(Video) Why Did Iran Regime's Parliament Hastily Approve the Internet Protection Bill?

The bill requires international technology firms to have a legal representative in Iran as a means of cooperating with Tehran to increase online surveillance.

PARIS, FRANCE, February 25, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- In an article, the Foreign Affairs Committee of [the National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCRI)](#) wrote that, after months of flip-flop about adopting the so-called "internet protection bill," the Iranian regime's parliament hastily approved the generalities of the bill. Unlike its name, this bill will not protect millions of Iranians using the internet and social media platforms but further restricts their individual freedoms.

After months of the so-called "internet protection bill," the Iranian regime's hastily approved the generalities of the bill. This bill will not protect millions of Iranians using the internet but further restricts their individual freedoms.

Social media platforms such as Instagram are not just a placeholder of glossy images for millions of Iranians. They use these platforms to earn a living amid the country's grim economic situation.

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> *NCRI*

Iran's internet speed has significantly slowed down in the last month. Regime officials, fearing a public backlash, denied having approved and implemented the internet protection bill.

Yet, the state-run Hamdeli daily on February 22 hinted that "this situation is signal of silent implementation of internet protection bill before its approval."

In an exclusive report about this bill on January 17, the Iranian Resistance wrote: "The bill, which is officially called the 'Cyberspace Users Rights

Protection and Regulation of Key Online Services,' will disrupt citizen access to international services, primarily social media, and allow the regime's security apparatus to control internet gateways to intensify suppression of dissent."

The proposed bill requires international technology firms to have a legal representative in Iran as a means of cooperating with Tehran to increase online surveillance.

Companies that host unregistered social media apps in Iran would risk penalties. Millions of Iranians must either turn to regime-affiliated platforms and risk their basic freedoms or risk sinking deeper into poverty, the report added.

The regime's MPs were hesitant to approve this bill because they feared a fierce public backlash. One hundred fifty of the regime's handpicked MPs have called for the review of the plan in an attempt to thwart any possible public reaction by kicking the can down the road.

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The hasty approval of the so-called "protection" bill by 18 votes in favor and one against revived warnings by regime officials and state media about a foreseeable uprising.

"You are going down on the path of dictatorship by adopting this plan in 10 minutes," Gholamreza Noury Ghezelgeh, one of the regime's MPs, said while warning of the people's reaction.

"An unsustainable policy will certainly fail; the pace of change is such that it will overtake any restrictions in the short term," the state-run Etemad daily quoted Ali Rabie, the spokesperson of Hassan Rouhani's government, warning regime officials on February 23.

If we do not persuade the public before the approval of plans such as the protection plan, this

plan will confuse public opinion," Nasser Imani, one of the regime's experts, told the state-run Farhikhtegan daily on February 23."

"If you talk to anyone in the street, none has a good impression of the approval of the internet protection plan. In other words, this plan is destined to fail because it does not have the support of the public," the paper quoted Imani as saying. Imani also warned officials that "approving this plan behind closed doors" is a "dangerous procedure."

In recent months, the Iranian regime's Supreme Leader, Ali Khamenei, and his representatives in different cities stepped up their calls for "controlling" cyberspace.

They have expressed fear of the Iranian opposition's active presence on social media and an increasing number of youths approaching the organized Resistance movement.

Khamenei expressed his agitation of social media removing the name of his terror mastermind, Qassem Soleimani, brazenly describing the public mocking of Soleimani as a "media dictatorship."

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"In our country, due to the lack of a national cyber sovereignty strategy, unregulated cyberspace has caused the [regime] to be deprived of its basic rights in defending its honor, and dignity," the state-run Tasnim news agency, an outlet linked to the IRGC's Quds Force, wrote on February 9, while referring to Khamenei's comments about the role of social media in society.

On February 9, Ali Hatami, Khamenei's representative in Zanjan, said: "The enemy tries to demonstrate that the [regime] is useless."
On February 16, Mohammad Saidi, Khamenei's representative in Qom, called for restricting

social media and warned about the "enemy's" anti-regime propaganda on cyberspace.

Khamenei and other regime officials are right to fear social media and its impact on society. Since 2009, there have been at least five significant uprisings in Iran, and social media has played a vital role in exposing the regime's crimes, fighting its censorship, and organizing protests. During the November 2019 uprising, the regime had to shut down the internet as the situation was going out of its control.

Approving this bill will also have major economic consequences for the regime as well. Some officials and state media estimated that Tehran lost nearly $1bn by imposing an internet blackout in November 2019.

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So why has Khamenei ordered his handpicked MPs to approve this bill? Why did over 150 of them call to review this plan despite Khamenei's repeated calls to restrict social media?

One should seek answers on Iran's busy streets, where people from all walks of life hold daily protests and warn officials that they are "ready to revolt."

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This press release can be viewed online at: https://www.einpresswire.com/article/564003974