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Duma Committee Recommends Stripping Contrarian Lawmaker Ponomaryov's Immunity

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Ilya Ponomaryov

The State Duma's regulatory committee unanimously recommended on Monday that opposition lawmaker Ilya Ponomaryov, the lone deputy who voted against Russia's annexation of Crimea last year, should be stripped of his legislative immunity, the Interfax news agency reported.

State Duma Speaker Sergei Naryshkin said on March 26 that parliament had received a request from Russian prosecutors seeking to strip Ponomaryov of immunity from prosecution, paving the way for embezzlement proceedings.

At the time, Naryshkin said Ponomaryov is suspected of having committed embezzlement in connection with his work for a state-funded technological foundation, which was also the subject of a civil lawsuit in 2013.

The issue will be considered by the Duma on Tuesday.

Ponomaryov, who is one of the legislature's few remaining vocal Kremlin critics, has claimed that the criminal case is politically motivated. He is currently in the United States, and thus will not be present during the hearing, Interfax reported.

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