

United Russia Kicks Out Tula's Mayor

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Tula's mayor has rebelled against United Russia after being kicked out of the party's faction in the local legislature during an emergency session Saturday.

"I intend to continue to work in this high and respectable post, preserving the legal rights and interests of the Tula people," Alisa Tolkacheva, who also heads the city's legislation, told Interfax on Sunday.

Tolkacheva was ousted for "ignoring decisions of the party," United Russia's Tula branch said on its web site. It controls the legislature.

But Tolkacheva, 43, who remains a party member, criticized the decision to oust her as illegal. She said the emergency meeting lacked the necessary quorum of 12 deputies. She did not attend the meeting.

United Russia, the Communist Party and A Just Russia backed Tolkacheva when she was elected in March as the mayor of Tula, a city of 560,000 people located 200 kilometers south

of Moscow and known for its weapons production.

Local media reported that the pretext for the emergency meeting was a citywide water shutoff last Wednesday because of the local state-run water company's debt to an electricity provider. Tolkacheva blamed Tula city manager Mikhail Ivantsov for the problem.

Ivantsov resigned voluntarily during the meeting, Interfax reported.

Tula City Hall is accepting applications for city manager through Monday. Ivantsov is expected to reapply for the job.

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