

# Kazakh lawmakers back restrictive Internet law

June 24 2009, By PETER LEONARD , Associated Press Writer

---

(AP) -- Kazakh lawmakers have approved Internet legislation that media rights activists say will limit freedom of speech in the Central Asian nation.

The bill would subject Internet outlets - such as chat rooms, blogs and online stores - to the same [criminal prosecution](#) currently applied to traditional media. Foreign Web sites deemed to be in breach of Kazakh law could also be blocked.

Authorities say the legislation approved Wednesday aims to curb the distribution of child pornography, extremist literature and other unsuitable material.

But opponents argue that laws already exist to prevent the dissemination of illegal material and say the proposed new rules are aimed at restricting criticism of the government.

President Nursultan Nazarbayev is expected to sign the bill into law.

Efforts to tighten regulation of the [Internet](#) in Kazakhstan are being closely scrutinized by international observers as the former Soviet nation prepares to take up chairmanship of a trans-Atlantic security and rights organization.

Government critics accuse Nazarbayev of quashing all political opposition and seeking to limit the free dissemination of information.

He has ruled the oil-rich Central Asian nation of 15 million since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991.

Tamara Kaleyeva, head of Kazakh media rights group Adil Soz, which has been fighting the proposed regulations, complained that the legislation would enable authorities to block any media outlet for its coverage of "elections, strikes, demonstrations and relations between ethnic groups, which are the most contentious social and political subjects."

In bidding for the 2010 chairmanship of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, Kazakhstan committed to a wide range of democratic reforms, including improving press liberties.

Some minor changes have been made to laws regulating the [media](#), but international rights groups have complained that they do not go far enough.

*©2009 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed.*

Citation: Kazakh lawmakers back restrictive Internet law (2009, June 24) retrieved 18 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2009-06-kazakh-lawmakers-restrictive-internet-law.html>

<p>This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.</p>
--