

Opposition Campaign Leaflets Banned for Putin Cartoon

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The  **Moscow Times**

An opposition candidate in Russia's upcoming parliamentary elections has seen his campaign leaflets banned for featuring a cartoon of Russian President Vladimir Putin, the Vedomosti newspaper reported Friday.

Nikolai Lyaskin, a candidate for the PARNAS opposition party, was told by Moscow's Babushkinsky District Election Commission on Thursday that he must withdraw the leaflets.

They feature cartoons of Russian President Vladimir Putin, the president's ally Arkady Rotenberg, Deputy Prime Minister Igor Shuvalov, and Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu, Vedomosti reported.

Under new laws which came into force this April, politicians cannot use the name or image of anyone who isn't a candidate as part of their election campaign.

Lyaskin said that he created the leaflets to “test out” the new law after

a Communist Party candidate in Krasnoyarsk was allowed to use a hand-drawn image of Stalin in his campaign literature, the newspaper wrote.

The Krasnoyarsk Election Commission initially banned the image, but relented after

Russia's Central Electoral Commission (CEC) said that the restrictions didn't apply to deceased figures or "hand-drawn images." The CEC are yet to comment on Lyaskin's case.

"With regard to the cartoons and caricatures there is still no clear criteria," said Oleg Zakharov, a member of the Russian Association for Political Lawyers. "We still believe that is better for candidates to err on the side of caution," he told Vedomosti.

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