

Tajikistan Court Removes Presidential Term Limits From Constitution

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Tajikistan's President Emomali Rahmon

The Constitutional Court in Tajikistan has approved constitutional amendments that would allow President Emomali Rahmon to run for office as many times as he pleases, ruling that the “founder of peace and unity” should not be limited by a two-term restriction, Russia's TASS news agency reported Thursday.

The honorific — which in full runs: “The founder of peace and national unity, the leader of the nation” — was bestowed on Rahmon by parliament in December 2015, TASS reported.

The Constitutional Court has now ruled that Tajikistan's constitution, which currently states the “same individual cannot serve as president for more than two consecutive terms” should be amended to include an exception: “The restrictions ... do not apply to the founder of peace and national unity, the leader of the nation,” according to the report.

The proposed amendments would also lower the minimum age for presidential candidates to 30 years from the current 35. Political analysts said that change was introduced to allow

Rahmon's son Rustami Emomali — who turns 30 next year, according to Russian online accounts — to succeed his father, the BBC Russian Service reported.

The Constitutional Court ruled the amendments were “aimed at strengthening the foundations of constitutional order” in the country, and “reflect the continuing process of democratizing the political and social life of Tajik society,” TASS reported.

The amendments, which were approved by the lower house of Tajikistan's parliament on Jan. 22, will now be put to a referendum, TASS reported, adding that no date for the balloting has yet been set.

Tajikistan, a former Soviet republic in Central Asia, adopted its constitution as an independent state in 1994. It was amended in 2003 to extend the presidential term to seven years from the previous five.

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