

Pakistan's gays in dark after Muslim nation's first gay website blocked

Hong Kong (CNN) -- Pakistan, ranked by the Pew Research Center as one of the least tolerant countries in the world for gays, has pulled the plug on its only online resource for the Muslim nation's lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender communities.

Queer Pakistan, which just went online in July, confirmed it had been blocked September 24 with a [Twitter post](#) saying, "It's official! QueerPK is banned from viewership in Pakistan."

Netizens attempting to access the site inside the country are greeted with the note, "Surf Safely! This website is not accessible. The site you are trying to access contains content that is prohibited for viewership from within Pakistan."

Outside the country, however, Queer Pakistan [can still be reached via a redirect](#).

"#QueerPK is now accessible on new domain name <http://humjins.com>! We are determined to fight #censorship if we have your support!" said Queer Pakistan in a follow-up Twitter post.

"The government's blocking of Queerpk.com clearly violates internationally recognized rights to freedom of expression and non-discrimination, and should be lifted immediately," Phil Robertson, Deputy Director of Human Rights Watch's Asia division, told CNN.

Queer Pakistan's [last entry on its homepage](#), dated September 4, detailed religious, political and social reactions to its existence -- including a call for the government "to control them" and a statement that the "West should not try to impose their values on us."

"Pakistan's shuttering of this news portal shows how incredibly out of step Pakistan is with growing efforts by the United Nations to ensure rights protections for LGBT persons, including the strong public endorsement of LGBT rights given by none other than the U.N. Secretary-General himself," added Robertson.

"Pakistan's donors should get off the sidelines and publicly press the government to reverse this internet censorship and permit discussions of sexual orientation and gender identity to proceed unhindered."

Homosexuality is illegal in Pakistan, a country of more than [193 million people](#), [nearly 97%](#) of which are Muslim.

According to [IRIN](#), a [U.N. humanitarian news and analysis service](#), "under section 377 of the PCC (Pakistan Penal Code), whoever voluntarily has carnal intercourse against the order of nature with any man, woman or animal, shall be punished with imprisonment for life, or with imprisonment of either description for a term which [shall not be less than two years nor more than] 10 years, and shall also be liable to a fine."

Pakistan is also one of just several countries in the world that still reserve the death penalty for homosexuals, according to the [International Lesbian and Gay Association](#), or ILGA.

This past June, the Pew Research Center released the results of its survey on the ["Global Divide on Homosexuality."](#) Of 39 countries studied, Pakistan was found to be one of the least gay-tolerant, with 87% of those surveyed saying homosexuality should be rejected.

In Asia, only Indonesia -- the world's most populous Muslim country -- scored higher with 93% disapproval. Spain and Germany were found to be the world's most- and second-most tolerant countries respectively.

In a separate survey, [Spartacus World's Gay Travel Index](#) ranked Pakistan 124th of 138 nations surveyed for gay tolerance. The country received an overall score of "-5" for the high degree of religious influence, anti-gay laws, local hostility and the risk of prosecution. Vatican City, Egypt, and Russia scored even lower -- with Iran bottoming out the list with a score of "-13."