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# Russia Orders Apple, Google to Remove Navalny App

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Navalny began actively promoting the app after the authorities last month blocked access to his website and 49 other associated sites. **Benny Bowden / unsplash**

Russia has ordered Apple and Google to remove jailed Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny's app from their app stores as his movement faces unprecedented pressure ahead of key elections next month.

Navalny began actively promoting the app after the authorities last month blocked access to his main website and 49 other associated sites and called for blocking social media linked to him.

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Russia's state communications watchdog Roskomnadzor told Interfax on Friday that it sent letters to the two tech giants asking them to take Navalny's app down from the App Store and Google Play.

Roskomnadzor said that the app "is used to promote and implement the activities of extremist organizations."

A Moscow court in June declared Navalny's political and activist network "extremist," outlawing Russia's most vocal force opposing President Vladimir Putin ahead of the vote.

"This is an important milestone for Apple — whether they'll follow the lead of the Russian authorities," Navalny wrote on his blog in response to Roskomnadzor's request to delete his app.

"We really hope that this won't happen because our application exists completely legally," he said.

Russian courts have in recent months begun levying multimillion-ruble fines against tech giants including Google and Facebook for failing to ban illegal content, including calls for Navalny supporters to attend anti-Kremlin protests.

Navalny is currently serving 2.5 years in jail for violating parole during his recovery abroad from a near-fatal poisoning. Last week he was hit with new criminal charges of "creating a nonprofit organization that infringes on the identities and rights of citizens" which could see his prison term extended by up to three more years.

Nearly 500 Navalny supporters have reportedly been subjected to police visits in Moscow this week after their addresses were leaked online earlier this year. The officers were said to have asked at least one to file a statement against Navalny over the illegal collection of personal data.

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