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Russia Greenlights Presidential Election in Occupied Ukraine

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A poster in Donetsk promoting Russia's 2024 presidential election. **Dmitry Yagodkin / TASS**

Russia's Central Election Commission has given the green light on holding next year's presidential election in partially occupied Ukrainian regions, Interfax reported Monday.

Russia's Armed Forces and the Federal Security Service (FSB) had previously said that they "deem it possible" for the vote to go ahead in areas where fighting continues, nearly two years into Russia's war against Ukraine.

Russian law allows the CEC to call elections in regions that are under martial law after first consulting with the FSB and Defense Ministry.

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The Kremlin claims to have annexed parts of Ukraine's Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhia and

Kherson regions, a move widely condemned by the international community.

Large swaths of these territories, including two of the regional capitals of Zaporizhzhia and Kherson, are not currently under the control of the Russian military.

“Not only is the electoral system of the four [occupied regions]... in working order, but it’s highly professional,” said deputy CEC chairman Nikolai Bulayev.

President Vladimir Putin last week announced that he plans to run for a fifth overall term in office, a race that he is certain to win as most of the country's opposition has either been jailed or forced into exile.

The CEC last week set a three-day voting period for next year's presidential election, which will take place on March 15-17.

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