

Communist Party Leader Zyuganov Says He's Not Running for President (Yet)

November 08, 2017



Gennady Zyuganov / Kremlin Press Service

The longtime leader of Russia's Communist Party denied that he's running for president in 2018 — less than 24 hours after seemingly announcing his candidacy on state-run television.

Gennady Zyuganov said on the centennial anniversary of the October Revolution on Tuesday that "every organization" within his party had backed his candidacy for the March 18 election.

But on Wednesday, Zyuganov said his Channel One statement shouldn't be interpreted as a formal announcement.

"We're in discussions now, and the final decision will be made later," he told the radio station Govorit Moskva.

Related article: [Russian Communist Party Leader Zyuganov Announces Presidential Bid](#)

The Communist Party is scheduled to meet on Dec. 23 to formally decide on the candidate. Zyuganov added the resulting decision would include candidates for prime minister, deputy prime ministers and key cabinet members.

If — or when — the 73-year-old politician makes up his mind, it would be Zyuganov's fifth run for the Russian presidency, his first dating back to 1996. The Communist Party has about 160,000 members, 40 percent of whom are under 35.

President Vladimir Putin is widely expected to run for his fourth term and win, although he has not officially confirmed his bid. Zyuganov is likely to compete for second place with the Liberal Democratic Party's Vladimir Zhirinovsky.

Also running are socialite and former reality-TV host Ksenia Sobchak, singer-songwriter and journalist Yekaterina Gordon, as well as a slew of businesspeople and TV personalities.

Alexei Navalny, Russia's most prominent opposition leader, continues to run a nationwide campaign despite being barred due to a criminal conviction which he claims is politically motivated.

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