

Moscow Mayor Raises Pensions on Eve of Contentious City Election

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Viktor Drachov / TASS

Moscow's mayor has raised the city's monthly retirement payout less than two weeks before a local election that has triggered the largest sustained protest movement in Russia in recent years.

The protests [broke out](#) this summer after election authorities barred a slew of opposition candidates from running for the Moscow City Duma on Sept. 8. Police have briefly [detained](#) over 2,000 people, sometimes violently, at rallies that the authorities said were illegal.

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Moscow's minimum pensions will total 19,500 rubles (\$300) a month starting in September, Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyanin [announced](#) Tuesday, a week after [pledging](#) to increase payouts from the city budget.

Some 1.6 million retirees living in the Russian capital will each receive additional payouts of around 2,000 rubles (\$30) next month, Sobyanin tweeted, 44,000 of them for the first time.

Social media users [noted](#) that the retirement increase [comes](#) suspiciously close to the date of Moscow's election.

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“Give us elections twice a year!” one user [tweeted](#) in response to Sobyanin’s announcement.

Sobyanin, an ally of President Vladimir Putin, has praised the police for what he called their appropriate response to “mass disorder” at the height of the election protests in Moscow.

“We don’t live in Zimbabwe,” the mayor [said](#) in July, accusing the opposition of “simply forcing the police” to forcibly disperse the protests.

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