

Facebook deletes 30 UK inmates' pages after taunts

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(AP) -- Facebook has deleted the pages of 30 U.K. prisoners at the request of the British government, the justice minister announced Thursday, after several incidents in which inmates reportedly used the Internet to plot with criminals and intimidate victims.

Justice Minister Jack Straw said the convicts' pages had been removed within 48 hours of the government demand but he's working with the popular social networking site to remove objectionable pages even faster.

"What we've got to is set up a better system with Facebook so that if they get a notice from us that this site is improper than all they have to is not make a judgment about it but press the delete button," he told the BBC in an interview Thursday.

Repeated calls to Britain's Ministry of Justice seeking an elaboration of Straw's remarks were not immediately returned.

Facebook also did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

Straw said British inmates are generally barred from using sites like Facebook, but according to reports some prisoners have been able to update their personal pages via their family or by using cell phones smuggled into jail.

Last month, The Sunday Times reported that a British gangster serving

time for conspiracy to murder had been communicating freely with his 565 Facebook friends and making threats.

"I will be home one day and I can't wait to look into certain people's eyes and see the fear of me being there," the paper quoted the criminal as saying in one message.

"Some (of you) have let me down badly, and will be named and shamed," he was quoted as saying in another.

The news followed a separate report that the family of a stabbing victim had expressed outrage over his killer's Facebook boast.

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