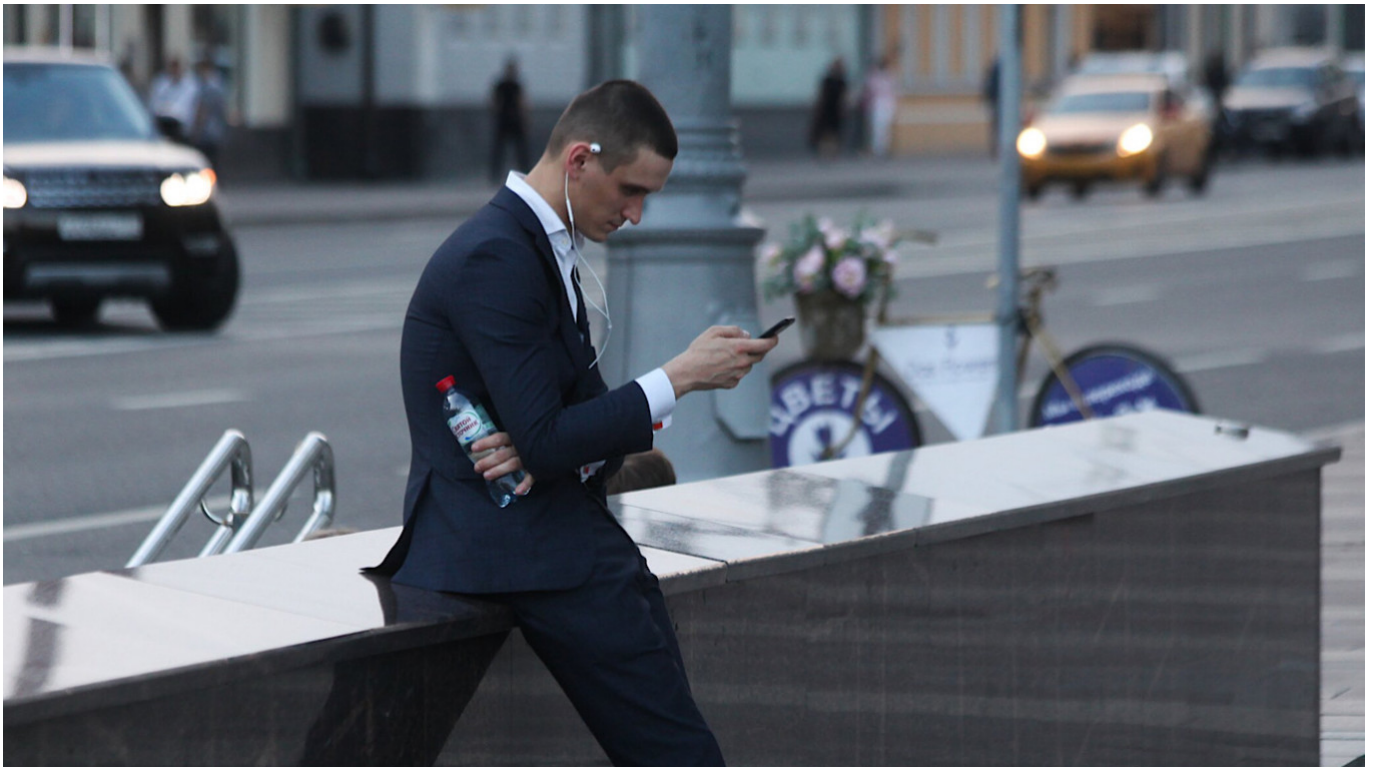


Russia Opens First Criminal Case Under New SIM Card Transfer Law

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Sergei Vedyashkin / Moskva News Agency

Russian police [said](#) Tuesday that they had opened the country's first criminal case over a violation of a new law that bans the transfer of mobile phone numbers to others.

The new regulation, introduced this year, prohibits individuals from handing over SIM cards or mobile phone numbers to anyone other than close family members. Authorities say the measure is aimed at curbing scams, spam and communication block bypasses with the anonymous use of rented out SIM cards.

Violations can lead to administrative fines and up to one year in prison for repeat offenders.

A resident of the northern Moscow suburb of Khmkhi was accused of using fake powers of attorney to sign mobile service contracts on behalf of various companies, according to an Interior Ministry statement.

The statement said the person, who was not identified by name, passed the SIM cards to

unspecified third parties in exchange for 9,000 rubles (\$111) per successfully signed contract. It was not specified what the SIM cards were subsequently used for.

An Interior Ministry video showed masked police officers breaking down an apartment door with a sledgehammer and pinning a man inside to the ground.

The statement also said that police seized smartphones, SIM cards and documents during the search and were in the process of identifying possible accomplices.

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