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Kremlin Slams 'Western Interference' Ahead of Georgian Parliamentary Elections

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A pro-Georgian Dream rally in Tbilisi ahead of this weekend's elections. **David Mdzinarishvili / EPA / TASS**

The Kremlin on Friday accused the West of trying to interfere in Georgia's upcoming parliamentary elections, while also dismissing claims that it was meddling in the South Caucasus country's politics.

Georgia will hold parliamentary elections on Saturday, which some observers have called a key test of the country's democracy and its prospects of joining the European Union.

"We're not influencing or interfering in Georgia's affairs," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters. "It's up to the Georgians to make their own decisions."

"But we're witnessing completely unprecedented attempts by the West to interfere. They are not only trying to twist Tbilisi's arm, they're literally trying to dictate terms," Peskov added.

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Domestic critics have accused the ruling Georgian Dream party of moving the country away from the West and closer to Russia since the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.

Earlier this year, the party passed controversial laws targeting foreign-funded NGOs and the LGBTQ+ community, with the EU warning that the laws undermine the country's long-standing bid for EU membership.

Russia and Georgia, which were both part of the Soviet Union, fought a brief war in 2008 over control of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, regions that sought to separate from the country.

The two countries officially broke off diplomatic ties, but Georgian Dream has been accused of courting economic and political ties with the Kremlin in recent years.

AFP contributed reporting.

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