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Russia Fines Google $2.5 Decillion Over YouTube Bans – RBC

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Ostankino TV Center in Moscow. **Dzasohovich (CC BY-SA 4.0)**

Updated with Kremlin comments.

Google has racked up some 2 undecillion rubles ($2.5 decillion) worth of fines in Russia after years of refusing to restore the accounts of pro-Kremlin and state-run media outlets, the RBC news website reported Tuesday, citing an anonymous source familiar with court rulings against the tech company.

According to RBC's sources, Google began accumulating daily penalties of 100,000 rubles in 2020 after the pro-government media outlets Tsargrad and RIA FAN won lawsuits against the company for blocking their YouTube channels. Those daily penalties have doubled each week, leading to the current overall fine of around 2 undecillion rubles.

Undecillion is a number equal to 1 followed by 36 zeros, or one trillion trillion trillions. Google, whose parent company Alphabet reported revenue of more than $307 billion in 2023, is unlikely ever to pay the incredibly high fine as it far exceeds the total amount of money on

earth.

A total of 17 Russian TV channels have filed legal claims against Google, according to one of RBC's sources. Among them are the state-run Channel One, the military-affiliated Zvezda broadcaster and a company representing RT editor-in-chief Margarita Simonyan.

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YouTube, which is owned by Google, blocked several Russian state-run media outlets over their support of the full-scale invasion of Ukraine. Authorities in Moscow retaliated with fines but stopped short of blocking the website.

On Thursday, the Kremlin called the fine against Google "symbolic."

"Although it is a concretely formulated sum, I cannot even pronounce this number," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters at a daily briefing. "Rather it is filled with symbolism."

"In fact, this should be a reason for Google's management to pay attention to this and fix the situation. This is the best that the company can do," he added.

Google's Russian subsidiary filed for bankruptcy in the summer of 2022 and was officially declared bankrupt last fall. Alphabet Inc's Google had earlier halted advertising in Russia to comply with Western sanctions over the war in Ukraine.

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