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‘Unprecedented’ Number of Russians Voted Abroad, Says MFA

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People line up outside the Russian embassy in Berlin on **Carsten Koall / dpa via AP / TASS**

An “unprecedented” number of Russians living abroad voted in the March 15-17 presidential election, Russia’s Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said Monday.

Preliminary data shows 372,779 Russians cast their ballots outside of Russia during the three-day race, according to Zakharova.

“The figures are, of course, unprecedented,” Zakharova told the state broadcaster Channel One.

Zakharova did not indicate which share of the vote went to Vladimir Putin, who secured a record 87.33% of all votes cast as he heads for another six-year term.

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Election chief Ella Pamfilova said Monday that turnout in the 2024 presidential election set a

record of 87.1 million, or 77.44% of eligible voters.

Exit polls organized by exiled Russian activists across 41 countries showed the New People candidate Vladislav Davankov gaining more votes than Putin in all but four countries.

Overall, Davankov finished third after Communist candidate Nikolai Kharitonov and just ahead of nationalist Leonid Slutsky. All three challengers — who combined for just over 11% of all votes — had easily conceded defeat to Putin.

Allies of the late Alexei Navalny — Putin's most prominent rival, who died in an Arctic prison last month — had urged voters to flood polling stations on the last day of voting Sunday for a "Noon Against Putin" protest.

Putin said in his victory speech on Sunday that the Navalny-inspired action had “no effect” on the outcome of the vote.

Zakharova made no mention of the protests and claimed the long lines seen outside Russian diplomatic missions across the world were the result of “unfriendly countries closing down [Russian] general consulates.”

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