

advertisement

NEWS JUL 24 2013, 4:57 PM ET

Pakistan bans condom ad starring controversial actress

by WAJAHAT S. KHAN, PRODUCER, NBC NEWS

SHARE



A suggestive condom TV ad starring Pakistan's sultry and equally controversial actress and TV host Mathira Mohammad has spurred the wrath of the country's media watchdog.

Pakistan's Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) issued a letter Tuesday forcing TV networks to remove the ad for "Josh" ("Strength") Condoms from their programming immediately.

In the letter, PEMRA called the ad "indecent," reprimanded the networks for running it, and said the move came after having received complaints from the public.

"It's so sad and so over-hyped," Mohammad told NBC News. "We party hard. We drink. We wear little dresses and do all the things people across the world do when they party. But that's all ignored! And here's a positive effort to do something constructive for a country that needs it, and they ban it!"

"I think they needed an issue to spice up in Ramadan, because things are so slow," Mohammad added. "So, the regulators spiced it up. The ban has really blown things out of proportion, and millions of people who wouldn't have watched it are now downloading it, just because of the hype."

Mohammad, 21, grew in popularity while hosting "Love Indicator," a late-night advice show on Pakistani television. Her provocative clothes and opinions on sex and relationships were a ratings boon. Many called her raunchy or a sex kitten as she unabashedly addressed topics considered taboo in Pakistan.

The banned ad depicts a newly married couple, and a seemingly average-looking groom gloating about snagging "super-model" Mohammad for a wife. The secret to his success, the groom claims, is the brand of condoms he uses.

While the ad does not show any nudity and limits its message to suggestive gestures made by the actor, some bloggers were angry that the functional aspect of contraception was ignored in a country struggling with its exploding population. According to the United Nations, only 27 percent of Pakistan's people have access to birth control.

Some local reports said the ad trivialized the issue of birth control in a country that has the world's sixth largest population -- more than 173 million -- and an average population growth of 1.8 percent per year, according to the UN.

Josh Condoms is an initiative by U.S.-based non-profit organization, DKT International, which provides contraception and HIV/AIDS awareness in developing countries around the world.

"I didn't do this ad for the money. I did it because Pakistanis need awareness. Sexual education is compulsory for kids all over the world, but not here. They need it to avoid being harassed," Mohammad said.

"But here, it's a taboo. That's why there is harassment and rape here. They just hate honesty. They hate me, just because I'm a woman who's ready to talk about issues they're too scared to talk about," she added.

While the ad is currently off the air, it continues to create buzz on social media and in local news reports.

"I'm a bad person in a good way. And I'm a good person in a bad way," Mohammad said. "I enjoy talking about my sexuality, but that doesn't mean I don't like talking about other, bigger issues that matter."

WAJAHAT S. KHAN, PRODUCER, NBC NEWS

TOPIC

FIRST PUBLISHED JUL 24 2013, 4:57 PM ET

↓ NEXT STORY

More to Explore

Sponsored Links by Taboola

Shoppers Are Getting Unbelievable Deals With This Little-Known Site

Tophatter

Car Thieves Will Hate This Tiny Device

TechieFans

The 50 Artists Each State Is Proudest to Have Produced

MSN

SPONSORED CONTENT

MORE FROM NBC NEWS

What A Dollar Could Buy The Year
You Were Born MSN

This New Disruptive Technology
Could Change Everything
Stansberry Research

Saudi Arabia and the United States
Work Together to Fight Terro...
ArabiaNow

If you own a computer you must try
this game! Throne: Free Online Game

3 Examples of Great Banner Ads
Advertise World

WH Reporters Erupt in Anger After
Spicer Exits Without a Briefing

Mom, Daughter Charged With Incest
After Marrying

Yoga with goats is a thing! So we tried
it.

Here's why you should never tip a
server 20 percent

Penn State Fraternity Pledge's Death:
DA Says Surveillance Video is Ke...

Promoted Links by Taboola