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1 Million Russians to Be Put Under Surveillance in 2016 — Activists

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More▣than one million Russians are expected to be under wiretap surveillance by the end of 2016, Russian activists have reported.

Data▣collected by journalists Andrei Soldatov and Irina Borogan for their book "The Red Web: The Struggle Between Russia's Digital Dictators and the New Online Revolutionaries" shows▣that the number of wiretaps signed off by the Russian courts doubled▣between 2007 to 2015, jumping from 265,937 to 539,864.

Further▣documents analyzed by journalist Oleg Salmanov found that authorities▣had legally eavesdropped on almost one million Russian citizens in▣2015.

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Each column represents the number of permits granted for a six-month wiretap, Salmanov

wrote on Facebook. The line shows the percentage of wiretaps in relation to the number of economically active adults in the company. Every hundredth person in Russia is subject to eavesdropping, he wrote.

Writing on his blog, opposition activist Leonid Volkov condemned the figures. “These are not the only 'opposition leaders' or 'political activists.' These people are not only 'potential terrorists,' or those suspected of committing a crime," he said. “Millions of people: it does not fit within a reasonable scope for investigative activities— it is literally total surveillance.”

A report released by human rights activists in May found that at least six percent of Russia's population has been under state surveillance at some point in the last nine years.

The information, compiled by activist group Agora, claimed that a lack of accountability left the work of the security services open to political exploitation.

The Kremlin denied the claim, maintaining that the wiretaps were needed to combat terrorism.

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