

Moscow has noticed US attempts to meddle in Russian election process – foreign ministry

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Moscow has seen attempts to meddle in the Russian elections coming from the US, a senior Russian diplomat said. It comes as Google is suspected of possibly violating the law by selling political ads for unsanctioned rally.

Andrey Nesterenko, a senior Russian diplomat, said the US “*certainly does*” attempt to meddle in the Russian electoral processes, Interfax reported. He was speaking after a briefing on the issue.

*“Our collective opinion is that electoral sovereignty is a principle that all civilized nations should respect,”* the diplomat said, adding that Moscow will notify “*our American partners that the actions of their media outlets allow us to state that they are close to breaking Russian law.*”

Read more [US meddles in Russian affairs by trying to turn our citizens into informants – Kremlin](#)



On Sunday, several Russian regions, including Moscow, will hold elections. Opposition leader Aleksey Navalny is calling for protests to denounce the plebiscite, which he calls biased. Among other ways to spread the word about the event, Navalny's public movement is using paid ads on Google services like YouTube. Holding an event dedicated to an election campaign on the exact day of the election is banned by Russian law.

The Russian Central Election Commission, media watchdog Roskomnadzor (RKN), and the Russian Anti-monopoly Service (FAS) earlier notified Google that its platform is being used to conduct improper political activities in Russia.

*"Living in a proper law-abiding nation, we expect every actor to play by the rules. Especially an informed player. If the opposite happens, I believe we have tools at our disposal [to address that]," Andrey Kashevarov, the deputy head of FAS, said.*

Vadim Subbotin, the deputy head of RKN, said YouTube ads *"serve as a conduit for incitement of anti-social behavior during the election campaign."* He said Google and other social media platforms *"offer virtually unrestricted instruments" to "individuals seeking to destabilize the situation in Russia."*

The accusations from Moscow come shortly after the revelation that the FBI had unsuccessfully tried to recruit several Russian billionaires as informants. The US agency hoped people such as tycoon Oleg Deripaska could provide insider information about alleged Russian meddling in the 2016 US election, among other things, according to the New York Times. Moscow, which denies interfering in the US election, said the report confirms the US' duplicity in the matter, demonstrating that it was meddling in Russia's domestic affairs.

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