



Plenary sitting

B9-0259/2024

22.4.2024

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

to wind up the debate on the statement by the Commission

pursuant to Rule 132(2) of the Rules of Procedure

on Russia's undemocratic presidential elections and their illegitimate extension
to the occupied territories
(2024/2665(RSP))

**Anna Fotyga, Ryszard Czarnecki, Assita Kanko, Witold Jan
Waszczykowski, Adam Bielan, Charlie Weimers, Anna Zalewska, Patryk
Jaki, Hermann Tertsch, Beata Mazurek, Bogdan Rzońca, Elżbieta
Rafalska, Andżelika Anna Możdżanowska**
on behalf of the ECR Group

B9-0259/2024

European Parliament resolution on Russia's undemocratic presidential elections and their illegitimate extension to the occupied territories (2024/2665(RSP))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Russia, Alexei Navalny, and civil society and human rights defenders in Russia,
 - having regard to the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (the European Convention on Human Rights),
 - having regard to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,
 - having regard to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,
 - having regard to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court,
 - having regard to the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide,
 - having regard to the UN Charter,
 - having regard to the European Convention on Human Rights and the Protocols thereto, in particular Article 10 on the right to freedom of expression and Article 11 on the right to freedom of assembly and association,
 - having regard to Rule 132(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas Vladimir Putin, a former KGB operative who was relatively unknown to the public, was installed in the Kremlin 25 years ago with the goal of reversing the collapse of the Soviet Union; whereas from the very beginning, his time in office has been marked by internal oppressions and external aggressions, all of which have been inadequately addressed by the international community, which has led to numerous dreadful events, culminating in the illegal and unjustifiable war of aggression against Ukraine;
- B. whereas the Putin regime has illegitimately sought to prolong its time in power by removing term limits for the Russian presidency; whereas the sham referendum of 2020 cannot be perceived as valid and was enacted in violation of the laws and international commitments of the Russian Federation; whereas the renewed presidential term of Vladimir Putin is therefore unconstitutional;
- C. whereas the recent undemocratic presidential election serves as a testament to the profoundly autocratic and anti-democratic nature of Russia's political system and serves as cover for the Putin regime to further consolidate its power within Russia and enhance its hostile provocations abroad;

- D. whereas the election served as a thinly veiled camouflage for the Putin regime to further its current policies of deepening repression at home and continuing its illegal and unjustifiable war in Ukraine;
- E. whereas the political space in Russia for meaningful opposition to the Putin regime has been largely eliminated via a continued programme of intimidation, exile, assassination and imprisonment, with various candidates being banned from running by the Central Election Commission of Russia, while the election itself was marked by many irregularities, widespread reports of fraud, intimidation of voters and denial of their right to vote, stuffing of ballot boxes, falsification of protocols from the precincts on a massive scale, detention of independent domestic election observers, complete suppression of media freedom and penalties for exercising the freedom of expression;
- F. whereas opposition candidates running in this sham election were representatives of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation (CPRF), New People, and the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia (LDPR), whose opposition status is merely a façade as they support the current policies of the regime; whereas Mr Nikolay Kharitonov, Mr Vladislav Davankov and Mr Leonid Slutsky, who ran in this sham election, are all currently under EU and US sanctions owing to their support for the war in Ukraine and cannot be considered legitimate opponents to Russia's dictatorship;
- G. whereas political repression in Russia is currently at one of its highest ever levels, even compared to Soviet times, and is largely used to silence any voice critical to the new wave of Moscow's imperialism and shield the war in Ukraine from internal disapproval; whereas this has led to a new law being passed that permits any individual who criticises the 'Special Military Operation' in Ukraine to be liable to have their property and assets confiscated by the authorities;
- H. whereas since 2022, the Putin regime has implemented various restrictive election monitoring laws that prevent campaign participants from appointing members to the election commission and prevent candidate proxies from observing the counting of votes or voting at polling stations, while supporters of opposition parties are routinely targeted, detained and often charged, largely under the new law passed in February 2024 permitting property and asset confiscation for any individual criticising the war in Ukraine;
- I. whereas Putin's 'electoral victory' with 87 % of the vote derived from a clearly manipulated outcome from polling stations throughout the country from Adygea to Yamalo-Nenets, all of which committed at least 85 % of the vote to President Putin, a clearly inconceivable number for a free and fair election; whereas this shows the cavalier and flagrant manner in which elections are misused by the Putin regime to continue into its 24th year in power;
- J. whereas the system re-introduced in Russia since 1999, including the multiple barriers in the election laws of Russia, is designed to limit the influence of opposition parties and representatives of regions opposing the hegemony and policies of Moscow, which are detrimental to the well-being and even the survival of numerous nations conquered by Moscow, in the State Duma; whereas the Russian Federation is a single constituency and parties must receive 7 % of the total vote to be eligible for representation, resulting

in the absence of many parties and movements at the national level, allowing Putin to maintain a kleptocratic dictatorship rooted in a despotic Moscow-centric system;

