

S.Koreans tweeting with N.Korea to be punished: officials

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A girl logs in to her twitter account on October 2010. South Koreans trying to tweet with North Korea will be punished, Seoul officials have warned, as the communist state ratchets up an online propaganda drive via popular websites such as Twitter and YouTube.

South Koreans trying to tweet with North Korea will be punished, Seoul officials have warned, as the communist state ratchets up an online propaganda drive via popular websites such as Twitter and YouTube.

The Justice Ministry, in its 2011 operation plan, said those who forward the North's [Twitter](#) postings to others or post comments on its postings via "retweet" or "reply" will face punishment.

There was no information on what kind of punishment the offenders will face.

"This is a measure in response to North Korea's recent attacks on the South Korean navy ship Cheonan and Yeonpyeong island, which signified the importance of national security," JoongAng Daily quoted deputy Justice Minister Hwang Hee-Chul as saying.

Hwang was referring to the North's alleged torpedo attack on a Seoul warship that killed 46 sailors in March, and the November 23 shelling attack on the border island that left four South Koreans dead.

The communist North in August joined Twitter under the name @uriminzok (our own nationals), months after its foray into popular video-sharing site, YouTube.

It has more than 10,000 followers and has made more than 600 postings on YouTube, criticising [South Korea](#) and the United States and denying Seoul's accusation that Pyongyang attacked the warship.

[North Korea](#), one of the world's most tightly controlled states, is believed to have an elite unit of hackers, but few of its citizens have access to a computer, let alone the Internet.

Under the South's anti-communist National Security Law, people are banned from unauthorised communication with North Koreans and offenders can be jailed.

The South blocked direct access to the North's Twitter account but followers can still view recent messages through feeds or automatic updates sent to their own accounts.

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