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Russian Lawmakers Approve Lifetime Immunity for Ex-Presidents

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Lawmakers in Russia's lower house of parliament have voted to approve legislation that would give former presidents lifetime immunity from prosecution. **State Duma / Moskva News Agency**

Lawmakers in Russia's lower house of parliament have voted to approve legislation that would give former presidents lifetime immunity from prosecution.

The proposal is a part of a larger set of constitutional reforms announced by President Vladimir Putin which Russians approved in a nationwide vote this summer. Those reforms also include a provision that would reset Putin's term limits and allow him to serve two more six-year terms in office.

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In its third and final reading of the law, the State Duma strengthened immunity protections for former presidents.

If the law is passed, an ex-president can only be stripped of immunity if the Duma brings charges of high treason or other felonies against him or her. If thosee charges are approved by the Supreme Court and the Constitutional Court, the Federation Council would then vote on whether or not to strip the ex-president of immunity within three months.

The law specifies that an ex-president cannot be held criminally nor administratively liable. He or she may not be detained, arrested, subject to search, interrogation or body search.

Under current laws, presidents cannot be held criminally or administratively liable for crimes committed while serving their terms.

The law must now obtain the approval of the upper-house Federation Council in a single reading before Putin can sign it into law.

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