

Pakistan Lists 'Jesus Christ' on List of Banned Obscenities

Pakistan is grouping pornography and Jesus Christ in the same heap.

The Pakistan Telecommunication Authority, or PTA, compiled a list of what it considers obscene and offensive words and has ordered mobile phone companies to block text messages that contain them.

The list includes words like "condom," "flatulence," "monkey crotch" and "Jesus Christ." Mobile phone companies must start screening text messages for 586 Urdu words and 1,109 English words by Nov. 21, according to local media.

An unofficial letter from the PTA from its Islamabad headquarters outlines the balance between free speech and pornography in the Constitution of the Islamic republic of Pakistan, then explains the goal of its list is to tackle spam. The PTA describes spam as "the transmission of harmful, fraudulent, misleading, illegal or unsolicited messages in bulk to any person without express permission of the recipient."

Although many of the words on the list are legitimately obscene or suggestive, banning the Jesus Christ, the name above all names, is leading some to question Pakistan's motives. The PTA letter clearly stated that free speech could be restricted "in the interest and glory of Islam."

Pakistan ranks No. 11 on Open Doors' 2011 World Watch List. According to Open Doors, religious freedom is constantly being eroded there. Open Doors reports:

"In 2010, 29 Christians were killed and four were sentenced for blasphemy. At least 58 Christians were kidnapped and at

least 100 were physically harmed. During the devastating floods of August 2010, Christians experienced discrimination from local authorities and Muslims in the distribution of aid. In November 2010, a Christian woman was sentenced to death for blasphemy.”