

Algeria

Country Focus Report

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Credit: Jamal Kabar



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A) An Introduction to the Enabling Environment

What we mean by an "enabling environment" is the set of laws, rules and social attitudes that support and encourage the work of civil society. In such an environment, civil society can engage in political and public life without fear of reprisals, openly express its opinions and actively participate in shaping its context. This includes a legal and regulatory framework that is favourable to civil society, guaranteeing access to information and sustainable and flexible resources in order to pursue its objectives without hindrance, in safe physical and digital spaces. In an enabling environment, the state is open and responsive in its governance, promoting transparency, accountability and inclusive decision-making. Positive values, norms, attitudes and practices towards civil society on the part of state and non-state actors further reinforce this enabling environment.

To assess the state of the enabling environment, we use the following six principles:

SIX ENABLING PRINCIPLES

- 1. Respect and Protection of Fundamental Freedoms**
- 2. Supportive Legal and Regulatory Framework**
- 3. Accessible and Sustainable Resources**
- 4. Open and Responsive State**
- 5. Supportive Public Culture and Discourses on Civil Society**
- 6. Access to a Secure Digital Environment**

In this country-specific thematic report, each enabling principle is assessed using a quantitative score and supplemented by analysis and recommendations written by members of our network. Rather than proposing a single index to rank countries, the report aims to measure the enabling environment for civil society across the six principles, identifying strengths and areas requiring particular attention.

The conclusions presented in this report are based on the diverse knowledge and perspectives of civil society actors who came together in a dedicated panel with civil society representatives to discuss and assess the state of the enabling environment. Their collective contribution enriches the report with a participatory and informed assessment. This primary contribution is supplemented by secondary sources of information, which provide additional context and reinforce the analysis.

Brief Overview of the Country Context

Algeria operates under a [republican constitutional system](#) characterised by a strong concentration of power in the presidential executive. While the Constitution guarantees freedoms of association, expression, and assembly, these rights are heavily restricted in practice.

Since the onset of the Hirak movement in 2019, civic space has faced [persistent repression](#), which intensified in 2021 when authorities curtailed the movement through [restrictive and targeted measures](#). Arbitrary arrests, criminalisation of dissent, and widespread surveillance [have increased](#). As of March 2025, more than 200 prisoners of conscience [were detained](#) for peacefully expressing their views, particularly on social media.

The [2012 Law on Associations](#) imposes a prior authorisation regime, requiring founders to obtain formal approval from the administration before a CSO can acquire legal status and operate. This grants authorities broad discretionary powers to obstruct CSO activities. A [new bill](#) under consideration could further tighten these restrictions.

Freedom of assembly remains strictly regulated, public media marginalises critical voices, and the National Human Rights Council is [largely inactive](#). The judiciary, widely perceived as an instrument of the executive, lacks independence and is frequently used to prosecute activists and human rights defenders.

The digital space—once a refuge for free expression—is now closely monitored. Critical internet users [are often targeted](#) with vague charges such as “*spreading false information*,” “*inciting hatred*,” or “*undermining national unity*.”

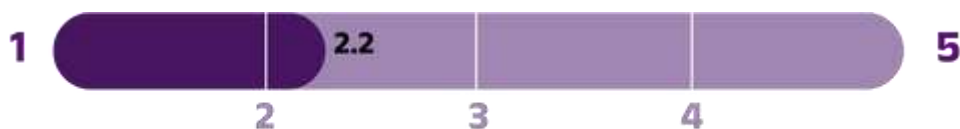
Despite this repressive environment, Algerian civil society continues to demonstrate resilience, often operating informally and [drawing strength](#) from regional networks, international mechanisms, and strong local roots. This persistence reflects a deep commitment to human rights, social justice, and civic participation.

B) Assessment of the Enabling Environment

PRINCIPLE SCORE

1. Respect and Protection of Fundamental Freedoms

Rating: 2.2/5 ¹



"We can still talk about rights, but never collectively, never publicly, never without risk."

Freedom of association, peaceful assembly and expression are enshrined in the Constitution, but the reality remains one of [sustained repression](#), selective enforcement of laws and the extension of general criminal provisions (notably Article [87 bis](#) of the Penal Code). The [CIVICUS Monitor](#) classifies Algeria's civic space as "repressed", with updates for 2024-2025 reporting arrests and convictions related to dissent.

1.1 | Freedom of association

Freedom of association in Algeria is formally guaranteed under Article 53 of [the 2020 Constitution](#), which affirms the right to form associations "in accordance with the law." However, this constitutional protection is significantly undermined by [Law No. 12-06](#) of 12 January 2012, which imposes a system of prior authorisation and grants authorities broad discretion to refuse, delay, or dissolve associations on vague grounds.

Efforts to reform this framework have not improved the situation. A draft bill intended to replace Law No. 12-06, [reviewed by civil society organisations](#) in September 2025, has been widely criticised for entrenching restrictive measures rather than addressing existing shortcomings. The bill reintroduces mandatory prior government approval, grants the Interior Ministry sweeping powers over the creation, financing, and activities of associations, imposes arbitrary restrictions on objectives and operations, limits foreign funding, forbids ties with political

¹This is a rebalanced score derived from the [CIVICUS Monitor rating](#) published in December 2024.

parties, and maintains onerous registration requirements. These provisions contradict the principle of independent civil society and risk further shrinking civic space.

In practice, the enabling environment for civil society remains highly constrained. Authorities continued in 2025 to use [administrative obstruction](#) and the threat of criminal prosecution under terrorism-related provisions to deter unregistered groups. The [ICNL Civic Freedom Monitor](#) notes that the expansion of [Article 87 bis](#) and the ability to place individuals or entities on a national terrorism list without a final judgment have a chilling effect on informal civic initiatives. Reports presented at a Human Rights Council side event on 7 March 2025, co-organised by MENA Rights Group, [documented cases](#) of judicial harassment and surveillance targeting unregistered defenders, particularly those working on enforced disappearances or linked to the Hirak movement.

International assessments in 2025 converge on the same conclusion: civic space in Algeria is steadily deteriorating. A [joint letter](#) from HRW, CIHRS, and EuroMed Rights to the UNHRC (March 2025) [highlights](#) the “abusive use of terrorism-related charges” against peaceful activists. The CIVICUS Monitor [continues to classify](#) Algeria as “severely restricted”, citing systematic targeting of unregistered associations. Amnesty International’s [2024–2025 updates](#) confirm that the combination of Law 12-06 and Article 87 bis effectively criminalises autonomous organisation, leaving little room for independent civil society.

