

LONDA 2025

DIGITAL RIGHTS & INCLUSION IN AFRICA REPORT

Senegal

Country Report



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LONDA 2025

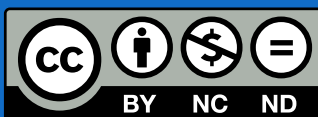
DIGITAL RIGHTS & INCLUSION IN AFRICA REPORT

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SENEGAL

By Moussa Waly Sene

Executive Summary

In 2024, Senegal joined the 17 African countries that have launched at least one GAINDESAT-1A satellite into orbit. It joined countries like South Africa and Egypt, which each have 13 satellites, as

well as Nigeria, which ranks third with 7 satellites. President Bassirou Diomaye Diakhar Faye stated that this initiative represents a significant step towards Senegal's "technological sovereignty".¹

1. GAINDESAT-1A, the first Senegalese satellite, successfully launched: <https://www.jeuneafrique.com/1599726/politique/gaindesat-1a-premier-satellite-senegalais-lance-avec-succes/> (Accessed on November 28, 2024).

In 2025, this satellite entered full operational status, enabling the deployment of agricultural remote sensing and natural resource monitoring services. The government announced the development of a second satellite, GAINDESAT-1B, as part of the New Deal for Technology, with a launch planned for 2027.² However, technological sovereignty must result in tangible advantages for citizens' digital rights; it cannot be limited to the ownership of space infrastructure. However, no evidence that is currently accessible to the public indicates that the GAINDESAT-1A satellite has helped

close the digital divide, make the internet more affordable, or provide connectivity to underserved rural areas. This report on Senegal's digital rights and inclusion has been updated and rewritten in light of this. Internet access, freedom of speech, data protection and privacy, content censorship and moderation, information access, artificial intelligence and new technologies, digital inclusion, and the Universal Service Fund were all examined in the study that served as the foundation for this report. This report has shown that there is still more work to be done in the area of press freedom.



2. Senegalese Space Agency (ASENA), 2025 Annual Activity Report, Dakar, 2025 Ministry of Digital Affairs and Telecommunications, New Deal for Technology — Space Roadmap, February 2025

Introduction

Senegal launched a digital strategy called “New Technological Deal” in 2025.³ This new strategy aims to transform the country into a digital hub by 2034, with a planned investment of 1,097 billion CFA francs. Objectives include reducing dependence on foreign technologies, strengthening cybersecurity, digitising public services, promoting tech entrepreneurship and positioning Senegal among the top three African exporters of digital services. The plan also includes training 100,000 graduates in the digital field, achieving 95% internet connectivity, and creating more than 500 certified startups by 2034.⁴

To boost the digital sector, Senegal, under the leadership of the president of the Republic, has embarked on an ambitious digital transformation initiative called the “New Technological Deal.”⁵ This strategy

aims to position the country as a leader and catalyst for digital innovation in Africa.

In relation to the digital economy, Senegal’s General Directorate of Taxes and Domains (DGID)⁶ has declared that value-added tax (VAT) will henceforth apply to digital services offered by international online service providers and digital platforms. An important development in its digital tax policy is the new 18% VAT on services rendered by digital platforms. The goal of this project is to govern Senegal’s digital services industry.

Although the New Deal for Technology is a declared goal, an examination of it exposes a number of significant flaws. First, in terms of budgetary transparency, Senegal’s commitments under the Open Government Partnership (OGP), of which it has been a member since 2018,

3. <https://stcc-ssi.sn/lancement-de-la-strategie-numerique-du-senegal-new-deal-technologie-24-fevrier-2025-aucicad/>
4. <https://www.presidence.sn/fr/actualites/new-deal-technologique-une-ambition-nationale-pour-faire-du-senegal-un-leader-de-leconomie-numerique-en-afrique>
5. With its new technological deal, Senegal aims to become a leader in digital innovation in Africa. <https://www.rts.sn/actualite/detail/a-la-une/new-deal-technologique-le-senegal-ambitionne-de-devenir-leader-de-linnovation-numerique-en-afrique> (Accessed on November 28, 2024).
6. Order No. 10698 of June 27, 2024, concerning the application of their Article 355-bis of the CGI.

are in conflict with the announced 1,097 billion CFA francs since there is no public mechanism for tracking disbursements or performance indicators available to citizens. Furthermore, neither an evaluation of the impact on basic rights nor a recourse mechanism for persons denied internet access is specifically included in the strategy for human rights protections.

