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Widespread YouTube Outages Reported Across Russia

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Rego Korosi / flickr

Users across Russia reported widespread outages of YouTube on Thursday, just weeks after Russian authorities criticized the video streaming platform for what they described as anti-Kremlin actions.

The online monitoring service Sboi.rf reported receiving around 12,000 complaints about YouTube within a 10-minute period. Downdetector, another outage tracking service, reported that three-quarters of the complaints it received were connected to YouTube's desktop version.

Seven Russia-based users confirmed the outages to The Moscow Times, adding that the mobile version of YouTube was also experiencing slower speeds. The issues were reportedly resolved for some users through the use of virtual private networks (VPNs), a common tool for bypassing censorship.

Related article: As Russia Throttles YouTube, Exiled Opposition Voices Prepare for Total Blackout

Speculation that YouTube could be blocked in Russia has grown since the country's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, when Russian authorities accused the Google-owned platform of spreading "terrorist" anti-war content.

Last week, Russian users began noticing a slowdown in YouTube's download speeds after authorities demanded that Google restore around 200 pro-government channels. A prominent Russian lawmaker warned that YouTube's loading speeds could drop by as much as 70%.

Google denied that the slowdown was due to any technical issues or actions on its part. However, Russia's state-owned telecom giant had previously warned that the removal of Google's equipment from the country would degrade the quality of YouTube video playback.

Besides YouTube, Sboi.rf also reported disruptions on Thursday affecting other Russian websites, including Russian Post, the classifieds site Avito and the movie streaming service Kinopoisk.

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