

# LONDA 2025

## DIGITAL RIGHTS & INCLUSION IN AFRICA REPORT

### Namibia

Country Report



PARADIGM  
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# Namibia

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## Executive Summary

This report presents an overview of digital rights and digital inclusion in Namibia for 2025. It provides an overview by reviewing developments in the country as well as publicly available information and data. The report analyses academic research, news coverage, parliamentary engagement and political pronouncements on matters of interest. This study further assesses compliance with the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and notes any decline or progress in 2025

when compared with findings in the Londa 2024 Report. The report demonstrates the level of State compliance with key international standards. It assesses the state of digital rights and inclusion, and scores Namibia based on 12 key indicators listed in The Score Index by Paradigm Initiative. The report examines internet access in the country and addresses accessibility as a matter of public interest. It further reviews cases of media freedom in the nation's digital landscape

and considers how gendered disinformation and criminalisation of false news were addressed during the review period.

Furthermore, the report examines the state of data protection and privacy, and presents cases on cybercrimes and how they are dealt with in Namibia. The report looks at surveillance and smart city developments in Windhoek in particular and discusses how this is linked to privacy amongst citizens. Other thematic areas include censorship and content moderation by global platforms. The report also considers whether the transparency mechanisms engaged by platforms

are extended to Namibia. The report reviews the work done since the passing of the 2022 Access to Information law, while also engaging with how artificial intelligence (AI) and emerging technologies are dealt with in the Namibian context, particularly in the absence of an AI-specific policy pronouncement. The report assesses the extent of digital inclusion, Digital Identification (ID) systems, costs of data, and the status of the Universal Service Fund (USF). Finally, the report makes recommendations towards improving all matters related to digital rights and inclusion in Namibia.



## Introduction

Namibia is among the world's least densely populated countries<sup>1</sup>, and in 2023, the Southern African nation's population reached a milestone of 3 million people. Its capital city, Windhoek, had 486,186 residents as per the 2023 Population and Housing Census, and this population continues to grow due to migration from other regions in Namibia.<sup>2</sup> The nation is ranked high in press freedom, however, internet access, digital infrastructure and cybersecurity remain a high concern.<sup>3</sup> The year 2025 saw landmark developments including the launch of the Universal Service Fund (USF) in March 2025

to bridge rural digital connectivity gaps,<sup>4</sup> establishment of the Namibia Cyber Security Incident Response Team (NAM-CSIRT) with N\$20 million (US\$ 1.25 million) funding in April 2025,<sup>5</sup> passage of the Civil Registration and Identification Act in December 2024 enabling biometric digital identity,<sup>6</sup> and launch of the country's AI Readiness Assessment Report in August 2025.<sup>7</sup> Paratus Group launched Namibia's first private mobile network with N\$600 million (US\$ 37.7 million) investment in September 2025, breaking the state monopoly in the mobile service provider sector.<sup>8</sup> In August 2025, MTC

1. The Ten Least Densely Populated Countries in the World. Global Citizen Solutions. <https://www.globalcitizensolutions.com/countries-with-lowest-population-density/> (Accessed 15 February 2026)
2. 2023 Population and Housing Census main report. Government of Namibia. <https://nsa.org.na/document/2023-population-and-housing-census-main-report/> (Accessed 04 November 2025)
3. [https://www.wesgro.co.za/uploads/files/Research/Wesgro-IQ\\_Namibia\\_2021.05.pdf](https://www.wesgro.co.za/uploads/files/Research/Wesgro-IQ_Namibia_2021.05.pdf)
4. Communications regulator launches Universal Service Fund to boost ICT access <https://economist.com.na/96240/technology/communications-regulator-launches-universal-service-fund-to-boost-ict-access/> (Accessed: 15 November 2025)
5. Namibia Launches NAM-CSIRT to Strengthen Cybersecurity Amid Rising Threats <https://www.wearetech.africa/en/fils-uk/news/tech/namibia-launches-nam-csirt-to-strengthen-cybersecurity-amid-rising-threats> (Accessed: 4 November 2025)
6. Civil Registration and Identification Act, 2024 <https://namiblii.org/akn/na/act/2024/13/eng@2024-12-30> (Accessed: 15 November 2025)
7. Namibia Launches Artificial Intelligence Readiness Assessment Report <https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/namibia-launches-artificial-intelligence-readiness-assessment-report> (Accessed: 15 November 2025)
8. Namibia: Paratus Launches N\$600m Nationwide Mobile Network Covering 50 Towns <https://allafrica.com/stories/202509030174.html> (Accessed: 4 November 2025)

rolled out 5G services in Windhoek and other major cities, promising users much faster speeds and reduced latency.<sup>9</sup> In 2024, Namibians went to the polls to elect a new President and made history by electing a woman President, Vice President, and National Assembly Speaker, a key moment for gender inclusion and in the country's political landscape.<sup>10</sup>

Namibia further launched its National Digital Strategy (NDS), which sets forth a comprehensive blueprint for the country's holistic digital development for the period of 2025-2028.<sup>11</sup> The country's National Digital Strategy is aligned with the country's strategies for expanding public broadband, enhancing cybersecurity measures, and developing human capacity.

## Internet Access

## And Disruptions

International Telecommunication Union (ITU) data<sup>12</sup> indicates that 64.4% of individuals use the Internet. In aiming to mitigate digital inclusion challenges faced in the country's major urban area, the city of Windhoek has reportedly installed 10 km of fibre<sup>13</sup> in a country that has an 18,790-kilometre network. This adds to the broader expansion of terrestrial fibre networks seen to enable widespread access to cyberspace.

