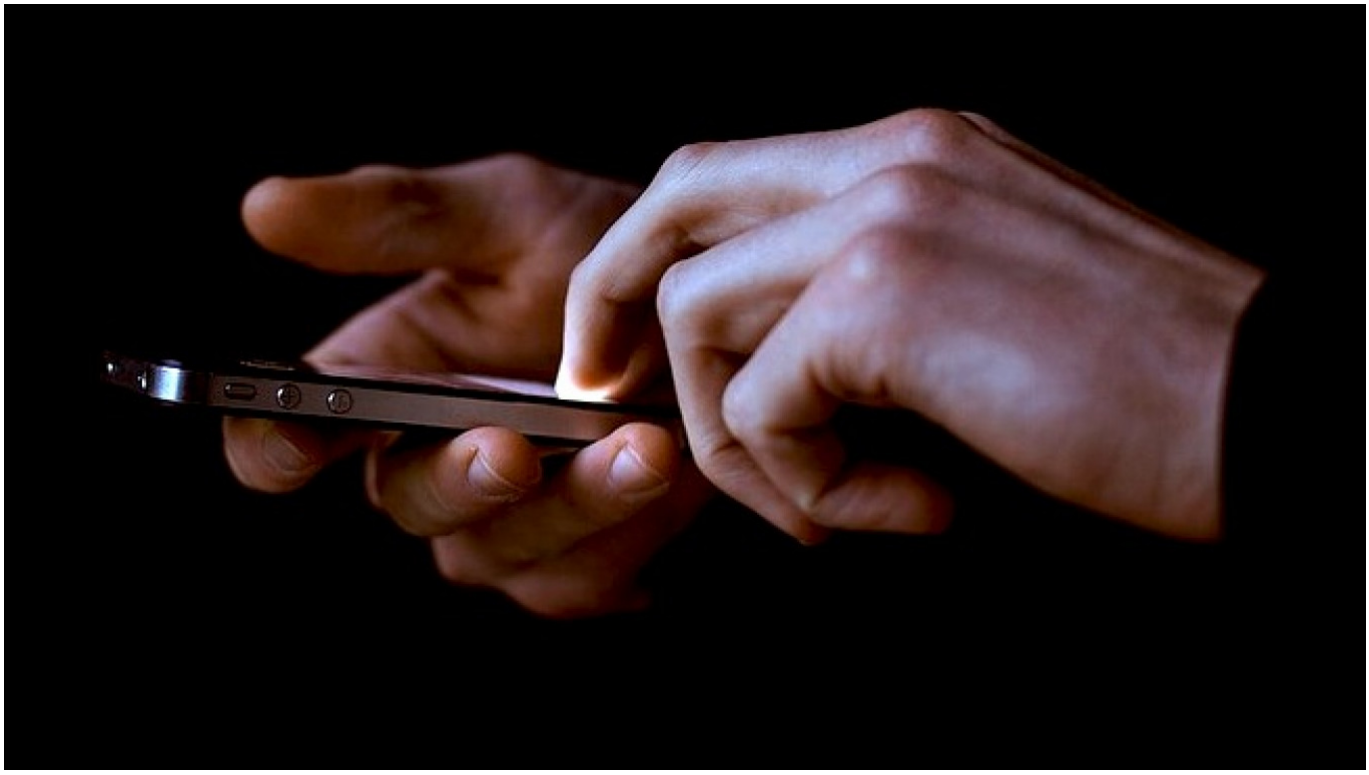
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Russia's Top Mobile Operators Call to Revoke New Anti-Terrorism Laws

By The Moscow Times

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The heads of Russia's top mobile phone operators — MTS, MegaFon, VympelCom and Tele2 — have spoken out against new amendments to Russia's anti-terrorist legislation, the Kommersant newspaper reported Monday.

In a joint letter to Valentina Matvienko, the head of Russia's Federation Council, the companies claimed that new requirements to store user data for six months were "technically and economically impractical." The companies asked Matvienko to reject the changes, Kommersant reported.

The storage of voice information and other user data for six months would cost operators 2.2 trillion rubles ($33.8 billion) and would lead to increasing tariffs and poorer connection quality, the letter said. The risk that such data could be illegally accessed would also create a threat to national security, the companies claimed.

The controversial amendments, introduced by ultraconservative United Russia lawmaker

Irina Yarovaya, were approved by the State Duma last week.

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