The Moscow Times
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Kazakhstan's Prime Minister Reinstalled

January 22, 2012



ASTANA, Kazakhstan — Kazakhstan's new parliament reinstalled a close ally of President Nursultan Nazarbayev as prime minister on Friday, demonstrating its loyal backing for the veteran leader after elections criticized by the West as falling short of democracy.

Karim Masimov will embark on a sixth year as prime minister after 92 deputies in the lower house voted to retain the government. Five in the 107-seat chamber voted against, and eight abstained.

Masimov, 46, is the longest-serving Kazakh prime minister, having held the job since January 2007. A Nazarbayev loyalist fluent in several languages, he identified a looming global economic crisis as the main challenge for his government.

"The No. 1 issue is macroeconomic stability," Masimov said in his first interview after being reappointed. "No country in the world is immune to the upcoming crisis. We should be responsive to this issue."

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