

Telegram App to Refuse Russia's Data Demands

Popular Messaging App Pledges to Protect Data Amid Rumors of Russian Government Pressure

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May 16, 2017



Dado Ruvic / Reuters

The company behind the messaging app Telegram has said it will not hand over information to the Russian state amid reports of government pressure to give up company data.

"No other government or special service in the world has ever received any information from us." the company said [in a statement on Tuesday](#). "It will always be that way,"

[Russia's Vedomosti newspaper reported](#) earlier that media watchdog Roskomnadzor had requested Telegram's data so that it could be registered in a national database controlled by the state.

Under Russian law, the app could be blocked across the country for refusing to comply.

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Russia began blocking messaging services which refused to provide company information for the government's "Register of Information Disseminators" in May 2017.

BlackBerry Messenger (BBM), LINE, Imo.im and Vchat were among the first victims blacklisted for failing to comply.

Chinese messenger WeChat was also blocked but saw the restriction lifted May 11 after cooperating with government demands.

Roskomnadzor has refused to comment on the claims, dismissing them as “rumors, spread by the media.”

Spokesperson Vadim Ampelonsky told [Russia's Interfax news agency](#) that the organization was in “constant interaction with a number of companies.”

Telegram had 6 million active Russian users as of January 2017, up from just 2 million at the start of 2016. According to company data, 60 percent of all Telegram downloads originate in Russia.

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