

Russian Lawmakers Pass Law Censoring Internet Defamation

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Sergei Kiselyov / Moskva News Agency

Russian lawmakers have passed legislation that will allow authorities to block websites that publish defamatory information against public figures.

A recent report found that Internet censorship in Russia has skyrocketed last year. An average of 244 websites were blocked every day in 2017, while courts handed down prison sentences related to Internet censorship every eight days, the Agora international human rights group said in February.

Related article: [Internet Censorship Skyrockets in Russia in 2017, Study Says](#)

“Access to Internet resources can be restricted for failure to remove information discrediting the honor, dignity or business reputation of a citizen,” the Duma’s Twitter account [wrote](#) after passing the bill in its third reading on Thursday.

Previous iterations of Russia's information technology law imposed fines on website owners who refused to retract defamatory material.

The Internet libel bill is expected to pass the Federation Council, Russia's upper house of parliament, and signed into law by President Vladimir Putin.

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