

Russia's Internet Freedom Deteriorates to a 'Not Free' Rating

October 29, 2015



Internet freedom has deteriorated worldwide this year, according to the Freedom House report.

Internet freedom in Russia has deteriorated this year, according to ratings by the Freedom House monitoring organization, dropping to "not free" in 2015 from "partly free" in 2014.

Russia scored 62 this year in the ratings released Wednesday by the U.S.-based nongovernmental organization, compared to 60 last year. The scale runs from 0, or complete freedom, to 100, or total government oppression.

Factors contributing to the deterioration of online freedom in Russia included a law, signed by President Vladimir Putin in late 2013, that allows the government to blacklist websites deemed to contain extremist content or calls for unauthorized rallies. As well as violence against online journalists, there is another new law requiring popular bloggers to register with the government as media outlets, Freedom House said in its report.

"Russia's environment for Internet freedom declined significantly as the government took multiple steps to increase control over the online sphere, particularly in advance of the Sochi

Olympic Games in February 2014 and throughout the ongoing crises in Crimea and eastern Ukraine," the report said.

Ukraine scored 37, or "partially free," this year, amid the conflict between Moscow-backed separatists in the east and Kiev government forces.

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