Lastly, in terms of execution, earlier digital strategies, most notably the Digital Senegal Strategy 2016–2025 failed to meet its goals of universal access without providing a public evaluation. While the introduction of VAT on foreign digital services aims to broaden the tax base, it risks increasing the cost of access to digital platforms for low-income users, thereby exacerbating already documented inequalities in access. No impact assessment on affordability was published before this measure.⁷

Internet Access

and Disruption

According to the official website of the Telecommunications and Postal Regulatory Authority (ARTP),⁸ in March 2025, Senegal's internet penetration rate reached 125.67%, reflecting massive adoption through the use of mobile and fixed devices. Due to the multiple connections per individual, the figure exceeds the total population. By early 2025, 11.3 million internet users represented 60.6% of the population.

These two figures are not contradictory but measure distinct realities that need to be clarified to guarantee the credibility of the analysis:

The rate of 125.67% (ARTP, 2025) corresponds to the number of active SIM cards

7. Open Government Partnership (OGP), *Senegal National Action Plan 2023-2025*, Washington DC, 2023; OECD, *Principles on Digital Governance*, Paris, 2020 — *Budgetary transparency and accountability in national digital strategies*; ITU, *World Telecommunication Development Report 2024 — Assessment of National Digital Strategies in Sub-Saharan Africa*; African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR), *Declaration of Principles on Freedom of Expression and Access to Information in Africa*, Principle 37(3), 2019 — *obligation of States to promote universal, equitable and affordable access to the Internet*

8. <https://artp.sn/>

relative to the total population. It exceeds 100% because an individual can hold several SIM cards simultaneously (professional/personal use, multiple operators). This figure measures mobile subscription penetration, not actual internet access.⁹

The 60% rate (DataReportal, 2024) measures the proportion of individuals who actually used the internet in the last three months, regardless of the number of SIM cards they own. This indicator reflects effective individual internet access.¹⁰

The gap between these two rates reveals a structural digital divide: nearly 40% of the Senegalese population remains without effective internet access despite seemingly satisfactory network coverage. The main causes are the prohibitive cost of mobile data, estimated at 2.8% of the average monthly income, above the 2% affordability threshold set by the Alliance for Affordable Internet (A4AI), and the low rate of device ownership in rural areas.

This distinction is fundamental in a rights-based analysis: the right of ac-

cess to the Internet, as recognised by the United Nations Human Rights Council, implies effective and affordable individual access, not simply the existence of formal subscriptions.

In Senegal, according to the Internet Tariff Observatory's report for the first quarter of 2025, mobile internet offers resemble a constantly evolving market, catering to both the public and professionals. For individuals, operators offer customisable passes, tailored to each user's needs. Orange, for example, offers a wide range of options, from small daily passes at 50 CFA francs (approximately \$0.09) for a few hours of use to monthly or 5G plans capable of supporting heavy usage. Expresso, on the other hand, focuses on diversity with offers ranging from very short-term options—such as the “Golden Hour,” 2 GB for one hour—to monthly subscriptions of up to 200 GB (approximately \$354). YAS adopts a simpler but targeted approach, with affordable monthly passes (2000 F ≈ \$3.54 to 15000 F ≈ \$26.55) and even seasonal offers for Ramadan (500 F ≈ \$0.89 to 2000 F ≈ \$3.54).

9. ARTP Senegal, *Electronic Communications Market Observatory — Quarterly Report Q1 2025*, Dakar, 2025

10. DataReportal, *Digital 2024: Senegal*, Kepios Analysis, January 2024

On the business side, the landscape is changing: the focus is less on flexibility and more on reliability. Operators are structuring their plans with or without a contract, offering larger data allowances and often with bonuses, particularly for 5G. Orange offers plans ranging from a few gigabytes for small teams (3098 F ≈ \$5.48) to over 80 GB for more intensive use (49560 F ≈ \$87.60), while Expresso and YAS complete this segment with Business or Pro offers tailored to the needs of SMEs. Some plans even include dedicated solutions, such as Expresso's 4G mini-routers, capable of reaching up to 500 GB (100000 F ≈ \$177). However, the high cost of internet access should be noted, as this significantly contributes to the difficulties citizens face in accessing ICT services. Financial accessibility to the internet in Senegal constitutes a structural obstacle to the full realisation of digital rights.

