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Deputy Vows to Cooperate From Beverly Hills

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State Duma Deputy Ashot Yegiazaryan is living in the United States and is ready to cooperate from there with investigators pressing fraud charges against him, his lawyer said Friday.

"[He] is hiding from nobody and has officially stated his address and his U.S. lawyers' contacts," lawyer Dmitry Barannikov told Interfax.

Yegiazaryan ignored a summons to show up for questioning at the office of the Investigative Committee on Friday, said Yegiazaryan's party, the Liberal Democratic Party, or LDPR.

Instead, he had sent the Investigative Committee a letter in which he explained that he could not return to Russia because he feared for his life, the Duma's LDPR faction said in an e-mailed statement.

In the letter, a copy of which was obtained by The Moscow Times, Yegiazaryan writes that he has been living in the affluent city of Beverly Hills, California, since the beginning of July.

His lawyer, Barannikov, said investigators could easily question the lawmaker on the basis of a U.S.-Russian treaty over legal assistance.

Yegiazaryan, who has served as a deputy since first being elected on the nationalist LDPR ticket in 1999, was stripped of his parliamentary immunity earlier this month after being accused of defrauding two business acquaintances of about 2 billion rubles ($66 million).

He has said the accusations are fabricated and linked them to widespread corruption in the country.

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