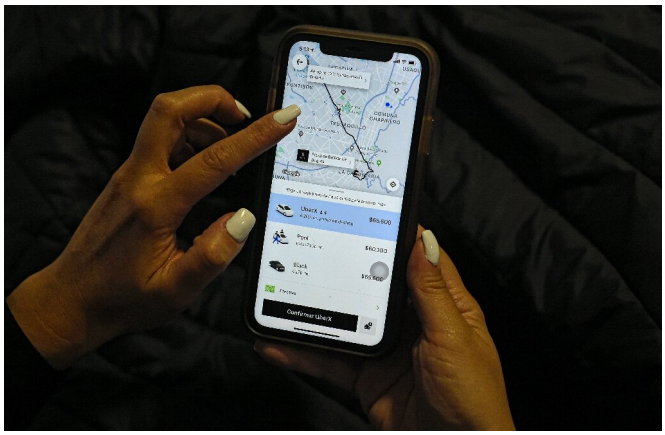
Colombia orders Uber to suspend app services

21 December 2019



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Uber has been told to immediately suspend its ride-sharing services in Colombia, the industry and commerce authority announced Friday, citing unfair competition laws.

The US tech giant has around two million active users in the country, and roughly 88,000 drivers.

The ruling, which is subject to an appeal, follows a lawsuit by a group of taxi drivers who accuse the company of unfair business practices.

The head of the Industry and Commerce department—which regulates the market—said that the company must cease operation immediately, citing "unfair competition" and a "significant advantage" over older and more traditional taxi services.

The "effects (of the measure) are immediately fulfilled," they added.

In a statement, the US firm regretted and rejected the ruling, which it "appealed immediately."

Although Uber was allowed to operate in Colombia by the Ministry of Information Technology and Communications and pays tax as a result, the use of drivers to transport passengers is illegal and the police are able to sanction drivers using the app.

Uber—founded in 2009—arrived in Colombia in 2013 but taxi owners and unions have repeatedly protested in the streets against Uber and similar competitors, who they claim steal their work.

Protests have also been held in other cities, where pressure has even led to the withdrawal of these applications. For example, Uber does not operate in Catalonia, Bulgaria, Hungary, Denmark and northern Australia.

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