Overall, the legal and practical environment for freedom of association in Algeria remains deeply restrictive, characterised by excessive state control, punitive measures against informal organising, and legislative initiatives that further undermine constitutional guarantees.

1.2 | Freedom of peaceful assembly

In Algeria, the right to peaceful assembly remains largely theoretical and is subject to extensive discretionary power by authorities, including preventive bans, dispersal of gatherings, and [arrests](#). Despite constitutional guarantees, the legal framework—particularly Article 15 of Law No. 89-28 of 31 December 1989 on public meetings and demonstrations, as amended by [Law No. 91-19 of 2 December 1991](#)—authorises the wali or security forces to ban or disperse demonstrations if they deem them to “disturb public order” or “threaten security.” These concepts are overly broad and undefined, granting authorities wide latitude to prohibit even peaceful gatherings.

In practice, enforcement remains highly restrictive. Amnesty International (February 2024) [documented](#) that five years after the Hirak movement began, hundreds of individuals had been arbitrarily arrested, with dozens still in detention for participating in peaceful protests. Freedom House (2025) [notes](#) persistent restrictions and inconsistent application of assembly rules, particularly when demonstrations involve political criticism. Recent trends indicate further deterioration: Amnesty International (April 2025) [reported intensified arrests](#) and prosecutions linked to a new wave of online mobilisation. A stark example occurred on 20 January 2025, when activist and poet Mohamed Tadjadit, a prominent Hirak figure, [was arrested and sentenced](#) to five years in prison just four days later in a summary trial on vague charges related to his online posts and public criticism of Algeria’s political and socio-economic situation.

These practices reveal a deeply constrained civic space where authorities systematically weaponise vague legal provisions to suppress dissent. Preventive bans, arbitrary arrests, and harsh sentences create a chilling effect on public participation, discouraging citizens and civil society organisations from exercising their constitutional right to peaceful assembly. The reliance on outdated laws and broad security clauses perpetuates an environment of fear and legal uncertainty, undermining democratic engagement and eroding trust in state institutions.

1.3 | Freedom of expression

Freedom of expression in Algeria is formally guaranteed under Article 54 of the 2020 Constitution, which protects press freedom and prohibits custodial sentences for press offences, as well as under the [2012 Information Act](#). However, these guarantees have been progressively eroded [since 2020](#) through the [application of broad criminal provisions](#)—such as those addressing “harm to the national interest” and “fake news”—and, more significantly, through the expansion of anti-terrorism legislation under [Article 87 bis of the Penal Code](#). The UN Special Rapporteur on counter-terrorism [reiterated in 2025](#) that Article 87 bis remains overly vague and is easily misused against peaceful critics.

A recurring [pattern has emerged](#): journalists, bloggers, and activists are initially charged with offences such as “disseminating information likely to undermine national unity” or “receiving foreign funding”, only for these charges to be [reclassified or combined](#) with Article 87 bis to fall under anti-terrorism provisions. In this context, French journalist [Christophe Gleizes](#) was sentenced to seven years in prison in 2025 for “apologising for terrorism” following a sensitive reporting assignment, while [Ihsane El Kadi was released](#) in 2024 by presidential pardon—a decision widely interpreted as political rather than legal. These cases illustrate how the same legal instruments can be applied selectively to punish or absolve, depending on political considerations.

The media environment has deteriorated sharply. In 2025, [Reporters Without Borders \(RSF\)](#) [noted](#) that “the media landscape has never been so deteriorated”, citing prosecutions, website blockages (including TSA and Interlignes), and the dependence of many newsrooms on public advertising. This structural vulnerability fosters [self-censorship](#), with [journalists avoiding sensitive topics](#) such as the Hirak movement, the military, corruption, or Western Sahara to avoid anti-terrorism charges, administrative sanctions, or loss of press licences. Civil society organisations publishing content on enforced disappearances, migration, or freedom of association report similar pressures, reducing the visibility of their work to avoid accusations of “supporting terrorism.”

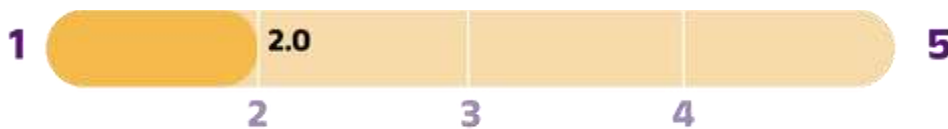
International assessments confirm this trend. The [CIVICUS Monitor \(2025\)](#) has documented convictions for dissent and arrests of journalists in January 2025. Human Rights Watch’s [World Report 2025](#) highlights persistent prosecutions of critical voices and the adoption of a new 2024 Penal Code, which further entrenches the repressive climate. Although Algerian authorities celebrated a 13-place rise in RSF’s [global ranking in May 2025](#), RSF itself stressed that this improvement does not reflect substantive progress, given ongoing prosecutions and censorship.

Overall, the enabling environment for freedom of expression in Algeria remains severely constrained, characterised by legal ambiguity, selective enforcement, and structural pressures that foster widespread self-censorship and undermine independent journalism and civic discourse.

PRINCIPLE SCORE

2. Supportive Legal and Regulatory Framework

Rating: 2.0/5



"In Algeria, registration rules and powers of dissolution are used in a discretionary manner to restrict the space for action of associations."

Despite the [constitutional](#) guarantee of creating associations “by simple declaration”, Algeria maintains a framework where effective access to legal status, day-to-day operations, and protection of associations remain subject to [discretionary](#) administrative control and extensive criminal sanctions. This gap between law and practice systematically undermines the autonomy of CSOs throughout their life cycle: registration depends on prior approval and tacit refusals, activities require revocable authorisations, and protection is weakened by the absence of independent remedies alongside targeted dissolutions and coercive pressure. The result is pervasive legal uncertainty and a generalised chilling effect, [incompatible with the principles](#) of legality, necessity, and proportionality under international human rights law.

2.1 | Registration

The legal and regulatory framework governing civil society registration in Algeria reflects [a profound disconnect](#) between constitutional guarantees and administrative practice. Article 53 of the [2020 Constitution](#) stipulates that freedom of association should be exercised “by simple declaration.” In reality, [Law 12-06](#) of 12 January 2012 subjects the recognition of CSOs to prior administrative authorisation, granting authorities broad discretionary power that results in tacit refusals, excessive delays, and widespread opacity. Local feminist and environmental CSOs [often wait more than 18 months](#) without a response, while several collectives—particularly [those advocating for women’s rights or sexual minorities](#)—are denied registration without written justification. Even apolitical groups, such as environmental CSOs, face [arbitrary blockages](#).

