



Движение в защиту прав избирателей

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Topic: Ensuring equal enjoyment of rights and equal participation in political and public life. Working
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Intervention by Movement for Defending Voters Rights «Golos» (Russia):

Intentional Obstacles Created by Russian Authorities to Limit Equal Citizens' Participation in Electoral Process, a Constituent Part of Political Life

Roman Udov, board member of Golos Movement

Good day, ladies and gentlemen

«Quality of access to political life»

From our point of view, since we are an election observation organization, political life of a citizen starts from elections. In Russia, when a person comes to a polling station for the first time, being a young woman or man, they are presented with candies and presents. And elections make them, those boys and girls, disappointed, because they see that we don't have alternative candidates. They don't come for candies.

In Russia, there exists an outrageous practice of municipal filter when a candidate have to collect agreements from incumbent municipal councillors, who are in their turn are representatives of the ruling party. In this case the ruling party reproduces itself in power due to the electoral process.

And ordinary people see that and begin to avoid elections and disrespect the whole process.

Authorities reproduce themselves, which violates the very essence of constitutional rights and political rights from Article 21 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

In this case, a person is not able to run because some guys, some municipal councillors decided that he or she is not worthy to be given councillor's signature of agreement.

Another, very unusual practice of Russian authorities in regard of elections is "secret" elections. When authorities see that they don't have a lot of chances to win, they try to hide information about elections.

This practice, these tactics were used when the current speaker of our Upper House of the Parliament Matvienko was running in Saint-Petersburg where nobody knew, actually, that she was running.

This practice was used recently in Moscow. When authorities understood that they don't have a lot of chances, they removed all campaigning, even notifications related to turnout, related to calling people to come and vote. And candidates themselves was doing it, ordinary citizens, I myself, were putting notices "Please, come to vote" adding address and working hours of a relevant polling station. It was job of the state, it was job of the authorities, and they tried to hide these elections and shut them off from the ordinary citizen.

Election commissions composition.

It's another practice when the ruling party and authorities, and sometimes it's impossible to see the difference. They organize commissions in such a manner that maybe 90% of the members of the commission are from the ruling party or came through authorities, and these commissions are absolutely submissive. They don't report any violations and, of course, most of their decisions are in favour of the candidates from the ruling party.

Authorities reproduce themselves.

But democracy is not a toy. It's a double edged sword. And if you play with it, pushing on with one cutting edge to the desired results, you are cut by the opposite edge, by low turnout, by humiliatingly low turnout like it happened in the recent years. At this point, let me quote our official statement:

“The low turnout observed in these elections, [last elections, R.U.] - was caused in the first place by the low level of competition and by the voters' distrust towards the election process that had developed over the course of recent years.”

And new leadership of our Central Election Commission, whose efforts we greatly favour and support, is still unable to break the tendency of those last years.

Democracy without turnout is dead.

Political life, and we are talking about political life here, is dead as well.

Thank you.

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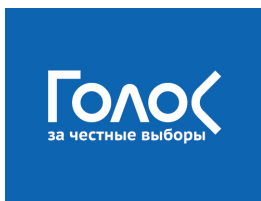
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Movement for defending voters' rights «Golos» was founded on July 5th, 2013 by citizens of Russian Federations – active participants of Association «GOLOS», which since the year 2000 has been active in civil monitoring of elections all over the country, and whose activity was stopped due to unprecedented pressure. Today the movement has restored its regional divisions, organize election monitoring and invite active citizens to work together with it.

More information: <https://www.golosinfo.org/en/about-en>

The following official reports and statements of Golos Movement were used in this intervention:



On September 10, Russia held administratively controlled elections

Statement on the Results of the Election Monitoring of the United Election Day Held on September 10, 2017

Russian: <https://www.golosinfo.org/ru/articles/142182>

English (EPDE website *):

<http://www.epde.org/en/newsreader/items/golos-on-september-10-russia-held-administratively-controlled-elections.html>



During the campaign, the administrative resource is actively used

Analytical report: Election Campaigning for the United Election Day to be Held on September 10, 2017

Russian: <https://www.golosinfo.org/ru/articles/142159>



The imbalance of socio-political representation is persistent in regional election commissions

Report: Analysis of the Composition of Regional Election Commissions that Organize Elections on September 10, 2017

Russian: <https://www.golosinfo.org/ru/articles/142070>



Russian regional elections: Independent candidates face discrimination through the "Municipal Filter"

Analytical report: On the Administrative Control over the Procedure of Collecting Signatures of Deputies and Heads of Municipal Entities in Support of Candidates ("Municipal Filter")

Russian: <https://www.golosinfo.org/ru/articles/142101>

English (article): <http://www.epde.org/en/newsreader/items/Russian-regional-elections-Independent-candidates-discriminated.html>

English (full text, PDF):

http://www.epde.org/tl_files/EPDE/RESSOURCES/2017%20Golos%20Reports/Report_Russian_Election_Municipal_Final.pdf



The competition at the stage of nomination and registration has decreased compared with the elections in 2015 and 2016

Analytical report: Nomination and Registration of Candidates and Political Parties' Lists for Elections of Representative Bodies to Be Held on the United Elections Day of September 10, 2017.

Russian: <https://www.golosinfo.org/ru/articles/142126>



In half of the districts of Moscow, election commissions created obstacles for voters to choose candidates

Analytical report

Russian: <https://www.golosinfo.org/ru/articles/142160>



Silence in the media and "administrative resources": Golos analyses campaign for Russian municipal elections

Analytical Report: Election Campaign for Municipal Elections in Moscow to Be Held on September 10, 2017

Russian: <https://www.golosinfo.org/ru/articles/142156>

English (article):

<http://www.epde.org/en/newsreader/items/Golos-report-municipal-elections.html>

English (full text, PDF):

http://www.epde.org/tl_files/EPDE/RESSOURCES/2017%20Golos%20Reports/Report_Russian_Election_Campaigning.pdf

* Golos Movement is a founding member of EPDE (European Platform for Democratic Elections) and rely on its capacities and resources to translate and disseminate abroad information from Golos.

More information: <http://www.epde.org>

