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Russian Security Council Calls for Rapid Deployment of Starlink Rival Satellites

By Reuters

November 06, 2026



Ukrainian servicemen set up Starlink satellite internet system near the frontline town of Pokrovsk.
REUTERS / Inna Varenytsia

Experts on Russia's Security Council warned Friday that Russia needs to urgently expand its homegrown equivalent to Starlink, warning that Elon Musk's satellite network could be used to destabilize countries throughout the world.

In a statement cited by state media, the Security Council said "it is necessary to rapidly scale up the mass production of communications satellites and terminal equipment," referring to Russia's Rassvet low-Earth orbit satellite network.

Digital Development Minister Maksut Shadayev told President Vladimir Putin last month that Russia has so far launched just over 30 satellites as part of Rassvet. In comparison, Starlink has more than 10,000 active satellites.

On Friday, Russia's Security Council held a meeting of its expert council to discuss issues related to information security and internet access.

"During the meeting, the main risks and threats posed by the use of Western space-based communications systems over the territory of sovereign states to destabilize the socio-political situation were highlighted," it said in its statement.

"This applies, first and foremost, to the widely used satellite communications services Starlink and OneWeb," it added.

Just days ago, Putin praised Elon Musk as a "real genius" for developing Starlink. Ukraine's army has used the military version of the satellite internet network throughout the war with Russia for drone operations and battlefield communications.

Dmitry Medvedev, who serves as deputy chairman of Russia's Security Council, criticized Musk on Friday for allowing Ukraine to use Starlink.

Ukraine said that Russia is already employing its new Rassvet satellite network for military communications in Ukraine.

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