

Broadcasting body calls on Iran to stop jamming

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GENEVA (AFP) – The UN's telecommunications agency called on Iran Friday to stop jamming foreign radio and television broadcasts, following European complaints.

International Telecommunications Union spokesman Sanjay Acharya said that "interference emanating from the territory of the Islamic Republic of Iran... appear to be of a nature which is forbidden under radio regulations."

The ITU's radio regulation board "urged the administration of Iran to continue its efforts in locating the source of interference and to eliminate it as a matter of the highest priority." he added.

The regulation board issued its call following a complaint lodged by France on behalf of the management of the Eutelsat telecommunications satellite whose emissions to Iran were being jammed.

Acharya acknowledged that the ITU could not impose any sanctions against Tehran before its next world congress in some two years' time.

"What we can do at this moment is to add pressure on the government of Iran," he said.

EU foreign ministers on Monday vowed to "act" against the Iranian state's unacceptable jamming of satellite broadcasts and Internet controls, showing the bloc's increasing impatience with Tehran.

Nearly 70 foreign radio and television stations that transmit via the Eutelsat satellite to Iran were jammed on February 11, the 31st anniversary of the Islamic Revolution, they said.

Iranian authorities have cracked down on the media and arrested scores of journalists since anti-government protests erupted after President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's disputed re-election last June.

The Islamic regime has been targeting the BBC's Persian-language broadcasts in particular.

EU sources said that Iranians' text messages were also being intercepted by the authorities in Tehran.

The bloc's foreign affairs chief Catherine Ashton said she was "extremely concerned" about Iran's jamming tactics, without saying what precisely Europe would, or could, do to counter Tehran's tactics.