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# Russian Monarchist Withdraws Presidential Bid After Founding 'Romanov Empire' in Africa

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Anton Bakov **Sergei Karpov / TASS**

A 2018 presidential candidate campaigning to restore the Russian monarchy will drop out of the race after reportedly acquiring dual citizenship in the "Romanov Empire."

The Russian Monarchy Party nominated its founder and leader Anton Bakov to run as a presidential candidate in the March 18 elections last month. Bakov made headlines last year over plans to revive the Romanov dynasty on three uninhabited islands in the Pacific Ocean.

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On Wednesday, Bakov announced he was withdrawing his bid for the Russian presidency after receiving dual citizenship from a newly founded state called the Romanov Empire in Western Africa.

Bakov claimed his new government had been recognized by The Gambia last month, thus endowing him with second citizenship and making him ineligible to run for the Russian presidency.

The Gambian government denied the deal and called it a "false and faked document" after its circulation by Radio New Zealand in early December.

"The creation of an empire is sensational, we congratulate you!" Russia's Central Election Committee chairwoman, Ella Pamfilova, was cited as saying in an address to Bakov by the Interfax news agency on Wednesday.

"We await your application [to withdraw as a presidential candidate] and wish you success in your unusual and interesting project," she said.

Bakov said he hoped to establish diplomatic relations between the West African Romanov Empire and Russia and promised to withdraw possible restitution claims against his country of birth, the state-run RIA Novosti news agency reported on Wednesday.

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