

## Impact Insight:

# Senegal's 2023 Internet Shutdowns on Social Relations and Sense of Security

The 2023 internet shutdowns had profound repercussions on social relations, community ties, and collective security in Senegal. During a time of crisis, digital isolation amplified feelings of insecurity and anxiety for many Senegalese citizens, further exacerbated by the spread of rumors and the paralysis of real-time communication. These disruptions also exposed stark inequalities in access to information and connectivity between rural and urban areas.

Survey participants reported that this disconnection heightened their vulnerability to social tensions, particularly in areas where protests were occurring. The lack of access to reliable information fueled rumors and misinformation, contributing to a generalized climate of distrust and fear.

Communication restrictions left many citizens in a state of anxiety, especially those with loved ones in areas prone to tension. Among respondents, 20% found it "very difficult" to obtain reliable information about the safety of their loved ones, 23% found it "moderately difficult," and 27.8% found it "slightly difficult."

This digital isolation created a psychological environment marked by distrust and anxiety. Additionally, 44.1% of respondents observed an increased spread of misinformation and rumors during the shutdowns, exacerbating confusion and fear.

## Key Findings

- **Sense of Insecurity:** 34.4% of respondents reported a significant decline in their sense of security during the shutdowns. Citizens living in protest zones felt particularly unsafe.
- **Spread of Rumors:** 44.1% of participants noted a significant rise in misinformation and rumors, amplifying a climate of panic and distrust.
- **Digital Isolation:** The shutdowns plunged many citizens into digital isolation, depriving them of reliable means to stay in contact with loved ones or access critical information.
- **Psychological Impact:** The absence of access to real-time information created an environment marked by anxiety and distrust, particularly affecting the most vulnerable populations.

To learn more, read the full reports:

- [The Impact of Senegal's 2023 Internet Shutdowns on Society, the Economy, and Trust in Democracy](#)
- [The Price of Disruption: Evaluating the Economic Impact of Senegal's 2023 Internet Shutdowns](#)