

Founder of South Korean pornography site jailed amid voyeurism epidemic

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Distributing pornography is illegal in the country, where secretly recorded sexual videos are common

The co-founder of South Korea's biggest pornography website has been jailed for four years over the distribution of obscene material, as the country attempts to tackle a voyeurism epidemic.

The woman, referred to only by her surname Song in South Korean media reports, was sentenced this week after a court found her guilty of "aiding and abetting" the spread of obscene images on Soranet, which she allegedly set up with her husband and another couple in 1999.

The file-sharing site, which used an overseas server, once had more than one million users and hosted tens of thousands of images, including "revenge porn" and videos of women recorded secretly in toilets and other public places. It was closed in 2016 following complaints from [women's rights](#) groups.

"Beyond the basic concept of pornography, the website severely violated and distorted the values and dignity of children and youths, as well as all human beings," the Seoul central district court said in its ruling, according to the Korea Herald.

"It is difficult to measure how much harm the existence of the website caused our society, visibly and invisibly."

Although it is illegal to distribute pornography in [South Korea](#), videos featuring sexual content are widely shared via servers based overseas or through secret file-sharing sites, according to the country's media.

Molka, or secretly filmed images of a sexual nature, has [reached epidemic proportions in South Korea](#) and last summer prompted huge demonstrations by women demanding that police take action against those who film and share the material.

Of the 16,201 people arrested between 2012 and 2017 for making illegal recordings, 98% were men; 84% of the 26,000 victims recorded over that period were women, according to police.

Last year the South Korean president, Moon Jae-in, acknowledged that the use of spycams had become "part of daily life" and called for tougher penalties for offenders.

Government workers in Seoul have begun [daily checks for spycams in public toilets](#) in response to growing public outrage.

Song was also fined 1.4 billion won (£980,000) and ordered to attend 80 hours of sexual violence

prevention education, the Korea Herald said.

The 46-year-old fled to New Zealand when the investigation into Soranet began in 2015, but handed herself in last June later after the South Korean government revoked her passport.

She denied the allegations throughout her trial, claiming that her husband and the second couple – all of whom are living overseas – were responsible for running the site.

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The Guardian

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