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Forcing Russians to Disclose 2nd Citizenship Is Unconstitutional, Cabinet Says

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Cabinet Deputy Chairman Sergei Prikhodko said that officially proclaiming non-Russian citizenship ran counter to Article 62 of the Constitution.

Russia's Cabinet of ministers, led by Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev, has reportedly deemed unconstitutional a bill to force Russians to disclose whether they have citizenship in another country.

However, President Vladimir Putin in a meeting last month supported the proposed measure, currently being considered by the lower house of parliament.

The disagreement shows a rare rift between the head of state, who has the final say over whether a bill approved by parliament can become law, and the Cabinet, which heads the government's executive branch and is thus responsible for enforcing the country's laws.

The Cabinet's deputy chairman, Sergei Prikhodko, said in a statement cited by the Vedomosti

newspaper on Thursday that Article 62 of the Constitution declares that Russia views its citizens as only its own citizens, and officially proclaiming another citizenship runs counter to that definition.

Elected officials and police officers are already obligated to disclose any other citizenship that they may have, and failure to do so may result in disciplinary actions.

However, the Cabinet believes that failure to perform such a disclosure is not a crime because it does not endanger the public.

Liberal Democratic Party member Andrei Lugovoi, who submitted the bill to parliament last month, said he had not seen the Cabinet's statement and declined to comment further.

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