

Khabarovsk Scraps Direct Mayoral Elections

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The Khabarovsk city government building. **Andshel**

Lawmakers in the Far Eastern city of Khabarovsk have voted to abolish direct mayoral elections in favor of an appointment system controlled by the regional governor, the Interfax news agency [reported](#) Tuesday, leaving Russia with just two major cities where voters can still elect their mayors.

“In accordance with federal law, city Duma lawmakers will elect the head of the city based on candidates presented by the governor,” the Khabarovsk regional assembly said in a statement quoted by Interfax.

The move comes weeks after Khabarovsk’s Mayor Sergei Kravchuk [stepped down](#) after winning a seat in the lower-house State Duma in parliamentary elections held last month.

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Khabarovsk is the latest city in Russia to cancel direct mayoral elections as part of a nationwide campaign launched by the Kremlin in the late 2000s to exert greater control over local government. Dozens of regional capitals have since eliminated direct mayoral elections, triggering protests in some places.

In 2024, the State Duma [passed](#) controversial local government reform which, among other things, allows regional lawmakers to abolish mayoral elections to create a so-called “unified system of public authority.” The law grants smaller municipalities the right to keep direct elections.

Abakan in Siberia’s republic of Khakassia and Anadyr in Far East Russia’s Chukotka autonomous region are now the only remaining regional capitals to retain direct mayoral elections.

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