

Apple Says 'Paused' All Product Sales in Russia

By [AFP](#)

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Apple Pay and other services have been limited, while RT and Sputnik news apps were no longer available for download outside Russia. **TASS / Andre M. Chang / ZUMA Press Wire**

Tech giant Apple announced Tuesday a halt in all product sales in Russia, the latest fallout over Moscow's invasion of Ukraine.

Western governments, sporting organizations and big companies have cut Russia off or dealt it punishing sanctions over the internationally condemned attack on its neighbor.

"We have paused all product sales in Russia. Last week, we stopped all exports into our sales channel in the country," said an Apple statement.

The iPhone maker also announced Apple Pay and other services have been limited, while Russian state-owned media RT and Sputnik news apps were no longer available for download outside Russia.

"We are deeply concerned about the Russian invasion of Ukraine and stand with all of the people who are suffering as a result of the violence," the statement said.

"We are supporting humanitarian efforts, providing aid for the unfolding refugee crisis," it added.

Ukraine's defiant government, which has urged its people to battle Russian forces, has asked for help from all quarters, including Apple's CEO Tim Cook.

"I appeal to you... to stop supplying Apple services and products to the Russian Federation, including blocking access to the Apple Store!" Ukraine's digital minister Mykhailo Fedorov wrote in a letter he posted to Twitter Friday.

Tech platforms pulled into conflict

Apple also said that it has disabled both traffic and "live incidents" in Apple Maps in Ukraine as a safety measure for Ukrainian citizens.

"We will continue to evaluate the situation and are in communication with relevant governments on the actions we are taking. We join all those around the world who are calling for peace," the Apple statement said.

The announcement came just as the European Union banned Russian RT and Sputnik from broadcasting in the bloc while banning "certain" Russian banks from the SWIFT bank messaging system.

Tech firms from Facebook to TikTok and Microsoft had already moved to curb the reach of Russian state-linked news outlets, which stand accused of pushing misinformation about Moscow's invasion of Ukraine.

Social media platforms have become one of the fronts in the attack, home to sometimes false narratives but also real-time monitoring of a conflict that marks Europe's biggest geopolitical crisis in decades.

Facebook's parent Meta said Monday it would be restricting access in the European Union to RT and Sputnik.

Video sharing app TikTok told AFP it had restricted Russian state-owned media access on its platform in the EU, while Microsoft said it was removing RT from its app store and would change its search engine Bing's algorithm to shift RT and Sputnik content to lower in results.

Twitter and Facebook have both been hit with access restrictions in Russia since the invasion of Ukraine and are now "largely unusable," said web monitoring group NetBlocks.

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