

Russian Politician Zhirinovsky Pledges to 'Shoot' Opponents in Parliament

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Anton Novoderezhkin / TASS

Members of Russia's Liberal Democratic Party (LDPR) stormed out of the Russian parliament on Wednesday after parliamentary vice-speaker Sergei Neverov called for LDPR leader Vladimir Zhirinovsky to be investigated for hate crimes.

During a speech earlier that day, Zhirinovsky had pledged that he said he would "shoot" his opponents if he won Russia's presidential election next year. Zhirinovsky had taken to the podium to protest against a number of United Russia deputies, who he believed were defending "corrupt" individuals in the Moscow region.

"In March next year, I will drive into the Kremlin and shoot and hang you, you scoundrels!" he said.

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Vice-speaker Sergei Neverov, the secretary of Vladimir Putin's United Russia party, called for an ethics commission to look into the threats made to his party's deputies. He also stressed that all politicians were "innocent until proven guilty" amid Zhirinovsky's corruption claims.

"All political speeches can be emotional, but should not be abusive. The electorate has decided who will represent them in the Duma and I want to say this: gentlemen, some of you are lawyers, please respect our constitution and presumption of innocence. Only a court can decide who is a criminal, but here we are hearing about shootings," said Neverov.

Zhirinovsky, a flamboyant politician known for his nationalist speeches, will run as LDPR's candidate in the 2018 presidential election. It will be the sixth time the 70-year-old has run for the Russian presidency.

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