

Russia scraps plans to ban Telegram messaging app

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Russia has ditched plans to ban the Telegram messaging app after its owner agreed to register the company in the country, authorities said Wednesday.

Telegram, which provides end-to-end encrypted messaging, has prided itself on privacy and has protested the Russian government's demands to get it to keep and share users' chat histories and encryption keys.

Alexander Zharov, head of the Russian communications regulator, said that Telegram would be free to operate in Russia, despite previous threats to close it down, after its owner agreed to registration. The company is currently registered in Britain.

A set of counter-terrorism amendments initiated by lawmaker Irina Yarovaya and adopted last year, among other things, obliges telecommunications companies to store call logs and data for months.

Telegram founder Pavel Durov said earlier Wednesday that he would be willing to register it in Russia, but insisted that he wouldn't share privacy data as a new Russian law requires.

"We will not comply with the Yarovaya law, which is anti-constitutional and technically impossible to implement, as well as other laws which violate the right to privacy and Telegram's confidentiality policy," Durov said on his social media page.

Zharov insisted that all companies working in Russia "are obliged to comply" with Russian laws.

Authorities have been putting pressure on Telegram, with Russia's FSB security agency saying Monday that the app was used by a suicide bomber who killed 15 people in St. Petersburg in April.

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