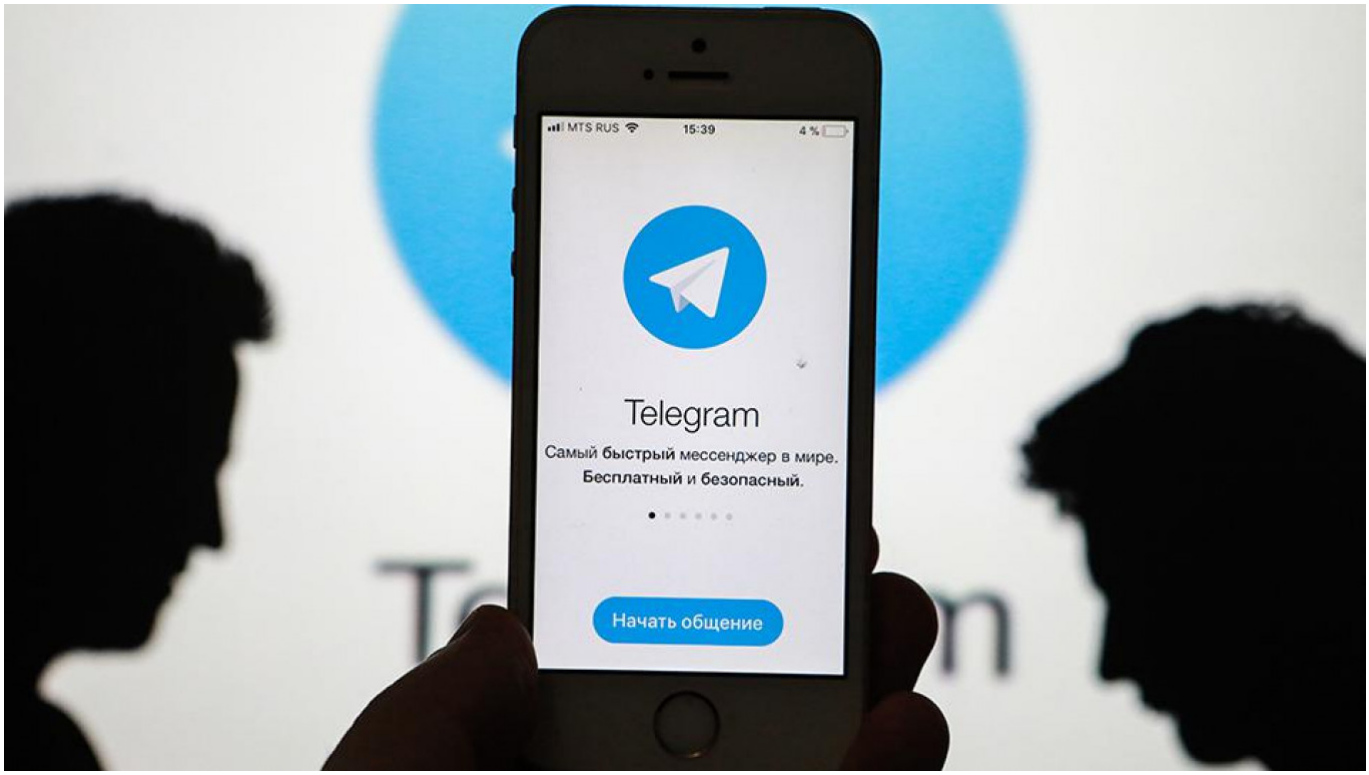
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Russia's FSB Says Online Messages Are Not Protected Under Secrecy of Correspondence

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Sergei Konkov / TASS

The Russian justice system has sided with security services in rejecting the Telegram messaging app's claim that private correspondence on its platform is guaranteed by the constitution.

Telegram was fined in October 2017 for not providing Russia's Federal Security Services (FSB) with the encrypted conversations of two suspects linked to the deadly April 3 St. Petersburg metro bombing, raising fears that Russia could block the app. Its founder Pavel Durov had said that the FSB's demands violated the constitutional rights of Russian citizens to the privacy of correspondence.

Related article: Telegram Fined for Failing to Provide Encryption Keys to FSB

The Russian Supreme Court ruled to dismiss Telegram's lawsuit on Tuesday, the Mediazona news website reported.

Russia's state media watchdog Roskomnadzor gave the messaging app 15 days to comply with the demand to hand over the encryption keys.

The FSB's defense attorney argued that its position was constitutional because it demanded Telegram to provide encryption keys as opposed to correspondence.

"The correspondence of citizens in messaging apps does not constitute privacy that is protected by law for which the FSB would need a court order," a representative of the security services was cited as saying by the TASS news agency.

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