

Medvedev Says Reforms Unrelated to Protests

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President Dmitry Medvedev said Monday that the proposals he made in December for reforms to the political system were not concessions to protesters who have rallied in cities across the country in favor of just such reforms.

Medvedev has proposed reinstating gubernatorial elections, which were annulled by President Vladimir Putin in 2004, as well as softening the requirements for forming political parties and for becoming a presidential candidate.

"Everything being done — this is not an uncoordinated set of random measures that were pulled out in December or somewhat later. It is a deeply thought-out position," Medvedev said at a meeting of his supporters, RIA-Novosti reported. He said drafts of some of the laws included in the proposed reform package had been written in May and June.

Medvedev also said the proposed measures are not finalized and should be carefully discussed by the State Duma and members of civil society.

Commenting on the issue of gubernatorial elections, Medvedev suggested that governors should be limited to two terms in office.

"If such a position exists in relation to other officials, then why not" instate the rule for governors, Medvedev said, Interfax reported.

A number of current regional governors have served more than two terms in office, including Tomsk Governor Viktor Kress, who has been in the position since 1995, and Omsk Governor Leonid Polezhayev, who has been at his post since 1991.

But Medvedev said Krasnodar Governor Alexander Tkachyov will be reappointed as the head of his region for a fourth term, before gubernatorial elections are restored.

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