

# News From Russia: What You Missed Over the Weekend

September 24, 2018



Sergei Furgal (Dmitry Morgulis / TASS)

## Opposition victories

Systemic opposition candidates have won in gubernatorial runoffs against Kremlin-backed incumbents in two regions.

In Khabarovsk, Sergei Furgal of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDPR) commanded a [lead](#) over ruling United Russia's Vyacheslav Shport by 70 percent to 28 percent of the votes. LDPR challenger Vladimir Sipyagin also beat Vladimir region governor Svetlana Orlova by 57 percent to 37 percent.

Meanwhile, the incumbent governor of the Siberian republic of Khakasia [quit](#) after failing to secure a majority in the first round of voting, pitting Valentin Konovalov of the Communist Party against Andrei Filyagin of A Just Russia in runoff elections on Oct. 7.

## Pension protests

Around 3,000 supporters of Russia's Communist Party and local residents rallied in Moscow to protest against an unpopular pension reform plan that will raise the retirement age.

## Serial spies

Several people with passport numbers similar to those of two men suspected of poisoning a former Russian spy and his daughter in Britain were [reported](#) to have listed the headquarters of the GRU military intelligence agency's address in their paperwork.

Two of the men who placed Khoroshevskoye Shosse 76B as their residence allegedly traveled to Serbia in the fall of 2016, when neighboring Montenegro suspects Russians and Serbians of having plotted a coup.

## Still guilty

Russia's Defense Ministry [reiterated](#) its accusation that Israel had "misled" Moscow and used a Russian reconnaissance aircraft as cover, leading to its downing by Syrian anti-aircraft last week.

The Israeli military later [said](#) its air force "did not hide behind any aircraft" and [accused](#) Syria of "irresponsible" deployment of anti-aircraft weapons that led to 15 deaths aboard Il-20.

## Catch and release

Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny was detained again on Monday for allegedly violating protest laws while he was being released from a 30-day jail stint on the same charge, his associate said.

### Related article: [Navalny Detained Upon Release From 30 Days in Jail](#)

Leonid Volkov, a Navalny ally, wrote on Twitter on Monday morning that Navalny had been taken to a police station as he walked out of jail and was again being accused of violating protest laws.

## Lonely space

The head of Russia's space agency Roscosmos, Dmitry Rogozin, said Moscow may abandon joint work with U.S. space agency NASA on a space station in lunar orbit and instead propose its own moon-orbiting project.

Roscosmos spokesman Vladimir Ustimenko later told the state-run TASS news agency that "Russia has not refused to take part in the project of the lunar orbit station with the U.S."

## Prying eyes

Ecuador gave WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange a diplomatic post in Russia on Dec. 19, 2017, but rescinded it after Britain refused to give him diplomatic immunity, according to an

Ecuadorian foreign ministry letter to a legislator.

The letter's disclosure follows reports that Russian diplomats held secret talks in London to help Assange flee Britain through an operation tentatively scheduled for Christmas Eve, 2017, which was aborted because it was deemed too risky.

### **Clean record**

An estimated 100 people have been [convicted](#) of treason or espionage between 1997 and 2017 in Russia, according to a report by the Team 29 rights group.

Only one suspect has been acquitted in the past two decades, which also saw the inclusion of new treason and espionage articles in the Criminal Code.

### **Unwanted guest**

The Norwegian police have detained a Russian citizen on suspicion of illegal intelligence activities after attending a seminar on digitalization in the Norwegian parliament this week.

#### **Related article: [Norway Detains Russian Man Over Suspected Illegal Intelligence Activities](#)**

The man was detained at Oslo airport late Friday and would be held for two weeks due to the risk of destruction of evidence, police told Reuters. The Russian Embassy in Norway [said](#) the reason for the 51-year-old's arrest was "far-fetched."

### **Anticapitalism**

Seven Other Russia opposition movement activists have been [detained](#) after throwing smoke bombs and unfurling a "Dekulakization for Oligarchs" banner outside an office of the Sibur Holding petrochemical group in Moscow.

### **Heavyweight crowns**

Britain's Anthony Joshua delivered a devastating technical knockout in the seventh round to defeat Russia's Alexander Povetkin in London and retain his WBA, IBF, WBO and IBO world heavyweight championship belts.

With a right-hander square on his jaw, Joshua, 29, moved on to 22 unbeaten professional fights and handed Povetkin, 39, his second overall defeat and first by TKO.

### **Indian summer**

Saturday set the record as the [hottest](#) Sept. 22 in Moscow's history at 25.8 degrees Celsius, but the heat was later followed by [torrential rains](#) in the evening.

Meanwhile, temperatures [plummeted](#) to 16 degrees Celsius on Sunday, and the weather service [warned](#) of nonstop wind and rain next week with a chance of light snow toward the weekend.

## **Another million**

The southern city of Krasnodar officially [became](#) the 16th Russian city with a population of at least 1 million on City Day weekend.

Mayor Yevgeny Pervyshov handed out symbolic certificates to newborns at a maternity hospital after the regional head of the State Statistics Service certified the city's official status.

## **Metrobaby**

The St. Petersburg metro celebrated its first childbirth when a passenger gave birth to a baby boy on the platform of Tekhnologichesky Institut station.

“This is the first metrobaby that was born on the St. Petersburg metro in its history of more than half a century,” the city’s metro service [said](#) on its Telegram channel.

*Includes reporting from Reuters.*

Original url:

<https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2018/09/24/news-from-russia-what-you-missed-over-the-weekend-62972-a62972>