

The third quarter of 2025 recorded 48 violations in eleven countries across West Africa. Below is the summary narrative of the incidents, some of which involve more than one violation:

BENIN

On July 11, 2025, Beninese journalist Comlan Hugues Sossoukpè, publisher of *Olofofo*, [went missing](#) in Abidjan while attending the Ivoire Tech Forum. His hotel room was vacated without notice, sparking concern. Sossoukpè, a critic of President Patrice Talon living in exile in Togo since 2019 as a political refugee, was later discovered to have been forcibly repatriated to Benin. On July 14, he appeared before the CRIET on charges of *incitement to rebellion, incitement to hatred and violence, harassment via electronic communication, and advocacy of terrorism*. He was then placed in pre-trial detention at Ouidah prison. The case mirrors that of activist Steve Amoussou, who was reportedly abducted in Togo and jailed in Benin.

On July 15, 2025, journalist Cosme Hounsa, editor-in-chief of *La Boussole*, was [arrested](#) in Parakou by the CNIN after a complaint from Minister Rachidi Gbadamassi, who accused him of *“harassment by electronic means.”* The case stems from *La Boussole*'s reporting on a defamation dispute between Energy Minister Paulin Akponna and his predecessor Samou Séidou Adambi, which allegedly implied Gbadamassi had pushed Akponna to accuse Adambi of embezzlement. Hounsa was transferred to the CRIET in Cotonou, but released on July 17 under summons, with a court appearance scheduled for July 24. The next day, *La Boussole* issued a public apology to Gbadamassi, acknowledging that some reporting may have been perceived as damaging to his image.

Beninese journalist Djobo Bio, who works with FM Nonsina, a community radio station based in Bembéréké, a town in northern Benin (Borgou region), was [arrested](#) by the National Police on Saturday, July 26, 2025. He was subsequently detained at the central police station in

Parakou, the regional capital. Bio's arrest followed the publication of a report on Nonsina's Facebook page about a house attack that occurred on the night of July 22, 2025 in Diadia, a village located in the Sinendé municipality in north-central Benin. The attack allegedly targeted a herder named Oumarou MAMA and his wife.

COTE D'IVOIRE

On 1 September 2025, Ivorian political activist Ibrahim Zigui was [arrested](#) after calling on supporters of the opposition PPA-CI party to prepare for demonstrations ahead of a Constitutional Council decision on presidential election candidacies. Armed men reportedly broke into his home in Abidjan, searched it, and then took him to an unknown destination. His family and political allies have had no news of his whereabouts since then, and no official statement has been made by the authorities.

THE GAMBIA

In August 2025, ex-military officer and commentator Abdoulie Sanyang was [arrested](#) at Banjul Airport after criticizing the government on a popular radio show. Authorities cite national security concerns, while he is held at the CID in Brusubi. His detention, linked also to his participation in the June 23 protest, has raised fresh concerns over freedom of expression in The Gambia.

On September 15, 2025, Gambian police [arrested](#) four activists and a journalist outside the National Audit Office for "unlawful assembly." They were peacefully supporting Auditor General Ceesay, who had been forced from office. Witnesses reported forcible arrests and tear gas. Rights groups condemned the crackdown, while Ceesay is challenging his removal in court.

GHANA

Three journalists, Kwabena Agyekum Banahene of the EIB Network; Salomey Martey of the Multimedia Group; and Vida Wiafe of Amansan TV (ATV) were [assaulted](#) in three different incidents while they were reporting from polling stations in the constituency.

JoyNews’ reporter, Carlos Calony and his cameraman, Jonas Dodzi Voegborlo were [assaulted](#) by the National Security operatives. Carlos Calony was also arrested and detained at the National Security Head Office in Accra, his equipment and phone seized. The security operatives also assaulted an eyewitness with whom the journalist was engaging.

On July 1st, 2025 GRNMA General Secretary Dr. David Tenkorang-Twum “marked” and warned they would be “dealt with” in hospitals. These [remarks](#), made during a June 2025 radio interview amid the nurses' strike.

