

Brazil Unbans YouTube, But Steamy Video Is Still Off-Limits

Contributed by Newsroom
Tuesday, 09 January 2007

São Paulo judge Ênio Santarelli Zuliani issued a statement today asking Brazilian Internet Service Providers to stop blocking access to the entire video sharing service YouTube.

Zuliani nonetheless said ISPs should continue to do everything possible to block the video of Daniela Cicarelli, soccer star Ronaldo's former wife, in steamy scenes with her boyfriend.

In his order the judge states that "all measures should be taken in order to block the access to the video of the couple's film, as long as this is possible, technically, without blocking the whole site."

A decision by a São Paulo court on 4 January ordering Internet Service Providers (ISPs) to block access to the US video sharing service YouTube was condemned as "disproportionate" by Reporters Without Borders, which called for access to YouTube to be restored in Brazil.

The court issued its order in response to a petition filed by two Brazilians, who were shown in a steamy video posted on the site.

"While it is essential that judges ensure that the right to privacy is respected, blocking access to this site, which agreed to withdraw the offending video, is a radical and inappropriate measure and one that it is anyway ineffective," Reporters Without Borders said.

"We find it hard to understand how a single video, the banning of which did not seem to be a matter of urgency, was able to justify the closure of a website used by tens of thousands of Brazilians every day," the press freedom organization added.

The court's order has already been implemented by one of Brazil's biggest ISPs, Brasil Telecom, which blocked the site's domain name. Another company, Embratel Participações, told Reuters it was looking at ways to block access to YouTube. The Spanish company Telefonica, which also operates in Brazil, announced that it would comply with the order.

The video, which was posted on YouTube by several Internet users, showed model Daniella Cicarelli, the former wife of soccer star Ronaldo, together with her boyfriend, Renato Malzoni Filho, on a Spanish beach. They sued YouTube, demanding US\$ 116,000 in damages for each day the video remained on the website.

The court ban remains in effect even though YouTube, which was recently bought by Google, has since removed the video. People keep posting the video while YouTube keeps deleting it. The video meanwhile remains accessible on many other websites to which access has not been blocked in Brazil, like this one:

{mgmediabot}images/stories/video/cicarelli.flv|false|400|300{/mgmediabot}