

Russia Praises Belarus Vote

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The  **Moscow Times**

The Foreign Ministry on Tuesday praised Belarus' parliamentary election, which strengthened the grip of President Alexander Lukashenko and was dismissed as a sham in the West, and accused international observers of bias.

"We are certain that Belarussian citizens were able to make their conscious choice," the ministry said in a statement. Russian observers and monitors from a grouping of former Soviet republics found that Sunday's election "was conducted freely, openly, in a calm atmosphere and with a high turnout," it said.

It said monitors from the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, who said the election was not free and fair, had taken a "politicized approach."

(Reuters)

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