

Sexy 'Graft' Video May Lead Russia to Block Instagram, YouTube

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Oleg Deripaska **Jason Alden / Bloomberg**

(Bloomberg) — Russia may block access to YouTube and Instagram after billionaire Oleg Deripaska won a court injunction against videos and photographs that showed him and Deputy Prime Minister Sergey Prikhodko relaxing on a yacht with a woman described as an escort.

Deripaska won an order from Ust-Labinsk court in his native Krasnodar region ordering the removal of 14 Instagram posts and seven YouTube videos that breached his right to privacy, according to a spokeswoman for his Basic Element company.

Anti-Kremlin campaigner Alexey Navalny said the order also threatens to block his website after he published an online film alleging that the videos and photographs posted by the woman, who calls herself Nastya Rybka, showed evidence of a corrupt relationship between the aluminum tycoon and the senior minister.

Russian communications watchdog Roskomnadzor included the materials on its register

of blacklisted sites following the court order. Its press office declined immediate comment. Internet providers must block access to online services within days unless information declared illegal is deleted.

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Deripaska denied wrongdoing after Navalny published his video Feb. 8, calling it a 'planned campaign' to damage his reputation. The injunction was granted Feb. 9. Navalny's allegations 'should have been answered in a manly way, but we'll stay within the law,' Prikhodko said, the RBC newspaper reported on Feb. 9.

Navalny, who was barred from running against Vladimir Putin in March's presidential elections, has built a massive online following in Russia for investigations accusing government ministers and top officials of corruption. He inspired the largest anti-government protests since 2012 last year after releasing a video showing lavish estates allegedly belonging to Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev, who denied the accusations.

Seeking removal

YouTube and Instagram may be blocked in Russia as early as Wednesday unless they comply with the order and remove the material, Vedomosti newspaper reported, citing the watchdog. Representatives of Facebook Inc., which owns Instagram, and YouTube's parent company, Alphabet Inc., declined to comment.

Deripaska is seeking removal of only the 14 Instagram posts and seven YouTube videos, and not to block access to the two services entirely, the spokeswoman for Basic Element said in an email.

'It's impossible for internet providers to block certain pages on Instagram and YouTube,' and they'll have to block the services unless the material singled out by the watchdog is deleted, said Karen Kazaryan, chief analyst at the Russian Association for Electronic Communications, an internet lobby group. There's also a 'high chance that Navalny may need to remove this information to avoid being blocked.'

The action against his investigation is 'a brazen act of censorship,' Navalny wrote on his website, which remained accessible on Monday. 'I urge everyone to spread this video wherever you can.'

Billionaire Alisher Usmanov took to YouTube last year to post his own video responses to Navalny's allegations that he donated real estate to a fund benefiting Medvedev, calling the anti-corruption campaigner a 'loser' and saying 'I spit on you.' Usmanov later won a defamation lawsuit, in which a court ordered Navalny to retract the allegations.

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