

Ukraine Votes With Opposition Leader in Jail

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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KIEV — Ukrainians voted in an election Sunday that was expected to maintain President Viktor Yanukovich's parliamentary majority, despite his rollback on democracy during nearly three years in power.

Yanukovich's Party of the Regions appeared to be capitalizing on three issues: the jailing of the charismatic opposition leader Yulia Tymoshenko, a former prime minister; a divided opposition camp; and Ukrainians' overall disillusionment with politics.

The West is paying close attention to the conduct of the vote in the strategic former Soviet state, situated between Russia and the European Union and responsible for transporting energy supplies to many EU countries.

A strong showing by the Party of Regions would cement Yanukovich's grip on power and likely turn Ukraine further away from the West.

The pro-Western opposition groups hope to gain enough parliament seats to weaken Yanukovich's power and undo the damage they say he has done: the jailing of Tymoshenko and her top allies, the concentration of power in the hands of the president, the snubbing of the Ukrainian language in favor of Russian, the waning press freedoms, a deteriorating business climate and growing corruption.

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