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Roskomnadzor Accuses Telegram of Enabling Black Market of Personal Data

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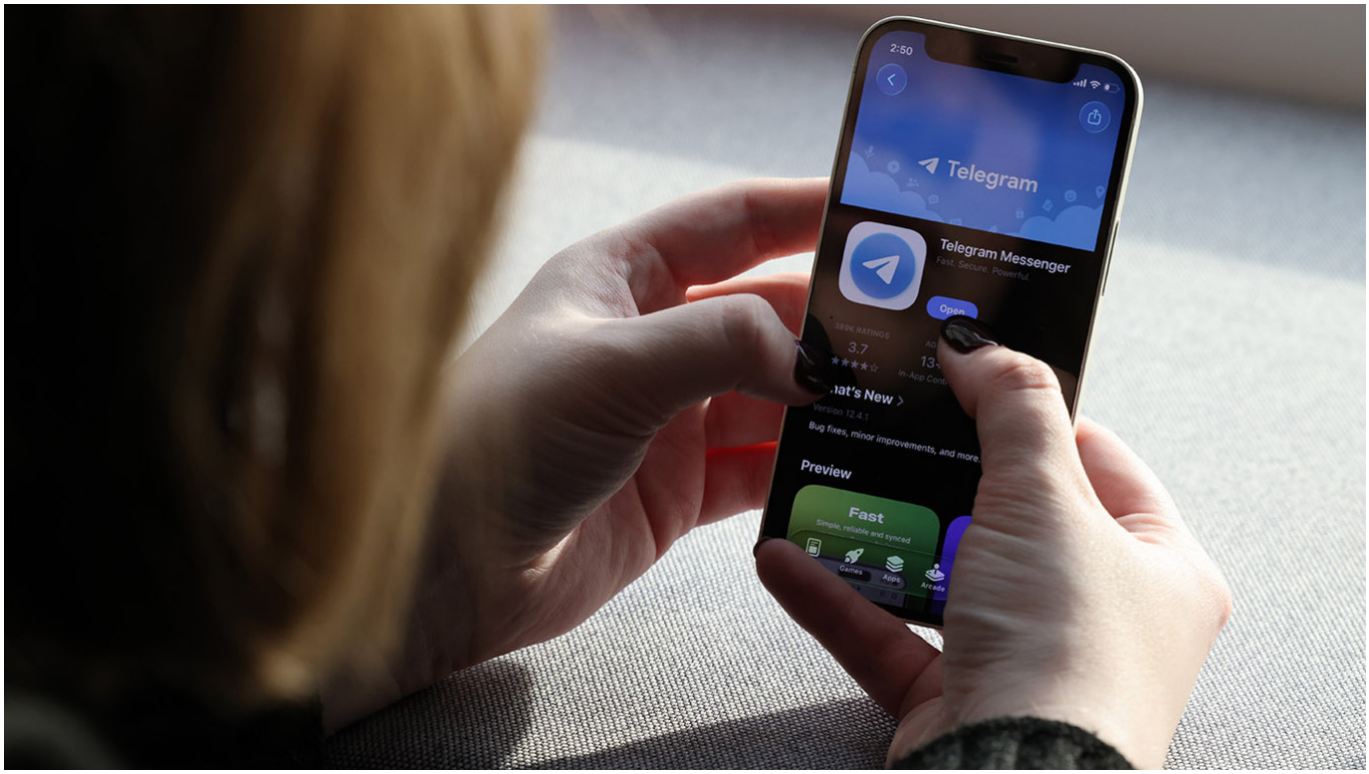

Anastasia Romanova / Paragraph / TASS

Russia's state media regulator has accused Telegram of failing to crack down on third-party services that gather and sell the personal data of Russians, the latest in a growing list of allegations that authorities in Moscow have leveled against the company as they ramp up restrictions against the messaging platform.

Roskomnadzor claimed Friday that the popular app has created and "systematically maintains" digital infrastructure that allows users to "access stolen personal information" through third parties.

"Telegram has deleted up to 100 of these services each week in 2026, but the situation does not fundamentally change as new bots for searching personal data continue to appear," Roskomnadzor said.

It said up to 8,400 such services have been removed since 2022.

In a statement to the news outlet RBC, Roskomnadzor demanded that Telegram remove third-party services that gather and sell personal data of Russians and "stop providing them with the infrastructure" to commit crimes.

Telegram has around 90 million users in Russia.

Related article: As Kremlin Throttles Telegram, Russians Stand to Lose More Than Just Messaging

Roskomnadzor announced new restrictions on Telegram last week that appeared to significantly hinder the ability of users to access media content such as voice notes, videos and images. Authorities had earlier restricted voice and video calls on Telegram, as well as on WhatsApp, which has over 100 million users in Russia.

A Moscow court last Wednesday ordered Telegram to pay a fine of 10.8 million rubles ($14,000) after it was found guilty of failing to remove content banned in Russia.

Digital Development Minister Maksut Shadayev claimed this week that foreign intelligence services gained covert access to Telegram messages sent by Russian soldiers in Ukraine, a charge that Telegram rejected as "deliberate fabrication."

On Thursday, the head of Russia's FSB security service, Alexander Bortnikov, accused Telegram founder Pavel Durov of "pursuing selfish interests" and condoning crimes like terrorism, sabotage and juvenile delinquency.

Bortnikov said previous talks with Durvov had led nowhere.

Telegram said the new curbs were "intended to justify outlawing" the app so that Russians would be forced to switch to the state-backed messenger called Max, which critics say was created for mass surveillance and censorship.

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