

# Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/tadjikistan-access-to-one-of-tadjikistan-s-main-25-07-2012,43109.html>

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Europe/Ex-USSR - Tajikistan

Online censorship

## Access to one of Tajikistan's main news sites blocked again

25 July 2012

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Reporters Without Borders deplores the blocking two days ago of access to the news site *news.tj*, the portal of one of Tajikistan's biggest independent news organizations *Asia Plus*, by all Internet service providers on government orders.

"This act of censorship unfortunately is part of the continuing wave of website blockages that we condemned in March," the press freedom organization said.

"The arbitrary blocking of access to websites by the telecommunications ministry is unacceptable. We urge the government to stop putting pressure on Internet service providers and to restore access to all news sites affected by this mass censorship as soon as possible."

Access to the *Asia Plus* website was blocked on the evening of 23 July. The site's editorial staff were told of the blocking order by its service provider which was responding to a request by Beg Zuhurov, the director of communications, who had given the order to cut access to the site by text message.

Editorial staff say they never received a statement from the government giving the official reasons for the blockage. They made a number of attempts to contact the minister directly without success.

A few days earlier, the site published several articles about a conflict between government forces and rebels in the eastern region of Badakhshan, during which the general in charge of special services, Abdullo Nazarov, was stabbed to death.

It is the second time access to the site has been blocked by the government in the past two months. The previous blockage, which lasted a week, was in response to a comment made by an Internet user. In March this year, access to the sites *zvezda.ru*, *tkjnews.com*, *maxala.org* and *centrasia.ru* was also blocked.

The government is tightening its control over the Web in the run-up to the presidential election next year.

Last week, the communications ministry informed journalists that a group of IT experts would be formed in the near future to monitor undesirable content. The mission of this "citizens' organization", once it is registered with the justice ministry, will be to filter out all comments found to be insulting or defamatory towards those in power.

In this manner, the government hopes forestall the use by Internet users of proxy servers to get around censorship and access the content of blocked sites.

Tajikistan is in 123rd place of 179 countries listed in the 2011-2012 World Press Freedom Index compiled by Reporters Without Borders.

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**Other images**



JPEG - 36.4 kb  
400 x 300 pixels



JPEG - 38.8 kb  
400 x 300 pixels

