

# Bill on New Investigative Body Sent to Duma

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President Dmitry Medvedev has signed a decree separating the Investigative Committee from the Prosecutor General's Office and sent a bill regulating the new agency's work to the State Duma, the Kremlin's press service said Monday.

The new investigative body, which will retain the same functions as the committee that was part of the Prosecutor General's Office, will have a staff of 21,156 officers, the decree says. The committee had 20,000 employees in 2009.

There will be no staff reshuffles within the agency until the bill is adopted, committee spokesman Vladimir Markin told Itar-Tass on Monday.

The Duma will approve the bill in all three required readings before year's end, said Vladimir Kolesnikov, deputy head of the Duma's Security Committee, RIA-Novosti reported.

Since its creation in fall 2007, the Investigative Committee, headed by Alexander Bastrykin, a close ally of Prime Minister Vladimir Putin, has been fighting for independence from the

prosecutor's office. Medvedev announced his plans to separate the two agencies last Thursday.

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