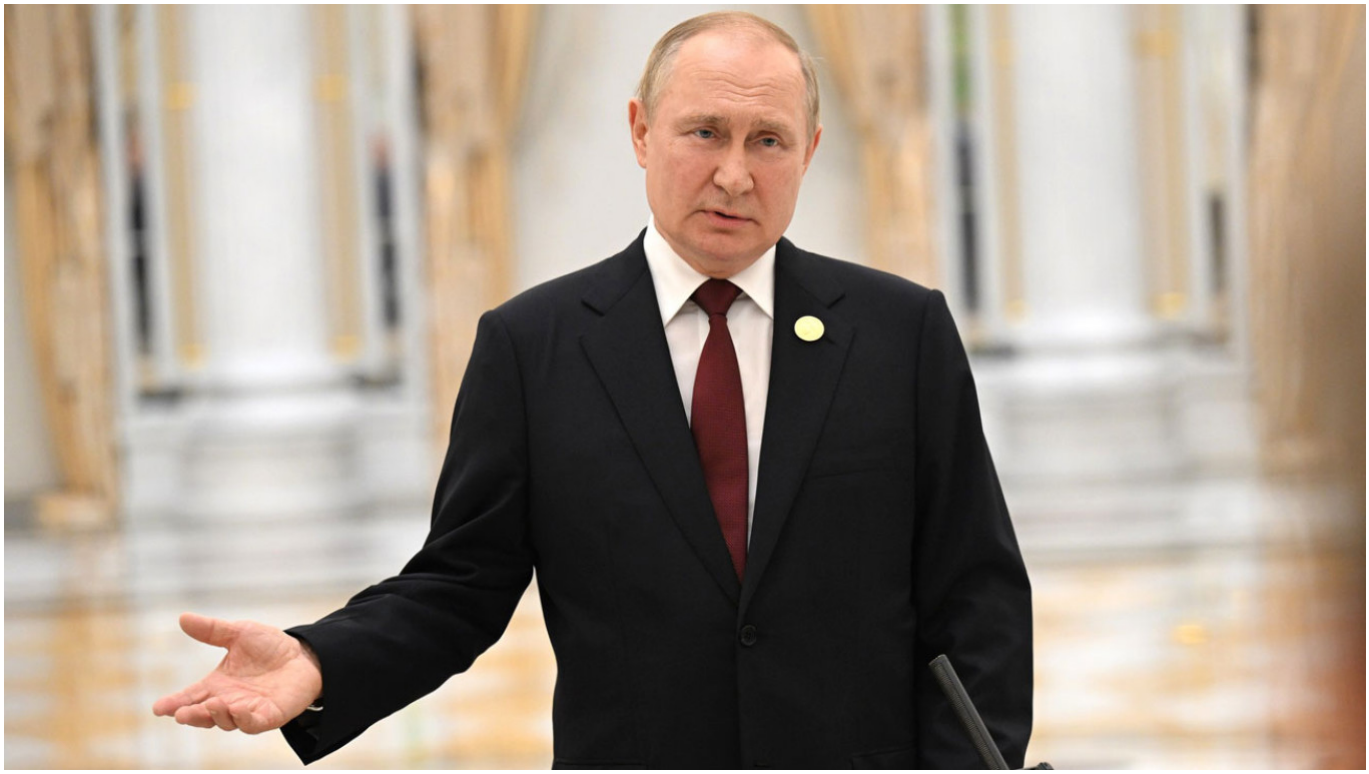
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Russian City Deputies Petition for Putin Resignation

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kremlin.ru

Dozens of municipal deputies from Moscow and St. Petersburg have called on President Vladimir Putin to resign in an open letter published Monday.

The call for the Russian president to step down comes amid claims of vote rigging in this weekend's local and regional elections as well as a massive advance by Kyiv's forces that marked the biggest setback yet for Moscow's invasion of Ukraine.

Its signatories also put themselves at risk for punishment under laws passed shortly after Russia invaded Ukraine that outlaw virtually all anti-war dissent.

"President Putin's actions are detrimental to the future of Russia and its citizens," reads the petition shared on Twitter by Ksenia Torstrem, a deputy for St. Petersburg's Semyonovsky district.

"We demand the resignation of Vladimir Putin from the position of President of the Russian

Federation," the statement, initially signed by 19 deputies, continues.

Related article: Pro-Kremlin Candidates Sweep Wartime Polls Amid Rigging Claims

According to Torstrem, another 84 people signed the petition on Monday.

"Another 84 signatures have been received, now we will check them," Torstrem wrote.

Independent election watchdog Golos reported dozens of cases of ballot-stuffing, intimidation, vote buying and misrecorded votes after pro-Kremlin candidates swept the field in Russia's local and regional elections.

Meanwhile, the Ukrainian counteroffensive in its northeastern Kharkiv region saw Kyiv's forces reclaim around 3,000 square kilometers of ground previously occupied by Moscow.

Calls from deputies for Putin to stand down initially emerged last week after Dmitry Palyuga, a deputy from St. Petersburg's Smolninskoye district, called on the State Duma to try the president on charges of treason over his invasion of Ukraine.

Palyuga was summoned to the police station on possible charges of "discrediting" the Russian army, but was later released.

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