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Nemtsov Says Investigators Will Question Him Over Tax Evasion Report

By The Moscow Times

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Boris Nemtsov, a former deputy prime minister in the 1990s and now an opposition party member and lawmaker in the Yaroslavl legislature.

Investigators have summoned opposition leader Boris Nemtsov for questioning over complaints that his report about supposed tax-dodging by 16 pro-Kremlin lawmakers in Yaroslavl had violated their privacy, Nemtsov said.

A United Russia deputy from the Yaroslavl regional legislature, Mikhail Krupin, had demanded that investigators charge Nemtsov with "disclosure of confidential information" over his December report, Nemtsov said on his Facebook blog on Monday.

The charge carries a maximum penalty of seven years in prison.

Nemtsov, a former deputy prime minister in the 1990s and now an opposition party member and lawmaker in the Yaroslavl legislature, is scheduled to appear for questioning at the

regional branch of the Investigative Committee on Saturday, Jan. 25, Nemtsov said.

"Krupin does not know that tax debts are not confidential information," Nemtsov said. "But the fact that crooks are not paying taxes is a crime."

Nemtsov, from the RPR-Parnas party, has said that he had used the Federal Tax Service's online database to learn about the lawmakers' tax debts.

The online service, called "Find Out Your Debts," allowed visitors to check on any Russian citizen's tax backlogs by punching in that person's individual tax-payer's number, or INN, a state-issued identification number, similar to U.S. social security numbers.

Following Nemtsov's report, the tax service has changed its procedure for accessing tax debt information, essentially blocking visitors from accessing other people's tax files.

"I'm going to the Investigative Committee next week. Maybe now it will dawn on them to open criminal cases for tax evasion??," Nemtsov said.

"Or is it that United Russia members don't have to pay?" he added.

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