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Website errors explained: 500, 403, 404, 508 and what to do

cPanel & WHM

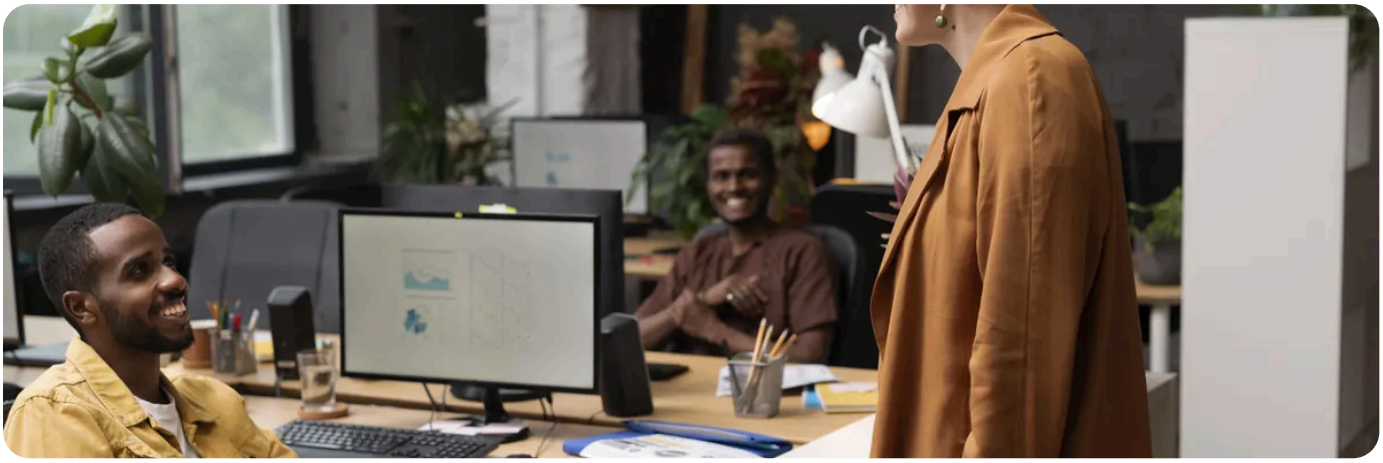
CODE	VERSION	COUNTRY · LANGUAGE
RLX-MZ-KB-144	v2026.10.18	Mozambique · English

Interweb Mozambique
RLX Holdings, S.A. · Group RLX Holdings
Tax ID (NUIT) 401 191 607 · Legal entity no. (NUEL) 105 045 974 · Economic activity code (CAE) 62022

https://www.meu.interweb.co.mz/knowledgebase/144

Website errors explained: 500, 403, 404, 508 and what to do

cPanel & WHM Created on **August 16, 2026** Updated on **October 18, 2026** 4 min read



When a site breaks, the number on screen is not decoration: it tells you which side the problem is on. Three or four of them are worth knowing how to read.

Code	What is happening
`500` **Internal Server Error**	The server tried to run the site and something blew up. Usual suspects: a broken **.htaccess**, wrong permissions, or a plugin/theme that failed after an update.
`403` **Forbidden**	Access was refused. Either the folder has no index file, or permissions are wrong, or our security system blocked the request as suspicious.
`404` **Not Found**	The address does not exist. If it hit the whole site at once, on WordPress it is usually .htaccess - saving the permalinks again fixes it.
`508` **Resource Limit Reached**	Your plan **hit its resource limit** (CPU, memory or simultaneous processes). The site is not broken: it is asking for more than the plan allows. Check *Resource Usage* in cPanel.
`502` / `504`	The service behind it took too long to answer. Usually a heavy database query or a process that got stuck.
Error establishing a database connection	The database credentials in **wp-config.php** no longer match, or the database is not responding.
Blank white screen	A PHP error with no visible message. The **error_log** in the site folder has the exact line.

Error 508 deserves its own note

It is the most misunderstood one. It is not a fault on our side, and the site is not "broken": it is your site consuming more than the plan allows, and the server stopping it before it affects the neighbours. It typically shows up when the site has grown, when a new plugin is too heavy, or when someone is hammering the site with automated requests.

1. In cPanel, under **Resource Usage**, see which limit is being hit - CPU, memory or processes.
2. If it started suddenly, disable the last plugin you installed and test again.
3. Install a **cache**. It is the single change that usually cuts consumption by more than half without touching the content.
4. If the site has genuinely grown, the limit no longer fits. Then the answer is a bigger plan, not more squeezing.

Where to find the exact cause

In cPanel, under **Errors**, you get the server's latest messages. In the site folder, the **error_log** file holds the same with more detail. One line from those logs beats an hour of guessing - if you write to us, send it.

Before you change anything, keep a way back.
Rename .htaccess instead of deleting it, and keep a recent copy - see **how to restore your data with JetBackup** . Plenty of sites got worse while being fixed.

If the site is gone entirely
with no error at all, it may be something else - start with **what to check when your site is down** .

NEED A HAND?

Give us the code, the time and the address - we will go into the server logs.

Open a support ticket →

Where to see it in your account

- Error 508 means the account reached one of its resource limits. Open **Resource Usage** in cPanel (Metrics section): it shows CPU, memory, entry processes and I/O, and when the account hit the limit.

- The limits are per account and we do not promise a single figure for every plan, so the numbers on that screen are the ones that count. The article on monitoring performance explains how to read it.
- If it only happened once, look for a heavy task at that time. If it keeps happening at ordinary traffic after you installed a cache, the plan no longer fits: you can move up a plan without losing the site, or talk to us.

SEE ALSO

If error 508 keeps coming back, the plan is no longer enough -
Shared hosting vs VPS: which one does your project need?

Many 500 errors are fixed by the right PHP version:
How to change your PHP version

If the error mentions the database:
Creating databases and using phpMyAdmin

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