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Russian Regions Lure Voters With Raffles and Rap Concerts

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Sergei Kiselyov / Moskva News Agency

Events are planned in more than half of Russia's regions on Sunday in what is seen as an effort by authorities to attract voters to the polls, the Kommersant newspaper reported Friday.

On Sept. 10, Russians will elect governors in 16 regions and vote in local legislative and city council elections across the country.

Nine regions have scheduled concerts, contests and giveaways to run alongside the elections, according to Kommersant.

The northwestern republic of Karelia, for example, will give away a Russian-made car this Sunday, the report said.

The Sverdlovsk region will hold a series of festivities in which 15 apartments, 130 cars and 10,000 household items will be given away in raffles. To collect prizes winners must be registered to vote.

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Students in the Crimean city of Sevastopol will compete over which university can turn out the greatest number of voters using hashtags and social media, Kommersant said.

In the exclave of Kaliningrad, sandwiched between Poland and Lithuania, young participants of the "I Decide 2017" promotion will be awarded a pen, headphones and a coupon to take part in a raffle.

The regions of Omsk and Perm will host pop concerts, and in Perm social media posts are also touting free cinema tickets for voters aged 18 to 35. Major events are also scheduled in Tomsk, Saratov, and the capital of the Siberian republic of Buryatia.

The reports of mass events follow revelations that regional authorities are secretly campaigning using state funds and authorities in Moscow are seeking to ensure victory of loyal candidates by starving the city's election of publicity.

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