

Hunt for South Korea feminist sparks backlash against 'sexist' police

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Activists say search for website editor who posted photos of men without their consent is hypocritical and ignores similar activities by men



South Korean women protest against pornography filmed on secret cameras. Photograph: Chung Sung-Jun/Getty Images

Police in [South Korea](#) are seeking to arrest the operator of a feminist website, sparking a backlash and accusations of sexism in the justice system.

Police in the southern port city of Busan are seeking to arrest the unnamed operator of [Womad](#) on charges of disseminating sexually explicit material after the site posted nude photos taken surreptitiously of a male model. Womad seeks to combat sexism by using the same tactics of their opponents, including online harassment and posting footage from hidden cameras.

The police likened the case to online sexual harassment, and it is at least the second time the site has posted [photos of men taken without their consent](#), one at an art class and another at a public bath house. The authorities have said she is currently outside the country and are seeking help from Interpol.

But the arrest warrant has sparked a backlash, with many online saying the police have done little to punish men guilty of the same crimes. South Korea is in the midst of a wave of [protests against pornography taken with hidden cameras](#) in bathrooms, with a monthly demonstration in Seoul drawing tens of thousands of participants. Those protests have highlighted what activists say is a system designed to protect men and ignore women.

In a petition on the presidential Blue House website, [nearly 68,000 people derided the government](#) for biased policing, and questioned why the men who run sites that host spycam pornography have not been arrested. Other feminist groups called the police investigation into Womad sexist, part of a pattern of lax enforcement when women are the victims.

“Your attitude is strong evidence that you do not listen to women’s voices,” the petition said. “Hate speech has always been more severe on sites operated by men, but authorities have never considered this a problem. If this is not a cause of selective justice and misogyny, then what is?”

Police denied charges of sexism, with the commissioner of the national police agency, Min Gap-ryong, saying: “The police are investigating anyone who uploads, spreads and allows the spread of illegal footage”, according to the JoongAng Daily newspaper.

This is not the first time Womad has been at the centre of controversy. After a public spat with Catholic officials last month, the group vowed to burn one church every Sunday and posted photos of sacramental wafers on fire.

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