



SUPPORTING
AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT
FOR CIVIL SOCIETY

Enabling Environment Snapshot

Chad

July 2025



Context

The civic space in Chad remains [severely restricted](#), shaped by a legacy of authoritarian governance, legal constraints, and [escalating repression](#). The environment for civil society is increasingly defined by state control over institutions, a punitive legal framework, disinformation and deep-rooted social fragility.

A key legal instrument—the 2018 Ordinance No. 023/PR/2018—continues to [impose onerous conditions](#) on the registration and operation of associations. It mandates prior ministerial authorization and criminalises unauthorised activity, including the formation of federations, under threat of imprisonment or heavy fines. These provisions have been [widely criticized](#) by legal experts and human rights organizations for violating international standards on freedom of association. The government has further prohibited coalitions between political parties and civil society organizations (CSOs), regional and community organisations, effectively dismantling avenues for citizen-led collaboration and advocacy. Government decrees have [targeted](#) specific youth and peacebuilding organizations, such as AJADR and CONAJEPDT, dissolving them on vague grounds of public order violations.

Since 2021, public demonstrations have been met with violent suppression, including the use of live ammunition and [mass arrests](#). The National State Security Agency (ANSE) has been [implicated](#) in arbitrary detentions and intimidation of civil society leaders and opposition figures. The October 2022 [crackdown](#), which resulted in dozens of deaths and hundreds of injuries, remains uninvestigated.

The December 2023 [constitutional referendum](#), widely seen as engineered to entrench the ruling regime, marked a turning point. Despite claims of democratic transition, the process was [marred by irregularities](#), exclusion of opposition voices, and a lack of transparency. The ruling Patriotic Salvation Movement (MPS) secured a dominant majority in the National Assembly, while opposition parties [boycotted](#) the elections citing fraud and repression. Inter-ethnic violence continues to undermine national cohesion. In Mandakao (May 2025), [clashes](#) between Fulani herders and Ngambaye farmers left over 35 dead and displaced hundreds. Similar [incidents in Ouaddai](#) province reflect long-standing tensions between Zaghawa and Ouaddai communities. These [conflicts are exacerbated](#) by competition over land and resources, weak governance, and climate pressures.

Apart from the legal and institutional constraints, the environment for civil society in Chad is also shaped by a volatile information environment. Disinformation and divisive narratives—particularly [anti-French and pro-Russian rhetoric](#)—are gaining traction amid geopolitical competition. These narratives, often amplified through [coordinated campaigns](#) involving paid influencers, fake media content, and Russian state-linked channels, further polarize communities and erode public trust in institutions.

Despite these challenges, civil society actors persist in efforts to foster dialogue and peacebuilding, often under threat. Movements like Wakit Tama and local youth networks have mobilized around issues of governance, human rights, and social cohesion. However, their impact remains constrained by limited institutional support, surveillance, and legal harassment.

1. Respect for and protection of fundamental freedoms

In Chad, constitutional guarantees of freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly (Article 28 of [the 2018 Constitution](#)) are regularly flouted by restrictive laws and

repressive measures, plunging civil society actors into a climate of fear and uncertainty. Freedom of expression is subject to sustained repression: in 2025, journalists such as Olivier Mbaindinguim and Mahamat Saleh Al Hisseine [were arbitrarily arrested](#), accused of "collusion with Wagner", in what the Union of Chadian Journalists [condemned](#) as politically motivated detentions. On 14 June 2025, the Attorney General [explicitly banned](#) any independent investigation into the deadly conflict in Mandakao, which left over 30 people dead, mainly women and children from the Fulani community, and threatened [legal](#) action against journalists and civil society actors who attempted to report on the incident. Provisions of the 2017 Criminal Code ([loi n° 001/PR/2017](#)), including Articles 142 and 143 (contempt of public office) and Articles 346 and 518 (contempt not committed by the press), are regularly used to silence dissenting voices.

Freedom of association in Chad remains fragile. Civic [groups](#) such as Wakit Tama continue to face police repression and harassment, while gatherings are frequently banned without due process. Although the constitution provides for freedom of association, there is no specific legal framework that protects independent civil society organizations from state interference. In practice, authorities can arbitrarily deny registration, dissolve organisations, or obstruct their activities without clear legal justification. Civil society actors are therefore vulnerable to intimidation and disruption — a pattern consistently documented by the [CIVICUS Monitor](#) and other human rights observers

