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Kremlin 'Aiming for 70% Victory' in 2018 Presidential Election

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Andrei Makhonin / Vedomosti

Russia's authorities are angling for a 70-percent victory in the upcoming 2018 presidential elections, according to one regional deputy governor.

The deputy governor in question attended a seminar on 24 Dec., organized by Sergei Kiriyenko, the new deputy head of the presidential administration. The meeting brought together the man charged with Russian domestic policy and his regional counterparts, but the discussion was largely about the 2018 election.

Kiriyenko said that "the main candidate should win with 70-percent turnout" and should receive 70 percent of the vote, the deputy governor told the RBC news site on condition of anonymity. Two other participants in the seminar confirmed the numbers to RBC.

One of the sources also said that the election would take place in March 2018, thus dismissing rumors that the Kremlin could opt for early elections.

Russia’s incumbent president, Vladimir Putin, is expected to be the main contender in 2018, even though he has not yet confirmed his plans to run.

A 70 percent of the vote is a very high bar – even for Putin. He won an election by a similar margin just once, in 2004, when he received 71.3 percent of the vote. Achieving 70-percent turnout will also pose a challenge. In Russia's 25 years of independence, the highest turnout was in 2008, when 69 percent of the population voted.

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