

Chinese anti-censorship group says it's under attack

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"We are under attack and we need help," the group said in a blog post on Thursday, claiming it has been hit by a barrage of automated requests known as a distributed denial of service (DDoS) attack.

"This tactic is used to bring down Web pages by flooding them with lots of requests—at the time of writing they number 2.6 billion requests per hour. Websites are not equipped to handle that kind of volume so they usually 'break' and go offline."

GreatFire allows residents of China to circumvent the so-called "Great Firewall" that censors much content from the West, by providing "mirror" websites of those which are blocked by censors.

The blog said the attack appears to be in retaliation for a Wall Street Journal article this week which explained methods to access censored websites.

"This attack affects all of our mirror websites," the blog said.

"While we have talked openly about our method of using collateral freedom to unblock websites and mobile apps that have been blocked by the Chinese authorities, the WSJ story clearly stated how the strategy works and how it is being used successfully to deliver uncensored content into China. Blocked websites that we have liberated in China include Boxun, Deutsche Welle and Google."

GreatFire said the increased data requests could lead to costs of up to \$30,000 per day. It was seeking contributions to upgrade its servers to stave off the [attacks](#) and asking supporters to contact the hosting service, Amazon, to waive the extra costs.

"We've upgraded to faster servers and used other techniques to manage the load and it's working for now but we fear that the attack may be

intensified at any time."

The news coincided with the apparent blocking of Reuters news websites in China, the latest Western news organization to face the issue.

Reuters said its sites in both English and Chinese were inaccessible in China on Friday, joining those of Bloomberg News, the New York Times and the Wall Street Journal.

China's Communist Party oversees a vast censorship system—dubbed the Great Firewall—that aggressively blocks sites or snuffs out Internet and TV content and commentary on topics considered sensitive, such as Beijing's human rights record and criticisms of the government.

Popular social network sites such as Facebook and Twitter are inaccessible in the country, as is YouTube.

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