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Russian State Duma Lawmakers Stripped of Mandates

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

One of Russia's youngest lawmakers and a fugitive deputy sentenced in absentia on bribery charges have been kicked out of Russia's lower-house State Duma.

Vasily Vlasov, 28, and Vadim Belousov, 63, were formally dismissed for skipping committee meetings for more than a month, Russia's lower house of parliament said in a statement on Wednesday.

Vlasov claimed that he regularly attends legislative sessions and said that his removal "raised uncomfortable questions" in comments made to the Vedomosti business daily earlier this week, but he did not go into further detail.

In a separate interview with Russia's tabloid Moskovsky Komsomolets, he maintained that his attendance stood at 98.8%.

Related article: Fugitive Russian Lawmaker Retains Position in Parliament 1 Year After Bribery Conviction – Report

The tabloid, citing an anonymous State Duma source, said that the leader of the far-right Liberal Democratic Party (LDPR), Leonid Slutsky, may be clearing the political field of close allies of LDPR's late leader Vladimir Zhirinovsky as he aims to assert greater control over the party.

Vlasov, who first entered Russia's lower parliament in 2016, was Zhirinovsky's one-time aide.

Belousov, meanwhile, was stripped of his parliamentary immunity in 2018 to allow authorities to investigate claims of bribery in 2010-14.

In 2022, a Moscow court sentenced him to 10 years in prison, but Belousov failed to appear in court and was later declared a fugitive.

The 3.2-billion-ruble ($49 million) bribe he was found guilty of receiving was described as the largest in modern Russia's history.

Belousov had managed to retain his Duma seat for a full year after his conviction.

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