



Ассоциация «ГОЛОС» —
достоверно о выборах с 2000 года

Moscow

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“GOLOS” ASSOCIATION

STATEMENT No.1

On long-term monitoring findings during regional elections of March 1, 2009: nomination, registration of candidates and beginning of campaign.

Association of non-commercial organizations In defence of voter rights “GOLOS” conducts long and short term observation of the electoral process. Monitoring is carried out by long term observers, correspondents of the newspaper “Grazhdanskiy Golos” and activists of the Association. Association receives information from media and expert interviews with representatives of political parties, NGO leaders, members of electoral commissions, and also from ordinary citizens, who report violations through public “Hotline” at 8-800-333-33 50.

Association “GOLOS”, as an organization that operates based on internationally accepted standards of election monitoring, strictly observes principle of political neutrality, since it is one of the main conditions for independent and objective monitoring of elections. “GOLOS” takes all possible measures to ensure that its activists and observers comply with these principles.

“GOLOS” monitors progress of electoral campaign in accordance with Russian electoral legislation and universal international electoral standards, such as: the UN Declaration of Human Rights – 1948, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights – 1966, Inter-Parliamentary Council Declaration on Criteria for Free and Fair Elections – 1994, 1990 Copenhagen Document, and regional international electoral standards.

When monitoring electoral process, “GOLOS” pays particular attention to: 1) observation of electoral rights of voters and compliance with electoral procedures; 2) work of electoral commissions; 3) use of administrative resource; 4) equality of candidate’ abilities to conduct political agitation; 5) course of Election Day.

This Statement is the first statement of “GOLOS” Association on findings of long term monitoring of the course of deputies of state power legislative bodies elections in the subjects of Russian Federation, heads of administrative bodies of municipal districts and other municipal level bodies, which will take place on March 1, 2009.

On March 1, 2009, elections of legislative authorities will take place in 9 Russian regions, in following regional centers: Bryansk, Vologda, Yekaterinburg, Chelyabinsk, Khabarovsk, Murmansk, Penza, Ulan-Ude, Chita, Anadyr, Birobidzhan, second half of Tver city municipal Duma (the first half was elected on rotation basis in 2008).

On March 1, 2009, mayors of 10 administrative centres will be elected in following cities: Anadyr, Birobidzhan, Blagoveschensk, Murmansk, Novosibirsk, Petropavlovsk-Kamchatski, Smolensk, Tomsk, Chelyabinsk, and Chita. Representative state bodies of 12 administrative centers of Russian regions will be elected. Besides, a large number of heads of municipal level bodies and deputies of councils of other municipal level bodies would be elected. Total elections of deputies of municipal councils will take place in 108 out of 111 intra-municipal level bodies in St. Petersburg.

Conclusions of “GOLOS” Association

There is a continuous tendency of transition from mixed electoral system to fully proportional electoral system at the elections for legislative bodies of state power.

After March 1, 2009, already 9 regions of Russia – St. Petersburg, Dagestan, Chechnya, Ingushetia, Kalmykia, Amur and Moscow regions, Kabardino-Balkaria and Nenetskiy autonomous region – will become regions, where proportional electoral system will be introduced in full.

Very often, transition from proportional electoral system is accompanied by reduction of total number of deputies. At the same time there is continuous tendency to increase the maximum terms of regional authorities of state power up to 5 years.

Association “GOLOS” has repeatedly drawn attention of voters that **the passive electoral right (right to be elected)** is the important part of legislative regulation of regional elections. Especially the question is relevant in the regions, where proportional electoral system is introduced in full. In fact, switching to full proportional system for regional elections leaves only declaratory right for non-partisan citizens to be included in the relevant party list of candidates. Thus, **non-partisan citizens are denied their constitutional rights to be elected to the regional authorities of state power.**

In addition, an adequate number of deputies is among the guarantees of independence and capacity of the relevant parliament. As a rule, small parliament is easier to pressure and manipulate by the executive authorities.

Municipal elections of March 1, 2009, continue the trend to introduce mixed and fully proportional electoral system in the elections for representative bodies of local self-governments.

Association «GOLOS» notes that in these elections some small municipalities registered only two or three lists of candidates, which underlines the unjustified introduction of on party lists based elections at the municipal level. To a large extent, in regions, where municipal competition is stronger, it is ensured by active regional and local public organizations, which can still exercise the right to self-nomination of candidates from public organizations (**Currently the State Duma is considering a bill to deprive them of that right**). Their active participation at municipal elections proves that the right to self-nomination of candidates is a “real chance”, but not a “formal right”. Certain deputies of State Duma are trying to prove this by submitting a bill for consideration to the RF State Duma. This bill violates political rights of civic organizations.

Association “GOLOS” reminds that up to 1990s the only region in Russia, that used mixed electoral system at elections for representative bodies of local self-government, was Krasnoyarskiy region. After 2004 introduction of party lists at municipal elections has become widely spread. As early as during course of autumn electoral campaign the RF State Duma was getting ready to adopt bill on the obligatory introduction of mixed electoral system at municipal elections.

