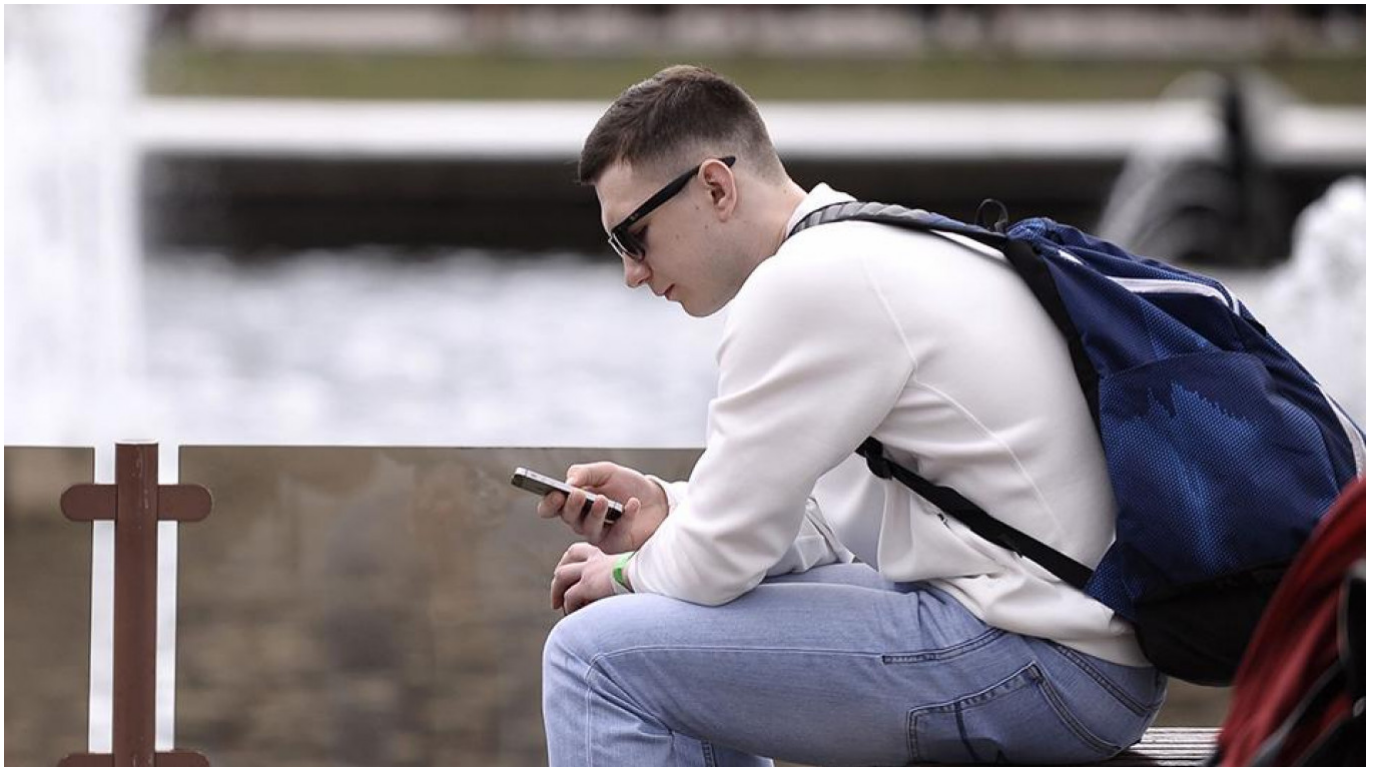


Police Can Confiscate Phones Without a Criminal Prosecution

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Aleksander Avilov / Moskva News Agency

Police can [confiscate](#) cell phones from social media users who have posted content they deem extremist, even without a criminal prosecution, according to a ruling from Russia's top court.

Russian authorities have increasingly [targeted](#) ordinary Russians for social media activity, including handing out jail sentences for posting [images](#) and [comments](#) critical of the country's leadership.

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A ruling from the Russian Supreme Court allows the confiscation of "any property" belonging to an extremist or terrorist suspect that prosecutors say was used to commit the crime.

"This property may include cellphones, personal computers, other electronic means of

communication,” the June 14 resolution reads on the court’s website.

The items, including money allegedly used in a bribe or cars that authorities say were used to stash smuggled goods, can also be seized from people not under criminal prosecution.

Observers criticized the court’s latest ruling as confusing.

“There are too many vague formulations in the Supreme Court’s explanations that don’t rule [out] the arrest and confiscation of property from an innocent person,” Yury Kostanov, member of the presidential Human Rights Council, [told](#) the Kommersant business daily.

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