

Russian Lawmaker Says Bans Are Freeing and Civil Rights Are Restrictive

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Yelena Mizulina **Alexander Avilov / Moskva News Agency**

An outspoken Russian lawmaker has turned heads for arguing that civil rights are restrictive, while bans are a form of freedom.

Yelena Mizulina, who successfully lobbied for Russia's 2012 "gay propaganda" law and spearheaded efforts to [decriminalize](#) domestic violence, made the statement in defense of recent internet restriction laws. On Monday, Russian senators [backed](#) tighter internet controls against foreign meddling that critics say could disrupt Russia's internet and be used to stifle dissent.

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“What are rights? They’re the biggest lack of freedom. I can tell you that the more rights you have, the less free we are,” Mizulina argued, using the Russian word that translates as both “rights” and “law.”

“A ban is when the person is free because it says ‘this is impossible, but with everything else — [you can] do what you want,’” she was [quoted](#) as saying at an internet safety forum by the Moskva news agency Monday.

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Observers [noted](#) parallels between Mizulina’s impassioned statement and George Orwell’s “War is Peace, Freedom is Slavery, Ignorance is Strength” quote from his dystopian novel “1984.”

Russia has [introduced](#) tougher internet laws in the last five years, requiring search engines to delete some search results, messaging services to share encryption keys with security services and social networks to store user data on servers in the country.

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