

# News From Russia: What You Missed Over the Weekend

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Sergei Vedyashkin / Moskva News Agency

## Parliamentary lead

President Vladimir Putin's United Russia party was on track to win a strong majority in a parliamentary vote, results showed Monday, after an election that followed an unprecedented crackdown on the opposition.

With 80.1% of votes counted, United Russia was ahead with 49.42% of the vote, followed by the Communist Party with 20.25%.

Voting by party list accounts for only half of the lower house State Duma's 450 seats, and United Russia was dominating in the other half of seats assigned according to single-mandate races. With 71.50% of those votes counted, United Russia candidates were ahead in at least 196 of the 225 seats.

Turnout was at 45% according to the latest figures released by the election commission on

Sunday.

## **Widespread violations**

Russian social media was inundated with reports of ballot stuffing and military servicemen patrolling polling stations. As of Sunday evening, the independent election monitor Golos — which authorities branded a "foreign agent" ahead of the polls — had tracked close to 4,900 reports of voting violations.

Critics also pointed to online voting, new limits on independent election observers and the polls being spread over three days as presenting opportunities for mass voting fraud. Jailed Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny's allies said the vote was being falsified on a massive scale, pointing especially to repeated delays in releasing results from electronic voting in liberal and opposition-friendly Moscow.

## **Caving in**

As voting kicked off Friday, Apple and Google caused an uproar among Russia's opposition after they removed Navalny's "Smart Voting" app, which recommended candidates that supporters should back to unseat Kremlin-aligned politicians, from their stores.

By late Friday, the popular Telegram messenger had also removed Navalny's "Smart Voting" bot. By Sunday, Google Docs and YouTube videos containing the lists of the recommended candidates had also been blocked.

## **Foreign meddling**

Russia's elections commission said Saturday that it had recorded foreign interference in its ongoing three-day parliamentary elections.

The commission said two attacks targeted its website while a third was a denial-of-service attack.

## **Art show**

The Louis Vuitton Foundation's new exhibition in Paris opening Wednesday will feature Van Gogh, Picasso, Monet, Matisse and Cezanne — as well as Manet, Renoir, Toulouse-Lautrec, Rodin — on loan from Russian museums.

The 200 portraits, sculptures and photographs were brought to Russia by Mikhail and Ivan Morozov, brothers born into a textile dynasty in the 1870s.

According to Bloomberg, Putin personally [greenlit](#) the collection's loan in 2016, when billionaire Bernard Arnault's Louis Vuitton Foundation showcased another collection loaned from Russian museums.

*Includes reporting from AFP.*

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