The registration procedure itself is neither clear nor accessible. Law 12-06 requires voluminous documentation, specific conditions regarding headquarters location and membership composition, and sometimes certification by a public official. The [draft bill debated in 2025](#) introduces even stricter requirements, including a higher minimum number of founders, nationality conditions, and compliance with vague concepts such as “national constants.” These measures make registration costly and dissuasive for small, local CSOs. [Several NGOs](#)—including HRW, EuroMed Rights, and MENA Rights Group—observed in late 2025 that these administrative burdens function as a [political filter rather than a compliance mechanism](#).

The legal risk for unregistered groups is considerable. Article 46 of [Law 12-06](#) criminalises participation in an unregistered association, punishable by six months’ imprisonment, effectively outlawing informal civic organising. This provision is incompatible with Article 22 of the [International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights](#), ratified by [Algeria in 1989](#). In practice, this criminalisation fosters fear among activists and significantly reduces the vitality of associations outside state-controlled structures.

Although the law theoretically provides for appeals to the wali and then to the administrative court in cases of refusal or non-response, NGOs consulted in 2025 [report that](#) these remedies are slow, opaque, and rarely successful, particularly when refusals are politically or security-motivated. Associations remain blocked throughout the appeal process, preventing them from acquiring legal personality. On 25 September 2025, [eight organisations publicly denounced](#) these obstacles, calling for “the removal of administrative and judicial barriers to registration.”

Overall, Algeria’s registration regime imposes systemic barriers that undermine constitutional guarantees, criminalise informal organising, and perpetuate a restrictive environment for civil society.

2.2 | Operating environment

The legal framework in Algeria does not allow CSOs full autonomy over their internal governance, objectives, and activities. Although Article 53 of the 2020 Constitution states that freedom of association should be exercised “by simple declaration”, Law No. 12-06 (2012) requires prior authorisation for registration. This grants authorities broad discretionary power, resulting in opaque procedures, prolonged delays, and tacit refusals. The draft bill intended to replace Law 12-06 maintains prior authorisation and expands state control, grants the Interior Ministry sweeping powers over the creation, financing, and activities of associations, imposes arbitrary restrictions on objectives and operations, limits foreign funding, forbids ties with political parties, and maintains onerous registration requirements. This signals a regressive legislative trajectory.

CSOs face intrusive administrative oversight. Law 12-06 mandates mandatory notifications for internal governance changes and empowers authorities to suspend or dissolve associations. Reporting requirements are [described by HRW](#) as “excessive”, creating uncertainty and limiting CSOs’ ability to plan long-term initiatives. Legal remedies exist but are slow and ineffective, especially [when security concerns are invoked](#), leaving organisations vulnerable to arbitrary sanctions.

Access to funding—particularly foreign funding—is subject to prior authorisation, which [NGOs report](#) as a major operational barrier. These restrictions reduce resource availability, reinforce dependence on state-controlled funding streams, and compromise CSOs’ independence and

advocacy capacity. The proposed draft law does not ease these constraints; instead, it introduces additional restrictions on funding and operations.

The cumulative effect of these restrictions is a highly constrained operating environment for civil society in Algeria. Discretionary registration practices, excessive administrative control, and restrictive funding rules create structural vulnerabilities that weaken organisational resilience and autonomy. Instead of fostering pluralism and civic participation, the regulatory framework entrenches state dominance, discourages informal organising, and perpetuates a climate of fear and compliance. This environment severely limits CSOs' ability to function as independent actors, advocate for rights, or hold authorities accountable.

2.3 | Protection against interference

The Algerian legal framework provides limited safeguards for civil society organisations against arbitrary state interference. First, the law does not clearly protect CSOs from unjustified dissolution. [Law 12-06](#) authorises [suspension or dissolution](#) on broadly defined grounds such as “public order” or “non-compliant activities.” These vague provisions have enabled politically motivated actions, including the [dissolution](#) of RAJ in 2021 and the Ligue Algérienne pour la Défense des Droits de l’Homme (LADDH) by the Algiers Administrative Court on 29 June 2022, without prior notification to the organisation. Although judicial review exists in theory, as evidenced by LADDH’s appeal, its rejection in December 2024 underscores the [absence of effective, independent oversight mechanisms](#).

Second, legal protections against interference by the state or third parties remain weak. The framework grants authorities wide discretion to conduct administrative inspections and interventions without clear limitations on frequency, scope, or purpose. This includes requests for reports, on-site visits, and tax audits, which have reportedly been used to target critical organisations. The lack of procedural safeguards creates opportunities for inspections to function as instruments of control or intimidation rather than legitimate oversight, as highlighted in [the joint statement](#) to the UN Human Rights Council on 3 March 2025 regarding the repression of civic space.

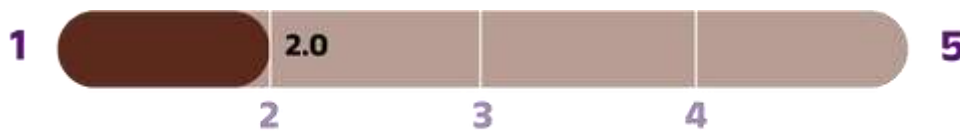
Finally, criminal provisions exacerbate these vulnerabilities. Articles [87 bis](#) and [95 bis](#) of the Penal Code, which criminalise foreign funding under broad security-related justifications, have been applied in high-profile cases against [journalist Mustapha Bendjama and researcher Raouf Farrah](#), who were convicted in 2023 for allegedly “receiving funds from abroad” and “undermining state security.” Furthermore, [the 2025 General Mobilisation Act](#) introduces [additional risks](#) by authorising requisitioning and enabling restrictions on campaigns or demonstrations under the pretext of national security. These measures collectively indicate that the legal environment not only lacks robust protections against interference but also embeds mechanisms that can be leveraged to constrain civic space.

The absence of explicit legal guarantees, combined with discretionary enforcement and punitive provisions, creates a highly restrictive environment for CSOs. This undermines their autonomy, exposes them to politically motivated actions, and erodes the predictability and fairness essential for an enabling civic space.

PRINCIPLE SCORE

3. Accessible and Sustainable Resources

Rating: 2.0/5



"Close control of financial flows to CSOs has become an indirect but effective means of restricting freedom of association in Algeria."

