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RUSSIA ELECTION ALERT #6

Regional and local elections – Trend against established parties. Candidates under undue pressure.



Source: *dw.com*

Last weekend's regional and local elections in Russia represented a final rehearsal ahead of next year's federal parliamentary elections. This was also the last election to be managed by the acting composition of the Russian Central Election Commission (CEC) and its chairperson, Ella Pamfilova, whose term in office is to expire in March next year. [According to independent election observers](#), the elections displayed two strongly conflicting trends.

On the one hand, it is becoming increasingly evident that citizens' electoral preferences are changing. Wherever possible, many voters either backed 'new faces' or other candidates and parties that had not been so popular before.

On the other hand, those in charge of organizing the elections responded to this situation through different means aiming to preserve the power of the ruling parties and candidates. They filtered out politicians, even previously considered 'systemic' during the stage of registering candidates; created own organizations to substitute or imitate civil society or some political actors; put candidates and civil activists under undue pressure; introduced and expanded non-transparent and unobservable procedures; complicated access to final voting results, and finally, opted for direct and massive fraud.



There were also numerous attempts to restrict election observation. Independent election observers were the victim of massive smear campaigns aiming to discredit their findings and to stir up hostility against them.

More open-source material on these elections from independent election observers available [here](#).

Also see www.epde.org for more information.