



Russia Blocks Access to Facebook as Media Companies Crack Down

Roskomnadzor, Russia's communications regulator, said it will be [completely blocking Facebook](#) after partially restricting the social network a week ago.

This comes after Facebook's parent company, Meta, restricted access to Russian media accounts — a move Moscow said violated “fundamental human rights and freedoms, as well as the rights and freedoms of Russian citizens.”

In a Friday [blog post](#), Roskomnadzor said Facebook restricted the Zvezda TV channel, the RIA Novosti news agency, Sputnik, Russia Today, and the Lenta.ru and Gazeta.ru information resources.



Georgijevic/E+/Getty Images

According to Russia, the country's laws prohibit efforts to prevent users' access to Russian media on foreign Internet platforms.

Meta's president of global affairs said in a Friday statement that “soon millions of ordinary Russians will find themselves cut off from reliable information, deprived of their everyday ways of connecting with family and friends and silence from speaking out.”

Also Friday, White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki said the Biden administration is “deeply concerned ... about the threat to freedom of speech” in Russia and the “crack down on any form of information being shared with their public.”

Additionally, Russian lawmakers approved legislation threatening to imprison journalists and individuals for up to 15 years if they publish what Moscow deems to be “fake” information about the invasion of Ukraine.

Silicon Valley firms have been limiting the circulation of Russian state-aligned media. Meta curtailed access on its platforms across the EU last week after the European Commission said it will ban “the Kremlin's media machine.” The company also began demoting content linking to Russian state media outlets on Facebook and Instagram globally.

Meta, along with Google, Microsoft, and Twitter, have complied with the region's Russia state media ban and have restricted Russian state media from purchasing ads globally.

Axios [notes](#):

TV distributors in the U.S. are facing pressure to remove Russian state media from their platforms, though they largely haven't done so yet.

Roku is removing RT in Europe from the Roku Channel store.

Dish said in a statement “Our thoughts are with all the people of Ukraine, and particularly



Written by [Luis Miguel](#) on March 6, 2022

with our team members in the country. We are closely monitoring the situation.”

DirecTV, which also carries the network, did not respond to request for comment.

Film studios are also [taking aim at Russia](#), with big names like Disney, Warner Bros., and Sony canceling releases of their new films in the country.

Disney, for example, said it will not debut the new Pixar film *Turning Red* in Russia, while Warner Bros. is pausing release of *The Batman* and Sony is withholding the Marvel film *Morbius*. Paramount’s *The Lost City* and *Sonic the Hedgehog 2* will also be withheld from the Russian market.

“We will make future business decisions based on the evolving situation,” Disney said in a statement last week. “In the meantime, given the scale of the emerging refugee crises, we are working with our NGO partners to provide urgent aid and other humanitarian assistance to refugees.”

“Russia has, at times, been a very relevant piece of the international box office picture,” said Shawn Robbins, chief analyst at Boxoffice.com. “But the humanitarian crisis resulting from current developments is emerging as a clear consideration for Hollywood distributors in such a challenging and tragic geopolitical environment.”

Spider-Man: No Way Home, a co-production with Sony, earned more than \$50 million in the country.

“The Motion Picture Association stands with the international community in upholding the rule of law and condemning Russia’s invasion of Ukraine,” the Motion Picture Association said in a statement last Monday. “On behalf of our member companies, who lead the film, TV and streaming industry, we express our strongest support for Ukraine’s vibrant creative community who, like all people, deserve to live and work peacefully.”

Sports organizations are also getting involved. Federation Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) joined the Union of European Football Associations to declare it would bar Russian teams from events, including the 2022 World Cup in Qatar, until further notice.

Even the National Hockey League, which has over two dozen Russian-born hockey players, has suspended agreements with Russian companies. And the International Olympic Committee has floated banning Russian teams for violating the “Olympic Truce.”

While these declarations may make headlines, is the loss of these companies likely to sway a government that has long been trying to purge its society of their influence? If anything, Putin may feel they’re doing him a favor.



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