A comparative regional analysis helps to measure the scale of the challenge:

In Senegal, 1 GB of mobile data costs on average 2.8% of monthly gross national income (GNI) per capita (2024), which is above the 2% affordability threshold set by the Alliance for Affordable Internet (A4AI).¹¹

By comparison, this ratio is 1.2% in Morocco, 1.7% in the Ivory Coast, 1.9% in Ghana and 0.9% in South Africa, placing Senegal among the African countries where the internet remains the least financially accessible.¹²

The average cost of one gigabyte of mobile data worldwide is USD 4.68; in Senegal, it is roughly USD 1.20. For most people, the cost is still disproportionate when compared to average income, especially in rural areas where average income is 40% lower than in metropolitan areas. According to ARTP, rural women, the elderly and low-income populations are most affected by this cost; the internet penetration rates in rural areas are 35 points lower than in urban areas.¹³ Access to fixed broadband internet (24.39% penetration) remains almost

11. Alliance for Affordable Internet (A4AI), Affordability Report 2024, Washington DC, 2024 — Regional comparative data on the cost of the Internet in Africa

12. World Bank, World Development Indicators 2024 — GNI per capita, Senegal and comparator countries

exclusively urban, further widening territorial inequalities.

Principle 37 of the Declaration of Principles on Freedom of Expression and Access to Information in Africa (ACHPR, 2019) requires governments to take specific steps to ensure universal, equitable, and affordable access to the internet. This data indicates a failure to meet these obligations. Although the Universal Telecommunications Service Development Fund (UTSDF) was created specifically to meet this need, its effect on cost reduction is still not well-documented or publicly assessed.

Freedom Of

Expression

Despite initial pledges by the PASTEF government to restore liberties, there is growing concern over freedom of expression in Senegal in 2025 due to the arrest

of journalists, closure of media outlets, and summoning of opposition members. Since May 2024, the situation has hardened, according to observers, and the judicial reforms that were pledged at the national justice conference have not been implemented.

Arrests of Journalists

- Maimouna Ndour Faye, the director of 7TV, was taken into custody by gendarmes in Dakar on October 28, 2025, when she was interviewing an opposition politician.
- Television pundit Badara Gadiaga was arrested on July 10, 2025, for his on-air criticism of the Prime Minister, who is charged with defaming the head of state and disseminating false information. He is still being held.
- In September 2025, at least two columnists were detained pending trial for disseminating false information.

Media Closures and Suspensions

On April 22, 2025, Ministerial Order No. 011059/MCTN issued by Minister Alioune Sall ordered the cessation of activities

of 381 media companies for non-compliance with the press code, a decision deemed illegal by the Supreme Court (ruling of April 11, 2024, limiting ministerial powers). This includes the suspension of advertising contracts by the Prime Minister's Office and jeopardises the survival of entire newsrooms.

The Senegalese Constitution¹⁴ guarantees freedom of expression. Senegalese law places great importance on freedom of expression. For reference, see Law No. 2008-10 of January 25, 2008, the Framework Law on the Information Society (LOSI),¹⁵ the 2017 Press Code, and Law No. 2018-28 of December 12, 2018, the Electronic Communications Code. To strengthen human rights, the government has drafted a law on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights Defenders.

The aforementioned acts are more than just media-related situations; they involve the Senegalese state's international obligations under several legally binding agreements.

From the perspective of universal inter-

national law, Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), ratified by Senegal, guarantees freedom of expression and only permits restrictions if they cumulatively meet three conditions: they must be prescribed by law, pursue a legitimate aim, and be necessary and proportionate. The arrest of journalists for "spreading false news" and "insulting the Head of State" clearly fails to meet this three-part test: the United Nations Human Rights Committee explicitly stated in its General Comment No. 34 that laws on "false news" and the offence of insulting leaders are incompatible with Article 19 of the ICCPR when used to suppress legitimate criticism.

From the perspective of African regional law, Principle 20 of the Declaration of Principles on Freedom of Expression and Access to Information in Africa (ACHPR, 2019) expressly prohibits the arbitrary arrest of journalists and digital rights defenders.

Principle 22(2) requires states to repeal laws criminalising sedition, insulting lead-

14. JORS, No. 5963 of January 22, 2001.

15. JORS, No. 6406 of May 3, 2008, p. 419 et seq.

ers, and disseminating false news when these laws are used to suppress freedom of expression. Article 9 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights enshrines the right to receive and impart information without arbitrary restriction.

In light of the decisions by the ECOWAS Court of Justice: The ECOWAS Court of Justice condemned Senegal on May 14, 2025, in the ASUTIC case. The Republic of Senegal established a direct regional precedent: the state has already been found guilty of violations of the rights to freedom of expression and to work related to digital restrictions. The documented arrests of journalists in 2025 fall within this same pattern of repression, exposing Senegal to further proceedings before this court.

