

# South Ossetia Holds Runoff Presidential Vote

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A man depositing his ballot in Sunday's runoff election in South Ossetia. **Kazbek Basayev**

TBILISI, Georgia — A former KGB chief and a human rights ombudsman faced each other in Sunday's runoff presidential election in Georgia's breakaway province of South Ossetia.

Leonid Tibilov, who led the region's KGB before falling out with the former local president, won more than 40 percent of the vote in the first round last month. Tibilov is expected to easily defeat his rival in the runoff, presidential human rights commissioner David Sanakoyev, who polled 25 percent in the first round.

South Ossetia depends entirely on subsidies from Russia, which recognized it as an independent state after the 2008 Russian-Georgian war and still has troops there. The ties with Moscow are expected to remain close no matter who becomes president of the province, which has a population of about 50,000.

Critics accused the government of the former president, Eduard Kokoity, of embezzling Russian donations, while thousands of South Ossetians continue to live in half-destroyed

houses and apartment buildings with irregular water and electricity supplies.

South Ossetia first tried to elect a new president in November, when former Education Minister Alla Dzhioyeva appeared to have beaten a rival backed by the Kremlin and the former local president, but the results were disputed and a local court ordered a new vote.

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