

Apple Pay closes loophole that allowed Russian users to pay with Mir cards

Apple Pay will no longer support Russian card payment system Mir, closing a loophole that let Russians continue to use the service amid economic sanctions put on the country, according to a report from *Reuters*.

“Apple has informed NSPK [Russia’s National Payment Card System] that it is suspending support of ‘Mir’ cards in the payment service Apple Pay,” a translated announcement on Mir’s site reads. “Since March 24, uploading new ‘Mir’ cards to the service has been unavailable.” The company also notes any Mir cards previously added to Apple Pay will stop working over “the next few days.” Apple Pay first added support for Mir cards last year.

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According to *The Guardian*, Mir is owned by the Central Bank of Russia and was established in response to the economic sanctions put on Russia after it annexed Crimea in 2014. Statistics from the Central Bank say Mir cards make up around 32 percent of all new cards issued in the country.

Google is also taking steps to cut ties with Mir, the *WSJ* reports. The company reportedly paused a pilot program – which began last October – that let users connect their Mir cards to Google Pay. “Google Pay is pausing payments-related services in Russia as a result of payment services disruption out of our control,” a Google spokesperson said in a statement to the *WSJ*.

The Verge reached out to Google and Apple with a request for comment but didn't immediately hear back.

Many Russian users have been cut off from Apple Pay and Google Pay after several countries imposed financial sanctions on Russia's major banks, including VTB Group, Sovcombank, Novikombank, Promsvyazbank, and Otkritie FC Bank. Earlier this month, Visa and MasterCard suspended their operations in Russia, blocking Russians from using their credit or debit cards outside the country or for international online payments.

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