- K. whereas the most powerful opposition figure against Putin's rule, Alexei Navalny, Chairman of the Russia of the Future party, died in prison in mysterious circumstances indicating assassination and a cover-up by prison authorities on 16 February 2024, ensuring that all opposition to Putin in Russia has effectively been eliminated, eroded, expelled or delegitimised;
- L. whereas there are over 1 000 political prisoners in the Russian Federation; whereas the EU shows solidarity with all those dissidents and the Russian people, who, despite the threat to their freedom and their lives and the pressure from the Kremlin and the Russian authorities, continue to fight for freedom, human rights and democracy;
- M. whereas the United Nations Special Rapporteur for Human Rights in Russia, Mariana Katzarova, stated in her September 2023 report that political mobilisation or dissent are virtually impossible in the current highly repressive and corrupt legal framework;
- N. whereas the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights was not invited to observe the Russian election in March 2024, for the first time since 1993, while many other reputable international election monitoring personnel refused to take part in legitimising the process of this sham election;
- O. whereas residents of the illegally occupied territories of Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhia, Kherson and Crimea were forced to vote in this sham election with a foregone conclusion, often under strict supervision of armed and masked personnel, in an effort to tighten the Putin regime's grip on the illegally occupied territories, bestow legitimacy on an illegal occupation and identify any dissenters against Russia's continued war crimes;
- P. whereas those living under Russian occupation have been forced to assume Russian citizenship, with many being forcibly moved to the Russian Federation, while those in the illegally occupied territories who could not produce a Russian passport for voting were questioned and had their homes and belongings searched by Russian officials; whereas election officials went from house to house throughout the occupied territories with armed guards forcing people to vote in the election;
- Q. whereas the holding of Russian elections in the occupied territories of Ukraine is illegal and unacceptable; whereas over 55 countries, including the EU Member States and Ukraine, have signed a declaration to this effect;
- R. whereas if not properly and rightfully addressed, this sham election may inspire the further erosion of democratic development throughout the Global South;
- S. whereas the Putin regime has consistently used messaging in the areas of the Russian Federation that are home to the nearly two hundred ethnic and national communities living in its territory, many of them indigenous, that can only be described as xenophobic and racist, and has frequently emphasised that only the 'great Russian', above all others, will flourish in the country with the support of the government;

- T. whereas the reactions of Western democracies to these sham elections, assassinations and other aggressive actions of the Russian Federation have not been strong enough to deter the Kremlin from continuing its hostile and oppressive policies and once more turning into an aggressive totalitarian state;
1. Condemns in the strongest terms the hosting of such an obviously sham election in Russia and the territories it illegally occupies and encourages the EU and its Member States not to recognise Vladimir Putin as president of the Russian Federation once his current term of office expires on 7 May 2024, by noting that he will have no legal, political or moral mandate to enter into any further contractual relations on behalf of the Russian Federation;
 2. Condemns in the strongest terms the murder of Alexei Navalny; expresses its sympathy to the family of Mr Navalny; calls for an international investigation into the circumstances surrounding his death, with the aim of holding those responsible to account; calls for a joint and adequate international response to this homicide;
 3. Is strongly convinced that any internal changes within the Russian Federation will depend on the outcome of the war in Ukraine; calls on the international community, therefore, to make an even stronger contribution to Ukraine's victory;
 4. Expresses its solidarity with the Russian people who protested this sham election in Russia and abroad; commends in particular those Russians and representatives of other nations of the Russian Federation who actively oppose the regime of Vladimir Putin and its invasion of Ukraine, by joining Ukraine in its just war of self-defence within the Freedom of Russia Legion, the Russian Volunteer Corps (RVC) and the Sibir Battalion formations;
 5. Is deeply concerned that the outcome of this sham election may be used by the regime to instigate a general mobilisation to support its illegal and unjustifiable war in Ukraine;
 6. Reiterates its calls for the assassins of Alexei Navalny and other members of the regime to be held to account for their continued human rights violations, including high-level officials and members of the security forces and the penitentiary sector, based on the 6 000 List published by Alexei Navalny's Anti-Corruption Foundation International; welcomes the recent adoption of sanctions by the US following Navalny's death and invites the EU to coordinate the response of the democratic world;
 7. Calls on Russia to release all of the over 1 000 political prisoners in the Russian Federation; expresses its solidarity with all dissidents and the Russian people, who, despite the threat to their freedom and their lives and the pressure from the Kremlin and the Russian authorities, continue to fight for freedom, human rights and democracy, as exemplified by the courageous and dignified stand taken by Vladimir Kara-Murza, for which he has been severely persecuted; calls for targeted sanctions against those who conducted the illegal election on Ukraine's internationally recognised territory with the aim of legitimising an illegal occupation;
 8. Is of the opinion that any permanent changes in the Russia Federation require the de-imperialisation, decolonisation and re-federalisation of the state and a clear break with Russia's imperial past;

9. Urges the international community to ensure accountability for the regime's ongoing crimes committed not only on the territory of the Russian Federation, but also on European Union soil and worldwide;
10. Reiterates that the EU should stand in full solidarity with Russian civil society which has subscribed to universal democratic values and rejected imperialism, and that it should make use of the European human rights violations sanctions regime to sanction perpetrators of human rights violations and their families; encourages the EU to work closely with international partners, including the G7 and like-minded countries, and to coordinate efforts to address human rights abuses and violations in Russia, including through stronger targeted sanctions, diplomatic pressure and support to civil society;
11. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the Council, the Commission, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the Council of Europe, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, International Memorial and the Memorial Human Rights Centre, and the Russian authorities.