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Russia Blocks Facebook, 'Restricts' Twitter

By AFP

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Access to Facebook and Twitter was restricted in Russia late Friday. **PA Wire / PA Images / PA Wire/PA Images**

Russia's media regulator Roskomnadzor "restricted access" to social media network Twitter after blocking Facebook in the country, Russian news agencies reported Friday.

According to Interfax and RIA Novosti news agencies, access to Twitter was restricted on the basis of a request of the Prosecutor General from Feb. 24 — the day of Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

An AFP journalist confirmed that Twitter was no longer refreshing its feed in Russia.

Roskomnadzor did not issue a statement to explain the reasons behind the decision.

Earlier on Friday, the media watchdog said it was blocking Facebook in Russia over several cases of "discrimination" toward state media.

"Soon millions of ordinary Russians will find themselves cut off from reliable information... and silenced from speaking," said Nick Clegg, president of global affairs at Facebook's parent Meta.

The move was part of an unprecedented government crackdown on independent media and activists since the start of the Russian invasion.

The country's key remaining liberal media outlets have been shut down in recent days and a new law introducing harsh jail terms for publishing "fake news" about the war in Ukraine has forced others to abstain from covering that topic.

Russian President Vladimir Putin signed into law a bill introducing jail terms of up to 15 years for publishing "fake news" about the Russian army.

Russia's lower house said in a statement that if fake news stories "led to serious consequences, [the legislation] threatens imprisonment of up to 15 years."

Amendments were also passed to fine or jail people calling for sanctions against Russia.

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