

Sobyanin Gives Putin His Resignation

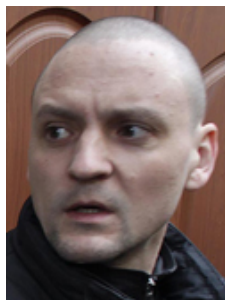
By [The Moscow Times](#)

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The  **Moscow Times**

Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyanin has handed in his resignation to President Vladimir Putin, forcing an election in the fall in which he likely will be returned to the job. Sobyanin was appointed mayor by then-President Dmitry Medvedev in 2010 at a time when it was an unelected post. The Russian government has since restored the direct election of mayors.

The move to force an early election — Sobyanin's term ran until 2015 — is seen as harming his opposition challengers, including billionaire Brooklyn Nets owner Mikhail Prokhorov and anti-corruption crusader Alexei Navalny, who may struggle to get their campaigns ready on short notice.



Sergei
Udaltsov
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Opposition leader Sergei Udaltsov also announced Wednesday that he would fight to become the next mayor, despite being under house arrest in connection with accusations of having plotted mass unrest.

A message that appeared on the Left Front leader's twitter account said he "intends to enter his candidacy for early elections for the Moscow mayor post." He also did not exclude the possibility that a single united candidate could be agreed on by opposition movements, RIA Novosti reported.

Udaltsov is accused of plotting mass unrest at a protest on Moscow's Bolotnaya Ploshchad on May 6, 2012 and has been under house arrest since February of this year.

Other opponents could include Yabloko leader Sergei Mitrokhin and Green Alliance — People's Party chairman Oleg Mitvol, among others.

Former mayor Yury Luzhkov may also enter the election race, Vedomosti reported.

Sergei Sobyenin was appointed mayor for a term of five years in October 2010, but announced Tuesday that he would step down and seek re-election in fall. The election is set to take place on Sept. 8.

The last time direct mayoral elections were held in the capital was 2003, when Luzhkov, ensconced since 1992, won the ballot.

Material from The Moscow Times has been included in this report.

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