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Leaked Audio Reveals Governor's Predetermined Election Victory – Novaya Gazeta Europe

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Moscow region Governor Andrei Vorobyov. **Maxim Grigoryev / TASS**

The governor of the Moscow region is expected to secure an overwhelming majority during his re-election bid in next month's gubernatorial elections by manipulating voter turnout, the independent news website Novaya Gazeta Europe reported Tuesday, citing leaked audio.

Moscow region Governor Andrei Vorobyov, a member of the ruling United Russia party, is among over a dozen governors across Russia's regions standing for office this September.

Vorobyov's share of the vote is projected to be 70%, with a turnout of 50%, Novaya Gazeta said, citing a leaked audio recording of United Russia's campaign headquarters meeting in the Moscow region town of Krasnogorsk that took place in March.

Senior administration officials were ordered to bring in loyal voters, election commission members and observers to ensure the desired result during the Sept. 8-10 vote, Novaya Gazeta

said.

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Likewise, state employees — such as medical workers and teachers — will be pressured to go out and vote for Vorobyov, a common form of electoral manipulation used in Russia.

Political consultants involved in the scheme also noted that, with the help of a QR code system, authorities will be able to monitor which candidates state employees cast their vote for and whether they voted online or in person.

"Simply put, the elections will be stolen, but it will all look real," the Novaya Gazeta Europe said.

Vorobyov, a former senior United Russia member, secured overwhelming victories in the 2013 and 2018 elections, with 79% and 62% of the votes respectively.

Novaya Gazeta's report comes days after the arrest of the co-chair of Golos, Russia's independent election monitor, for "organizing the activities" of an "undesirable" organization. The monitor has projected the upcoming regional elections to be some of the least competitive in years.

Next year, President Vladimir Putin is expected to seek re-election for a fifth overall term in office. Previous reporting said regional authorities were tasked with ensuring at least 80% of the votes for Putin.

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