

# New Nazarbayev Stint?

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ASTANA, Kazakhstan — Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev on Monday asked a constitution council to examine a proposed referendum on a 10-year extension to his rule, which would allow him to bypass two elections and lead the country unopposed until 2020.

Parliament, snubbing U.S. and EU criticism, has unanimously approved a referendum that would avert any potential challenge of the 70-year-old president in 2012 and 2017 elections.

The constitutional council, itself headed by the president, said in a statement that it would examine whether the proposal complied with Kazakhstan's constitution and deliver its verdict within a month.

The president cannot sign into law any bill declared unconstitutional by the council. Nazarbayev on Jan. 6 rejected the plan to extend his powers via a referendum, but his veto was overruled by a vote in the parliament on Friday.

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