These acts constitute clear and documented violations of Senegal's international and regional obligations regarding digital rights and freedom of expression. Their systematic repetition reveals not isolated incidents but a pattern of deliberate restriction of digital civic space, in-

compatible with the commitments made by the state.

Access to

information

In 2025, access to public information in Senegal will undergo a major advancement with the promulgation of Law No. 14/2025¹⁶ on access to information on September 25, 2025. This law guarantees every citizen an expanded right to access documents held by public administrations, with exceptions such as national security or privacy. Any individual may submit a written request for access to information. The relevant organisation must respond within eight clear days, which may be extended to fifteen days if necessary. Access will be free of charge, except for costs related to the reproduction or transmission of documents.¹⁷

16. <https://www.presidence.sn/fr/actualites/communique-du-conseil-des-ministres-du-mercredi-03-septembre-2025>

The promulgation of Law No. 14/2025 on access to information on September 25, 2025, marks a historic turning point in the Senegalese legal framework. For over two decades, the absence of such a law had constituted a structural obstacle to transparency and public accountability. This adoption brings Senegal into partial compliance with the African Union Model Law on Access to Information (2013) and with the commitments made within the framework of the Open Government Partnership (OGP) since 2018.

However, the formal adoption of the law is not enough to guarantee the effectiveness of the right: several conditions must be met for implementation in accordance with international standards:

- The establishment of an independent supervisory authority responsible for handling appeals
- The training of public officials on disclosure obligations
- The establishment of sanction mechanisms in the event of unjustified denial of access

- The allocation of sufficient budgetary resources for effective implementation

The African Union adopted a model law for Africa on access to information in 2013, which aims to guide member states in developing national legislation on the matter.¹⁸ Access to information law enables state authorities to be accountable, transparent and to strengthen trust in public institutions. Access to law information allows citizens to participate fully in public life.

Data Protection

And Confidentiality

In 2025, a major case made headlines: Ms. Awa Ndiaye,¹⁹ former president of the CDP, was accused by the Association of ICT Users (ASUTIC) of having authorised the mass collection of personal data with

17. <https://walf-groupe.com/blog/2025/08/07/acces-a-linformation-le-senegal-veut-franchir-un-cap/>

18. Model Law for Africa on Access to Information 2013: <https://achpr.au.int/fr/node/873> (accessed 28 November 2024).

out consent (95,814 endorsements for a candidate in the elections), sparking a serious controversy over respect for privacy in the electoral process. The case led to the announcement of a complaint before the ECOWAS Court for alleged violations of data protection rights.

The draft law of 2019,²⁰ which has not yet been adopted, reforming Law No. 2008-12 of January 25, 2008, on the protection of personal data,²¹ proposes major innovations, including the creation and operation of a Personal Data Protection Authority (APDP) and the establishment of specific regimes for the processing of medical data, employee data, biometric data, the Internet of Things, and artificial intelligence.

These innovations aim to modernise the personal data protection system by adapting it to Additional Act A/SA.1/01/10, relating to the protection of personal data within the ECOWAS region and to the African Union Convention on Cybersecurity

and the Protection of Personal Data.

In addition, there is the National Data Strategy project, which has the vision of “making data an engine of socio-economic growth, inclusivity, innovation and openness to the international community, by 2028 in Senegal.”

In early October 2025, the Directorate General of Taxes and State Property (DGID) suffered a ransomware cyberattack²² claimed by “Black Shrantac,” paralysing tax systems for approximately a week (early October). The hackers exfiltrated 1 terabyte of sensitive data (tax, administrative, and taxpayer) and encrypted servers, blocking tax returns, payments, and collections; losses were estimated at 11 billion FCFA per day. The initial ransom was €10 million (6.5 billion FCFA), reduced to 4 billion FCFA with an ultimatum of October 10 (4:00 PM); authorities denied negotiations, and the DGID²³ denied the official claims.

19. <https://cybersecuritymag.africa/violation-protection-donnees-senegal-presidente-commission-accusee-ASUT-IC/>

20. Draft law to overhaul the system for the protection of personal data by repealing and replacing law no. 2008-12 of 25 January 2008.

21. <https://www.cdp.sn/sites/default/files/protection.pdf> (Accessed on November 28, 2024).