On August 11, two journalists from [The Fourth Estate](#) had to [abruptly abort](#) a scheduled interview with the acting Director-General of the Ghana Health Service (GHS), Dr. Samuel Kaba Akoriyea. The journalists who are investigating a major health sector scandal for which the Director General needs to clarify some issues, had agreed to an interview with him at his office within the headquarters of the GHS. Upon arriving at the GHS headquarters, the Director General suggested moving the interview venue to the Greater Accra Regional Hospital (Ridge Hospital).

GUINEA

On 24 August 2025, Guinean journalist Mamadou Boullère Diallo was [arrested](#) while covering a deadly landslide in Manéah, about 40 kilometres from Conakry. Diallo, a reporter for the Hadafo Media group and administrator of the website leguideinfo.net, was detained by soldiers

and gendarmes while covering rescue operations. Security forces seized his cameras and phones before taking him to the gendarmerie's 23rd mobile brigade, near the disaster site. After 24 hours of mediation, Diallo was released on 25 August and handed over to the Guinean Press Professionals Union (SPPG). The SPPG strongly condemned the arrest as a violation of press freedom and demanded his immediate release. The detention contravenes Guinea's 2010 Press Freedom Act L002, which decriminalises press offences and stipulates that no journalist may be detained for acts committed in the exercise of their profession.

On August 25, 2025, Guinean journalist Daouda Bah of national TV channel RTG was [attacked](#) by protesters in Conakry while riding home on his motorbike. After identifying himself as a journalist, he was stabbed in the left eye, leading to permanent loss of the eye. He is receiving treatment at Donka Hospital in serious condition. The Minister of Information condemned the assault and promised an investigation.

GUINEA BISSAU

On August 15, 2025, Guinea-Bissau [suspended](#) Portuguese outlets RTP África, RDP África, and Agência Lusa, ordering their staff to leave by August 19 without explanation. The move drew condemnation from the outlets, Portugal's Foreign Ministry, and local press freedom groups, who called it arbitrary and damaging to democracy. Rights organizations warned it deprives citizens of independent information. The suspension follows a series of press freedom violations, including the violent July 2025 attack on RTP correspondent Waldir Araújo, prior bans on RTP journalists, and suspected government interference in broadcasts.

MALI

On 14 July 2025, Seydou Oumar Traoré, director of Radio Baoulé in Mali, was [sentenced](#) to six months in prison and fined one million CFA francs for 'insulting a foreign head of state'.

He had been arrested on 26 May 2025 after posting a viral video in which he accused Guinea's transitional president, General Mamady Doumbouya, of betraying the Sahel Alliance by collaborating with Western powers.

On 28 July 2025, the Bamako court [sentenced](#) journalist Kassim Traoré and pro-junta activist Mamadou Sidibé to six months' suspended imprisonment and a fine of 150,000 CFA francs for defamation, following online publications about an alleged altercation between a magistrate and a prosecutor. Two other journalists who had been charged were acquitted.

On 28 July 2025, Malian journalist Alfousseini Togo was given an eight-month [suspended](#) prison sentence and fined 500,000 CFA francs by the National Cybercrime Unit in Bamako. This sentence followed the publication on 8 April 2025 of an article entitled 'Malian justice or the scourge of the century: the mistake made by Minister Mamoudou Kassogué', in which he questioned the results of an official survey on public confidence in the judicial system. The Minister of Justice had claimed that this confidence had risen from 30% to 72% in 2024, a figure that Togo considered unrepresentative, pointing out that the survey sample consisted of only 2,000 people out of a population of more than 23 million.

Former Malian Prime Minister Moussa Mara was [arrested](#) in Bamako on August 1, 2025, by the National Cybercrime Unit for allegedly "undermining the credibility of the state" through social media posts about his visits to political prisoners. His arrest followed four rounds of questioning in July by various judicial and police bodies, including the Judicial Investigation Brigade, the Public Prosecutor's Office, and the Commune 4 Police Station. Earlier, on July 21, Mara—who served as Prime Minister from 2014 to 2015—had been barred from leaving Mali without prior notice or any formal travel restrictions, despite holding a valid passport.

