

Putin Will Reportedly Meet With Russia's Top Cartoonists to Shore Up Parents' Support

May 19, 2017



Ivan Sekretarev / AP

In a bid to shore up his popularity among parents, President Vladimir Putin will meet with the creators of Russia's two most popular cartoon shows, according to the independent television station [Dozhd](#).

Two sources reportedly told the network that the president will likely sit down with the producers of "Kikoriki" and "Masha and the Bear" on May 31, just before International Children's Day. Dozhd says the idea for the meeting came from experts on Putin's domestic policy team, where Oleg Matveichev manages youth coordination efforts. Matveichev and other Kremlin officials refused to discuss the president's schedule with Dozhd, though Putin's spokesman, Dmitry Peskov, said such a meeting is "impossible to rule out."

Though Russia's next presidential race is less than a year away, scheduled for March 2018,

incumbent President Vladimir Putin has not yet indicated his intention to stand for reelection. Nevertheless, journalists have tracked several moves by the Kremlin in recent months that strongly suggest Putin will seek a fourth term in office, which would keep him in power until at least 2024, extending the Putin era (including Dmitry Medvedev's short tenure) to a quarter-century.

Russia's presidential campaign season doesn't formally begin until December this year, 100 days before the vote. In December last year, the news agency RBC [reported](#) that Sergei Kiriyenko, Putin's powerful first deputy chief of staff, informed Russia's lieutenant governors that Moscow expects "70/70" results in March 2018: 70 percent national turnout and 70 percent of the vote for Putin.

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