22. <https://lemondedunumerique.com/2025/10/03/cyberattaque-contre-la-dgid-ce-quil-sest-passe-qui-est-derriere-et-pourquoi-ca-nous-concerne-tous/>

From a cybersecurity perspective, this incident reveals structural weaknesses—lack of network segmentation and insufficient offline backups—consistent with trends identified by INTERPOL regarding African tax²⁴, administrations and underscores the urgent need to ratify the Malabo Convention on Cybersecurity.²⁵ In terms of transparency, the lack of official communication regarding the extent of the breach violates NIST and ENISA standards for incident notification²⁶ and raises questions about its compatibility with the obligations of Law No. 2008-12 of January 25, 2008.²⁷ Regarding data protection, the CDP is legally obligated to investigate the DGID’s data security practices, thus strengthening the case for the expedited adoption of the 2019 draft law creating an APDP with enhanced sanctioning powers.²⁸ Finally, the prolonged paralysis of a central digital public service risks permanently eroding public trust in the dematerialisation of state services, compromising the ambitions of the Technological

New Deal, as demonstrated by comparable studies on the impact of government data breaches on the adoption of online services.

Censorship And

Content Moderation

Developments on Content Censorship and Moderation in 2025

According to Ministerial Decree No. 011059/MCTN of April 22, 2025, 381 media outlets were closed in Senegal in 2025 for violating the press code, and journalists were arrested for “spreading false news” (e.g., Maimouna Ndour Faye arrested on October 28, 2025, in Dakar; Badara Gadiaga detained since July 10, 2025). To achieve a “balance” between freedom of expression and moderation against “hate speech”, the PASTEF gov

23. <https://fr.allafrica.com/stories/202510030138.html>

24. Senegalese media sources (Seneweb, RFM, Le Soleil), October 2025; no official DGID report published at the time of writing.

25. AU, Malabo Convention on Cybersecurity and Data Protection, June 27, 2014, signed but not ratified by Senegal.

26. NIST, Cybersecurity Framework 2.0, 2024 ; ENISA, Guidelines on Cyber Incident Reporting, 2023.

27. Law No. 2008-12 of 25 January 2008 on the protection of personal data, art. 39, JORS No. 6406.

28. Republic of Senegal, Draft law to reform law no. 2008-12, 2019 providing for the creation of the APDP.

ernment, led by Bassirou Diomaye Faye, tightens regulations through the 2025 National Dialogue without creating a new, updated penal code.

Internet outages in 2025

On May 14, 2025, in Lagos, the ECOWAS Court condemned previous incidents (2021-2024, such as mobile restrictions in March 2021 and June 2023 during the Sonko protests) and awarded 250,000 CFA francs in damages to each plaintiff (ASUTIC, Ndiaga Guèye) for violations of the rights to freedom of expression and the right to work. In contrast, the New Deal for Technology places a high priority on connectivity, with no recent blackout measures and a 95% coverage target by 2034.

There were two internet disruptions in Senegal in 2024. These limitations apply to mobile data internet access on February 4th and February 13th, 2024. The Ministry of Communication, Telecommunications and Digital Economy asserts in a statement that “mobile data internet is suspended this Tuesday during certain time periods due to the dissemination on social networks of several hateful and

subversive messages which have already provoked violent demonstrations with deaths and significant material damage.”

AI And Emerging

Technologies

National AI Strategy

In 2025, Senegal unveiled a national artificial intelligence strategy, integrated into the New Technological Deal and the Senegal 2050 Vision, with a budget of 7 billion CFA francs²⁹ over two years for research and applications in agriculture, health, education, and infrastructure.

It aims for ethical AI, data protection, and digital sovereignty, in partnership with Meta for an AI computing center.

Senegal is currently developing a National Artificial Intelligence (AI) Strategy.³⁰ Its vision is “For ethical and trustworthy AI, a catalyst for the Emerging Senegal Plan, youth employment, economic per-

29. <https://d4dhub.eu/fr/news/le-senegal-devoile-sa-nouvelle-strategie-ia-un-effort-collaboratif-avec-lequipe-europe>

formance, public sector transformation, sovereignty, and Senegal’s attractiveness. “ Senegal intends to make AI an exemplary national collective project, serving the common good, anticipating climate risks, and improving economic performance, while playing a leading role in sub-regional technological cooperation.

The state has acquired a supercomputer with a peak power of 537.6 TFlops, a distributed memory capacity of 1.2 PB, and 8064 computing nodes.³¹ This infrastructure provides Senegal with a powerful tool to support the development of artificial intelligence.

