

Facebook Blocks Could Open the Door to Online Censorship | The Verge

By Makena Kelly

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On Easter Sunday, in the wake of devastating attacks that killed over 300 people, Sri Lanka shut down a large portion of its internet. President's secretary Udaya Seneviratne said officials had decided to "temporarily block" sites and apps like Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, YouTube, and Viber until investigations concluded — something they claimed was a precautionary measure to curb misinformation. In a statement, Seneviratne said that they "decided to temporarily block social media sites," and planned to reinstate them as soon as investigations into the events were completed.

It's part of a larger pattern of censorship and media coercion in Sri Lanka and abroad. The country has spent years blocking news sites, and it shut down social media briefly in 2018 after [mob violence broke out against Muslim minority groups](#). Sri Lanka's moves against press outlets have been widely condemned, but the social media shutdowns are less controversial. After years of escalating warnings about misinformation running wild on Facebook, shutting the site down in an emergency doesn't seem so unreasonable. It's a new understanding of the government's role online — and for anti-censorship activists, a scary one.

[...]

Source: [Facebook blocks could open the door to online censorship - The Verge](#)