

Duma Won't Amend U.S. Adoption Ban, Lawmaker Says

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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The State Duma will not amend a ban on U.S. adoptions of Russian orphans to make an exception for mixed-nationality couples living in the United States, a senior lawmaker said Tuesday, denying a news report that said such a change was in the works.

Izvestia reported Tuesday that lawmakers were preparing amendments to the so-called Dima Yakovlev law that would allow U.S. couples in which the husband or wife was a Russian citizen to adopt Russian orphans. The report said the amendments were to be examined in the Duma's fall session.

But Olga Batalina, head of the Duma's Family, Women and Children Committee, said there were no grounds for changing the law, which currently bans adoptions to the U.S. regardless of the adopting parents' nationalities, RIA Novosti reported. Batalina said the ban was put in place because the United States cannot guarantee the safety of adopted children on its territory.

"Nothing has changed in this regard, and therefore there are no reasons to make changes," Batalina said. She added that if a mixed-nationality couple had permanent-residency status in Russia, the family would be allowed to adopt a Russian child.

Late last year, the Duma approved a ban on U.S. adoptions of Russian children as part of a bill unofficially named after Dima Yakovlev, a Russian boy who died while in the care of adoptive parents in the United States.

The bill, seen as Russia's response to the U.S. Magnitsky Act, was promptly signed by President Vladimir Putin and took effect on Jan. 1.

Many anti-Kremlin protest leaders strongly opposed the U.S. adoption ban, arguing that it unfairly used Russian orphans as pawns in a political battle. American couples who were in the process of adopting Russian children were also outraged by the law, which raised tensions between Moscow and Washington.

A protest against the ban held in January drew tens of thousands of people to the streets of central Moscow — but support for the measure by the government has not wavered.

Last week, Duma speaker Sergei Naryshkin reiterated this point at a news conference, saying there was “no reason” to revise the law, Interfax reported.

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