The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

RusLeaks Suspended Amid Investigation into Privacy Breaches

By Natalya Krainova

October 04, 2011

RusLeaks, the Russian answer to WikiLeaks, has been suspended amid an investigation into whether it breached privacy rights by publishing personal details of private individuals in what it said was an effort to fight corruption.

The web site, which operated in the domains .com, .net and .org, posted information about the passports, incomes, fines, banking operations and travels of Russians, and was closed early Tuesday, Rossiiskaya Gazeta reported.

It was not immediately clear who suspended its operations.

A statement posted on RusLeaks by its unknown owners reads: "The web site is suspended because it doesn't fulfill the functions declared with its creation."

The statement appealed to users to send Bitcoin, an electronic peer-to-peer crypto currency

to the site's electronic purse.

The owners have identified themselves only as a "dispersed team of creators who care about what happens in Russia" and said they created the site to "support" a public drive against corruption, Svobodnaya Pressa, an independent news site run by a nongovernmental group, reported, citing a statement formerly posted on the now-closed site.

The three web domains were registered at different times this year, one of them by Internet.bs Corp. and the other two by U.S.-registered eNom, Inc., according to RIPN Whois Service, which tracks domain registrations. The registrant for the .org site is listed as AnonymousSpeech of Tokyo, Japan.

Among the people surprised to find personal information on the site was prominent blogger Anton Nosik, who posted scanned pictures of the site on his blog Sunday.

On Monday, prosecutors opened a preliminary probe into the web site on suspicion of breaking privacy laws, the Prosecutor General's Office said in a statement.

Prosecutors ordered the Federal Service for Monitoring Mass Media and Communications to determine whether any laws had been broken and, "if there is reason," to limit access to the web site and hold the guilty party responsible.

The media watchdog said in a statement Monday that it had sent a letter to Internet.bs Corp. asking for assistance in suspending the .com site.

The web site for Internet.bs Corp. said the company was based in the Bahamas.

The watchdog has not received a reply, its spokesman Mikhail Vorobyov told The Moscow Times on Tuesday.

The watchdog has also appealed to Moscow's Tagansky District Court, asking it to rule the site's activities illegal. A date for a first hearing has not been set.

If the court sides with the watchdog, its ruling will be forwarded to the Federal Security Service, which will "seek its [the site's] closure by its own forces," Vorobyov said.

The watchdog has assisted in the closure of 20 web sites that provided private data on Russians, it said in its Monday statement. It did not elaborate.

In April 2009, the watchdog and the FSB assisted in closing Radarix.com, a U.S.-registered site that claimed to carry 3 terabytes of personal data on citizens of Russia and other former Soviet republics from pirated databases, Vorobyov said.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2011/10/04/rusleaks-suspended-amid-investigation-into-privacy-breaches-a9935