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Telegram Boss Pavel Durov Detained in France – French Media

August 25, 2024



@TuckerCarlson / X

Telegram founder and CEO Pavel Durov was detained at a Paris airport for allegedly enabling criminal activity with his encrypted messaging app, French media reported Saturday.

France issued an arrest warrant for Durov on charges of complicity in drug trafficking, crimes against children and fraud due to the lack of moderation on Telegram and his failure to cooperate with law enforcement, the TF1, LCI and BFMTV media outlets reported.

The 39-year-old billionaire was detained on the tarmac of Paris-Le Bourget Airport after his private jet landed from Azerbaijan, TF1 reported.

TF1 quoted an anonymous investigator as saying that Durov would most likely be placed in pre-trial detention.

"On his platform, he allowed an incalculable number of offenses and crimes to be committed, for which he did nothing to moderate or cooperate [with law enforcement]," TF1 quoted a

source close to the case as saying.

The arrest warrant was reportedly only valid in France.

Durov allegedly knew that he was "persona non grata" in France, rarely traveled to Europe and avoided countries where Telegram was under surveillance by security forces, a source close to the investigation told TF1.

"He made a mistake tonight. We don't know why... Was this flight just a stopover? In any case, he's in custody," TF1 quoted the source as saying.

Telegram is widely used by Russian speakers.

It has become a key platform for sharing information about the war in Ukraine and is reportedly used by the Russian military to communicate.

"Telegram is the main social media network through which open-source information is spread about the war. That includes footage but also opinions and analysis from Russian and Ukrainian military sources. A significant change to Telegram's policies could have a significant effect on the information domain for this war," military expert Rob Lee said on X (formerly Twitter).

Deputy Russian State Duma Speaker Vladislav Davankov said he had sent an appeal to Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov to seek Durov's release.

"His arrest may be politically motivated and a tool to gain access to the personal information of Telegram users. This must not be allowed," the state-run RIA Novosti news agency quoted Davankov as saying.

The Russian-born boss of Telegram, which he says boasts over 900 million users, is currently based in Dubai. He became a naturalized French citizen in August 2021.

Durov, also the founder of the VKontakte social network, left Russia in 2014 after he refused to share VKontakte users' data with Russian security services. Russia later unsuccessfully attempted to block Telegram over its alleged refusal to provide users' online communications to security services.

"His non-cooperation with the FSB in favor of free speech is unfortunately completely neutralized by his non-cooperation with anyone to stop Telegram from being used for all these terrible things. It was his choice. Was it possible to do one and not do the other?" wrote investigative journalist Christo Grozev.

Original url:
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