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Russia Lawmakers Move to Classify Real Estate Ownership Data

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Russian State Duma **duma.gov.ru**

Russian lawmakers have advanced new legislation to block the public from accessing information from the country's state real estate register, a move that could hinder independent journalists from investigating the hidden wealth of the country's elite.

The bill, which passed its third and final reading in the lower-house State Duma on Thursday, restricts third parties from accessing information about others on the real estate register without the property owner's consent.

The legislation must clear a vote in the upper-house Federation Council and be signed by President Vladimir Putin before it becomes law.

Russia's Federal Security Service (FSB) proposed classifying data from the state real estate register, officially known as Rosreestr, in 2015. Two years later, the country's Supreme Court ruled that the registry had the right to classify data about real estate owners.

Russian journalists have often used data from Rosreestr to track down officials' luxury properties.

An investigation into President Vladimir Putin's alleged Black Sea palace by a team led by jailed Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny helped fuel nationwide protests in early 2021.

Navalny's team said it used data from Rosreestr in its investigation, which has racked up over 124 million views on YouTube since its release.

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