

# FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION IS A RIGHT, NOT AN OPTION!



Nigeria is one of a few countries that have banned Twitter/social media platforms. Other countries are Iran, China, Turkmenistan and North Korea, all of which are known to lean towards autocratic systems.

In Nigeria, telecommunication companies were ordered to block access to Twitter on **June 4, 2021**.

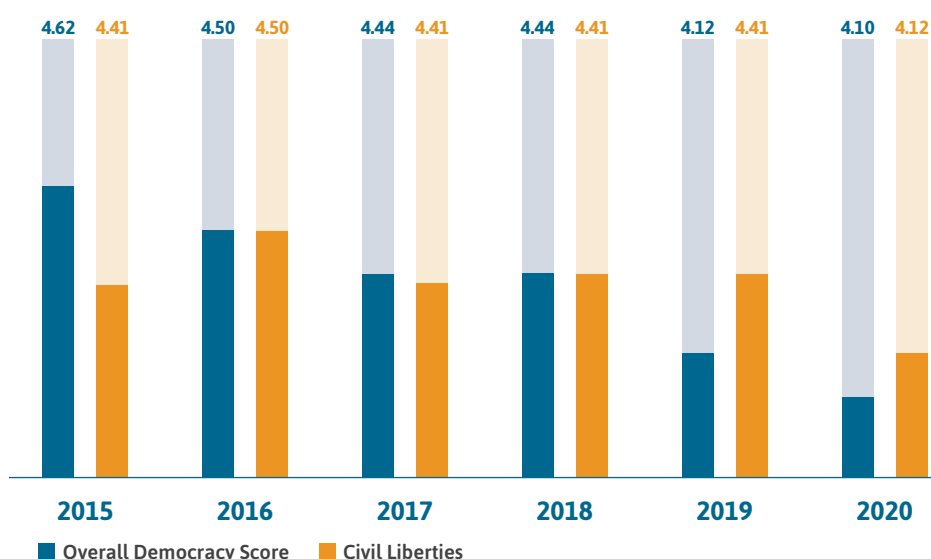
**Sunday, September 12** makes it **100 days** since the directive.

## Is this a slippery slope for Nigeria?

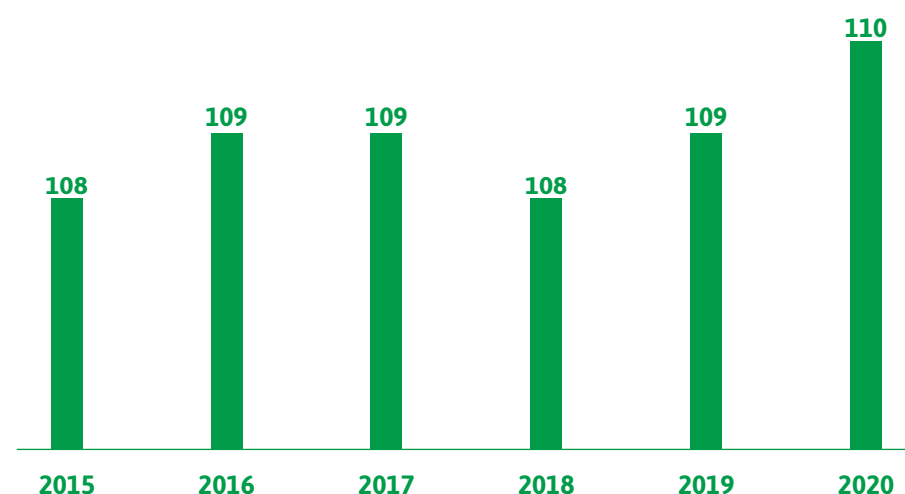
The first 6 years of President Buhari's tenure has seen a steady decline in Nigeria's democracy ratings.

**The #TwitterBan is yet another infringement on civil liberties that is likely to further lower our ratings.**

**Nigeria's Democracy & Civil Liberties (over 10)**







**Nigeria's Rankings (Over 167 Countries)**



Source: The Economist Intelligence Unit

## More democratic states dissatisfied with Twitter have handled the challenges differently

COUNTRY	DISPUTE WITH TWITTER/OTHER SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS	MEASURE IMPOSED
1. <b>NIGERIA</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Unfiltered misinformation and fake news on Twitter.</li><li>Twitter undermining Nigeria's corporate existence.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>Indefinite Ban (June 4, 2021)</b></li></ul>
2. <b>FRANCE</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Uncontrolled hate speech on the platform.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>On Wednesday, May 13, 2020, French parliament passed a law that would fine social media platforms if they fail to remove content within 24 hours -- and in some cases, as little as one hour.</li></ul>
3. <b>CANADA</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Hate and harassment on social media platforms</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>On June 23, 2021, the Liberals introduced Bill C-36, which proposes an amendment to the Canadian Human Rights Act. Under the proposed update, posting hate speech online would be a violation of Canada's Human Rights Act, rather than a criminal offence, and culprits could pay penalties of up to \$50,000.</li><li>In an individual case, victims could receive up to \$20,000 from the culprit.</li></ul>
4. <b>INDIA</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Proliferation of fake and harmful content against India.</li><li>Discriminatory practices against Indians by Twitter.</li><li>Twitter meddling in India's international relations.</li></ul>	<p>The Indian government established the Intermediary Rules 2021 which provides that all social media platforms operating in India should appoint a Chief Compliance Officer, a Resident Grievance Officer and a Nodal Contact Person.</p> <p><b>The law also provides that:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Users must be informed before they are removed and must be allowed to challenge the decision.</li><li>Social media platforms must set up an appropriate complaints system</li><li>Social media platforms must have their physical contact addresses in India displayed on the app.</li><li>Social media platforms must use technology-based measures to identify and remove information that depicts any sexually explicit content.</li></ul>

**Having banned Twitter on June 4, 2021, Nigeria is now potentially in breach of its own constitution as well as international treaties.**

INSTRUMENT	RIGHT
<b>Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999</b> Effective Date: May 29, 1999	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>Right to freedom of expression and the press</b> - Chapter IV section 39(1) and (2)</li></ul>
<b>International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights</b> Effective Date: October 29, 1993	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>Freedom of expression</b> - Article 19(2)</li></ul>
<b>African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights</b> Effective Date: July 22, 1983	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>Right to receive information and free expression</b> - Article 9</li></ul>

**EiE, Paradigm Initiative (PIN) & Media Rights Agenda (MRA) have filed a lawsuit against MTN, Airtel, Globacom and 9Mobile for the court to declare the blockage of Twitter access as unlawful, unconstitutional and against the rights to freedom of expression. We also seek an injunction restraining the telecommunication companies from blocking or interfering with Twitter and any other social media platform. There are 5 other lawsuits in Nigerian and ECOWAS courts.**