As reported in the Londa 2024 Report,<sup>14</sup> the rollout of Google's Equiano subsea cable<sup>15</sup> had the potential to connect

9. MTC announced 5G availability in the country. <https://www.mtc.com.na/pressreleases/article/mtc-announced-5g-availability-in-the-country> (Accessed: 15 November 2025)
10. The Forum on Internet Freedom in Africa 2025 (FIFAfrica25) Heads to Namibia! <https://internetfreedom.africa/the-forum-on-internet-freedom-in-africa-2025-fifafrika25-heads-to-namibia/> (Accessed: 22 November 2025)
11. National Digital Strategy Namibia 2025 - 2028 <https://mict.gov.na/documents/869282/6500577/NDS4+040825.pdf/aeb1c2a6-63a9-f04e-7f78-3e15549eefcf?t=1754320341496> (Accessed: 22 November 2025)
12. Figures from the previous Londa report compared to the 2024 index score <https://paradigmhq.org/londa-24/> (Accessed: 27 January 2026)
13. Scramble for city's fibre market, Namibian Sun, July 2024, available at <https://www.namibiansun.com/infrastructure/scramble-for-citys-fibre-market2024-07-05#:~:text=Research%20from%20We%20Are%20Social,for%20growth%20in%20internet%20services.> (Accessed: 22 November 2025)
14. Londa Report, Namibia 2023 Paradigm Initiative, available at <https://paradigmhq.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/Namibia-Country-Report.pdf> (Accessed: 19 December 2024)
15. Google's Equiano subsea cable: Namibia economic impact assessment, Africa Practice, 2022, available at <https://africappractice.com/equiano-namibia-eia/> (Accessed: 19 December 2024)

South Africa and Europe, adding to the impetus of heightened digital connectivity between Namibia, the rest of Southern Africa, and the rest of the world. The Google Equiano cable was activated in July 2024,<sup>16</sup> signifying a “quantum leap forward in Namibia’s digital transformation journey, paving the way for an era of unprecedented connectivity and boundless opportunities,” according to Telecom Namibia, the implementing partner. Expectations for a higher bandwidth capacity, better latency, and faster speeds at a much lower cost, are in place as a result of this activation and Namibia is expected to be on course for more rapid digitisation and an inclusive digital economy. The most transformative development for internet availability in 2025 was the official launch of the Universal Service Fund (USF) on March 19 2025 in Windhoek.<sup>17</sup> Dr Tulimevava Mufeti, Chairperson of the Communications Regulatory

Authority of Namibia (CRAN) Board of Directors, emphasised that “connectivity is no longer a luxury; it is a necessity. It is fundamental for education, healthcare, entrepreneurship, and overall socio-economic development.”<sup>18</sup> The government allocated N\$145 million (US\$ 7.25 million) over three years (2025-2028) specifically to enhance digital connectivity in rural areas and underserved communities. The Ministry of ICT’s 2025-2029 Strategic Plan set an ambitious goal to achieve 100% network coverage by 2030,<sup>19</sup> requiring substantial infrastructure investment in geographically challenging and economically marginal areas. A landmark development reshaping Namibia’s telecommunications landscape was Paratus Group’s launch of the country’s first privately-owned mobile network in September 2025.<sup>20</sup> Backed by a N\$600 million (US\$ 37,7 million) investment and built

16. Telecom activates Equiano Cable connection, The Brief, July 2024, <https://thebrief.com.na/2024/07/namibia-activates-equiano-cable-connection/> (Accessed: 19 December 2024)
17. Communications regulator launches Universal Service Fund to boost ICT access <https://economist.com.na/96240/technology/communications-regulator-launches-universal-service-fund-to-boost-ict-access/> (Accessed: 19 December 2024)
18. Govt commits N\$145 million to bridging rural digital divide <https://www.namibian.com.na/govt-commits-n145-million-to-bridging-rural-digital-divide/> (Accessed: 29 November 2025)
19. Govt commits to bridging digital divide <https://neweralive.na/govt-commits-to-bridging-digital-divide> (Accessed: 29 November 2025)
20. Namibia: Paratus Launches N\$600m Nationwide Mobile Network Covering 50 Towns <https://allafrica.com/stories/202509030174.html> (Accessed: 29 November 2025)

entirely on 4G LTE technology with 5G readiness, the network covered 50 major towns and 80 communities, focusing on the east-west and Windhoek-Oshakati routes.<sup>21</sup> This challenged the longstanding duopoly of state-owned Mobile Telecommunications Company (MTC) and Telecom Namibia, introducing new competitive dynamics potentially beneficial for coverage expansion and service quality. Infrastructure modernisation accelerated with Telecom Namibia announcing in June 2025 that all newly deployed mobile base stations were fully 5G-enabled,<sup>22</sup> implementing the International Mobile Telecommunications (IMT)-2020 (5G) Strategy for Namibia (2023-2027)<sup>23</sup> approved by the Cabinet in 2022. MTC expanded its fibre optic network to 2,738 kilometres by March 2025,<sup>24</sup> and in Sep-

tember 2025, extended its fixed internet service, Spectra, to towns including Oshifo, Aranos, Maltahöhe, Rietoog, Stampriet, Khorixas, Tsandi, and Otavi.<sup>25</sup> According to the ICT Development Index (IDI) 2025 published by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU)<sup>26</sup>, Namibia has increased its overall score on digital development over the period of 2024-2025. In particular, the IDI score of Namibia grew to 73.2% in 2025, whereas universal connectivity improved to 63.0%. Essentially, connectivity indicators showed small increases within the same period. In 2024, the population of Namibia using the Internet was 64.3%<sup>27</sup>, and it slightly increased to 64.4% in 2025.