Algeria offers a financial environment where CSOs' access to resources is [opaque and centralised](#). Prior authorisation for foreign funding ([Art. 30 of Law 12-06](#)) acts as a discretionary filter, while public subsidies favour charitable actors close to the government. Added to this are [banking and tax obstacles](#), a lack of incentives for self-financing, the private sector's reluctance to cooperate, and significant regional inequalities (lack of support outside Algiers). International funds, which are often one-off and short-term, are not supplemented by national mechanisms (co-financing, endowments, multi-year funding), which keeps associations in a state of fragile dependence and project-based operation, with no margin for investment in capacity, innovation or planning. The result is a vulnerable ecosystem, where freedom of association is weakened by a lockdown on resources and surveillance of financial flows.

3.1 | Accessibility of resources

CSOs' access to funding is primarily determined by the state: [Article 30 of Law 12-06](#) requires all associations to obtain [authorisation from the authorities](#) before receiving foreign support. The update to [the ICNL's Civic Freedom Monitor](#) (29 July 2025) shows that this mechanism is applied more strictly to CSOs working on sensitive issues (human rights, memory, gender, migration) than to charitable or community-based associations. The draft law of August-September 2025, denounced by [HRW](#), [CIHRS](#) and EuroMed Rights, maintains this prior authorisation and even extends the powers of the Ministry of the Interior over the allocation of donations, which amounts to making access to resources conditional on political alignment.

Information on funding opportunities exists, but it is concentrated: most calls for proposals (EU, UN agencies) are published online, in French or English, and require management skills that associations in the interior wilayas do not always have. [Freedom House 2025](#) notes that

this centralisation around Algiers creates differentiated access to resources. Local NGOs can therefore respond to calls, but at the cost of greater administrative effort (translation, reporting, bank documents) and with the risk of being refused authorisation.

In terms of taxation, there are no general deduction or exemption measures to encourage private donations to associations; [CIVICUS Monitor](#) and [MAJALAT II](#) point out that the lack of incentives and the possibility of reclassifying certain items as taxable income discourage domestic funding and diversification.

Finally, several alerts from EuroMed Rights and [MENA Rights Group](#) in 2025 report recurring difficulties with banks (delays in opening accounts, requests for additional supporting documents, temporary freezing of international transfers under AML/CFT), which slow down project implementation and expose some CSOs to financial surveillance.

3.2 | Resource efficiency

In Algeria, the resource efficiency of CSOs is limited both by the conditions imposed by donors and by state restrictions on the use of funds.

First, [Law 12-06 \(Art. 30\)](#) requires all associations to obtain prior authorisation to receive foreign funds; [Bill 2025](#) maintains this filter and gives the Ministry of the Interior broad powers to control the allocation of resources, which means that even funding that has been obtained can be [conditioned or delayed](#) by the administration.

On the international donor side, the funding available in 2024-2025 is mainly for short-term projects, with rigid budgets and strict reporting requirements (external audit, bank statements, proof of legal status), as several Algerian CSOs pointed out during the [MENA Rights Group](#) side event at the HRC on 7 March 2025: these requirements are not always aligned with local priorities (legal protection, discreet work with families, digital security) and force associations to model their activities on the donor's agenda.

Flexibility remains low: neither the Algerian bill nor most public donors readily allow budget lines to be shifted to sensitive areas (security, legal support, witness protection). In September 2025, [HRW and EuroMed Rights](#) noted that, in a context of civic space shrinkage, donors should be able to quickly adapt funding, but that this flexibility is hampered by prior state control.

Finally, responsiveness to security risks is uneven. A few external mechanisms – such as emergency grants from the UN Human Rights Fund (via OHCHR) or rapid assistance from Front Line Defenders – cover immediate costs (legal assistance, temporary rehousing), but they remain limited in amount and inaccessible to small associations, especially when bank transfers are controlled.

3.3 | Sustainability of resources

The financial viability of the sector remains deeply compromised. Firstly, CSOs [have limited](#) access to [diversified](#) sources of funding: public funding goes almost exclusively to charitable organisations or those close to the authorities, while independent CSOs must rely on foreign funds subject to prior authorisation (Art. 30 Law 12-06). [HRW, EuroMed Rights](#) and the joint communiqué of 25 September 2025 note that the draft new law does not remove this filter. This dependence on a single and uncertain source makes organisations highly vulnerable: an administrative refusal or a bank block is enough to interrupt a project.

Secondly, there are real gaps in [funding cycles](#): most of the support available is ad hoc, lasting 6 to 12 months, with no possibility of automatic renewal, and the state does not offer grants, co-financing or multi-year funding. In 2025, [ICNL](#) and the [UN Special Rapporteur](#) on access to resources [pointed out](#) that this lack of predictability prevents CSOs from retaining their staff and ensuring programme continuity, forcing them to operate on a "project-by-project" basis.

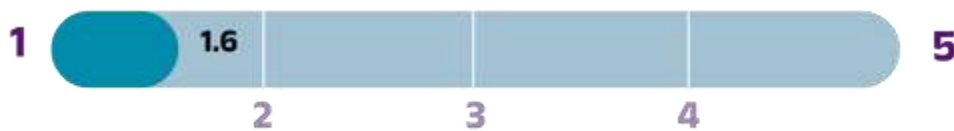
Thirdly, this resource environment prevents genuine strategic planning: funding is largely project-based rather than core-based, which means that lines for institutional strengthening, protection or innovation are often ineligible. [EuroMed Rights](#) and [MENA Rights Group](#) point out that this limits the ability of Algerian CSOs to pursue their priorities (freedom of association, disappearances, women's rights) in favour of agendas dictated by donors.

Finally, financial autonomy is difficult to achieve: the tax framework does not encourage [local fundraising](#), crowdfunding is viewed with suspicion, and companies are reluctant to publicly support critical CSOs for fear of being associated with a "sensitive" actor. The African Special Rapporteur on Defenders ([ACHPR, report of 25 October 2025](#)) notes the same thing: without tax incentives or a clear framework for income-generating activities, associations remain dependent on external support.

PRINCIPLE SCORE

4. Open and Responsive State

Rating: 1.6/5



"An open state is measured by its responses, not its communiqués."

In Algeria, government [transparency to CSOs](#) remains largely theoretical. Important decisions are published without prior consultation with civil society actors and their requests for information often go unanswered. Participation is selective and formal. CSOs perceived as critical, unregistered collectives and independent trade unions [are excluded](#), while consultative workshops offer neither traceability of contributions nor meaningful feedback. Institutional accountability is virtually non-existent: there is no independent body responsible for monitoring policy implementation or ensuring effective remedies. [The centralisation](#) of power and the absence of a national digital portal for consultation and monitoring perpetuate a closed and unaccountable framework.

