

Rousseff wants Web servers to be housed in Brazil

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Brazil's President Dilma Rousseff attends a ceremony at the Planalto presidential palace, in Brasilia, Brazil, Monday, Sept. 9, 2013. Rousseff again demanded answers from the U.S. government Monday after a new report about National Security Agency spying on Brazil. The report broadcast by the Globo TV network Sunday night, based on leaked documents from Edward Snowden, said the NSA targeted Brazil's state-run oil firm Petrobras. (AP Photo/Eraldo Peres)

(AP)—Brazil's president asked legislators on Thursday to urgently vote on a bill that would force foreign companies to store all data about their

Brazilian clients on servers based in the country, a move seen as essential for user security after repeated reports of Internet spying by the U.S. in Brazil.

The "Internet constitution" bill has lingered in the lower house since 2011 and includes many provisions extending protections to Web users in Latin America's biggest nation, one of the globe's biggest users of social media like Facebook and Twitter.

President Dilma Rousseff met earlier this week with the bill's sponsor, Deputy Alessandro Molon of the governing Workers Party, and asked that he insert language into the bill that would force Internet companies to keep their servers on Brazilian soil if they want to do business in the country, the [lawmaker's](#) office said. That would force companies to follow Brazilian [privacy laws](#) for the information on those servers.

A Molon spokesman, who would not allow his name to be used because he wasn't yet authorized to speak on the matter, said the legislator and his team were ironing out the exact language to be included in the bill.

The president's office confirmed that Rousseff met with Molon and Communications Minister Paulo Bernardo Silva on Tuesday, but referred all questions about the meeting to the legislator and the minister. After hours calls to the ministry rang unanswered. A statement on the website of the lower house confirmed that Rousseff requested urgent action on the bill.

Rousseff and other officials have been enraged at revelations that the U.S. National Security Agency's espionage programs targeting global communications have focused on Brazil. Globo television has aired several reports about the NSA's focus on Brazil, based upon documents leaked by Edward Snowden to American journalist Glenn Greenwald, who resides in Rio and has worked with Globo.

Among the revelations have been that the NSA intercepted Rousseff's communications with her top aides, that the agency is intercepting a huge amount of Internet traffic that flows through Brazil, and that its espionage programs have targeted Brazil's state-run oil company Petrobras.

Technology companies like Facebook, Yahoo, Google and Microsoft have been forced to comply with U.S. government orders to turn over information about users under the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act.

All the companies have asked a secret U.S. court that oversees the law to allow them to disclose data on national security orders that the companies have received. The companies were among several U.S. Internet businesses identified as giving the NSA access to customer data under the program known as PRISM.

Facebook and Yahoo say they want to correct false claims and reports about what they provide to the government and argue they have a free-speech right to publish aggregate data on national security orders.

Under Brazilian law, Rousseff's asking congress to take up the bill means legislators must vote on the measure within 45 days. If not voted upon by then, no other bills can be brought to a vote until that measure is taken up.

If it passed the lower house, the bill would then go to the senate, where it would also have to be voted on within 45 days.

Brazilian Communications Minister Paulo Silva has called for any companies working with Brazilian clients to maintain servers in the nation, which officials say would help prevent spying by foreign entities.

"The level of concentration of American Internet companies is colossal,"

Silva said shortly after the first reports that the NSA program was focusing on Brazil. "Beyond that, as all the data centers are (now) located within the United States, one is always communicating with U.S. servers."

Silva insisted that companies like Facebook, Google and others plant their servers in Brazil, a nation of 200 million people with a voracious social media appetite.

Facebook's director in Brazil, Leonardo Tristao, told the Globo television this week that Brazil ranks only behind the U.S. and India in terms of how many users are on the social network, with 76 million Brazilians maintaining a Facebook account.

In August, Silva said the government would ask legislators to include in the Internet bill language make it a crime to read someone else's email, giving email the same level of legal protection afforded to letters sent by mail.

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