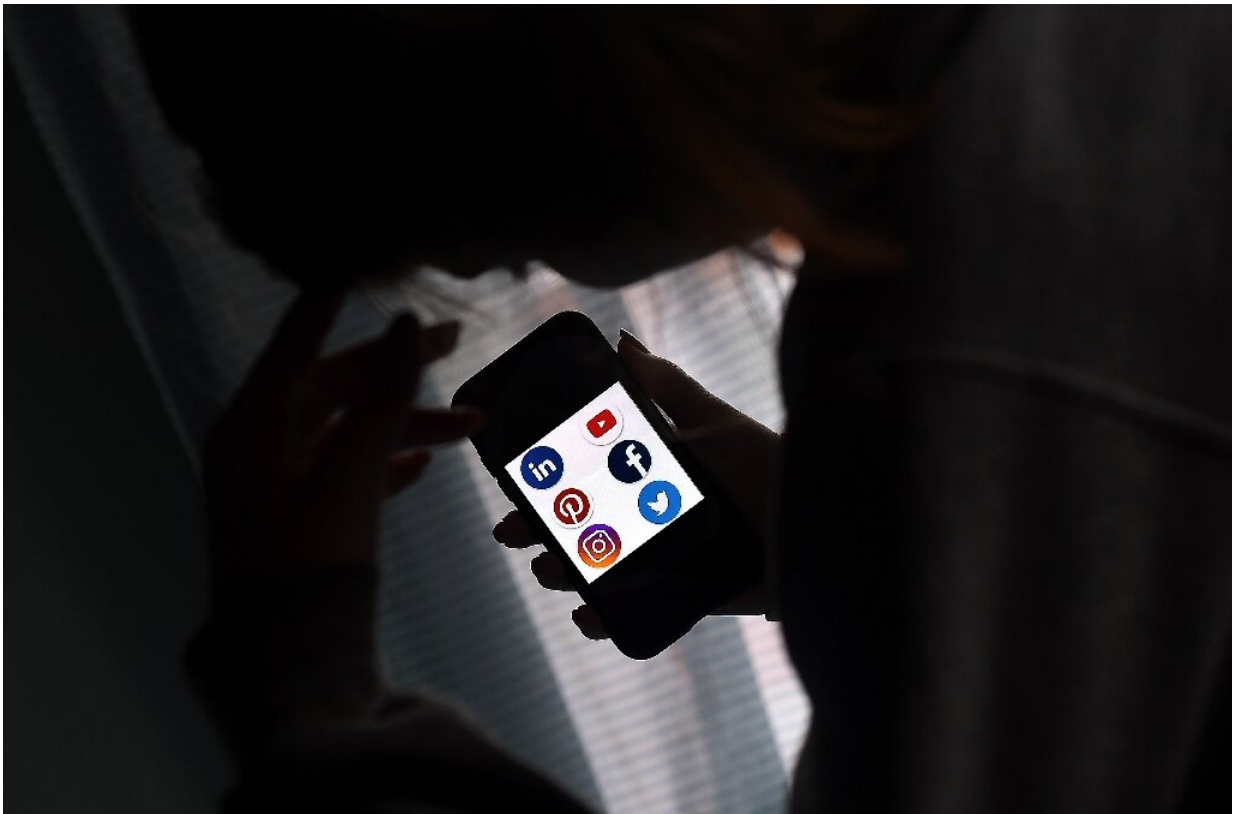


Vietnam to demand social media users verify identities

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Vietnam plans to ask all social media users on platforms such as Facebook and YouTube to verify their identities.

Vietnam plans to ask all social media users on platforms such as Facebook, YouTube and TikTok to verify their identities, citing the need to combat online scams.

The Southeast Asian nation has one of the highest online fraud rates in Asia, with financial, identity and romantic scams particularly common, according to the Global Anti Scam Alliance.

But social media restrictions are also used by the communist state to curb freedom of expression, and government critics with online followings are regularly targeted.

"Unidentified social network accounts will be dealt with," said Nguyen Thanh Lam, deputy minister of information and communications, without elaborating.

A new government decree on online information scheduled to be issued later this year will make the measure mandatory, Lam said, according to a report published Monday on the ministry's website.

Lam added that there were times authorities could not track down [social media users](#) who violated the law because they used cross-border platforms.

This measure, he said, will "prevent the using of those platforms to create fraud groups that are untraceable".

No details were shared about the potential punishments for breaking this law.

The move comes a month after authorities said they would probe TikTok over alleged "toxic content" hosted on the hugely popular Chinese-owned video-sharing app.

Vietnam has also asked foreign tech companies to establish representative offices in Vietnam and store data in the country.

The requirement is part of a sweeping cyber security law introduced in 2018 that compels Facebook and Google to take down posts deemed to be a national security threat within 24 hours.

Facebook, TikTok and YouTube do not ask users in Vietnam to verify their identity.

Earlier this year, authorities ordered mobile phone users to verify their identities and subsequently blocked around 1.2 million SIM cards.

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