4.1. | Transparency

The principle of open government remains weak in Algeria, even though Article 51 of the [Constitution \(2020\)](#) guarantees the right to information. Draft laws and important decisions are most often drafted and then published without structured consultation with CSOs, as noted by [CIHRS, HRW and EuroMed Rights](#) in relation to the draft law on associations in September-October 2025. In this specific case, the authorities organised a meeting via the National Observatory of Civil Society, but the main independent CSOs, often dissolved or unregistered, were unable to participate, meaning that the consultation was largely a formality.

In general, critical civil society actors are not consulted on an equal footing. In July 2025, [the ICNL](#) noted that the impact of the consultation was weakened by the de facto exclusion of dissolved organisations, showing that participation is neither fully inclusive nor free from political discrimination. CSOs are often invited late, once the policy has been finalised, with little time for substantive comments, as [the OHCHR](#) also notes in its observations on Algeria.

Opportunities for participation exist mainly [in person](#), in Algiers, through workshops or ad hoc meetings. Online channels remain limited and not very interactive, contrary to the good practices [recommended by the OECD](#) for open participation. This reduces access for regional CSOs and reinforces the opacity already reported by studies on open data in Algeria in 2025.

4.2 | Participation

The participation of civil society organisations in government consultations [remains limited](#), selective and of little influence. In most of the reforms of 2024-2025 (law on associations, social dialogue, education), the authorities did convene meetings, but with a core group of ["safe"](#) CSOs and trade unions. Unregistered collectives, feminist movements and independent trade unions are excluded, as confirmed by [the ICNL](#) and the joint letter [from NGOs](#) to the UNHRC on the closure of civic space. In other words, CSOs are consulted for form's sake rather than to co-develop policies. There is no mechanism that obliges the administration to incorporate their proposals, nor is there any institutionalised follow-up, which reduces participation to a symbolic gesture. [Independent trade unions](#) (SNAPAP, CNAPEST) illustrate this [closed nature](#): they have been targeted with suspensions, intimidation or dismissals following national strikes in 2025, while the UGTA remains the government's recognised interlocutor.

Participation is also discriminatory. It depends on legal status (registered/unregistered) and position vis-à-vis the government (critical/non-critical). Invitations often arrive late, on texts that have already been finalised, leaving very little time for substantial contributions — [the OHCHR](#) and [MENA Rights Group](#) reported this in their interventions in March-April 2025. Finally, the available channels are mainly in [person in Algiers](#); online participatory tools are in their infancy and do not cover the interior of the country, which accentuates [geographical inequalities](#) and weakens the enabling environment for civil society.

4.3 | Accountability

In Algeria, the authorities do not generally publish detailed feedback explaining how CSO contributions are incorporated into public decisions, and there is no regular practice of public consultation reports justifying the adoption or rejection of proposals. International data confirm this lack of feedback and traceability. The UN ranks Algeria very low in [e-participation 2024](#) (score 0.0548; rank 187), indicating a lack of public tools for monitoring, commenting on and seeing how citizen contributions are taken into account in policies.

When a CSO submission is not accepted, there is no clear and systematic procedure requiring the administration to justify its refusal, nor are there any [independent](#), rapid and effective [appeal](#) mechanisms enabling civil society actors to demand accountability specifically on the use of their comments. [The](#) baseline [assessments](#) describe an environment where participation is limited and lacks transparency, which reduces CSOs' ability to obtain official justifications and assert their observations.

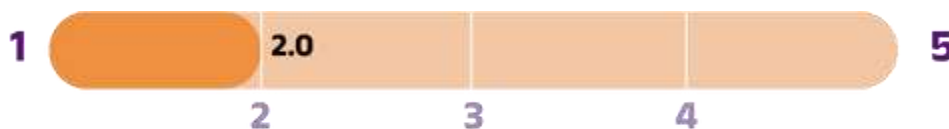
More generally, there is no documented permanent public space for monitoring the use of contributions (national consultation portal with government responses, tracking tables, implementation audits) or for monitoring compliance with commitments made to CSOs. Monitoring [reports](#) on civic space highlight [closed](#) and centralised decision-making, which is incompatible with a consultation-response-accountability cycle.

In short, as of October 2025, [the](#) available [evidence](#) indicated a lack of systematic government feedback, the absence of dedicated channels for CSO contributions, and the lack of a public mechanism enabling CSOs to monitor and evaluate the consideration of their comments in public action.

PRINCIPLE SCORE

5. Supportive Public Culture and Discourses on Civil Society

Rating: 2.0/5



"As soon as it criticises, civil society is suspect; as soon as it remains silent, it is useful."

In Algeria, civil society is largely confined to a [social intermediary role](#), while its legitimacy is frequently questioned and often portrayed as a conduit for foreign interference. This narrative [fosters widespread caution](#) and restricts civic engagement to localised volunteering with minimal political influence. Structural inequalities persist: regional and gender disparities remain pronounced, as rural collectives and women human rights defenders encounter both material constraints and [symbolic barriers](#). In the absence of state-led initiatives to strengthen the democratic function of CSOs, the public sphere for debate remains narrow, resistant to independent voices, and devoid of mechanisms for inclusive participation.

5.1 | Public discourse and constructive dialogue on civil society

In Algeria, public authorities frame civil society in a highly selective manner. Social and charitable associations are promoted as "partners", while human rights organisations and independent networks are frequently portrayed as [susceptible to "foreign interference"](#), as evidenced during [the debate on the draft law](#) on associations in September–October 2025.

This securitised narrative, [amplified by state-controlled](#) media and press outlets reliant on government advertising, shapes public perception. Coverage prioritises social initiatives while [warnings](#) from organisations such as Human Rights Watch or EuroMed Rights regarding excessive control of CSOs receive minimal attention or are presented through a security lens. Such discourse delegitimises advocacy-oriented CSOs, erodes public trust in independent actors, and reinforces a regulatory approach that prioritises control over collaboration. This constrains the diversity of voices in policy dialogue and narrows the scope for rights-based engagement.

Consultative spaces do exist; however, contributions from critical CSOs are rarely integrated into decision-making. The persistence of the authorisation regime—despite recommendations from [CIVICUS](#) and the [International Center for Not-for-Profit Law](#) (ICNL)—illustrates the tokenistic nature of these consultations. Excluding dissenting perspectives from formal processes undermines participatory governance, perpetuates legal uncertainty for CSOs, and discourages meaningful engagement in policy reform.

