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Khakassia Governor Vetoes Local Government Reform Bill

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Khakassia head Valentin Konovalov. **t.me/konovalov_khakasia19**

The head of the southern Siberian republic of Khakassia on Wednesday vetoed a controversial bill that would do away with the region's two-tier system of local governance and consolidate power under a centralized structure.

Regional head Valentin Konovalov, a member of the Communist Party, accused regional lawmakers from the ruling United Russia party of trying to undermine local self-governance. His own party unanimously opposed the proposed changes.

Federal lawmakers passed legislation in March allowing regions to dissolve lower-tier municipal governments and shift to a single-tier system. President Vladimir Putin signed the bill into law later that month, and it took effect on June 19.

Lawmakers in Khakassia's regional legislature, where United Russia has a majority, responded by introducing and passing a regional bill to eliminate the lower tier of local government. But Konovalov vetoed it on the day it was set to come into force.

But Konovalov returned a version of the bill passed by Khakassia's regional legislature, where United Russia holds the majority of the seats, on the day it was set to come into force.

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"The bill limits residents' access to government and was adopted without considering the views of the rural population," the Khakassia administration said in a statement, quoting Konovalov as saying lawmakers "rushed" the process.

He called on regional lawmakers to coordinate with local authorities on the bill and hold public hearings.

The federal reform, amended more than 1,000 times since its introduction in 2021, was expected to result in about half of Russia's regions retaining two-tier systems or partially transitioning to the new model.

Khakassia was among 26 regions projected to adopt the single-tier structure.

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