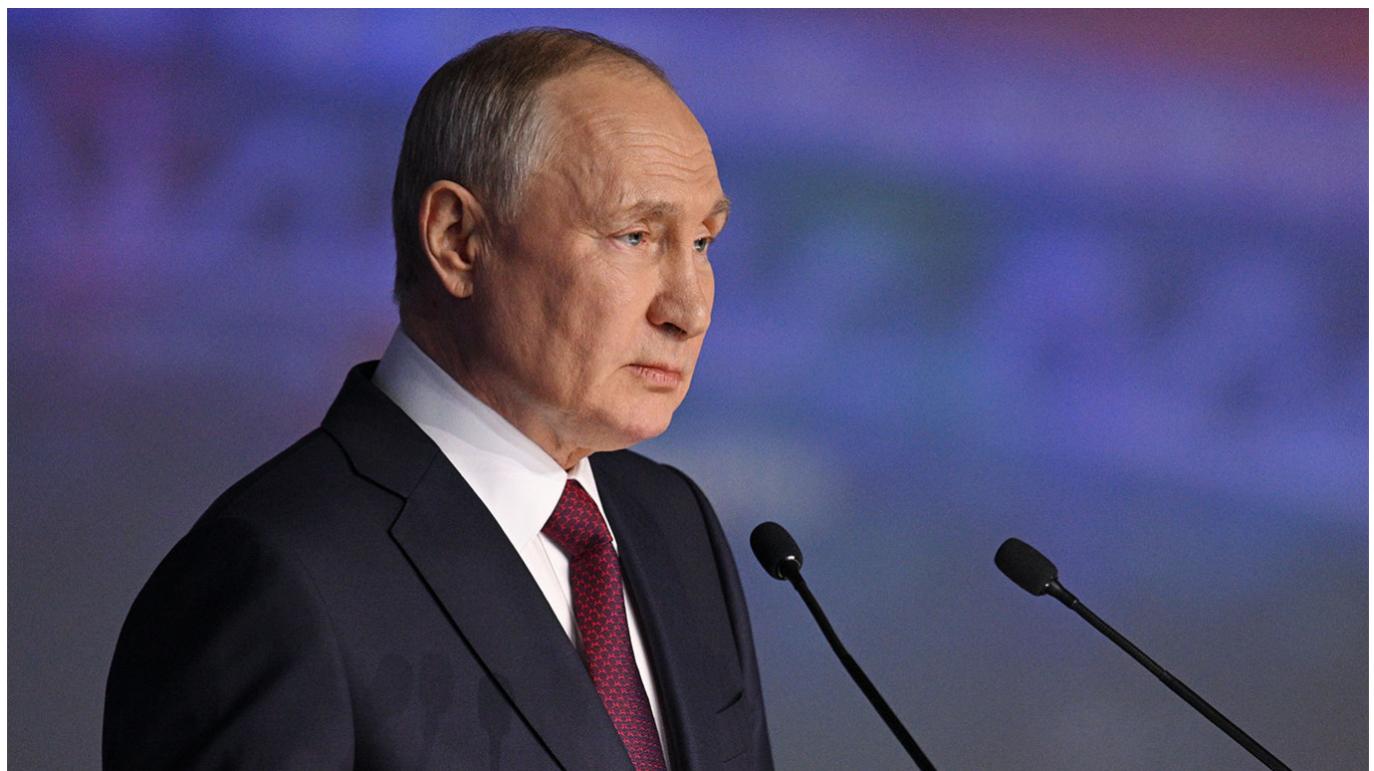


Kremlin Handpicks Putin's 2024 Election Opponents – Meduza

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Vladimir Putin. **Ramil Sitdikov / RIA Novosti Photo Host Agency**

The Kremlin has begun handpicking the challengers to President Vladimir Putin's re-election bid next spring, Russia's independent news website Meduza [reported](#) Monday, citing two anonymous sources close to the Presidential Administration.

So far, the Kremlin has approved Communist Party mainstay Gennady Zyuganov, 79, and leader of the Liberal Democratic Party Leonid Slutsky, 55, as "safe" candidates that would ensure Putin's high margin of victory amid Russia's costly war in Ukraine.

"No dark horses [on March 17, 2024, when Russia's presidential election is scheduled to take place]," one of the Kremlin sources told Meduza.

Putin's old age poses a key challenge to Kremlin efforts to win an 80% vote share and 70% turnout, the outlet said, noting that surveys [show](#) his age as one of the top things Russians dislike about him.

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With some in the Presidential Administration referring to the 70-year-old Putin as “grandpa,” the Kremlin now faces a choice of picking from among a 57-year-old and a 39-year-old challenger from the recently formed New People party.

“A young and active candidate can make voters think about the president’s age,” Meduza writes. “It will be an unfavorable contrast.”

Sergei Mironov, the head of the party A Just Russia — For Truth, has already bowed out of the 2024 race and said his faction would support Putin’s re-election.

Putin, who has been in power for over two decades, is widely expected to declare his bid for a fifth overall presidential term. Changes to Russia’s constitution in 2020 allow him to remain president until 2036.

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