

State Duma Passes ‘Civic Death’ Bills Cutting Off Exiled Critics From Banking and Consular Services

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Russia's lower house of parliament, the State Duma, [passed](#) legislation on Wednesday that would cut off exiled anti-war Russians from online banking, real estate transactions and consular services, a move rights advocates warn will severely disrupt the lives of emigres abroad.

A new bill and package of amendments target Russians who have been convicted in absentia of “discrediting” the military, participating in “undesirable” organizations, being designated as “foreign agents” and calling for separatism or sanctions against Russia. A public registry of the targeted individuals would appear on the Justice Ministry's website.

Taken together, the measures impose more than a dozen new restrictions, including stripping targets of access to consular services at Russian embassies, effectively preventing them from renewing their passports or registering marriages. Individuals would also be barred from

registering vehicles or completing real estate transactions.

While their bank accounts in Russia remain frozen, courts would be authorized to seize funds from those accounts to pay for legal fees and court-ordered damages. Any remaining frozen assets could also be used to support family members still living in Russia.

The State Duma's Deputy Chairman Pyotr Tolstoy, a member of the ruling United Russia party, [predicted](#) on Wednesday that the restrictions would serve as an effective deterrent against criticism of the government.

"I wouldn't be surprised if some of these uncompromising 'freedom fighters' suddenly change their tune. After all, the wallet is a liberal's most sensitive organ," Tolstoy wrote in a post on Telegram.

Related article: [‘Peaceful Russia’: Anti-War Exiles Found Their First Political Party](#)

State Duma Speaker Vyacheslav Volodin similarly denounced those targeted as "extremists" and "traitors to the Motherland" who continue to criticize Russia while living in the West.

Rights advocates have warned that the new bill and package of amendments extend the Russian government's ability to punish dissent far beyond its borders.

Anastasia Burakova, a lawyer and founder of Kovcheg (The Ark), an organization supporting Russian anti-war emigres, [said](#) that the legislation effectively strips Kremlin critics of the basic benefits of Russian citizenship.

"This is a catastrophic law that places Russians abroad targeted by the state in the position of stateless persons," Burakova said. "The state is essentially stripping people of the rights of citizenship by cutting off every avenue of interaction with the nation."

In May, Human Rights Watch [described](#) the new bill as a "civic death law" and called on foreign governments to help affected Russians by granting them access to travel documents, work authorization and essential services abroad.

Having cleared its second and third readings in the State Duma on Wednesday, the bill and amendments now move to the upper-house Federation Council. If approved and signed into law by President Vladimir Putin, the restrictions will take effect immediately.

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