

Russian begins blocking messaging app Telegram

April 16 2018



Activists bring a sack with about 2,000 paper airplanes symbolising the logo of the messaging app Telegram to the door of St. Petersburg's department of Roskomnadzor, the state communications oversight agency, to protest against blocking the messenger app in St. Petersburg, Russia, Friday, April 13, 2018. A Russian court has ordered the blocking of a popular messaging app following a demand by authorities that it share encryption data with them. (AP Photo/Dmitri Lovetsky)

Russia's communications watchdog said Monday it has begun enforcing a nationwide ban for the popular messaging app Telegram.

Telecommunications providers have been instructed to block Telegram in Russia after a court last week sided with authorities who demanded that the app be kept out of the country until it hands over the keys to its [data encryption](#).

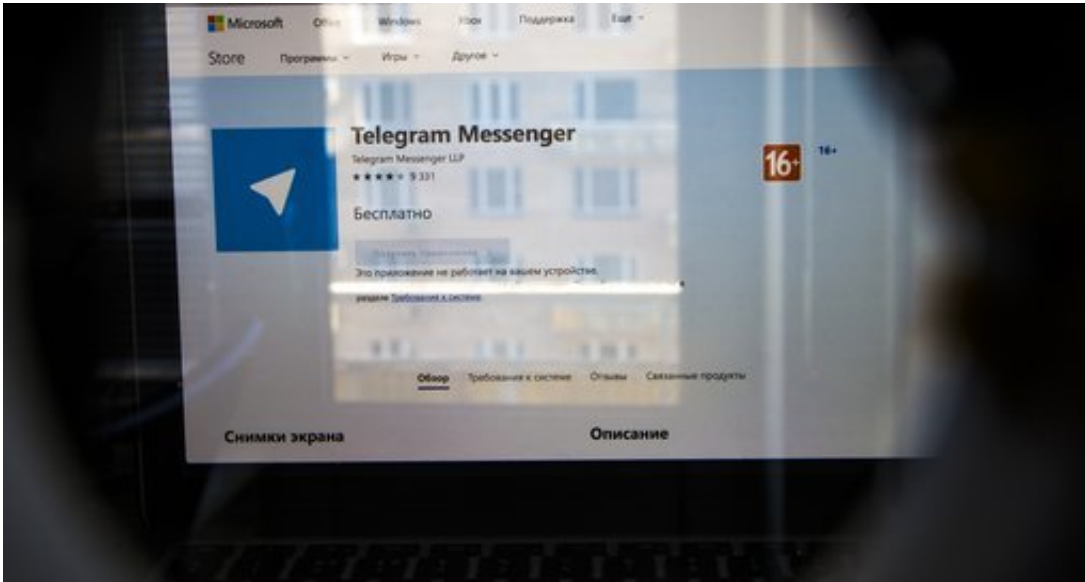
Russian authorities alleged that Telegram, which was developed by Russian entrepreneur Pavel Durov, has been used by violent extremists. The company argues that Russia's FSB intelligence service is violating consumer rights.

Telegram was briefly unavailable to users early Monday afternoon, but was back online later in the day. Durov said last week the latest version would have "built-in" features that would be able to circumvent the ban.

"We consider the decision to block the app to be unconstitutional and we will continue," he said in a statement posted on social media Monday.

Privacy features have made Telegram the messaging app of choice for many Russian officials. The Kremlin has used it for arranging conference calls with reporters.

The Russian president's press office said Monday it would now be using a different app.



The website of the Telegram messaging app is seen on a computer's screen in Moscow, Russia, Friday, April 13, 2018. A Russian court has ordered the blocking of a popular messaging app following a demand by authorities that it share encryption data with them. (AP Photo/Alexander Zemlianichenko)

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