

Spain imposes €640m penalty on Airbnb for unlicensed rentals

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Dhaka: Spain has fined U.S.-based holiday rental platform Airbnb €64 million for advertising more than 65,000 properties that breached consumer protection rules, the Consumer Affairs Ministry said on Monday (Dec 15).

The ministry said the listings violated Spanish regulations in multiple ways, including properties without licences, incorrect licence numbers, or locations in areas with restrictions on short-term rentals.

Authorities said Airbnb is responsible for ensuring listings comply with local and regional housing rules and must remove non-compliant adverts promptly, a process the ministry claims the company has delayed.

"The penalty reflects six times the profits Airbnb earned from these listings while they remained online," Consumer Rights Minister Pablo

Bustinduy said, adding that prolonged non-compliant listings reduce housing availability for locals.

The fine comes as part of Spain's broader effort to curb overtourism. Earlier this year, local protests against holiday lets, including water pistol attacks, made headlines. In July, the government ordered Booking.com to remove around 4,000 non-compliant listings.

Barcelona plans to phase out all tourist apartments by 2028. Globally, cities including New York, Berlin, Paris, and San Francisco have also imposed stricter rules on short-term rental platforms.

Airbnb said it intends to challenge the fine in court, while the ministry described the penalty as final.

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