The most significant shift was at the household level: the number of house

21. Paratus launches N\$600m nationwide mobile network covering 50 towns <https://thebrief.com.na/2025/09/paratus-launches-n600m-nationwide-mobile-network-covering-50-towns/> (Accessed: 29 November 2025)
22. Telecom Namibia Rolls Out 5G-Ready Base Stations in Nationwide Network Modernisation Drive <https://trendsnafrica.com/telecom-namibia-rolls-out-5g-ready-base-stations-in-nationwide-network-modernisation-drive/> (Accessed: 29 November 2025)
23. Strategy In Respect Of Implementation Of Imt-2020 (5g) In The Republic Of Namibia 2023-2027 <https://www.lac.org.na/laws/2023/8000.pdf> (Accessed: 29 November 2025)
24. MTC expands network capacity with major fibre expansion <https://economist.com.na/95750/technology/mtc-expands-network-capacity-with-major-fibre-expansion/> (Accessed: 22 November 2025)
25. MTC expands fiber internet to key towns and settlements <https://economist.com.na/100471/technology/mtc-expands-fiber-internet-to-key-towns-and-settlements/> (Accessed: 22 November 2025)
26. Measuring Digital Development The ICT Development Index 2025 [https://www.itu.int/dms\\_pub/itu-d/opb/ind/D-IND-ICT\\_MDD-2025-1-PDF-E.pdf](https://www.itu.int/dms_pub/itu-d/opb/ind/D-IND-ICT_MDD-2025-1-PDF-E.pdf) (Accessed: 19 November 2025)
27. ICT Development Index 2023, ITU, [https://trc.gov.jo/EchoBusV3.0/SystemAssets/%202023\\_compressed.pdf](https://trc.gov.jo/EchoBusV3.0/SystemAssets/%202023_compressed.pdf) accessed 19 December 2024

holds with internet access at home increased by 66.3% to 78% which means that home broadband access is becoming more widespread in the country. Mobile access remains at the heart of the Namibian digital ecosystem, as mobile broadband subscriptions hit 58.6 per 100 inhabitants in 2025, and mobile phone ownership rose to 86.6.

Internet coverage is quite dense, with 89% of the population having access to at least a 3G network and 85% of the population covered by 4G/LTE in 2025. The affordability indicators in the index indicate that the price of mobile services, which is a high consumption basket, is at 1.4% of Gross National Income (GNI) per capita, and fixed broadband prices are high at 7.7%, which could explain the high reliance on mobile services.

The 2025 ITU IDI report further shows no data for fixed broadband subscriptions. However, it indicates that Namibia has a 98% mobile data as well as voice high consumption bas-

ket price in the percentage of Gross National Income (GNI) per capita and a fixed broadband internet basket price (as % of GNI per capita) of 79.3%. There were efforts recorded to improve cross-border roaming charges with neighbouring countries. Towards the end of 2024, following high-level ministerial talks, Namibia and Botswana agreed to reduce roaming charges effective from August 2024, continuing into the review period.<sup>28</sup> CRAN and Botswana Communications Regulatory Authority (BOCRA) directed mobile network operators in both countries to implement reduced roaming prices to boost cross-border communication and strengthen bilateral relations whilst fostering economic opportunities. Furthermore, Minister of Information, Communication, and Technology Emma Theofelus announced in January 2025 that the Ministry engaged Zimbabwe, Zambia, and Angola on harmonisation of roaming fees,<sup>29</sup> indicating expanding regional cooperation to reduce telecommunications costs. At the beginning of 2025, satellite internet provider Starlink was eyeing Namib-

28. [Namibia and Botswana cut roaming charges for better cross-border communication](https://economist.com/na/91126/technology/namibia-and-botswana-cut-roaming-charges-for-better-cross-border-communication/) <https://economist.com/na/91126/technology/namibia-and-botswana-cut-roaming-charges-for-better-cross-border-communication/> (Accessed: 22 November 2025)

29. [ICT Minister engages Zimbabwe, Zambia and Angola on harmonization of roaming fees](https://www.nbcnews.com/na/index.php/node/109231) <https://www.nbcnews.com/na/index.php/node/109231> (Accessed: 22 November 2025)

ia’s telecommunications market as part of its broader African expansion, having already established operations in over 20 African countries by mid-2025.<sup>30</sup> However, by July 2025, the Communications Regulatory Authority of Namibia (CRAN) issued a cease-and-desist order to Starlink, demanding the immediate halt of all operations due to the company’s failure to obtain the required telecommunications licence.<sup>31</sup> The situation escalated in November 2025 when CRAN confirmed that Starlink had been operating a network within Namibia without proper authorisation, leading to the confiscation of illegal terminal equipment from consumers and the opening of criminal cases with the Namibian Police.<sup>32</sup>

## Freedom of expression

In 2025, Namibia was ranked 28th in the World Press Freedom Index,<sup>33</sup> which is an improvement from the 2024 country’s global ranking of 34.<sup>34</sup> The Reporters Without Borders ranking cites Namibia’s freedom of the press as firmly anchored, and historically one of Africa’s best-ranked countries in the Reporters Without Borders (RSF) World Press Freedom Index. The government’s response to viral misinformation in April 2025 demonstrated a measured approach. False claims circulated on social media platforms such as Facebook, X (formerly known as Twitter), TikTok and WhatsApp alleging that President Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah had ordered the deportation of 500 American citizens. The Presidency issued a public clarification noting “with concern

30. Starlink Expanding in Africa <https://blog.telegeography.com/starlink-expanding-in-africa> (Accessed: 22 November 2025)
31. Namibia orders Musk’s Starlink to shut down <https://techpression.com/namibia-orders-musks-starlink-to-shut-down/> (Accessed: 22 November 2025)
32. Starlink’s use ruled illegal in Namibia <https://www.republikein.com.na/mw-main/starlink%E2%80%99s-use-ruled-illegal-in-namibia2024-12-02142183> (Accessed: 10 November 2025)
33. Press Freedom Index: Namibia Ranks Four Places Higher than the UK, Namibian Org, May 2023, <https://namibian.org/news/tourism/press-freedom-index-nambia-ranks-four-places-higher-than-the-uk> (Accessed: 4 November 2025)
34. Disappointment as Namibia loses top position on press freedom, The Namibian, May 2024, available at <https://www.namibian.com.na/disappointment-as-namibia-loses-top-position-on-press-freedom/> (Accessed: 4 November 2025)

