

Ukraine Opposition Fails to Sign Up Klitschko for Election

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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KIEV — Ukraine's opposition suffered a setback Friday in its bid to weaken President Viktor Yanukovich's grip on power when boxing champion Vitaly Klitschko, a rising political star, refused to join an election coalition.

The opposition has been weakened by the jailing of former Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko. But a surge in popularity for the Udar (Punch) party of Klitschko, a strong critic of Yanukovich and his Party of the Regions, had raised the prospect of a combined opposition victory at the Oct. 28 election.

But though he is equally forthright in criticizing the Yanukovich leadership and although he has ruled out any post-election deals with the Regions party, Klitschko has held back from casting his lot with the united opposition before the poll.

In a statement issued by his press service, the WBC world heavyweight champion explained

why he had snubbed the offer to join other opposition groups.

“We respect the suggestion of our opposition partners, but we consider victory in the elections and the defense of the results of the vote, and not the signing of statements, declarations and agreements to be the main task for the opposition in the coming days,” he said.

Arseny Yatsenyuk, a former economics and foreign minister who heads the union of opposition parties, said in an interview that “we did our utmost ... to produce a united, powerful and strong democratic coalition in the new parliament. He [Klitschko] refused. It is up to him.”

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