

Iran president vetoes WhatsApp ban: reports

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Access to social networks, including Twitter and Facebook, are routinely blocked by Iranian authorities, as are other websites considered un-Islamic or detrimental to the regime.

The policy is contentious and the move to filter WhatsApp has caused a rupture between Rouhani's administration and a 13-member committee responsible for Internet censorship.

The reformist Sharq daily reported that Rouhani has ordered the WhatsApp ban, proposed shortly after Facebook bought the messaging service for \$19 billion in February, be stopped.

"The issue of banning WhatsApp was raised. The president has ordered a halt on (banning) the site," Telecommunications Minister Mahmoud Vaezi was quoted as saying by Sharq.

"Until the time that we have a replacement for these sites, the government opposes filtering them," he added.

According to an official at the telecommunications ministry, the ban was approved by the Committee for Determining Criminal Web Content, but it was not implemented.



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In separate comments, the committee secretary Abdolsamad Khorramabadi this week told several local media outlets: "One of the reasons for approving the filtering of WhatsApp was the adaptation of this software by (Mark) Zuckerberg, the American Zionist manager of blocked site Facebook."

The committee has yet to decide if it wants to ban other smartphone applications, including Instagram—also owned by Facebook—and Viber.

Government officials have voiced support for lifting the wider ban on

[social media](#).

Rouhani has promised greater tolerance on social, cultural and media issues—a vow that helped him beat his conservative opponents in the presidential election last year.

But the president continues to face resistance from hardliners.

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