Freedom of peaceful assembly is criminalised by a set of overlapping decrees and criminal provisions. Decree No. 009/PT/2023 punishes refusal to disperse and incitement to unarmed assembly; Decree No. 010/PT/2023 targets unannounced meetings, failure to designate leaders and prolonged gatherings; Order No. 011/PT/2023 punishes incomplete or inaccurate statements and participation in prohibited demonstrations. These provisions are reinforced by Articles 124 and 126 of the Criminal Code, which further criminalise refusal to disperse and incitement to assemble. Demonstrations, whether against government policies, gender-based violence or foreign military presence, are often banned under vague public order laws, and participants are at risk of arrest or violence. In January and March 2025, the Ministry of Public Security and Immigration banned two peaceful demonstrations organised by the R.J.A and the [CNDH victims'](#) collective, respectively, citing non-compliance with Order No. 011/PR/2023 and risks to public order. According to Freedom House, Chad scores only 15/100 in its 2025 [global freedom index](#), with only 1/40 for political rights and 14/60 for civil liberties. This reflects a general climate of repression, impunity and abuse of power by the executive branch. Civil society actors operate under constant threat, with limited legal protection and an increasingly restricted space for dissent. Without urgent reforms, the environment for civil society in Chad will remain dangerously compromised.

2. Supportive legal framework for the work of civil society actors

The legal framework governing civil society in Chad remains highly restrictive, particularly in relation to the regulation of associations. [Ordinance No. 23/PR/2018](#), which replaced Ordinance No. 27/INT/SUR of 1962 on public meetings, imposes strict registration requirements and prohibits associations from operating until they receive formal authorisation from the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Decentralisation. Article 8 of this law explicitly states that the mere fact of founding an association does not confer the right to commence activities, thereby reinforcing a rigid system of prior authorisation. Articles 31 and 32 criminalise the existence and administration of unauthorised associations, thereby making

membership of unregistered groups a punishable offence. In June 2025, the Mouvement Citoyen Le Temps and the political wing of Wakit-Tama [were banned](#) from all activities throughout the country by the Ministry, pursuant to Decree No. 01/PR/PM/MATD/SG/2025, for operating informally without legal authorisation.

The registration procedure itself is cumbersome and opaque, with authorities having up to three months to respond and no clear appeal process for applicants facing delays or refusals. The order further erodes civil society autonomy by banning regionalised associations and prohibiting affiliation with international confederations. It empowers the government to dissolve associations on vaguely defined grounds such as threats to "territorial integrity" or "national unity", terms that remain undefined and open to arbitrary interpretation. For example, in June 2025, two civil society organisations: the Association des Jeunes pour l'Animation et le Développement Rural (AJADR) and the Coordination Nationale des Jeunes pour la Paix et le Développement au Tchad (CONAJEPDT), [were dissolved](#) by the Minister of Territorial Administration by Decree No. 712/PR/PM/MATD/SG/2025 without giving specific reasons.

Human rights organisations, religious groups and student associations are explicitly prohibited from engaging in "political activities", but the order does not specify what constitutes such activities, which has a chilling effect on rights defence and civic engagement. Foreign associations face additional obstacles, including the periodic renewal of their authorisation, the frequency and criteria for which are not specified.

3. Accessible and sustainable sources of information

Despite the presence of active civil society organisations in Chad, access to sustainable resources remains limited and difficult. Funding is largely provided by donors and is project-based, with limited national financial support. International donors [such as USAID](#), the EU and UNDP continue to provide vital assistance through calls for proposals, implementation partnerships and technical assistance. However, this dependence on external support exposes CSOs to volatility and donor priorities, which undermines their long-term viability.

Domestic funding mechanisms are underdeveloped. There are no robust tax incentives or exemptions to encourage philanthropic support, and the legal framework does not facilitate the mobilisation of domestic resources. Furthermore, foreign funding, while not explicitly prohibited, is subject to bureaucratic control and political considerations, particularly in a context of increased repression and legal ambiguity.

Structural fragility, characterised by limited institutional capacity, geographical concentration in urban centres and weak coordination, further limits access to resources. Opportunities exist, including media engagement, advocacy for legal reforms and access to human and technical resources through donor programmes. However, these are circumstantial rather than systemic solutions.

4. Openness and responsiveness of the state

The political transition in Chad has been marked by a paradoxical attitude towards civil society, where formal gestures of openness coexist with systemic restrictions. Although platforms for engagement exist, such as consultations in the humanitarian and development sectors, participation is often selective. They are limited and largely informal. Government consultations are sporadic and tend to favour urban organisations in N'Djamena and the south, particularly those aligned with donor priorities in education, health and natural resource governance. Independent, feminist, youth-led and rights-based groups are often excluded or

stigmatised. While community organisations play a proven role in local governance, particularly through local development plans (PDLs), their participation at the national level remains uneven and conditional. Government entities tend to favour pro- al organisations aligned with official discourse, sidelining independent, feminist, youth-led and community groups.

