

Russian election 2021: Putin's United Russia clings on to supermajority

Written by Administrator

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Uliana Pavlova 21/09/2021

President Putin's party has been declared to have won a landslide victory in parliamentary elections, despite polls showing historically low support and amid claims of widespread election fraud.

United Russia won nearly 50 per cent of the national vote, meaning that it will retain a two-thirds "supermajority" in the State Duma, or parliament, and pass laws without the need for alliances. With 99 per cent of ballots counted, the Communist Party was the second largest party with almost 20 per cent of the vote.

[The official results were dismissed by opposition](#) groups, who accused the state of gerrymandering through ballot stuffing, the coercion of voters and committing widespread online voting fraud.

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In Moscow, an opposition stronghold, early exit polls that showed strong leads for Communist and other candidates endorsed by the jailed opposition leader Alexei Navalny under his “smart voting” project. After online votes were tallied, however, candidates from the Kremlin-endorsed list saw huge swings in their favour and won every district. Mikhail Lobanov, a Communist candidate who had been far ahead in polling, said the results were “simply not possible” and his party said that it would not recognise the results.

[Kira Yarmysh](#), Navalny's spokeswoman, tweeted: “Electronic voting robbed this procedure of even a hint of reality.”

Lyubov Sobol, an ally of Navalny, said: “With such a colossal number of violations, the results of the State Duma elections cannot be recognised as clean, honest or legitimate.”

Independent polling by the Levada Centre before the election showed United Russia on about 15 per cent support in Moscow.

Navalny's smart voting strategy aimed to unseat United Russia candidates by publishing a list of alternative candidates a few days before the elections. The Kremlin forced the US tech giants Google and Apple to remove an associated app from its app stores on Friday and accused the US government of collusion in the project.

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Navalny's organisations were banned as "extremist" before the election, his top allies were arrested or fled and anyone associated with his groups was kept from running.

The US State Department cast doubt on the integrity of [Russia's](#) parliamentary election today, saying that a crackdown on critics by the government had "prevented the Russian people from exercising their civil and political rights".

Ned Price, the State Department spokesman, said: "The September 17-19 Duma elections in the Russian Federation took place under conditions not conducive to free and fair proceedings."

At a celebratory rally at United Russia's headquarters broadcast on state television, Sergei Sobyenin, the mayor of Moscow and an ally of the Russian leader, shouted: "Putin! Putin! Putin!" to a receptive crowd that echoed his chant.

Golos, an election watchdog accused by the authorities of being a foreign agent, recorded thousands of violations, including threats against observers and ballot stuffing, blatant examples of which circulated on social media. Some individuals were shown on camera appearing to deposit bundles of votes in urns.

Meanwhile, in elections in Chechnya, the pro-Kremlin leader [Ramzan Kadyrov](#) gained 99.7 per

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cent of votes to retain his position.