From the Arab Spring to Russian censorship: a decade of internet blackouts and repression | Rest of World

By Peter Guest
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Special operation and peace

On February 27, a few days after Russia invaded Ukraine, radio journalist Valerii Nechay returned to St. Petersburg from a trip to the North Caucasus to find three men in his apartment. Wearing masks to disguise their features, they told him that if he wanted his mother to be left unharmed, he should leave the country.

They needn't have bothered. Nechay already had a one-way ticket booked to Yerevan, the capital of Armenia. "It actually just helped me to pack my bags much quicker," he said. From Armenia, he traveled on to Georgia and then on again. *Rest of World* agreed not to disclose his current location, out of concern for his safety.

For nearly two decades, Nechay has worked for the radio station Echo of Moscow, which has broadcast political talk shows and news since 1990. Soon after the invasion of Ukraine began, the station was told, like all media in Russia, to stop calling the war a war.

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