

Communists Defend Their 'Mailman Hunt'

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The Communist Party on Monday reiterated accusations that its main rival, United Russia, is getting help in its campaign from state-owned Russian Post, which has earlier accused the Communists of conducting a "mailman hunt."

Ivan Melnikov, who runs the Communists' campaign for the upcoming State Duma elections, [said](#) on the party web site that Russian Post is distributing an illegally printed election newspaper targeting United Russia's opponents.

Two Duma lawmakers with the Communists, aided by police, searched a postal van in Samara earlier this month, looking for the newspaper, but found nothing, Russian Post head Alexander Kiselyov [said](#) in an open letter on Saturday.

The Communists reported later obtaining the newspaper, Den Vyborov (Elections Day) at a postal office in Samara. In a [video](#) released on the party's web site, a woman identified as a postal worker says her branch is distributing the newspaper on orders from their superiors.

Kiselyov dismissed these reports in his open letter, insisting that the woman was not a Russian Post employee.

He also demanded apologies from Communist Party head Gennady Zyuganov for "involving [his agency] in political games." No such apology was proffered Monday.

Melnikov also pointed out that Russian Post is actually affiliated with United Russia, having joined earlier this year the All-Russia People's Front, an election group that fielded about a quarter of the candidates for United Russia's Duma list. Kiselyov did not comment on the accusation as of late Monday.

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