There are no institutionalised or transparent mechanisms for civil society to contribute regularly to policy-making. Consultations, when they take place, are ad hoc and are not publicly recognised or integrated into decision-making processes. This conditional openness reflects a broader strategy of co-optation rather than genuine collaboration.

Chad does not have a specific law on access to information. Requests for public information are handled inconsistently, and civil society actors calling for transparency are often [stigmatised](#) or accused of political opposition. The lack of legal guarantees for timely and equitable access to information undermines accountability and limits civic oversight.

In summary, while opportunities for engagement exist, they are fragile and contingent. Without legal reforms to institutionalise participation and protect access to information, civic space remains vulnerable to further shrinkage, particularly during periods of political tension.

5. Political culture and public discourse on civil society

Chad's political culture favours stability and centralised power, often under the guise of inclusive governance. In their public statements, political leaders only present civil society as a partner when it aligns with the interests of the state. Independent or critical voices are frequently marginalised, stigmatised or [accused](#) of undermining national unity. Arrests, administrative suspensions and legal restrictions are commonly used tools to [silence dissidents](#).

Media coverage of civil society is limited and often influenced by official discourse, reinforcing the idea that only 'constructive' or apolitical organisations are legitimate. This framework discourages public support for advocacy-focused CSOs and restricts their room for manoeuvre.

The role of civil society is not officially included in Chad's national education programme, which contributes to low public awareness of its importance. While CSOs play a vital role in service delivery and rights promotion, their contributions are largely undervalued in national discourse. This controlled discourse undermines the credibility of civil society and hinders its ability to mobilise communities, advocate for reforms and hold institutions accountable. Without a change in public discourse and institutional recognition, civil society in Chad remains subordinate to state power and vulnerable to repression.

Public discourse around civil society is increasingly being influenced by external propaganda and disinformation networks. [Reports indicate](#) that Russian-linked actors have supported the creation of seemingly grassroots African organizations to disseminate polarising content. This manipulation of narratives undermines civil society's efforts to promote transparency, dialogue, and democratic engagement, while reinforcing suspicion and fragmentation within the public sphere.

6. Access to a secure digital environment

In 2025, Chadian civil society continues to face profound challenges in accessing a secure digital environment. Internet penetration remains one of [the lowest in the world](#), at only 13.2%, or 2.74 million users, [with significant disparities between urban and rural areas](#): 75% of the population lives in rural areas with limited infrastructure and high costs. Fixed broadband is virtually non-existent and most connections rely on mobile networks, which are often slow and unreliable. Internet shutdowns, such as [the one in February 2024](#) during civil unrest, highlight the fragility of Chad's digital infrastructure and the government's propensity to restrict access.

Digital freedoms are restricted by vague laws on issues such as that allow for the surveillance and harassment of activists, while online platforms are monitored and sometimes suspended. Civil society actors risk prosecution under cybercrime and defamation laws, which are sometimes used to silence dissent. Despite these constraints, in July 2025 the government launched a national [AI training programme](#) for 2,000 young people, signalling a nascent commitment to promoting digital literacy and innovation. However, uptake remains limited and most CSOs lack the skills or tools to effectively leverage digital technologies. The digital divide continues to marginalise rural organisations, hampering their advocacy work, outreach and access to global networks.

Challenges and opportunities

Between August and November 2025, the enabling environment for civil society in Chad is expected to remain fragile and unpredictable. Risks include the continuation of administrative restrictions, such as the suspension of CSOs deemed “hostile,” and tighter controls on foreign funding. New repressive laws targeting protests, the media, and digital spaces could further restrict civic action. Civil society actors are also likely to face heightened challenges due to the continued spread of disinformation and politically charged narratives. These dynamics may intensify public mistrust and complicate efforts to foster inclusive dialogue and civic engagement.

Despite these threats, opportunities exist. The ongoing institutional transition offers partial openings for dialogue and reform. Strategic external support and coordinated advocacy, particularly around inclusive governance and human rights, can help preserve civic space. Social innovation and professionalisation within CSOs also appear to be strategies for resilience.

To navigate this unstable period, civil society actors must strengthen their alliances, diversify their tactics and remain vigilant in the face of legal and political backlash. The next four months will be decisive in determining whether civic space will continue to shrink or find the space it needs to assert its role in Chad's democratic trajectory. Targeted interventions are needed to strengthen media literacy, support independent information channels, and protect civil society from digital and reputational attacks.

This publication has been funded/co-funded by the European Union. Its contents are the sole responsibility of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union.

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