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Russia Blocks Signal Messenger For 'Violating' Country's Legislation

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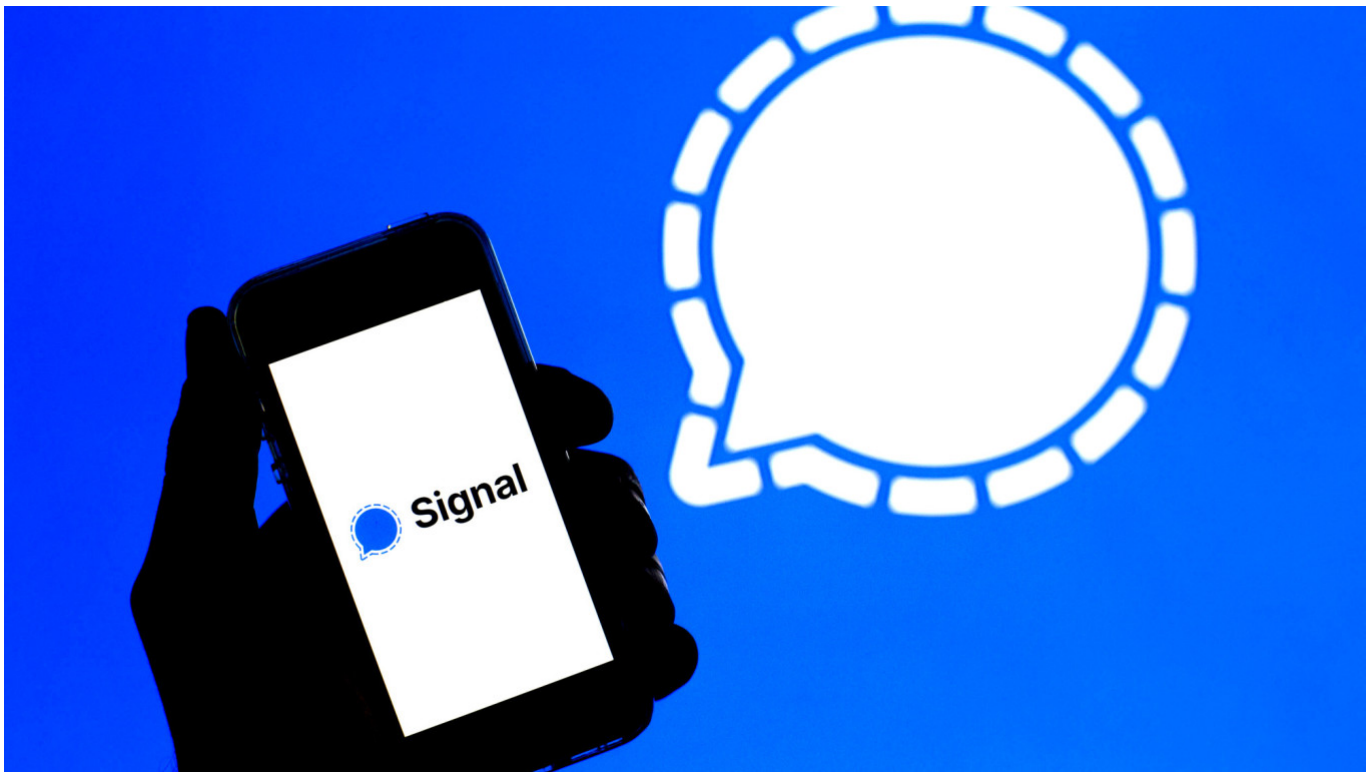

DAX via ZUMA Wire / TASS

Russia has blocked the Signal messaging app for alleged "violations" of the country's legislation, state media regulator Roskomnadzor told the RBC business daily on Friday.

The messenger was restricted "due to violations of the requirements of Russian legislation, compliance with which is necessary to prevent the use of the messenger for terrorist and extremist purposes," Roskomnadzor told RBC.

Users across Russia reported widespread outages of Signal on Friday.

Signal is considered to be one of the most secure messaging apps, allowing users to send encrypted texts, make voice and video calls and share media.

It is used by many independent Russian journalists and opposition activists.

The blocking of Signal comes one day after users across Russia reported widespread outages of YouTube.

Speculation that Russia could block YouTube 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 started noticing a slowdown in YouTube's download speeds after authorities demanded that Google restore around 200 pro-government channels.

A prominent Russian lawmaker warned at the time that YouTube's loading speeds could drop by as much as 70%.

The independent Vyorstka news website reported Friday citing sources at Russian tech giant VK, that YouTube and the WhatsApp messagenger could be blocked as early as September. Yet Vyorstka's sources from Russia's parliament and those close to the presidential administration denied these plans.

Russia previously banned the Telegram messaging app in 2018 after it refused to hand Russian law enforcement the "encryption keys" that would allow authorities to read users' private conversations and prevent terror attacks. The largely unsuccessful ban was lifted in 2020.

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