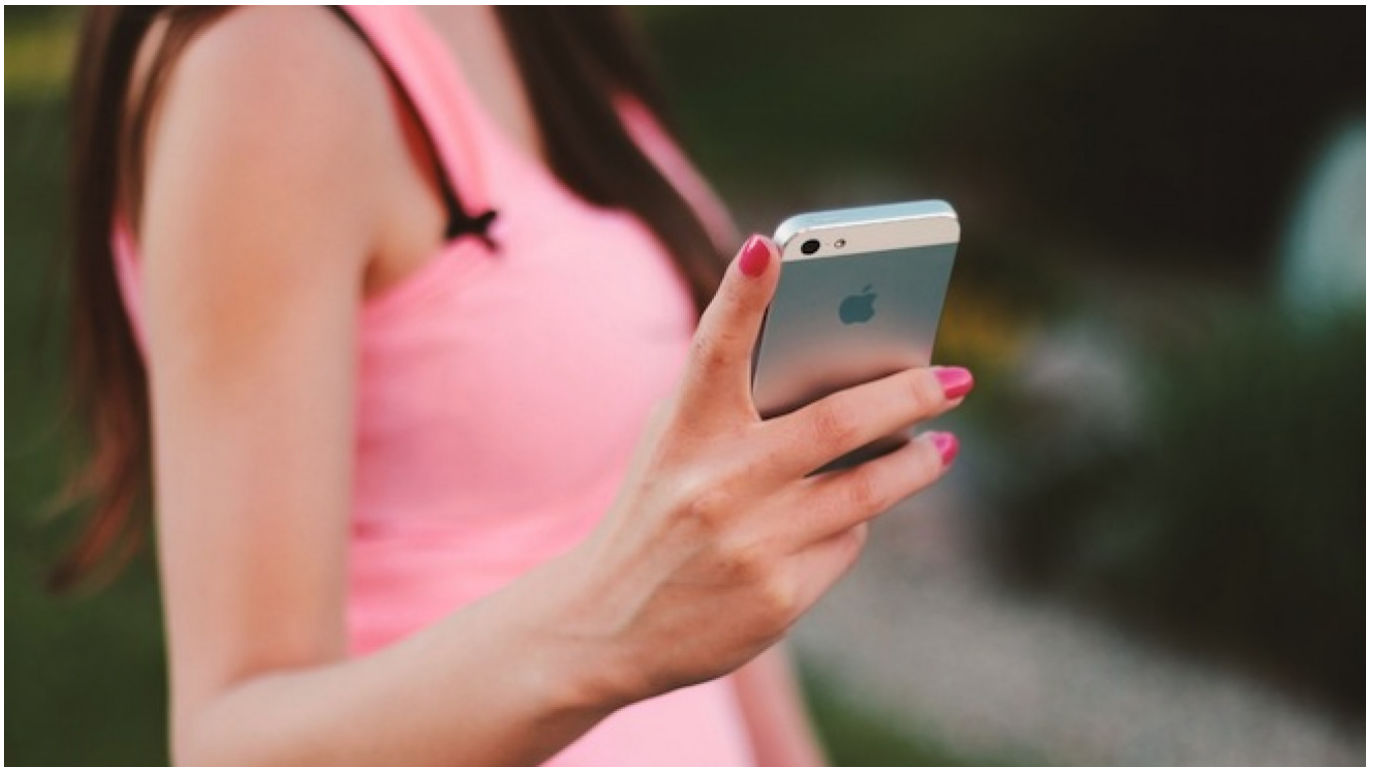


# Apple Ditches Developers in Crimea Over Sanctions

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Apple sent notices of termination to software developers whose accounts are registered in Crimea, preventing them from creating or uploading apps onto Apple's online store.

Apple has reportedly severed ties with Crimea-based app developers in connection with a recent wave of Western sanctions imposed against Russia, the Interfax news agency reported Monday, citing a Crimean programmer.

The news comes one month after the U.S. and European Union imposed harsher economic sanctions against Russia by prohibiting their nationals and corporations from conducting business in the contested region of Crimea, which Russia annexed from Ukraine in March.

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The American multinational corporation's alleged termination notices, leaked to the Russian media, also demand that developers cease using Apple software and destroy materials related to its use, citing "new sanctions" announced by the U.S. government and the European Commission in December as the basis for the measure.

The apps created by Crimean software developers have also been deleted from the App Store, according to Crimean programmer Maxim Serdyuk, as quoted by Interfax.

Apple could not immediately be reached for comment.

An executive order issued by U.S. President Barack Obama on Dec. 19 prohibits the "direct and indirect" importation of goods, services and technology from Crimea to the United States, as well of the supply of U.S. goods and services to the region.

It remains unclear whether Apple users among Crimea's programmers could regain access to the company's software if they were to register their addresses in mainland Russia or Ukraine.

American video game company Valve has also reportedly barred Crimeans from purchasing its Steam digital distribution platform products, according to posts on social network VKontakte by the products' consumers.

Apple made headlines in Russia last month after it temporarily closed its online store to Russian Internet users amid efforts to adjust to the ruble's plunge.

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