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'Freedom of speech is my birthright, you can go to hell sir'

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New Delhi: Politicians and prominent thought leaders on Tuesday took to Twitter to debate Kapil Sibal's remarks on Internet censorship with Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah coming out in support of the embattled Telecom Minister. Abdullah cited the dangers of inflammatory content on social networking websites.

"I hate the idea of censorship but have seen for myself how dangerous inflammatory content on Facebook YouTube can be," Abdullah tweeted even as Sibal called a press conference to clarify his remarks that have taken Twitter and Facebook by storm.

Sibal said the Centre does not believe in censorship and that websites must self regulate. He said the "government is trying to supervise the content that can hurt religious sentiments."

Sibal also said the Government decision has nothing to do with Anna Hazare's popular campaign against corruption. Sibal has asked websites to censor offensive content against Congress President Sonia Gandhi and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh.

Abdullah also added, "We want the luxury of free speech but not the burden of responsibility for how we use that freedom. Something will have to give. If push came to shove I'd come down on the side of freedom of speech but its one of those freedoms that has me worried unfortunately."

Sibal got some support from fellow MP Shashi Tharoor, who tweeted "I reject censorship. Art, literature & political opinion are sacrosanct. But inflammatory communal incitement is like a match at a petrol pump."

But MP Varun Gandhi slammed the move saying "The Internet is the only truly democratic medium free of vested interests, media owners & paid-off journos. Can see why Sibal wants to gag it."

MP Rajeev Chandrasekhar tweeted: "Sibal was wrong on the 2G scam wit his 'zero loss' theory.. He is very very wrong in trying to bring to India the Chinese model of controlling Internet.. Doomed to fail!"

And always one of the firsts to tweet on issues, filmmaker Prithish Nandy says, "What separates politicians from decent people is their stand on freedom of speech. Decent people are not scared of freedom of speech. Netas are."

"This is my country. Freedom of speech is my birthright. You can go to hell sir."

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