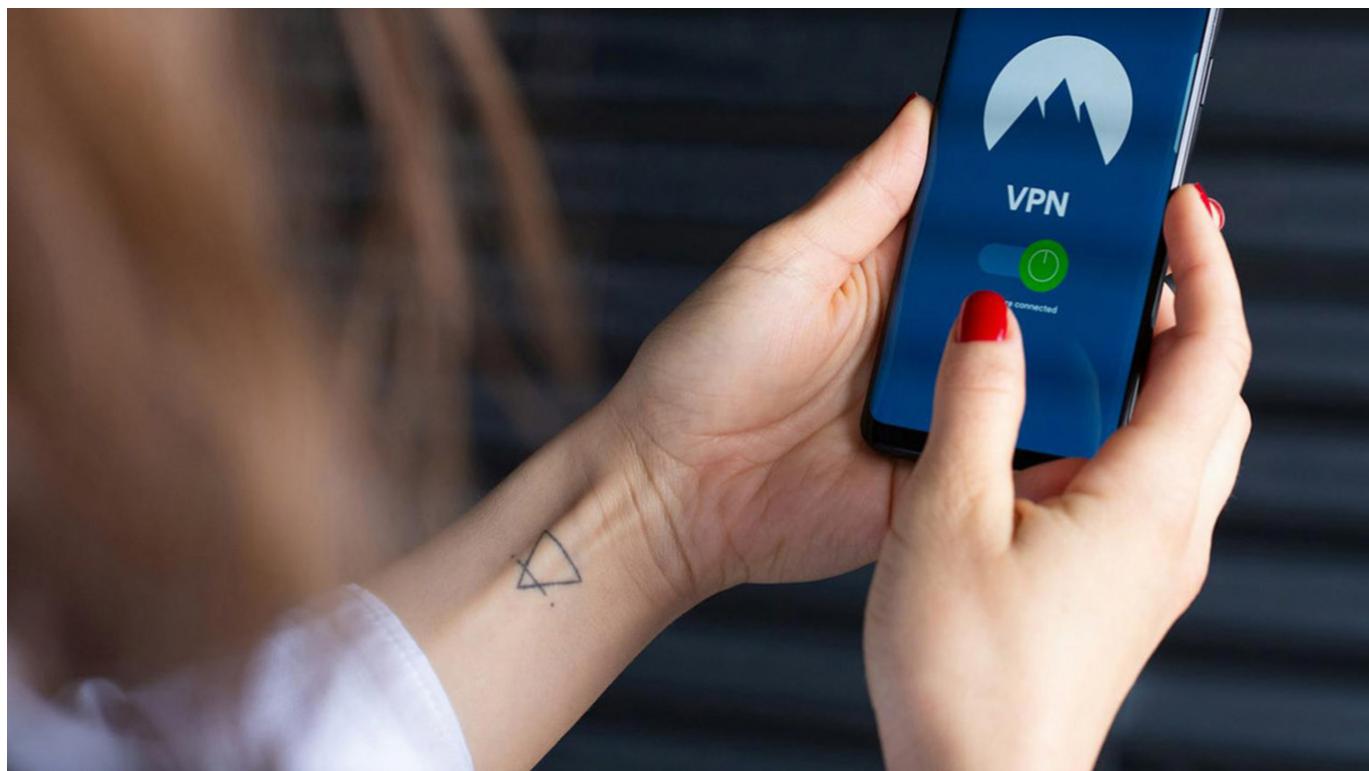


Russia Forces Apple to Remove VPNs From App Store

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Stefan Coders / pexels

At least two VPN services said Thursday that Russian authorities have successfully forced Apple to delete their applications from its App Store in Russia.

Identically worded messages from Apple's app review team to [Red Shield VPN](#) and [Le VPN](#) state that their applications will be removed "per demand from Roskomnadzor."

Roskomnadzor is Russia's state media watchdog. It has banned a number of Western social media platforms and blacklisted opposition media websites since the country invaded Ukraine in 2022.

Roskomnadzor has also attempted to restrict VPNs with efforts ranging from voluntary inclusion in a state-approved white list to blocking them directly. An increasing number of VPNs have been blocked in Russia, with experts saying fewer services are now able to circumvent restrictions.

The regulator demanded Apple remove the two VPNs because they include unspecified “content that is illegal in Russia,” according to the screenshots of emails published by Le VPN and Red Shield VPN.

Related article: [What Should Russians Do If VPNs Are Banned?](#)

Le VPN said it has appealed the decision with Roskomnadzor and begun collaborating with other VPNs and rights activists to assess its implications.

“This recent development underscores a significant escalation in Roskomnadzor’s capabilities, demonstrating its increasing influence over major technology companies like Apple,” Le VPN said in a statement.

“The outcome of this incident could have far-reaching effects on how global tech companies operate in jurisdictions with stringent regulatory environments, influencing both business operations and user access to digital resources,” it said.

Red Shield VPN [recommended](#) users change their Apple ID’s region or country settings to regain access.

On March 1, Roskomnadzor gained the power to block websites for informing readers on how to access prohibited resources and advocating or selling circumvention technologies like VPNs. Experts [say](#) this will further affect the ability of users to learn about and download VPNs amid Russia’s tightening wartime censorship rules.

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