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Russian Radio Host Dismissed for Comparing Putin Voters to Primates

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A radio host in Kamchatka in the Far East has been taken off the airwaves after she compared Russians who voted for President Vladimir Putin to primates.

Nearly 77 percent of voters on Sunday gave Putin a fourth presidential term amid reports of ballot-stuffing and state employers pressuring workers to go to the polls.

"I've been increasingly under the impression recently that I live in a country where 74 percent of citizens are primates," Radio SV's Rosina Budans was heard saying on air a day after the March 18 vote.

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Budans was dismissed after her comments, including a "special hello to those here in

Kamchatka who fabulously and beautifully stuffed ballot boxes," were leaked online.

The radio station apologized to the Kamchatka regional election commission Wednesday, after the commission demanded an official explanation.

In the apology, Radio SV editor Roman Zhukov distanced his station from Budans' comments, saying "freedom of speech is not freedom to insult and accuse indiscriminately."

"For the expression of personal opinions there are various web platforms and blogs," Zhukov said.

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