

Turkey lifts YouTube ban after more than 2 years

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(AP) -- Turkey said Saturday that it was lifting a ban on YouTube more than two years after it blocked access to the site because of videos deemed insulting to the country's founder.

Transport Minister Binali Yildirim, who is in charge of Internet issues, said the government has been in touch with [Google](#), which owns [YouTube](#). There was no longer any reason to ban the video-sharing site, he said, as the offending videos had been removed.

"In the end, common sense prevailed. The reasons for the YouTube ban do not exist anymore," Yildirim said. "In the end,

"The [ban](#) has been removed," Yildirim said on NTV television. "But we didn't get here easily, we have been through a lot in the process. I hope that they have also learned from this experience and the same thing will not happen again. YouTube will hopefully carry out its organization in Turkey within the limits of law in the future."

Turkey's telecommunications authority banned access to YouTube in May 2008 after users complained that some videos insulted Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, who founded the country in 1923. It is a crime in Turkey to insult Ataturk. The country has implemented reforms as part of a bid to join the European Union, but still faces questions about its record on free expression.

The country began blocking access to websites in 2007, after parliament

adopted a law against cyber crime in an effort to curb child porn, prevent the dissemination of terrorist propaganda and stamp out illegal gambling.

More than 6,000 sites have been banned in Turkey according to Engelli Web, a site that monitors blocked pages.

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