Digital Inclusion

The State of Digital Inclusion in 2025

With a focus on rural areas, the informal economy, and educating 100,000 graduates to reduce inequality, Senegal’s dig-

ital inclusion is making substantial progress in 2025, thanks to the introduction of the New Technological Deal on February 24, 2025, which aims for 95% universal internet coverage by 2034.

Major National Initiatives

- Digital Inclusion Volunteer Program:³² Launched on September 2, 2025 at the Place du Souvenir Africain (Dakar); 20 volunteers deployed in 24 communities across 6 departments for digital training, literacy programs, and modernization of administrative archives with local partners.
- Digital Strategy for Education 2025-2029:³³ Official launch on October 6, 2025, for the integration of AI and digital tools in education, promoting equitable access.
- Digital Economy Acceleration Project (PAEN):³⁴ Expands climate-resilient broadband connectivity, improving public services and businesses.
- National Digital Council (CNN):³⁵ Established on October 2, 2025, for co

30. <https://www.numerique.gouv.sn/mediatheque/documentation/la-strat%C3%A9gie-ia> (Accessed on November 28, 2024).

31. Artificial Intelligence, Challenges for Senegal and Africa, National Academy of Sciences and Techniques of Senegal (ANSTS), January 8, 2024.

32. <https://letechobservateur.sn/l'inclusion-numerique-en-marche-le-senegal-lance-son-programme-de-volontariat/>

- ordination, inclusion, and sovereignty.

Senegal's digital inclusion is further enhanced by the digital identification policy. The National Digital Identity project has a shared vision: "the existence, by 2024, in Senegal, of an operational, reliable, secure, and accessible digital identity for the benefit of all users."³⁶

The main objectives³⁷ of this project are as follows:

- Facilitate administrative procedures and rapid access to government information;
- Facilitate the interoperability of government information systems;
- Facilitate the exchange of data on individuals and businesses;
- Facilitate the inclusion of all citizens to achieve sustainable development goals and create wealth.

Although this project is still in the phase of gradual deployment in 2025, its strategic relevance in terms of inclusion is rein-

forced by the fact that it is now a part of a larger vision, pushed by the New Deal on Technology. There hasn't been an official identification of any significant legal measures aimed at protecting youngsters online. However, the increased integration of digital tools into the education system, particularly through the Digital Education Strategy 2025–2029, is a significant factor.³⁸ This makes the issue more urgent.

The lack of specific policies on:

- online risk prevention (cyberbullying, exploitation, exposure to inappropriate content),
- Digital citizenship education for children,
- and appropriate reporting mechanisms,

These constitute a significant gap in the overall framework of digital inclusion.

Senegal's digital inclusion is moving towards a more integrated approach, but it is still lacking, especially when it comes

33. <https://www.education.sn/posts/le-senegal-engage-une-nouvelle-ere-educative-lancement-officiel-de-la-strategie-du-numerique-pour-leducation-2025-2029>

34. <https://paens.sn/2025/>

35. <https://cybersecuritymag.africa/le-senegal-installe-officiellement-un-conseil-national-du-numerique/>

36. Senegal will have a digital identity in 2024.

37. Feasibility study of the national digital identity (INN) project: <https://identitenumérique.sn/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/INN-Rapport-Final-inputs-MENT.pdf> (Accessed on November 28, 2024).

to safeguarding the most vulnerable users and effectively translating policies into quantifiable effects on the ground.

Universal Service

Fund

The Universal Telecommunications Service Development Fund (FDSUT),³⁹ whose management, missions, and objectives are defined by Decree No. 2019-593 of February 14, 2019, aims to develop community telecommunications networks to bridge social inequalities and create conditions of equity.

As part of its policy to combat disparities between urban areas and underserved rural communities, Senegal has initiated collaborative models between operators,

symbolised by infrastructure sharing and digital development across the country.

To this end, for the development of rural areas, the FDSUT has inaugurated the Living Lab.⁴⁰ It is now fully operational.⁴¹ This project, with a total estimated budget of 60 million CFA francs,⁴² also covers the regions of Kaolack, Saint-Louis, and Ziguinchor. Its objective is to introduce digital technology into the primary sector (Agriculture, Livestock, Fishing) through an innovation methodology based on the cooperation of public and private actors, companies, associations, and individual actors.⁴³

38. <https://www.education.sn/posts/le-senegal-accelere-la-transformation-numerique-de-son-education-signature-dun-partenariat-strategique-entre-le-men-et-le-mesri>

39. <https://fdsut.sn/salles-multimedias/> (Accessed on November 28, 2024).

