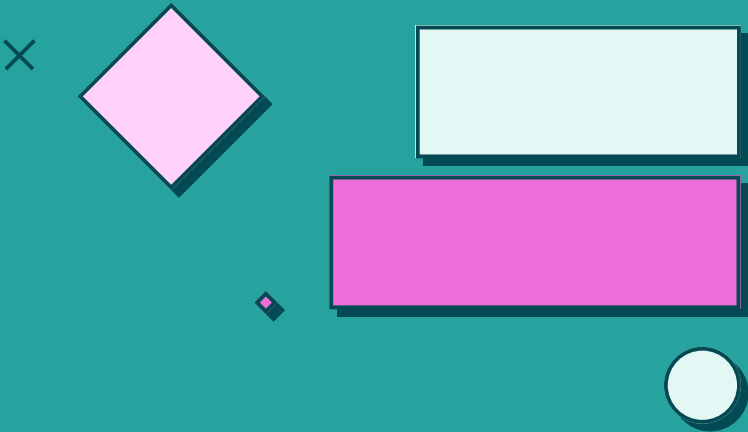


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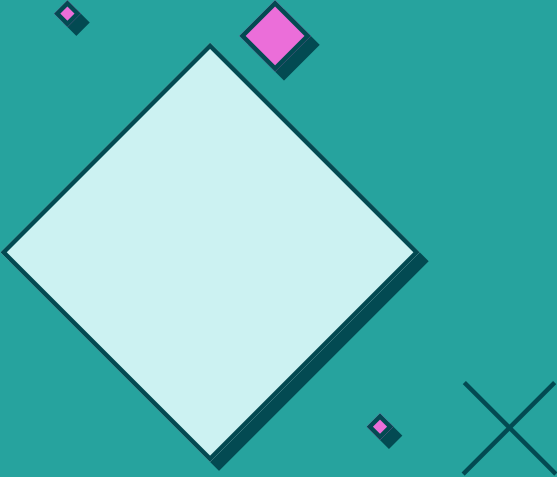
LAWYERS
Tech for Justice
HUB



NAVIGATING INTERNET SHUTDOWNS



USER GUIDE



Introduction



In 2020, at least 155 internet shutdowns were documented within 29 countries globally. In the period between January and May 2021, the #Keepiton coalition documented 50 cases of internet shutdowns across 21 countries globally.



155

NUMBER OF INTERNET
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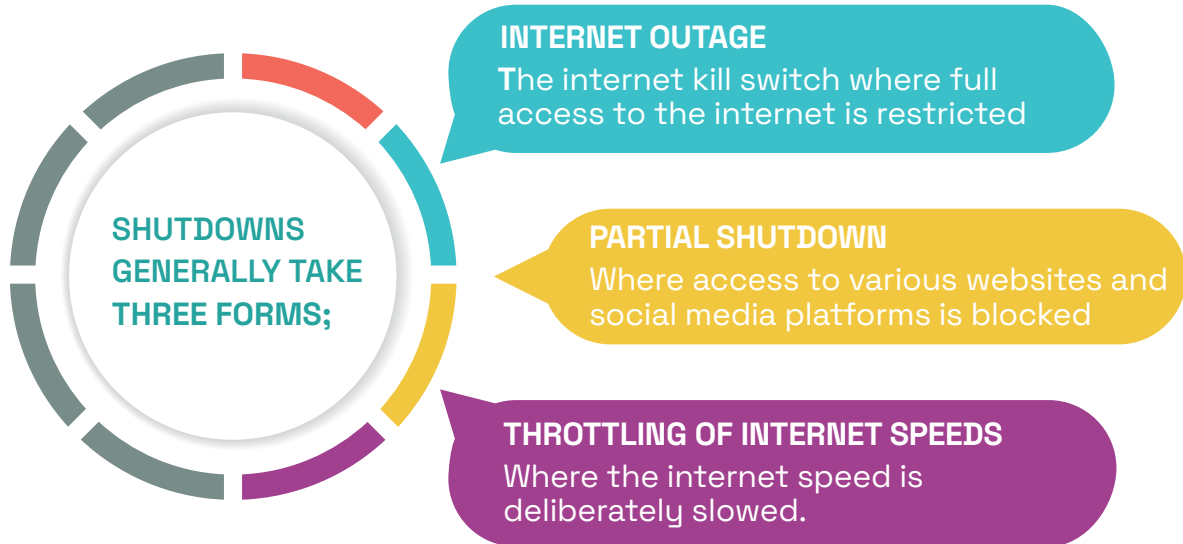
Internews assessed the capacity and challenges of civil society in responding to internet shutdowns and found that:

while the threat of internet shutdowns globally is high, advocates (including civil society) do not feel prepared to deal with shutdowns. Furthermore, network measurement tools and data sets are not widely used by advocates working on shutdowns locally.