In this climate of civic closure—documented by the [Human Rights Watch Report 2025](#) and the State of Civil Society [Report 2025](#)—public discourse marginalises independent actors rather than recognising them as essential stakeholders in democratic governance. The absence of inclusive dialogue entrenches a hierarchical model of state–civil society relations, limits pluralism, and weakens the institutional foundations for accountability and rights protection.

5.2 | Perception of civil society and civic engagement

The social perception of civic engagement in Algeria remains deeply ambivalent. In working-class neighbourhoods, community involvement is generally viewed positively; however, it is rarely associated with the concept of “civil society” as understood in terms of advocacy or human rights. Organisations perceived as having foreign connections continue to provoke mistrust, a sentiment reinforced by official narratives on “interference”. This framing delegitimises advocacy-oriented CSOs, discourages citizens from engaging in rights-based initiatives, and entrenches a preference for apolitical, service-oriented activities. As a result, civil society’s potential to act as a counterbalance to state power is severely diminished.

Public attitudes prioritise immediate social utility, while political or critical engagement is often met with suspicion. This utilitarian distinction is confirmed by [findings from the Opinion Poll 2024 – Algeria](#) (EU, published 5 Sept. 2025), which reveal that Algerians value concrete local initiatives but remain sceptical about their capacity to influence state decisions. Such perceptions perpetuate a narrow conception of civic action, reducing incentives for citizens to participate in advocacy or policy dialogue. This limits the emergence of a robust, pluralistic civil society capable of shaping governance.

Comparative data from [the CIVICUS Monitor 2025](#) classifies Algeria as “repressed” (31/100), signalling that civic space is restricted and CSOs operate in a high-risk environment. This perception undermines the public legitimacy of organisations, particularly those addressing sensitive issues such as historical memory, women’s rights, or migrant protection. When CSOs lack societal trust and face systemic risk, their ability to mobilise constituencies and advocate for rights is compromised, weakening the overall ecosystem for democratic participation.

Regarding influence on decision-making, [V-Dem 2025 indicators](#) place Algeria at the bottom of the regional scale for civil society participation. Consultation with CSOs by public authorities is minimal, and citizen involvement in organisations capable of shaping policy remains limited. Participation tends to be sporadic, community-based, often female-led, and voluntary—[yet politically marginal](#). This disconnect between grassroots engagement and formal policy influence reinforces tokenistic governance practices and perpetuates the perception that civic action is inconsequential, further discouraging sustained involvement.

Data from the [Gallup World Poll](#) (Algeria series), though older, corroborate these trends: formal associative engagement remains below 15%, with a marked preference for informal mutual aid networks. The dominance of non-institutionalised forms of solidarity reflects a lack

of trust in formal mechanisms and signals the fragility of structured civil society, limiting its capacity to aggregate interests and advocate effectively.

Finally, on civic education, sources from [ICNL 2025](#) and CIVICUS indicate that information on rights—association, assembly, expression—is primarily disseminated by CSOs and concentrated in Algiers. Schools present institutional frameworks but rarely explain practical mechanisms for participation or redress. This knowledge gap constrains citizens' ability to perceive themselves as active civic actors, perpetuating low engagement and reinforcing the state's dominance in shaping public discourse.

5.3 | Civic equality and inclusion

Algeria's legal and institutional frameworks formally guarantee equality among citizens; however, in practice, access to civic space remains profoundly unequal. Women's associations, including those in peri-urban areas, report the absence of dedicated premises and logistical support from local authorities. Many wait over a year for a simple registration receipt, preventing them from acquiring legal status and accessing funding. These administrative delays create structural exclusion, weakening organisational sustainability and deterring grassroots actors from formalising their activities. This perpetuates a civic space dominated by well-connected, urban organisations, undermining pluralism.

In September 2025, [Human Rights Watch highlighted](#) that the Ministry of the Interior retains discretionary power to block or delay association approvals—even for local, non-political groups. Such obstacles disproportionately affect organisations outside Algiers, limiting their access to national resources and networks. Centralised control entrenches geographic inequality, marginalising southern and rural actors and reducing the representativeness of civil society in national dialogue. This fosters a fragmented civic ecosystem, where participation is uneven and policy influence highly concentrated.

Women human rights defenders face additional barriers. Beyond resource constraints, they are subjected to moral stigmatisation campaigns—accusations of violating “public decency”—and criminal threats. In January 2025, the [UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders](#) condemned ongoing judicial harassment, arbitrary arrests, and vague charges such as “undermining state security” against peaceful activists. Reports include direct police pressure on women from victims' collectives: even mothers of disappeared persons gathering at the headquarters of the Collective of Families of Disappeared Persons in Algiers were surrounded, mistreated, and forcibly dispersed in 2024. These practices create a climate of fear, silencing women's voices and deterring participation in advocacy. The result is a civic space skewed towards male-dominated, urban organisations, eroding inclusivity and weakening rights-based mobilisation.

Territorial disparities compound these inequalities. NGOs in southern Algeria report limited access to training, national forums, and donors—resources concentrated in Algiers. This imbalance is reinforced by a state approach that views civil society as a social relay to be supervised rather than a legitimate political actor. The draft law on associations (2025), according to [Human Rights Watch](#), would further strengthen administrative control rather than dismantle these barriers. Such legal reforms institutionalise exclusion, consolidating state dominance over civic space and reducing opportunities for autonomous organisation, particularly in marginalised regions.

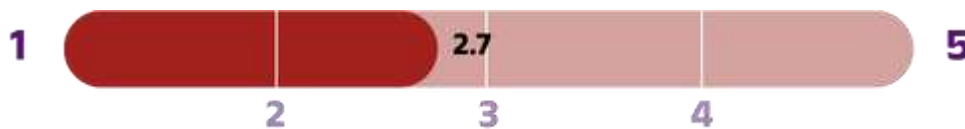
International indices confirm the gap between proclaimed equality and lived reality. The World Justice Project - [Rule of Law Index 2024](#) - ranks Algeria poorly on civil justice and equal access to remedies, signalling systemic obstacles for women and marginalised groups in asserting rights. Similarly, [V-Dem 2025 data](#) show freedom of expression remains far below global averages, including women's ability to speak publicly without stigmatisation or reprisals. These deficits weaken the normative foundations of civic equality, perpetuating structural discrimination and limiting the transformative potential of civil society as a driver of democratic accountability.

In summary, civic equality in Algeria exists largely on paper. In practice, women activists, rural and peri-urban associations, and NGOs in the south face accreditation barriers, lack of infrastructure, moral stigmatisation, direct police surveillance, and restricted access to justice. These constraints narrow civic space, reinforce gender and territorial hierarchies, and sustain a model where "legitimate" civil society remains the preserve of urban men in northern cities.

