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Kremlin Officials to File Anonymous Tax Returns – Vedomosti

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The Kremlin wall. **Pavel Golovkin / AP / TASS**

Kremlin officials and Russian cabinet members will file anonymous tax returns, Russia's Vedomosti business newspaper reported Wednesday, citing unnamed sources close to the government.

President Vladimir Putin in late December waived requirements for government officials to disclose their income tax returns for the duration of Russia's so-called "special military operation" in Ukraine.

According to Vedomosti, Russia's cabinet of ministers is considering allowing so-called "generalized" income tax information for themselves and members of the presidential administration.

Instead of individual tax returns, the "generalized" information would only reportedly include the number of submitted and un-submitted tax returns, and whether any violations have been uncovered.

Similar relaxed rules for lawmakers are currently moving through Russia's parliament. They are expected to take effect on March 1 once passed by both chambers and signed into law by Putin.

The bill was approved in its third and final reading in the lower-house State Duma on Wednesday.

"Not everyone is interested in [and] wants to [file tax returns]," State Duma deputy Pavel Krasheninnikov, a member of the ruling United Russia party, has said. "Laziness."

"Some [members of parliament] don't want to show their income," he told the Komsomolskaya Pravda tabloid, adding that the current requirements also act as a deterrent for Russian businesspersons and activists to seek public office.

The Kremlin attributed Putin's decree lifting the income tax return publication requirements to "the peculiarities of the special military operation."

In addition to government officials, Putin's decree exempts soldiers fighting in Ukraine and members of Russia's security services from releasing their tax returns, as well as officials who have traveled to Russian-annexed Ukrainian regions.

Previously, civil servants were legally required to publicly disclose income tax returns for themselves and their immediate family members in an effort to curtail endemic corruption.

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