Reflecting on these findings and the need to build resilience among the general populace, civil society and media practitioners, we have developed this guide to provide information on how to circumvent an internet shutdown.

1. WHAT IS AN INTERNET SHUTDOWN?

Internet shutdown **means** “an intentional disruption of internet and electronic communications, rendering them inaccessible or effectively unusable, for a specific location or within a location often to exert control over the flow of information.”



Shutdowns can affect the entire nation or specific regions within a country.

2.WHO INSTIGATES AN INTERNET SHUTDOWN?

Shutdowns are imposed by both state and non-state actors.

STATE ACTORS

Internet service providers can receive orders from the regulatory commission to shut down the internet. For example in 2021, the **Uganda** Communications Authority ordered all telecommunication companies to suspend the internet.

NON- STATE ACTORS

In 2020, Kenya documented 2 accounts of internet disruptions that resulted from a jihadist group, Al shabab destroying communication infrastructure in the county of Mandera.

3. WHY DO THESE ACTORS SHUT DOWN THE INTERNET?

In the last three years, shutdowns have been as a result of:

TO PREVENT CHEATING IN EXAMS

Between 17th-30th June 2021 Internet Service Providers (ISPs) in [Sudan](#) were ordered by the Public Prosecutor to suspend internet service in Sudan to prevent cheating in the national exams. This follows a similar shutdown during national exams in [Ethiopia](#) in 2019.

QUELLING PROTEST

The government of Ethiopia ordered a [nationwide internet shutdown](#) in an effort to quell protests that erupted in the Oromia region following the death of popular musician Ha-chulu Hundessa.



ELECTIONS

At least [3 countries](#) in Eastern Africa namely Uganda, Tanzania and Burundi shutdown the internet during their general elections. These governments shutdown the net for reasons like preventing the spread of disinformation during the election period.



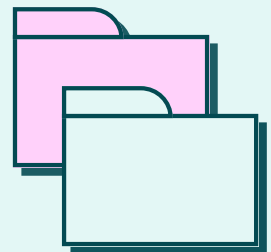
4. WHAT IMPACTS DOES INTERNET SHUTDOWN HAVE?

Shutdowns infringe on human rights, the right to access information and express yourself online. The media is unable to report information as it happens and journalists find it difficult to research and verify news as well as communicate with sources on the ground. In some circumstances, shutdowns affect online business and services like mobile money leading to **economic losses**

Internet shutdowns during elections affect the credibility of the electoral process and make it harder for electoral observers to carry out their work.



SHUTDOWNS INFRINGE ON HUMAN RIGHTS, THE RIGHT TO ACCESS INFORMATION AND EXPRESS YOURSELF ONLINE.



5. HOW DO WE MEASURE AN INTERNET SHUTDOWN?

To measure internet shutdowns, you can use the following tools:

