

Gabon internet blackout after coup attempt

Gabon's government on Monday morning shut down the internet and broadcasting services following an attempted coup against President Ali Bongo, according to digital rights groups Netblocks, and Internet Without Borders, news reports, and local journalists and civil society organisations with whom the Committee to Protect Journalists spoke.



Gabonese soldiers stand in front of the headquarters of the national broadcaster in Libreville on January 7, 2019, after a failed coup. Gabon shut down the internet and broadcasting services following the coup attempt. Credit: CPJ/AFP/Steve Jordan.

"Shutting down the internet and broadcasting services during times of crisis makes it impossible for journalists to carry out their work efficiently and safely. Citizens are robbed of access to the reliable information that they need to make decisions," said CPJ Africa program coordinator Angela Quintal from New York. "We call on authorities in Gabon to immediately and fully restore access to the internet and lift all restrictions on broadcasting."

According to [research](#) by Internet Without Borders, internet traffic from Gabon fell sharply at around 8am local time, indicating the beginning of an outage. Eric Mbog Matassi, a local journalist, told CPJ that the internet remained shut down on Monday evening.

Radio and television services had yet to be restored by late Monday, Matassi and Georges Mpage, the spokesperson for the local civil society organization Le Réseau des organisations libres de la société civile pour la bonne gouvernance au Gabon, told CPJ.

Soldiers [took control](#) of the national radio station's offices at dawn on Monday and called on the public to rise up against Bongo, 59, who has been recuperating abroad after suffering a stroke in Saudi Arabia in October, according to reports by [Bloomberg](#) and [Reuters](#).

Gabon's government [put down the coup attempt](#), according to [multiple news reports](#). Government spokesperson Guy-Bertrand Mapangou [told the BBC](#) that the government had taken back control of the area around the state broadcaster and said the situation was under control following a string of arrests.