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Russia's Zhirinovsky to Run for President Next Year

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Vladimir Zhirinovsky (Vedyashkin Sergei / Moskva News Agency)

Russia's Liberal Democratic Party (LDPR) has put forward its longtime leader Vladimir Zhirinovsky as Vladimir Putin's challenger during presidential elections next year.

The vote in March 2018 will be Zhirinovsky's sixth presidential bid. With more than two decades at the helm of the first registered post-Soviet opposition party, the LDPR leader is an institution of Russian political life, infamous for his rabble-rousing rhetoric and outrageous statements.

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Putin is also widely expected to run, extending his rule into 2024, although he has yet to make an official announcement.

Igor Lebedev, deputy speaker of the State Duma and Zhirinovsky's son, said that the faction unanimously nominated its party leader at a meeting on Monday.

"I'm immensely grateful for having been nominated," Zhirinovsky was cited as saying by the Interfax news agency.

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