PRINCIPLE SCORE

6. Access to a Secure Digital Environment

Rating: 2.7/5



"Digital technology opens the door, but the threshold is mined."

In Algeria, the growing reliance on online civic space is tempered by structural constraints that weaken its democratic potential. Rights-based [limitations](#)—such as intermittent platform blocking, legal proceedings over online content, and the absence of a robust data protection framework—create legal uncertainty and discourage open expression. [Security risks](#), including surveillance of activists and journalists, filtering of political content, and opaque procedures, foster self-censorship and divert resources towards risk management rather than advocacy. Access barriers, marked by territorial and social divides, high mobile costs, and training concentrated in Algiers, exacerbate inequality and marginalise rural actors. For civil society organisations, digital technology is therefore both indispensable and precarious: while it enables mobilisation and outreach, the need for circumvention practices and heightened security measures significantly reduces the civic impact of online engagement, reinforcing a fragile and exclusionary digital ecosystem.

6.1 | Digital rights and freedoms

The digital environment in Algeria remains fragile and restrictive, shaped by political constraints, systematic surveillance, and stark inequalities in access. Beyond these disparities, the exercise of digital rights is undermined by [arbitrary restrictions](#): authorities routinely block social media platforms during student protests or events linked to the Hirak movement, without any clear legal basis. [Temporary restrictions](#) on WhatsApp, Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter (X) reinforce self-censorship among activists and curtail the free flow of information, while opaque judicial decisions against bloggers and online activists foster a perception that the digital sphere is inherently risky and that any critical publication may lead to prosecution. Data [from V-Dem](#) confirms a sharp rise in censorship of political content and surveillance of communications, signalling a systemic erosion of online freedoms.

A striking example is the [blocking of the CFDA](#) (Collectif des Familles de Disparu(e)s en Algérie) website, which provides testimonies and legal resources for families of victims of enforced disappearances. This site is inaccessible from within Algeria without a VPN, and the measure has never been subject to judicial review or official justification, making it an arbitrary and politically motivated act. By denying citizens access to a platform for information and remembrance, the authorities seek to render a sensitive cause invisible and diminish the impact of civil society's documentation efforts.

These practices reveal that digital repression in Algeria is not limited to episodic interruptions but includes structural measures aimed at silencing critical actors. Such constraints weaken civil society's capacity to inform, mobilise, and advocate, forcing organisations to operate under constant risk and divert resources to circumvention and security rather than substantive engagement. The result is a digital civic space that is precarious, exclusionary, and incompatible with democratic participation.

6.2 | Digital security and confidentiality

Digital security in Algeria remains precarious, characterised by surveillance practices, prosecutions for online content, and recurrent disruptions that hinder civil society's ability to operate effectively. While there is no public evidence of state spyware directly targeting CSOs in 2024–2025, authorities combine systematic monitoring with punitive measures. At [least 23 prosecutions](#) for online publications were recorded between December 2024 and April 2025, alongside [documented internet](#) cuts during sensitive periods, and the internet shutdown affecting the 2024 baccalaureate examinations, [reported](#) by the Internet Society Pulse.

Although a formal framework for data protection exists [under Law No. 18-07](#), its effectiveness is undermined by permissive security legislation, including [Law No. 09-04](#) on cybercrime and [Ordinance No. 21-09](#) on “classified” documents—criticised by [MENA Rights Group](#) for enabling broad state discretion and offering few rapid or independent remedies for victims of hacking or surveillance. These gaps leave CSOs and activists vulnerable to intrusion and intimidation, eroding trust in digital platforms and reinforcing perceptions of insecurity.

Recurring patterns of online manipulation—such as prosecutions of critical accounts, dissuasive campaigns, and repeated blocking—further fuel self-censorship and discredit NGOs, as highlighted by [Freedom House](#) and [Access Now](#) in their global monitoring of internet shutdowns. In the absence of robust protections, many actors resort to pseudonyms and adopt restrictive communication strategies to minimise exposure, sacrificing visibility and outreach.

The lack of guarantees for privacy and digital security, reflected in Algeria's classification as “Not Free” in the Freedom on the Net 2024 [report](#), forces civil society into defensive modes of operation. This diverts resources from advocacy to risk mitigation, reduces transparency in public discourse, and entrenches a climate of fear that stifles participation. Ultimately, these dynamics weaken the resilience of civic space and undermine the capacity of CSOs to act as credible democratic actors.

6.3 | Digital accessibility

Although internet penetration in Algeria is estimated at [around 76.9% per cent](#) in early 2025—primarily via mobile phones, with data costs among the lowest in the region—access remains uneven and structurally constrained. Connectivity is relatively stable in urban centres, yet rural and Saharan regions experience frequent outages and lack the infrastructure necessary for

equal access. Government-imposed [shutdowns](#), such as those during the 2024 baccalaureate examinations, further disrupt continuity and undermine trust in digital platforms.

These disparities are compounded by socio-economic barriers: the high cost of mobile devices limits daily digital use for young people and disadvantaged communities, while digital literacy and cybersecurity training programmes remain scarce and [concentrated in Algiers](#). This concentration excludes peripheral regions and deepens the digital divide, reducing opportunities for civic participation outside major cities.

Crucially, technical access does not translate into freedom of use. Between December 2024 and April 2025, at least 23 activists, journalists, and internet users [were arrested or prosecuted](#) for online publications calling for peaceful mobilisation or criticising the authorities, under vague charges such as “incitement to unarmed assembly” or “breach of public order”. These prosecutions foster self-censorship and deter engagement, signalling that digital space is neither safe nor autonomous.

While the state has [announced](#) significant investments in emerging technologies—such as artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, cloud computing, and the Internet of Things—these programmes aim to modernise state infrastructure and [train youth](#) without offering equivalent support to human rights defenders or independent CSOs.

The coexistence of infrastructural gaps, punitive restrictions, and selective investment creates a digital ecosystem that is unequal, insecure, and politically constrained. This environment limits civil society’s capacity to leverage technology for advocacy and inclusion, reinforcing territorial and social hierarchies and perpetuating a model of controlled participation rather than genuine digital empowerment.

C) Recommendations

"Democracy cannot be decreed: it is proven when everyone can organise, assemble and express themselves — in law, in practice and online."

