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American-Born MMA Fighter Elected to Russian Regional Parliament

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Jeff Monson. **Sofia Sandurskaya / Moskva News Agency**

American-born mixed martial artist Jeff Monson has been elected to office in the regional parliament of Russia's republic of Bashkortostan, as the Central Election Commission on Wednesday officially recognized the results of this past weekend's vote.

Monson will now serve among the 87 ruling United Russia party members who were elected to Bashkortostan's 110-seat state assembly, known as Kurultai, according to the party's list of elected representatives.

President Vladimir Putin granted Russian citizenship to Monson in 2018, and earlier this year the athlete renounced his U.S. citizenship.

Over the weekend, Russia held elections across dozens of regions, including partially occupied Ukrainian regions that Russian forces captured following Moscow's full-scale invasion.

Related article: Putin Grants U.S. Hockey Player Russian Citizenship

United Russia secured an overwhelming majority in the elections amid widespread reports of voting irregularities, as well as an unprecedented wartime crackdown on the opposition and civil society.

Monson's ties to Bashkortostan appear to go back to 2021, when the fighter opened a jiu-jitsu and grappling school in the regional capital of Ufa.

"I feel at home here in Bashkortostan," Monson said at the time, according to the state-run RIA Novosti news agency.

"Now I'm no longer American, I'm just Russian," the Minnesota native said in May after renouncing his U.S. citizenship.

Monson was previously elected to local office in Krasnogorsk, a small town northwest of Moscow, soon after receiving Russian citizenship in 2018.

Monson also holds passports of the Kremlin-backed separatist Luhansk People's Republic and Georgia's breakaway republic of Abkhazia.

Monson said this summer he planned to run for Russia's lower-house State Duma in 2026.

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