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Russian Supreme Court to Consider Removing Opposition Party From Duma Elections

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Next Monday, Sept. 12 (less than a week before nationwide parliamentary elections), Russia's Supreme Court will consider considering removing the PARNAS opposition party from the race, following a complaint from a rival party.

The Civic Platform political party filed a formal appeal to the Supreme Court on Sept. 8, accusing PARNAS chairman and former Prime Minister Mikhail Kasyanov of making extremist comments during a televised debate. Specifically, Civic Platform says, Kasyanov accused President Vladimir Putin of helping the Syrian government attack civilians with chemical weapons.

The suit against PARNAS also cites public comments by the party's two other leading candidates, Vycheslav Maltsev and Andrei Zubov. On Aug. 22, Maltsev said in a TV debate that "bad tsars," nodding to Putin, should be "impaled."

The People's Freedom Party (PARNAS) is generally considered to be one of Russia’s two anti-government opposition parties. Neither PARNAS nor Yabloko, the other such political party, is expected to win enough votes on Sept. 18 to gain seats in the Duma through Russia’s proportional-representation system.

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