

SKorea blocks access to NKorea's Twitter account

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(AP) -- South Korea has blocked North Korea's new Twitter account from being accessed in the South, saying the tweets contain "illegal information" under the country's security laws, officials said Thursday.

North Korea announced last week saying it has a Twitter account and a YouTube channel in an apparent effort to boost its propaganda war against South Korea and the United States.

The Twitter account gained more than 8,500 followers in a week, though it has posted just 30 [tweets](#) linking to reports that praise North Korean leader Kim Jong Il and lambast South Korea and the U.S. over their ongoing joint military drills.

North Korea, one of the world's most secretive countries, blocks Internet access for all but the elite among its 24 million citizens but is believed to have a keen interest in information technology.

On Thursday, South Korea's state-run Communications Standards Commission began blocking the site from Internet users in the South trying to view the account, commission officials said.

The account has "contents that praises, promotes and glorifies" North Korea and they were confirmed as "illegal information" that is banned under the country's National Security Law, a commission statement said.

A government warning "illegal content" pops up when trying to access

the Twitter account via South Korean IP addresses.

"We decided to act immediately, after having considered the unique nature of social network services like Twitter, where specific information can be dispersed to thousands in a short period of time," Han Myung-ho, a commission official, said.

He said the commission has no immediate plans to block the North's YouTube channel but gave no further details.

The two Koreas technically remains in a state of war because the 1950-53 Korean War ended with an armistice, not a peace treaty.

The [Twitter](#) account opened last Thursday under the name uriminzok, which means "our nation" in Korean, and the YouTube channel was created last month, under the username uriminzokkiri.

More than 130 videos have been uploaded to [YouTube](#) including clips that condemn and mock "warmongers" South Korea and the U.S. for blaming North Korea for the sinking of a South Korean warship in March. The North has insisted it has nothing to do with the sinking, which led to the death of 46 South Korean sailors.

State Department spokesman P.J. Crowley said Tuesday that the U.S. welcomed [North Korea](#) to the social media forums but challenged its authoritarian leaders to allow its citizens full access to the sites, as most other governments do.

The official North Korean Uriminzokkiri website, which is run by the Committee for the Peaceful Reunification of the Fatherland in Pyongyang, has been blocked in [South Korea](#) alongside 64 other North Korean-run and pro-North Korean websites, said Shim Joo-hyung, a spokeswoman for the standards commission.

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