

Fedotov to Keep Kremlin Rights Post

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Mikhail Fedotov

President Vladimir Putin will retain Mikhail Fedotov as head of the Kremlin's human rights council despite criticizing him earlier this month for complaining to reporters about anti-protest legislation.

Fedotov, who served as council head during the tenure of President Dmitry Medvedev, was reappointed Saturday as a presidential adviser on human rights, the Kremlin said on its website.

"My reappointment as a president's adviser stipulates that I will keep my post as head of the presidential human rights council," Fedotov told Kommersant in comments published Monday.

Fedotov angered Putin last week by telling reporters that he would appeal to Putin to veto a bill that would sharply increase fines on people who attend and organize illegal protests. The bill has been approved by the State Duma in a first reading.

Putin told Fedotov to appeal to him directly and not through the media.

The 40-member human rights council has been transformed from a lower-level commission offering nonbinding advice to the president.

It issued a damning report last year on the 2009 jail death of lawyer Sergei Magnitsky that, while shedding light on the case, has not led to any charges being filed.

Several council members promised to quit after Putin's re-election in March.

But a council source told The Moscow Times on Monday that many others were ready to continue working under Putin.

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