

Facebook Blocks 'Defamatory' Post in Compliance With Russian Court Order — Reports

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Monica Davey / EPA / TASS

Facebook has reportedly blocked a post on its social media networks in compliance with a recent Russian law that calls on tech giants to block content ruled defamatory by judges in what internet freedom advocates predict will become a common practice.

Over the past five years, Russia has introduced tougher internet laws that require companies to delete certain search results, share encryption keys of messaging services with security services and store Russian users' personal social media data on servers within the country.

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In October, a district court in Moscow ordered 40 websites, including Facebook and

Instagram, to block content it said had discredited the reputation of a Kazakh bank owner, the *Kommersant* business daily [reported](#) Monday.

Kommersant said that Facebook and Instagram had since blocked the defamatory posts voluntarily, while the content was blocked on the other websites by Russian internet providers.

“The posts are still available [when accessed] from other countries,” the newspaper reported.

The court order was enforced in compliance with a law that President Vladimir Putin [signed](#) in April that allows the authorities to block websites that publish defamatory information about public figures.

The latest case will likely be followed by a surge in politicians and businessmen filing defamation lawsuits, internet freedom advocates told *Kommersant*.

“The blocking [requests] are likely to remain inaccessible to ordinary people, since trials are quite long and impose costs,” the outlet quoted Sarkis Darbinyan, an attorney with the Roskomsvoboda internet rights group, as [saying](#).

Russian regulator Roskomnadzor has repeatedly accused Facebook and Google of failing to comply with Russian laws. It blocked access to LinkedIn in 2016 and tried to do the same to the Telegram encrypted messenger service in April.

Facebook has said it is in discussions with the telecoms watchdog about its compliance with Russian legislation. It has not moved servers containing its Russian users' data to Russia, three years after a law was passed requiring the move.

Reuters contributed reporting to this article.

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