

# Open Internet for Democracy

PRIORITIZING THE COMMITMENT TO AN OPEN INTERNET  
IN THE DIGITAL FUTURE

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**Center for International  
Private Enterprise**



# Misinformation



# Online Violence Against Women

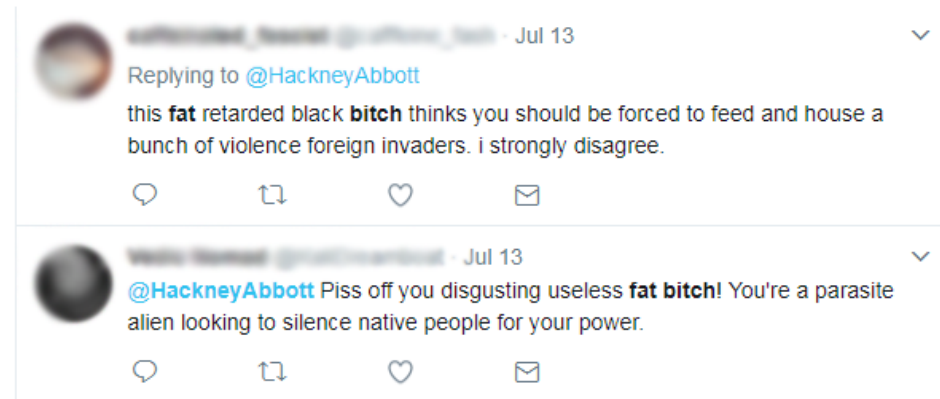
## Diane Abbott faces the most abuse

Diane Abbott is the UK's first black female MP and currently Labour MP for Hackney North and Stoke Newington, as well as Shadow Home Secretary.

She receives an incredibly disproportionate amount of abuse and was the target of almost a third (31.61%) of all abusive tweets we analysed. She received even more abuse in the six weeks leading up to 2017's snap general election, when 45.14% of abusive tweets were aimed at her.

This amounts to an average 51 abusive tweets per day over the 158 day study.

The type of abuse she receives often focuses on her gender and race, and includes threats of sexual violence.



Here she shares her experience. Warning: this video contains content some viewers may find offensive.

# Closing of Online Space

**WHAT WE LEARNED**  
From the internet shutdown in Cameroon

#BRINGBACKOURINTERNET

#BRINGBACKOURINTERNET #KEEPITON #BRINGBACKOURINTERNET

**94 DAYS**

The government of Cameroon in January ordered the disruption of the internet in the English-speaking Southwest and Northwest administrative regions of the country following protests and unrest surrounding service delivery. The internet shutdown lasted 94 days.

A conservative estimate pegs economic losses from the shutdown at a minimum of U.S. \$4.5 million, in a country with a per capita income of just \$1,200. This does not account for losses due to disruptions of supply chains, lack of investor confidence, and human costs.

**\$4.5M**

**AFFECTED REGIONS**

Notoriously, the affected region was home to Cameroon's "Silicon Mountain," a technology hub which suddenly found itself without internet.

While the internet is back in the affected regions in Cameroon, the government threatens that it will shut down the internet again whenever is necessary. Yet there is no remedy plan for the significant economic and social damages to victims and businesses in the regions.

**? REMEDY**

**Shutdowns violate human rights, and they will not be tolerated. They cannot, and will not, become the new normal, for the people of Cameroon or anywhere else.**



# Open Internet Principles

## 2. Freedom of Assembly and Association

*Everyone has the right to associate freely through and on the Internet for social, political, cultural or other purposes.*

### What Does This Look Like in a Democracy?

The internet is an important platform for political organizing where citizens can collaborate to advance democratic goals. Citizens are able to peacefully associate with others on the internet. The internet provides an open space for individuals to exercise their democratic rights and advocate for the rights of others.

### Warning Signs of an Undemocratic Internet:

- Citizens are prevented from accessing websites and messaging apps that facilitate political mobilization.
- Governments pressure websites and social media platforms to remove publicity for an event because it has the effect of limiting the ability of citizens to schedule a public meeting or organize a protest.
- Security agents infiltrate online communities to monitor groups.

