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Human Rights Law Firm to Defend Telegram in Government Encryption Row

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

A human rights group has agreed to represent Pavel Durov, founder of the popular messaging app Telegram, in his legal battle with government regulations that require his company to hand over encryption keys to some users' communications.

A Moscow court on Monday fined Telegram 800,000 rubles ($14,000) for refusing to give security services decoding data targeting six phone numbers.

Related article: Telegram Founder Durov Puts Out Call for Lawyers to Fight Encryption Fine

Pavel Chikov, head of Agora, a law firm which publishes an annual report on Internet freedom, has defended high-profile activists and independent journalists including Oleg Kashin and Pussy Riot's Yekaterina Samutsevich.

"I am confident that Pavel's team can successfully represent Telegram in Russian courts, defending the right of Russians to the privacy of
their personal correspondence," Durov wrote on social media.

Durov said he had received 200 offers, including from famous lawyers who were prepared to defend Telegram pro bono.

"The case of Telegram is not Pavel Durov's case, it's the case of hundreds of millions of program users and is a principle issue of the protection of privacy of correspondence in the digital age," Chikov told the Interfax news agency.

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