the circulation of social media posts and online articles” containing “fabricated quotes and images containing misinformation and disinformation intended to tarnish the image of the President.”<sup>35</sup> Whilst no systematic studies on self-censorship were published during the review period, concerning indicators emerged. Reports in May 2025 documented that “verbal attacks on journalists are increasing,”<sup>36</sup> potentially creating chilling effects. The case of Namibian Sun Senior Reporter Jemima Beukes, subjected to disciplinary proceedings by her employer in March 2025,<sup>37</sup> raised concerns about internal pressures. The Namibia Media Professionals Union (NAMPU) called for the media house, Namibia Media Holdings (NMH), to “treat one of its reporters like a human being and with dignity.”<sup>38</sup> Despite such incidences, no documented cases of ar-

bitrary arrests, detention, or prosecution specifically for online speech occurred during December 2024 to November 2025. The Namibia Media Trust/Foundation (NMT) published research in December 2024 on “The Digital Closet,” exposing the impact of online hate speech on Namibia’s Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (LGBTQ+) community,<sup>39</sup> highlighting how marginalised groups, including gender-diverse persons faced targeted online violence, constraining their public participation. From an AI-generated image Netumbo Nandi Ndaitwah, then-candidate of the ruling party and President-elect falling, to a fake video of Independent Candidate Ally Angula, of “God asking her to withdraw” from the elections,<sup>40</sup> gendered disinformation was at its peak during elections. These and other mat-

35. Nandi-Ndaitwah dismisses social media claims of American deportations from Namibia <https://www.namibian.com.na/nandi-ndaitwah-dismisses-social-media-claims-of-american-deportations-from-namibia/> (Accessed: 4 November 2025)
36. Verbal attacks on journalists increasing <https://www.observer24.com.na/verbal-attacks-on-journalists-increasing/> (Accessed: 22 November 2025)
37. Media union calls for justice for journalist Jemima Beukes in NMH disciplinary hearing <https://www.namibian.com.na/media-union-calls-for-justice-for-journalist-jemima-beukes-in-nmh-disciplinary-hearing/> (Accessed: 22 November 2025)
38. NMH dismisses Jemima Beukes <https://www.namibian.com.na/nmh-dismisses-jemima-beukes/>
39. Press Statement: New study calls for bold reform of Namibia’s media accountability framework <https://www.nmt.africa/Media-Centre/Press-Statements> (Accessed: 19 November 2025)
40. Election fake news surge in October 2024, Namibia Fact Checker, November 2024, <https://namibiafactcheck.org.na/news-item/election-fake-news-surge-in-october-2024/> (Accessed: 4 November 2025)

ters, such as increased news on the health of the Founding President, Sam Nuyoma,<sup>41</sup> had the Minister of ICT calling for responsible use of social media.<sup>42</sup>

Meanwhile, further civil defamation cases have been seen in courts particularly brought and won by the more affluent such as a businessman who sued a citizen to the tune of N\$773 000 (US\$ 41,300) for questioning, via a social media audio clip, the expenses on his wedding versus public hospitals being left without medicine. The businessman supplies state hospitals with medicines as well as other medical supplies.<sup>43</sup> Another notable case is that of an academic and politician who has taken legal action against a fellow political member and is suing them

for N\$370,000 (US\$ 23,000). The lawsuit stems from a series of allegations made by a citizen through a widely circulated WhatsApp audio clip, which the plaintiff claims is entirely false and defamatory.<sup>44</sup>

## Data Protection and

## Privacy

To safeguard data governance and build national cyber resilience, the Communications Regulatory Authority of Namibia (CRAN) established the Namibia Cyber Security Incident Response Team (NAM-CSIRT) in March 2025.<sup>45</sup> The Namibian government allocated N\$20 million (USD 1,25 million)<sup>46</sup> in seed money for the op

41. Sam Nujoma Foundation Condemns Fake News on Social Media, Observer, November 2024, <https://www.observer24.com.na/sam-nujoma-foundation-condemns-fake-news-on-social-media/> accessed November 2024.
42. Theofelus urges responsible social media use, Namibian Economist, August 2024, available at <https://economist.com.na/90062/technology/theofelus-urges-responsible-social-media-use/> accessed November 2024
43. Shapwa Kanyama donates N\$773 000 defamation award to cyberbullying victims, Namibian December 2024, <https://www.namibian.com.na/shapwa-kanyama-donates-n773-000-defamation-award-to-cyberbullying-victims/> accessed in November 2024
44. Swapo School Lecturer Mubita sues Shipwikineni for defamation, Observer, February 2024, available at <https://www.observer24.com.na/swapo-school-lecturer-mubita-sues-shipwikineni-for-defamation/> (Accessed: 22 November 2025)
45. CRAN hosts inaugural NAM-CSIRT Stakeholder Engagement. <https://nambusinessexpress.com/?p=9216> (Accessed: 22 November 2025)
46. Government invests N\$20 million to strengthen Namibia's cybersecurity. <https://nambusinessexpress.com/?p=9216> (Accessed: 22 November 2025)

erationalisation of the NAM-CSIRT<sup>47</sup>. Between January and June 2025, NAM-CSIRT recorded 1,103,784 instances of cyber threats and 1,090,342 vulnerabilities, representing the highest figures logged since the national cybersecurity body was established and underscoring the urgency of comprehensive legislative frameworks.<sup>48</sup> Though such efforts exist, according to various experts, the absence of a robust Data Protection Act was cited as to blame for the massive cyber terrorist attack on the country's key telecommunications provider and other government institutions that took place towards the end of December 2024 and during the year in 2025.<sup>49</sup> The MICT stated on various occasions during the review period that it would table the Data Protection Bill in Parliament in September 2025; however, that did not materialise.<sup>50</sup> The Bill has circulated in various draft forms since 2021-2022

but remained unenacted by November 2025.<sup>51</sup> The Bill, published for consultation in March 2022, aimed to establish a data protection supervisory authority and provide protections aligned with international standards, including principles from the European Union (EU) General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Activists continued to urge the government to enact a Data Protection Act, as the legislative gap leaves citizens vulnerable to data misuse and surveillance, especially as technologies like biometric registration and interception systems become more widespread.<sup>52</sup> Article 13 of the Namibian Constitution recognises the right to privacy as a fundamental human right, stipulating that all persons have a right to privacy in their homes and communications. However, this constitutional protection lacks comprehensive statutory implementation through