Association “GOLOS” notes that the regional authorities more and more often interfere in the activities of local self-government authorities by enforcing specific type of electoral system on them.

Use of administrative resource

The scandalous situation with the results of drawings for the position of political parties on the ballots continues. Repeated public inquiries were sent to electoral commissions to find out why in many cases it is “United Russia” which is the first in the list as a result of drawing (such results did not violate Russian legislation, but sometimes questioned the law of mathematics and probability). The absurdity of the situation, no doubt, undermines citizens’ trust in the electoral system and election commissions¹.

¹ According to results of drawings “United Russia” won right to be listed first in the lists of ballots in nine regions (Nenets autonomous region, Arkhangelsk, Vladimir and Volgograd regions, the Republic of Tatarstan). Also in two regions (Kabardimo-

The trend to use electoral deposit as means of financial barrier stays evident. This time, the biggest electoral pledge has been appointed for party lists in Vladimir region (12, 3 million rubles) and in Volgograd region (10,5 million rubles). Let us remind that in the course of electoral campaign of latest years the absolute record was set by St. Petersburg, where in the elections for Legislative Assembly of 2007, the amount of electoral deposit was set as high as 90 million rubles, which exceeded electoral deposit for parties at elections to the State Duma in 2007.

Association “GOLOS” consider abolishing electoral deposit at next elections altogether less beneficial than lifting regulations, which allow misuse of deposit². The use of deposit allowed circumventing the need for registration based on signature sheets. The requirements for signature sheets were so strict that it allowed electoral commissions to refuse to register candidates even if there was a little technical inaccuracy. It would have been good enough to define amount of electoral deposit based on minimum wage or average wage in certain territory instead of electoral fund of a party.

At regional elections we can still see the use of so called “locomotives’ technology”, when there are candidates placed on the lists in order to attract more votes, but do not intend to hold elected positions afterwards. No doubt, abuse of administrative resources also includes individual participation of heads of regions, city mayors at campaigns in elections for representative bodies of state power.

Association “GOLOS” repeatedly noted that personal participation of senior officials at elections is aided with concrete actions of the authorities in different regions which worsens situation of informational, legal, financial, organizational and other inequality of candidates.

Different manipulative techniques to refuse to register oppositional candidates and to disqualify candidates’ lists continue to be used:

- basing refusal on the verification of addresses of citizen using data bases containing inaccurate data;
- decisions of “handwriting experts” that do not contain actual evidence of “falsifications”;
- obliging to submit documents that are not originally required by law;
- refusing to release to candidates preliminary materials related to revision of signatures (therefore candidates do not have possibility to object);
- introduction of distorting fragments³ etc.;

Administrative resource is actively used to ensure mass campaigns organized by the “United Russia” party. “United Russia” continues to dominate in media sphere, since “professional activities” of its candidates and meetings in support of the party are being widely covered by official media.

Association “GOLOS” notes that March 1 elections for regional legislative assemblies demonstrate the lowest level of political competition since 2003, when regional electoral reform started (obligatory introduction of party lists in the regions).

It is the result of cumulative effect of extremely strict legislation on political parties together with overall tightening of electoral legislation (increase of barriers, complication of registration procedure), systematic obstructions in registration of party lists and specific candidates at elections of all levels, domination of administrative resource during agitation period.

I. MAIN LEGISLATIVE CHARACTERISTICS OF REGIONAL

Balkaria and Khakassia) “United Russia” is the last in the lists. Therefore, from March 2009 at 67 regional elections “United Russia” was listed first in 31 regions.

² The violations were result of the decision to tie the amount of the deposit to minimum amount of the party electoral fund – 10% or 15%, which gave enormous possibilities for the regions to increase the amount of electoral funds and turned them into income qualification.

³ Representatives of United civic front in St. Petersburg stated that the signature lists that they handed in were falsified. The numbers of the houses in the sheets were changed on purpose. This was found out at the electoral commission “Chernaya rechka” during the reviewing against the originals that were left with candidates.

PARLIAMENTARY AND MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS OF MARCH 1, 2009

Kabardino-Balkaria and Nenets autonomous region on March 1 will become 8th and 9th regions, where proportional electoral system would be fully introduced.

In fact, if Kabardino-Balkaria decided to shift to totally proportional system a year ago and the fight over such decision in Nenets autonomous region was taking place during last year. Deputies of regional assembly even managed to adopt in two readings their own law on elections that introduced 3% barrier and allowed to leave mixed electoral system. However, after this the Assembly was badly pressured and with active participation of officials from Presidential representative office in the North-West federal region and from the CEC, the Assembly had to adopt a new law providing for totally proportional electoral system. Also, the number of deputies had to be reduced from 20 to 11.

