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Top Officials Express Concern Over Foreign Collection of Russian DNA

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Russian lawmakers are set to propose new laws tightening oversight of lab samples sent abroad amid worries over the foreign collection of biological material, a senior official said on state television.

President Vladimir Putin on Monday said it was important to ask whether Russian samples were being used “purposefully and professionally," Vedomosti reported.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said that Russian intelligence had information that "certain emissaries, representatives of non-government organizations and other agencies are conducting such activity."

Gennady Onishchenko, first deputy head of the Duma committee on education and science, told the Rossia-1 channel that he was preparing a draft law to increase control over foreign laboratories operating in Russia to ensure the "biological security" of Russian citizens.

Onishchenko, who previously served as chief physician and head of Russia’s consumer watchdog, said many foreign laboratories were conducting research in Russia's largest cities and “have the opportunity to study this material and send the data abroad." Onishchenko said he had warned intelligence agencies and that the practice “must stop.”

"What is happening to the collection of fluids, and organs and tissues of our citizens is nothing other than proof that the United States has not ceased its offensive military program," he added.

Onishchenko claimed there was a "belt of biological warfare facilities" surrounding Russia in neighboring Georgia, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan and Ukraine.

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