

These are the hottest, dirtiest single-mandate races

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<http://www.kyivpost.com/content/politics/these-are-the-hottest-dirtiest-single-mandate-races-315394.html>



Election commission officials recalculate ballots at a district of election commission in Kyiv, Ukraine, Tuesday, Oct. 30, 2012. © AP

As widely anticipated, the fight for half the legislature's 450 seats was the fiercest and dirtiest in single-mandate constituencies. Because of their local nature, international and local observers saw these races as being highly susceptible to widespread abuse of government resources in favor of pro-presidential candidates, intimidation of candidates, journalists and observers, voter bribing and tampering with vote tabulations.

Vote counts commenced slowly where pro-presidential candidates faced opposition opponents in tight races.

Bottlenecks appeared at district election commissions that delayed the process of accepting tabulated results from precinct election commission heads. Election watchdog OPORA reported also that many precinct commission heads started to re-write their tabulated results before submitting them for processing. The same was witnessed by opposition party observers.

Election authorities blamed the huge delays on faulty or slow computer technical problems. Nevertheless, suspicion of vote tampering ensued with each passing hour and day. Some precinct commission heads had to wait up to 72 hours before submitting their results to district election commission officials, often without food and under sleep deprivation.

The situation called for vigilance and civic mobilization on the part of opposition candidates. As of 1:10 p.m. today, vote counting was still under way for 15 races.

Ukraine's capital was the battleground for five of the 11 hot races described below. Two contests in Kyiv Oblast were also highly contentious, as were duels in Vinnytsia, Mykolayiv, Volyn and Cherkassy oblasts.

Ideology trumps money and incumbency

Who:

Andriy Illienko (Svoboda) vs. Halyna Herera (independent)

Illienko is a 25-year old Svoboda party activist. Herera is the Kyiv City Council secretary and acting mayor of Kyiv. A multi-millionaire, Herera and her husband who won a parliamentary seat in Khmelnytsky Oblast, run Epicenter, a chain of home improvement stores. She was perceived to be friendly with the pro-presidential Party of Regions.

What happened:

This race in Kyiv's Troyeshchyna area was as ugly as the residential district in which it was held.

After scuffles with police, fears of election fraud and a ballot recount, the district election commission here finally concluded at 4 a.m. on Oct. 31 that Svoboda activist Andriy Illienko prevailed by a narrow vote count.

The vote count dragged on beyond 48 hours. At one point on Oct. 30, Illienko noticed that election officials had mixed up the results by entering Herera's name in first, whereas his name belonged there. A vote count followed that showed Illienko had won in the disputed precinct.

In the end, the vote recount confirmed Svoboda's allegation of votes being counted wrongly and the Central Election Commission immediately corrected the official election figures for that district on its website.

Think tank analyst bests former Kyiv city council speaker

Who:

Viktor Chumak (UDAR) vs. Oles Dovhiy (independent)

Chumak is a career think tank analyst and heads the Ukrainian Institute of Public Policy, a non-governmental policy research center.

Dovhiy served as Kyiv City Council speaker under Mayor Leonid Chernovetsky's time in office. Dovhiy's father, Stanislav, is an incumbent member of parliament. While in office, Dovhiy presided over a city council that passed many controversial laws that led to suspicious land privatizations, including city park and forestland.

What happened:

With 88 percent of the votes officially in on Oct. 31, former Kyiv City Council secretary Oles Dovhyi conceded defeat to Viktor Chumak of Vitali Klitschko's Ukrainian Democratic Alliance for Reforms in the capital's Dnipro district.

Initially the race was close, as the lead position changed back and forth. Tabulated results trickled in at snail pace. In the early stages, only a few hundred votes separated the two.

The slow pace in the counting sparked suspicions of fraud. Dozens of precinct election district members were forced to wait more than 24 hours in corridors with their ballot boxes as the votes were being counted.

Chumak said that based on the copies of tabulated results that he and the rest of the candidates received, he had 5,200 more votes than Dovhyi. However, many damaged boxes with ballots were sent for a recount. According to Chumak, all the damaged boxes contained ballots whose totals favored him. For more than 48 hours Chumak and his party supporters remained vigilant and monitored activities until it became clear he had won.

Rich local squeezes past opposition candidate

Who:

Stepan Ivakhiv (independent) vs. Ihor Huz, Batkivshchyna, Volyn Oblast council

A local activist, Ihor Huz is a 30-year old Volyn Oblast Council member. Ihor Huz is a multimillionaire who co-owns more than 300 gas stations with longtime friend and business partner Ihor Yeremeyev. Yeremeyev also won a single-mandate seat in Volyn Oblast. Ivakhiv is affiliated with the Party of Regions.

What happened:

OPORA watchdog observed tabulated results from precinct election commissions being re-written on the premises of the district election commission. The group also noted that the tabulated results weren't properly packaged. On Oct. 29, as the vote count dragged on with he and Ivakhiv constantly changing leads, Huz started a hunger strike at the district election commission in protest of the alleged vote tampering.

Despite this, Ivakhiv came out on top.

Incumbent lawmakers go head to head

Who:

Kseniya Lyapina (Batkivshchyna) vs. Oleksandr Suprunenko (independent)

Lyapina earned a reputation as a small and medium size advocate in the civil society sector. She switched to Batkivshchyna from Our Ukraine in this election. Suprunenko was a Kyiv City Council member before becoming a Party of Regions lawmaker. His brother, also a former Kyiv City Council member, is wanted by authorities on charges of assault.

What happened:

The vote count dragged on. Lyapina burrowed herself at the district election commission to keep a watchful eye. At one point, she said, “they’re trying to bid for time in order to tamper with the vote.” At one point on Oct. 31, the head of one precinct commission disappeared all day with an official election stamp. When she finally won, after more than 72 hours, Lyapina’s opponent filed a motion in court to conduct a re-count in 48 election precincts. The court ruled in his favor. However, Lyapina successfully appealed.

High stakes in small yet strategic in Kyiv Oblast town

Who:

Viacheslav Kutovy (Batkivshchyna) vs. Petro Melnyk (Party of Regions)
Melnyk is a Party of Regions lawmaker and head of the nation’s Tax Academy in Irpin, Kyiv Oblast. Kutovy is the owner of a small chain of gas stations who declared an income of less than \$1,200 in 2011.

What happened:

Melnyk was the subject of pre-election allegations that accused him of abusing his position as the head of the nation’s Tax Academy here in Irpin. He was accused of coercing his students to vote for him and of handing out computers to area schools. Only a third of tabulated results in this district were tabulated by the second day after elections. Suspicion of fraud ran high. Election officials began sending back results for clarification from precinct election heads. Fights ensued. UDAR’s candidate started to assist Kutovy’s people to monitor the vote count. As of 1:10 p.m., 83.14 percent of votes were counted in Kutovy’s favor.

Slowest vote count in Kyiv

Who:

Viktor Pylypyshyn (independent) vs. Yuriy Levchenko (Svoboda)
Pylypyshyn is the head of Kyiv’s Shevchenko District Administration, and failed numerous times to win the mayoral seat. He is perceived to be the pro-government candidate, as a member of Speaker Volodymyr Lytvyn’s People’s Party. He also is a successful business man who owns several greenhouses and brands of tea. Levchenko, 28, heads Svoboda analytical department.

