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Apple faces US govt probe over performance-destroying iPhone update – reports

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The US government has reportedly opened up an investigation into tech giant Apple amid a torrent of lawsuits alleging the company used an iPhone update to intentionally slow down older models.

According to Bloomberg News, citing sources with knowledge of the matter, the US Department of Justice and the Securities and Exchange Commission have requested information from Apple as part of a probe into whether or not the company's not-so-helpful update violated securities laws. The inquiry is still in its early stages, according to the sources.

While consumers and even foreign governments – French authorities launched an investigation of their own in early January – have cried foul over the company's "planned obsolescence," the US government probe will focus on whether Apple misled investors about the performance of older phones.

In a statement released on Tuesday, Apple confirmed that it had received questions from US government agencies and was in the process of responding to them.

Apple apologized for the year-old update in December, insisting that the company would "never do anything to intentionally shorten the life of any Apple product, or degrade the user experience to drive customer upgrades."

However, the company's admission that its so-called "update" had damaged the performance and battery life of older iPhone models triggered an avalanche of lawsuits from outraged consumers.

Aside from more than nine lawsuits underway in the United States, the company also faces legal battles in France, Russia and Israel.