The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Russian Soldiers to Lose Smartphone Privileges Over Leaks

February 16, 2018



Dmitry Feoktistov / TASS

The Russian military reportedly plans to ban the use of smartphones as early as next month after a series of embarrassing revelations of Russian troop deployments in Ukraine and Syria.

Russia's Defense Ministry has accused foreign intelligence agencies and terrorist groups of using data posted online by Russian soldiers for nefarious reasons. The ministry's draft bill, which passed public hearings, will ban troops from publishing photos or revealing military affiliations on social media.

Russian soldiers could lose their smartphone privileges and switch to cheaper keypad phones "on secrecy grounds" by March 1, the Kommersant business daily cited unnamed military sources as saying Thursday.

A list of 11 "approved" mobile phones compiled by a senior General Staff official overseeing information security includes the brands Nokia, TeXet, Alcatel and Samsung.

“They have the text message-sending function, a built-in alarm clock, a calculator, calendar, headphone jack, and some even have a flashlight or a slot for a second SIM card,” Kommersant wrote.

The devices meet the military’s criteria of not being fitted with GPS or cameras.

However, at least one Defense Ministry official said that the new restrictions would prove useless in preventing leaks.

“You buy a simple ‘dialer’ that you always carry and can show to the brass when needed,” Kommersant cited the unnamed officer as saying.

“The normal phone stays on silent in your pocket,” he said.

Related article: Russian Military Blasts 'Betrayal' After Media Leaks Deceased Pilot's Salary

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2018/02/16/russian-soldiers-lose-smartphone-privileges-over-leaks-a60533