

Sri Lanka lifts social media blockade imposed after Easter Sunday blasts

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According to the Sri Lankan Information Department, President Maithripala Sirisena has instructed the Telecommunications Regulatory Commission to lift the ban on Facebook, WhatsApp, YouTube and other popular platforms from April 30.

The government said it blocked social media in the wake of the Easter Sunday attacks to curb the spread of misinformation among the public.

Colombo: The Sri Lankan government Tuesday lifted a nationwide blanket ban on social media imposed to curb the spread of misinformation and maintain communal harmony soon after the devastating Easter Sunday bombings on churches and luxury hotels that killed 310 people.

According to the Sri Lankan Information Department, President Maithripala Sirisena has instructed the Telecommunications Regulatory Commission to lift the ban on Facebook, WhatsApp, YouTube and other popular platforms from April 30.

The government has asked the public to share content on social media sites with "utmost responsibility" while bearing in mind the current situation of the country, the Sunday Times reported.

Social media had remained blocked in Sri Lanka where a string of powerful blasts tore through three churches and as many luxury hotels on April 21, killing 253 people and injuring more than 500 others.

The government said it blocked social media in the wake of the Easter Sunday attacks to curb the spread of misinformation among the public.

The Islamic State has claimed the attacks, but the government has blamed local Islamist extremist group National Thowheeth Jamaath (NTJ) for the bombings.

Both Christianity and Islam are minority religions in Sri Lanka, with each accounting for less than 10 per cent of the population. The vast majority of Sri Lankans identify as Buddhist.

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