

FSB Goes After Telegram Encryption Keys, Founder Claims

September 27, 2017



Pavel Durov **TechCrunch** / Flickr (CC BY 2.0)

Russia's Federal Security Service (FSB) is seeking the encryption keys to the popular Telegram messaging app, its founder Pavel Durov [said](#) Wednesday.

Durov agreed to register Telegram with a government database in June after Russia's media censor threatened to block the service. He [stopped short](#) of complying with a new law that requires websites and applications to store users' data for six months starting next year.

Writing on his personal Telegram channel early Wednesday, Durov said Russia is "rushing to join Iran in filing charges against the Telegram management."

"They seem to be unhappy because we won't comply with the unconstitutional 'Yarovaya laws' and won't give them the encryption keys they wanted," he said in an English-language post.

The law, which comes into force July 1, 2018, is named after its champion, State Duma Deputy

Irina Yarovaya. In addition to the local storage stipulations, the law allows the FSB access to users' messaging data without a court order.

The "Yarovaya law" requires companies to provide the FSB with encryption keys, and in effect mandates secret ways for the authorities to bypass authentication, a method known as a backdoor.

Related article: [How Telegram Channeled Russia's Political Intrigue](#)

The FSB filed an administrative violation against Telegram for failing to submit "information required to decode the received, transmitted, delivered and (or) processed e-mails," according to a Sept. 14 letter that Durov [attached](#) to his post on the VK social network.

Russia's media censor, Roskomnadzor, began blocking messaging services that refuse to hand over information for the government's "Register of Information Disseminators" last spring.

The register, a list of every website allowing the publication of user-generated content, was [set up](#) in 2014.

Durov told the Vedomosti newspaper that it was unclear whether the administrative violation report would lead to Telegram being blocked in Russia.

He cited lawyers as saying that these administrative charges could complicate his travels to and from Russia.

In his Telegram channel, Durov responded to Iran's criminal case against him on charges of providing services to terrorists, saying he wished he could visit Iran, but that it was "more painful" to not visit Russia because of his parents.

"But Mom and Dad are not too old to travel and the globe is still pretty big."

Original url:

<https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2017/09/27/fsb-seeks-telegram-encryption-keys-founder-claims-a59085>