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LDPR Kicks Out Clout-Chasing State Duma Lawmaker

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Andrei Svintsov. **Kirill Zykov / Moskva News Agency**

Andrei Svintsov, a State Duma lawmaker who in recent months has been the source of ominous headlines about internet restrictions in Russia, was expelled from the far-right Liberal Democratic Party (LDPR) on Wednesday.

A party spokesperson said Svintsov's removal came after "actions that have tarnished the party's reputation, widespread complaints from Russian citizens and demands from all regional party branches."

The statement did not spell out which actions triggered the backlash, but sources told the newspaper Vedomosti earlier this week that some LDPR leaders had grown frustrated with Svintsov's constant media appearances, including his statements to the press about restrictions on Telegram.

LDPR chief Leonid Slutsky seemed to confirm the reason later Wednesday, telling the broadcaster RTVI: "He has himself to blame. What was the point of all that clout chasing?"

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Svintsov, deputy chairman of the State Duma's Committee on Information Policy, Technology and Communications, recently warned that Telegram could be labeled an "extremist" organization and suggested that Russians may no longer be able to access it even with VPNs.

Those claims have not been confirmed by the state media regulator Roskomnadzor, and other lawmakers have urged the public to rely on more authoritative sources for information on internet restrictions.

Svintsov said he was not surprised by his ouster. He called today's LDPR "very different" from the party under former leader Vladimir Zhirinovsky.

A longtime party stalwart, Svintsov served as Zhirinovsky's aide before winning a Duma seat in 2011. He failed to secure a mandate in the 2022 elections but retained his seat following Zhirinovsky's death that spring.

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