

Putin Urges Russians to Back 'Stability, Security, Prosperity' in Vote

By [AFP](#)

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Russians began voting last week on a package of constitutional changes proposed by Putin earlier this year. [Kremlin.ru](#)

President Vladimir Putin on Tuesday urged Russians to take part in a nationwide vote on constitutional reforms to ensure "stability, security and prosperity."

In a televised address before the week-long ballot ends on Wednesday, Putin said Russians should vote for the country "we want to pass on to our children" but made no mention of a controversial amendment that would allow him to potentially stay in power until 2036.

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Russians began voting last week on the package of constitutional changes proposed by Putin, including a reset of presidential term limits that would allow him to run twice again after his

current six-year term ends in 2024.

Other amendments would strengthen presidential and parliamentary powers, enshrine traditional values including an effective ban on gay marriage and guarantee better minimum wages and pensions.

"We are voting for the country in which we want to live, with modern education and health care, with reliable social protection of citizens, with an effective government that is accountable to society," Putin said.

"We are voting for the country... we want to pass on to our children and grandchildren."

'President for life'

Russia's two houses of parliament have already approved the amendments but Putin reiterated they would only take effect if supported by a majority of voters.

"We can ensure stability, security, prosperity and a decent life only through development, only together and by ourselves," he said.

Putin, who was first elected president in 2000, announced the reforms earlier this year, after winning re-election with an overwhelming majority in 2018.

The amendment resetting presidential terms was a last-minute addition before lawmakers voted on the reforms, with critics accusing Putin of seeking to become "president for life."

Initially planned for April 22, the vote was postponed by the coronavirus outbreak but rescheduled after Putin said the epidemic had peaked and officials began reporting lower numbers of new cases.

There is little doubt the reforms will be approved, with a state-run exit poll of more than 163,000 voters this week showing 76% in favor.

Kremlin opponents have denounced the vote as a farce and accused the government of risking lives by going ahead with it as Russia continues to record new coronavirus cases.

Government advertisements urging Russians to vote have played up the patriotic and populist measures but not mentioned the presidential term reset.

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