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Kremlin Launches Regional Reshuffle Before Putin's 2018 Presidential Bid – Reports

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Kremlin Press Service

The Kremlin is launching a major political reshuffle among the country's top regional officials, Russian media reports.

Five regional governors are expected leave their posts in the bid to strengthen Russian President Vladimir Putin's position before the 2018 presidential elections, the Vedomosti newspaper reported Monday.

They include the Karelian republic's Alexander Khudilainen, the Buryatia region's Vyacheslav Nagovicyn, Oleg Kovalev from the Ryazan region, Evgeny Kuyvashev from the Sverdlovsk region, Sergei Mitin of Novgorod Pavel Konkov of Ivanovo.

All of the men belong to the president's ruling United Russia party.

Viktor Basargin, the governor of the Perm region, is also among those expected to resign in the coming days. He announced on Monday morning that he would be leaving his post before his term formally finished in May.

Basargin was named governor in May 2012, and had previously worked as Russia's Minister of Regional Development. He will not be seeking re-election,
the Interfax news agency
reported.

Russia will next hold presidential elections in 2018. While President Putin has not yet confirmed his candidacy, he remains Russians' favourite for the post.

Some 63 percent of Russians want to see Putin continue as president, a report by independent pollster the Levada Center revealed in November 2016. Almost half of the population — 49 percent — believe there will no politician capable of challenging Putin in the elections, the survey found.

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