

Woman to be first charged under Philippine cybercrime law

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An anti-cybercrime law slogan is written on a shield of a policeman during a protest near the supreme court in Manila on January 15, 2013

A woman has been indicted for computer fraud in the first such case under the Philippines' controversial cybercrime law, justice department records showed Sunday.

Karla Martinez Ignacio could face up to six years in jail if found guilty of transferring thousands of dollars to her bank account using fraudulent

computer data.

She was indicted by a prosecutor in the city of Las Pinas, outside Manila, and is set to be charged under the Philippines' Cybercrime Prevention Act.

The law is designed to stamp out online scourges like fraud, identity theft and child pornography, but critics say it could be used to stifle dissent as it imposes heavy prison terms for online libel.

Facebook and Twitter have become popular ways of organising major political street protests in the Philippines.

The law was passed in 2012 but its implementation was suspended after coming under challenge from various groups.

The Supreme Court ruled in February that the law was not unconstitutional, paving the way for its implementation.

But the court ruled against a provision giving authorities sweeping powers to shut down websites or record Internet traffic data in real time.

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