

Advocacy Resources

Designing effective advocacy campaigns around Internet shutdowns can be challenging. Whether you are helping your community to prepare for a future internet disruption or conducting an awareness raising campaign to highlight one that has already occurred, it can be difficult to determine where to start, who to involve, what messages to use, and how to conceptualize an impactful advocacy plan. In addition, advocacy strategies will differ based on the political context and existing legal, policy and cultural constraints and opportunities in any given country. While there is no “one size fits all” approach to internet shutdown advocacy, the following 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.

Getting started: Understanding needs and finding resources

The first step to building an advocacy plan is to get your bearings, or to make sure you have a good sense of the threats, challenges, opportunities, and partnerships that will help shape your campaign.

- The [OPTIMA Risk Assessment and Advocacy Assessment](#) allows you to complete a brief survey about your work and context, then receive a customized guide that outlines your level of risk, strategies, and resources to bolster your advocacy efforts.

With a clearer sense of your (and your community’s) needs and risks, you can more effectively begin browsing around for the kinds of strategies, guides, templates, and other resources that best fit your profile. This library is, of course, one way to do that (keep reading for more), but other resource collections exist that might be useful starting points to take stock of existing knowledge on the subject.

- The [KeepItOn Toolkit](#) is a great place to start both to learn more about the basics of internet shutdowns (what are they? what do they look like? How is the global community responding?), and also to begin understanding best practices for responding to and advocating against internet shutdowns. AccessNow has developed a range of great resources (all hosted in the toolkit) that...
- Shutdowns often occur during moments of political uncertainty or crisis, most notably during electoral cycles. The following [Internet shutdowns and elections handbook](#), provides a useful guide for election observers, embassies, activists, and journalists looking to understand how shutdowns undermine elections and find tips for navigating and preparing for shutdowns around elections specifically.

Documenting shutdowns’ impact and telling the stories of those most impacted

Showing the real-world impacts of shutdowns is an essential part of advocacy in order to make the case as to why internet shutdowns are neither necessary nor proportionate- and that they not only violate human rights but also impact economies, human development, and health. One of the main challenges in advocating against shutdowns is that they are, by definition, moments when those impacted are rendered disconnected from the rest of the world and unable to share their stories. The following reports were developed to share the experiences of those impacted by shutdowns, and to raise awareness of the profound consequences of internet disruptions across sectors.

- [Of sieges and shutdowns](#) takes a deep dive into the impact of frequent internet shutdowns on women in Manipur, India.
- [Impact of Internet shutdowns on Women in Uganda](#) similarly looks at the way that shutdowns disproportionately impact women, this time focusing on a shutdown in Uganda.
- [Effects of network disruptions on health service delivery](#) outlines the impact of Internet shutdowns and disruptions on the health delivery system in Zimbabwe.
- [The Consequences of Network Shutdowns and Service Disruptions: A One-page Guide for Policymakers](#): The audience here is policymakers and can be used as a general baseline for communicating the issues and their impacts with this group.
- [Economic impact of disruptions to internet connectivity](#): Like the previous GNI one-pager this report may provide useful insight in talking to various stakeholders about the drawbacks to deploying shutdowns, this one looking specifically at their impact on the economy.
- [Disconnected: A Human Rights-Based Approach to Network Disruptions](#): A third useful foundational report by GNI to help you think through and talk about the impacts of shutdowns broadly on human rights. This includes recommendations for making your case with policymakers and government.



Designing advocacy that is impactful, inclusive and responsive

So you have a sense for what you want to do, and the case that you will make against internet shutdowns and for ongoing access. The following resources are designed to help you begin building an advocacy plan or campaign to reflect that vision. They include best practices, guidance, and even some examples of existing campaigns.

- [Life Interrupted: Centering the Social Impacts of Network Disruptions in Advocacy in Africa](#): examines the social impacts of network disruptions in sub-Saharan Africa and various advocacy strategies in response.

- [Lessons Learned: Advocacy, Strategy, and Internet Shutdowns in Cameroon](#): This resource dives more specifically into the case of Cameroon, exploring advocacy strategies before, during, and after the 2017-2018 internet shutdowns in the Anglophone regions of Cameroon, and seeks to identify lessons learned and best practices for future advocacy.
- [Digital Rights Are Women's Rights!](#) Looks at this from a women's rights angle, outlining the challenges and opportunities that women encounter online, and presenting guidance on developing feminist digital rights movements in Africa.
- Taking a more literal approach to design, [Engaging a Wider Audience](#) includes suggestions for how to make your digital messaging clear so that you can achieve the most reach and readership possible.
- This campaign, entirely [Women and the Internet](#), provides a good example of how to use the previous two resources to design straightforward awareness campaigns that tackle issues from a feminist perspective.



Resources to Engage with Key Stakeholders

An important part of any advocacy campaign is clearly identifying (and mapping) the relevant stakeholders and understanding how to narrate your message to each. Some of the most powerful stakeholders involved in internet shutdowns are government entities (ordering the shutdown) and the companies that receive these orders and are responsible to restrict internet access (internet service providers or ISPs). The following resources can help you think through some of the high-profile actors in this space, and help you to shape your messaging to work with them.

Engaging policymakers

- [Policy Recommendations: Internet Freedom](#): This analysis by Freedom House offers recommendations for policymakers, private sector, and civil society actors on protecting and promoting internet freedom. This is a useful starting point to understanding how to promote best practices with key stakeholders.
- The two GNI reports mentioned above; [The Consequences of Network Shutdowns and Service Disruptions](#) and [Disconnected: A Human Rights-Based Approach to Network Disruptions](#), offer talking points and guidance for addressing the harmful impacts of shutdowns and why they should be avoided at all costs.

Engaging telecommunications companies

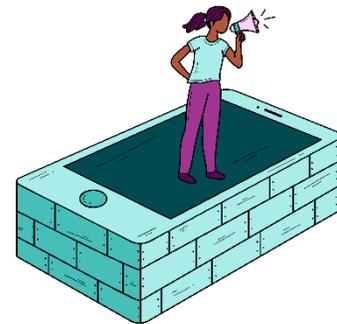
- [The Role of Internet Service Providers in Internet Shutdowns in Africa](#): outlines the role that Internet service providers play in Internet shutdowns, including how they are involved, why they comply with government requests, and what ownership means for their likelihood to shut it off.

- So what can be done knowing the outsized role that telcos play? [Security v Access: The Impact of Mobile Network Shutdowns, Case Study Telenor Pakistan](#) is a case study outlining how research can be done in collaboration with an internet service provider (Telenor Pakistan) to better understand how an internet shutdown order is sent to ISPs and the role that companies can play in advocating for more transparency and document shutdown impact.

Advocating during a shutdown

If a shutdown does occur, you should have a plan in place for how to continue your work despite communications restrictions, and how to stay safe while doing so. The following resources include some recommendations and insight for carrying out journalism and human rights work and documenting human rights violations during a blackout.

- [Witness shutdown archive](#): tips and approaches to capturing and preserving video documentation during a shutdown.
- [How to communicate and document human rights violations during an Internet shutdown](#): Whereas the witness resource focuses specifically on capturing video, this resource by Amnesty International take a more holistic approach to readying yourself to document protests and other events during a blackout, as well as how to maintain your safety while doing so.



Staying safe

- [Emergency Assistance to Frontline Activists](#): Freedom House offers emergency assistance to frontline activists. This site details two such resources.
- As noted before, the [How to communicate and document human rights violations during an Internet shutdown](#) resource also includes recommendations for maintaining your safety while capturing and reporting on violations during a shutdown.

Make sure to also review information about censorship circumvention tools in that section guide.