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Russian Supreme Court Bars Yabloko Party From State Duma Elections

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Yabloko Chairman Nikolai Rybakov attends a Russian Supreme Court hearing on Aug. 10, 2026.
REUTERS / Yulia Morozova

Russia's Supreme Court on Monday canceled the registration of the liberal Yabloko party's federal slate of candidates for next month's State Duma elections.

In a high-stakes hearing, the court granted a lawsuit filed by the small nationalist party Rodina, which accused Yabloko of receiving foreign funding, violating copyright law and promoting "extremism."

The Supreme Court disqualified Yabloko from the parliamentary elections primarily for alleged copyright violations during campaign activity. Election authorities and state prosecutors said they also documented the violations.

In the court's view, campaign materials linked to Yabloko's website used protected intellectual property without acquiring the proper rights or permissions. This included song lyrics, film footage, photographs and even images generated by ChatGPT.

The ruling removes Russia's oldest liberal party — and what was the only registered party campaigning on a pro-peace platform — from the nationwide party-list ballot.

Yabloko chairman Nikolai Rybakov said the party would appeal the ruling within the five-day deadline and that it would do everything possible to take part in the election.

Rybakov told supporters outside the court that he could see how many people wanted peace and an end to the loss of life, in a reference to the war in Ukraine.

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Hundreds of people had gathered outside the Supreme Court in Moscow on Monday morning to support Yabloko. The party estimated that around 500 people had lined up to enter the building, though the courtroom had space for only 150.

Supporters responded to the ruling with chants of "Shame! Shame!" as law enforcement prepared to disperse the crowd.

"You have two minutes to leave. No one will come to get you out of the military enlistment offices afterward," a police officer warned through a loudspeaker in footage published by the RusNews media outlet.

During Monday's hearing, Central Election Commission officials said that it had uncovered evidence indicating that candidates from Yabloko received funding from abroad.

Election officials told the court that data provided by Russia's financial watchdog, Rosfinmonitoring, revealed foreign financial transfers to several Yabloko candidates in 2025, the newspaper Kommersant reported.

Because the Rosfinmonitoring document was classified "for official use only," judges briefly adjourned the hearing to require non-disclosure agreements from Yabloko's legal defense team before permitting them to review the evidence.

Rybakov rejected the allegations that his party received funding from abroad.

"We're being funded by Russian citizens, and we answer to Russian citizens, as well as the Central Election Commission," Rybakov told the Supreme Court.

The legal push to remove Yabloko from the ballot comes after the Central Election Commission last month unexpectedly approved more than 400 candidates from the party to run in September's parliamentary elections.

Russian authorities have jailed several prominent Yabloko members in recent years over their opposition to the invasion of Ukraine.

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