

Head of Critical Elections Monitor Joins Rights Council

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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The head of a U.S.-funded elections watchdog known for its critical commentary on Russia's electoral system was included in Vladimir Putin's presidential human rights council on Monday.

Putin is expected to chair a council meeting late Monday, Interfax reported, citing the Kremlin press service.

Lilia Shabanova, head of the Golos election watchdog formerly funded by USAID, joins the 40-member advisory council after a recent reshuffle initiated by Putin.

Liberal-leaning journalist Leonid Parfyonov, conservative television host Maxim Shevchenko and Pavel Chikov, head of the respected rights group Agora, have also joined the council, Interfax said, citing a presidential decree.

Among other new members of the council are activist Yelizaveta Glinka, known as "Doctor Liza," who is known for running a charity for the homeless.

But the council, chaired by Mikhail Fedotov, will not include leading human rights champion Lyudmila Alexeyeva, who quit the body after saying that she didn't agree with the procedure of Internet voting, which has been used to select new council members.

Alexeyeva was among 15 council members, including prominent rights activist Svetlana Gannushkina and Yelena Panfilova, head of the Russian branch of Transparency International, who left the body after the end of Dmitry Medvedev's presidency.

Kommersant reported Thursday that the council may soon become an expanded 65-member body under a new decree prepared by the presidential administration.

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