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Russia's Internet Is Ready for Isolation, Officials Say After Partial Shutdown

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Evgenij Razumnyj / Vedomosti / TASS

Russia completed a series of tests on Monday checking that its internet services could function if the country were to get cut off from the worldwide web, Deputy Communications Minister Alexei Sokolov said.

The tests, conducted over the course of several days on specially designated networks, follow Russia's controversial "sovereign internet" law enacted last month, which aims to tighten state control over the network to protect it from possible cyberattacks from abroad.

Related article: Russia's Sovereign Internet Law Comes Into Force

"The outcomes of the review showed that government agencies and communications operators are ready to respond effectively to threats," Russia's Communications Ministry was quoted as saying after the tests.

A Communications Ministry presentation, however, said that over half of the simulated cyberattacks during the tests had penetrated Russia's cyber defenses, the Vedomosti business newspaper reported.

"The simulated intruder was able to successfully carry out 62.5% of attacks through the SS7 protocol and 50% through the Diameter protocol," it cited the presentation as saying.

Russia passed its internet isolation law in response to what it calls the "aggressive nature" of U.S. national cybersecurity strategy.

The law requires state-run institutions and security services, as well as all communications operators, messengers and email providers, to participate in government-run tests of the network. Authorities say the isolation tests do not affect regular internet users.

Free speech activists say the "sovereign internet" law will lead to increased government surveillance of Russia's cyberspace. President Vladimir Putin insisted last week that a free internet and a sovereign internet did not contradict one another.

"Our goal is to provide uninterrupted internet service on Russian territory under any circumstances," Deputy Communications Minister Sokolov told a press briefing.

The Communications Ministry plans to submit the test results to Putin.

Reuters contributed reporting to this article.

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