### Successful Advocacy Efforts to Defend this Principle:

Social media is an important organizing tool for journalists and advocacy groups in *Uganda*. Facebook, WhatsApp, and other messaging applications [have been used to share](#) political knowledge, connect leaders with supporters, and organize events — even share information about government abuses. During national [‘Walk to Work’](#) protests in 2011, organized to protest living costs after presidential elections, Facebook and Twitter provided a steady stream of updates from protestors, bystanders, and journalists.

# Open Internet Community Members



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# OpenInternet.Global

OPENINTERNET  
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About

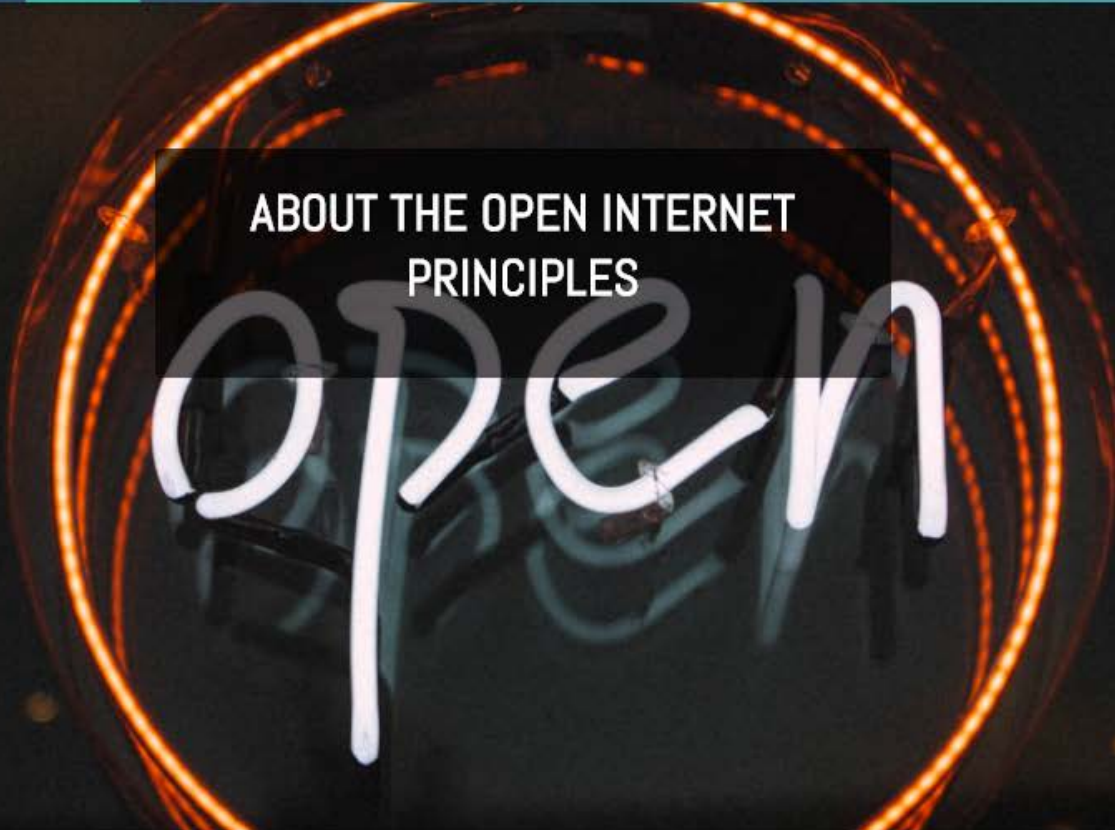
[Comment on the Draft Open Internet Principles](#)

[Join the Community](#)

[Resources](#)

ABOUT THE OPEN INTERNET  
PRINCIPLES

open

A glowing orange sphere, resembling a globe or a planet, is the central focus. The word "open" is written across the sphere in a white, neon-like font. The sphere is surrounded by a dark background with some blurred lights.