

Russian Duma Chair Asks Communist Lawmaker to Tattle on Colleagues Over Foreign Assets

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A Communist lawmaker claimed Tuesday that dozens of his fellow legislators are concealing assets overseas in violation of a law passed last year.

Valery Rashkin made the claim during a session of the State Duma on Tuesday, saying that while 40 lawmakers had openly admitted to owning foreign real estate and holding overseas bank accounts, many more had failed to disclose such information, the TASS news agency reported Tuesday.

State Duma speaker Sergei Naryshkin responded by demanding that Rashkin back up his claim by compiling a list of all the lawmakers he believed were breaking the law.

"I will pass this information on to the relevant commission on parliamentary ethics," Naryshkin was cited as saying by TASS. The speaker of the lower house of parliament added that if Rashkin could not name any specific deputies, he would go before the Duma's ethics

committee for making baseless accusations.

Rashkin said he was "prepared to make the list of names and give it to the speaker," TASS reported. He did not specify a timeframe.

A law prohibiting State Duma deputies from keeping money in overseas bank accounts or other financial instruments was passed last spring and signed into law by President Vladimir Putin in May. Legislators are also obliged under the new law to declare any foreign real estate.

The move was meant to enhance national security, counter corruption and return money to the Russian budget.

Lawmakers were given a grace period of three months after the adoption of the law to get rid of their foreign financial assets and declare property, with a deadline set for August 2013.

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