

Internet restored in Ethiopia 10 days after assassinations

2 July 2019, by Elias Meseret



Ethiopians follow the news on television at a cafe in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia Sunday, June 23, 2019. Ethiopia's government foiled a coup attempt in a region north of the capital and the country's military chief was shot dead, the prime minister Abiy Ahmed said Sunday in a TV announcement. (AP Photo/Mulugeta Ayene)

Ethiopia has begun restoring internet access Tuesday, 10 days after it was cut following the assassinations of six top government officials.

On June 22, attackers shot and killed the Amhara governor and two other officials. On the same night in Addis Ababa, the country's army chief and his close friend, a retired army general, were assassinated inside his residence by his bodyguard.

The [internet](#) was shut following the killings amid tightened security and a wave of arrests. Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed said the killings in Amhara were a coup attempt.

The internet shutdown affected the entire country but in recent days a few locations were able to function.

"Internet has been restored in Addis Ababa today and it will be restored in other locations across the country as well, step by step," Cherer Aklilu, secretary director of Ethio Telecom, told The Associated Press on Tuesday. "All internet packages that users bought but were not able to use during the internet cut will be reimbursed."

Ethio Telecom, the country's state-owned monopoly of telecommunications services, also cut internet access two weeks ago during national school exams.

NetBlocks, an internet monitoring group, estimated Ethiopia lost a minimum of \$4.5 million a day during the internet cuts.



Meskel Square stands empty in central Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, Sunday, June 23, 2019. Ethiopia's government foiled a coup attempt in a region north of the capital and the country's military chief was shot dead, the prime minister Abiy Ahmed said Sunday in a TV announcement. (AP Photo/Mulugeta Ayene)

"The government should stop cutting the internet whenever some security or exam issues pop up," said Abinet Haregu, a businessman in the delivery

business in Ethiopia. "This is a tactic that was tried and failed in the past."

Internet clampdowns have become more frequent across Africa. Mauritania and Sudan have recently blocked internet access in their countries. The shutdown in Mauritania was for a few days last week when the opposition planned to demonstrate against [election results](#) and Sudan cut internet access amid the ongoing anti-government demonstrations.

In January Zimbabwe ordered a "total internet shutdown" when violent protests over a dramatic fuel price increase resulted in a deadly crackdown.

Also in January Congo cut internet service before a court declared the winner of its disputed election and Gabon shut off service during an attempted coup.

The global digital rights group Access Now reports that there were 21 shutdowns across Africa in 2018, up from 13 in 2017.

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