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Putin Signs Changes to Russia's Presidential Election Laws

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Vladimir Putin. **kremlin.ru**

President Vladimir Putin on Tuesday signed changes to Russia's presidential election laws that allow for voting to take place in territories under martial law and introduce new restrictions on media coverage at polling places.

The amendments come just weeks ahead of Putin's anticipated announcement to run for a fifth term in office as president, though the Russian leader has said that he will declare his re-election bid only after parliament formally calls the race, which is expected to take place in March 2024.

According to the updated "Law on Presidential Elections," Russia's Central Election Commission (CEC) will be able to hold elections in regions under martial law after consulting with the Federal Security Service (FSB) and the Ministry of Defense.

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The changes also include bans for non-accredited journalists to record videos at polling stations located in military facilities, making it more difficult to document instances of electoral fraud at these voting locations.

Likewise, unaccredited journalists are banned from attending CEC sessions under Russia's new "Law on Elections."

Putin enacted an identical law ahead of Russia's regional elections in September, which were also held in Russian-occupied territories of eastern and southern Ukraine.

Western leaders rejected the results of the September elections in the occupied regions of Ukraine.

Election analysts say Putin's latest signing brings Russia's law on presidential elections in line with changes made earlier this year to the country's other electoral laws.

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