

Kremlin Rejects Novaya Gazeta Petition to Dissolve Duma

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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The petition submitted by Novaya Gazeta with more than 130,000 signatures calling for the Duma to be disbanded cannot be accepted, Oleg Morozov, head of the internal policy directorate of the presidential administration, said in an official response to the newspaper on Wednesday.

The newspaper published excerpts from Morozov's letter, in which he cites a presidential decree passed in March that requires such public initiatives to use the "Russian Public Initiative" website to propose and vote on various issues.

The website is due to start accepting online petitions starting on April 15.

The new mechanism has several limitations, however. First of all, the newspaper notes, public initiatives can only be proposed by adults registered in the Unified System of Identification and Authentication, a register designed by Rostelecom, a state-run communications provider.

Second, people can vote both in favor of the initiative and against it on the new website.

In addition, Novaya Gazeta wrote, according to Putin's decree, public initiatives cannot contradict the Referendum law adopted in 2004, which prohibits calling referendums on disbanding the State Duma.

Novaya Gazeta called Morozov's response "devoid of justification" and said it will turn to all major Russian state bodies for a comprehensive response to all requests from the newspaper's readers who signed the petition.

The newspaper started its petition in January in response to legislation that, among other things, banned adoptions of Russian children by U.S. citizens.

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