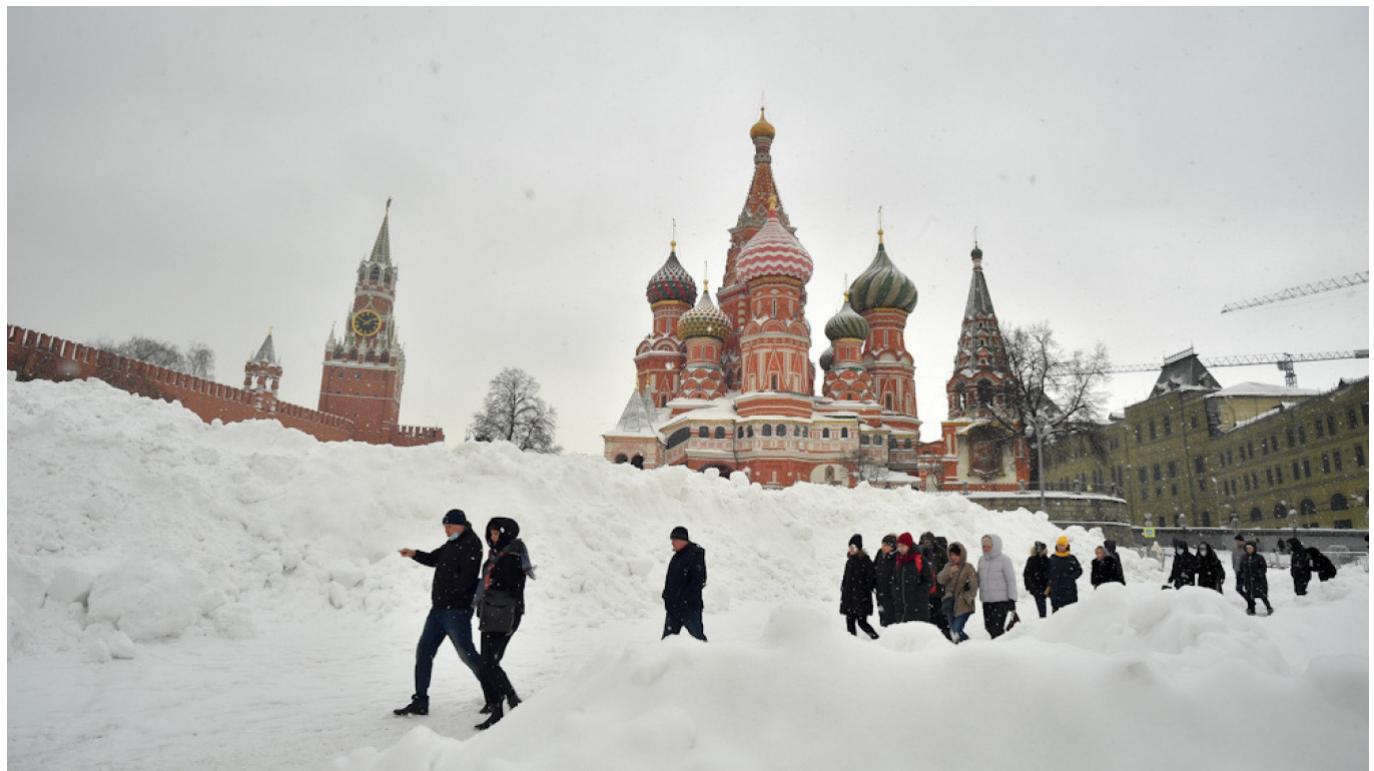


Russia Is the World's 'Last Island of Freedom,' Parliament Speaker Says

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Sergei Volodin / Moskva News Agency

Russia is the world's last bastion of freedom in the face of the U.S. labor movement's decline and pressure on Russian media in the Baltics and Ukraine, the head of Russia's lower house of parliament [said](#) Wednesday.

"Russia is the last island of freedom," State Duma speaker Vyacheslav Volodin said during a legislative session, according to the state-run TASS news agency. "Do you see what's happening in the United States of America? The country is dying, everything has been canceled out."

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"Where is [the American] labor movement? Where is the socialist party? Where is the once-strong communist party? Nowhere, just like there's no free media in Ukraine," he added.

Volodin was referring to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky's recent move to ban three pro-Russian television channels and Lithuania's move to ban Russia's state broadcaster for sowing "[discord](#)."

President Vladimir Putin, who presided over Russia during the state takeover of independent media in the early-to-mid 2000s, also criticized the Russian media bans during a video call with Duma party leaders earlier Wednesday.

Volodin's assertion comes 24 hours after Communist Party lawmaker Valery Rashkin [declared](#) that the country's current political climate to be "far worse" than the Soviet political repressions in 1937 known as the Great Terror.

Rashkin's broadside, accusing the Kremlin of fabricating criminal cases against [political opponents](#) and urging supporters to attend street protests next week, drew an immediate rebuke from Volodin.

"You need to realize that accusing the country of terror as a State Duma deputy means you yourself are implicated," the Open Media news website quoted the State Duma speaker as saying Tuesday.

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