submitted to the President of the National Assembly by MP Jacques NDJOLI ENSEG’EKELI in his correspondence referenced N°081/AN/RAPP/DEJ/SECAB/ELG/2024 on October 30, 2024](#)

To date, this proposal has not yet been adopted, and the law has not been promulgated. The absence of this law creates a legal vacuum regarding access to information, which is detrimental to the rule of law in the Democratic Republic of Congo.⁵²

Artificial Intelligence and Emerging Technologies

The regulatory framework for artificial intelligence (AI) remains relatively underdeveloped⁵³.

First, with technical support from UNESCO, a national report on artificial intelligence, considered a strategic reference framework for the country, was validated.⁵⁴ This report constitutes the first glob-

al regulatory framework on the ethics of artificial intelligence⁵⁵.

Second, the Ministry of National Education introduced AI into the State Examination marking process to enhance the reliability and efficiency of exam marking⁵⁶. This system is presented as being based on technology that allows for the automatic marking of exams while maintaining a high level of human oversight by experts from the Inspectorate General. However, its relevance and viability have been met with mixed reviews⁵⁷.

Digital Inclusion

The implementation of the Universal Service Fund (USF) is not effective in the DRC. Even though it has initiated some partnerships⁵⁸ and begun operationalis-

52. [Access to information in the DRC: a long-awaited law, a suspended democracy - Collective 24](#)

53. [Londa-24-DRC-FR.pdf](#)

54. [The DRC validates its national report on artificial intelligence and opts for an inclusive strategy - DRC - LIVE](#)

55. [The DRC validates its national report on artificial intelligence](#)

56. [DRC: Artificial Intelligence to be used for marking the 2025 State Exam - Stay informed - UNE.CD](#)

57. [What are the advantages and disadvantages of using AI to grade the main session of the State Exams? | Radio Okapi; Mobeka Ekabela, Ex tat 2025 against the backdrop of AI-assisted grading. What ethical issues need to be considered? | Droit-Num rique.cd NEWS-JURITECH – N 13 – AUGUST 05, 2025](#)

58. [The FDSU has entered into a partnership with Airtel aimed at accelerating the deployment of telecom services and reducing the digital divide across the entire Congolese territory \(September 25, 2025\) A New Era for Digital Inclusion in the DRC: The FDSU-Airtel Strategic Partnership and began discussions for a strategic partnership with Starlink \(September 2025\) Major strategic partnership: the FDSU - Starlink DRC..](#)

ing its roaming and site acquisition strategy,⁵⁹ the Universal Service Development Fund (UDDF), responsible for managing the USF, is still not functioning optimally. In fact, telecom firms failed to make all the legally required contributions in 2025⁶⁰. Neither the Unified Social Development Fund (FDSU) nor the Congolese government has released a report on the precise amount that these businesses have paid.

The fact that the decree forming, organising, and administering the FDSU does not identify the consequences these corporations face for failing to pay their payments makes this lack of transparency even more concerning.

However, the price of the nation's most popular mobile internet bundles (giga-bytes) is still thought to be excessive.

Conclusion

The guarantee of digital rights in the DRC is generally deficient, primarily due to regulatory gaps, an incomplete institutional framework, and dysfunctions that weaken the protective framework. It is therefore necessary to harmonise legislation and develop measures to implement the digital code.

Thus, the various regulatory authorities

will be established and provided with the necessary resources to complete the reform in the areas of digital identity, electronic certification, data protection, and cybersecurity. Given the widespread lack of awareness and recurring violations, particularly in the context of armed conflict, legal awareness and digital literacy training are strongly encouraged.

59. [Pilot phase of roaming and site acquisition in Kongo Centralhas](#)

60. [Article 33.2 of Decree No. 22/51 of December 30, 2022, establishing, organising and operating a public institution called the Universal Service Development Fund \(FDSU\), stipulates that the FDSU's financial resources consist primarily of a 3% levy on the turnover of operators in the telecommunications and information and communication technology sector. Decree No. 22/51 of December 30, 2022, establishing, organising, and governing a public institution called the Universal Service Development Fund, abbreviated as FDSU.](#)

It is also the government's responsibility to promote inclusion by taking the necessary measures to facilitate internet access for people living in rural areas. Furthermore, the ratification of the African Union (AU) Convention on Cybersecurity

and the Protection of Personal Data is an indication of the Congolese authorities' commitment to contributing to the emergence of a regional ecosystem that protects digital rights and freedoms.

Recommendations

The Government should:

- Accelerate the implementation of measures to enforce the Digital Code.
- Publish the implementation report of the National Digital Plan "Horizon 2025".
- Promote digital skills training.
- Take measures to protect freedom of expression online.
- Invest in expanding telecommunications infrastructure to improve internet access.

