

Communist Poll Boycott Is Banned

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An election campaign took an odd turn when the Central Elections Commission banned the Communist Party from boycotting the upcoming legislative vote in the Krasnodar region.

The Communists decided last week to withdraw all 39 candidates from the Oct. 10 election after four of them had their registrations canceled on a court order over paperwork problems.

But election officials informed the party Wednesday that the boycott violated the party's charter and infringed on the rights of the other candidates.

It was unclear whether all candidates on the Communist ticket in Krasnodar had supported the boycott.

“Some of the candidates have already withdrawn their bids. Maybe they all will be withdrawn by tomorrow,” Sergei Obukhov, a State Duma deputy with the Communist Party, told The Moscow Times on Thursday.

Central Elections Commission chief Vladimir Churov told City FM radio late Wednesday that at least three of the Communist Party's candidates in Krasnodar had refused to withdraw from the race.

But Obukhov said the three were not Communist members and planned to run as party supporters.

The party's Krasnodar branch called the election commission's ruling “illogical” on Thursday, saying that only the Constitutional Court was entitled to review a party's charter.

“The Central Elections Commission has no authority of the Constitutional Court to act like this,” Obukhov said.

Communists have also complained about violations in Tambov legislative elections, also scheduled for Oct. 10. Party representatives said local advertising companies and printing offices refused to work for anyone but the ruling United Russia party, effectively torpedoing the campaigns of its rivals.

The Communist Party has planned a series of rallies in Krasnodar and Tambov next week to protest what it called “administrative pressure” by authorities who side with United Russia, the party said in a statement.

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