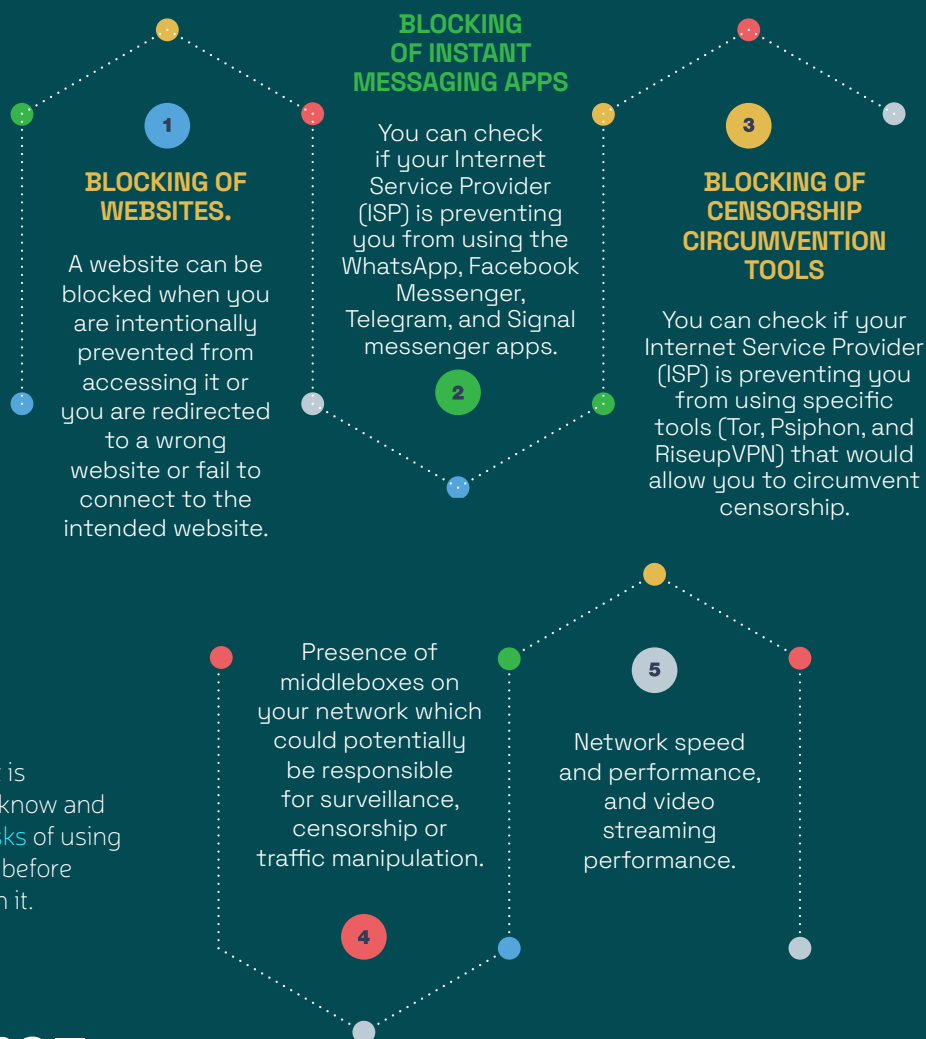
i) THE OONI PROBE

A [free and open source software](#) developed by the Open Observatory of Network Interference (OOONI) that can be used to measure censorship. It can be downloaded on mobile - OONI probe mobile for IOS or Android or desktop for windows, linux and macos.

Before using this app it is important to note that the OONI Probe is not a privacy tool and anyone monitoring your internet activity can know that you are running censorship detection tests and secondly, the results will automatically be openly published.

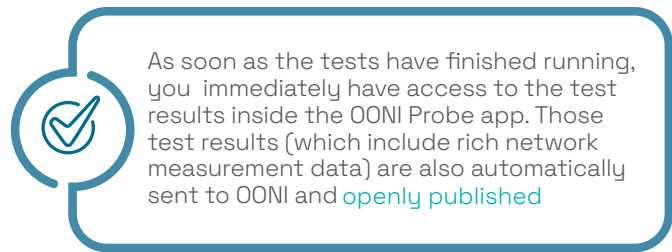
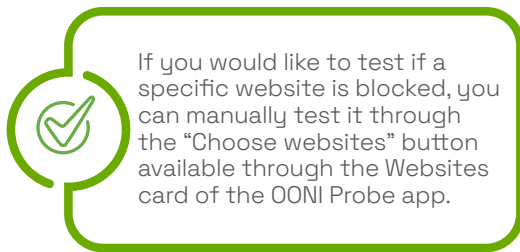
You can use the options in the app to customise your settings and not publish your results. Please look through the OONI [Data Policy Guide](#) for more information on the data collected and processed by OONI.

When one runs the OONI Probe, they perform a [series](#) of tests to determine the extent of censorship on the network they are connected to. The OONI Probe tests runs check for:



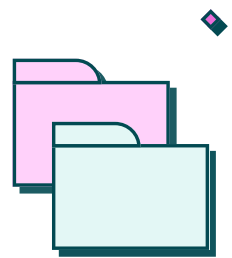
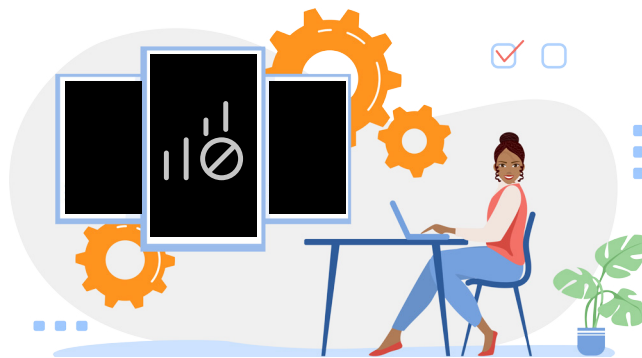
Please note it is important to know and review the [risks](#) of using this platform before embarking on it.

Testing a specific website



Please note it is important to know and review the risks of using this platform before embarking on it.