What happened:

Tension is high here as the vote count is in its fourth day. The Central Election Commission said it has evidence of fraud at this election district. The results the permanent election body has electronically received from the election district differs from the tabulated results. For example, one protocol had 157 votes for Pylypyshyn, while the number sent to CEC was 197. Another protocol had 310 votes for Pylypyshyn but 350 went to the CEC's server. A third protocol showed 277 votes for Pylypyshyn but 427 went to CEC. The vote count is ongoing. Vote recount demanded in court

Who: Serhiy Teryokhin (Batkivshchyna) vs. Ihor Lysov (Party of Regions)
Lysov is a Party of Regions lawmaker. Teryokhin is a veteran lawmaker for Batkivshchyna.

What happened:

Vote counting was slow from the start, but when Lysov saw that he was falling behind, he demanded a vote count of 28 election precincts on Oct. 31 in the courts. When the courts ruled in Lysov's favor, the opposition appealed on Nov. 1. The work of the district election commission has been frozen since.

Town of Brovary gets dirty

Who:

Pavlo Rizanenko (UDAR) vs. Mykola Semenyaka (independent)
Rizanenko is a former investment banker, turned civic activist. An Afghan War veteran, Semenyaka is district councilman of a town in Kyiv Oblast.

What happened:

Rizanenko faced trouble during the election campaign. Billboards and literature were distributed blackening his name. The validity of his candidacy was challenged in court. But he ran and the vote count was slow from the beginning. Market researcher GfK's exit poll showed that Rizanenko had won, as did Rizanenko's UDAR party's parallel vote count. Nevertheless, once polls closed on Oct. 28, a group of young men took over the district election commission building. They blocked the entrance with a fence and didn't let anybody inside. Fight broke out with journalists. Then Vitaliy Klitschko arrived with Hanne Severinsen, the former rapporteur of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. They calmed the situation down and started monitoring the vote tabulations.

The old switcheroo

Who: Vitaliy Travianko (Party of Regions) vs. Andriy Kornatsky (Batkivshchyna)

Travianko is a member of the Party of Regions and deputy head of the Mykolayiv Oblast State Administration. Kornatsky is a local activist and head of the Rural Front civil society organization.

What happened:

The whopper was when the Central Election Commission listed Kornatsky the victor on Oct. 30. But a few hours later, Kornatsky's name was replaced by the runner-up candidate, Travianko with with the same figures showing for first and second place.

In addition to the usual delays in vote counting, the opposition says a number of procedures weren't followed that further fueled suspicions of vote tampering. District election commission officials weren't publicizing how many election protocols they had and were receiving from precinct commissions. Vote counts were being made based on Central Election Commission data, not on the stamped protocols received from precincts. The protocols weren't packaged safely for safe transport to the Central Election Commission.

Voter tampering accusations on both sides

Who:

Viktor Zhrebniuk (independent) vs. Ivan Melnyk (Batkivshchyna)
Zhrebniuk is the presidential appointed head of Kyiv's Desna District State Administration. Melnyk is a local businessman.

What happened:

Aside from the usual delay in vote counting, Zhrebniuk accused his opponent of vote tampering. He said he saw bags of ballots with tabulated results naming Melnyk the victor being opened and tampered with. Zhrebniuk acknowledged that his opponent was ahead by 1,500 votes but when some damaged ballots were re-counted, the tide turned in his favor. In turn, Batkivshchyna's Oleksandr Turchynov said many ballots were destroyed that had Menyk chosen.

Paralysis of vote count

Who:

Bohdan Hubsy (independent) vs. Leonid Datsenko (Batkivshchyna)
Hubsy is a lawmaker and former member of Batkivshchyna who is seen as a pro-government candidate. Datsenko is aide to a Batkivshchyna lawmaker.

What happened:

The district election commission hasn't counted votes since Oct. 30. Batkivshchyna lawmaker Andriy Shevchenko Tweeted that the head of the commission has lost consciousness. Opposition candidates accuse Hubsy of applying psychological pressure on election officials to delay the vote count. Hubsy, in turn, blames the opposition for pressuring election officials. Batkivshchyna says its parallel count puts Datsenko as the winner, even though Hubsy is officially winning the vote so far.

TABLE:
Hot single-mandate parliamentary contests
Source: Central Election Commission

Election district	Where	Winner, party affiliation	Percentage of votes	Runner-up, party affiliation	Percentage of votes	Difference in votes
211	Kyiv, Holosiyiv district	Serhiy Teryokhin, Batkivshchyna	30.32 (as of 1:10 p.m., Nov. 1, 98.83% votes counted)	Ihor Lysov, Party of Regions	26.60	3,729
214	Kyiv, Dnipro district	Viktor Chumak, UDAR	38.91	Oles Dovhiy, independent	33.52	5,145
215	Kyiv, Desna district	Andriy Illyenko, Svoboda	33.14	Halyna Herera, independent	32.95	191
216	Kyiv, Dnipro district	Kseniya Lyapina, Batkivshchyna	29.27	Oleksandr Suprunenko, independent	27.70	1,436
223	Kyiv, Shevchenko district	Viktor Pylypyshyn, independent	28.37 (as of 1:10 p.m., Nov. 1, 76.23% votes counted)	Yuriy Levchenko, Svoboda	27.51	639
95	Irpin, Kyiv Oblast	Viacheslav Kutovy, Batkivshchyna	26.37 (as of 1:10 p.m., Nov. 1, 83.14%)	Petro Melnyk, Party of Regions	22.09	3,085

			votes counted)			
97	Brovary, Kyiv Oblast	Pavlo Rizanenko, UDAR	31.04	Mykola Semenyaka, independent	16.27	15,065
21	Kovel, Volyn Oblast	Stepan Ivakhiv, independent	37.23	Ihor Huz, Batkivshchyna	36.39	838
132	City of Pervomaisk, Mykolayiv Oblast	Vitaliy Travianko, Party of Regions	39.97	Andriy Kornatsky, Batkivshchyna	39.66	232
14	Zhmerynka, Vinnytsia Oblast	Viktor Zherebniuk, independent	33.32	Ivan Melnyk, Batkivshchyna	33.24	83
197	City of Kaniv, Cherkassy Oblast	Bohdan Hubsy, independent	34.67 (as of 1:10 p.m., Nov. 1, 48.63% votes counted)	Leonid Datsenko, Batkivshchyna	31.83	826

Spilna Sprava: Elections falsified in dozens of majority constituencies
Nov. 1, 2012, 11:35 a.m. | Interfax-Ukraine

<http://www.kyivpost.com/content/politics/spilna-sprava-elections-falsified-in-dozens-of-majority-constituencies-315378.html>



The Spilna Sprava (Common Cause) civil movement has stated that, according to results of a parallel vote counting conducted by it, candidates from the opposition and independent candidates are leading the parliamentary elections in several majority constituencies, in which candidates from the ruling party have been declared winners by the Central Election Commission of Ukraine (CEC), the movement's coordinator, Oleksandr Danyliuk, has said at a press briefing on October 31. © AFP

The Spilna Sprava (Common Cause) civil movement has stated that, according to results of a parallel vote counting conducted by it, candidates from the opposition and independent candidates are leading the parliamentary elections in several majority constituencies, in which candidates from the ruling party have been declared winners by the Central Election Commission of Ukraine (CEC), the movement's coordinator, Oleksandr Danyliuk, has said at a press briefing on October 31.

