

Leader of Yabloko's Sverdlovsk Region Branch Left Russia, Reports Say

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Maxim Petlin. [@yabloko_press](#) / Telegram

The head of the Sverdlovsk regional chapter of the liberal Yabloko party has left Russia amid a growing number of arrests of other party members, local media [reported](#) Wednesday, just weeks before parliamentary elections are scheduled to be held.

Regional party chairman Maxim Petlin has not been seen in the capital city Yekaterinburg for “several months,” anonymous sources [told](#) the news outlet 66.ru. It was not immediately clear when he left Russia or where he is currently located.

Petlin later [told](#) the newspaper Kommersant that his lawyer advised him not to comment on reports of his departure “for the safety of my family and myself.”

In June, the politician [withdrew](#) his candidacy in this month's State Duma elections due to reported pressure from law enforcement authorities, including short-term detentions and police searches at his home.

Related article: [Moscow Police Detain Yabloko Candidates Running in State Duma Elections](#)

Yabloko is Russia's oldest liberal party and is the only registered party campaigning on a pro-peace platform. Several of its candidates have been [disqualified](#) from running in next week's elections over various violations.

On Monday, Sverdlovsk region police [arrested](#) at least six Yabloko members running for federal or regional office in connection with public displays of "extremist" symbols. The charges disqualify them from the upcoming elections.

Yabloko's Sverdlovsk regional chapter [said](#) Wednesday that Petlin was in communication with one of its arrested members.

Candidates of the party campaigning in single-member districts are still allowed to run for office after Russia's Supreme Court last month [ruled](#) to cancel the registration of Yabloko's federal slate of candidates for the State Duma.

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