



The Citizen Lab

Southeast Asia CyberWatch: June 2013

A monthly report on trends in online censorship, information operations,
and Internet use in Southeast Asia

Table of Contents

- Cambodia (pages 1-2)
- Indonesia (page 2)
- Malaysia (page 2-3)
- Myanmar (page 3)
- Philippines (page 3)
- Singapore (page 3)
- Thailand (page 4)
- Vietnam (page 4)

CAMBODIA

Opposition parties use Internet to gather support for election

In anticipation of the Cambodian general election on July 28, opposition candidates have [taken to the Internet to gather support](#). Parties other than the ruling Cambodian People's Party (CPP) have found it difficult to acquire air time through traditional media sources like television and radio and have thus focused efforts on social media platforms. Sam Rainsy, president of the Cambodia National Rescue Party, recently solicited enough "likes" on his Facebook page to surpass that of current Prime Minister Hun Sen and has engaged the public in a series of Internet videos called "Rainsy TV." He recently asserted that "the

Internet will increasingly become the primary channel for young Cambodians to rally for change in the upcoming elections.” Social media played a [major role](#) in Malaysia’s recent 13th general election.

INDONESIA

Government building a “Cyber Army”

Indonesia’s Defence Ministry has recently [announced its intention](#) to build a “cyber army” with the mission of “targeting Internet hackers who could endanger the sustainability of the state.” Defence Minister Purnomo Yusgiantoro clarified that his ministry would collaborate with the Communication and Information Ministry, which would provide support in the form of infrastructure, training, and equipment. Indonesian government websites have allegedly suffered over 36.6 million [cyber attacks](#) in the past three years.

Law enforcement increasingly using social media

Indonesian police forces have [adopted Facebook as a tool](#) to improve relations with the public, encourage transparency, and monitor criminal activities. The National Police has used its Facebook page as a source of information for Indonesians through posting how-to guides, communicating current news of its operations, and raising awareness of new laws. National Police spokesman Boy Rafli Amar further stated that by “establishing regular communication with civil society on social networks, we hope that we can minimise the number of criminal victims.” Indonesia has experienced a [significant increase](#) in the number of cyber crimes, while terrorist groups in the country have reportedly [taken to social networks](#) to recruit new members.

MALAYSIA

Woman arrested for Facebook post

Earlier this month, a Malaysian woman [was arrested](#) on allegations that she had insulted the Malaysian king on Facebook. The suspect, reportedly [named Melissa Gooi](#), criticised a speech delivered by the king on June 1. A spokesman for the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC) stated that the woman could be “charged under the Sedition Act of 1948,” and that the investigation took place “under Section 233 of the Communications and Multimedia Act 1998.” The [Malaysian government has used](#) Section 233 of the Communications and Multimedia Act, which concerns “improper use of network facilities,” as a means of persecuting bloggers.

Prime Minister calls for restrictions on social media

In a speech at Malaysian Journalists Night on June 12, Prime Minister [Najib Razak pronounced](#) that freedom of speech “must be suited and match Malaysian norms which are synonymous with good manners and noble values.” To that end, he called for the public to submit proposals for a new “form of monitoring and control to ensure what is written in the social media do not breach the laws.” Several days later, [former Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamed publicly admitted](#) that he regrets having guaranteed

“absolute freedom of the Internet” in 1996. The public [responded negatively](#) to proposals to enforce stricter controls on social media.

MYANMAR

Cyber attack on independent media site

The English-language site of Eleven Media, a Burmese media group, was [compromised](#) and defaced by a collective identifying itself as the [Blink Hacker Group \(BHG\)](#). The group claims the attack was a response to an editorial written by the site condemning hate speech. As [previously reported](#), the group has previously attacked Burmese sites deemed "pro-Rohingya" in relation to the ongoing violence between the Muslim Rohingya people and Buddhists in Myanmar's Rakhine state.

