

US bans Kaspersky software amid concerns over Russia ties

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Kaspersky Labs founder Eugene Kaspersky, seen at a 2013 forum in Washington, denies his company has any ties to the Russian government

The US government has moved to block federal agencies from buying software from Russia-based Kaspersky Labs, amid concerns about the company's links to intelligence services in Moscow.

The General Services Administration, which handles federal [government](#) purchasing contracts, said in a statement to AFP that Kaspersky Labs, a major global provider of cybersecurity software, has been removed from its list of approved vendors, making it more difficult to obtain Kaspersky products.

"GSA's priorities are to ensure the integrity and security of US government systems and networks and evaluate products and services available on our contracts using supply chain risk management processes," the agency said in a statement.

The action came weeks after top US intelligence agency and [law enforcement](#) officials publicly expressed concerns about use of Kaspersky software.

The officials, appearing at a congressional hearing in May, stopped short of offering specifics but appeared to suggest concerns over the computer security firm's alleged links to Russian defense and intelligence bodies.

The company said in a statement to AFP Wednesday, "Kaspersky Lab has no ties to any government, and the company has never helped, nor will help, any government in the world with its cyberespionage efforts."

It added that "the company is being unjustly accused without any hard evidence to back up these false allegations."

A Bloomberg News report this week meanwhile claimed internal company emails show that Kaspersky has maintained a closer working relationship with Russia's main intelligence agency, the FSB, than it has publicly admitted.

Kaspersky on Tuesday issued a statement disputing the Bloomberg accounting, saying "the communication was misinterpreted or

manipulated," but did acknowledge that it "regularly cooperates with [law enforcement agencies](#), industry peers and victims of cybercrime."

The company has repeatedly denied working with any government agency, and Russia-born founder Eugene Kaspersky has on several occasions sought to counter any such allegations.

In a June 30 blog post, Kaspersky wrote, "For some reason the assumption continues to resonate that since we're Russian, we must also be tied to the Russian government. But really, as a global [company](#), does anyone seriously think we could survive this long if we were a pawn of ANY government?"

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