

Police Search Communist Party Offices as Online Voting Controversy Continues

The Communist Party is challenging the results of Russia's State Duma elections.

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The Communist Party came second in Russia's parliamentary elections. **Alexander Avilov / Moskva News Agency**

Moscow authorities attempted to raid the Communist Party's city headquarters Tuesday, minutes before a group of party lawyers was preparing to file a lawsuit to challenge controversial online voting results from last week's parliamentary elections.

Police also blocked one of the party's leading parliamentarians from gaining access to his office in the State Duma, where documents to support the lawsuit were being held, the OVD-Info non-governmental organization [reported](#) Tuesday.

The Communist Party came [second](#) in Russia's nationwide elections to the State Duma, the lower chamber of the country's parliament, winning 57 seats to the 334 secured by the ruling

United Russia party.

The vote has been marred by [allegations](#) of widespread electoral fraud. In Moscow, where the Communist Party was expected to challenge for seats and secured key support from Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny through his Smart Voting recommendation system, early leads secured in the offline vote for opposition candidates were overhauled after the results of controversial online ballots were tallied up.

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The Communists have refused to recognise the results of the election and staged a small unauthorized protest following the vote.

Four party lawyers were in the Moscow headquarters Tuesday when the police attempted to gain entry, initially refusing to let them in, OVD-Info reported. The group was collecting documents before heading to a Moscow city court to file a lawsuit against the online voting results. Maxim Sikach, a lawyer for the Communist Party in Russia, told the NGO he suspects searches were an attempt to frustrate their plan.

At the same time as the raid on the party headquarters, police also blocked access to a room in the parliament used by Ivan Melnikov, the party's vice chairman in the State Duma, where other documents for the lawsuit were being stored.

Several of the defeated candidates who were standing for election in Moscow have [pledged](#) to challenge the results and a number have already filed lawsuits against the results in their districts.

The Kremlin has heralded the election as transparent and dismissed allegations of fraud or vote-rigging.

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