The Moscow Times
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Russia Threatens to Block BuzzFeed Over Report on Grozny Attack

December 07, 2014



Communications watchdog Roskomnadzor threatened to ban BuzzFeed in Russia over an article about a deadly gun battle in the Chechen capital Grozny last week, the U.S.-based news and entertainment website said Saturday.

The BuzzFeed article featured a video that was uploaded by Kavkaz Center, the Islamist rebels' website, which is banned in Russia. In the video the insurgents appeared to explain the motives for the attack.

In its letter, Roskomnadzor gave BuzzFeed 24 hours to remove the article from its website or face a complete ban in Russia.

The Kavkaz Center video was hosted by YouTube, which later removed it, citing its own terms of service. BuzzFeed then removed the video from its article.

BuzzFeed wrote a letter to Roskomnadzor, asking for clarification on which element of the article had given cause for alarm, and noting that the video had been deleted. Roskomnadzor

thanked BuzzFeed for its cooperation.

As of Sunday evening, BuzzFeed's website is still available in Russia.

Last week, Roskomnadzor briefly banned video hosting service Vimeo over a 55-minute video apparently promoting the Islamic State. The watchdog also blocked access to GitHub, a repository hosting service on Wednesday, over pages featuring suicide instructions. Both websites were again made accessible in Russia once they removed the forbidden materials.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2014/12/07/russia-threatens-to-block-buzzfeed-over-report-on-grozny-attack-a42051