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# State Duma Fires 15 Aides Accused of Selling Access to Parliamentary Meetings

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**State Duma / Moskva News Agency**

Fifteen aides in Russia's lower-house State Duma have been fired after an internal investigation found they were involved in selling seats at parliamentary roundtable discussions, the RBC news outlet reported Monday, citing two sources familiar with the matter.

State Duma Speaker Vyacheslav Volodin, a member of the ruling United Party, announced the investigation during a closed-door session last Wednesday, the newspaper Vedomosti reported.

According to the investigation, aides offered paid participation in State Duma roundtables to outside individuals and business groups, effectively selling access to parliamentary events that are meant to be free and regulated.

Sources told RBC that the aides who were fired worked for Andrei Svintsov and Kaplan Panesh of the far-right Liberal Democratic Party, Roza Chemeris of the center-right New People party and Yevgeny Fyodorov of United Russia.

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Svintsov confirmed in comments to RBC that 12 of his unpaid assistants had been dismissed but said the move was part of a routine annual rotation of volunteers.

Chemeris said she had personally fired her aide over "shattered nerves," while Fyodorov denied any involvement in the dismissal of his aide.

All three lawmakers said they were unaware of the paid-access scheme.

The scandal surfaced last week after New People lawmaker Sardana Avksentyeva said she had seen a Telegram message advertising paid participation in a State Duma roundtable, allegedly tied to membership in a little-known business group.

Avksentyeva said the group, the World Entrepreneurs Alliance, held a business roundtable at the State Duma last month and planned additional events on healthcare in December and psychology in January.

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