

First Tech Firm Announces Russia Exit Due to New Anti-Terror Laws

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VPN service Private Internet Access (PIA) has announced that it will leave the Russian market due to new anti-terrorism laws.

PIA's VPN service allows users to encrypt their online traffic and avoid regional Internet restrictions. Under anti-terrorist legislation put forward by ultraconservative United Russian lawmaker Irina Yarovaya and signed by President Vladimir Putin last week, such services are required to decode their users' data at the request of the Russian Security Services (FSB.) Communications companies are also required to record users' data, with all photo and video messages to be stored for six months.

A fine of up to 1 million rubles (\$15,700) can be given to businesses who refuse to comply with the legislation. PIA is the first company of its kind to withdraw from Russia as a result of the new laws.

“The Russian Government has passed a new law that mandates that every provider must log all Russian internet traffic for up to a year,” the company wrote in a statement on its website

Monday. “We believe that due to the enforcement regime surrounding this new law, some of our Russian Servers were recently seized by the Russian authorities, without notice or any type of due process.

“Upon learning of the above, we immediately discontinued our Russian gateways and will no longer be doing business in the region.”

PIA also reassured its users that their data had not been compromised.

A number of businesses have voiced concerns over the legislation, with Russia's four major mobile operators — MTS, Beeline, MegaFon and Tele2 — claiming that implementing the measures will cost 2.2 trillion rubles (\$33.8 billion).

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