The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Russian Border Towns Postpone Local Elections Amid Shelling, Drone Attacks

September 07, 2023



Shebekino, Belgorod region. **Vyacheslav Gladkov / Telegram**

Russian authorities said Thursday they will "postpone" local elections in two municipalities near the border with Ukraine amid ongoing threats from drone and artillery strikes.

Local elections scheduled in the western Belgorod region's town of Shebekino and the village of Zhuravlyovka were just two of the 4,270 regional and municipal races set to take place across Russia, as well as occupied Ukraine and annexed Crimea, this upcoming weekend.

Russia's Central Election Commission chief Ella Pamfilova said both races would be called off on Sept. 8-10 due to terrorist threat levels, which have been in effect in the areas since the spring of 2022.

"The Belgorod region's election commission decided to postpone voting in the elections in connection with the high state of alert," Pamfilova said at a press conference on the eve of the elections.

She did not say when the races would be rescheduled.

Related article: Russia's Ruling Party Downplays War in Sweeping Regional Election Push

The Belgorod region, which lies across the border from Ukraine's second-largest city Kharkiv, has reported regular shelling and drone attacks since Moscow launched its full-scale invasion.

More than 50 Belgorod region residents have been killed in cross-border shelling that has only intensified in recent months.

In May, the town of Shebekino was attacked by armed anti-Kremlin groups — the Freedom of Russia Legion and the Russian Volunteer Corps.

Nearly 100 residents of other Russian regions near the border with Ukraine have been killed since February 2022.

All or part of six regions on the border with Ukraine have heightened terrorist threat levels in response to the cross-border shelling incidents, including the Kursk, Voronezh, Bryansk and Krasnodar regions.

Meanwhile, polls opened as early as last week in the four Ukrainian regions under partial Russian occupation, as the Kremlin seeks to legitimize its handpicked local administrations.

Pamfilova said Kremlin-installed election officials in those areas receive regular death threats from the Ukrainian security services.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2023/09/07/russian-border-towns-postpone-local-elections-amid-shelling-drone-attacks-a82389