

Satellite Failure Disrupts TV Service for Russian Providers

March 11, 2026



Yevgeny Leonov / TASS

An unexpected failure of a Russian telecoms satellite last week has left millions of households without television service and forced major providers to seek emergency help from foreign operators.

The state-owned Russian Satellite Communications Company (RSCC) [said](#) its Express-AT1 satellite abruptly stopped functioning on March 4 for unknown reasons.

Industry analysts estimate the outage may have affected around 5 million people and exposed RSCC's lack of a backup satellite for the service, the RBC news outlet [reported](#). The company operates 12 satellites that transmit more than 1,100 television channels.

Launched in 2014 and designed to operate until around 2030, Express-AT1 carried signals for at least three major satellite television providers — NTV Plus, Tri kolor and Russkiy Mir (“Russian World”), all of which serve viewers across Russia’s 11 time zones.

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Trikolor [said](#) it had begun negotiations with the Moscow-based international space communications organization Intersputnik to lease capacity on another satellite. NTV Plus [said](#) it had temporarily granted affected customers free access to digital channels, while Russkiy Mir lost access to its only satellite.

RSCC has opened bidding to build a replacement satellite, Express-AT3, which it expects to launch into service in late 2030.

The company said some customers will regain service after equipment is reconfigured to operate at a different orbital position, while others may face outages lasting up to a month.

A telecoms industry source [told](#) the business newspaper Kommersant that the sudden failure of Express-AT1 could have been caused by anything from an external impact to a cyberattack.

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