

Hong Kong minister says no social media ban under security law

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Beijing imposed a national security law on Hong Kong following mass democracy protests and the city is now introducing further legislation to target new offenses.

Hong Kong's justice minister said Wednesday the city does not plan to ban social media under a proposed national security law after a public

consultation document included suggestions that some apps should be barred.

The government recently concluded a month-long consultation on the "Article 23" legislation designed to target new offenses, which is separate from an existing national security law imposed by Beijing in 2020 following citywide democracy protests.

Officials published a document listing some of the input from the public under the heading "summary of views", which included the suggestion that "websites such as Facebook and YouTube should be removed from the Hong Kong market".

Another said messaging apps Telegram and Signal had become a "hotbed of crime" and should be "banned".

Secretary for Justice Paul Lam told lawmakers that Hong Kong "would not prohibit the existence" of [social media](#) platforms under the proposed national security law.

"I can say categorically that we have absolutely no intention to ban any social media," Lam said during a legislative meeting.

"What we are targeting are the use, abuse, or misuse of these tools to spread speech that can endanger national security... We are not targeting social media per se."

Security chief Chris Tang also promised the southern Chinese finance hub would not ban specific social media platforms.

Several popular platforms including Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp and X, formerly Twitter, are blocked in mainland China for regular users, but are accessible in Hong Kong.

The Hong Kong government is expected to introduce a draft bill as early as next week.

Concerns have been raised by rights workers, foreign businesses and diplomats that the new law may curtail the flow of information and further restrict [free speech](#) and other rights.

Foreign tech giants—including Google and Facebook operator Meta—have walked a tightrope in Hong Kong after the enactment of the 2020 [national security](#) law, with some firms refusing content takedown requests from the government.

Authorities are seeking a [court order](#) to ban the protest anthem "Glory to Hong Kong", with officials demanding it be removed from YouTube and Google search results.

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