

Russian Opposition Politician Loses Vote Marred by Doppelgangers

By [AFP](#)

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Boris Vishnevsky made headlines after he claimed that two other candidates had changed their names and appearance to match his. **Olga Maltseva / AFP**

A Russian opposition politician lost weekend elections to a Kremlin-aligned opponent after spoiler candidates in the country's second city St. Petersburg changed their names and even appearances to resemble him.

Russia held parliamentary and local elections that were marred by irregularities and allegations of fraud, with early counts showing an easy win for the ruling United Russia party.

Related article: [St. Petersburg Election Ballot Features 3 Near-Identical Boris Vishnevskys](#)

Ahead of the vote, the case of Boris Vishnevsky made headlines after he claimed that two other candidates had changed their names and appearance in an update on the common tactic

of nominating a "double" to split the vote and deliver victory to another candidate.

He said they had grown beards and mustaches for the election posters.

Preliminary results Monday showed that Vishnevsky, who is from the liberal Yabloko party, was defeated by Sergei Solovyov from the ruling United Russia party.

Vishnevsky, 65, told the news website Znak.com that he was prevented earlier Monday from filing a formal complaint against the vote.

He said five men snatched copies of the complaints and questioned him but did not cause him any harm.

With nearly all the votes counted Monday afternoon, President Vladimir Putin's United Russia party was on track to retain its majority in parliament.

The vote came in the wake of an unprecedented crackdown on the opposition with all vocal Kremlin critics prevented from running.

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