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After Expanding Online Control, Lawmaker Insists Russia Will Stay Connected to Global Web

November 11, 2025



Oleg Yolkov / TASS

A senior lawmaker in Russia's lower-house State Duma said Tuesday that the government has no plans to disconnect the country's internet from the global web following debate over a decree that grants new powers to state internet regulators.

The government decree, published last Thursday, expands Roskomnadzor's authority to isolate or reroute internet traffic inside Russia starting March 1, 2026, in case of "specific threats." These include large-scale outages, cyberattacks, critical infrastructure failure or loss of access to domestic or foreign networks.

The rules empower Roskmonadzor and the Ministry of Digital Development to issue binding orders to telecom operators, potentially allowing them to disconnect Russia from the global internet in an emergency. Russia's Federal Security Service (FSB) would also be involved in managing traffic isolation.

“No one is talking about cutting the Russian segment off from foreign services,” State Duma lawmaker and United Russia party member Sergei Boyarsky told the state-run news agency TASS.

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Boyarsky, who heads the Duma’s Committee on Information Policy, said authorities have learned to repel cyberattacks and “filter harmful content” while ensuring that “foreign resources familiar to Russians remain constantly accessible.”

His comments came after fellow State Duma lawmaker Alexei Chepa suggested that Russia could isolate its segment of the internet from the outside world in case of foreign interference in next year’s parliamentary elections.

Boyarsky insisted the newly published decree “merely updates” regulations first adopted in 2019 as part of Russia’s “sovereign internet” law, which aimed to protect domestic networks from external threats.

IT experts and digital rights advocates also downplayed the changes, saying the decree codifies what Roskomnadzor already does in practice.

These rules governing how mobile operators act in emergencies have existed for several years, and “nothing changes for customers,” a representative from Beeline, one of Russia’s leading internet and phone operators, told media on Sunday.

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