

Critical Corruption Website to Be Blocked

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Russia's communications watchdog has decided to block access to the website Compromat.ru after a court in Belgorod ruled that the site had slandered a local police chief in a report about corruption.

As of Monday afternoon, the website — known for investigating and exposing corruption among government officials — was still accessible, and it was not included on the communications watchdog's list of banned websites.

But Vadim Ampelonsky, a spokesman for communications watchdog Roskomnadzor, told *Vedomosti* that the website would soon be blocked since representatives of the agency had been unable to get in touch with the site's administrators to have contentious material removed.

The report that landed the website in hot water concerned Belgorod police chief Viktor Pesterev, who sued the website for republishing a report claiming he was on the brink of resigning over corruption charges against him.

Russia's list of banned websites appeared in 2012, and it was widely expected to crack down on sites that could be harmful to children — those promoting drugs, suicide or porn. Critics warned that it could also be used arbitrarily, however.

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