

Turkey moves to tighten control on Internet

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Turkey's parliament has approved legislation to tighten the government's control over the Internet by allowing it to block websites without prior judicial authorisation

Turkey's parliament has approved legislation to tighten the government's control over the Internet by allowing it to block websites without prior judicial authorisation, official media said Friday.

The Internet legislation is the most controversial article in a so-called omnibus bill containing legislation on vastly different topics that must be passed in full before the individual items become law.

The article passed by parliament is very similar to one it approved in September 2014 but was then overturned by the constitutional [court](#) one month later.

It allows Turkey's [telecommunications agency](#) to block a website deemed to be insulting, violating the right to privacy or endangering the stability of the state.

The providers of the site have four hours to take it down and a [court order](#) is then required to validate the blocking of the site after 48 hours.

The providers of the site will face hefty fines if they fail to comply with the court orders.

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) have already been repeatedly criticised for using court orders to block critical websites.

The government blocked Twitter and YouTube in March 2014 after they were used to spread a torrent of audio recordings implicating the prime minister and his inner circle in an alleged corruption scandal.

The ban on [social media](#) was later overturned by the top constitutional court.

The article will become law once the omnibus bill—which also contains articles on urban development and the civil service—is passed in full.

Erdogan in August 2014 compared social media to a "knife in the hand of a murderer", saying "I don't like to tweet, schmeet."

However in February this year he started tweeting from his own account.

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