Blogger and photographer Alhousseiny Traoré was [arrested](#) on September 12, 2025, in Timbuktu after posting a Facebook message denouncing corruption and negligence in the surgical department of the Timbuktu Regional Hospital. In his post, he accused surgeons of

delaying operations despite the availability of equipment, accepting informal payments for faster care, and violating regulations that require official receipts. His arrest followed his attempt to expose these abuses; an act aligned with his role as a public watchdog highlighting issues of public interest in Mali's healthcare system.

MAURITANIA

On July 22, 2025, Mauritanian activist Ali Ould Bakkar was [arrested](#) in Nouadhibou after the Coast Guard accused him of spreading false information that could harm the state and its foreign relations. He had posted claims on Facebook about illegal fishing by Turkish vessels in restricted waters, which authorities dismissed as inaccurate and based on faulty tracking, suggesting negligence by officials. Bakkar's father condemned the arrest as arbitrary and politically driven, linking it to alleged ties with ex-president Mohamed Ould Abdelaziz's supporters. His wife said he was pressured to apologise for years of past writings.

On July 27, 2025, Mauritanian journalist Ahmed Ould Haroud, director of the Hassaniya Platform, was [arrested](#) in Nouakchott after a dispute with a traffic police officer. The officer tried to use Ahmed's car to take him to a station; when he refused, the officer clamped his vehicle. Ahmed later questioned the legality of the act in a Facebook post, prompting the officer to file a complaint. Reports suggest the officer demanded the post's deletion and a public apology. Ahmed's arrest drew outrage from media groups, civil society, and opposition party RFD, which condemned it as a press freedom violation.

On August 25, 2025, Mauritanian authorities permanently [shut down](#) the Arabic-language news site Anbaa.info, accusing it of trying to damage relations with Algeria. The Cybercrime Unit informed the editor-in-chief that the site had failed to comply with a prior license revocation ordered by the Ministry of Communication. Officials cited analytical articles on Mauritania-Algeria relations, published since 2022, as a source of tension. The outlet had

already been sanctioned in March 2024 with a 60-day suspension for “attacks against Algeria.” Anbaa.info’s editor denied receiving official notice of the revocation and defended the reporting as ethical and evidence-based. The outlet plans to challenge the shutdown in court. On September 2, 2025, Mauritanian gendarmes [arrested](#) two Al Akhbar.info journalists, Aboubakar Ould Mohamed Vall and Mohamed Abdallah Ould al-Moustapha, while they were covering a peaceful protest by gas distributors in Nouakchott. The reporters were taken to a police station and pressured to delete their photos and videos. After refusing, they were detained for three hours before being released without charge.

NIGER

On September 7, 2025, Nigerien investigative journalist Ali Soumana, editor of *Le Courrier*, was [arrested](#) in Niamey and transferred to Say prison after a complaint by Prime Minister Ali Mahamane Lamine Zeine. He was charged the next day with defamation and complicity in dissemination by press and electronic means, following a report alleging customs fraud involving officials and traders. *Le Courrier* claimed to have a document signed by the prime minister supporting the story. Soumana had previously been detained in April 2025 over a similar complaint but was released without charge.

NIGERIA

On July 10, 2025, Kwara State police [arrested](#) investigative journalist Buhari Olanrewaju Ahmed and activist Saidu Musa Tsaragi after they condemned a government-backed violent attack on protesters demonstrating against rising kidnappings. Their arrest followed a complaint by Abubakar Sadiq Buhari, the Governor’s Special Adviser, accusing them of defamation, cybercrime, and conspiracy. The July 9 protest had been violently dispersed by

thugs allegedly supported by senior state officials and police officers, who assaulted protesters and plainclothes intelligence officers, and deleted videos from seized phones. After publicly denouncing the attack as a violation of the right to peaceful assembly, the two were invited by police and then detained. Authorities later bypassed due process by obtaining a remand order directly from a court registrar, keeping them in custody despite the magistrate court not sitting.

On July 28, 2025, Niger State Governor Mohammed Umar Bago ordered the [shutdown](#) of Badeggi Radio (90.1 FM) in Minna, accusing it of promoting violence. He directed the police and state security officials to lock the station and profile its owner. The Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ) condemned the move as illegal, stressing that only the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) and the courts can revoke a broadcast licence. NUJ urged the Governor to channel any grievances through the NBC. Human rights lawyer Femi Falana also criticised the shutdown as unconstitutional and a violation of press freedom. Badeggi Radio has since remained off air.

