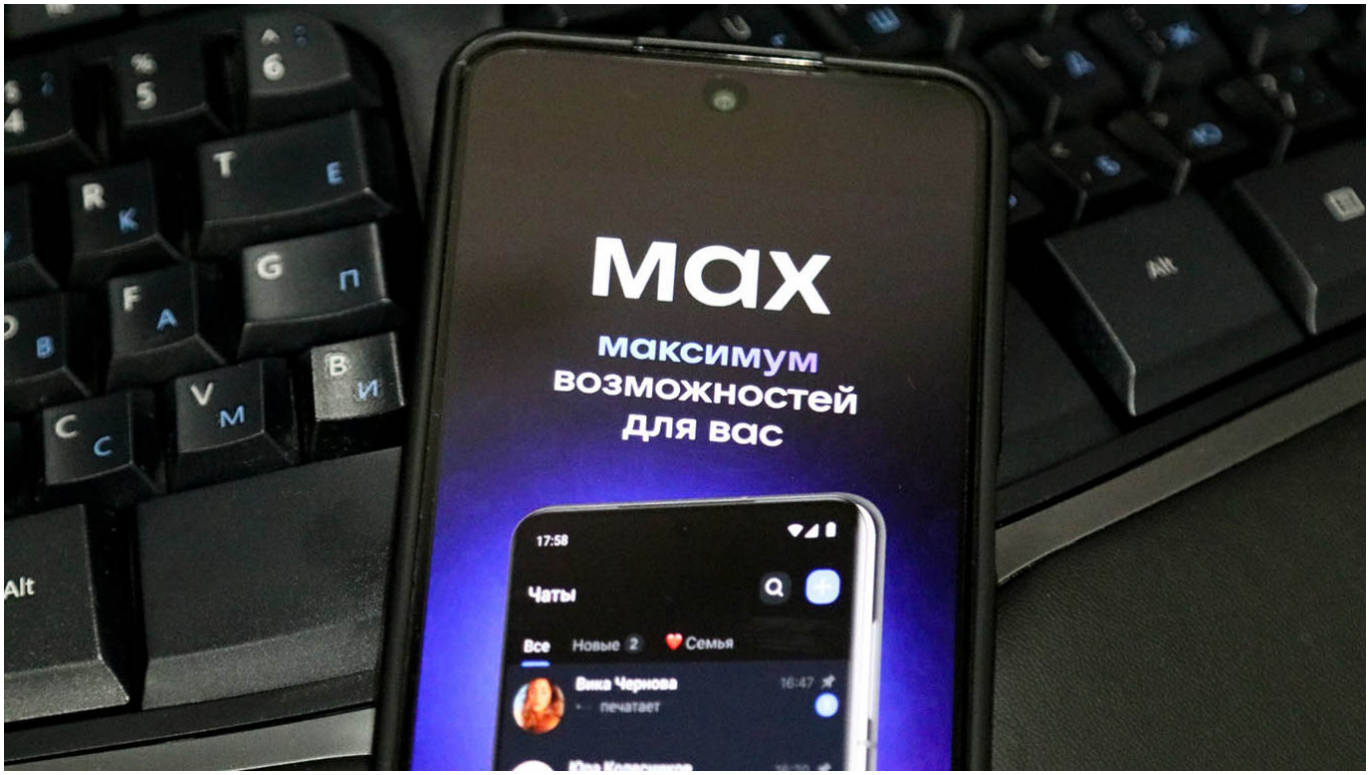
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Kremlin Orders Officials to Move Telegram Channels to Domestic Messaging App Max – Vyorstka

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Moskva News Agency

The Kremlin has ordered government officials and lawmakers to migrate their Telegram channels to domestic messaging app Max as it tightens restrictions on foreign services, the exiled news outlet Vyorstka reported Thursday.

The move is aimed at creating a "priority information system" on Max before the platform opens to the public, a source close to the presidential administration told Vyorstka.

Channels run by the State Duma, regional governors, local governments and prominent pro-Kremlin commentators are expected to launch on the app in the coming weeks.

Content will be curated by the state-backed nonprofit Dialog, which manages regional government communications centers.

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While officials will maintain their presence on other platforms including Telegram, Max channels have become mandatory for governors and for official work chats, a source in a Siberian region told Vyorstka.

State Duma Speaker Vyacheslav Volodin said that he had joined Max on Wednesday, saying the process was "no trouble at all."

The same day, Duma press officers told journalists that official comments would now be posted exclusively on Max and no longer on Telegram.

The directive comes as Russian authorities test curbs on foreign messaging apps.

According to Vyorstka, the Kremlin decided against immediately blocking Telegram and WhatsApp after consultations with the Digital Development Ministry and the Federal Security Service (FSB), instead starting with a ban on voice calls.

On Wednesday, state communications regulator Roskomnadzor said it was imposing "partial" restrictions on calls through both apps, citing citizen complaints that they had become "primary voice services" for scams, extortion and recruitment into sabotage or terrorism.

The Digital Development Ministry said calls on the apps could be restored if they comply with Russian law.

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