

Scavenging pensioner 'cut off Georgia-Armenia Internet'

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Workers roll a fibre-optic cable. Georgian police arrested a 75-year-old woman who single-handedly cut off Internet connections in Georgia and neighbouring Armenia, the interior ministry in Tbilisi said on Wednesday.

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The pensioner was digging for scrap metal when she hacked into a fibre-optic cable which runs through [Georgia](#) to Armenia, forcing many thousands of Internet users in both countries offline for several hours on March 28.

"She found the cable while collecting scrap metal and cut it with a view to stealing it," Georgian interior ministry spokesman Zura Gvenetadze told AFP.

The woman who was arrested in the village of Ksani, north of capital Tbilisi, has been charged with damaging property and could face up to three years in prison if convicted.

"Taking into account her advancing years, she has been released pending the end of the investigation and subsequent trial," Gvenetadze said.

Many Georgians' [Internet connections](#) were also briefly cut in 2009 by another scavenger who damaged the fibre-optic cable while hunting for scrap metal in the impoverished ex-Soviet state.

The company that owns the cable, Georgian Railway Telecom, said that the latest damage was serious, causing 90 percent of private and corporate Internet users in Armenia to lose access for nearly 12 hours while also hitting Georgian Internet service providers.

"I cannot understand how this lady managed to find and damage the [cable](#)," the head of the company's marketing department, Giorgi Ionatamishvili, told AFP.

"It has robust protection and such incidents are extremely rare," he said.

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