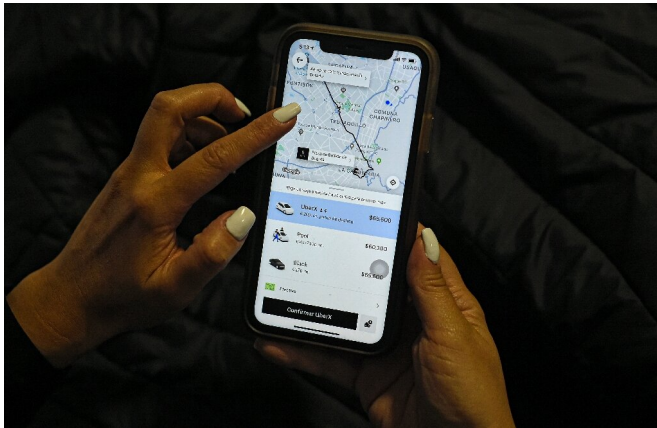


Uber reactivates Colombia service after three-week hiatus

20 February 2020



A woman checks the Uber transport application on her mobile phone after authorities ordered its suspension in Colombia, in Bogota on December 20, 2019

Transport platform Uber restarted its operations in Colombia on Thursday following a three-week suspension after it lost a case brought by taxi drivers for unfair business practices.

The US giant suspended its service on February 1 after the Industry and Commerce department (SIC) said it was benefitting from "[unfair competition](#)" and a "significant advantage" over older and more traditional taxi services.

"From 8:00 am on February 20, an alternative to the Uber application began working in Colombia," the company said in a statement.

The new model requires users to subscribe to a 17-point contract needed to apply for a [transport service](#).

"The model will allow (users) to rent a vehicle with a driver" through a contract between a lessor and a lessee, the statement said.

A Uber spokesperson told AFP this measure was "temporary" and aimed at "reducing the damage caused by the SIC's verdict."

Deputy Transport Minister Juan Camilo Ostos told W Radio the government would "analyze the [regulatory framework](#) upon which (Uber) is basing" its reactivation.

Uber, which has around two million active users and 88,000 drivers in Colombia, had described the initial ruling against it as "arbitrary" and said it violated "due process and constitutional rights."

It appealed the verdict and the case was passed to Bogota's supreme court. A final verdict is expected in the next year or two.

In the meantime, Uber has the right to continue its operations, according to a regulatory authority source.

Uber said it would seek \$250 million in damages from Colombia in international arbitration, without specifying what body it would appeal to.

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

Similar protests have been held in other cities, where pressure has even led to the withdrawal of these applications. For example, Uber does not operate in Spain's northeast Catalonia region, Bulgaria, Hungary, Denmark or northern Australia.

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