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Russian Antivirus Firm Kaspersky to Wind Down U.S. Operations

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Alexander Avilov / Moskva News Agency

Russian cybersecurity company Kaspersky Lab plans to gradually reduce its operations in the U.S. from July 20, the firm told state-run media on Monday.

Kaspersky's exit comes after the U.S. Commerce Department sanctioned the company in June, banning it from selling and updating its popular antivirus software in the country.

"The company has carefully studied and assessed the implications of U.S. legal requirements and has made the sad and difficult decision to cease its active operations in the U.S., as it currently sees no prospects for doing business in this country," Kaspersky Lab told TASS.

Kaspersky had initially said it would fight the sales ban in court.

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Although headquartered in Moscow, more than 400 million people use Kaspersky's services

globally. The company has been operating in the U.S. for nearly two decades.

Kaspersky was sanctioned because its "continued operations in the United States presented a national security risk due to the Russian government's offensive cyber capabilities and capacity to influence or direct Kaspersky's operations," the Commerce Department said.

The U.S. Treasury also sanctioned 12 members of Kaspersky's leadership team in June.

"[A]ction against the leadership of Kaspersky Lab underscores our commitment to ensure the integrity of our cyber domain and to protect our citizens against malicious cyber threats," Treasury Under Secretary Brian E. Nelson said.

Moscow criticized the sanctions packages as anti-competitive.

"This is a favorite method of unfair competition from the part of the United States. They resort to such tactics every time," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said in June.

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