The Moscow Times
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Kremlin Officials Continue to Use iPhones Despite U.S. Espionage Fears

June 01, 2023



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As many as 30% of employees in the Russian presidential administration continue to use iPhones for personal communication, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Thursday.

Peskov's comments came after Russia's Federal Security Services (FSB) announced that it had detected "anomalies" in some iPhones in Russia caused by "malicious software" that it linked to "surveillance operations by American intelligence services."

The FSB claimed that the malware was detected in at least 1,000 iPhones, including those used by members of Russia's diplomatic missions.

The detected malware "indicates the close cooperation of... Apple with... the U.S. National Security Agency and confirms that the user privacy policy declared by Apple... is not accurate," the FSB said in a report cited by the RBC news website.

"We don't have the power to even recommend that," Peskov told journalists when asked

whether the Kremlin had banned its employees from using iPhones.

“Of course, those who work in the government, those who work with state secrets...live under certain restrictions in general,” he added.

Apple denied the FSB's allegations.

"We have never worked with any government to insert a backdoor into any Apple product and never will," the U.S. tech giant said in a statement cited by Reuters.

In March, the Kremlin said it banned employees from using iOS or Android-equipped smartphones for official purposes.

Earlier this year, the Kommersant business daily reported that Kremlin internal policy staff, including those involved in President Vladimir Putin’s 2024 re-election campaign, had been banned from using their iPhones for fear of espionage.

Russia has sought to reduce its dependence on foreign-made technologies in recent years amid worsening relations with the West.

After Apple and Samsung exited the Russian market in response to the February 2022 invasion of Ukraine, sales of Chinese-made smartphones soared in Russia.

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