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Putin Orders FSB and Government to Make 'Critical Services' Available During Internet Outages

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Alexander Avilov / Moskva News Agency

President Vladimir Putin has ordered the Russian government and the FSB security service to ensure that critical online services remain accessible during mobile internet outages.

In a list of directives published on the Kremlin's website this weekend, Putin mandated that access to healthcare platforms, the Gosuslugi government services portal and electronic payment networks must remain available while broader network restrictions are in place.

Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin and FSB Director Alexander Bortnikov were instructed to submit progress reports to Putin by July 1.

The president's directive follows a cabinet session in April, during which he addressed the country's internet blackouts for the first time, defending them as a critical security defense against "terrorist attacks."

At the time, Putin had ordered the Digital Development Ministry and the security services to cooperate on ensuring the uninterrupted work of a so-called "white list" of online services. The registry, which includes the government-backed messenger Max, state news agencies and major banks, is designed to remain functional while the rest of the web goes dark.

While online restrictions have become common since the full-scale invasion of Ukraine, outages have intensified in recent months, with monitoring groups saying dozens of regions throughout the country now face daily internet disruptions.

Independent Russian media reported earlier this year that the FSB has been behind many of the new internet controls, including restricting functions on Telegram and WhatsApp, as well as a crackdown on the use of virtual private networks, or VPNs.

On Monday, the Kremlin called Putin's latest directive an "ongoing refinement and expansion of our white list."

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