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Russia Says Planning Domestic 'Alternative' to European Rights Court

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Russia is developing a domestic alternative to Europe's top human rights court, the head of the Association of Russian Lawyers said Thursday.

Russia has been outside the jurisdiction of the European Court for Human Rights (ECHR) since March, when Moscow was expelled from the Council of Europe over its invasion of Ukraine.

Work is currently underway to form a working group that will create an alternative human rights court over the next year, Interfax quoted Association of Russian Lawyers head Sergei Stepashin as saying at a meeting of the group's board and presidium.

The court's jurisdiction could consist of BRICS countries, Council of Independent States members or Eurasian Economic Union members, he said.

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The working group will include representatives from the Justice Ministry, the Investigative Committee and the presidential administration, he said.

President Vladimir Putin sacked the idea of creating an "alternative" human rights court in 2020. In 2021, he delegated the task to Russia's Supreme Court.

Russia has been widely criticized for its rights record in Western countries, with the country's clampdown on peaceful protests, opposition politicians, independent media, LGBT people and more coming under fire.

Filing a complaint through the ECHR was one of the only ways that Russians could seek justice for political persecution and human rights violations, and the court had ordered Russia to pay out millions of euros to plaintiffs for rights violations over the years.

The ECHR will continue to accept complaints filed against Russia until Sept. 16, 2022, as Russia will still be considered a signatory of the European Convention until that date.

"There is, however, no guarantee that Russia will comply with the ECHR's decisions," OVD-Info wrote.

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