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Ultranationalists Attempt to Unite

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Ultranationalists created a new umbrella group this week, though their chances of obtaining official registration appeared slim.

The group, called simply Russkiye (Russians), aims to "establish a national government and proclaim a Russian national state," co-founder Dmitry Dyomushkin told Interfax.

Dyomushkin, former head of the banned Slavic Union, a group notorious for its Russian acronym "SS," will head one of the new group's six managing bodies.

The group's leaders also include Alexander Potkin, also known as Alexander Belov, a former leader of the Movement Against Illegal Immigration, the sole prominent organization to represent nationalists until it was banned for extremism earlier this year.

At least two prominent nationalist groups, Narodny Sobor and Russian Public Movement, led by Potkin's former ally Vladimir Tor, did not join Russkiye, Lenta.ru reported Thursday, adding that Narodny Sobor was not invited over its alleged ties to the government. No explanation was given for Tor's refusal to join.

Members have not commented on the group's short-term plans, including whether it will seek registration as a political party with the Justice Ministry ahead of the State Duma vote in December.

No new party has been registered since 2009. Recent registration requests by several liberal and left-wing groups were thrown out by the ministry on technicalities.

Rights champion Svetlana Gannushkina said Russkiye is unlikely to be registered because its platform falls under anti-extremism laws, Interfax reported.

Ultranationalism is on the rise but mostly because of the activities of disorganized groups more interested in illegal activism than public politics, anti-xenophobia watchdog Sova said in March.

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