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Kremlin Cancels Voter Turnout Boost Over Fears of Opposition Victory — Reports

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Vedomosti

Kremlin plans to boost voter turnout in the country's regional elections have been scrapped over fears that opposition candidates could be pushed into victory.

The Russian government had planned to launch initiatives encouraging Russians to head to polls in 16 regions scheduled to hold gubernatorial elections this September, Russia's Vedomosti newspaper reported Thursday.

The program will instead be canceled in five of the 16 regions where candidates from President Putin's ruling United Russia party face serious opposition, an unnamed Kremlin source told the outlet.

Party officials believe that the regions of Sverdlovsk, Yaroslavl, Kaliningrad, Kirov and Buryatia could all return opposition governors after the vote, toppling their current United Russia leaders.

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Vedomosti reported in February that the Kremlin hoped for a strong turnout in the gubernatorial elections in order to shore up support before the presidential elections in 2018.

Officials are currently hoping for a 70 percent turnout, with 70 percent of votes cast for United Russia, the newspaper reported.

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