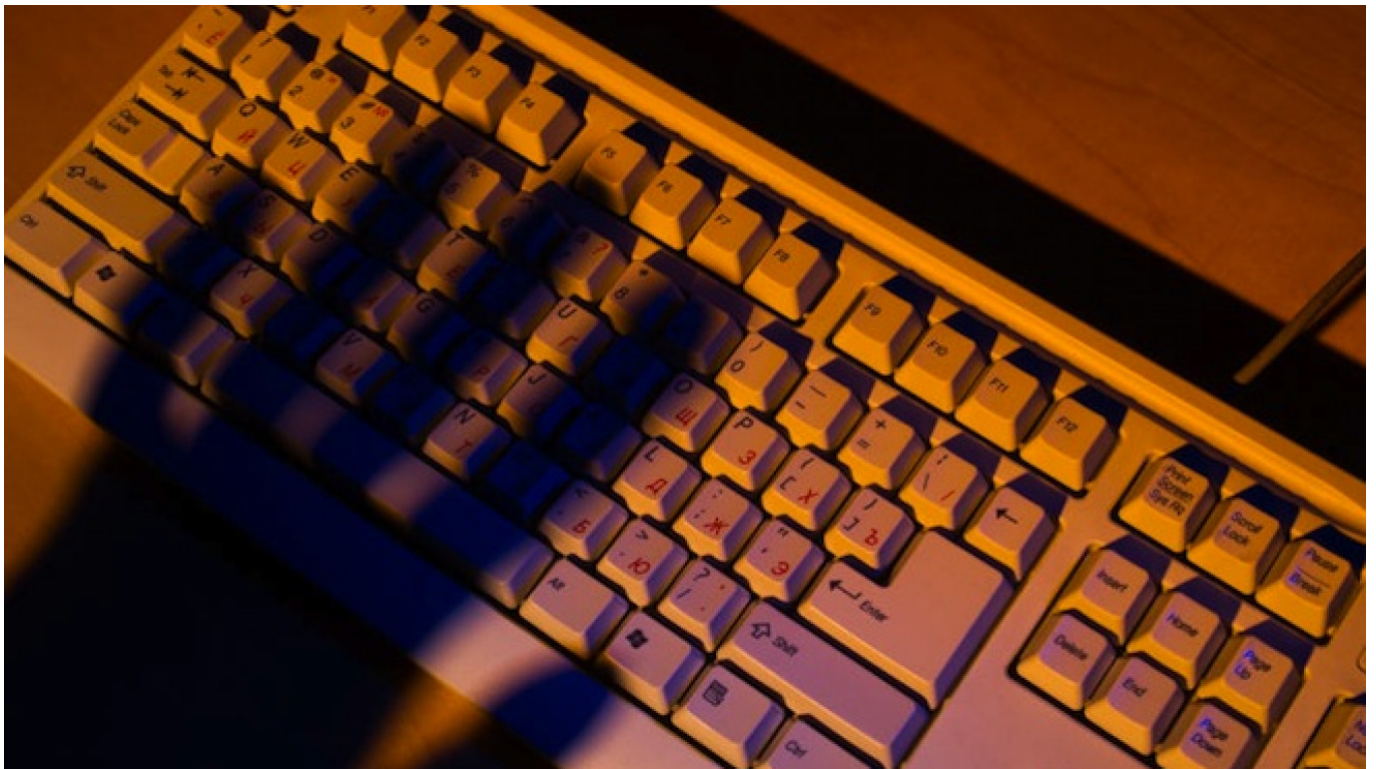


Russia and Turkey Lead on Internet Censorship Growth, Survey Shows

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Internet users in Russia and Turkey have been subjected to the greatest increase in web censorship over the past year, according to the latest Freedom on the Net survey.

The survey, published Thursday by U.S.-based watchdog Freedom House, ranked 65 countries against a 100-point scale — with higher scores equalling a greater degree of Internet censorship.

Russia and Turkey each gained 6 points this year, the greatest negative trend recorded globally by Freedom House.

Russia now ranks alongside Kazakhstan and Myanmar in 48th–50th place on the list, with 60-points out of the 100-point scale. Iceland and Estonia top the rankings for Internet

freedom on six and eight points, respectively.

The scale also brackets countries into three groups according to their level of censorship: "free," "partly free" and "not free."

Russia, which currently falls within the "partly free" bracket of Internet censorship, is now only one point away from being classified as "not free" — a group propped up by China (87 points), Syria (88 points) and Iran (89 points).

Russia and Turkey (43 points) were also found to be the worst performers over a five-year period, with their Internet censorship ranking increasing by 11 and 13 points, respectively, according to the survey.

Overall, the survey recorded a global increase in Internet censorship, with 36 of the surveyed countries curbing Net freedoms during the period from May 2013 to May 2014.

"Countries are rapidly adopting new laws that legitimize existing repression and effectively criminalize online dissent," the study said.

Since last December, Russian authorities have been allowed to ban without court order websites for political content.

Victims of the law include opposition websites Grani.ru and Kasparov.ru, and the LiveJournal blog of opposition activist and whistleblower Alexei Navalny.

In May, Russia also passed a "blogger law," which requires popular bloggers to register with the state and disclose their identity.

However, a senior media watchdog official said in August that nonpolitical bloggers were likely to be exempted from the hard-to-enforce law, Lenta.ru reported.

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