Subject of Russian Federation	Name of the legislative body of state power	Office term	Total number of mandates in previously elected assembly	Total number of mandates in presently elected legislative assembly	Number of those elected from party lists	Electoral threshold
Kabardino-Balkaria	Parliament	5 years	110	72	72 (100%)	7%
Karachaevo-Cherkessia	People's Assembly	5 years	73	73	37 (50,68%)	7%
Tatarstan	State Assembly	5 years	100	100	50 (50%)	7%
Khakassia	Supreme Assembly	4 years	75	75	38 (50,67%)	5% (threshold was increased to 7%, but for March elections this decision is not effective)
Arkhangelsk region	Regional Assembly of Deputies	4 years	62	62	31 (50%)	7%
Bryansk	Regional Duma	5 years	60	60	30 (50%)	7%
Vladimir region	Legislative Assembly	4 years	38	38	19 (50%)	7%
Volgograd region	Regional Duma	5 years	38	38	22 (57,89%)	7%
Nenetskiy autonomous region	Assembly of Deputies	4 years	20	11	11 (100%)	7%

As for electoral deposits, the highest deposit for party lists was registered in Vladimir region (12,3 million rubles) and in Volgograd region (10, 5 million rubles). These sums significantly exceed sums that were registered in Kabardino-Balkaria (3 million rubles), Tatarstan, Arkhangelsk and Bryansk regions (1,5 million rubles), Nenetskiy autonomous region (750 thousand rubles), Khakassia (714 thousand rubles).

Non-partisan domestic election observers still hold the right to monitor regional parliamentary elections in Bryans, Volgograd regions, Kabardino-Balkaria and Karachaevo-Cherkessia.

In Tatarstan, Archangelsk, Vladimir regions and in Nenetskiy autonomous region only parties, which registered their lists, and candidates registered in districts, are allowed to send their observers.

Municipal elections of March 1, 2009, continue the trend for introduction of mixed and entirely proportional electoral system at the elections for representative bodies of local governments.

As for elections of mayors of regional centers, as a rule, they are conducted according to majoritarian electoral system of relative majority (in one round), in some cities (Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsk, Murmansk, Novosibirsk, Blagoveschensk, Tomsk) elections take place based on majoritarian system of absolute majority (if no one gains 50% of votes in the first round, there is a second round with two candidates).

II. RESULTS OF THE NOMINATION AND REGISTRATION

Election of Legislative Assemblies: overall situation

Six parties will run for March 1, 2009, elections. Four parties are represented in the State Duma – “United Russia”, CPRF, LDPR and “Just Russia”. The other two parties that are “Patriots of Russia” and “Yabloko” are not represented in the parliament. There is another party “Just Cause” (Pravoe delo), founded in November and has not obtained registration yet, and it is likely that it will take part in October 2009 elections.

With that, only 4 parties out of 6 remaining parties made nomination of candidates in all 9 regions, where regional parliaments will be elected in March. Party “Patriots of Russia” managed to collect documents for registration only in 3 regions. Party “Yabloko” did not nominate any lists. Party “Peoples’ Union” held liquidation in December after start of the campaign and while formally its regional organizations could have taken part in the nomination of candidates, this was made only in Tatarstan, where in the end the party decided not to take part in elections.

Summary table on the number of nominated and registered party lists in the regions

Subject of Russian Federation / Political party	“United Russia”	KPRF	LDPR	“Just Russia”	“Patriots of Russia”	“Peoples’ Union”	In total
Kabardino-Balkaria	+	+	+	+	Did not submit documents for registration	-	5 nominees 4 registered
Karachaevo-Cherkessia	+	+	+	+	+	-	5 nominees 5 registered
Tatarstan	+	+	+	+	Did not submit documents for registration	Did not submit documents for registration.	6 nominees 4 registered
Khakassia	+	+	+	+	+	-	5 nominees 5 registered

Arkhangelsk region	+	+	+	+	Did not submit documents for registration	-	5 nominees 4 registered
Bryansk region	+	+	+	+	-	-	4 nominees 4 registered
Vladimir region	+	+	+	+	Did not submit documents for registration.	-	5 nominees 4 registered
Volgograd region	+	+	+	+	+	-	5 nominees 4 registered
Nenetskiy autonomous region	+	+	+	+	-	-	4 nominees 4 registered
Overall	9 registered (9 nominees)	3 registered (7 nominees)	0 registered (1 nominee)				

In total, 44 lists were nominated (4,88 per region on average), 39 lists were registered (4,33 per region on average). In comparison, at the elections of March 14, 2004 there was average of 7,17 lists per region in ballots, on March 12 2006 – average of 8, 13 lists per region, on October 8, 2006 - 7,9 lists.

Due to dramatic decrease of the number of parties and actual decrease of competition between parties, and only 4 competing parties, which are represented in the RF State Duma, perhaps we shall expect that the problem of denial to register must disappear, since thereof denial for registration of parties should be eliminated, since, actually, there is no one to deny running in elections. However, the elections of legislative assemblies showed that the problem of refusal to register party lists remains even in this situation.

Thus, only through intervention of the Central Election Commission of the RF, list of CPRF party was registered in Vladimir region, LDPR's list in Nenetskiy autonomous region, "Patriots of Russia"'s list in Khakassia⁴.

