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Russia Demands Official U.S. Response After Facebook Blocks 'Troll Factory'

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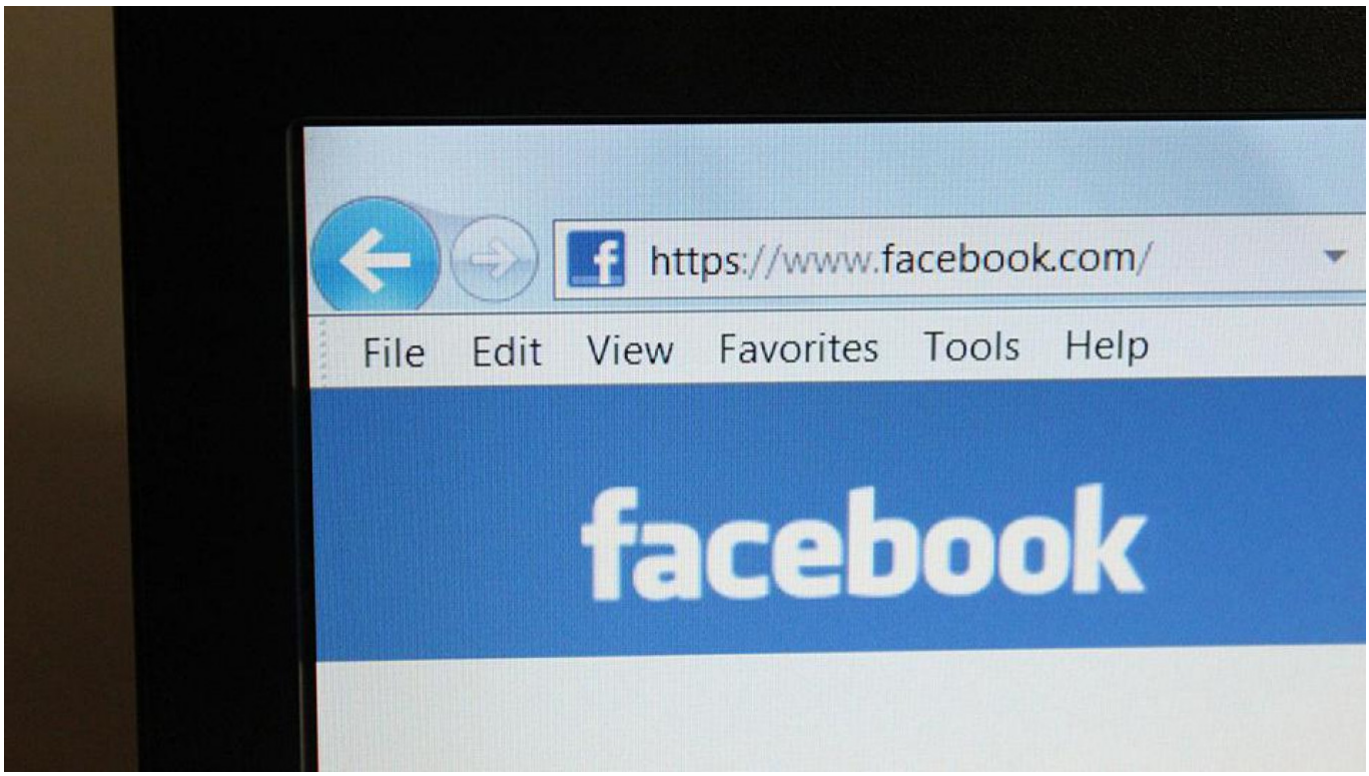

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Russia wants the U.S. government to provide an official explanation after Facebook deleted hundreds of Russian accounts and pages linked to a "troll factory" indicted by U.S. prosecutors.

Facebook announced this week that it was deleting articles and pages from the Russia-based Federal News Agency (FAN), which it said is "structurally intertwined" with the notorious Internet Research Agency "troll factory" based in St. Petersburg. The latter was among three firms and 13 individuals indicted by U.S. Special Counsel Robert Mueller in February on charges of conspiring to tamper in the 2016 presidential elections.

Related article: Facebook Cracks Down on Russian 'Troll Factory,' Deletes Hundreds of Accounts

At a weekly briefing Wednesday, Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said that Moscow expected to hear an official explanation from the U.S. State Department regarding Facebook's decision.

"We want to understand how State Department officials, and those from other U.S. bodies, view the blocking of Russian media organizations from American social networking sites," she said.

"If anyone should be blocked [...] it's those publications that print absolute heresy accusing Russia of committing a grave crime without having any facts or arguments," Zakharova added, referring to Western accusations that Moscow was behind the poisoning of an ex-spy and his daughter in England last month.

The Facebook page of a Moscow City Hall economic department was among those swept up in the recent purge, the RBC business portal reported on Wednesday.

Meanwhile, the FAN agency said its Facebook ban meant that American news consumers were deprived of "objective and independent information about events occurring on the territory of America and throughout the world."

FAN announced plans to launch a new information agency called "USA Really. Wake Up Americans."

"It will focus on promoting information and problems that are hushed up by major American publications controlled by the U.S. political elite," FAN said.

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