PHILIPPINES

Government bolsters cyber security measures

The Filipino Department of Science and Technology (DOST) announced it would take measures [further secure](#) all online transactions and government email accounts. Part of this campaign to strengthen government online security is the introduction of a public key infrastructure (PKI), which, among other methods, uses digital certificates as a means of security verification. Attacks against government websites have occurred in the past, including one against the website of the Filipino President last month as part of a ["cyber battle"](#) between Filipino and Taiwanese hackers.

SINGAPORE

Protests against new website rules

A protest took place in Singapore over a proposed [news licensing scheme](#) that would require some news sites to obtain licenses to operate and may oblige them to remove content. During the rally, activists denounced the regulations as justifying state censorship over online media. Singaporean bloggers also planned an Internet ["blackout"](#) involving more than [130 blogs and independent news sites replacing their screens with the hashtag #FreeMyInternet](#) on June 6. The new rules, coming into effect at the beginning of July, will affect sites that publish one local news story per week. According to one government source, the law will [leave blogs exempt as they are "not considered news portals"](#) under the rules.

Singapore increasing supply of cyber security experts

Singapore is participating in a [program](#) in Israel to train graduates from Singaporean universities as cyber security experts. The grant comes as part of the Economic Development Board's (EDB) effort to [combat](#) cyber crime, and is part of a partnership with American security firm RSA Security. As [previously reported](#), Singapore's Deputy Prime Minister had promised to bolster the country's infrastructure to prevent against online threats

THAILAND

***Lèse-majesté* charges upheld for activist**

Thailand's Appeals Court has [upheld](#) the 15-year sentence of activist Daranee Charnchoengsilpakul on *lèse-majesté* grounds. Daranee, who goes by the alias of "Da Torpedo," was arrested in 2008 for speeches made during rallies associated with Thailand's "red-shirt" movement. Thai courts have also [pardoned](#) Wanchai Sae Tan, a Singaporean national, who was also sentenced to 15 years in prison for handing out leaflets allegedly critical of the monarchy. As [previously reported](#), defamation of the monarchy carries severe punishment in Thailand and has been particularly scrutinized by authorities when allegedly defamatory comments occur online.

Government campaign against cyber attacks

The Thai government has announced the launch of a [five-year plan](#) designed to regulate cyber security and fight future cyber attacks. The strategies for the campaign were the result of a meeting between National Cyber Security Committee and Anudith Nakornthap, Thailand's Minister of Information and Communication Technology. The intention of the campaign is to teach state agencies how best to respond to online attacks. From January to May of this year alone, 1,475 [intrusions into state-run databases](#) have been detected by state authorities, along with hundreds of malware attacks and phishing incidents.

VIETNAM

Blogger arrests ahead of Journalism Day

Vietnamese authorities have arrested three bloggers in less than a month's time. On May 26, [Truong Duy Nhat was detained](#) in Da Nang and taken to Hanoi for "abusing democratic freedoms in order to infringe upon the interests of the state, the legitimate rights and interests of organizations and/or citizens." His blog was [disabled for a short time following his arrest](#). Upon reactivation, the blog was booby-trapped to download malware onto the PCs of its visitors. On June 13, Pham Viet Dao was [arrested in Hanoi](#) under similar accusations. Dao used his blog to criticize Vietnam's single party government. Finally, Dinh Nhat Uy was [arrested on June 15](#) for using his blog to "distort the truth and defame state organizations." In the wake of the arrests, Vietnam [celebrated Journalism Day](#) on June 21. The government has repeatedly [harassed and arrested bloggers](#) over the past year.

India to build a "Cyber Forensics Laboratory" in Vietnam

India has announced its intention to [build a "Cyber Forensic Laboratory"](#) in Vietnam. The "Indira Gandhi Hi-tech Cyber Laboratory" would be based in Hanoi and charged with investigating cyber crimes and malware attacks within and against the country. In doing so, the lab would coordinate with Vietnamese police forces.

[Read previous editions](#) of the Southeast Asia CyberWatch.