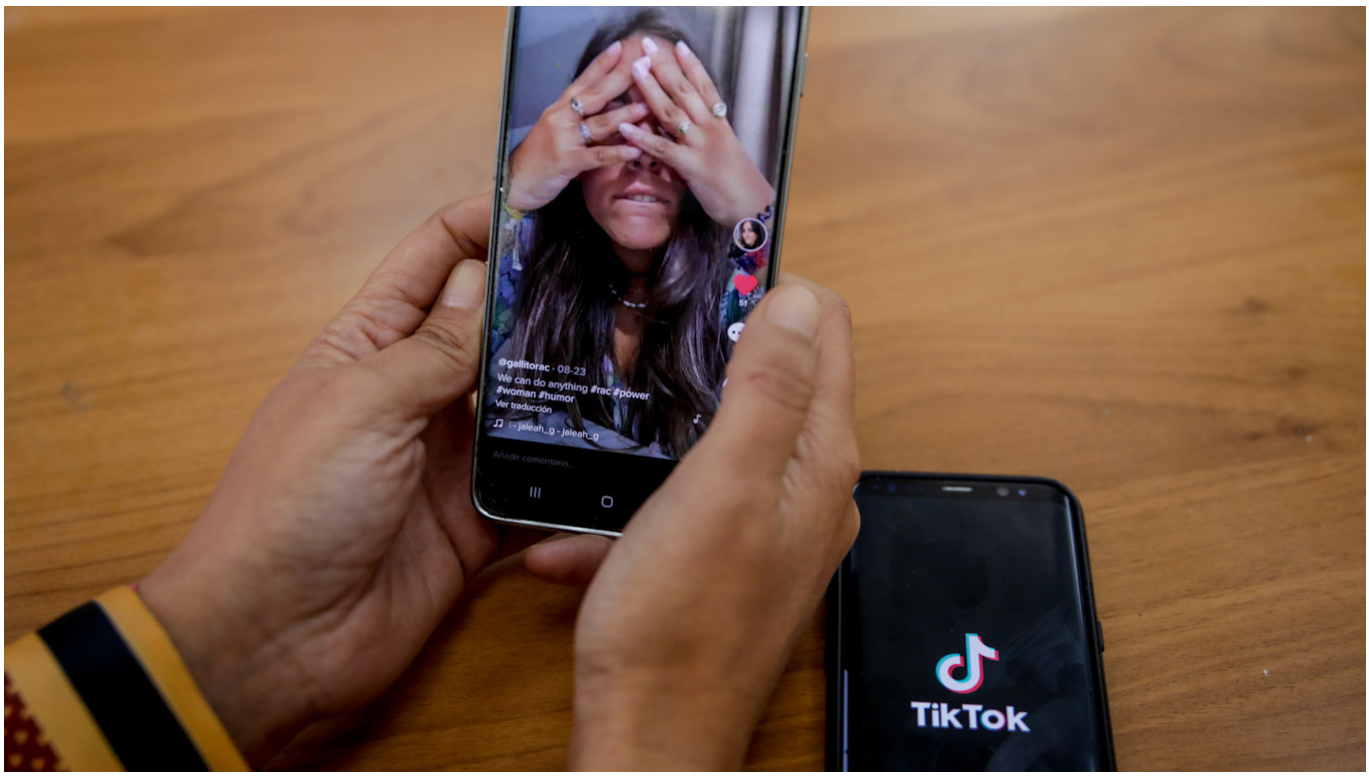
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TikTok Admits to Deleting Russian Videos at Government's Request

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TikTok removed or restricted nearly 700 videos worldwide following government requests between Jan. 1-June 30. **Zuma / TASS**

TikTok has deleted hundreds of Russian videos at the government's request since the start of 2020, the popular short video app's European policy executive said this week.

The Chinese-owned app removed or restricted nearly 700 videos worldwide following government requests between Jan. 1-June 30, according to its latest transparency report published this week.

Nearly 300 pieces of content were taken down or restricted at the Russian government's request. The transparency report does not specify what types of content were restricted.

Related article: How TikTok Is Bringing Russia's Youth Closer to the West

"I think the Russian law is terrible and our community does too, and they strongly voice that

on the platform," TikTok's director of government relations and public policy in Europe, Theo Bertram, told British lawmakers in response to a question on whether TikTok's content moderation complies with the laws of "homophobic, regressive" regimes.

"But unfortunately we have to comply with the legal requests in the country we operate," Bertram said Tuesday in the British parliament's digital and media committee hearing.

A TikTok representative in Russia denied that the platform took down LGBT content at the government's request, saying the deleted and restricted videos "have nothing to do with LGBT people."

TikTok pledged to cooperate with Russian authorities in the summer of 2019 after Russia's state media regulator announced a probe into whether the app distributed child pornography or other banned content.

Overall, TikTok said in its transparency report that it banned more than 104 million videos that violated its policies, including adult nudity, suicide, drug use and hate speech.

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