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Krasnoyarsk Court Rejects Lawsuit Against Local Governance Reforms

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A court in Siberia's Krasnoyarsk region on Tuesday rejected a lawsuit challenging Kremlin-backed reforms that scrap most local councils and shift power to the regional government, local media reported.

Residents and officials from several dissolved rural districts, equivalent to U.S. counties, had sued Krasnoyarsk Governor Mikhail Kotyukov and the regional legislature over the reforms, arguing that they were adopted without any input from the public.

The changes cut the number of municipalities in the vast region of 2.8 million people from 472 to just 39 — meaning most villages and small towns will no longer elect their own representatives. As a result of the reforms, authorities merged many rural districts into larger, more consolidated districts, where a number of elections are scheduled for next month.

Critics say the overhaul strips residents of local political representation and hands Moscow

tighter control over regional government, while regional lawmakers claim the reforms simply created new districts. The changes took effect June 19 under a federal law signed by President Vladimir Putin.

Governor Kotyukov is a member of the ruling United Russia party, which holds a two-thirds majority in the regional legislature. The Krasnoyarsk Regional Court on Tuesday rejected all lawsuits contesting the reforms, according to local media.

The court's ruling comes a day after the Supreme Court of the Siberian republic of Altai rejected a similar lawsuit challenging the municipal reforms there. A large group of locals gathered outside the courthouse in the city of Gorno-Altaysk to protest that ruling.

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