

Shein Arrives in Moscow to Meet With Churov

April 16, 2012



Astrakhan mayoral candidate Oleg Shein, speaking at a rally Saturday in his support. **Alexandra Odynova**

The Astrakhan mayoral candidate who has been on a month-long hunger strike to protest an electoral loss he says was tainted by fraud, filed a lawsuit Monday before heading to meet with the head of the elections commission.

Oleg Shein [wrote](#) on his LiveJournal blog that he had filed the lawsuit before boarding a plane to Moscow for a meeting with the Central Elections Commission's chief Vladimir Churov late Monday. They were scheduled to watch videos containing alleged vote-rigging at the Astrakhan polls.

Shein, the head of the A Just Russia party in the Astrakhan region, officially received less than 30 percent backing at the polls, while his rival, United Russia candidate Mikhail Stolyarov, won 60 percent of the vote.

Together with several supporters, Shein has been on hunger strike since March 16.

Last week, Rostelecom finally provided footage from the webcams at 203 of the city's polling stations. But it turned out Monday that video recordings from at least 18 stations are still missing, Shein told Kommersant FM radio after filing the lawsuit.

The videos are needed to back the lawsuit with evidence, he said.

The election results can be overturned if a court voids the returns from at least 25 percent of the polling stations. But the opposition says it has little trust in Russian courts to act independently of the ruling United Russia.

The election and its aftermath have become a lightning rod for the country's nascent opposition movement and thousands rallied in the center of Astrakhan on Saturday calling for a fair vote. Shein has repeatedly said he is ready to stop his four-week hunger strike if the Central Elections Commission orders a new vote.

On Monday, Central Elections Commission officials showed journalists footage from three polling station cameras, but reiterated that the recorded violations were not enough to lead to a new vote.

“Violations during the vote counting were found at four stations, while in five other cases observers didn't receive final protocols,” the commission's deputy chairman Leonid Ivlev said, Interfax reported.

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