Alibaba Group petitions USTR over piracy list

Alibaba Group, which is 40 percent owned by Yahoo Inc has petitioned the United States Trade Representative (USTR) office over the inclusion of Taobao, its consumer e-commerce platform, on USTR's notorious markets for piracy list, an Alibaba Group spokesman said on Wednesday.

Taobao made it on the United States Trade Representative's November notorious markets list for offering a wide range of copyright infringing products.

Alibaba wrote a letter last week to the USTR to petition its case that Taobao should not be on the list given the platform's efforts in working with intellectual property rights holders to combat piracy.

The USTR removed Baidu Inc from the November list, it said in December.

"Taobao continues to make significant strides in the protection of intellectual property rights...Taobao does not believe that the USTR should continue to designate Taobao as a Notorious Market," Alibaba Group's spokesman John Spelich wrote in the letter.

China's Ministry of Commerce also chimed in last month saying it was concerned and opposed to the listing of Taobao as a notorious market for piracy.

China has the most number of Internet users in the world and its e-commerce sector is booming. However, intellectual property violations remain a headache for foreign companies, as China struggles to crack down on the numerous factories and shops peddling the goods.

(Reporting by Melanie Lee; Editing by Jacqueline Wong)

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