47. [Namibia Strengthens Regional Cooperation In Transport, Ict, Information And Meteorology - Harare, Zimbabwe](https://www.cran.na/namibia-strengthens-regional-cooperation-in-transport-ict-information-and-meteorology-harare-zimbabwe/) <https://www.cran.na/namibia-strengthens-regional-cooperation-in-transport-ict-information-and-meteorology-harare-zimbabwe/> (Accessed: 4 November 2025)
48. [Namibia says detects over 1 mln instances of cyber threats in six months](https://english.news.cn/africa/20251009/772ad7399e5a46f8a01ba1c26d731634/c.html) <https://english.news.cn/africa/20251009/772ad7399e5a46f8a01ba1c26d731634/c.html> (Accessed: 22 November 2025)
49. [Lack of oversight and legislation blamed for cyber attack](https://www.observer24.com.na/namibia-does-not-negotiate-with-terrorists-shanapinda/) <https://www.observer24.com.na/namibia-does-not-negotiate-with-terrorists-shanapinda/> (Accessed: 22 November 2025)
50. [Namibia's Data Protection Bill to be tabled in September](https://thebrief.com.na/2025/08/namibias-data-protection-bill-to-be-tabled-in-september/) <https://thebrief.com.na/2025/08/namibias-data-protection-bill-to-be-tabled-in-september/> (Accessed: 19 November 2025)
51. [Cabinet yet to finalise data protection bill](https://www.observer24.com.na/cabinet-yet-to-finalise-data-protection-bill/) <https://www.observer24.com.na/cabinet-yet-to-finalise-data-protection-bill/>
52. [Namibia Urged to Tackle Digital Privacy Gaps](https://www.confidentenamibia.com/namibia-urged-tackle-digital-privacy-gaps) <https://www.confidentenamibia.com/namibia-urged-tackle-digital-privacy-gaps> (Accessed: 22 November 2025)

dedicated data protection legislation. The Civil Registration and Identification Act received presidential assent and was published in Government Gazette 8547 on December 30 2024.<sup>53</sup> This legislation, awaiting commencement, would establish a comprehensive civil registration system and provide for the issuance of identity documents using biometric data. An assessment by the Association for Progressive Communications in September 2024 found that whilst “Namibia’s newly proposed Civil Registration and Identification Bill has been praised for containing essential elements of data protection,” the government still needed “to finalise work on pending efforts to put in place a personal data protection law.”<sup>54</sup>

Minister of ICT, Emma Theofelus has issued a warning about the increasing threat of cyber scams and AI-driven deception in Namibia. While addressing

lawmakers in the National Assembly, Theofelus detailed the government’s response measures, emphasising the need for updated regulations. She highlighted the surge in digital fraud, including synthetic media, deepfakes, and social media scams that leverage AI technologies.<sup>55</sup>

Namibia has not adopted policies and laws on cybercrime, data protection, or the protection of personal identifiable information. While the country has a Child Online Protection Task Force,<sup>56</sup> Namibia has no child online protection policy. In February 2025, private mobile service provider, Paratus Namibia reported a significant breach following a compromised internal user account that disrupted 083 voice services and cloud environments.<sup>57</sup> CRAN classified it as Level Three, signifying serious disruption to the telecommunications sector. This was the most high-profile cybersecurity incident

53. Civil Registration and Identification Act, 2024 <https://namiblii.org/akn/na/act/2024/13/eng@2024-12-30> (Accessed: 22 November 2025)
54. Namibia’s new CRVS, national ID system reflects key data protection aspects <https://www.biometricupdate.com/202409/namibias-new-crvs-national-id-system-reflects-key-data-protection-aspects> (Accessed: 19 November 2025)
55. ICT Minister highlights growing impact of artificial intelligence <https://www.nbcnews.na/node/110380> (Accessed: 19 November 2025)
56. Namibians encouraged to protect rights of children in the Digital Realm, NBC, January 2024, <https://nbcnews.na/node/101414> accessed January 2025
57. CRAN investigates serious cyber incident at Paratus <https://economist.com.na/95702/technology/cran-investigates-serious-cyber-incident-at-paratus/> (Accessed: 19 November 2025)

documented during the review period.

## Censorship and content moderation

The decision of the Meta Oversight Board on June 3 2025 found that Meta’s adult nudity rules were being applied in a way that disproportionately restricts expression when it comes to images of bare-chested Indigenous women, including Ovahimba women in Namibia.<sup>58</sup> The Board reviewed two Instagram cases from July 2024 showing Ovahimba women in traditional dress (one a tourist’s photo, one a video of Himba people dancing). Meta removed the content under its Adult Nudity and Sexual Activity policy after automated and human review. The Board ruled that Meta was wrong in both instances, because bare-chested nudity is a socially and historically accepted part of Himba custom and there were sufficient signs

of implicit consent, so a “spirit of the policy” allowance should have applied.<sup>59</sup>

More broadly, the Board said Meta’s near-total ban, with only ad hoc exceptions, unjustifiably limits Indigenous people’s cultural expression and public access to information about those cultures. It ordered the Ovahimba content restored, criticised the inconsistency with Meta’s human rights responsibilities, and recommended that Meta publicly spell out and properly apply a clear exception for Indigenous nudity when it reflects socially accepted customs and is not misrepresented.<sup>60</sup>

