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# Russian Lawmakers Approve Prisoner Amnesty in Honor of Victory Day

By The Moscow Times

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Russian lawmakers on Friday voted to enact an amnesty for those convicted of certain categories of crimes in honor of the 70th anniversary of the allied Victory over Nazi Germany, which Russia celebrates on May 9.

In all, 442 State Duma deputies approved the draft bill on the amnesty, which could come into effect as early as Friday and must be enacted within six months, the Interfax news agency cited the head of the Duma's Legislation Committee, Pavel Krasheninnikov, as saying.

Between 350,000 and 400,000 people will be covered by the amnesty, Krasheninnikov added.

The amnesty will not be applied to anyone convicted of premeditated murder, terrorism, racketeering or other serious crimes. Those convicted of large-scale fraud, misappropriation or embezzlement on a large scale and bribery are also excluded from the amnesty, Interfax reported.

Opposition leader Alexei Navalny, who was slapped with suspended sentences in 2013 and 2014 for embezzlement and fraud, is therefore ineligible for the amnesty. Ukrainian pilot Nadya Savchenko, held by Russia on suspicion of aiding and abetting the murder of two Russian journalists in eastern Ukraine, also falls outside the perimeters of the amnesty.

Among those eligible are veterans who have committed mild or moderately serious crimes and who served in Chechnya, battled terrorists in the North Caucasus, fought in the Afghan war or helped in the clean-up effort after the Chernobyl nuclear plant disaster, Interfax reported.

The amnesty will also apply to minors, women with young or disabled children, pregnant women, single fathers, men over the age of 50, and women over the age of 55 who were convicted for mild or moderate crimes. Certain cancer patients are also included in the amnesty, although anyone found guilty of committing crimes against minors is excluded, the report said.

The amnesty bill was proposed to President Vladimir Putin by the head of the Presidential Council for Civil Society and Human Rights, Mikhail Fedotov, at a meeting with its members last December.

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