

China blocks Google sites ahead of Tiananmen anniversary: group

June 3 2014



Pedestrians walk pass the Google China headquarters in Beijing on June 30, 2010

Several Google websites have been blocked in China ahead of the 25th anniversary of the Tiananmen Square crackdown, a censorship monitoring service said.

China prevents access to a host of websites including YouTube and Twitter using a system known as the "Great Firewall," and restrictions

are tightened ahead of dates the government considers sensitive.

Overseas versions of Google, accessible in China after the technology giant withdrew from the mainland in 2010, have now been blocked, according to GreatFire.org.

"The block is indiscriminate as all Google services in all countries, encrypted or not, are now blocked in China," it said on Monday.

Affected products include Gmail, images, and the search and translation service, alongside country specific versions of Google homepages.

The move comes ahead of the anniversary of the 1989 crackdown on pro-democracy protests in Beijing, which killed hundreds, by some estimates more than 1,000.

China's ruling Communist Party tightly controls public discussion of the June 4 crackdown.

"Because the block has lasted for 4 days, it's more likely that Google will be severely disrupted and barely usable from now on," the website said in a statement on Monday.

Tiananmen 1989

Build-up to the bloody crackdown on protesters in the Chinese capital 25 years ago

- April 15**
Death of dismissed reformer and ex-Communist Party boss Hu Yaobang
- April 17**
First student protest on Tiananmen Square, to lay wreath honouring Hu, followed with pro-democracy slogans
- April 22**
Hu Yaobang's funeral disrupted by student demonstration in the Square
- April 25**
People's Daily calls protests 'riot' against regime
- April 27**
Protests erupt across the country
- May 4**
Over a million demonstrate commemorating the historic Chinese student demonstration of May 4, 1919
- May 13**
Students launch occupation of Tiananmen Square and a hunger strike
- May 15**
Protests disrupt visit by former Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev
- May 17**
About 1.2 million students, workers, civil servants, intellectuals protest in Beijing, major demonstrations across the country
- May 18**
Premier Li Peng meets student leaders in nationally televised meeting
- May 19**
Zhao Ziyang, Communist Party boss, pleads with hunger strikers to leave the square
- May 20**
Martial law declared
- May 25**
Zhao Ziyang purged from Party leadership, put under house arrest on 28th
- May 29**
Students erect the "Goddess of Liberty" statue, facing the portrait of former leader Mao Zedong
- June 3**
Students, citizens block military vehicles at Beijing's major intersections
- June 3-4**
Army evacuates Tiananmen Square. Soldiers flanked by tanks open fire in streets of Beijing. Hundreds, possibly more than 1,000, killed
- June 8**
An unknown Chinese citizen blocks a column of tanks



AFP

Timeline of events leading up to the crackdown against protesters in Beijing in 1989

"The 25th anniversary of the Tiananmen Square incident is coming. This highlights another fierce battle in the war between China censorship authority and information flow," it added.

Google stopped offering a search engine service within mainland China in 2010, citing censorship, but users were redirected to the Hong Kong version which was usually accessible, although sometimes blocked.

Google said the shutdown was not on its side.

"We've checked extensively and there's nothing wrong on our end," a Google spokesman told AFP, adding that Google services are partially accessible in China.

China's government generally responds to queries about blocked websites by saying it that it manages the Internet according to the law.

Google's share of China's online search market stood at just 1.2 percent in April, according to Chinese market research company CNZZ.

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Citation: China blocks Google sites ahead of Tiananmen anniversary: group (2014, June 3)
retrieved 30 April 2024 from

<https://phys.org/news/2014-06-china-blocks-google-sites-tiananmen.html>

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