

Opposition Calls for Rally Against New Russian Anti-Terror Laws

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Leonid Volkov, an ally of opposition activist Alexei Navalny, has requested permission from Moscow City Hall to hold a rally against controversial new anti-terror laws.

The request, posted on Volkov's website Monday, says that roughly 2,000 people could attend the rally on the evening of July 26, to “protect the freedom of Internet in Russia” from censorship and surveillance.

If approved, the rally will be held on Slavyanskaya Ploshchad in central Moscow, close to the offices of Russia’s Internet and media watchdog Roskomnadzor.

Volkov, the head of the Russian Society for the Protection of the Internet, said that he hoped protesters would be joined by other organizations affected by the new laws. “This rally will be in defense of the Internet — a meeting of professionals and users, providers, IT and telecom companies — those who were ignored by the State Duma, Federation Council and the President,” he told the RBC news site.

A package of amendments to Russian anti-terrorist legislation, put forward by ultraconservative United Russian lawmaker Irina Yarovaya, were signed by President Vladimir Putin last week.

The new laws will oblige mobile operators and Internet-companies to store users' data — including photo and video messages — for six months. Internet companies will also face a fine of up to 1 million rubles (\$15,700) if they refuse to decode their users' data at the request of the Russian Security Services (FSB.)

Four Russian major mobile operators — MTS, Beeline, MegaFon and Tele2 — have claimed that communication tariffs will double when Yarovaya's package comes into force, and called for the amendments [to be revoked](#).

The package also introduces a number of other new laws, including restrictions on religious activity, increases the number of crimes with which children aged between 14 and 17 can be charged, and the ability to prosecute citizens for not informing the government of terrorist activities.

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