Specifics of nomination and formation of party lists

“United Russia” is represented in all 9 regions and in all municipalities, where elections will take place. This time regional heads are leading party lists in 5 regions (Kabardin-Balkaria, Karachaevo-Cherkessia, Khakassia, Arkhangelsk and Bryansk regions). It is the Secretary of State Assembly, who is heading the list in Tatarstan, Mayor of the city of Vladimir in Vladimir region, the First Deputy Governor in Volgograd region, the State Duma Deputy Artur Chilingarov in Nenetsk autonomous region. Maximum number of state officials is registered in the “United Russia” list of Khakassia (Governor, Mayor of the city of Abakan, heads of the cities and districts) and in Kabardino-Balkaria (a number of ministers and state officials from Presidential administration of Kabardino-Balkaria). In all these cases we can see so-called “locomotives technology”, when state officials are heading the lists, but do not intend to become deputies, taking part in elections only to ensure seats for the party. Members of the Federation Council are also represented in large quantities in the lists.

⁴ Please see expert report in supplement to the Statement at www.golos.org

CPRF's positions are strongest in Vladimir and Volgograd regions. The increase of the number of representatives from business sector can be noted everywhere. In three regions the lists are headed by the RF State Duma Deputies, on one lists it is the Chairman of the Legislative Assembly, who is leading the party list. In two cases (Arkhangelsk region, Nenetskiy autonomous region) the RF State Duma Deputy Andrey Andreev is on the list.

Leader of **LDPR** Vladimir Zhirinovskiy decided to personally head the party list in three regions – Khakassia, Nenetsk autonomous region, Volgograd region. In Bryansk region the party list is headed by the State Duma Deputy A. Ostrovskiy. In Arkhangelsk region the LDPR list does not have any central part.

“Just Russia” decided to get rid of politicians who are considered to be in opposition to state authorities of different regions in Kabardino Balkaria, Tatarstan and Vladimir region.

“Patriots of Russia”. As it was noted, representatives of the party nominated lists in 7 regions, but they were registered only in 3 regions. In other regions the party representatives did not submit any signatures or deposit and, therefore, they got withdrawn from the competition.

The most significant campaign of the party is in Khakassia region, where the party list is headed by Gennadiy Semigin, Chairman of the party. The list was not registered without a scandal at the electoral commission. In the end it included 14 candidates.

Elections of the heads of administrative centers of the subjects of Russian Federation and other municipal establishments

Mainly current heads of administrations are leading at the elections of mayors. It is a typical scenario when representatives of parliamentary parties act as opponents. They usually take part in elections at the decision of regional organizations just to ensure formal competition, but do not take active part in electoral campaign.

At the elections of the mayor of the city of Novosibirsk 4 out of 9 initially nominated candidates were registered: Vladimir Gorodetskiy, current mayor since 2000 (from “United Russia” party), Viktor Starkov, deputy of the regional assembly, coordinator of regional branch of LDPR; self-nominees Alexander Plushkin, doctor of the Novosibirsk regional hospital and Sergey Kibirev, development director of the LLP “S.Yu. Vitte Regional Credit Broker”, former deputy of the regional council. There are no real opponents to current city mayor among registered candidates.

There is no intrigue *at the elections of the mayor of the city of Blagoveschensk*. Vladimir Migulya is nominated for the second term (last time he was a self-nominee, this time he is nominated by “United Russia” party). In total, 4 out of 5 initially nominated candidates were registered.

At the elections of the mayor of the city of Chita 4 candidates have been nominated: current mayor Anatoliy Mikhalev from “United Russia” party, deputy coordinator Vasilina Kulieva from LDPR party, among self-nominees are: head of the construction, transport and communication department, deputy chairman of the urban construction and social infrastructure of municipal administration of the city of Chita Vyacheslav Shylyakovskiy and private entrepreneur Grigoriy Rodionov. All three candidates were registered except for G. Rodionov, who failed to submit necessary documents.

At the elections of the mayor of the city of Tomsk 6 candidates were registered out of 12 contestants. Alexander Makarov, current mayor of the city, is held in custody charged with numerous violations. Nikolay Nikolaychuk, acting mayor, former chairman of the Municipal Duma, is running for the mayor of the city backed by the “United Russia”. Among other registered candidates are: Ivan Kucherov, regional Duma deputy (KPRF), Evgeniy Gusev, doctor of the maternity house (LDPR), Galina Nemtseva, deputy of regional Duma (“Just Russia”); two self-nominees – Alexander Deev, editor of the newspaper “Tomskaya nedelya” (he is considered to be the main opponent of N. Nikolaychuk) and Boris Markelov, advisor to the head of the administration of Kirov district of the city of Tomsk. Andrey Volkov, a candidate from “Yabloko” party, legal advisor at the fiscal chamber of the city of Tomsk, sent appealation to regional court after being denied in

registration by the first registering authority – Sovetskiy district court. The denial was due to his late submission of financial report.