In July 2025, a Namibian lawyer sued global tech search engine Google for US\$10 million (N\$180 million) because the company refused to remove some defamatory content. Tech expert Nrupesh Soni says despite the landmark judgement, compelling Google to comply with the court order could be tricky given the lack of Namibia’s data protection laws and the absence of

58. [Ban on Showing Indigenous Nudity Disproportionately Limits Expression](https://www.oversightboard.com/news/ban-on-showing-indigenous-nudity-disproportionately-limits-expression/) <https://www.oversightboard.com/news/ban-on-showing-indigenous-nudity-disproportionately-limits-expression/> (Accessed: 19 November 2025)

59. [Images of Partially Nude Indigenous Women](https://globalfreedomofexpression.columbia.edu/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/OB-Indigenous-Nudity-Women-case.pdf) <https://globalfreedomofexpression.columbia.edu/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/OB-Indigenous-Nudity-Women-case.pdf> (Accessed: 19 November 2025)

60. [‘Indigenous nudity content on platforms needs exception guidelines’](https://nimca.africa/2025/06/03/indigenous-nudity-content-on-instagram-facebook-needs-exception-guidelines/) <https://nimca.africa/2025/06/03/indigenous-nudity-content-on-instagram-facebook-needs-exception-guidelines/> (Accessed: 19 November 2025)

Google representation in the country.<sup>61</sup>

Furthermore, between April 2022 and April 2025, the Namibian Police (NAMPOL) recorded 4,835 defamation cases, many involving public figures and social media influencers.<sup>62</sup> According to NAMPOL, six human trafficking cases were also recorded, involving 38 Namibians recruited via online platforms to work abroad, 50 recruited to work within the country, and four foreign nationals recruited to work locally.<sup>63</sup>

Namibia has no domestic laws enforcing content moderation. Data from the Meta Transparency report,<sup>64</sup> covering January to June 2025 as part of Meta's processes to respond to government requests for data in accordance with applicable law and terms of service, indicates there were no requests, legal process re-

quests, emergency disclosure requests, users/accounts requested and finally no requests where some data was produced. The content moderation report by Google<sup>65</sup> indicates that there have been 44 total items named for removal by the Government between 2011 and 2022, while there have been three total removal requests received since 2011. Furthermore, no report has been published by TikTok on content takedown.<sup>66</sup>

The national launch of the Ethical Use of Social Media Campaign was launched during the reviewed period. The initiative is led by the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology (MICT) in partnership with the Namibian Police and Club de Madrid. Emma Theofelus, Minister of ICT, described the initiative as "not just an announcement, but a call to action for all users to contribute to a

61. Namibian lawyer sues Google over defamatory content <https://www.namibian.com.na/namibian-lawyer-sues-google-over-defamatory-content/> (Accessed: 19 November 2025)

62. Over 4 000 Namibians sue each other for online attacks <https://www.observer24.com.na/over-4-000-namibians-sue-each-other-for-online-attacks/> (Accessed: 4 November 2025)

63. Unemployed Namibians Targeted in Human Trafficking <https://www.thevillager.com.na/national/2025/unemployed-namibians-targeted-in-human-trafficking/> (Accessed: 4 November 2025)

64. Namibia, Government Requests for User Data, Meta, 2024 <https://transparency.meta.com/reports/government-data-requests/country/NA/> accessed December 2024

65. Government removal requests by the numbers: Namibia, Google, <https://transparencyreport.google.com/government-removals/government-requests/NA/> (Accessed: 19 November 2025)

66. Transparency Center, Tik Tok, <https://www.tiktok.com/transparency/en-us/government-removal-requests-2024-1> accessed December 2024

healthier, more informed digital community.” She urged attendees to “think before they post, verify before they share, and engage without causing harm.”<sup>67</sup>

## Access to Information

Namibia passed the Access to Information (ATI) law in 2022<sup>68</sup> after being drafted in 2016 and tabled in Parliament in June 2020. In February 2025, the Communications Regulatory Authority of Namibia (CRAN) established a dedicated ATI division within the Authority.<sup>69</sup> The division is housed in the communication and consumer relations department, and will be responsible for implementing the Access to Information Act. However, Civil Society Organisations have noted that only once an Information Commissioner is appointed will a critical step towards the full implementation of the Access to In-

formation (ATI) Act of 2022 take place.<sup>70</sup>

## AI and Emerging Technologies

In August 2025, the Cabinet approved the drafting of a Space Science and Technology Bill, which will provide a legal and institutional framework to guide Namibia’s space-related activities. The proposed legislation is underpinned by Namibia’s Space Science and Technology Policy (2021–2030), which aims to transition the country from being a passive user of space-based services to an active participant in the global space industry. The policy calls for the integration of space technologies into national development planning, improved public awareness, institutional capacity-building, and expanded access

67. Ethical Use of Social Media Campaign Launch <https://www.nust.na/think-you-click> (Accessed: 19 November 2025)

68. Access to Information Act, no 8 of 2022, available at <http://www.lac.org.na/laws/2022/7986.pdf> (Accessed: 19 November 2025)

69. Communications regulator launches access to information division <https://www.namibian.com.na/communications-regulator-launches-access-to-information-division/> (Accessed: 4 November 2025)

70. Appointment of information commissioner set to boost procurement transparency <https://www.namibian.com.na/appointment-of-information-commissioner-set-to-boost-procurement-transparency/> (Accessed: 4 November 2025)

to commercial space applications.<sup>71</sup> In August 2025, Namibia launched its Artificial Intelligence Readiness Assessment Methodology Report. The assessment represents the country's first structured evaluation towards adapting, developing and governing AI, in line with inclusive and ethical development principles. The project was carried out by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) in collaboration with the National Commission on Research, Science and Technology (NCRST).<sup>72</sup> Namibia is in the process of establishing a National AI strategy under the National Commission on Research, Science and Technology (NCRST). NCRST appointed a pool of AI experts to the Technical Advisory Committees (TACs) to develop the strategy.<sup>73</sup> The use of artificial intelligence (AI) is prevalent in various sectors such as edu-

cation, health, agriculture and labour as reported by a UNESCO report of 2022 that discusses the benefit of AI towards the country's economy and the potential to bridge the digital divide between Namibia and other developing countries.<sup>74</sup> To date, several AI developments have been noted in the country, including the launch of the AI and Robotics Lab<sup>75</sup> at the Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST) in partnership with the Bank of Namibia. This partnership is expected to herald a transformative step towards modernising Namibia's educational and technological landscape, placing the nation on the map for AI and robotics innovation.