6. HOW CAN I MONITOR AND KNOW WHEN INTERNET SHUTDOWNS HAPPEN?



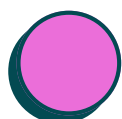
Data collected from all OONI Probe tests run around the world is accessible via [OOONI Explorer](#), an open data resource on internet censorship around the world. This information is valuable as it can form primary data in litigation and reporting of internet shutdowns.



Internet Outage Detection and Analysis (IODA)

IODA is a system with a public dashboard that monitors the internet almost in real time to identify cases of total internet outage. It is a complementary tool to OONI as OONI can not be used in cases of complete internet outage.

There are other private led internet monitors like [Netblocks](#) that publish information on internet shutdowns.



7. HOW DO YOU CIRCUMVENT AN INTERNET SHUTDOWN?

When experiencing a Partial internet shutdown, one can use the following to circumvent it and maintain secure communication:

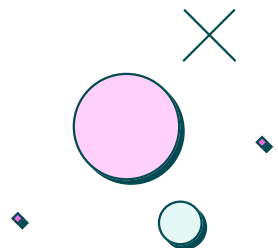
A) USING A VPN

A VPN (Virtual Private Network) masks your IP address and location and routes your traffic to a server owned by the VPN Host, preventing external interference e.g from ISPs who may want to tamper or block it. As the VPN provider can nonetheless see your identifiable data, it is important that one picks a trustworthy VPN provider.