At the elections of the mayor of the city of Petropalovsk-Kamchatsk the leading candidate is current mayor Vladislav Skvorsov (“United Russia”). Registered candidates are following: Sergey Golubev, General Director of LLP “Resource” (LDPR), Mikhail Puchkovskiy, head of the Social Assistance Department of the Pteropavlovsk-Kamchatsk (“Just Russia”). Self nominees are: Andrey Zimin, chairman of the trade unions’ council of Kamcatka city, Arkadiy Ugay, deputy general director of LLP “Nutalkut”, Kostantin Parygin, mechanic of LLP “Ecological reserve”. In total there are 10 candidates.

At the elections of the mayor of the city of Chelyabinsk the situation is following: Mikhail Yurievitch, candidate from “United Russia” has got an opponent – Vyacheslav Tarasov, former mayor of the city. Also among registered candidates there are: Irina Plescheeva, entrepreneur, Vladimir Filichkin, the RF SD Deputy, Petr Svechnikov, First Secretary of the CPRF regional committee, Viktor Fitsler, Director of LLP “Company “Rost”, candidate from LDPR, Nikolay Myalichkin, director of LLP “Communal service -2”, Evgeniy Rogoz, construction tycoon, head of the regional branch of the party “Just Russia”.

At the elections of the mayor of the city of Murmansk there are 9 registered candidates. Primaries took place for the first time in the city of Murmansk on December 4 – first internal partisan elections of the single candidate from “United Russia”. However, self-nominee Sergey Subbotin, Deputy Governor, decided to run against M. Savchenko and signed resignation letter to leave the regional administration from March 15, 2009. As Oksana Gurova, press secretary of the Deputies Assembly, reported to Interfax, this decision was due to the fact that the “Governor of Murmansk region Yuriy Evdokimov was against the party’s decision”, and he refused to support current mayor Mikhail Savchenko, single candidate from the “United Russia”. CPRF nominated Gennadiy Stepakhno, Deputy of Regional Duma. LDPR nominated Andrey Ivanov from Petrozavodsk. The self-nominees are Sergey Ivanov, 34-years old Deputy of the Murmansk municipal Council, Andrey Ivanov and Dmitriy Malyshev, deputies of the Murmansk regional Duma (participant of “United Russia”’s primaries), Vasiliy Vologdin, Director of LLP “RIELT” and Sergey Gabrielyan, private entrepreneur.

A tough competition between regional elite was registered *at the elections of the mayor of the city of Smolensk*. 12 out of 13 nominated candidates were registered⁵.

Elections of the representative bodies of self-governing authorities

As for elections of representative bodies of self-governing authorities with the use of mixed or fully proportional electoral system, the situation here reminds elections of regional legislative bodies: in majority of regions only 4 parliamentary parties are represented. At the same time, the level of competition depends on the size of the municipal establishment, the largest municipal establishments are in Tver and Togliatti. In some small municipal establishments there are only two or three registered candidates.

A right to nominate candidates from civic organizations is still effective in a number of regions. In some regions (for example, movement “December” in Togliatti) there are candidates from non registered political parties and organizations, who run for elections from civic organizations and unite in one list, or they unite people with formally different views to resolve common issues. These local civic organizations defend local interests above all. As an example we can bring a motto of the organization “City Council” (Dolgoprudny town): “We are not the political party, we live here”.

There are following refusals in registration of the lists of political parties and civic organizations at the municipal level:

⁵ Please see supplementary experts’ report at www.golos.org

At the elections of municipal Dumas of the towns such as Noyabrsk and Lapytnangi (Yamalo-Nenetsk Autonomous Republic) CPRF's party lists were denied registration. "Patriots of Russia" also received denial in the city of Noyabrsk.

In Tver lists of Tula regional civic movement "Parents for the future of children" (Alexander Derevyanko, leader – oppositional municipal deputy, supporter of former mayor Oleg Lebedev and former member of "United Russia's" fraction) and "Yabloko – united democrats" (nominated by "Yabloko" party) were denied in registration.

Electoral committee of the Selenginskiy district of Buryatia republic refused to register "Just Russia's" party list at the elections of district council. Committee decided that the party "Just Russia" did not notify the committee about the partisan conference where the party list was formed. In Zeyskiy district of Amur region refusal was received by municipal organization of trade unions of the workers of education and science, which nominated the largest number of candidates (38 people). As Roman Unkunov, the chairman of the electoral commission, explained to "Amur Polit.ru", the organization did not submit full number of documents, moreover, the voting to approve party list was done openly not in secret.

In places, where elections are taking place according to majoritarian system or where we are talking about registration of candidates according to majority part in mixed system the situation is really complicated. The most scandalous situation was noted in the city of St. Petersburg.

Municipal and local authorities are trying to stop any oppositional candidates from taking part in the municipal elections in St. Petersburg, and most often refusals to register these candidates are explained by inaccuracies of the signature sheets. This proves that electoral legislation is too strict and allows recognizing signatures of actually existing people as false based on technical inaccuracies or even by entering on purpose additional errors that make them inaccurate.

Thus, according to the members of the "United civic front", the organization's candidates in some cases were not allowed in to the premises of electoral commissions to submit documents. The leader of the organization Olga Kurnosova told about problems at the electoral commission of the municipal establishment "Chernaya rechka", where the security was called not to let in the candidates to the premises, where electoral commission was present even at five in the evening, though the submission of documents was allowed till six o'clock.

