



A computer engineer checks equipment at an internet service provider in Tehran February 15, 2011.

Proton Sees Whopping 6,000% Surge In VPN Sign-Ups In Iran

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Iran Human Rights



Internet privacy company Proton revealed a jaw-dropping 6,000-percent surge in sign-ups for its virtual private network (VPN) in Iran during October 2022.

This remarkable increase coincided with a notable escalation in the Iranian regime's crackdown on internet access, a move that followed the death of Mahsa Amini whilst she was police custody.

As demonstrations swept through Iran in mid-September, **the government swiftly imposed restrictions** on Instagram, the sole international social media platform that citizens were previously permitted to access. Other social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Telegram had already faced bans

following the 2009 Presidential election and the aftermath of the November 2019 protests.

The Switzerland-based firm, Proton, stated that in addition to the surge in sign-ups from Iran, they witnessed a remarkable 9,000-percent increase in new VPN users in the aftermath of Russia's blockage of independent news sites following its invasion of Ukraine last year. Furthermore, the company noted a staggering 15,000-percent spike in sign-ups from Turkey earlier this year when access to Twitter was reportedly temporarily restricted in the aftermath of a devastating earthquake.

Andy Yen, Proton's founder and CEO raised concerns about the escalating trend of internet shutdowns imposed by governments globally. "Internet censorship is increasing at an alarming rate," he warned.

The company's research revealed that in 2022, authorities in 35 countries orchestrated 187 internet shutdowns, setting a new record for the highest number of shutdowns in a single year. Proton attributes such actions to events like public protests, active conflicts, elections, and political instability, employed as desperate means of control to keep citizens uninformed and isolated.

"This is a very dangerous path," Yen cautioned.

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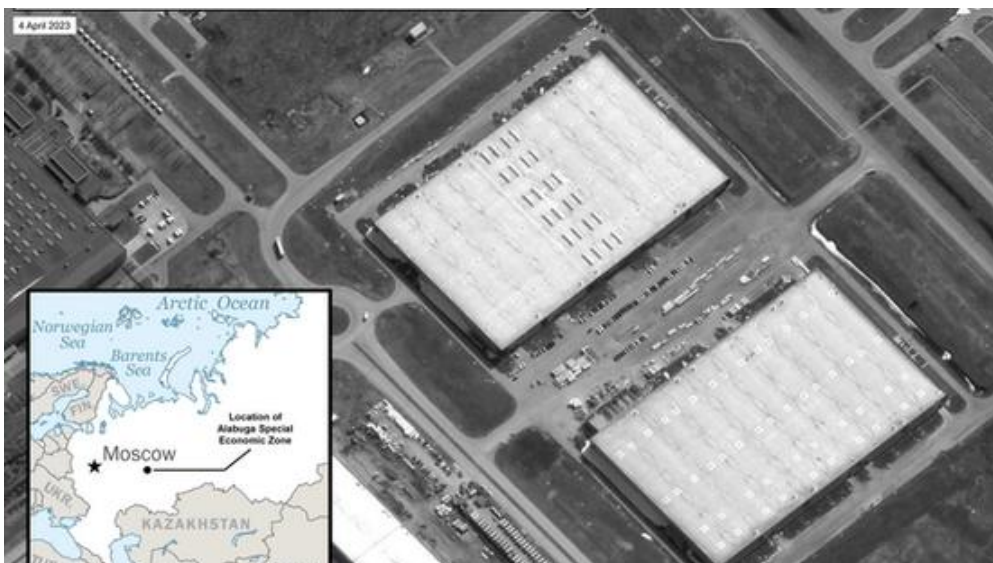
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