

GNI Statement on the Nationwide Internet Shutdown in Tanzania During the 2025 Elections

The Global Network Initiative (GNI) expresses deep concern about the [nationwide internet shutdown in Tanzania](#) that coincided with the country's [general elections in late October 2025](#), and calls on the Government of Tanzania to restore and maintain connectivity.

From the morning of October 29, major platforms such as X, WhatsApp, and Instagram were inaccessible, creating a [digital blackout](#) at a moment when transparency and the free flow of information were especially essential. While general access was restored five days later on November 3, access to [X remains suspended](#). The shutdown occurred as Tanzanians headed to the polls in a [highly charged political environment](#). The week-long outage resulted in an [estimated 238 million USD in economic losses](#) due to disruptions to essential services such as access to health, emergency services, and payments. The protests that followed the 29 October elections led to violence, with reports suggesting that as many as [700 people may have died](#) during confrontations between security forces and demonstrators. In the midst of this tumult, the internet shutdown prevented journalists, election monitors, and affected communities from sharing real-time updates, compounding the uncertainty and [eroding trust during a critical electoral moment](#). The United Nations Human Rights Office has [urged investigations](#) into the killings and other violations committed during this election cycle.

This is [not the first connectivity disruption](#) in Tanzania. On August 30, 2024, access to Twitter [was blocked for nearly 24 hours by several ISPs](#) without explanation, coinciding with an online campaign highlighting allegations of murders, kidnappings, and disappearances. The incident followed [warnings by the police](#) regarding alleged attempts by opposition groups to mobilise [youth online](#). In October 2024, the Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority [suspended Mwananchi Communications Digital for 30 days](#) for alleged publication of prohibited content, affecting all its social media channels. More recently, [access to about 80,000 websites and social media was blocked](#) in May 2025, and [TikTok Live and Instagram Live features were blocked on October 6 2025](#). These consecutive actions show a progressive narrowing of Tanzania's digital civic space. Tanzania's experience also reflects a wider pattern. Internet shutdowns have [doubled across Africa in less than a decade](#) and similar disruptions were documented recently in [Mozambique and Mauritius](#).

Increasingly, Internet shutdowns coincide with politically sensitive moments such as during election periods and in response to protests or civil unrest. These shutdowns are sometimes



affected with the intention to curb dissent, but may also be implemented to cover up human rights violations. These shutdowns can often have the [opposite effect](#), causing a greater degree of unrest and violence, as well as drawing global scrutiny.

GNI and its members have long highlighted that network shutdowns carry severe human rights, safety, and economic consequences. As we set out in our Network Disruptions [one-pager](#) and other relevant [resources](#), including [reports](#) focused on Africa, and as [others](#) have also explained in various statements, reports, and UN resolutions, network disruptions can have deep and disproportionate impacts on a variety of human rights and their consequences are often more acute in conflict scenarios.

In light of these developments in Tanzania, GNI calls on the Government of Tanzania to restore full internet connectivity, including access to social media platforms and communication services, and ensure that any future restrictions on internet connectivity fully comply [with international human rights standards](#), are subject to independent oversight, and are necessary, proportionate, and time-bound.

About GNI

As a multistakeholder organization comprising many of the world's leading tech companies, academics, civil society organizations, and investors, GNI works to protect and advance freedom of expression and privacy rights in the technology ecosystem. Based on the diverse experiences and expertise of our membership, our approach generates collaboration towards a more rights-respecting legal environment for technology users around the world.