According to municipal electoral commission, 4676 people declared their willingness to take part in elections of the deputies of municipal councils. 800 people received refusal, with that, 25% of these candidates were representatives of "Just Russia" party. Representatives of "Yabloko" party were running for elections as self-nominees and half of them were not registered. Out of 1,5 thousand representatives of "United Russia" refusal was given to 12 people, out of 50 representatives of LDPR refusal was given to 5 people, and out of 50 representatives of CPRF party – 55.

A number of candidates of "Just Russia" received refusals based on claims that they did not submit written excerpts from their work record. Though, according to the law, it is acceptable to present a certificate letter from employee or written excerpt of the work record.

Self-nominees from "United civic front", who did not manage to submit documents, filed complaints with regional electoral commission and municipal criminal court. 14 complaints were received from representatives of "Just Russia". **Complaint letter indicated the following: in several municipal establishments electoral committees kept under secret their decisions about changes in borders and numbers of electoral districts and this disabled the candidates to submit documents for registration. Candidates and official representatives spent a week trying to find out actual numbers of electoral districts, however it was almost impossible to obtain this information, also it was nearly impossible to locate chairmen of the electoral commissions. The numbers were changed in Kirovskiy, Moscow, Primorskiy, Vyborgskiy, Vasileostrovskiy districts. However, change of numbers did not influence candidates from "United Russia". At the same time representatives of "Just Russia", CPRF, "Yabloko", and also independent candidates received refusals in many cases. Representatives of "Just**

Russia” announced that 170 representatives of their party were not registered, and additional 400 applications were under consideration.

Candidates of “Just Russia” in Akademicheskiy municipal district were denied registration because during the conference, where party list was formed, the party failed to observe principle of equality between male and female candidates.

Numerous cases of refusal to register candidates were also noted at the municipal elections of Moscow region.

Litigations connected with exclusion of candidates are in full swing in the city of Togliatti. 95 candidates were nominated according to single seat electoral constituency, however only 76 were registered.

With that, in the situation of crisis, we noticed cases of candidates backed by the “United Russia” preferring to be nominated as independents, and thus disassociate themselves from the party.

For example, at the election of Chelyabinsk municipal Duma, candidates nominated by “United Russia” Andrey Baryshev and Irina Shafikova, also Vladimir Alexeev, general director of the CJSC “Stalkonstruksia”, decided to run for elections as self-nominated candidates.

In St. Petersburg, Dmitriy Gryzlov (born in 1979), a son of the Chairman of the Supreme Council of “United Russia” party, was registered as independent candidate at the elections for municipal council of the district No.74 of Frunzenskiy district (“Georgievskiy”). Therefore he competes with the candidates, who are officially nominated by the “United Russia”.

III. USE OF ADMINISTRATIVE RESOURCE

SPECIFICS OF THE AGITATION CAMPAIGN

Personal participation of senior state officials at the elections is aided by certain actions of the authorities in different regions.

Here we are talking about difficulties that are caused during registration of party lists and specific candidates (examples from Tver, St. Petersburg, Severodvinsk and etc.) and active media coverage of the agitation activities disguised as “coverage of professional activities of the candidates”.

According to media and participants themselves, administrative resource was actively used to ensure mass rallies organized by the “United Russia” on January 31st in support of anti-crisis measures of the government and president (this date was chosen in order to distract attention from social protest of the oppositional groups, which was planned on the same date). Media received instructions on how to cover these events. These instructions and plans, which were sent through executive authorities in Khakassia, were published by informational groups such as www.irena.org.ru, www.tayga.info, etc. According to information obtained, candidates from single mandate units and party lists were withdrawing under pressure from administration (for example, the head of the labour unions of APK withdrew himself from the list of “Patriots of Russia” party).

In Vladimir region “United Russia” obliged mainly staff members of the municipal, district administrations, municipal establishments and enterprises to take part in the meeting. In total thousand people gathered in Teatralnaya square in the city of Vladimir. V. Kiselev in his speech blamed some unknown forces’ resistance to unite in the face of crisis. “We will say our decisive NO to demagogues from left and right”, - he said. In general the meeting was intended to support the “party and government”. The event’s motto was “People-Medvedev-Putin- together we will win!”. Communists held their rally on the same day. Around 300 people came to attend it.

In Volgograd region local authorities distributed New Year presents for children in bags with “United Russia” symbol, also municipal media is actively agitating for the party of power. According to communists, representatives of “United Russia” are putting pressure on the heads of villages and districts and oblige them

to ensure certain turn out of voters and number of votes, which should be obtained in the electoral districts by the party of power. CPRF will send official inquiries regarding all registered violations to the court and regional electoral commission.

