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Russia's Ruling Party Sees Voter Support Drop in Crimea 5 Years After Annexation

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Andrei Nikerichev / Moskva News Agency

Voter support for Russia's ruling party has fallen significantly in the major Crimean port city of Sevastopol since 2014, the RBC news website has reported, citing official data from regional and local elections held across the country Sunday.

United Russia, which supports President Vladimir Putin, saw a decline in support in nearly every region compared to the 2014 regional elections. Sevastopol, a federal city on the annexed Crimean peninsula, was one of only four regions in which United Russia failed to gain over 50% of the vote.

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The party's share of the vote in Sevastopol has fallen by 39%, from 77% in 2014 to 38% on Sunday, RBC reported Tuesday. The results mark the second-largest decline in votes for United Russia in the country.

Only in the Kharbavarosk region did United Russia lose a bigger proportion of the vote, suffering a 45% decrease in votes from 2014. Kharbavarosk has historically been considered one of the most difficult regional assemblies for United Russia to succeed in, RBC had previously reported.

Andrei Turchak, the secretary of United Russia's general council, said that "intra-elite" conflict was responsible for the decline in votes. He added that United Russia will represent 58% of the deputies in the Sevastopol legislative assembly after the single-mandate is considered.

Political scientist Vitaly Ivanov told RBC that the party had seen a popularity surge in 2014 as a direct result of Russia's annexation of Crimea that year. The subsequent drop in support comes in response to less popular policies such as pension reforms, he said.

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