

Turkish court orders Facebook to block pages 'insulting' prophet

ISTANBUL TURKEY: A Turkish court has ordered Facebook to block pages deemed insulting to the Prophet Mohammed, threatening to shut down the social media network indefinitely if it ignores the directive, state media said on Monday.



The ruling came after Turkish prosecutors investigated the social media pages following a deadly attack on the Paris offices of French satirical magazine *Charlie Hebdo* on 7 January.

The court ruled on Sunday that Facebook would be shut down altogether in Turkey if it fails to implement the order, state-run Anatolia news agency reported.

In its first issue after the attack by two Islamist gunmen that killed 12 people, *Charlie Hebdo* featured an image of the prophet weeping on its front cover holding a "Je suis Charlie" sign under the heading "All is forgiven".

The image sparked outrage in some parts of the Islamic world, including Muslim-majority Turkey, where many find the depiction of the prophet highly offensive. Earlier this month, Turkish daily newspaper *Cumhuriyet* printed a selection of cartoons in a show of solidarity with *Charlie Hebdo*.

Soon after, Turkish prosecutors opened an investigation into two *Cumhuriyet* columnists who ran the controversial cartoons in their columns. Also in January, a court in the southeastern city of Diyarbakir ruled to block access to web pages showing *Charlie Hebdo*'s latest cover.

The Turkish government has in the past blocked numerous social networks. Twitter and YouTube were temporarily blocked in Turkey last year after both platforms were used by opponents of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan to post allegations of corruption within his inner circle.

Turkish lawmakers will this week debate a new bill that will further tighten the government's grip on the internet.

Under a change to an existing law, the prime minister and any of his ministers will be able to order a block on websites "to

protect national security, public order and to prevent crime."

Source: AFP, via I-Net Bridge

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