The recommendations presented below are grounded in the report's findings, which reveal a civic space in Algeria characterised by structural constraints, selective participation, and systemic inequalities. Despite formal guarantees of rights, CSOs face restrictive legislation, administrative barriers, and recurrent digital repression, while regional and gender disparities further undermine inclusivity. The absence of transparent consultation mechanisms and the securitisation of public discourse weaken trust and limit meaningful engagement. At the same time, international and domestic actors have opportunities to strengthen resilience through targeted support, improved coordination, and investment in digital security and accessibility. These recommendations aim to address the root causes of civic closure and create an enabling environment where civil society can operate freely, inclusively, and effectively as a partner in democratic governance.

Recommendations to the Government

1. Reform the Legal and Institutional Framework

- Revise Law No. 12-06 on Associations to guarantee genuine freedom of association by replacing the discretionary authorisation regime with a declaratory system, in line with Article 53 of the Constitution. Limit the Ministry of the Interior's power to block or delay registration.
- Establish an independent appeal mechanism enabling organisations to challenge implicit refusals, prolonged administrative delays, and arbitrary dissolutions.

2. Ensure Participation and Transparency

- Create a national dialogue platform between the state and civil society that is independent of executive control and includes diverse associations, including those active in human rights, women's rights, environmental protection, and migrant rights.
- Introduce decentralised consultation mechanisms in southern wilayas and rural areas, requiring local authorities to seek CSO input before adopting policies affecting access to services, environment, or local development.
- Enforce a legal obligation for feedback: authorities must inform CSOs how their contributions were considered or publicly justify their exclusion after consultations.

3. Improve the Financial Environment for CSOs

- Publish details of national and local subsidies (amounts, criteria, beneficiaries) and ensure access for independent CSOs, not only those aligned with the administration.
- Simplify banking, tax, and administrative procedures for foreign funding and self-financing to prevent financial restrictions being used as a tool of control.
- Establish dedicated funds:
 - (i) a national fund for initiatives led by women and youth in rural and peri-urban areas;
 - (ii) a public–private fund for technological accessibility and digital equipment for local CSOs.

4. Protect Civic Space, Including Digital Space

- Prohibit arbitrary internet and platform shutdowns, allowing restrictions only under proportionate, time-limited judicial decisions.
- End criminal prosecutions for peaceful online expression, including charges such as “spreading false information” or “undermining public order”.
- Adopt legislation against abusive digital surveillance, ensuring safeguards for personal data and protecting communications of journalists, human rights defenders, and associations.

5. Promote Civic Equality and Inclusion

- Implement targeted public policies to reduce regional inequalities by guaranteeing high-quality internet, meeting spaces, and training in southern and rural areas.
- Recognise and fund women’s associations as legitimate public-interest actors, not merely socio-charitable entities.
- Launch public campaigns affirming civil society’s role in social cohesion and accountability, countering narratives that portray it as a threat.

Recommendations to Civil Society Actors

1. Strengthen Coordination and Collective Protection

- Build interregional alliances between CSOs in the north and south to jointly document violations and share legal and digital resources.
- Develop rapid solidarity mechanisms for cases of arrest, including immediate legal assistance, coordinated public communication, and family support.

2. Professionalise Digital Security and Archiving

- Integrate digital security protocols into daily operations: encryption, secure data management, and diversified communication channels.
- Train multiple staff members in cybersecurity and risk management to reduce vulnerability during arrests or equipment confiscation.
- Prepare response strategies for smear campaigns and surveillance, particularly those targeting women defenders.

3. Defend Inclusion as a Core Principle

- Systematically document barriers faced by women, youth, and rural associations and incorporate these findings into advocacy.

- Highlight the role of non-political associations (e.g., rural women's groups, environmental collectives) to demonstrate that civic space restrictions affect all autonomous organisations.
- Collaborate with universities, independent media, and professional unions to promote an alternative narrative: civil society as a legitimate actor for transparency and social cohesion.

Recommendations to the International and Donor Community

1. Support Independence, Not Just Service Delivery

- Fund independent organisations, including small local associations and rights-based groups, even if they lack final accreditation, recognising that administrative barriers are politically motivated.
- Make financial and technical support conditional on verifiable commitments by Algerian authorities to uphold freedom of association and end prosecutions for peaceful expression.

2. Reduce Financial and Bureaucratic Barriers

- Simplify administrative and accounting requirements for small CSOs to avoid excluding vulnerable groups such as rural women and youth collectives.
- Create rapid-response micro-funding mechanisms for organisations facing repression, connectivity cuts, or targeted arrests.

3. Strengthen Digital Capabilities and Security

- Fund advanced digital skills training for CSOs, including cybersecurity, data protection, and online risk management, prioritising actors outside Algiers.
- Provide independent technical support to counter surveillance and online stigmatisation campaigns.

4. Include Marginalised Voices

- Ensure consultation processes (EU, UN, AU, bilateral donors) include representatives from southern regions, rural women, and youth collectives—not only Algiers-based organisations.
- Support internal mobility (transport, accommodation, connectivity) to enable these groups to participate in national and regional advocacy spaces.

D) Research Process

Each principle encompasses different dimensions that are assessed and aggregated to obtain quantitative scores per principle. These scores reflect the extent to which the environment within the country facilitates or hinders the work of civil society. The scores are ranked on a five-category scale defined as follows: totally unfavourable (1), unfavourable (2), partially favourable (3), favourable (4) and totally favourable (5). To complement the scores, this report provides a narrative analysis of the environment, favourable or unfavourable to civil society, identifying strengths and weaknesses and offering recommendations. The analysis writing process is led by network members; the consortium provides quality control and editorial oversight prior to publication.

For Principle 1, which assesses respect for and protection of freedom of association and peaceful assembly, the score incorporates data from [the CIVICUS Monitor](#). However, for Principles 2 to 6, the availability of external quantitative indicators updated annually for the 86 countries participating in the EU-SEE programme is either limited or non-existent. To remedy this, network members convene a panel of civil society representatives and experts once a year. This panel uses a set of guiding questions to assess the status of each principle and its dimensions within the country. Discussions draw on secondary sources such as [V-Dem](#), [the Bertelsmann Stiftung Governance Index](#), the [Centre for Law and Democracy's RTI rating](#) and other reliable resources. These sources provide benchmarks for measuring similar dimensions and are supplemented by primary data collection and other secondary sources of information available for the country. Guided by these deliberations, the panel assigns scores to each dimension, which network members submit to the consortium, accompanied by detailed justifications that reflect the specific context of the country. In order to determine a single score per principle, the scores assigned to each dimension are aggregated using a weighted average, reflecting the relative importance of each dimension within the principle. This approach balances different perspectives while maintaining a structured and objective assessment framework.

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