

Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/china-internet-is-collateral-victim-of-31-05-2011,40379.html>

Asia - China

Websites censored

Internet censorship stepped up in Inner Mongolia

6 June 2011

Reporters Without Borders has learned that more websites in Inner Mongolia are being censored by the Chinese authorities, who are now using more insidious and less visible methods than just blocking a site. They are leaving certain personal blogs, forums and instant messaging services accessible but are making it impossible to post a message.

As a result, websites such as [Ulaag Internet Bar](#) seem at first sight to be operational but are in practice completely unusable. Programmes such as the [Boljoo](#) instant messaging service have been completely censored since 30 May while the [Baidu](#) search engine continues to censor Chinese word strings such as “demonstrations in Inner Mongolia.”

Reporters Without Borders reiterates its appeal to the Chinese authorities to end all forms of censorship.

Internet is collateral victim of crackdown on Inner Mongolia protests 31 May 2011

Reporters Without Borders condemns the Chinese government's decision to rein in Internet service in the northern region of Inner Mongolia, which has been experiencing a growing wave of protests since 10 May.

“Yet again, the Chinese authorities have not hesitated to obstruct Internet access in a bid to suppress unrest,” Reporters Without Borders said. “Like Tibet and Xinjiang, Inner Mongolia is a special target for censorship. Suspending or slowing Internet service violates freedom of expression and information. But far from restoring calm, blocking the flow of information just encourages the spread of rumours and falsehoods. It is counter-productive.”

In the city of Tongliao, bloggers and Internet users have been summoned to the Public Security Bureau. Two *Reuters* journalists were harassed. Police pulled them out of their car and gave them express orders not to conduct interviews.

In the regional capital of Hohhot, Internet cafés have closed because of bad Internet connections and mobile phone access to the Internet is completely blocked. Chat rooms, the instant messaging service QQ and other online social networks are also blocked. Content relating to the protests has been removed from micro-blogging platforms such as Weibo and Sina. Even very general key-words linked to the protests, such as Hohhot (呼和浩特) and Ujimqin (西乌旗), are now censored on the Chinese Internet.

The current wave of protests in Inner Mongolia, which usually has little unrest, were sparked by the death of a herdsman, who was knocked down by a truck while opposing the frequent truck traffic across his pastures. Hundreds of people took to the streets to demand justice and an end to discrimination against the region's ethnic Mongolian minority. Martial law has since been imposed in some areas and dozens of arrests have been made.

Among the demands circulating online have been many calls for the release of journalists and cyber-dissidents who are in prison or missing. They include the Mongolian rights activist **Hada** and several of his close relatives, who are being held for refusing to abandon their cause. Hada should have been freed on completing a 15-year jail sentence on 10 December.

The writer **Govruud Huuchinhuu** [has been missing](#) since 27 January, when she was

discharged from a hospital in Tongliao. Until her hospitalization, she had been under house arrest since November for urging fellow Mongolians to get ready for Hada's release. Reporters Without Borders is without any news of her and is worried about her state of health.

Among the journalists who have been detained is **Hu Jianlong**, a reporter for the independent business magazine *Caijing*, who was arrested and interrogated for six hours. He had to call a senior Inner Mongolian official in order to be freed.

Reporters Without Borders urges the Chinese authorities to restore Internet connections, unblock the censored websites and refrain from any harassment of bloggers who refer to the ongoing protests. The organization also calls for light to be shed on the cases of detained journalists and cyber-dissidents, and for them to be freed at once.

Sensitive provinces that are prone to unrest receive special treatment from the Chinese authorities. The autonomous region of Xinjiang was cut off from the rest of the world following unrest in July 2009. Its Internet was completely disconnected for nearly 10 months, from August 2009 to May 2010, while netizens were given long jail sentences.

Repression in Tibet has never really stopped since the March 2008 uprising. Dozens of Tibetans have been [arrested](#) for sending reports, photos or videos abroad and some have been given long jail terms.

China is on the list of "[Enemies of the Internet](#)" which Reporters Without Borders released on 12 March.

Photo : Reuters
