Russia elects a new Duma

The Council of Labor & Defense Building in Moscow where the Duma meets..

Elections were held in Russia on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday to elect the 450 members of the State Duma, the lower house of the Federal Assembly. Over the three days, 225 members were elected on a first-past-the-post basis in single-member constituencies and 225 members were elected according to the proportion of the vote for each party relative to the total vote for all of the parties that obtained at least 5 percent of the party-list vote.

A few votes are still being counted, but with 98 percent of the votes counted the results are clear. The most important result, of course, is the overwhelming vote for the United Russia party, which is headed by former President and Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev and of course supports President Putin. With almost all of the votes counted, United Russia appears to have won 58 percent of the party list vote, an increase of 8.1 percent over its vote in the 2021 election, and 355 of the 450 seats in the Duma, an increase of 31 over the 324 seats it won in the 2021 election. Of the 355 seats, 147 were won in the party list vote and 208 were won in single-member constituencies. With its 355 seats, United Russia will hold 79 percent of the seats in the new Duma.

Among the other parties, the Communist Party received 13.7 percent of the party list vote, a drop of 5.3 percent, and won 40 seats, 17 less than it won in 2021. 35 of the party's seats were won in the party-list vote and five were won in constituencies. The Liberal Democratic party received 9 percent of the party list vote, an increase of 1.4 percent, and won 25 seats, 4 more than it won in 2021. 23 of the party's 25 seats were won in the party-list vote. The other 2 were won in constituencies. The New People party received 7.9 percent of the party list vote, an increase of 2.6 percent, and won 20 seats in the party-list vote, a gain of 7. The A Just Russia party received 5.1 percent of the party-list vote, a drop of 2.4 percent, and won 4 seats, 23 less than it held before the election. One other party, Rodina, won one seat. All of which means that United Russia will continue to have, notwithstanding the façade of competitive elections, a very large majority – close to 80 percent of the seats – in the Duma.

Since June, there has been frequent speculation that, following the election, Russia will undertake another mobilization of up to 300,000 by the end of 2026. In the runup to the election, Presidential Press Secretary Dmitry Peskov and other Russian officials denied another mobilization would be announced once the election had taken place. Nevertheless, many observers believe Russia will be forced to hold one in the near future, given the substantial losses its forces continue to experience as the war continues in northeastern and eastern Ukraine. That obviously couldn't be said before the election. But now that the election has taken place, no one should be surprised if Russia announces another mobilization in the near future.

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