

# St. Petersburg Lawmaker Wants Romanov Family to Return to Russia

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Grand Duchess Maria Vladimirovna

A lawmaker in the Leningrad region outside the city of St. Petersburg has appealed to the descendants of the Romanov royal family to return to Russia, saying their presence would help unify the country and restore its might, media reports said.

In letters to Grand Duchess Maria Vladimirovna Romanova in Spain and Prince Dmitry Romanovich Romanov in Denmark, both of whom claim to be the head of the house of Romanov, regional lawmaker Vladimir Petrov argued that the “return of the descendants of the last Russian autocrat to their historical homeland would help smooth out the political contradictions inside the country, which have been left over from the moment of the [Bolshevik] October revolution, and would become a symbol of restoring the spiritual might of Russia's people,” Izvestia reported Tuesday.

“At the present time, a difficult process is under way in restoring Russia's might and of

returning its international influence,” Petrov said in the letter, Izvestia reported. “I am certain that during such an important historical moment, members of the Romanov imperial house cannot remain aside from the processes that are going on in Russia.”

The lawmaker also proposed designating a tsarist-era palace outside St. Petersburg or in Crimea as the Romanovs' official residence, adding that his local legislature plans to draft a bill granting a “special status” to the royal family's descendants, the report said.

Claims of Russia's revival, spiritual might and resumed international influence have become common themes in Moscow's rhetoric after the annexation of Crimea from Ukraine last year, and amid Western economic and political sanctions that followed.

A spokesman for the Romanov family, Alexander Zakatov, said Romanova is willing to move to Russia and has no claims on any property or political power, but wants the status of the imperial house as part of Russia's “historical heritage” recognized by law, Izvestia reported.

He also said the “imperial house does not engage in any political struggle” and would not want their return to the country to be used for the political purposes of “for instance, monarchists or opposition activists,” Izvestia reported.

Russia's last emperor, Nicholas II, his wife and five children were shot by Bolsheviks in 1918. Calls for the descendants of other branches of the Romanov family to return to Russia have resurfaced from time to time since the 1991 Soviet collapse.

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