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Ultraconservative Russian Lawmaker Yarovaya to Head Duma Legislative Committee

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Irina Yarovaya **Maxim Stulov / Vedomosti**

The United Russia lawmaker behind repressive new anti-terror legislation, Irina Yarovaya is a candidate to become head of a powerful parliamentary committee on constitutional legislation, the Vedomosti newspaper reported Thursday.

Yarovaya, previously known for legislative crackdowns on protestors and non-governmental organizations, rose to prominence this summer after co-authoring the "Yarovaya Law," a series of harsh anti-terror measures human rights campaigners have dubbed the "Big Brother Law."

The laws tighten restrictions on Russian terror suspects, introduce harsher penalties for inciting or justifying terrorism online and increase the crimes that children as young as 14 can be charged with.

The ultraconservative Yarovaya is being considered as a candidate for head of the committee, Vedomosti reported, citing Duma sources. The committee's current head, fellow United Russia deputy Vladimir Pligin, is unlikely to serve in the new Duma after placing fifth in United Russia's party list for St. Petersburg, from which only the first two candidates received enough votes to enter the Duma.

Crimean Prosecutor General, and newly elected Duma deputy, Natalya Poklonskaya is also being considered for the position. According to an anonymous source from within the Kremlin administration however, only an experienced deputy will be chosen for the post, which gives Yarovaya the advantage, Vedomosti reported.

Sunday's Duma elections brought an expected landslide victory for the ruling United Russia Party, handing them 76 percent of seats, a super-majority granting them power to amend the Russian Constitution without cross-party support.

If Yarovaya is chosen to head the committee, the state's constitutional duty to observe and defend citizens' rights and freedoms will be "quickly erased by United Russia's majority," Vedomosti reported, citing a Duma source.

Yarovaya previously held senior positions in the liberal party Yabloko, where she served as head of the Kamchatka regional council in the Far East before switching allegiance to the party of power. She was first elected to the Duma in 2007.

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