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Russian State Duma Election Season Begins

By The Moscow Times

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Campaign season for the upcoming Russian State Duma elections kicks off this week, with the country's main political parties preparing for their vital 2016 conventions and candidate nominations.

Russian President Vladimir Putin announced Friday that elections would be taking place on September 18. Russian law requires that between 90 to 110 days notice is given before elections, with Putin making his announcement 93 days ahead of the vote.

The race is now on for political candidates across the country, who must collect a certain number of signatures from their local area before being allowed to appear on the ballot.

Party conventions will begin next week, with the Russian Communist Party (KPRF), United Russia, A Just Russia, and Liberal Democratic (LDPR) parties all holding their meetings between June 25 and June 28.

The ruling United Russia party has seen a slide in the polls in the run-up to the elections, a survey by the independent Levada Center revealed in May. Thirty-five percent of respondents said that they would vote for United Russia if elections were held this week, down from 42 percent in April.

United Russia and the All-Russia People's Front are predicted to receive 80 percent of Duma seats allocated through single-member constituencies and remain on the edge of a constitutional majority, political analyst Abbas Gallyamov told The Moscow Times. Liberal opposition parties Yabloko and Parnas are not expected to win seats.

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