This and other conversations on AI stem from the 2022 Windhoek Statement on Ar

71. Cabinet approves drafting of Space Science and Technology Bill <https://thebrief.com.na/2025/08/cabinet-ap-proves-drafting-of-space-science-and-technology-bill/> (Accessed: 19 November 2025)
72. Artificial intelligence readiness assessment report: Namibia <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000394686> (Accessed: 22 November 2025)
73. Namibia Kicks Off National AI Strategy Development <https://www.facebook.com/ncrst.na/posts/namibia-kicks-off-national-ai-strategy-developmentthe-national-commission-on-res/1280851653827042/> (Accessed: 4 November 2025)
74. AI could bridge Namibia's Digital Gap if challenges are tackled. Namibian Sun, November 2024, available at <https://www.namibiansun.com/technology/ai-could-bridge-namibias-digital-gap-if-challenges-tackled2024-11-11> (Accessed: 19 November 2025)
75. NUST, Bank of Namibia Partner Launch AI and Robotics Accelerator, NUST, November 2024 available at <https://www.nust.na/nust-bank-namibia-partner-launch-ai-and-robotics-accelerator> (Accessed: 19 November 2025)

tificial Intelligence in Southern Africa<sup>76</sup> by UNESCO that sets recommendations on AI and Data Governance, Capacity-Building and Awareness-Raising, Investment and Infrastructure, Education, Research, Development and Innovation, Environment and Disaster Risk Reduction, Gender, Collaboration and Partnerships.

## Access to Information

The Universal Service Fund (USF) provides financial support to mobile network operators to mitigate the challenges of expanding services in high-risk, low-return areas. By offering subsidies, the fund facilitates the introduction of advanced technologies in remote regions, ensuring equitable access to digital resources.<sup>77</sup> In November 2025, phase one of the Universal Service Fund (USF) rollout began,

with MTC handing over the first completed network tower under the programme.<sup>78</sup> USF rollout will give more than 9,000 Namibians access to 4G, many for the first time. Phase one focuses on remote communities in Kavango West, Kavango East, Kunene, Oshikoto, and Ohangwena. The goal is to reach at least 80% broadband coverage in underserved areas.<sup>79</sup> Namibia is finalising preparations to launch the e-ID in 2026, supported by a significant budget allocation. The new system will be built on the Model Governance Framework's principles of security, inclusion and human rights. Simultaneously, the country is deploying NamX, a data-exchange platform that allows ministries to share information securely, and Nampay, a real-time payment system for instantaneous transfers. When combined, these components will form the backbone of Namibia's digital economy.<sup>80</sup>

76. Windhoek Statement on Artificial Intelligence in Southern Africa, Windhoek (Namibia), 9 September 2022, UNESCO available at <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000383197> (Accessed: 19 November 2025)

77. Communications regulator launches Universal Service Fund to boost ICT access <https://economist.com.na/96240/technology/communications-regulator-launches-universal-service-fund-to-boost-ict-access/> (Accessed: 19 November 2025)

78. New USF tower brings 4G to Ohangwena community <https://www.observer24.com.na/new-usf-tower-brings-4g-to-ohangwena-community/> (Accessed: 19 November 2025)

79. Namibia Launches First Universal Service Fund Tower to Expand Rural Connectivity <https://techafricanews.com/2025/11/19/namibia-launches-first-universal-service-fund-tower-to-expand-rural-connectivity/> (Accessed: 4 November 2025)

80. Season 3: Namibia's Digital Identity Journey – From Vision to Reality <https://www.undp.org/namibia/blog/season-3-namibias-digital-identity-journey-vision-reality> (Accessed: 4 November 2025)

The Home Affairs ministry has announced the roll-out of Namibia’s first electronic identity card (e-ID), scheduled for launch by July 2026. The move is expected to overhaul identity management and streamline access to both public and private services nationwide. Developed in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and aligned with its model governance framework for digital legal identity, the e-ID initiative is designed to modernise and ultimately redefine Namibia’s civil registration system.<sup>81</sup> The Civil Registration and Identification Act received presidential assent and was published on December 30 2024, representing new legislation enabling the digital ID system. However, it awaited the commencement of implementation.<sup>82</sup> The government announced July 2026 as the rollout date for the national digital ID system in June 2025.<sup>83</sup> Home Affairs Minister Lucia lipumbu called for “clear timeline” and “strong awareness campaigns” about the system’s benefits.<sup>84</sup>

81. Namibia to launch groundbreaking electronic ID by 2026 <https://www.namibiansun.com/government/namibia-to-launch-groundbreaking-electronic-id-by-20262025-06-10159527> (Accessed: 4 November 2025)
82. Civil Registration and Identification Act, 2024 <https://namiblii.org/akn/na/act/2024/13/eng@2024-12-30> (Accessed: 19 November 2025)
83. Namibia to roll out digital ID card in July 2026 <https://www.biometricupdate.com/202506/namibia-to-roll-out-digital-id-card-in-july-2026> (Accessed: 22 November 2025)
84. Namibian govt aims for strong public awareness on digital ID as rollout nears <https://www.biometricupdate.com/202504/namibian-govt-aims-for-strong-public-awareness-on-digital-id-as-rollout-nears> (Accessed: 4 November 2025)

## Conclusion

As a moderately compliant country with the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) Declaration, Namibia has made steps to ensure digital inclusion and combat cyber threats. However, without comprehensive digital rights laws the country still has a lot to do to protect its citizens' online rights. Digitally enabled threats and a significantly expanding threat surface, especially in a consumer market with low levels of security awareness. This remains a challenge for Namibians at an economic level. The lack of sector-related laws has enabled a wide range of cyber threats, with social engineering and phishing attacks topping the list.

