

India: 'standing firm' on BlackBerry access demand

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A man talks on his mobile phone inside a BlackBerry shop in Mumbai. India says it is standing firm in its demand for security agencies to have access to BlackBerry messages after giving the smartphone's makers a 60-day reprieve on a threat to ban core services.

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"All [security](#) concerns (related to BlackBerry) need to be addressed," Home Minister P. Chidambaram said late Tuesday on the sidelines of a business forum.

The government gave the smartphone's manufacturer Monday a two-month window to provide a permanent solution to its security concerns

to avert a shutdown of BlackBerry's heavily encrypted corporate email and messenger chatting services.

India's security forces, battling insurgencies ranging from Kashmir in the northwest to the remote northeast, are worried militants could use the encrypted services to plan attacks and want to be able to monitor the data.

"Our stand is firm. We look forward to getting access to the data," said Chidambaram. "There is no uncertainty over it."

BlackBerry's temporary reprieve came after the manufacturer of the phone, Canada's [Research in Motion](#) (RIM), made proposals for giving security forces "lawful access" to messages carried on the handsets.

The breathing room was announced on the eve of an August 31 deadline set by the government for BlackBerry to comply with its demands for access.

India's home ministry is now testing the feasibility of RIM's monitoring proposals.

India, which has the world's fastest growing number of mobile users, is a key market for [BlackBerry](#), which has 1.1 million customers in the country.

Skype, the Internet phone service, and [Google](#), which uses powerful encryption technology for its [Gmail](#) email service, are also in the government's firing line as it widens its crackdown on communications firms.

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