

Human Rights Council Wants Ban on Returning Militants' Bodies Abolished

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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The presidential human rights council will ask President Vladimir Putin to abolish the ban on returning the bodies of dead militants to their relatives for proper burial, a news report said Thursday.

Nikolai Kovalev, a member of the State Duma's Security and Anti-Corruption Committee, said he would support the initiative to lift the ban, noting that the security situation in Russia has become more stable in recent years, Kommersant reported.

The ban was introduced in 2002 following the seizure of a Moscow theater by a group of Chechen militants that resulted in the death of many hostages and rebels during the botched rescue operation. The law was amended shortly afterwards to allow the authorities to place the dead militants in secret burial places without informing their relatives.

Kovalev said that the measures were introduced at a time when the threat of terrorism was at its highest in Russia but that now it is time for reassessment, RIA Novosti reported.

Russia "must take the path of the civilized world" and abolish this law to "respect all human rights," Kovalev, a former FSB chief, was quoted as saying.

Earlier, deputy head of the security committee Ernest Valeyev expressed caution with regard to the proposal, saying that the amendment should be carefully evaluated first.

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