The Moscow Times
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Leonid Slutsky Elected Leader of Russia's Nationalist LDPR Party

May 27, 2022



Leonid Slutsky. **Sergei Vedyashkin / Moskva News Agency**

Russian parliamentary deputy Leonid Slutsky was unanimously elected Friday the head of Russia's nationalist Liberal Democratic Party (LDPR).

"I could never have guessed that I would be elected the chairman of my native party," Slutsky told party delegates after the vote, Vedomosti newspaper reported.

Slutsky also promised to "modify" the party's political strategy ahead of local elections scheduled for September, according to Interfax.

Demagogue Vladimir Zhirinovsky, who led the LDPR for 32 years, died in April from Covid-19 leaving a leadership vacuum at the top of the party.

Slutsky, 54, was first elected to Russia's lower house in 2000.

He was appointed one of Russia's negotiators in abortive peace talks with Ukraine after the start of Russia's invasion of its pro-Western neighbor.

Three journalists accused Slutsky of sexual harrassment in 2018, leading to a short-lived media boycott of parliament. Slutsky denied the allegations.

Original url:
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