"The results were falsified in constituencies No. 15, 16, 17, 18, 20, 21, 22, 23, 64, 66, 70, 87, 90, 92, 93, 96, 100, 120, 132, 141, 146, 147, 149, 155, 182, 184, 185, 188, 190, 193, 195, 196, 197, 199, 210," he said.

He added that falsifications took place in Vinnytsia, Khmelnytsky, Zhytomyr, Poltava, Kyiv, Kirovohrad, and Cherkasy regions, where elections results were distorted.

Danyliuk also said that falsification technologies were the same as those registered in a number of Kyiv-based constituencies, in particular correction of vote count protocols by district election commissions.

The activist added that organizational weakness of the opposition's candidates and a lack of media attention resulted into the absence of proper controls over recounting of votes and prevention of data replacement.

Batkivschyna: Kyiv District Administrative Court considering Suprunenko's lawsuit against Liapina

Nov. 1, 2012, 1:10 p.m. | Interfax-Ukraine

<http://www.kyivpost.com/content/politics/batkivschyna-kyiv-district-administrative-court-considering-suprunenkos-lawsuit-against-liapina-315385.html>



Ksenia Liapina, a representative of the united opposition

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A parliamentary candidate for single-seat constituency No. 216 (Kyiv), self-nominee Oleksandr Suprunenko, is contesting in court the results of the counting of votes in the constituency, according to which he is behind Ksenia Liapina, a representative of the united opposition, reads a statement posted on the Web site of the Batkivschyna All-Ukrainian Union.

Suprunenko on Wednesday filed four lawsuits against the district election commission at Kyiv District Administrative Court concerning the vote recount and recognition of the vote in the constituency as invalid.

According to the Web site of the Central Election Commission, with all ballots counted in constituency No. 216, Liapina won the elections, with 29.27% of the vote. Suprunenko took 27.7% of the vote.

Residents of Kyiv vote for opposition representatives in single-seat constituencies

Nov. 1, 2012, 11:31 a.m. | Interfax-Ukraine

<http://www.kyivpost.com/content/kyiv/residents-of-kyiv-vote-for-opposition-representatives-in-single-seat-constituencies-315377.html>



A police officer leaves a booth after voting, whilst other officers read their ballots, at a polling station in Kyiv, Ukraine, Sunday, Oct. 28, 2012. © AP

Eight opposition representatives have claimed victory in eight single-seat constituencies in Kyiv with all ballots counted, according to the Web site of the Central Election Commission.

Vitaliy Yarema, a nominee of the Batkivschyna United Opposition, former chief of the Ukrainian Interior Ministry's main office in Kyiv and head of the board of the Law and Dignity charitable organization, tool the most votes in constituency No. 212. Incumbent BYT-Batkivschyna MP Volodymyr Yavorivsky won the elections in constituency No.213.

Andriy Illienko, a representative of the Svoboda Party, snatched victory in constituency No. 215. Batkivschyna representative Oleksandr Bryhynets took the most votes in constituency No. 217.

Batkivschyna representatives Ksenia Liapina, Volodymyr Ariev, Volodymyr Bondarenko, Oleksandr Chornovolenko, Leonid Yemets and Dmytro Andriyevsky won the elections in constituencies Nos. 216, 218, 219, 220, 221 and 222 respectively. UDAR Party representative Viktor Chumak claimed victory in constituency No. 214.

The vote count is continuing in two single-seat constituencies. With 96.51% of the ballots counted in constituency No. 211, Batkivschyna representative Serhiy

Teriokhin holds the lead with 30.28% of the vote, followed by Regions Party representative Ihor Lysov, with 26.75% of the vote. With 76.23% of the ballots counted in constituency No. 223, self-nominee Viktor Pylypyshyn holds the lead, with 28.37% of the vote, while Svoboda Party representative Yuriy Levchenko is second (27.51%).

EU pledges 'close watch' on Ukraine

http://www.upi.com/Top_News/Special/2012/11/01/EU-pledges-close-watch-on-Ukraine/UPI-73301351765800/

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BRUSSELS, Nov. 1 (UPI) -- The European Union said this week it will "watch closely" as political events in Ukraine unfold following parliamentary elections labeled unfair by observers.

Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich's ruling Party of Regions claimed victory after the weekend balloting, in which his slate of candidates was ahead with about 30 percent of the vote with counting nearly complete.

An observer mission from the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe said the elections were carried out on a tilted playing field that featured "abuse of administrative resources" as well as "a lack of transparency in campaign and party financing" and unbalanced media coverage.

EU Foreign Affairs Commissioner Catherine Ashton and Stefan Fule, commissioner for EU enlargement, Tuesday issued a statement acknowledging reports of electoral abuse and warning subsequent developments in Ukraine would be monitored closely.

"We take full note of the International Observation Mission's preliminary findings on the conduct of the elections -- which present a mixed picture with several shortcomings -- and of the difficulties faced by the local electoral observers," they said.

"The final assessment will also depend on post-electoral developments, which we will watch closely," including the "tabulation of results and following up on possible electoral complaints."

The Party of Regions has come under criticism from Brussels for the jailing of former Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko, who is serving a 7-year prison sentence after a conviction on corruption charges and watched the elections from jail after not being allowed to run for her Fatherland Party.

Tymoshenko said she won't recognize the election results and has launched a hunger strike in protest.

OSCE observers said the absences of Tymoshenko and fellow jailed opposition figure Yuriy Lutsenko "negatively affected the election process."

That process was also unduly influenced by "powerful economic groups" who took advantage of "a lack of diversity in media ownership" and poor transparency in campaign and party financing, they said.

Ashton and Fule cited their "regret" that the prison terms, which came as the result of "trials that did not respect international standards," had prevented a fairer vote and urged Ukraine to "take further steps to reform the judiciary to avoid their recurrence."

The elections featured high turnout and were conducted peacefully, but the vote tabulation process wasn't clearly visible in many cases, the European observers said.

"Ukrainians deserved better from these elections," Andreas Gross, head of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe delegation, said in a statement. "The 'oligarchization' of the whole process meant that citizens lost their ownership of the election, as well as their trust in it."

Ukrainian Prime Minister Mykola Azarov brushed off Western criticism and cited the findings of election observers from the Commonwealth of Independent States, the Russian-led organization of post-Soviet nations.

"To claim that the elections were undemocratic, non-transparent -- it's like black and white," the premier said Tuesday. "I met with the (CIS) observers ahead of the elections, and I said we accept and consider all absolutely objective conclusions, but we don't accept biased assessments of our elections."

Azarov noted the CIS leaders stated that, in their opinion, elections in all of Ukraine's regions were "held in an organized way, transparent and (with) high activity of voters."

Complaints were "considered promptly and substantially," he said.

