

Nationalists Want Place in Human Rights Council

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Slavic Union leader Dmitry Demushkin

Russian nationalists are seeking inclusion in the presidential human rights council in the same week that several prominent rights defenders quit the advisory body.

"We are definitively seeking our place in the human rights council. In contrast to many others, we have something to say," Slavic Union leader Dmitry Demushkin told Izvestia on Tuesday.

Demushkin added that he had sent a letter making his case to council chairman Mikhail Fedotov.

"We work not in human rights circles, not in Duma circles, but on the street. All these commissions, congresses and councils are made up of aging aqsaqals [elders] and elderly rights defenders," Demushkin said. "They are not only detached from youth issues

and problems on the street, but also from normal people."

Three more council members quit Monday and Tuesday, including Igor Yurgens, a liberal expert who heads the Institute of Contemporary Development, bringing to 17 the number of people who have left the council since President Vladimir Putin was elected to a new six-year term in March.

Veteran rights defender Lyudmila Alexeyeva, head of the Moscow Helsinki Group, left the council Friday, citing new Kremlin rules that would determine council members with the use of an online poll.

Fedotov said he too would leave the organization if fewer than 20 members — the minimum number necessary to reach a quorum — remain on the council.

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