UK Mandates Face ID Checks for Social Media as Europe Tightens Online Censorship



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The UK quietly rolls out Face ID checks for access to social media, while the European protests are used as a pretext to restrict workers' civil rights all over Europe.

Details. The Labour government, under Prime Minister Andy Burnham, is finalizing sweeping legislation to ban minors under 16 from social media. Expanding previous age checks for 18+ adult websites to everyday platforms, this law applies to all citizens. Every British user will now be forced to prove their age using government ID or facial scanning under the guise of child protection, effectively ending online anonymity.

► European governments have exploited recent protests to justify further digital censorship and repression. Macron claimed that social media damages "democracy" and mobilises the "worst impulses". French officials have pressured platforms to block protest coordination and threatened network shutdowns, while Albania proposed laws allowing police to delete posts and prosecute users accused of inciting clashes.

Context. Europe recently faced a wave of mass protests driven by the deepening capitalist crisis. Rising living costs, deteriorating public services and worsening working conditions fuelled discontent among workers, students, lumpen and other strata. Provocateurs and adventurist "ultra-revolutionary" groups subsequently pushed sections of these spontaneous protests towards looting and arson.

► European governments are using such unrest to accelerate the expansion of state surveillance and repression. In the digital sphere, the European Union recently re-enacted Chat Control 1.0, permitting private non-encrypted message scanning until 2028, while pursuing Chat Control 2.0, which would extend surveillance to all encrypted communications.

► Former Prime Minister Keir Starmer introduced the under-16 social media ban, while his proposed national digital ID programme faced significant public opposition before its cancellation. Burnham is now finalising the social media restrictions, using his temporary popularity to pass the bill quietly, before comparable mass protests have spread to Britain.

Important to Know. European states and their allies legitimise surveillance measures by pointing to policies already adopted elsewhere, in reality, they are coordinating these policies. Britain explicitly modelled its under-16 social media ban on Australia's, while France also pursued a similar ban following the Australian precedent. UK, Australian and EU regulators have meanwhile established a cooperation group to coordinate age-verification measures.

► Western powers hypocritically condemn imperialist rivals like Russia while expanding their own surveillance and censorship. Escalating its own digital blockade, Moscow systematically restricted Telegram and WhatsApp throughout 2025 and 2026 to stifle dissent. Just like London and Brussels, Russian authorities justified this sweeping censorship as a necessary measure to protect children and citizens.

► The working class now relies on social media to rapidly spread information and organise, much like it once relied on print media. These platforms enable more

direct democratic participation, allowing workers to organise rapidly, formulate demands and select representatives. This was demonstrated when Facebook helped coordinate the 2011 Arab Spring and Discord enabled protesters in Nepal to organise their 2025 uprising. However, without genuine communist leadership, this spontaneity, even if democratic, is inevitably captured by other sections of the bourgeoisie.

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