On August 29, 2025, Daniel Ojukwu, a journalist with the Foundation for Investigative Journalism (FIJ), was [assaulted](#) at the Lagos State Police Command while following up on an extortion case. Three officers at the Squad 1 office seized his phone, and when he resisted, they shoved him out and violently attacked him, joined by others who beat him, broke his glasses, and injured his arm. One officer threatened him with a machete, while another mocked that his death would be blamed on asthma, not police brutality.

On September 6, 2025, Nigeria's Department of State Services (DSS) asked X Corp. to [delete](#) a post and deactivate the account of activist Omoyele Sowore after he called President Bola Tinubu a "criminal," accusing him of spreading falsehoods and violating several national laws on cybercrime and terrorism. A similar request was sent to Meta the next day concerning Sowore's Facebook account.

On September 9, 2025, Nigerian journalist Sodiq Atanda of the Foundation for Investigative Journalism (FIJ) was [detained](#) for 11 hours by the Ekiti State Police after honouring an invitation over a petition from Federal University Oye-Ekiti Vice Chancellor Abayomi Sunday Fasina, who accused him and FIJ of cyberbullying and defamation following reports on sexual misconduct allegations against him. Despite arriving with legal counsel, Atanda was held on the orders of the Police Commissioner and pressured to reveal his sources, which he refused. He was released later that evening, with the Commissioner later claiming ignorance of his journalist status.

On September 10, 2025, Nigerian journalist Hassan Mai-Waya Kangiwa was [arrested](#) in Kebbi State after posting a viral video exposing poor conditions at Kangiwa General Hospital, including patients lying on bare bedframes. Instead of addressing the issues raised, Governor Nasir Idris's administration reportedly ordered his arrest without clarifying the legal grounds. The detention has drawn widespread condemnation from civil society groups, press freedom advocates, and opposition figures, who denounced it as an assault on accountability and free expression.

SENEGAL

On June 25, 2025, Senegalese journalist Bachir Fofana was [arrested](#) by the Cybersecurity Division following a complaint from National Assembly president El Malick Ndiaye. He was accused of spreading false information about a vehicle procurement process, after mistakenly naming contractor Cheikh Guèye instead of the actual awardee, Cheikh Dieng. Brought to trial on July 2, the prosecutor sought a six-month sentence (three in prison) and a 200,000 CFA fine. The court denied his lawyer's request for provisional release, keeping him detained until the verdict on July 16.

On July 9, 2025, Senegalese journalist Badara Gadiaga of TFM was [arrested](#) after remarks made during a July 4 TV debate in which he countered an MP's accusations by recalling Prime

Minister Ousmane Sonko's 2023 conviction for "corruption of youth." Detained by the Cybersecurity Division, Gadiaga was later charged with indecent speech, spreading false information, insulting the Head of State, and receiving funds to disturb public order. He remains in custody as investigations continue. His case reflects a growing trend of prosecutions against journalists and critics in Senegal, following similar actions against Abdou Nguer, Moustapha Diakhaté, and Bachir Fofana.

On July 30, 2025, journalist Bachir Fofana and former MP Moustapha Diakhate were [sentenced](#) to two months in prison, with only fifteen days enforceable—a term already exceeded in pre-trial detention. Fofana had been arrested on June 25 for mistakenly naming the wrong contractor in a report on a parliamentary procurement, while Diakhate was detained on June 10 for remarks deemed offensive to Senegal's president and other leaders. Delays due to a clerks' strike prolonged their detention, but both were released immediately after the verdict.

On August 20, 2025, journalist Doudou Coulibaly, Programme Director of Dakar Municipal Radio, was [detained](#) after being summoned by Senegal's Cybercrime Division over remarks about Prime Minister Ousmane Sonko's visit to Türkiye. He allegedly likened Sonko's meeting with President Erdogan to an encounter between "underworld figures" and was accused of spreading videos and photo montages, which he denies. Coulibaly faces charges of insulting a foreign Head of State, insulting Senegal's president, and defamation. He remains in pre-trial detention ahead of his August 25 trial. His case is the fourth in three months where critics have been prosecuted for "offending the head of state."

