International Rights Groups Implore Russia to 'Unblock' Telegram

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Mikhail Tereschenko / TASS

More than two dozen international human rights and media freedom groups have urged Russia to stop its "relentless" campaign to block the messaging service Telegram.

Russia's state regulator has blacklisted more than 14.5 million IP addresses that Telegram has relied on to remain accessible to its nearly 15 million subscribers in Russia. Ordinary users have experienced severe disruptions across an array of unrelated online services, including wire transfers, games and ticket purchases.

Related article: Russian Internet Users Suffer Under Chaotic Telegram Ban

"We call on Russia to stop blocking Telegram and cease its relentless attacks on Internet freedom more broadly," 26 rights, media and Internet freedom groups said in a statement published Monday on the British human rights organization ARTICLE 19's website.

The groups cheered on tech companies that continue to "resist unfounded and extra–legal orders that violate their users' rights," and urged the UN, the United States and the European Union "to challenge Russia's actions."

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The groups, which include Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International, called on the repeal of Russia's laws on local data [storage](#), VPN [ban](#) and a ban on [anonymous](#) online messaging.

"Such attempts by the Russian authorities to control online communications and invade privacy go far beyond what can be considered necessary and proportionate to countering terrorism," they said, invoking Russia's [justification](#) for the Telegram ban.

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