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After Blocking Telegram, Russian Regulator Sets Its Sights on Facebook

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Alexander Zharov **Anton Novoderzhkin / TASS**

Russian regulators have reminded Facebook that the social network could face bans this year if it fails to comply with the country's local data storage legislation.

Russia's media regulator Roskomnadzor has had Facebook in its crosshairs since last year for failing to comply with a 2015 law requiring tech firms to store Russian citizens' personal data on local servers. The same law forced LinkedIn, a social platform for professionals, to cease operations in Russia, costing it an estimated 40 percent of its Russian user base.

Related article: Russia Turns the Switch off on LinkedIn

A day after Roskomnadzor began blocking the popular Telegram messaging service, the regulator's head Alexander Zharov told the pro-Kremlin Izvestia daily that Facebook could be next.

“We will inspect the company by late 2018 [...] Obviously, the blocking question will come up” if Facebook fails to meet the regulator’s requirements, Zharov was cited as saying.

“They’re already way behind,” he warned.

Zharov said last year that Twitter, another popular social media platform, had agreed to transfer its Russian users’ data to servers in the country by mid-2018.

A Moscow court ruled last week to ban Telegram in Russia over its refusal to provide security services with keys to decrypt private conversations.

Internet providers began to impose the ban on Monday.

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