40. Socioeconomic development of the terroirs: FDSUT inaugurates the Living Lab: <https://fdsut.sn/category/living-lab/> (accessed on November 28, 2024).

41. Implementation of the operational phase of the living lab, August 22, 2024.

42. <https://letechobservateur.sn/developpement-socioeconomie-des-terroirs-le-fdsut-inaugure-le-living-lab-de-ndangalma/>.

43. Living Lab FDSUT or Living Laboratory: <https://fdsut.s/living-lab-fdsut-innovation-numerique-secteur-primaire/> (accessed November 28, 2024).

44. <https://fdsut.sn/>

45. <http://www.jubanti.sn> digital ministry

46. <https://www.education.sn/posts/le-senegal-accelere-la-transformation-numerique-de-son-education-signature-dun-partenariat-strategique-entre-le-men-et-le-mesri>

Conclusion

Senegal's evaluation under the **LONDA 2025** framework reveals a mixed but generally favourable development in the area of digital rights and inclusion. The overall score rises from **34 in 2024 to 38 in 2025**, indicating quantifiable growth, especially in the areas of government openness, internet access stability, and the reinforcement of specific legal protections.

The year 2025 stands out in particular for the absence of internet shutdowns, in contrast to previous years. This development, combined with the ECOWAS Court of Justice's condemnation of Senegal for the 2023 shutdowns, marks a significant turning point in the recognition of the fundamental nature of internet access.

It demonstrates a relative improvement in compliance with the principles of the Declaration of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights.

However, these advances coexist with persistent challenges. The continued criminalisation of spreading false news, the lack of reform to sedition laws, and the arrests of journalists and the planned closure of media outlets in 2025 all point to the ongoing fragility of online freedom

of expression. These factors indicate that institutional progress has not yet fully translated into practice.

Furthermore, although Senegal has a universal service mechanism and ambitious digital inclusion initiatives, particularly through the New Deal for Technology, significant limitations remain. The lack of transparency in the management of the Universal Telecommunications Service Development Fund (FDSUT) and the absence of detailed public data on its impact hinder a comprehensive assessment of the effectiveness of inclusion policies.

Finally, the lack of significant development in the legal framework for data protection and the protection of children online, as well as the inadequacy of specific policies on gendered disinformation, shows that certain essential dimensions of digital rights remain insufficiently taken into account.

Thus, Senegal is positioned in **2025 within a dynamic of moderate but incomplete progress**, characterised by significant strategic and institutional advances, but hampered by inconsistencies between the regulatory framework and its effective implementation. Consolidating these gains will require targeted legal reforms, greater institutional transparency, and a strengthening of mechanisms for protecting fundamental rights in the digital space.

Recommendations

The Government should:



- Revise the provisions of the Penal Code relating to the dissemination of false news, sedition and opinion offences to align them with Principle 22 of the Declaration of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR).
- Establish a clear legal framework that complies with human rights to govern any restriction of internet access, incorporating the standards of legality, necessity and proportionality.
- Strengthen transparency in the management of the Universal Telecommunications Service Development Fund (UTSDF), in particular through the regular publication of detailed reports, including the amounts collected, the projects financed and their impact.
- Accelerate the revision of the law on the protection of personal data to align it with international standards and strengthen the powers of the regulatory authority.
- Develop and adopt a national strategy dedicated to the protection of children online, including mechanisms for prevention, education and reporting of abuse.
- Establish mechanisms for monitoring and publishing data related to arrests and prosecutions linked to online expression in order to strengthen accountability.

For the attention of the media



- Strengthening journalists' capacity in digital rights, fact-checking and coverage of issues related to disinformation.
- Promote ethical practices in online information processing in

- order to limit the risks associated with the dissemination of sensitive or unverified content.
- Develop initiatives to raise public awareness about digital rights and freedom of expression.

For the attention of the Private Sector (digital operators and platforms)

- Improve transparency in content moderation practices, including by publishing detailed reports on content removal requests from public authorities.
- Strengthen mechanisms to protect users, especially women and children, against online harassment and disinformation.
- Collaborating with authorities and civil society to develop solutions promoting affordable and inclusive access to the Internet.







To the attention of Civil Society

- Intensify advocacy for reform of laws restricting freedom of expression online.
- Strengthen initiatives to monitor and document violations of digital rights, including arrests, cases of censorship and breaches of privacy.
- Develop digital education programmes targeting vulnerable populations, including women, youth, and people living in rural areas.
- Promote research and the production of independent data on the impact of digital policies, particularly in terms of inclusion and universal service.







