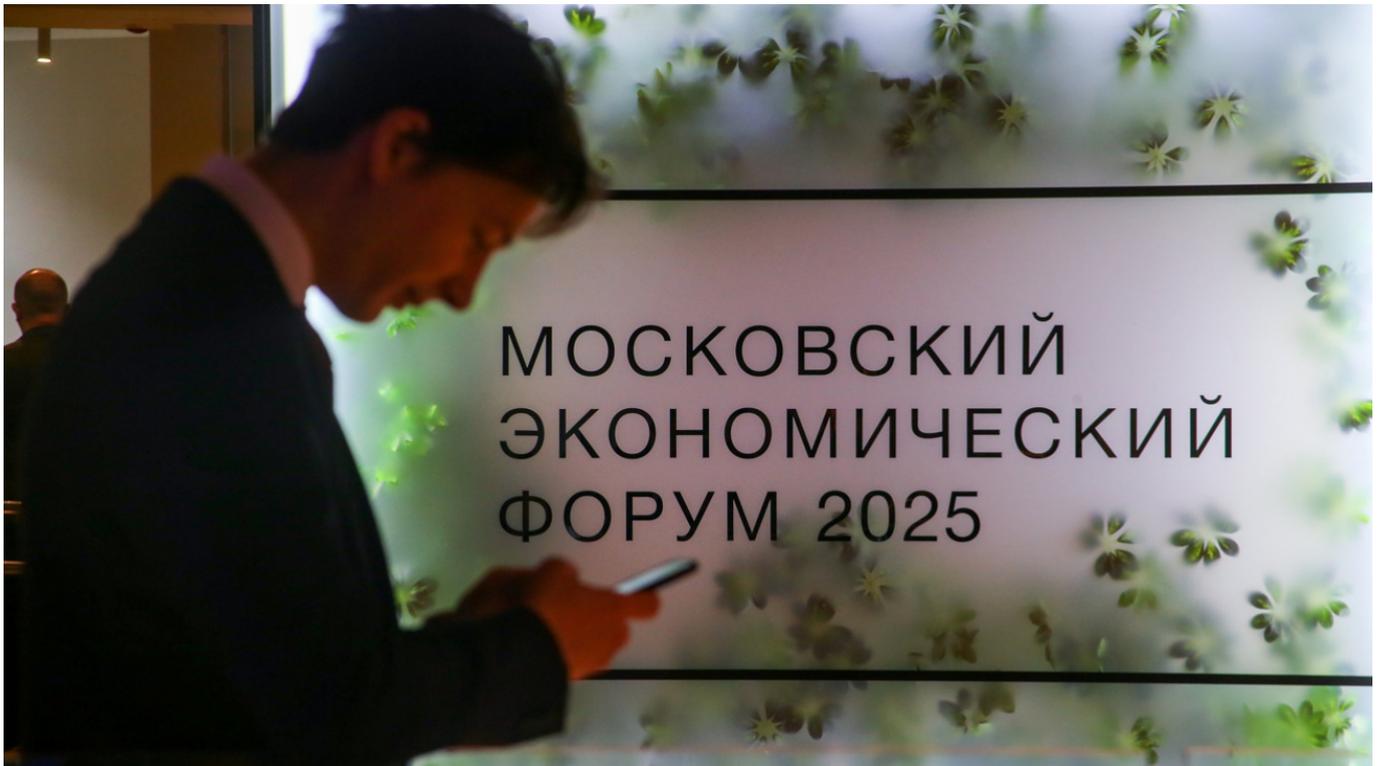


Putin Bans Government, Bank Employees From Using Foreign Messaging Apps

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Sergei Vedashkin / Moskva News Agency

President Vladimir Putin on Tuesday [ordered](#) sweeping measures against phone and internet scams, including a ban on government and bank employees from using foreign messaging apps.

Employees of government agencies, credit institutions and telecom operators will be barred from communicating via foreign messaging apps in an official capacity, according to Putin's order.

Putin instructed his government, the lower-house State Duma, the Federal Security Service (FSB) and the Central Bank to draft the appropriate legislative amendments by April 15.

The same entities, as well as Russia's Interior Ministry and Investigative Committee, were also ordered to propose the creation of a separate government agency tasked with combating

internet and telephone fraud by July 15.

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State communications watchdog Roskomnadzor was expected to compile a list of foreign messaging platforms to be banned under the amendments, the RBC news website [reported](#) in February, when the proposed ban was first being considered.

Around that time, Putin ordered security and law enforcement agencies to develop measures that would block “criminal calls” from Ukraine and other “unfriendly” countries, a designation that applies primarily to Western states.

In December, the Kremlin leader claimed that “Ukrainian phone scammers” had stolen more than 250 billion rubles (\$2.5 billion) from Russian citizens in 2024 alone and accused Kyiv of making phone fraud a part of “state policy.”

Interior Ministry data cited during Putin’s anti-scam meeting with officials last month said crimes involving information and communication technologies [rose](#) by 30% in 2023, totaling 677,000 cases. In 2024, these crimes increased by another 13%, totaling 765,000 cases.

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