The Irish Times - Thursday, November 1, 2012

Rift deepens between Kiev and West as poll is criticised



OSCE special co-ordinator Walburga Habsburg Douglas: "democratic recession"

DANIEL McLAUGHLIN

<http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/world/2012/1101/1224325979318.html>

THE ORGANISATION for Security and Co-operation in Europe's criticism of Ukraine's election and the jailing of opposition leader Yulia Tymoshenko has angered the ex-Soviet state and highlighted deep rifts in the 56-nation group as Kiev prepares to replace Ireland at its helm.

Monitors from the OSCE said Sunday's parliamentary ballot represented a setback for democracy in Ukraine, complaining that it was tilted in favour of the ruling Regions Party by biased media coverage and the unfair use of so-called administrative resources.

The European Union and United States took their lead from the OSCE monitors in denouncing the vote, which could deepen the existing chill in relations between Kiev and the West.

Ukrainian officials responded calmly to the OSCE's preliminary findings, but insisted that while the vote may not have been perfect, its results did accurately reflect the will of the people. Monitors from several ex-Soviet states, grouped around Russia, found no major fault with the election.

Ukraine's anger was piqued by sharp criticism from senior OSCE representatives after they were prevented on Tuesday from visiting Ms Tymoshenko, who is receiving hospital treatment for back problems after being jailed for seven years last October for alleged abuse of power.

She denies the charges, and has gone on hunger strike in protest at what she called a rigged election.

“Yesterday we were speaking about democratic regression in this country. And unfortunately today this fact that we cannot meet Ms Tymoshenko once again proved this right,” said OSCE special co-ordinator Walburga Habsburg Douglas, after being prevented from seeing the ex-prime minister. “It is disconcerting when the incoming chairmanship is not fulfilling their OSCE commitments,” she added.

Oleh Voloshyn, a spokesman for Ukraine’s foreign ministry, said the attention given by Ms Habsburg Douglas and OSCE colleagues to Ms Tymoshenko suggested they had not come to monitor elections but to help the politician “whose political position appeals to them most”.

Mr Voloshyn criticised Ms Habsburg Douglas for linking the conduct of the vote to “events that have nothing to do with the elections . . . Visiting Tymoshenko is an issue that has nothing to do with the elections.” Ukraine’s frustration with the OSCE monitors echoes complaints from Russia and many other former Soviet states which believe the organisation’s assessments of elections are heavily influenced by the political preferences of the US and EU.

Russia has frequently accused OSCE monitors of bias, and last month denounced the “deliberately politicised approach” of their criticism of elections in Belarus. Before Sunday’s vote, Ukrainian foreign minister Kostyantyn Gryshchenko said he hoped OSCE monitors would deliver “a report reflecting reality and not just perceptions”. He also spoke of Kiev’s desire, matched by Russia and its allies, to standardise the OSCE’s election-monitoring process and remove subjectivity.

“So that it is not about what I like in this or that, but ‘tick’, ‘tick’, ‘tick’ according to specific standards,” he told The Irish Times, while marking boxes on an imaginary check-list.

Ukraine opposition party to take election fraud to court

<http://www.euronews.com/2012/11/01/ukraine-opposition-party-to-take-election-fraud-to-court/>



Kiev, Donetsk and Vinnytska are the regions worst hit by electoral fraud, according to Ukrainian opposition parties.

The Udar Party says at least 1.5 percent of all votes cast on Sunday were affected, and it will go to court to investigate the irregularities

However, Prime Minister Mykola Azarov was dismissive.

“The total number of recorded violations and their nature don’t give any reason to doubt the legitimacy of the election,” he said.

Together with Udar, the eight parties that merged to create United Opposition, want to form a new coalition government, despite the results from Sunday’s poll still not being formally announced.

Speaking at a press conference, member of the United Opposition Oleksandr Turchynov said:

“It’s impossible to say that this was a general election in Ukraine. It’s really using gangster tactics. The government tries to change the will of our citizens by disrupting the counting process.”

According to political analyst Kostyantyn Matviyenko, the poll was more or less truthful and does essentially show voters’ preferences.

“There were some incidents of fraud. We have heard this from the candidates and I have no reason not to trust these claims. But in general, even with the fraud, we’ve got the overall result that was expected,” he told euronews.

The government has ignored criticism from European monitors with the Organisation for Security and Cooperation (OSCE).

Ukraine: the far-right in parliament for the first time

ANTON SHEKHOVTSOV 1 November 2012

<http://www.opendemocracy.net/od-russia/anton-shekhovtsov/ukraine-far-right-in-parliament-for-first-time?>



The Parliamentary election in Ukraine has, as expected, returned President Yanukovich’s Party of Regions to power. It has also had one less predicted result: the first election to the country’s parliament of MPs from the ultra nationalist far-right. Anton Shekhovtsov looks at the rise of ‘Svoboda’ (Freedom). Photo: RIA NOVOSTI Agency

A startling 10% of the vote

Since Ukraine became an independent state in 1991, no far-right party – in contrast to those in many post-socialist European countries – has ever succeeded in having members elected to parliament through the party-list system, although a few ultranationalists from various far-right parties have been elected in single-member constituencies. Their numbers, however, have never been sufficient to form their own parliamentary faction, and they have always allied themselves with other, mostly national-democratic, groups. Now Oleh Tyahnybok's All-Ukrainian Union 'Freedom' (Svoboda), which has won a startling 10% of the vote, is ideally positioned to enter Ukrainian political history as the first far-right parliamentary faction.

'The 2009 regional election in the Ternopil oblast was a watershed for Svoboda: it finished in first place with 34.69% of the vote. In 2010 it gained seats in seven more regional councils in the west and centre of the country, and three regional councils are now headed by members of Svoboda.'

Established in 1991 under the name Social-National Party of Ukraine (and switching to its present name in 2004 on the advice of the French National Front), Svoboda polled badly in elections before 2009. It won a miserable 0.36% of the vote in the 2006 parliamentary election, and an equally poor 0.76% in 2007. The 2009 regional election in the Ternopil oblast, however, was a watershed for Svoboda: it finished in first place with 34.69% of the vote. And although the party failed to repeat this astounding result in the 2010 regional elections, it nevertheless gained seats in seven more regional councils in the west and centre of the country, and three regional councils are now headed by members of Svoboda.

Svoboda's rise since the early elections in Ternopil oblast has been no accident.

The two once allied 'Orange' national-democratic parties that finished first and second in the 2006 elections in this oblast – the Bloc of Yulia Tymoshenko (BYuT) and Our Ukraine (OU) – had become bitter enemies by 2009. The rise in support for Svoboda in that year took place at their expense: the BYuT finished fourth, while the OU finished sixth.

This development did not go unnoticed by the 'anti-Orange' Party of Regions (PoR). After PoR's then leader Viktor Yanukovych defeated Yulia Tymoshenko in the second round of the presidential elections in February 2010 and its present leader Mykola Azarov was elected Prime Minister in March that year, Svoboda started enjoying massive promotion on TV channels either directly or indirectly controlled by the government (Inter, First National and Ukraina). The PoR's calculation was clear: despite Svoboda's forceful criticism of the government and President, its electoral rise was damaging for the PoR's main political adversary, Tymoshenko, and her political force (even though support for Svoboda was

confined largely to western and central Ukraine, while Tymoshenko was equally popular across the whole country).