The Score Index





Senegal, 2025

1. Totally non-compliant. 2. Slightly compliant: This is a slight attempt at compliance with critical deficiencies. 3. Moderately compliant – where there are areas for improvement. 4. Largely compliant – Minimal areas for reform. 5. Fully compliant – No issues

Indicator	ACHPR Principle	2024 Score	2025 Score	2025 Justification
Internet Shutdowns	P38(2)	 1	 4	No internet outages in 2025 Senegal was condemned by the ECOW-AS Court of Justice on May 14, 2025, for internet shutdowns during the period of electoral tension.
Inexistent laws, policies and other measures to promote universal, equitable, affordable and meaningful access to the internet	P37	 3	 3	In Senegal, the Universal Telecommunications Service Development Fund (FDSUT) ⁴⁴ This constitutes the main funding mechanism for universal access to digital services. However, despite the existence of this institutional framework, transparency regarding the use of the fund’s resources and the impact of funded projects remains limited, which restricts the effective assessment of its contribution to bridging the digital divide.
Criminalizing fake news	P22(2)	 1	 1	Spreading false news is considered an offense. Article 255 of Law No. 77-87 of August 10, 1977, amending the Penal Code of 1965. The rating remains in place because many arrests of journalists and columnists have been motivated by this offense.

Indicator	ACHPR Principle	2024 Score	2025 Score	2025 Justification
Legislation on sedition	P22(2)	 3	 3	Articles 181 and 183 of the Penal Code refer to sedition, while according to Principle 22(2), states shall repeal laws that criminalise sedition, insults, and the publication of false news. The rating remains unchanged because there has been no evolution or development in that direction.
Arbitrary Arrests and Harassments of the Media, HRDs and Citizens	P20(1) & (2)	 3	 1	In 2025, despite a new government that brought much hope, the Ministry of Communication, through a decree, closed 381 media outlets, and more than 4 journalists were arrested for defamation or opinion offences.
Data Protection Legislation.	P42	 4	 4	Data protection legislation has existed since 2008. A bill has existed since 2019 which brought major innovations, including the creation of a Personal Data Protection Authority (APDP). The rating remains unchanged as there are no new developments regarding this law. However, many problems justify its revision.
States interfere and require the removal of online content by internet intermediaries	P38 and P39(4)	 2	 3	We are seeing a strengthening of freedom of expression and access for opposition parties to state media. The state is not removing content but has still shut down some media outlets.

Indicator	ACHPR Principle	2024 Score	2025 Score	2025 Justification
Invasion of Privacy of Communications	P41			<p>Senegal protects privacy and the confidentiality of communications through the Constitution and the law on the protection of personal data.</p> <p>Privacy protection is particularly strengthened in the digital sphere. People are more sensitive to the concepts of image rights and consent, and no cases of state surveillance have been reported.</p>
Failure by the government to proactively disclose and disseminate information on digital technologies.	P29(3)			<p>The new government proactively discloses and disseminates information of public interest, including functions, powers, structure, officials, decisions, budgets, and expenditures, in the interest of transparency.</p> <p>There has been an improvement in the transparency of public information. The government has implemented digital platforms for consultation and contribution. www.jubanti.sn⁴⁵ for major reforms. Law No. 2025-15 on access to information in Senegal was promulgated on September 25, 2025, after 15 years of advocacy. It enshrines the right of any individual or legal entity to access public data held by public entities and certain private entities, thereby strengthening transparency, democracy, and the fight against corruption.</p>
AI and Emerging	P39(6)			<p>Senegal has a draft national strategy on artificial intelligence (AI). With the launch of the New Deal for Technology,</p>

Indicator	ACHPR Principle	2024 Score	2025 Score	2025 Justification
Technologies national strategies				the role of AI in the digital transformation of public services is more visible, with an AI strategy structured around urgent needs such as education, health, training, and notably the strengthening of the AI workforce with 100,000 people trained in AI.
Adoption of specific child laws, policies and measures promoting children's digital safety and privacy online	P37(5)			No major legislative changes specifically dedicated to the protection of children online have been formally identified. However, the increased integration of digital tools into the education system, particularly through the Digital Education Strategy 2025–2029, is a significant development. ⁴⁶
Digital Inclusion	P37(3)			The State of Senegal has adopted laws, policies, and other measures to guarantee universal, equitable, and affordable access to the internet, without discrimination. The government is making considerable efforts to digitise educational curricula. Internet coverage is almost universal, even in rural areas.

Total (out of 60):	2024: 36	2025 38
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