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Moscow Mayor Sobyanin Wins Re-Election

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Sergei Sobyanin. **Moskva News Agency**

Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyanin has won his third term in office by a sweeping margin following a relatively muted wartime campaign, poll results showed Monday.

With 100% of the ballots counted as of early Monday, Russia's Central Election Commission (CEC) website showed Sobyanin securing 76.39%, or 2.5 million, of the votes.

Moscow's electoral commission said Sobyanin, 65, won in all of the Russian capital's administrative districts, according to the state-run news agency RIA Novosti.

"I'll do everything to make our city even cooler, more beautiful [and] ahead of the whole planet," Sobyanin said early Monday after the preliminary results were published.

"Victory will be ours," the mayor wrote on his personal website as his rivals from four systemic opposition parties squeaked in with only single-digit percentages of the vote.

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Leonid Zyuganov, the grandson of veteran Communist Party (KPRF) leader Gennady Zyuganov, finished a distant second with 8.11% of the votes.

Boris Chernyshov from the nationalist Liberal Democratic Party (LDPR) and Vladislav Davankov from the center-right New People party received 5.61% and 5.34% of the votes respectively.

The A Just Russia party's Dmitry Gusev rounded out the list with 3.93%, according to CEC's website.

Sobyanin's 2023 campaign under the United Russia banner contrasted with his past election bids, when he ran as an independent despite being a veteran member of the ruling party.

But following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the Kremlin has demanded firmer loyalty from the country's ruling elite, as reports suggested that Sobyanin had sought to distance himself from the war.

Turnout in Moscow's Sept. 8-10 mayoral election stood at a 20-year high of more than 40%.

Moscow's election commission credited online voting for higher turnout, saying more than 2.7 million Muscovites cast their ballots through an online portal.

Yet the election was marred by reports of voter intimidation and procedural violations, as well as criticism of the online voting system's lack of transparency and the absence of any real opposition candidates.

The mayor's race and the dozens of regional elections held in Russia over the weekend are seen as a test run for the March 2024 presidential election in which Putin is widely expected to seek re-election for a fifth overall term.

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