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Russian Lawmakers to Consider Seizing Exiled War Critics' Property

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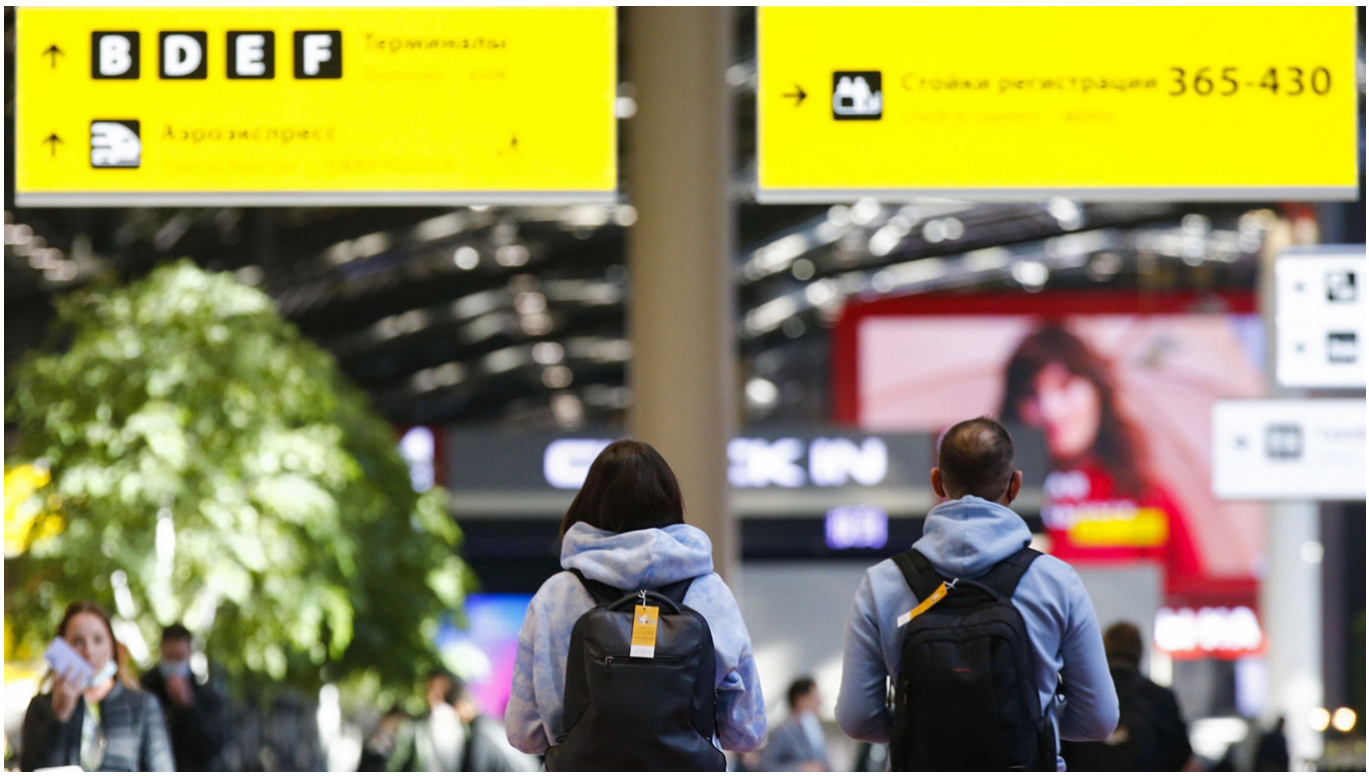

Moscow's Sheremetyevo Airport. **Sergei Vedyashkin / Moskva News Agency**

Russian lawmakers will consider confiscating the property of citizens abroad who speak out against Russia's war in Ukraine and donate to the Ukrainian army, the pro-Kremlin Izvestia daily reported Monday.

Calls to punish the tens of thousands of Russians who fled in opposition to the February 2022 invasion of Ukraine intensified last month, when an exiled actor's emotional condemnation of the war sparked outrage among pro-war Russians.

Russia's lower-house State Duma will form a task force next week to examine ways to use the Criminal Code to punish prominent exiled Russians for their dissent, State Duma deputy Yelena Yampolskaya told Izvestia.

Measures under consideration will include property seizures, banning anti-war Russians' online content and stripping artists of awards if they are found to have spread "fake news" about the Russian military or financially supported Ukrainian forces.

Related article: How the Kremlin Is Taking Aim at its Russian Critics in Exile

Russia passed a law in March allowing jail sentences of up to 15 years for sharing what the authorities deem to be false information about the military's actions abroad.

Many popular artists and prominent activists were among the wave of Russians who have fled abroad since Moscow launched its invasion of Ukraine last February.

Yampolskaya, who chairs the Duma's Culture Committee and will lead the task force, told Izvestia she has received a number of proposals on amending Russia's laws to punish exiles who remain critical of the invasion of Ukraine.

The group is expected to meet for the first time in the middle of next week and then report to State Duma Speaker Vyacheslav Volodin on its most effective measures.

Volodin last month called property confiscation a "proper" punishment for anti-war Russians in exile.

The Kremlin has warned against "opening any Pandora's boxes" by taking punitive measures that could antagonize Russian emigres.

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