

# Zelensky Says Ukraine Targeting Kremlin-Backed Messaging App Max

March 20, 2026



Volodymyr Zelensky. [president.gov.ua](https://www.president.gov.ua)

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said Friday that his country is working to infiltrate the Russian state-backed messaging app Max.

Russia's media regulator Roskomnadzor has spent months restricting features on Telegram and WhatsApp, the country's two most widely used messaging services, in an apparent effort to force Russians to switch to Max.

Zelensky said both Ukrainian and Russian intelligence services use Telegram to recruit individuals and shape narratives about the war.

"With the restrictions on Telegram in Russia, it will certainly be more difficult to transmit signals to their society," Zelensky told reporters.

"Nonetheless, I had a report about their new network, Max. We'll get to Max as well," he added, without elaborating.

**Related article:** [Everything You Need to Know About Max, Russia's State-Backed Answer to WhatsApp](#)

People across Russia began reporting problems accessing Telegram last weekend, raising speculation among tech industry experts that the government may have already moved to block the messaging app ahead of an anticipated crackdown next month.

Authorities in Moscow argue that their clampdown on Telegram and WhatsApp is based on security concerns as the country faces an increasing number of attacks blamed on Ukraine and its Western allies.

Access to Max is currently restricted to Russian citizens with domestic phone numbers and users from countries deemed “friendly” to the Kremlin.

*AFP contributed reporting.*

Original url:

<https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2026/03/20/zelensky-says-ukraine-targeting-kremlin-backed-messaging-app-max-a92287>