

Russian Prisons Ban Video Calls for Inmates, Says Member of Presidential Rights Council

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Russian prison authorities have banned inmates from making video calls, a member of Russia's presidential human rights council [said](#) Tuesday.

More than 1,500 video call devices are [installed](#) in prisons across Russia, council member Eva Merkacheva told the tabloid Moskovsky Komsomolets.

But earlier this month, Federal Penitentiary Service (FSIN) deputy chief Alexander Khabarov is said to have ordered a blanket ban on all video calls from prison "until further notice."

According to Merkacheva, the prison official said the ban was "aimed to prevent illegal actions by convicts."

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She speculated that the move may have come in response to an alleged incident involving an inmate's sexual harassment of a minor through video calls.

"But does this mean it was necessary to turn off video communication everywhere? It's like treating a headache by chopping off your head," Merkacheva said.

She further argued that prison authorities have not issued blanket bans on inmates receiving packages despite regular attempts to send them prohibited goods.

"This happened to video calls because their status is 'suspended' — they're not fully legalized and not spelled out in the law. We need to work on that."

Merkacheva said she has appealed to Russia's Justice Ministry to reverse FSIN's decision after receiving requests on social media.

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