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Russian Media Hit With New Court Reporting Restrictions

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Artyom Geodakyan / TASS

The Russian media are set to face new restrictions on broadcasting from the country's criminal courts.

A new law signed by Russian President Vladimir Putin on Tuesday forbids online livestreaming of legal proceedings without court approval.

Journalists will now only be able to broadcast cases with the judge's express permission. They will also be barred from live streaming court sessions during the pre-trial stages.

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The move has been heavily criticized by both journalists and NGOs, with human rights lawyer Damir Gainutdinov condemning the law as "one of the most repressive changes" adopted by

Russia's justice system in recent years.

He told the Republic news outlet that journalists who attempt to broadcast without court permission could be prosecuted for contempt of court.

The Russian media have been able to livestream court trials since 2012. Broadcasts have brought widespread attention to trials such as those against Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny, Pussy Riot, and the Bolotnaya protesters.

Navalny regularly posts photos and videos on social media when he appears in court. On Monday, he held an impromptu press conference in a Moscow courtroom, minutes after he had been found guilty of breaking Russian protest laws. The livestream depicted the opposition leader confronting a state television camera crew in order to ask them why their channel had ignored anti-corruption demonstrations across Russia.

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Another tweet posted by Navalny from the courtroom read: There will come a time when we have them on trial (but we will try them honestly)."

Embed:

> Всем привет из Тверского суда. Настанет время, когда и мы будем их судить (только уже честно) pic.twitter.com/zs6ueJMM8o
>
> — Alexey Navalny (@navalny) March 27, 2017

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