

Medvedev Calls Limiting Gubernatorial Elections 'Counterproductive'

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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The cancellation of direct gubernatorial elections would be a "step back" for Russia, Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev said at the opening of United Russia's Civil University on Wednesday.

"I am absolutely confident that the majority of Russian regions will not use this possibility," he said.

On March 24, the State Duma passed in a third and final reading a bill that grants regional authorities the right to cancel direct gubernatorial elections. Many lawmakers and pro-government pundits cited potential inter-ethnic strife and instability in the Caucasus as the reason for such a measure, while critics said it would undermine democracy.

Echoing Duma deputies' sentiments, Medvedev agreed that "Russia's federal structure has to be taken into account. This mostly concerns the Caucasus, but, in my opinion, there are no

other territories where this question could be raised in the same vein as in the Caucasus."

He added that in case some regional authorities would want to consider canceling the election, they would have to offer a solid explanation to the region's population.

United Russia's Civil University is designed to train new party leaders with a series of lectures.

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