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NOTICES

Telecoms regulator to investigate internet providers for snubbing Cambodia Daily ban

Erin Handley | Publication date 05 February 2018 | 17:51 ICT

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A man reads the Cambodia Daily before it was shuttered in September. Cambodia's telecoms regulator says it will investigate internet service providers who failed to block access to the Daily's website despite a government request. Hong Menea

Cambodia's Telecommunications Regulator (TRC) said today that it will investigate internet service providers (ISP) that have not blocked the *Cambodia Daily* website, warning that those who fail to comply with a now months-old order could lose their licences.

Government documents, which came to light yesterday, show the Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications, at the request of the General Department of Taxation, ordered ISPs to block access to the *Cambodia Daily* IP address, as well as its Facebook page and Twitter account.

Only a handful of ISPs seem to have complied with the government request. MekongNet and Sinet KH confirmed the block, and access also appeared to be restricted through the provider Online. The *Daily* was forced to close in September last year after it was handed a \$6.3 million tax bill, which many observers contend was used to silence an outlet often critical of the government.

TRC spokesman Im Vutha said that the noncompliant ISPs – some of which told *The Post* yesterday they had not received the letter – could face legal consequences under Article 78 of the Telecoms Law.



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"We start to investigate those who did not block, because it was ordered by the government," Vutha said. "If they violate any order from the government, they will face the Telecoms Law."

"We will give them a warning, give time to correct, and if they do not listen we will revoke their licence," he said, adding that only the courts could determine the penalty.

Telecom Ministry spokesman Khov Makara today said he had little detailed knowledge of the letter, which was signed by Khay Khunheng, a secretary of state from his ministry, as it came from a "technical department".

Makara denied the move was a form of censorship.

"Block means you are not able to view; censorship is something different. Censorship means you cannot do – block means you are not allowed to see," he said.

Ezecom CEO Paul Blanche-Horgan yesterday said he had not seen the ministry's letter. While government has made attempts over the years to block sites, he said, "we don't do that".

"We have never blocked any sites," he said in an email.

A representative from Cellcard said the company had adhered to the government's order when it was first issued.

"Cellcard acted with due diligence in September 2017 and blocked the IP addresses as requested. However, it appears the Cambodia Daily has since changed its IP address. We are seeking advice from the Ministry on further action to be taken," they said in a statement.

Neak Longkheang, Digi's chief marketing officer, maintained his company had not received the letter, but that it would move to block access to the *Daily* if further pressed by the government.

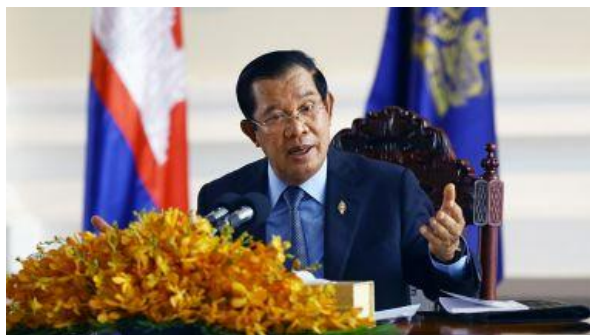
"If a letter comes, we have to do it," he said. "We will follow the regulations from the government. That's what we do."

The *Daily* is not the first site to be blocked at the behest of the government. In 2011, attempts were made to block access to opposition news blog KI Media, although the government denied any official blackout of the site at the time.

A previous version of this article included a comment from Cellcard CEO Ian Watson that he is unaware of the company having received the letter from the ministry. It has been updated to reflect a subsequent statement from the company.

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Phnom Penh placed in two-week lockdown

The government has decided to place Phnom Penh in lockdown for two weeks, effective April 14 midnight through April 28, as Cambodia continues to grapple with the ongoing community outbreak of Covid-19, which has seen no sign of subsiding. According to a directive signed by Prime Minister

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The World Health Organisation (WHO) in Cambodia warned that the country had reached another critical point amid a sudden, huge surge in community transmission cases and deaths. “We stand on the brink of a national tragedy because of Covid-19. Despite our best efforts, we are

**Hun Sen: Stay where you are, or else**

Prime Minister Hun Sen warned that the two-week lockdown of Phnom Penh and adjacent Kandal provincial town Takmao could be extended if people are not cooperative by staying home. “Now let me make this clear: stay in your home, village, and district and remain where



Businesses in capital told to get travel permit amid lockdown through One Window Service

The Phnom Penh Municipal Administration has issued guidelines on how to get travel permission for priority groups during the lockdown of Phnom Penh, directing private institutions to apply through the municipality's One Window Service and limit their staff to a mere two per cent. In



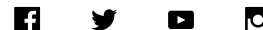
Vaccination open to foreigners in Cambodia

The Ministry of Health on April 8 issued an announcement on Covid-19 vaccination for foreigners residing and working in Cambodia, directing the Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training and local authorities to register them. Health minister Mam Bun Heng, who is also head of the inter-ministerial



Ministry names types of business permitted amid lockdown

The Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training singled out 11 types of business that are permitted to operate during the lockdown of Phnom Penh and Takmao town, which run through April 28. Those include (1) food-processing enterprises and slaughterhouses; (2) providers of public services such as firefighting, utility and



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