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First Amnestied Prisoners to Walk Free by Russia's Victory Day

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The first of the prisoners to be impacted by a sweeping amnesty launched in honor of the 70th anniversary of the Allied victory in World War II will walk free in time to celebrate Victory Day, State Duma deputy Pavel Krasheninnikov told journalists on Tuesday, Interfax reported.

As many as 400,000 people are set to benefit from the amnesty, which was approved by the State Duma on Friday. That includes inmates, people with suspended sentences and those currently standing trial.

Up to 60,000 inmates are set to walk free from prison under the amnesty, Krasheninnikov said in comments carried by Interfax.

The first prisoners to be released will include war veterans, mothers with young children, single fathers and the workers who helped resolve the Chernobyl nuclear plant disaster.

The amnesty was criticized by rights activists for its exclusion of entrepreneurs, who they say could help galvanize Russia's crisis-hit economy if set free.

Leading government critic Alexei Navalny, who is under a suspended sentence for what he claims are politically motivated embezzlement charges, will not benefit from the amnesty.

But his fellow prominent opposition activist Ilya Yashin, who had been accused of intentional infliction of light injury by a court in the town of Yaroslavl, was granted amnesty.

“The court in Yaroslavl has dropped the charges against me in the connection with amnesty,” Yashin wrote on his Twitter account Tuesday.

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