The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Russia Blocks VPN Providers in Ongoing Internet Crackdown

September 03, 2021



Russia has blocked access to some of the world's largest virtual private network (VPN) services. **Petter Lagson / unsplash**

Russia has blocked access to six VPN services which authorities say allow access to illegal online content in violation of Russian law.

The country's communications regulator Roskomnadzor said Friday it had blocked access to some of the world's largest VPN providers, including Nord VPN and Express VPN, following an investigation.

"The use of such services leads to the preservation of access to prohibited information and resources and creates the conditions for illegal activities, including those related to the distribution of drugs, child pornography, extremism and suicide," Roskomnadzor said in a statement.

Virtual private networks (VPNs) allow internet users a greater level of anonymity online and can provide access to material which has been blocked by internet service providers.

Related article: Russia Fines Google Again for Not Removing Banned Content

Roskomnadzor said it could effectively block access to the VPN providers in Russia, though experts say many have systems in place to maintain access. Russia's internet regulators previously embarked on a failed two-year battle to block the use of the popular Telegram messaging app in Russia.

Russia has adopted a number of measures to increase its control over the internet in recent years, including controversial laws that require companies to store Russian users' data on servers located in Russia. It has also levied multiple fines against Western social media giants for failing to remove content Russia says violates Russian laws, such as posts authorities say encourage minors to attend unauthorized protests.

The country Thursday accused Google and Apple of election interference over its refusal to remove an app published by Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2021/09/03/russia-blocks-vpn-providers-in-ongoing-internet-crackdown-a74966