'Svoboda, in contrast to Tymoshenko's party, was considered an easy 'sparring partner' as its ultranationalism and racism could provide grounds for banning the party any time the government wanted.'

Last, but not least, Svoboda, in contrast to Tymoshenko's party, was considered an easy 'sparring partner' as its ultranationalism and racism could provide grounds for banning the party any time the government wanted. Public opinion polls showed that, from 2010 onwards, the number of Ukrainians who did not recognise the name of Svoboda's leader Tyahnybok decreased, while the number of respondents who supported him increased. Although the number of Tyahnybok's opponents also grew, the PoR's political strategy of covert promotion – and, hence, public legitimisation – of Svoboda on popular TV channels seemed to work.

To minimise this damage to themselves and increase their own support, the national-democratic forces opposed to President Yanukovich and Azarov's government decided to engage Svoboda in the workings of the Committee against Dictatorship, originally formed in 2011 to protest against Tymoshenko's criminal conviction. Svoboda agreed to join the Committee and to work with the United Opposition coalition, led by Tymoshenko's All-Ukrainian Union "Fatherland" and Arseniy Yatsenyuk's "Front for Change", in parliament, should the forces of the right win an election. Here, apparently, the PoR's strategy started working against itself, as further, though still covert, promotion of the far right – reinforced by Svoboda's open cooperation with moderate national-democratic forces – now played into the hands of the anti-PoR coalition.

Where has Svoboda's support come from?

One reason for Svoboda's stunning electoral results has been allegedly un-patriotic government policies (for example the adoption of a controversial law granting official status to the Russian language in regions where it is predominantly spoken) that have triggered wider support for the 'patriotic' far right. There are, however, at least four other important factors to consider.

Firstly, a large part of the Ukrainian public seems to be fed up with the current political elite. This is a major element in the current success of Vitali Klychko's Ukrainian Democratic Alliance for Reform (UDAR). The reigning WBC heavyweight boxing champion, Klychko is still a new face in Ukrainian politics, and – in contrast to many members of parliament, both in the PoR-led majority and the opposition – has 'kept his hands clean'. The same applies to Tyahnybok, who despite two parliamentary terms (1998-2002 and 2002-2006), is also seen as a new face in politics. There is a widespread belief among Ukrainians that new people will bring new policies, and both Tyahnybok's Svoboda and Klychko's UDAR have taken advantage of this belief.

Secondly, since the 2007 parliamentary election Svoboda has been in the privileged position of being the only active far-right party in Ukraine. As such, it has become the focus for nationalist and ultranationalist voters whose vote was previously spread among a number of far-right parties or even the moderate nationalist Our Ukraine once led by Viktor Yushchenko. Former leaders of various radical right parties and blocs – for example, Roman Koval, head of the now defunct “State Independence of Ukraine” or [Levko Lukyanenko](#), number one on the National Front electoral bloc list in 1998 – have publicly endorsed Svoboda as virtually the only ‘patriotic’ party. Moreover, Svoboda has managed to appeal to many prominent figures in Ukrainian intellectual and cultural life.

Moreover, as well as receiving support from smaller fascist social movements like the Autonomous Resistance or Social-National Assembly, Svoboda has also secured approval from many former members of the [Ukrainian Insurgent Army](#) that fought for Ukraine’s independence in 1943-1954. In other words, one far-right party has managed to consolidate the nationalist vote – an unprecedented development in Ukraine.

'Since the 2007 parliamentary election Svoboda has been the only active far-right party in Ukraine. As such, it has become the focus for nationalist and ultranationalist voters whose vote was previously spread among a number of far-right parties.'

Thirdly, Svoboda remains one of the most active political groups to take part in street rallies and protests organised around social issues. According to the Centre for Society Research, which monitors protest activities in Ukraine, Svoboda has participated in around one third of all protest rallies in Ukraine since the end of 2011. This strategy has obviously proved its effectiveness in not only increasing the party’s public visibility and helping attract prospective voters, but it has also allowed Svoboda to distract the public’s attention away from its intrinsic ultranationalism, unacceptable to the eastern and southern regions of Ukraine, and towards largely populist slogans on urgent social and cultural problems that might appeal to a wider Ukrainian public.

The return of ideology

Fourthly, the 2012 parliamentary election has been notable for the return of ‘ideology’. There has been some kind of consensus among many ostensibly liberal and politically active young Ukrainians that Svoboda is the only major party with a genuine political programme guided by an ideology to which the party’s leaders and activists have a long-standing adherence. Just as they are tired of the current political elite, Ukrainian voters seem to be fed up with the indistinct philosophies of big, catch-all parties such as the PoR and ‘Fatherland’. Paradoxically, several Ukrainian journalists working for allegedly pro-democratic publications have openly articulated their support for Svoboda for this very reason. These journalists claim to reject Svoboda’s racism, but see the fact of its being apparently rooted in ideology as of paramount importance. Hence the

unexpected support received by the far right from a large number of liberal and pro-democratic political and social commentators, who have further legitimised Svoboda as an emphatically political organisation worthy of their vote. In the stifling atmosphere of catch-all parties' obscure positions, the very fact that one party has a well-defined and articulate ideology (no matter what underpins this ideology) has appealed to many Ukrainian voters.

'Just as they are tired of the current political elite, Ukrainian voters seem to be fed up with the indistinct philosophies of big, catch-all parties such as the PoR and 'Fatherland.'

It is still too early to speculate how Svoboda will behave in parliament and what the far right's political future may be. Close cooperation with national democrats may result in an ideological drift towards a less radical nationalism. If this happens, it will no longer be considered a rock solid political force and it will lose a huge chunk of its current support and most likely suffer a split between moderate and radical factions (Svoboda has always been ideologically heterogeneous). On the other hand, if Svoboda remains as radical as it is now, it will run into an unwillingness to cooperate on its more bizarre political projects from 'Fatherland' and UDAR, who will not risk alienating their largely non-radical voters. This scenario will probably lead to the estrangement and disengagement of the far right from the national-democrats, and, therefore, the fragmentation of opposition to the PoR and President Yanukovich.

Ukraine: The vote is in

The country's democratic window narrows after internationally criticized election



AFP Photo

A woman casts her ballot Oct. 28 in the village of Prybirs, some 100 kilometers from the capital Kyiv, during national parliamentary elections. Ukraine votes in legislative polls largely viewed as a test of democracy under President Viktor Yanukovich following the jailing his political foe Yulia Tymoshenko;

By Harriet Salem

<http://www.praguepost.com/news/14651-ukraine-the-vote-is-in.html?>

For the Post
KYIV, Ukraine

Eight years have passed since Independence Square in Kyiv turned optimistic orange as Ukrainian people took to the streets en masse to protest. However, the small democratic gains made immediately after the 2004 revolution have been slowly eroded by subsequent administrations. Many feel little has changed.

Western authorities labeled Ukraine's parliamentary elections, held Oct. 28, as a litmus test of democratic processes and a potential deal breaker for increased economic integration with Europe. More pragmatic opposition forces within Ukraine cast it as a last chance for the country to resist President Viktor Yanukovych and his Party of the Regions' encroaching authoritarianism. Both were to be disappointed.

