

# **FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION ONLINE AND OFFLINE IN EQUATORIAL GUINEA**

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**Pre-Session 47**

# INTRODUCTION

**Equatorial Guinea has not implemented any of the 18 recommendations it endorsed at the previous UPR cycle calling to:**

- **Legislate according to international standards**
- **Remove restrictions on civil society and the media**
- **Take specific measures to guarantee freedom of expression or decriminalize defamation**

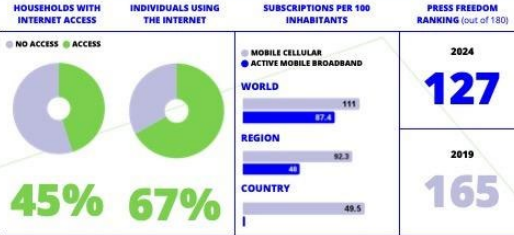
**The government has not conducted any consultation with CSOs for this UPR cycle on these themes.**

UPR SESSION 47 • 4TH CYCLE

# EQUATORIAL GUINEA

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION & INTERNET FREEDOM

UPROAR



Sources: <https://datahub.io/>

Sources: <https://datahub.io/>

Sources: <https://rpt.org/en/index>

**Equatorial Guinea should uphold its international obligations to guarantee freedom of expression and access to information on and offline, and refrain from media harassment.**

The human rights situation in Equatorial Guinea has not improved since the previous review in 2019. Instead, the government has continued to imprison human rights defenders, journalists, "audios" activists, and even ordinary citizens for exercising their fundamental rights of expression, communication and access to information. The country ruled for 40 years by the same President is ranked as "not free" partly due to government control of the media which has led to censorship of private media.

Individuals and journalists are subjected to intimidation, arrest, detention, torture, and ill-treatment for criticising government, creating a chilling effect and self-censorship. Some people, especially activists, turn to art, music, theater, or the visual arts to express themselves. Several activists including Leoncio Prisco Eco Mba, Anacleto Michá Ndong, Luis Nzo Ondo, Pablo, Angie Angono, Claudio Nizé Ntutum, Liberato Bielo Biacho among others were arrested and jailed for criticising the government on various social media platforms.

<sup>1</sup> The term "audios" is used in Equatorial Guinea to refer to people who produce and disseminate messages to the population through WhatsApp. Sometimes these are denunciations against the arbitrariness of the government regime, and other times they are messages to raise awareness and motivate the local citizens.

<sup>2</sup> Freedom House, 2024, <https://freedomhouse.org/country/equatorial-guinea/freedom-world/2024>

#### SUBMITTING ORGANISATIONS



#### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Ensure that the internet, including websites, social media and other digital communication platforms, remain open, accessible, and secure to all across the country.
- Ensure media pluralism, including allowing private and foreign media to freely operate in the country without fear of censorship.
- Comply with the UN Human Rights Committee's recommendation to protect journalists and the media from any form of undue interference, harassment or attack, promptly investigating all such acts and bringing those responsible to justice.

## IN EQUATORIAL

### Y SUBMISSION

Guinea to protect their rights and help people in the community to address human rights violations and demand accountability in a transparent and enabling environment for critical

work that works to support the IPI. The non-profit engages in global advocacy to uphold digital rights in over 34 countries through the Universal

work of editors, media professionals and dedication to quality, IPI advances press freedom through its program, IPI monitors press freedom across the continent, IPI advocates against journalists' harassment and e-based advocacy to ensure the abilities to protect their work freely,



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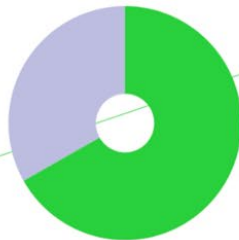
HOUSEHOLDS WITH  
INTERNET ACCESS

● NO ACCESS ● ACCESS



45%

INDIVIDUALS USING  
THE INTERNET



67%

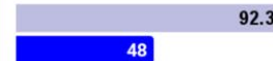
SUBSCRIPTIONS PER 100  
INHABITANTS

● MOBILE CELLULAR  
● ACTIVE MOBILE BROADBAND

WORLD



REGION



COUNTRY



PRESS FREEDOM  
RANKING (out of 180)

2024

127

2019

165

Sources: <https://datahub.itu.int/>

Sources: <https://datahub.itu.int/>

Sources: <https://rsf.org/en/index>

## **BACKGROUND**

- **11 journalists were arrested or fired for carrying out their work.**
- **The government has adopted a new Penal Code (2022) that is more restrictive and punitive against internet users.**
- **The government has increased its use violence to restrict rights.**
- **The government controls all media outlets and limits communications.**

# RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1. Ensure that the internet, including websites, social media and other digital communication platforms, remain open, accessible, and secure to all across the country.**

# RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2. Ensure media pluralism, including allowing private and foreign media to freely operate in the country without fear of censorship**

# RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3. Comply with the UN Human Rights Committee's recommendation to protect journalists and the media from any form of undue interference, harassment or attack, promptly investigating all such acts and bringing those responsible to justice.**

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## RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3. Repeal articles 221 to 224 of the 2022 Penal Code that include the crime of "abusive exercise of fundamental rights" as they are contrary to international standards. Immediately and unconditionally release all prisoners detained on arbitrary grounds, including for having exercised their right to freedom of expression.**



**CONTACT US**

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