

Turkey keeps YouTube ban after court backtrack

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Turkey blocked YouTube after it was used to spread recordings allegedly of top-level security talks on Syria

YouTube will remain blocked in Turkey, despite the end to a similar controversial ban on Twitter, after a court backtracked on an earlier ruling to grant access to the video-sharing site.

The court in the capital Ankara on Friday lifted a March 27 government

decision blocking access to YouTube, saying the blanket ban violated human rights, and instead restricting 15 videos.

But the court later reversed the decision, saying the block would remain in place until the [audio recordings](#) allegedly showing top-level security talks on Syria are removed, Turkey's Hurriyet newspaper reported.

The change of heart comes after Turkey's government complied with a Constitutional Court ruling on Thursday and scrapped a similar ban on San-Francisco-based Twitter.

The microblogging site was blocked by the Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan on March 20 after it was used to spread a spate of anonymous leaks implicating his inner circle in corruption.

YouTube was banned in Turkey after the site was used to spread audio recordings in which the voices of senior government, military and spy officials can be heard weighing possible military action inside war-torn Syria.

Both restrictions, the latest steps in Ankara's crackdown on the Internet, have sparked protests from Turkey's Western allies and [human rights](#) groups, which have deplored it as curbing the right to free expression.

Washington Friday hailed the court's decision to lift the ban on US-based Twitter and urged the government to "open all social media space in Turkey".

Erdogan, however, slammed ruling, saying he has no "respect" for the court's decision and that "insults to a country's [prime minister](#) and ministers are all around".

A damaging corruption scandal fuelled by online leaks—which Erdogan

has blamed on supporters of influential US-based Islamic cleric Fetullah Gulen—has posed the biggest challenge to Erdogan's 11 years in power.

Despite street protests, crackdowns and graft scandals, Erdogan's Justice and Development Party (AKP) scored sweeping wins in the nationwide municipal polls last Sunday.

The vote has led to a tense standoff in the capital, where the opposition claims the AKP rigged the vote to deliver its candidate a narrow victory.

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