Parliament should:

- Accelerate the adoption and promulgation of the law on access to information.
- Legislate on artificial intelligence.
- Implement laws to protect consumers of telecommunications services, especially citizens living in rural and isolated areas.

The private sector should:

- Telecommunications companies must pay their legal contributions to the FSU, amounting to 3% of their revenue.
- Strengthen partnerships with the public sector to implement innovative initiatives aimed at bridging the digital divide.
- Invest in infrastructure tailored to the needs of disadvantaged communities.
- Participate in digital skills training.

Civil society organisations should:

- Advocate for the adoption and promulgation of the law on access to information
- Advocate for each telecommunications company to make 3% of its revenue available to the FDSU
- Work with the media to raise awareness against hate speech in the digital public sphere, including during armed conflicts
- Investigate violations of digital rights







Civil society organisations should:









- Initiate awareness-raising activities, digital training, and digital capacity building.
- Launch awareness campaigns on tolerance and hate speech in the digital public sphere, including during armed conflicts.
- Respect professional ethics and standards and press laws, and demonstrate professionalism to avoid disseminating misinformation and spreading hate speech in the digital public sphere, including during armed conflicts.









The Score Index



Democratic Republic of Congo, 2025

1 = Totally non-compliant; 2 = Mildly compliant; 3 = Moderately compliant; 4 = Considerably compliant; 5 = Fully compliant

Indicator	ACHPR Principle	2024 Score	2025 Score	2025 Justification
Internet outages	P38(2)			In 2025, there were internet outages during the capture of the cities of Goma and Bukavu by the AFC/M23, on the sidelines of the armed conflict in eastern DRC.
Existing laws, policies and other measures aimed at promoting universal, equitable, affordable and meaningful access to the Internet	P37			There are some policies and initiatives to promote universal, equitable, affordable and meaningful access to the Internet, but they are incomplete, deficient, and require several enforcement measures and political will. In 2025, with a view to ensuring connectivity in rural areas, the Universal Service Development Fund (UDDF) continued to operationalise its roaming strategy and site acquisition in the provinces and territories.
Criminalizing fake news	P22(2)			The Penal Code (Art. 199) and the Digital Code (Art. 360) cover false news and false rumours, including when committed through social networks, computer systems, electronic communication networks, or any form of electronic media.

Indicator	ACHPR Principle	2024 Score	2025 Score	2025 Justification
Sedition legislation	P22(2)			Confusing and inconsistent legislation. The activists' penal code addresses the detention of persons for sale as slaves (Art. 68), while the military penal code deals with insurrection and rebellion.
Arbitrary arrests and harassment of the media, human rights defenders and citizens	P20(1) & (2)			<p>Despite the promulgation of the law relating to the protection and responsibility of human rights defenders in the Democratic Republic on June 15 2023, the year 2025 saw several arbitrary arrests and detentions of human rights defenders, journalists, and pro-democracy activists, according to the United Nations and human rights NGOs.</p> <p>This situation is exacerbated by the armed conflict in eastern Congo. Arbitrary arrests have taken place in areas occupied by the M23 and in areas under government authority.</p>
Data protection legislation.	P42			Protection exists because the digital code contains an entire section of 78 articles dedicated to data protection. However, efforts must be made to ensure the effective application of this legislation.
States intervene and demand the removal of online content by internet intermediaries.	P38 and P39(4)			Lack of a national digital awareness policy

Indicator	ACHPR Principle	2024 Score	2025 Score	2025 Justification
Invasion of the confidentiality of communication	P41			Intelligence services and the police violated the confidentiality of communications to justify legal proceedings against journalists, human rights defenders, and political opponents.
The government's failure to proactively disclose and disseminate information on digital technologies.	P29(3)			There are laws, policies, and government initiatives in place to raise awareness and disseminate information about digital technologies. The Digital Code, the National Digital Plan 2026-2030 (PNN2), and the Digital Strategy 2030, currently being finalised, include provisions dedicated to disseminating information about digital technologies.
National strategies on artificial intelligence and emerging technologies	P39(6)			Embryonic initiatives and a first national strategy are currently being developed
Adoption of laws, policies and measures specifically for children promoting digital safety and children's online privacy	P37 (5)			The legislation exists. However, there is a lack of specific measures promoting digital safety and children's online privacy.

Indicator	ACHPR Principle	2024 Score	2025 Score	2025 Justification
Digital inclusion	P37(3)			<p>The new National Digital Plan 2026 - 2030 aims to reduce the digital divide. For its part, the FDSU has made progress by extending universal service to some rural and peri-urban areas in order to guarantee equitable access to the internet.</p>
Total (out of 60):	2024: 26	<div style="background-color: #ff6600; color: white; padding: 20px; text-align: center;"> <p>2025</p> <p>21</p> </div>		



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