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Investigation Opened in Sham Vote-Fraud Videos on Internet

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The Investigative Committee has opened an investigation into who is responsible for creating fake videos showing voting fraud during the upcoming presidential election and will check to see if a crime has been committed, RIA-Novosti reported Thursday.

The pre-filmed phony videos appeared online a week before the March 4 election, purporting to show violations being committed at polling stations.

“If signs of a crime are confirmed in the actions of those who created and posted the videos, it will be decided whether to open a criminal case,” committee head Sergei Markin said Thursday.

Central Elections Commission head Vladimir Churov made mention Tuesday of such bogus videos in a meeting of regional elections commission chairs.

He called on them to react calmly to such “provocations,” RIA-Novosti reported.

The move may be part of an attempt to accuse Kremlin critics of foul play ahead of Sunday's vote which Prime Minister Vladimir Putin is widely expected to win.

Putin had earlier claimed that the opposition was preparing to fake evidence of vote-rigging to cast doubt on the vote.

Members of the opposition have said the fake videos are aimed at discrediting authentic footage of falsifications being committed.

After videos were posted online showing fraud in December's State Duma elections, Churov dismissed them as phony, saying they were shot with actors in film studios.

Those videos helped fuel widespread protests against election fraud. Despite the rallies, authorities have stonewalled demands to punish those accused of vote-rigging.

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