The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Russia Fines Google as Deadline to Remove Banned Content Passes

May 25, 2021



Thomas Hawk / Flickr (CC BY-NC 2.0)

A court fined Google for failing to remove content banned by the Russian authorities as Moscow's 24-hour ultimatum to comply or have its services slowed down passed on Tuesday.

Russia's internet regulator Roskomnadzor threatened to slow down Google services if the internet giant did not comply with requests to delete an estimated 5,000 links. Roskomnadzor has accused Google of leaving up content promoting drug use and featuring child pornography, as well as content that Russia says incites minors to attend unauthorized protests.

On Tuesday, the Tagansky district's magistrate court in Moscow handed down three rulings fining Google a total of 6 million rubles ($82,000), Russia's RBC news website reported.

The fines came a day after news emerged that Google has filed its first-ever lawsuit against Russia over earlier demands to remove content from Google-owned YouTube.

Related article: Russia Gives Google 24 Hour Ultimatum to Remove Banned Content

The U.S. tech giant is challenging Roskomnadzor requests submitted in January to take down 12 videos Russia says call on minors to participate in unauthorized rallies. First hearings against Roskomnadzor are scheduled in the Moscow Arbitration Court for July 14.

Separately, Roskomnadzor on Monday said it had demanded Google unblock a YouTube video posted by the state-run Sputnik France outlet.

Russia has embarked on a high-profile campaign against several social media giants this year over a surge in the number of posts supporting jailed Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny following his return and detention in Russia.

Roskomnadzor demanded that both foreign and Russian technology companies, including Facebook, VKontakte, TikTok, YouTube and Twitter, delete tens of thousands of posts, videos and pictures it said violated Russian law against promoting participating in unauthorized rallies to under-18s.

The regulator is also slowing down Twitter and previously said it was prepared to ban the social media platform if it did not comply with Russia's requests to remove content.

Roskomnadzor had not yet stated as of Tuesday evening if Google had complied with its demands.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2021/05/25/russia-fines-google-as-deadline-to-remove-banned-content-passes-a74006