

# Net Freedom Endangered by Russian Internet Blacklist Bill

by [David Sohn](#) [1]  
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## [UPDATE BELOW](#)

Just one week after the Human Rights Council [reaffirmed](#) [2] in a [resolution](#) [3] that the guarantee of freedom of expression contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights applies with full force to the Internet, Russia is threatening to move in the opposite direction. [Reports](#) [4] [indicate](#) [5] that Russia is actively considering legislation, [Duma Bill 89417-6](#) [6], that would create a unified "blacklist" of government-banned websites. We don't have all the details at this time, but reports suggest that a variety of entities, from ISPs to web hosts, might be required to take action to block access to the blacklisted sites, under threat of liability or even being added to the blacklist itself.

Reminiscent of the [uprising](#) [7] against SOPA/PIPA in the United States, [Russian Wikipedia](#) [8], [LiveJournal](#) [9] and [other sites](#) [10] today are [staging](#) [11] protests on their services ahead of a key vote on the legislation tomorrow. Russian journalists, lawyers, and bloggers have also [criticized](#) [12] the proposal as vague and potentially enabling abuse that could sweep in lawful expression and restrict access to online communications tools.

It's hard to overstate how troubling this is for free expression—so troubling, in fact, that Russia's own Presidential Council for Civil Society and Human Rights [characterizes](#) [13] the proposal as "the introduction of real censorship" on the Russian segment of the Internet, and also observes that it will significantly impair the network's speed and reliability. As CDT has described in connection with previous proposals in the United States, from [Pennsylvania's ill-fated state-level website blocking statute](#) [14] to the [recent battle over SOPA and PIPA](#) [15] in Congress, [government-mandated website blocking](#) [16] is inevitably overbroad, impairing lawful expression along with the unlawful; carries significant costs for the technical operation of the Internet; may undermine user privacy; and isn't even effective at achieving its stated aims.

The Russian Parliament should take note: this is a dangerous proposal that needs to be stopped in its tracks. We at CDT stand in solidarity with those in Russia who are speaking out against this bill, and urge others who support net freedom—including the signatories to the [Declaration of Internet Freedom](#) [17] released [last week](#) [18]—to do the same.

## **UPDATE - July 11th**

In what has been [reported](#) [19] as a process with "next to no debate or public discussion," the Russian parliament passed Duma Bill 89417-6 today. According to [RIA Novosti](#) [20], the bill is expected to enter the upper house for a vote and could become law in January.

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## **Links:**

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