

Duma to Consider Lifting Ban on Child Adoptions

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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The State Duma is preparing to discuss a bill to lift the ban on U.S. parents adopting Russian children, even as Russian investigators accuse another U.S. couple of failing to protect their child.

The bill's authors, Just Russia Deputies Dmitry Gudkov, Ilya Ponomaryov and Valery Zubov, said the ban needed to be overturned for the sake of Russian children.

"The rights of orphans to be adopted and live in a normal family regardless of the adoptive parents' citizenship must be protected," they wrote in the introduction to the bill, Interfax reported.

It was initially reported that the bill would be discussed on Wednesday, but as of Wednesday afternoon there was no word on it. It is unlikely to be passed by the Duma, where a majority of lawmakers toe the Kremlin line.

The text of the bill also said the rights of orphans "should not depend on political, ideological, economic and other disagreements between international parties." The language referred to the fact that the ban was imposed immediately after Washington adopted the Magnitsky list of Russian officials barred from entering the U.S. over alleged human rights violations.

Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev reiterated the government's stance on keeping Russian children with Russian parents during an annual speech to the Duma on Wednesday. Medvedev said that even though the authorities stripped 44,000 parents of custody of their children last year, Russia was still capable of taking care of its orphans.

The Duma initiative to overturn the adoption ban was prompted by a petition signed by more than 100,000 people and submitted to the Duma.

Meanwhile, the Investigative Committee said it had opened a criminal case into suspicions that a girl born in the Amur region in 2000 and adopted by U.S. parents two years later was sexually abused by a family friend.

The child, who was left partially paralyzed after being beaten by her first adoptive U.S. father, was subsequently placed with a second U.S. family, where investigators said the abuse occurred.

"Between 2008 and 2010, the adoptive mother allowed a family friend, a local Baptist church parishioner and a U.S. citizen, to perform violent sexual acts with a disabled minor for money and gifts," the Investigative Committee said in a [statement](#) Tuesday.

The abuse stopped only after the man's death, the statement said.

The girl, however, has denied that any abuse took place and said she was happy with her new family, Russian national media reported.

National media noted that the Russian authorities ignored the girl's case when her first adoptive father was sentenced to 16 years in prison for breaking her spine in a case of domestic violence in 2002.

The head of the Investigative Committee, Alexander Bastrykin, personally ordered that the criminal case be opened this week.

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