Pro-Telegram Libertarians to March in Moscow

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The Russian Libertarian Party has announced a demonstration in support of the embattled Telegram messaging service in central Moscow on April 30.

Russian regulators have blocked nearly 18 million IP addresses in an effort to prevent users from accessing Telegram after the app came under fire for refusing to grant Russian security services access to private messages.

The app's founder and CEO Pavel Durov reiterated on Thursday that Telegram does not hold keys to encrypted messages.

Ordinary Russians have been experiencing difficulty wiring money, playing games, storing data, buying travel tickets and using countless other online services.

Related article: The Telegram Ban Is Forcing Ordinary Russians to Break the Law (Op-ed)

"No state claiming leadership in the 21st century should impede the development of its own technologies and digital progress," the Russian Libertarian Party wrote in its announcement.

The party criticized "censorship and criminal prosecutions for likes and shares" as unacceptable and predicted that continued bans would lead to "growing threats to national security, long-term economic damage and Russia's isolation from progress."

"We hope to politicize the people who had sidestepped politics before," blogger and demonstration organizer Mikhail Svetov told the TJournal.ru news website.

Opposition leader Alexei Navalny expressed support for the rally, saying "at first I was surprised that the meeting is on Monday at 14:00. But it's a day off, so it's all good."

Moscow City Hall approved a two-hour rally in support of Telegram on Prospekt Sakharova, the regional security department told state-run RIA Novosti news agency.

"Don't forget to bring a couple paper planes," the party urged supporters, referring to Telegram's logo — a white paper plane against a blue background.

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