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Kudrin's Civic Initiatives Committee Ready to Monitor Elections

By The Moscow Times

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Former finance minister Alexei Kudrin said that the Civic Initiatives Committee, which he heads, is ready to fill the void left by Golos' suspension and accept the task of monitoring future elections in Russia.

Last month, Independent elections watchdog Golos, which played a prominent role in reporting voting violations in disputed December 2011 parliamentary elections, was ordered by the Justice Ministry to cease all activities for six months.

The ministry attributed the decision to the fact that the group failed to register as a "foreign agent" in accordance with the new law on nongovernmental organizations, which requires all organizations that receive foreign funding and conduct "political activity" to register as "foreign agents."

"Unfortunately, the only independent organization dedicated to the long-term observation

[of elections] was minimized. Today we responsibly declare that we are ready to take on the important function of monitoring the elections," Kudrin said Thursday at a meeting of the committee.

Committee of Civil Initiatives has already formed a network of regional correspondents in the 30 regions where, according to Kudrin, "the most significant campaigns" are run. Experts have already begun objectively monitoring the nomination and registration of candidates in over 30 regions, Interfax reported.

The mayoral vote will be held in Moscow on Sept. 8, and many other elections will be taking place on the same day nationwide.

The deadline for registrations for the capital's mayoral elections fell yesterday and six candidates, including acting Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyanin and opposition blogger Alexei Navalny, submitted their applications.

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