

Golos Ordered Out of Offices

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The landlord for independent elections watchdog Golos has demanded the organization vacate its offices six months before their lease is set to expire, Gazeta.ru reported Tuesday.

Golos received a letter from the company, which rents its office space, asking the organization to leave the building by Feb. 1, even though their lease is valid through Aug. 1, Golos director Lilia Shibanova told Gazeta.ru.

Golos came under pressure from authorities before last month's State Duma elections. It became the subject of a smear campaign by state-run TV channel NTV and was issued a fine for violating a law that prohibits publication of election opinion research five days before a vote.

On the day of the Duma elections, the organization's website was shut down by cyber attacks. Shibanova said the pressure has not let up as the March 4 presidential election approaches.

"In certain regions we are already being refused the right to carry out observation at voting sites, and inspections are being made in connection with the work of our newspaper Grazhdansky Golos. So right now it does not seem that this campaign will end up being easier

for us than the parliamentary [vote], " she said.

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