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United Russia Party Calls for 'Pro-Kiev' Deputies to Lose Mandates

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State Duma deputies Ilya Ponomaryov (left) and Dmitry Gudkov have been threatened with the removal of their mandates.

A State Duma deputy has accused two of his parliamentary colleagues of being traitors for supporting the interim government in Kiev and called for their deputy mandates to be revoked.

Dmitry Gudkov and Ilya Ponomaryov "have betrayed Russia's national interests and should go to Kiev and put on the uniforms of the Right Sector," a Ukrainian ultranationalist group, United Russia party member Mikhail Markelov told The Moscow Times on Monday.

Markelov, deputy head of the Duma's Social and Religious Organizations Committee, said that he had asked the legislature's Rules Committee to strip the two deputies of their mandates and that he would appeal to all party factions for a joint decision on the issue.

Following the Duma's vote on the annexation of Crimea in March, Gudkov said that Russia had suffered a "geopolitical defeat" that would have serious consequences for the Russian

economy, the BBC's Russian service reported.

"We got Crimea, but we lost Ukraine. We have found ourselves in international isolation," said Gudkov, who abstained from the vote.

Ponomaryov, who was the only deputy to vote against Russia's annexation of Crimea in March, said at the time that the annexation could lead to bloodshed in Europe and destabilize the entire international relations and security system, Reuters reported.

Ponomaryov had equally strong words on Monday, when he told The Moscow Times that the only precedent for Markelov's measures was the removal of the Communists from the Reichstag during Adolf Hitler's rule and warned that the political situation in Russia was worsening.

"In Russia we are wailing about the fascists in Kiev, while an authoritarian state is actually being created in Russia," he said, adding that the removal of his deputy status would be illegal.

Liberal Democratic Party leader Vladimir Zhirinovsky in March called for Ponomaryov to be kicked out of the Duma for his "unpatriotic" vote, only to be informed that deputies cannot be removed based on the way they vote, Reuters reported at the time.

Markelov, however, said he is convinced that the "biased" position of Ponomaryov and Gudkov shows that they have been "bought off," which is a "serious crime," the United Russia party's press service cited Markelov as saying, Interfax reported Sunday.

See also:

Liberal Democratic Party Declares War on Ponomaryov

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