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Kremlin 'Strongly Rejects' Accusations of Election Interference in Georgia

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Voters outside a polling station in Tbilisi. **Alexander Patrin / TASS**

The Kremlin on Monday said it "strongly rejects" accusations from Georgia's president that it interfered in this past weekend's parliamentary elections.

Georgian President Salome Zourabichvili claimed that Moscow was behind election fraud in Georgia, saying it was part of a "Russian special operation."

"We strongly reject these accusations. There was no intervention. These accusations are completely unsubstantiated," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said when asked about Zourabichvili's claims.

"There are attempts to destabilize the situation in the republic," he told reporters, claiming that the West was trying to meddle in Georgia's domestic politics.

"There are attempts to interfere, but not from Russia's side," Peskov said. "A huge number of forces from European countries and various European institutions have tried to influence the

outcome of the vote. No one was even hiding this, these were public statements."

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Georgia's opposition refused to concede defeat in Saturday's elections, which saw Georgian Dream win 54% of the vote and a majority of seats in parliament. Opposition groups announced a protest for Monday night, setting the stage for a potential political crisis in the nation of 3.7 million people.

While the elections were marred by polarization and widespread reports of pressure on voters, international observers said campaigning in the lead-up to Saturday offered voters a wide choice and that the elections themselves were "competitive."

Officials in Brussels and Washington said there were "irregularities" in Georgia's elections and called for an investigation.

AFP contributed reporting.

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