Other examples of direct administrative actions, which impede opponents' electoral campaigns are: in Severodvinsk a local channel "TVS" stopped broadcasts before the start of elections, as it was announced by Maya Laukarte, acting editor in chief of CJSC "TVS". "In the morning of January 26 almost whole staff members of "TVS" – around 30 people - came to work. However, they did not have any work assignments, since shareholders of the TV company signed a decision to stop broadcasting on January 23rd", - she said. As Maya Laukarte explained, the official decision to stop broadcasting was due to heavy economic situation and consequences of global financial crisis, however, she was more than sure that the company's financial situation was normal and there should be more serious reason for such decision. "On March 1st we will have elections of three levels. In a private conversation, shareholders of "TVS" told me that the governor's administration obliged to close the channel and threatened to take away the license if such decision would not be carried out" – she said to journalists. "TVS" (television of Severodvinsk) was established six years ago as a result of merger of several town's TV studios. The broadcasting was made at the frequency of "Ren-TV" channel. "News" program was shown four times a week. All citizen of Severodvinsk watched the program (around 200 people). In addition to that, "TVS" recently won a tender to broadcast in Arkhangelsk, however the workers of the TV channel did not manage to start working in the regional centre⁶. The head of the company S. Nepogodyaev attempted to run for elections for the mayor of Severodvinsk city on March 1, 2009, as an opponent to the "United Russia"'s candidate.

On the eve of new year Tula regional branch of the Ministry of Justice refused again to register movement "Zasechny Rubezh", which had five deputies in regional Duma and three in Tulska municipal Duma (more than any party, except "UR"). The movement lost its registration in 2007, and all attempts to reregister again were unsuccessful. In an unofficial conversation representatives of "Zasechny Rubezh" were told that the movement will not be registered in any case and will not be able to take part in municipal elections. As a result two deputies of regional Duma Denis Bychkov and Sergey Mirko left the movement and joined "Just Russia".

In Zhukovskiy, a town in the outskirts of Moscow, a widely visited portal unsorted.ru was shut down because there were on-line discussions of the election of the mayor; and the administrator of the portal refused to close the on-line discussion. This was written by the portal's administrator in the remaining page of the portal. The on-line discussion was supplemented by Internet voting for the mayor of the city. The current mayor of Zhukovskiy town Alexander Bobonikov received 14% votes and a winning candidate Igor Novikov received 57% votes. Portal was visited by more than 10 thousand users per day, most of them from the towns of Zhukovsk or Ramenskoe. The website was supported by the server located in the network of the city Internet provider "Progtekhn", which also provided website's access to the Internet⁷.

In Ulan Ude (Buryatia) a scandal took place when "Just Russia" banner had been removed. The organization intends to file a court appeal against actions of state officials who ordered to take down banner that says: "Interest of the citizens are more important than interests of the mayor's office!". The space rent for the banner was paid by the organization for the whole month of February, till the end of electoral campaign. The representatives of advertisement agency decided to do with a phone call instead of sending written notifications to the organization. In a phone call made on Sunday the agency explained that the decision to remove the banner was made upon request of the mayor's office officials. According to Sergey Merzin, party representative, the municipal electoral commission was notified that the banner would be installed at the entrance of the building, located not far from business-centre "Vostocnyye vorota". Till the last moment the party hoped that the agency would resist pressure.

In Tatarstan, TNV, local TV channel, showed news featuring Farid Mukhamtshin, State Assembly Deputy of the Republic of Tatarstan, who is leading "United Russia" list. The news report had all characteristics of the political agitation. In the same program agitation video about Malykhina L.V. was

⁶ <http://www.regions.ru/news/2192566/>

⁷ http://pravoedelo-mo.ru/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=172&Itemid=2

shown, a number two on the “United Russia” list. In January channels “Efir” and TNV showed programs featuring Farid Mukhametshin and Ilshat Aminov, also candidate from “United Russia”, these programs also contained agitation. The financing sources were not identified. The video records are available. At the moment analysis of the printed media is being done, the analysis should help to identify agitation materials which were published before start of electoral campaign in the media. According to Nasima Stolyarova, election candidate, her opponent from “United Russia” had meetings with voters in schools. At one of the meetings, where her opponent was making a speech, director of the school did not allow Stolyarova to also speak at the meeting. At the decision of the CEC of the Republic of Tatarstan newspapers “Republic of Tatarstan” and “Vatanam Tatarstan”, whose founders are state structures, were not included in the list of media that should provide free space for publication of agitation materials of the candidates.

In Vladimir region a complaint was sent to regional prosecutor’s office by Larisa Goryacheva, current deputy of legislative assembly, a candidate from CPRF. On January 26 she was supposed to have meeting with the veterans in the Verbovskiy village. Vera Kolushina, the Chairman of local council of self-government No.16, did not let in the veterans inside the premises of local council of self-government No.16 and the meeting did not take place, since, as she explained, her staff were asked to attend a meeting in some other place. On January 21 and 26, 2009, meetings of the local councils of self-government No. 13 and of the Podbolotksiy district took place. Voters asked the deputy to have a meeting with them after the conference. However, the administration of the district, represented by deputy head A.V. Shirshova, asked voters to leave the premises where the conference took place and, therefore, the meeting did not take place.

