

# Dubai police chief calls BlackBerry a spy tool

September 3 2010, By BRIAN MURPHY , Associated Press Writer

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In this Friday, Aug. 27, 2010 file photo, a dummy BlackBerry handset stands at a shop in Hyderabad, India. India has widened its security crackdown, asking all service providers, and not just BlackBerry-maker Research In Motion, to install servers in the country, a move analysts say will bolster national security, possibly at the expense of privacy. (AP Photo/Mahesh Kumar A., File)

(AP) -- Worries about spying by the U.S. and Israel spurred plans to sharply limit BlackBerry services in the United Arab Emirates, Dubai's police chief said in comments that suggest a tough line in talks with the smart phone maker.

The UAE says it will block [BlackBerry](#) e-mail, messaging and Web services Oct. 11 unless authorities can gain access to the [encrypted data](#) traffic - a demand by other countries warning of possible bans including India.

The proposed UAE action threatens BlackBerry service for an estimated

500,000 local subscribers and could tarnish the country's reputation as the Gulf's business and tourism hub with potentially millions of visitors left without key BlackBerry services.

Dubai's police chief, Lt. Gen. Dahi Khalfan Tamim, said that fears of espionage and information sharing by foe Israel - as well as UAE allies United States and Britain - helped prompt the possible limits on the popular BlackBerry.

Tamim told a conference on information technology that the proposed BlackBerry curbs are also "meant to control false rumors and defamation of public figures due to the absence of surveillance," according to a story posted Friday on the website of the UAE newspaper Al-Khaleej.

Tamim, whose remarks are often considered to reflect the views of Dubai's leadership, did not elaborate on the spying accusations in the article. He did not respond to calls by The Associated Press for further comment.

The police chief gained international attention as the pointman in the probe into the January slaying of a Hamas commander in Dubai, which Emirati officials have blamed on Israel's Mossad spy agency.

UAE officials reportedly are still in talks with BlackBerry maker, Canada-based [Research in Motion](#) Ltd. Tamim's comments, however, point to a hard line by Emirates security chiefs who demand access to BlackBerry data.

Blackberry traffic is encrypted and routed through servers operated by RIM. The company has said it would not disclose details of discussions with regulators in any of the more than 175 countries where it operates.

This week, India gave RIM a 60-day window to offer ways for

authorities to monitor BlackBerry traffic. Saudi Arabia last month allowed BlackBerry services to continue, citing "positive developments" after talks with the company. It's unclear whether the Saudi reprieve is permanent.

Other countries such as Indonesia and Lebanon have also noted security worries about BlackBerry services.

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