The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Kremlin Won’t Probe Incomes

By Alexandra Taranova

November 18, 2010



The Kremlin has refused to investigate disputed income declarations from several State Duma deputies, saying they are not specified as officials in a presidential anti-corruption decree.

Opposition Yabloko party leader Sergei Mitrokhin, who appealed to the Kremlin to investigate the income declarations earlier this fall, criticized the Kremlin's rational as "artificial" on Thursday.

"The presidential administration has showed that this issue is extremely uncomfortable for them," Mitrokhin said by telephone.

He said the Kremlin had redirected his request to the Federal Tax Service and to the Duma's ethics committee.

On Sept. 23, Mitrokhin and the Russian office of the Transparency International anti-corruption watchdog petitioned Kremlin chief of staff Sergei Naryshkin to review the income declarations of Duma Speaker Boris Gryzlov of United Russia, Liberal Democrat Ashot

Yegiazaryan and Communist Sergei Levchenko. On Oct. 4, the petitioners submitted a second letter, urging Naryshkin to review the declarations of five additional lawmakers, all from United Russia.

The appeals noted that the lawmakers' declared assets were not compatible with their modest incomes for the year.

President Dmitry Medvedev in spring 2009 ordered all top officials to declare their incomes, and in fall 2009 authorized the Kremlin directorate for state service and the Cabinet chief of staff to open reviews of income declarations at the request of political parties and nongovernmental organizations.

"The refusal [to check the declaration] does not confirm the seriousness of the real fight against corruption," Mitrokhin said.

Russia is ranked a low 154th place among 178 countries on Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index.

On Nov. 6, Investigative Committee opened a $65 million fraud case against Yegiazaryan after the Duma lifted his immunity from prosecution. Yegiazaryan, who reportedly has fled to Britain, has denied wrongdoing.

Original url: https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2010/11/18/kremlin-wont-probe-incomes-a3089