Speaking at a press conference Oct. 29, the independent international monitoring body OSCE delivered a damning verdict on Ukraine's electoral proceedings. "Considering the abuse of power and excessive role of money in this election, democratic progress appears to have reversed in Ukraine," stated Walburga Habsburg Douglas, head of the OSCE mission.

The monitoring body further noted that conditions under which the election campaign took place constituted "an unlevel playing field caused primarily by abuse of administrative resources, a lack of transparency of campaign and party financing, and a lack of balanced media coverage."

Of particular concern was the widespread culture of indirect vote buying. "Baiting" (bestowing gifts on the electorate) was so commonplace that one lawmaker, Volodymyr Nakonechniy, even blogged about handing out food parcels on behalf of the Party of Regions. Meanwhile, parliamentary speaker Volodymyr Lytvyn took the practice to new levels by gifting the electorate free bicycles.

The OSCE report was also highly critical of the continued incarceration of charismatic political opponents of the government, Yuriy Lutsenko and Yulia Tymoshenko. Both have fought the election campaign from behind bars and were unable to register as candidates. While the pre-2004 veterans undoubtedly have dirty hands, the European Union has condemned their trials and subsequent convictions for abuse of office as unfair and politically motivated.

With more than 80 percent of the votes counted as of press time, a continuation of the previous government looks almost certain. It is estimated the Party of the Regions and their Communist Party allies will take 240-260 seats between them. While the impact of voter manipulation techniques is intrinsically hard to measure, the OSCE had yet to comment on whether the widespread allegations of vote fraud on Election Day could have influenced the results.

Carousel voting, invisible ink, ballot stuffing and more than 1 million last-minute registrations for home voting were among the fraudulent ruses revived from the rigged 2004 election that sparked the Orange Revolution.

Opposition parties and organizations (such as the Maidan Alliance) providing live stream monitoring of proceedings reported their websites coming under attack from hackers throughout the day. The depths of widespread disillusionment were apparent on Russian social networking site VKontakte.ru, where large numbers of votes were openly being sold, many for as little as \$30.

The divergence between exit polls and the still-incoming vote count are substantial. Opposition parties have all fared less well than predicted, while the dominant forces have done better. The Party of the Regions currently holds around 5 percent more of the vote than polls anticipated, while its Communist Party allies have jumped from fifth to third place.

Although the vote count has not yet finished, incumbent Prime Minister Mykola Azarov claimed a "clear victory for the Party of the Regions" only hours after the polls had closed. Meanwhile, opposition forces cried foul-play.

"Only blind and deaf people could call these elections fair and independent," stated Tymoshenko, who Oct. 29 declared a "hunger strike to protest against fake elections and illegitimate Parliament."

Yet despite the dramatic events of the past few days, the streets of Kyiv are calm. "Welcome on Ukraine!" Dmitry Gusarov, a market vendor, says by way of referencing Yanukovich's poor English skills. "In the West, you joke about Ukraine; in Ukraine, we joke about our president!"

The bon mot is that if you don't laugh you'll cry, but jokes aside the political situation is increasingly bleak. The general feeling is that little can be done to change it.

"Ukrainians are no longer shocked by the actions of our political elite," says Maria Likharev, a university student. "The Orange Revolution was for what?"

Nothing has changed. The politicians are the same. The problems are the same."

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Ukraine: Observers question legitimacy of parliamentary election

Observers record systemic flaws in voting process

Posted: October 31, 2012

By Anna Shamanska - For the Post |

<http://www.praguepost.com/news/14678-ukraine-observers-question-legitimacy-of-parliamentary-election.html?>



AFP Photo

People in Kyiv read local coverage of the Oct. 28 parliamentary election, which saw several political parties have their websites hacked into.

Some 3793 international observers flocked to Ukraine to monitor the Oct. 28 election, seen as a decisive indicator for the former Soviet country's future political development.

While reporting mixed but overall positive assessments of the election's actual conduct, it was the longer-term inadequacies of the political system that raised red flags regarding their legitimacy.

Some 988,492 Ukrainians voted not at the polling station, but from home or hospitals, the official website of the Central Election Commission stated.

"These are permanently immobile citizens whom we have registered. There are also those who are immobile just temporarily. The latter sent a request to the Central Election Commission along with a medical notice," said deputy chairman of the Central Election Commission Zhanna Usenko-Chorna.

Election by the numbers

Observers

Official observers from other countries and international organizations
3,793

Local NGOs 68

Official observers from local NGOs 38,693

Official observers from candidates 146,394

Official observers from parties 177,330

Source: Central Election Commission, Ukraine

Results (in percent)

Party of Regions 31.56

Batkivshchyna United Opposition 24.46

The Communist Party of Ukraine 13.79

UDAR 13.51

Svoboda 9.68

Source: Pravda.com as of Oct. 30

In order to reach immobile citizens, ballot boxes were transported and carried around by the representatives of the polling stations. However, as reported from Dniepropetrovsk, for example, around 400 people were discharged from hospitals right after casting the ballots into the boxes.

The NGO Chesno noted widespread bribing of voters. "We have registered gift giving and mass charity activity before and on the day of the elections," said Inna Borzylo, Chesno representative, in a telephone interview from Ukraine.

Another NGO, the Commission of Ukrainian Voters, reported various violations on Twitter throughout Election Day.

One tweet reported that in Slavuta, Khmelnytskyi region, voters were given out blank ballots marked with the stamp "eliminated." Allegedly, the polling station received the ballots from different sources and wanted to mark that difference, as they explained to voters.

Cyberspace was also prone to unsavory tactics. Anatoloy Hrytsenko, the leader of the Civil Position, announced on Facebook that his personal website, along with several other oppositional and NGO websites, was experiencing DDoS-attacks. Shortly after, the Party of Regions released the same statement, saying their website had been under attacks from 1 p.m.

Still, many monitoring officials were satisfied with the election process itself. "The elections ... were legally in order, and there were no violations. But the second point is the question of legitimacy," said Cyril Svoboda, the chairman of Czech Christian Democratic Union who was an observer in Ukraine during the election weekend.

"The elections themselves were free, because [President Viktor] Yanukovich did recognize he is strong enough to be a winner. He had many instruments to manipulate the electorate before the day had come."

It was legitimacy - not legality - that raised observers' concerns. "When we speak about legitimacy, we have to take into consideration the campaign and the atmosphere before the elections," Svoboda said. "It is a highly internal question. It is up to the people. No one from the outside could change the atmosphere inside. This is a question of leadership."

That conclusion does not bode well for Ukraine's democratic future. "These elections reflected a definite regress in democracy," said Raynell Andreychuk, a Canadian senator and an elections observer.

Another observer, local NGO Opora, had a similar assessment. "Opora noted a setback for Ukraine to hold democratic elections," the NGO's representatives said in a statement.

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TEXT-Fitch:Ukraine faces post-election policy challenges

Thu Nov 1, 2012 7:24am EDT
(The following statement was released by the rating agency)

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/11/01/idUSWLA558520121101>

Nov 01 - A looming external financing gap and the prospect of presidential elections in 2015 mean that the next Ukrainian government has limited time to deliver key reforms following this week's parliamentary elections, Fitch Ratings says.

