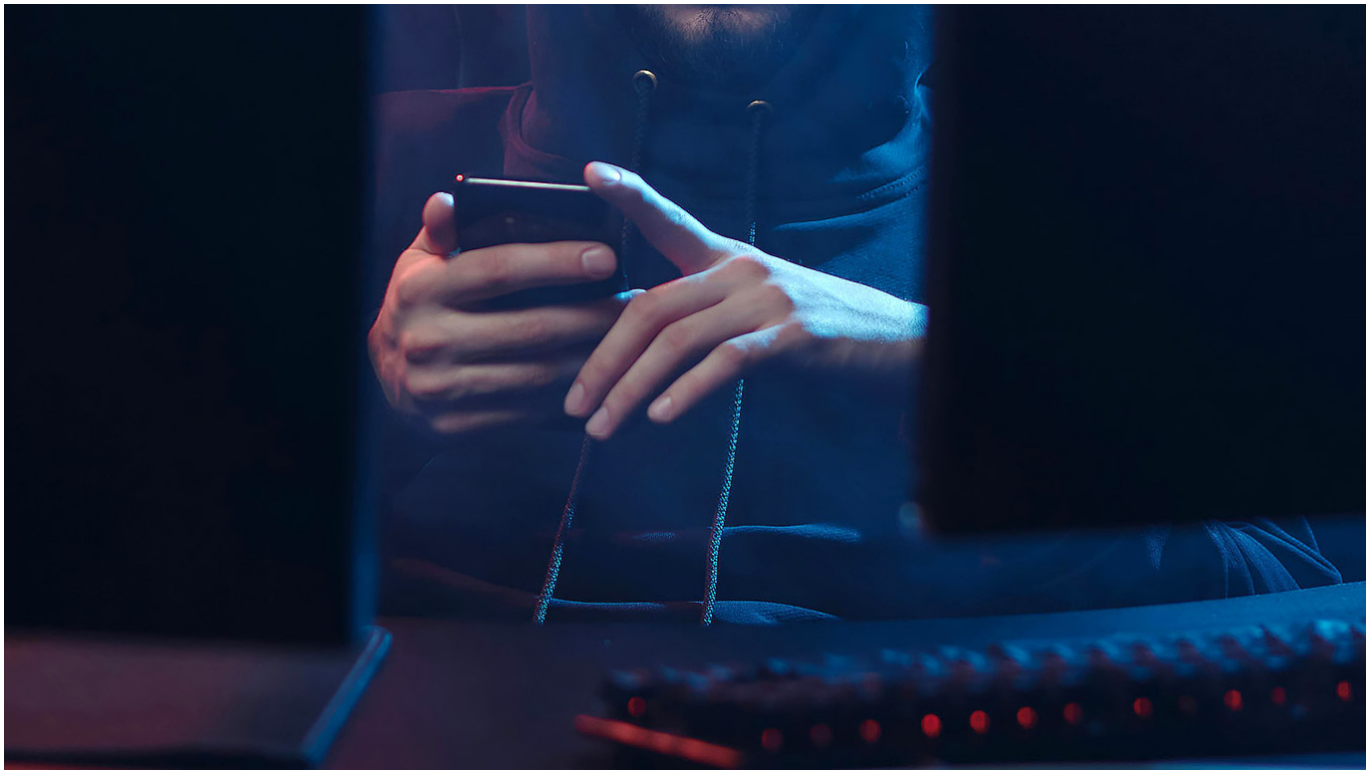
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Anti-War Russians Targeted by FSB's Spy Software – NGO

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Mikhail Nilov / pexels

Russia's Federal Security Service (FSB) spies on anti-war Russians with advanced Android spyware, the legal rights group Perviy Otdel said Wednesday, citing a systems analyst who discovered the surveillance software on his phone.

In 2018, cloud security company Lookout identified a program called Monokle as spyware developed by the U.S.-sanctioned Russian defense contractor Special Technology Center.

Monokle's sophisticated capabilities include recording the device's screen, which exposes users' passwords, and stealing data from third-party apps, among others.

Monokle attacks are "highly targeted" because the spyware appears in a "very limited" number of apps, Lookout wrote in July 2019. The apps that carry Monokle "include legitimate functionality, so user suspicion is not aroused," Lookout said.

According to Perviy Otdel, systems analyst Kirill Parubets may have been the first person to

uncover Monokle installed on his phone after FSB agents raided his apartment and seized his devices this spring.

The Canadian digital watchdog group Citizen Lab concluded the spyware on Parubets' phone was likely an upgraded version of Monokle.

Parubets faced up to life in prison on "treason" charges for donating to Ukrainian organizations after Russia invaded Ukraine in 2022.

Parubets told Perviy Otdel the FSB agents returned his devices after he agreed to supply information about his other anti-war friend they were interested in.

Instead, Parubets fled Russia with his wife and eventually discovered the spyware.

Perviy Otdel said it believes Monokle was installed on Parubets' phone to make sure he would not tip off his friend that they were also the target of the FSB's investigation.

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