

Nazarbayev Authorizes Early Election

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The  **Moscow Times**

The long-ruling Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev has signed into law a measure allowing early presidential elections.

Elections were to be held in 2012, but Nazarbayev unexpectedly called this week for an early vote.

The measure he signed on Thursday allows for the vote to be held on two months' notice.

The signing was reported by the state news agency Kazinform.

Nazarbayev, 70, has led Kazakhstan since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. He has tried to project a democratic image despite detractors accusing him of corruption and undemocratic practices. The parliament has no opposition members.

He called for the early election on the same day that the constitutional council rejected a petition drive for a referendum on keeping him in power for at least another decade.

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