

News From Russia: What You Missed Over the Weekend

September 27, 2021



People attend a Russian Communist Party rally in Moscow's Pushkin Square against the results of parliamentary elections. **Yuri Kardobonov / AFP**

‘Colossal fraud’

Russia's Communist Party on Saturday led a thousand-strong [protest](#) in central Moscow over what it called "colossal" fraud in parliamentary polls as police detained a number of activists.

It was the first sizable Moscow protest since this month's controversial election. Police did not break up the unsanctioned rally but played loud music in an effort to drown out the protesters.

‘Convincing victory’

From his residence outside Moscow, Russian President Vladimir Putin hailed the ruling party's "convincing victory" and said Russian democracy was growing stronger as he hosted the heads of five parties that won parliamentary seats, including Communist leader Gennady

Zyuganov.

Speaking to the party leaders on Saturday, Putin said that for the first time since 1999 the State Duma would have five factions instead of four, hailing it as a sign of "the democratic development in our country."

Refuge revoked

Veteran human rights lawyer and head of the migrant workers rights organization Tong Dzhakhoni, Valentina Chupik, was detained at a Moscow airport and had her refugee status in Russia revoked, Reuters [reported](#) Saturday.

Chupik, who says she faces torture in her native Uzbekistan if she is deported, [told](#) the independent Novaya Gazeta newspaper that Russia's Federal Security Service (FSB) informed her she has been barred from entering the country until 2051.

Bitter friends

At least 11 fighters from the pro-Turkish rebel group Al-Hamza Division were [killed](#) Sunday in Russian air raids in northern Syria's town of Afrin, a war monitor said Sunday.

A spokesperson for the National Army, a coalition of Turkey-backed rebel groups, called Sunday's attack a "clear message from Russia" to Turkey, showing that there are no "red lines."

Filling the void

Mali has asked private Russian companies to boost security, Russia's foreign minister confirmed Saturday, as the Malian leader accused France of abandoning the conflict-ridden country by preparing a large troop drawdown.

European countries warned the Malian government on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly last week against hiring paramilitaries from the controversial Wagner group.

AFP contributed reporting.

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