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Azerbaijan's President Appoints New Deputy. (His Wife)

February 21, 2017



Azerbaijan President Ilham Aliyev and his wife Mehriban leave a polling station after casting their ballots in Baku, Azerbaijan. **Sergei Grits / AP**

The President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev, has named his wife as the country's second-in-command.

Mehriban Aliyeva, the chairwoman of the ruling New Azerbaijan Party, is the first person to take on the role of vice-president since the post was created in a referendum last year. She now has the power to take over as Azeri leader if the president is unable to carry out his role.

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Azerbaijan's 2016 referendum made 29 amendments to the Azeri constitution, including an extension of the presidential term from five to seven years. All of the amendments were approved with between 90 and 95 percent of the popular vote, with a turnout of just under 70

percent.

International election monitoring group Freedom House described the referendum as unfair due to "well-documented ballot stuffing, the detention of people protesting the procedures, and other serious irregularities."

Ilham Aliyev was first elected as president in 2003, taking over the position from his father Heydar Aliyev. He was most recently was re-elected in 2008 with 87 percent of the vote. Opposition parties boycotted the elections.

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