

Activists Seek Surkov Ouster

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Rights activists will ask President Dmitry Medvedev to fire his first deputy chief of staff, Vladislav Surkov, who they say masterminded a nationwide electioneering system, Kommersant reported Thursday.

A letter asking for Surkov's removal will be circulated for signing during a high-profile Civil Constitutional Forum on Sunday, the daily said, citing a forum organizer, human rights veteran Lyudmila Alexeyeva of the Moscow Helsinki group.

Medvedev criticized the country's political system last month, saying it risks stagnation for lack of competitiveness. The draft of the letter accuses Surkov of suppressing political opposition through administrative means, as well as of cracking down on independent media and nongovernmental organizations.

The Kremlin did not comment on the report Thursday.

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