

LinkedIn says access blocked in parts of China

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The logo of LinkedIn is displayed on a laptop screen in San Anselmo, California. The career networking site has said its service had been blocked in parts of China, after the launch of an online campaign for Middle East-style rallies that has triggered official unease.

Career networking site LinkedIn said Friday its service had been blocked in parts of China, after the launch of an online campaign for Middle East-style rallies that has triggered official unease.

Government censors in China have long barred access to foreign [social networking sites](#) such as [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#), and in recent days have heavily censored online chat about the wave of unrest sweeping across the Arab world.

"We can confirm that access to LinkedIn is being blocked for some in

China. This appears to be part of a broader effort in China going on right now, involving other sites as well," company spokesman Hani Durzy told AFP.

"We will continue to monitor the status of LinkedIn's availability in China," Durzy said in an email.

A China-based AFP journalist was unable to access LinkedIn on Friday. The website just-ping.com, which monitors web accessibility around the world, said the service was not available in parts of China.

China, which has the world's largest online population at 457 million, has a huge Internet censorship system that blocks content deemed objectionable by the ruling Communist Party.

An online campaign for weekly "Jasmine rallies" in 13 Chinese cities -- a reference to Tunisia's "Jasmine Revolution" -- has rattled a government already uneasy about the unrest in the Middle East and North Africa.

"I am almost certain that it (LinkedIn) was blocked because there were so many messages related to the calls for Jasmine protests," said Jeremy Goldkorn, editor of the Beijing-based China media website danwei.org, which also is blocked by censors.

Last week, US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton renewed calls for Internet freedom around the world and said Washington would continue to help "people in oppressive Internet environments" with censorship circumvention technology.

"Those who clamp down on Internet freedom may be able to hold back the full expression of their people's yearnings for a while, but not forever," she said.

The United States later chided China for apparently blocking online access to Clinton's remarks.

"While [China](#) negotiates with Clinton, it is evidently trying to make her disappear from the Internet," State Department spokesman Philip Crowley wrote on Twitter.

"This is a losing proposition."

[LinkedIn](#), which describes itself as the world's largest professional network on the Internet with more than 90 million members in more than 200 countries, filed last month to stage an initial public offering in the United States.

"We believe we are transforming the way people work by connecting talent with opportunity at massive scale," the Mountain View, California-based start-up said in its filing with the US Securities and Exchange Commission.

Officials at China's Ministry of Industry and Information Technology declined immediate comment when contacted by AFP.

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