

Possible Changes to Russian 'Anti-Terrorism' Surveillance Laws

June 29, 2016

The  Moscow Times

United Russia party member Irina Yarovaya

The Russian Ministry of Communications is to prepare amendments to the controversial package of anti-terrorism laws passed by the Russian State Duma last week, the Interfax news website reported Wednesday.

The possible changes concern legislation requiring telecom providers to store all user data and content for phone calls and messages made on Russian soil for up to six months.

The heads of Russia's top mobile phone operators have penned a joint letter against the bill, calling the new demands "technically and economically impractical," the Kommersant newspaper reported Monday.

They claimed that the new requirements could cost companies 2.2 trillion rubles (\$33.8 billion).

Nikolai Nikiforov, Russian Minister of Communications and Mass Media, told reporters Wednesday that the committee needed more time to look into some of the possible problems with the law, Interfax reported.

The minister also said that a law requiring all encrypted messages to be accessible to the Russian security services may need revising.

“We believe that there will be serious issues with the application of this law,” said Nikiforov
“We are confident it will require a number of amendments.”

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