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Putin Signs Law to Seize Property of Exiled Dissidents Before Trial

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President Vladimir Putin signed a law on Wednesday that empowers the government to confiscate the property and seize the bank funds of Russians living abroad who are accused of acting "against Russia's interests."

The law, which takes effect on Sept. 1, targets a broad range of offenses, including "discrediting" the Russian military, calling for sanctions against Russia, violating the country's laws on "foreign agents," affiliation with an "undesirable" organization and promoting "extremism."

Now, authorities no longer have to wait for a court ruling to seize the property of exiled Russians living abroad. The law permits asset forfeiture the moment a person is formally charged, bypassing the trial process to impose an immediate financial penalty in absentia.

While Russian courts have previously fined exiled Kremlin critics on various administrative charges, this legislation formalizes and expands the crackdown. In practice, the law hands the

government a new tool to punish Kremlin critics living abroad, including exiled journalists and activists.

The legislation was first proposed in October 2024 by regional lawmakers in the republic of Tatarstan before the State Duma passed it late last month.

During the voting sessions in parliament, State Duma speaker Vyacheslav Volodin praised the legislation, framing it as a necessary measure to protect Russian soldiers fighting in Ukraine.

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