The country's provisions of telecommunications surveillance in the current Communications Act, the lack of transparency on the usage of biometrics collected during SIM regulations, and other potential means of surveillance are key concerns for human rights in the digital era. Furthermore, the lack of accountability for internet intermediaries and the lack of mechanisms to promote digital inclusion for children and people with disabilities through the USF remains

an inclusion concern. This is in addition to the need for support and sustainability of independent media. Finally, considerable steps need to be enforced by Namibia to ensure the policy for Artificial Intelligence use, amongst others.

## Recommendations

### The Government should:



- Pass the Data Protection legislation which must ensure that necessary oversight mechanisms are in place in addition to ensuring personal data protection recourse for individuals.
- Make sure that the USF includes previously marginalised groups such as persons with disability, children and indigenous women and girls.
- Adopt specific child laws, policies and measures promoting children's digital safety and privacy online.
- Develop an AI national policy and strategy to address the design, use and deployment of AI in Namibia.
- Require internet intermediaries to ensure that in moderating or filtering online content, they mainstream human rights safeguards into their processes, adopt mitigation strategies to address all restrictions on freedom of expression and access to information online

### Private Sector should:



- Ensure transparency on all requests for removal of content, and incorporate appeal mechanisms.
- Collaborate towards improving digital literacy in the country and narrowing data and device access gaps.

#### Civil Society Organisations should:



- Provide education on Digital Rights and Inclusion
- Continue shedding light on issues of infringements of Digital Rights and Inclusion in the country.

#### Media should:











- Monitor and report on the implementation of the Universal Service Fund (USF), including its effectiveness in the expansion of internet access to underserved communities.
- Report on and turn digital rights into real-life stories that people can relate to
- Follow-up on the Data Protection Bill and other digital laws





# The Score Index





## Namibia, 2025

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

Indicator	ACHPR Principle	2024 Score	2024 Score	2025 Justification
Internet Shutdowns	P38(2)			No internet shutdowns were recorded.
Inexistent laws, policies and other measures to promote universal, equitable, affordable and meaningful access to the internet	P37			Namibia launched the Universal Service Fund (USF) to provide financial support to mobile network operators to mitigate internet access challenges. Phase one of the Fund was rolled out and will give more than 9,000 Namibians access to 4G, many for the first time.
False News Criminalisation	P22(2)			Namibia has no laws that criminalise the publication of false news.
Sedition Legislation	P22(2)			Namibia has no laws that criminalise sedition, insult and publication of false news.

Indicator	ACHPR Principle	2024 Score	2024 Score	2025 Justification
Arbitrary Arrests and Harassments of the Media, HRDs and Citizens	P20(1) & (2)			While the State has guaranteed the safety of journalists and other media practitioners. There were a few cases of harassment of journalists such as Jemima Beukes. However, the state has not taken measures to prevent attacks on journalists and other media practitioners, including various forms of ill-treatment, such as, intimidation, threats and unlawful surveillance undertaken by State and non-State actors.
Data Protection Legislation.	P42			The State has not adopted laws for the protection of personal information of individuals in accordance with international human rights law and standards and individuals have no legal recourse to effective remedies in relation to the violation of their privacy and the unlawful processing of their personal information.
States interfere and require the removal of online content by internet intermediaries	P38 and P39(4)			There is no evidence that the State required internet intermediaries to proactively monitor content which they have not authored or otherwise modified.
Invasion of Privacy of Communications	P41			Part 6 of the Communication Act 8 of 2009, institutes interceptions of telecommunications. This provision gives indication that

Indicator	ACHPR Principle	2024 Score	2024 Score	2025 Justification
				states engage in targeted communication surveillance that is authorised by law, that conforms with international human rights law and standards, and that is premised on specific and reasonable suspicion that a serious crime has been or is being carried out or for any other legitimate aim.
Failure by the government to proactively disclose and disseminate information digital technologies.	P29(3)			While there has been proactive disclosure by public institutions even in the absence of a specific request, to proactively publish information of public interest, including information about their decisions such as regular Cabinet Decision announcements and budgets, expenditure and other information relating to their activities more can be done for full disclosure on public spending.
AI and Emerging Technologies national strategies	P39(6)			While the country is developing a National AI Strategy, it has not yet completed the development of the framework on the development, use and application of artificial intelligence, algorithms and other similar technologies. The use of such by internet intermediaries is governed and compelled to be compatible with international human rights law and standards, nor is there a requirement for such not to infringe on the rights to freedom of expression, access to information and other human rights.

Indicator	ACHPR Principle	2024 Score	2024 Score	2025 Justification
Adoption of specific child laws, policies and measures promoting children’s digital safety and privacy online	P39(6)			While the Draft Cybercrime bill makes provision for the protection of Children online, no other existing laws are in place to ensure the safety of children. A Child Online Protection Task Force however is in place overseeing serious cases, working without cases.
Digital Inclusion	P37(3)			The Universal Service Fund became fully operationalised and has been rolled out in remote places such as the Kavango regions. In 2025, Paratus Group became Namibia’s first privately-owned mobile network in September 2025. Backed by a N\$600 million (US\$ 37,7 million) investment and built entirely on 4G LTE technology, the network covered 50 major towns. Furthermore, the move challenged the longstanding duopoly of the state-owned Mobile Telecommunications Company (MTC) and Telecom Namibia, introducing new competitive dynamics that could benefit coverage expansion and service quality.

Total (out of 60):	2024: <b>39</b>	<b>2025</b>  <b>42</b>
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