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Russia's Yabloko Party Turns Down Offer to Merge With PARNAS

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Yabloko party co-founder Grigory Yavlinsky

Russian liberal opposition party Yabloko has turned down a proposal from the PARNAS opposition party that they merge to compile a single list of State Duma election candidates, the Kommersant newspaper reported Monday.

"It was suggested that we include our candidates on the PARNAS list. They actually suggested we liquidate our party, which means there is no point discussing the issue [with them]. It is a deliberate provocation to create headlines," Yabloko chairperson Emiliya Slabunova told the Interfax news agency.

Ilya Yashin from PARNAS said the party was ready to support Yabloko candidate Grigory Yavlinsky in the 2018 presidential elections on the condition that Yabloko compile a single list of State Duma election candidates, Interfax reported

Yavlinsky is well-known for his support for a free market Russian economy and has entered the race for the Russian presidency on two previous occasions.

“If Yabloko agrees to create a list of candidates on PARNAS terms, the next logical step is to support Grigory Yavlinsky in the 2018 presidential election,” Yashin told Interfax.

“In fact, it would signify the formation of a single democratic party in Russia.”

Yashin claimed it would allow the party to break the 5 percent barrier in the State Duma elections and create a splinter faction in the parliament.

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