

Telegram accuses Apple of blocking updates

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Secure messaging app Telegram accused Apple on Thursday of blocking its updates for users worldwide after Russian authorities imposed a ban on Telegram for refusing to hand over keys to decrypt messages.

"Apple has been preventing Telegram from updating its iOS apps globally ever since the Russian authorities ordered Apple to remove Telegram from the App Store," said the founder of the app, Pavel Durov, on his Telegram feed.

In April, a Moscow court banned the popular free app following a long-running battle between authorities and Telegram, which has a reputation for securely encrypted communications.

Telegram refused to provide Russian authorities with a way to read communications over its network as Moscow pushes to increase surveillance of internet activities.

"We believe we did the only possible thing, preserving the right of our users to privacy in a troubled country," said Durov. "Unfortunately, Apple didn't side with us."

Russian authorities have ordered domestic internet service providers to block the app, causing disruption of other services but failing to shut down Telegram in the country.

On Monday, Russia's communications watchdog said it had requested Apple block push notifications for Telegram users in Russia, which would mean users would not receive alerts for new messages and thus render it less useful.

It also requested Apple no longer make the app available for download in Russia.

Telegram is still available for download both inside Russia and the rest of the world, but it is a version that has not been updated since the Russian court ruling.

Durov said Apple's position means that it has been unable to comply with the new EU data protection and privacy that came into force last week.

Telegram lets people exchange messages, stickers, photos and videos in groups of up to 5,000 people. It has attracted more than 200 million users since its launch by Durov and his brother Nikolai in 2013.

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