Despite its ability to access the bond markets this year, Ukraine's external financing position is precarious. The 12-month current account gap has widened to 8% of GDP, highlighting the impact of weak external demand and the need for external adjustment. Pressure on the exchange rate has increased, with domestic demand for foreign currency rising, while foreign exchange reserves fell by USD3.1bn since end-2011 to USD27bn, or three months of current account payments.

The external financing requirement will grow in 2013, as repayments due to the IMF rise sharply to USD6bn (combining government and National Bank repayments). Fitch believes this probably exceeds the government's capacity to borrow externally and will require partial refinancing by the IMF itself.

Getting the IMF deal back on track would reduce refinancing risk, boost investor confidence and so underpin continuing market access. It would also force the government to resume fiscal consolidation and address underlying structural economic and financial weaknesses.

Ukraine's record in implementing the reforms demanded under its suspended IMF programme has been patchy. Last year, parliament approved an unpopular pension reform package, but did not carry out a second promised rise in household gas prices. This caused the IMF to freeze its \$15bn Stand-By Arrangement. Steep rises in gas import prices in recent years have made energy subsidies a significant burden on Ukraine's public finances, with the IMF

estimating the cost of natural gas-related transfers from the government to households at 6% of GDP.

It was always likely that unpopular reforms would be delayed until after the parliamentary elections, which were held 28 October. But Ukraine's record of domestic political considerations overriding policy commitments to international financial institutions suggests this pattern could be repeated ahead of 2015's presidential election. Effectively, there may be little more than a year to enact these reforms.

Widespread expectations of depreciation are reflected in Fitch's forecast of UAH8.8:USD1 by end-2012, but overshooting is a risk, particularly if the reserve position weakens further. A weaker currency would increase the burden of external debt, and lead to higher inflation. Continuing to defend the hryvnia would be likely to see FX reserves continue to fall. Restricting liquidity in the banking system is leading to high interest rates, hurting growth.

We rate Ukraine 'B' with a Stable Outlook. The immediate rating outlook remains highly dependent on Ukraine's ability to secure external financing to stabilise reserves, rein in balance of payments pressures and tighten fiscal policy. We have assumed the government will be able to re-access IMF funding in 2013. Without this, there is a risk that reserves continue to fall, and the hryvnia depreciates in a disorderly [fashion](#), which would likely trigger a downgrade.

President Viktor Yanukovich's incumbent Party of Regions had secured 30.1% of votes cast, with 98.6% of the votes counted, the Central Election Commission said yesterday. Despite a strong showing by opposition parties, including newcomer Udar, Party of the Regions is the largest single party and should be able to form a working majority with other parties and independent MPs.

Lutsenko calls for recognition of newly elected parliament, despite incompliance of elections with democratic standards



<http://www.interfax.com.ua/eng/main/125279/>

Former Ukrainian Interior Minister Yuriy Lutsenko, who is serving a prison term in the Mena penal facility, has called for the recognition of the results of the parliamentary elections in Ukraine, despite the undemocratic election campaign and fraud.

"At a meeting with the vice-president of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly and the upcoming meeting with U.S. and EU ambassadors, I have called for, and will call for the recognition of these elections, while mentioning their incompliance with European democratic standards," he said in an interview with the Kommersant newspaper, which was published on Friday.

"After the politically motivated imprisonment of [former Prime Minister] Yulia Tymoshenko, the electoral process in Ukraine cannot be called competitive... After the Party of Regions seized 90% of the seats in election commissions across the country the elections ceased to be transparent. Large-scale bribery and coercion of voters... puts an end to the democratic nature of the campaign. All of this is true. But I'm still calling for the recognition of the newly elected parliament," Lutsenko said.

"It is better to have this, largely falsified Verkhovna Rada and turn it into a platform for democratic forces in 2015, than give up this ugly offspring of the puppeteers of the Party of Regions and thus complete the construction of an authoritarian 'Mezhyhiria archipelago,' which will finally spit on [Ukraine's] commitments to the European Union. Everyone understands quite well what the next election will be like without the umbrella of European monitoring," he said.

When asked whether he considered the elections to be rigged, Lutsenko said: "The significant difference in the results of exit polls and vote count protocols sent to the CEC shows the distortion of the will of the voters... This is a siren, rather than a signal of fraud."

He said that the number of single-seat candidates from the Party of Regions who won the elections had increased thanks to "the bribery of voters and then members of commissions."

The parliamentary elections in Ukraine were held on October 28. The OSCE and the U.S. Department of State called it a step backwards in the development of democracy. Former Ukrainian Prime Minister and Batkivschyna Party leader Yulia Tymoshenko went on a hunger strike on October 29, demanding an objective assessment of the elections by international observers and the CEC.

Voting in Ukraine – The people lose in elections that were hardly free and fair

by Oleksii Khmara on 1 November 2012

<http://blog.transparency.org/2012/11/01/voting-in-ukraine-the-people-lose-in-elections-that-were-hardly-free-and-fair/>

The [elections](#) here did not go well. Even the enormous expenses of installing cameras at polling stations didn't provide transparent voting. Constant problems

with connections, lack of experience in using of such systems and the rush in preparation for the elections turned the idea into a new kind of entertainment. Not surprisingly, the independent election monitors pretty much called the whole event a farce.



But elections are no joke. The people should be given the opportunity to have their say. All parties and candidates said fighting corruption was a number one priority. The fact that the [election itself was riddled with allegations of corruptions](#) is not a good start.

Paradoxically, it was the people who lost and the parties who won. The people lost because there was no real democracy. There was no transparency of the political parties, the government dominated the run-up to the election with undue influence in the media and the judicial system is beholden to the government so other parties had little recourse to challenge this. The voters didn't even have a chance to influence the party lists, so they had to vote for whomever the party put forward and many of the candidates had [tarnished reputations](#).

It was the political parties that won in the end. The ruling Party of Regions kept its power according to the proportional system and their candidates also swept the first past the post voting system. The opposition also won because the total votes for the three main opposition parties ended up as twice the figure of the ruling party.

The far left won because they doubled their previous result. And the far right won because with 11 per cent of the votes, they now have enough of the votes to have seats in parliament.

Transparency International was also involved in [monitoring recent elections in Georgia](#), which saw the countries first peaceful democratic transition.

If anyone wants to launch a legal challenge to the results, they will have a hard time because the courts are to a large extent beholden to the ruling party. What will this mean for the fight against corruption? The government keeps saying it is transparent and wants to combat corruption. On paper, the state

follows all the demands of the [Open Government Partnership](#) global initiative, but in fact no work has been done yet to put into practice these requirements. Fighting corruption should have started with free and fair elections. That didn't happen. We'll see in the next few weeks if the government or any of the newly elected MPs are serious about fighting corruption. As candidates they all said they would launch a "crusade" against the corruption. I hope I don't have to hold my breath for too long.

