

VPN Sales Soar After Russia Bans Telegram App, Media Reports

May 21, 2018



Kirill Zykov / Moskva News Agency

The sales of online privacy tools in Russia have skyrocketed by up to 1,000 percent amid state efforts to ban the Telegram messaging application in the country.

Russia's telecom watchdog disrupted scores of online services in the past month in an attempt to enforce a court order banning the app for refusing to hand over private conversations to security services. Telegram's founder and executive Pavel Durov, who maintains that there are no encryption keys to give, has pledged to donate funds to developers of anonymous web surfing tools to keep Telegram accessible in Russia.

Related article: [Russian State Censor Blocks Tools for Bypassing Telegram Ban](#)

“We’re seeing an increased interest from Russian business since Telegram began to be blocked,” the Kommersant business daily [quoted](#) TorGuard CEO Benjamin Van Pelt as saying

Monday.

TorGuard, a provider of virtual privacy networks (VPN) that allow users to bypass filters, saw 1,000 percent more Russian subscribers since April, Van Pelt was cited as saying. The Telegram ban has propelled Russia into its second-fastest growing market, he added.

CyberGhost and Golden Frog VyprVPN registered a 380 percent and 190 percent increase in new accounts each, Kommersant reported.

Since Russian media watchdog Roskomnadzor began efforts to ban Telegram last month, Russian institutions including the National Guard [announced](#) tenders for the purchase of VPN services.

Meanwhile, Roskomnadzor said it has banned 80 VPNs for being “specially created” to help users evade the Telegram ban, Kommersant reported.

Under new regulations, VPNs and proxy services can be [banned](#) in Russia for not registering with Roskomnadzor in what critics say is a clampdown on internet freedom.

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