On January 18 four agitators of the regional branches of CPRF party were arrested and delivered to the Department of Internal Affairs of Leninskiy and Frunzenskiy districts of the city of Vladimir. As one of the arrested told, he and his colleague were distributing agitation leaflets at Sobornaya square. Militia arrived by car and asked them to come with them to regional department. According to agitator, one of the militia representatives told that there was “a signal” and “Razov’s personal order” (Alexander Razov – head of the Department of Internal Affairs of the city of Vladimir). Young people were held at the department for 1,5 hours and were released after they wrote explanation notes. Other two agitators, who were distributing leaflets at the entrance of “Valentina” shop were taken to Leninskiy Department of Internal Affairs. According to Vyacheslav Korolev, lawyers of CPRF are studying this case and intend to file complaint against the representatives of law enforcement bodies.

On January 21 militia arrested CPRF’s agitator together with Nikolay Gorko, lawyer, who came to rescue the agitator. Both were taken to Department of Internal Affairs of Frunzenskiy district of the city of Vladimir. This time, militia was doubtful about the “dates” of agitation. According to militia, the agitation was supposed to take place from February 1. And before this date any agitation was considered to be illegal, as militia said, referring to the words of their chiefs.

Candidate for deputy elections Dmitriy Basharin (district No. 6) on January 22 took part in drawings to obtain paid space for publications in the newspaper “Suzdalskaya nov”. First publication on him was supposed to come out on January 31, however, up to that date he was not given a contract to be able to pay for the publication. Moreover, according to his words, as a result of drawings he was allowed to place publication on the whole newspaper page, however he was later offered only half of the page.

Chelyabinsk office of the Association “GOLOS” noted a large number of illegal pre-electoral advertising. A number of candidates for the elections of deputies of Chelyabinsk regional Duma sent greeting notes to citizen of the city right after the beginning of the agitation campaign, they also placed outdoor advertising, etc.

For example, on January 18, V. Pautov, current deputy of the municipal Duma, nominated himself and was registered by electoral commission as a candidate for election. The very next day a publication titled “New year presents from deputy Pautov” appeared in the newspaper “Chas pik” (number of copies 15 000). The publication is supplemented by the photo of the candidate surrounded by children, which, as we know, is prohibited by law during agitation period. The media agitation should start on January 31.

In December banners saying: “We are to build here, we are to live here” with portraits of A. Dida, director of the construction company “Smart House”, were placed in the electoral district No. 28. Also, leaflets with the same context were distributed. Installation of banners with such context is against law on “Advertisement” and Federal Law 67, as noted in one of “GOLOS” press releases from Chelyabinsk. This violates principle of honest agitation, voter right to receive honest and true information. After this the advertising sheets appeared again on the same constructions in the same district. There was only one difference in the advertising sheets – instead of “Director of the construction company “Smart House” it was written “Candidate for elections of deputy of Chelyabinsk municipal Duma”.

In a number of regions criminal cases were registered

For example, Boris Ibragimovitch, the director of the tourism company “Bars”, was reported missing in the village of Dombay of Karachaevo Cherkessia republic in the morning of January 13. Suspects were arrested. They plead not guilty, the body had not been yet found. This missing case is connected with a turf war at the municipal level. The Marshankulovy brothers were suspects in this criminal case. Marat Marshankulov, one of the brothers was assigned as acting head of the town of Dombay by S. A. Laypanov, the mayor of the Karachaevo municipal establishment, instead of Umar-Ali Bayramukov, illegally suspended mayor, who served for 5 years. Boris Bayramukov and Umar-Ali Bayramukov are close relatives.

Islam Krymshakhalov, one of the candidates at the elections for deputy of the parliament in single-seat constituency was killed in the region. He was shot dead on January 13 at the parking area near the Supreme Court in the town of Cherkessk, Karachaevo-Cherkessia republic. Uslam Krymshakhalov is a current deputy of the regional parliament, one of the leaders of the opposition to Mustafa Batdyev, former president of the republic. Officials declared this assassination was politically motivated. He used to be member of “Rodina” and “Party of social justice”. Civic groups condemned these events.

In general, in comparison to past electoral campaigns, the current level of agitation efforts of the parties dropped significantly. “United Russia” dominates in media; the media coverage is disguised as “coverage of professional activities” of the candidates and coverage of meetings supporting the party. At the same time “United Russia” uses outdoor advertising as well. CPRF agitates using traditional methods with involvement of agitators and party’s press. LDPR and “Just Russia” are little noticed in the regions.

“GOLOS” (www.golos.org) is an independent Russian civic organization founded in 2000 to defend voters’ rights and contribute to the development of the civic society in Russia. “GOLOS” has a largest and most geographically widespread election monitoring network in the country (it unites 281 NGO and has offices in 40 regions). “GOLOS” has monitored more than 50 elections (from municipal to regional), including 4 federal campaigns, and trained over 15000 independent observers all over the country. “GOLOS” issues statements covering the results of its election observation, including messages from its hot-line “Transparent Elections” (<http://8800333350.ru>), and gives its assessment to the various stages of the electoral process in Russia using international standards of Free and Fair elections and Russian Election Law.