

India orders telecoms to block more than 850 adult websites

August 3 2015, byMuneeza Naqvi

India has ordered Internet service providers to block access to more than 850 adult websites in what the government has described as a way to protect social decency.

N.N. Kaul, a spokesman for India's department of telecom, said Monday that the government was trying to control easy access to pornography following a directive from the country's top court.

Kaul said that while Internet service providers in India will have to bar access, users may still view the sites through virtual private networks and proxy servers. He said the move would protect children.

The leaked government order, dated last Friday, orders Internet [service providers](#) to block access to the 857 sites on grounds of morality and decency.

The Supreme Court said earlier in July that ordering a [ban](#) on adult websites was not its job but was an issue for the government. That followed an order from the court last year that suggested the government needed to monitor access to pornography.

Many Indians are accusing the government of moral policing and infringing on personal freedoms.

"Don't ban porn. Ban men ogling, leering, brushing past, groping, molesting, abusing, humiliating and raping women. Ban non-consent.

Not sex," popular Indian author Chetan Bhagat said on Twitter.

"Porn ban is anti-freedom, impractical, not enforceable. Politically not very smart too. avoidable. Let's not manage people's private lives," he added.

In the past India has tried to control social media sites like Facebook and Twitter and ask them to take down offensive material. It had briefly blocked several Twitter accounts in 2012 citing security and law and order fears.

It also blocked access to a homegrown soft-porn website in 2009.

Kaul said more websites may be added to the list of those to be blocked.

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