Turchynov, Yatseniuk and Nemyria come to visit Tymoshenko at hospital

Nov. 1, 2012, 1:29 p.m. | Interfax-Ukraine

<http://www.kyivpost.com/content/politics/turchynov-yatseniuk-and-nemyria-come-to-visit-tymoshenko-at-hospital-315386.html>



Leaders of the Batkivschyna United Opposition Oleksandr Turchynov (R), Arseniy Yatseniuk (centre), and Hryhoriy Nemyria have entered the territory of Central Clinical Hospital No. 5 in Kharkiv, where former Ukrainian Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko is undergoing treatment. © Kostyantyn Chernichkin

Leaders of the Batkivschyna United Opposition Oleksandr Turchynov, Arseniy Yatseniuk, and Hryhoriy Nemyria have entered the territory of Central Clinical Hospital No. 5 in Kharkiv, where former Ukrainian Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko is undergoing treatment.

An Interfax-Ukraine reporter said that the politicians walked into the territory of the hospital. Tymoshenko's supporters with Batkivschyna's flags welcomed them. Yatseniuk asked them whether they had voted, and thanked them for their votes. At the same time, Yatseniuk did not answer journalists' question whether he and his colleagues had permission for a meeting with Tymoshenko. He promised to talk to the press on leaving the hospital.

Ukrainian doctors from international commission arrive at hospital to examine Tymoshenko due to her hunger strike

Nov. 1, 2012, 12:51 p.m. | Interfax-Ukraine

<http://www.kyivpost.com/content/politics/ukrainian-doctors-from-international-commission-arrive-at-hospital-to-examine-tymoshenko-due-to-her-hunger-strike-315383.html>



A man walk past a tent camp set up in support of former Ukrainian Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko in Kyiv, Ukraine, Wednesday, Oct. 24, 2012. Ukraine will hold parliamentary elections on Oct. 28. The poster with Tymoshenko reads: 'Batkivschyna (party) needs your vote ' 'Vote for yourself vote for Batkivschyna (party) '© AP

The Ukrainian doctors have arrived at Kharkiv-based central Clinical Hospital No. 5 to examine former Ukrainian Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko and give her new recommendations in connection with her hunger strike.

"On November 1, representatives of the international medical commission, including experts from the State Penitentiary Service, Central Clinical Hospital No. 5, and Kharkiv Regional Department of Health, arrived at Ukrzaliznytsia's Central Clinical Hospital (Kharkiv) to examine the patient and give recommendations on the convict's further medical treatment under conditions of her refusal of food," reads a statement of the State Penitentiary Service of Ukraine.

As reported, on October 29 Tymoshenko went on hunger strike in protest against the falsification of the parliamentary elections in Ukraine.

She also announced a hunger strike in April 2012, when a scandal emerged around alleged forced hospitalization of the ex-premier.

On October 30, Deputy Head of the State Penitentiary Service Department in Kharkiv region Andriy Lapinsky said that a procedure of force-feeding may be applied to Tymoshenko.

In turn, the ex-premier's defense lawyer, Serhiy Vlasenko, said that the force-feeding of Tymoshenko could be considered torture.

On October 11, 2011, Pechersky District Court in Kyiv sentenced Tymoshenko to seven years in prison for overstepping her authority when signing the 2009 gas contracts with Russia. She has served her sentence in Kachanivska Penal Colony in Kharkiv since late December 2011.

She was transferred to a clinic on May 9 to undergo medical treatment and a rehabilitation course under the supervision of doctors from the German clinic, Charite.

Zerkalo Nedeli: Ukraine to purchase gas supplies from Europe

<http://www.naturalgaseurope.com/ukraine-to-purchase-gas-supplies-from-europe?>

[RWE Supply and Trading](#) and [Naftogaz Ukrainy](#) signed a contract for the purchase of natural gas on the border between Poland and Ukraine. It said the contract begins on November 1, 2012 and ends on January 1, 2013, and envisages purchase of 56,744,640 cubic metres of gas.

Naftogaz Ukrainy was not immediately available for comment.

Ukraine can receive up to 5 billion cubic metres of natural gas from Europe annually in reverse mode and can increase this volume to 20 billion cubic metres in the future “without additional capital investments”, [Ukrtransgaz](#) Deputy Chief Engineer Oleg Mikhalevich said earlier.

[more:

http://news.zn.ua/ECONOMICS/ukraina_nachinaet_reversnye_postavki_gaza_iz_es-111365.html]

The Putin Crackdown

First he went after the punk rockers. Then the activists.

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970204840504578087152147315198.html#articleTabs%3Darticle>

Americans consumed by the Presidential election might spare a moment for Russia. Vladimir Putin timed his 2008 invasion of Georgia for the U.S. campaign season, and this year he's doing the same with his latest political crackdown.

The Russian strongman has ruled since 2000, but his current domestic power play stands out for its ferocity. Last Friday Russian prosecutors charged a protest leader, Sergei Udaltsov, with plotting riots. If convicted by a puppet tribunal, Mr. Udaltsov could serve 10 years, long enough to keep him out of the way until well into a possible fourth Putin presidential term.

A week earlier Russian agents abducted Leonid Razvozzhayev in Ukraine and brought him back for trial alongside Mr. Udaltsov in Moscow. Mr. Razvozzhayev went to Ukraine to seek political asylum but he said he was grabbed off the street, tortured and forced to sign a confession.

All of this is part of a putsch that has been going on since shortly after Mr. Putin maneuvered himself back into the Presidency this year after a five-year rest stop as Prime Minister. It includes the arrest of Alexei Navalny, an anticorruption activist of little visible wealth who faces a long jail sentence on dubious embezzlement charges. There's also the two-year jail term for a couple members of a feminist rock band, Pussy Riot, for staging an anti-Putin "punk prayer" in Moscow's main Orthodox cathedral. No challenge to his dominance is too small for Mr. Putin to punish.



Reuters

Left Front opposition movement leader Sergei Udaltsov

The rubber-stamp Parliament has imposed steep fines and jail time for any "unauthorized" protests. The point is to scare away Russia's new professional classes from backing the opposition. New laws have neutered local NGOs and turned alleged libel and slander into felonies. Pro-democracy groups from abroad have been banned, including the U.S. Agency for International Development.

Mr. Putin is trying to ensure that no political alternative to him can emerge. The opposition can't even fairly contest a local mayoral election. This is dangerous for Russia because it means the frustration with corruption and lack of political freedom will boil beneath the surface and could eventually explode. But the former KGB colonel will make sure anyone who protests pays a price in the meantime.

The Kremlin has also moved to consolidate economic control. Mr. Putin brokered last week's sale of TNK-BP to state-run Rosneft. A marginal player in the 1990s, Rosneft took over the prime assets of the country's then largest oil producer, Yukos, after founder Mikhail Khodorkovsky fell politically afoul of the Kremlin.

With TNK, a company run by a Putin crony will have larger reserves than [Exxon Mobil XOM +0.60%](#) .

The Bush and Obama Administrations accommodated Mr. Putin for the sake of containing Iran and other U.S. interests, but he denounces America when it suits him at home and abroad. He dismisses critical U.S. comments but they still embarrass him and show average Russians the U.S. is on their side.

Congress should get over its gridlock and pass the Magnitsky Act that bars Russian human-rights offenders from traveling to or banking in the U.S. Better still: Boot this non-democrat out of the G-8 group of democracies.