

French MPs urge TikTok ban ultimatum

July 6 2023, by Jules BONNARD



France is also taking a harder position on social networks after they spread images of rioting that broke out last week.

French MPs on Thursday called on the government to ban video-sharing platform TikTok unless it clarifies its links to China, days after the government blamed social media for fuelling recent riots.

A Senate commission of inquiry set up to probe TikTok's handling of data and "influence strategy" said in its final recommendations that the firm should be given until January 1 next year to come clean or face a ban in France and possibly Europe.

The commission, which held four months of hearings and grilled TikTok executives about its ownership structure, also said the platform had to improve content moderation and introduce "effective" age limits or face being suspended.

Its findings are not binding on the [government](#) but opinion on [social media](#) platforms has hardened after President Emmanuel Macron suggested he might "cut them off" if the country faces widespread rioting like it has in recent days.

Macron and his ministers have singled out platforms including TikTok for spreading images of the nights of violence that followed a fatal police shooting of a 17-year-old named as Nahel M in a Paris suburb on June 27.

The [senators](#) backed the idea of blocking content during moments of crisis and suggested TikTok should be forced to ramp up moderation in the event of future outbreaks of violence.

Their recommendations, which could form the basis of legislation in the autumn, could also cover other platforms.

The app, used by hundreds of millions across the world, was set up by Chinese firm ByteDance but it is registered in the Cayman Islands and TikTok claims there has been a "total separation" with the Chinese entities.

The platform has already been banned in the US state of Montana and

faces intense scrutiny in many locations.

TikTok was not immediately available for comment on the French developments.

The senators urged the government to expand an existing ban on public servants using TikTok to cover anyone in a "vitally important" role in a public or private organization.

Children should have their time on the app limited and more effort was needed to ensure [copyright protection](#), the senators said.

Their most explosive hearings focused on TikTok's ownership structure, with senators repeatedly being stonewalled by France-based executives on the firm's ties with Chinese entities.

Andre Gattolin, vice-chairman of the committee, said he "absolutely doubted" the viability of TikTok's business model.

He said it appeared TikTok "is not an economic enterprise but a political enterprise with the aim of capturing [personal data](#)".

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