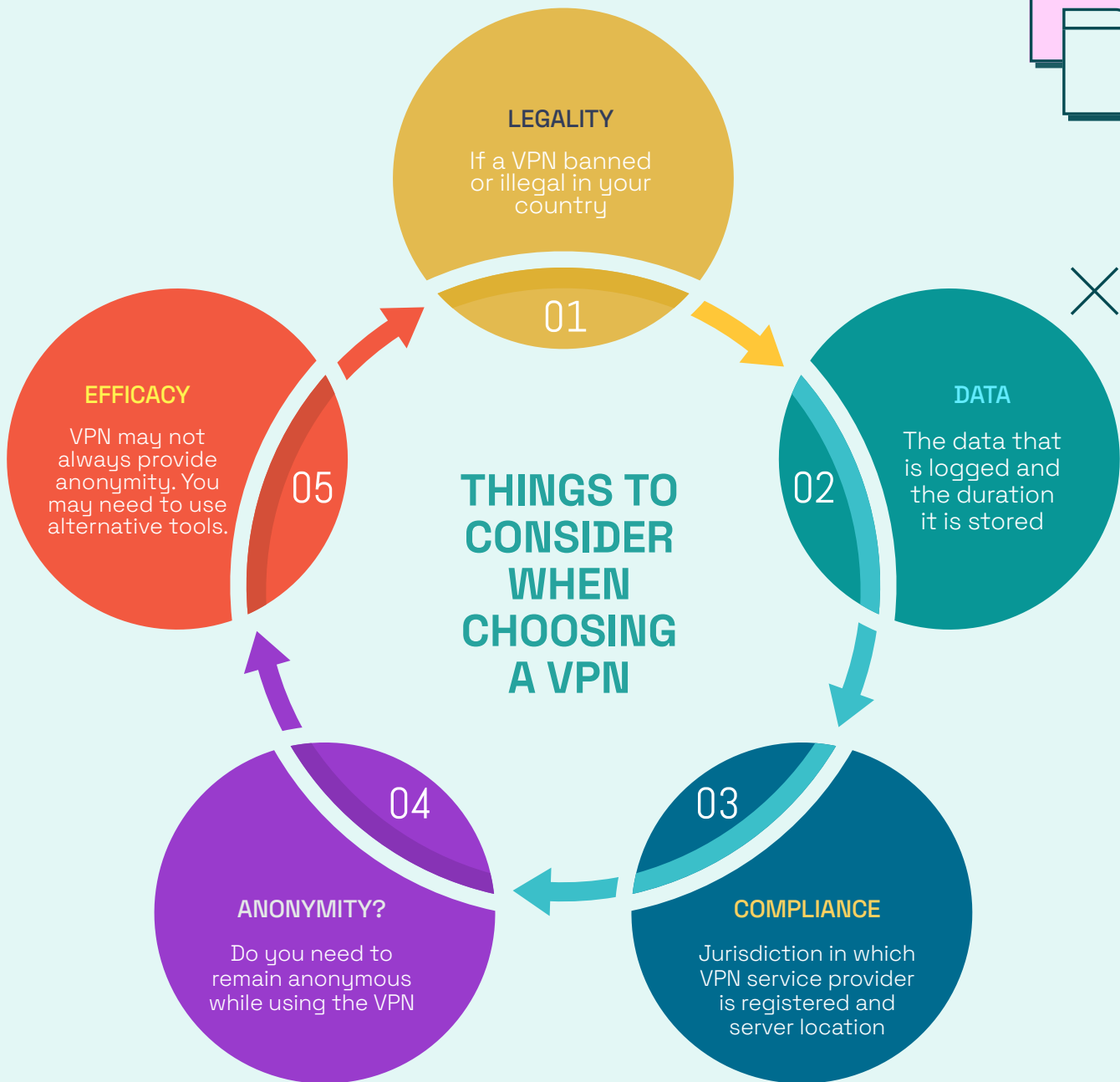


In finding a trustworthy VPN provider, pick one that is accessible, has open source code and has been audited by a trusted security expert. Unfortunately, using VPNs can lead to slower internet speeds and may also be blocked during a partial shutdown.

To circumvent this, one may use the external server that is set up outside the country as it is unknown to authorities and may not be blocked.



A VPN is advisable in cases of partial internet shutdowns where certain platforms are unavailable. The most important factor to consider when choosing a VPN is your safety. You need to consider:



B) SECURE BROWSING

During shutdowns it is important to browse on secured websites using the HTTPS protocol as they are less vulnerable to interception and encrypt your browsing. Using a secure website makes it harder for people snooping on the network to see or eavesdrop on what you are browsing. This is useful where the Government or security institutions are monitoring citizen's browsing during an internet shutdown.

You can install **HTTPS Everywhere**, an extension added to your browser that allows you to browse securely only on secured websites or the secured parts of the website.

It is noteworthy to mention that HTTPS Everywhere secures the content of your browsing and does not conceal the identity of websites you visit nor the duration you spend on the site. This **resource** provides more information on how to install HTTPS Everywhere extension on your browser, the protection it offers, the data to be collected and how to remove it.



C) INSTALLING TOR BROWSER

Tor is a program that facilitates private and anonymous browsing by preventing eavesdroppers from learning which websites you visit as well as your physical location, a step further from HTTPS Everywhere. It is mostly used on the Tor Browser that can be **installed** on Windows, linux and android. On the Tor browser, your browsing history is deleted immediately after you finish browsing.



The more severe the shutdown, the harder it is to circumvent and thus it's advisable to set up these tools in advance.

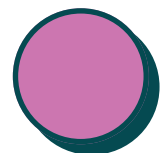


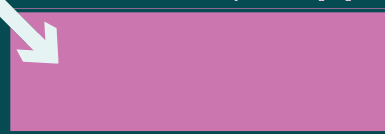
8. HOW DO YOU ADVOCATE AGAINST SHUTDOWNS?

Advocacy brings awareness to the harm caused by internet shutdowns and can help in safeguarding people's rights through sharing information on how to deal with internet shutdowns and further highlight measures people can take to prepare for an internet shutdown.

Though it can be difficult to design an adequate advocacy campaign, as there is no "one size fits all" approach, the following [advocacy resources](#) provide guidance and examples to support Internet shutdowns advocacy efforts and include guidance and examples to support you in building impactful messaging and getting the word out even during a crisis.

The OPTIMA resource library includes a [pre-shutdown checklist](#) which outlines measures people can take in preparing for an internet disruption before an election and various ways to [circumvent](#) an internet shutdown.





9. HOW DO YOU LITIGATE AGAINST SHUTDOWNS?

On some occasions, the courts may be the best way to prevent a shutdown and when it comes to this course of action. It is beneficial to have a good grasp of the relevant issues, the laws, legal standards and jurisprudence when it comes to internet shutdowns. This is then applied in strategic litigation through the courts to challenge and/or deter shutdowns while upholding human rights online.

In preparing to challenge an internet shutdown in the courts, it is important to document and preserve the activities that occur. For example, data from OONI probe tests can be used as evidence of such activity and any video evidence documenting the shutdown. To learn more about various ways to document shutdowns, read through this [guide](#).

The [OPTIMA](#) library includes resources to help you build and argue strong litigation and learn about successful legal challenges from around the world to inform those initiatives.

10. WHERE CAN I FIND MORE INFORMATION OR RESOURCES ON INTERNET SHUTDOWNS?

The [OPTIMA](#) resource library is a tool developed to provide information on how to navigate internet shutdowns.

It is a compilation of new and existing resources, guides, methodologies and more to assist individuals and activists before, during and after an internet shutdown.

To learn more about this resource, visit <https://preparepreventresist.org/>

Follow activities of various civil society organizations under [the #Keepiton](#) coalition that works to fight internet shutdowns around the world.