On August 25, the Dakar Court of Misdemeanors convicted Doudou Coulibaly of insulting a foreign head of state, acquitted him of insulting Senegal's president, and [sentenced](#) him to a three-month suspended term with a CFA 300,000 (USD 540) fine before releasing him.

SIERRA LEONE

On August 20, 2025, Sierra Leone journalist Thomas Dixon, Chairman of the Guild of Newspaper Editors and Managing Editor of the *New Age*, announced he had been [invited](#) to appear before the CID over allegations of “cyber-stalking and cyberbullying” filed by Chinese-owned Leone Rock Metal Group. The case stems from Dixon’s report alleging the company failed to pay social security contributions for its foreign workers, which he also shared on social media. Though the Independent Media Commission dismissed the company’s initial complaint in Dixon’s favour, Leone Rock escalated the matter to the CID. The move has sparked concern among Sierra Leone’s media and civil society groups about the misuse of cybercrime laws to suppress critical journalism.

On August 27, 2025, Sierra Leone journalist Shar Maturi was briefly [detained](#) over a report on alleged fund misappropriation involving a MP and community chairman. He was released the same day after intervention by SLAJ and his media outlet. The incident raises concerns about the misuse of the Cyber Security and Crime Act and potential press restrictions under the proposed Counter-Terrorism Bill.

TOGO

On August 22, 2025, Togolese activists Armand Agblézé and Oséi Agbagnou of the citizens’ movement Tournons la Page were [arrested](#) and detained at SCRIC. Their detention, officially linked to planning protests against injustice and poor governance, reflects rising tensions between civil society and the state following the June 2025 demonstrations demanding democratic reforms. On August 28, they were charged with “aggravated public order disturbance” and transferred to Lomé Civil Prison. The movement also reported that another

supporter fled the country after being targeted and surveilled by suspected plainclothes officers, highlighting efforts to intimidate and suppress civic activism.

Civil society groups seeking accountability for June's deadly crackdown were met with heavy security force deployments that effectively blocked the march. Activist-musician Aamron and his mother [were stopped](#) by armed soldiers and forced to delete photos, former defence minister Essissomna Marguerite Gnacadé was intercepted shortly after leaving home, and opposition leader Brigitte Kafui Adjamagbo-Johnson was confined to her house overnight by surrounding troops. These actions highlight deepening tensions between citizens demanding reform and a government intent on silencing dissent.

Since the August 22, 2025, arrests of *Tournons la Page* members Armand Agblézé and Oséi Agbagno, Togo has seen a new wave of detentions targeting activists and students, further eroding freedom of expression. Among those [arrested](#) are paralegal Chimene Akou Apevon, detained on August 28 and later charged with incitement to violence and undermining state security; SEET Secretary-General Yawo Attiso and member Abdoul Zoulkaneini Lamboni, apprehended by plainclothes officers on September 3; and student Julien Komandéga Katakam, whose status remains unclear. Authorities have offered no official explanation for these arrests, which raise the number of detained dissenting voices to six amid a growing crackdown on civil society following the June 2025 protests.

On September 17, 2025, former defence minister Essossimna Marguerite Gnacadé was [arrested](#) in Lomé after months of criticizing President Faure Gnassingbé and recent constitutional reforms. Armed officers raided her home, confiscating her devices before taking her into custody. Gnacadé had previously faced harassment during the August 30 protests and has been a prominent critic of government crackdowns. Her arrest underscores the Togolese government's use of intimidation to suppress dissent, restrict protests, and create political fear.

On September 19, 2025, Togolese artist and activist Aamron (Tchala Essowè Narcisse) was [arrested](#) at his home and charged with inciting revolt, spreading false information, and insulting state authorities. Brought before a judge the same day, he was released on September 20 under judicial supervision, with his passport confiscated. His arrest came shortly after that of former defence minister and government critic Essozimna Marguerite Gnacadé, and follows Aamron's earlier detention in May 2025, during which he reported being tortured. The repeated targeting of Aamron reflects the government's escalating repression of dissent and the tightening restrictions on freedom of expression in Togo.