

Volatile Tajikistan Sets Presidential Election for Nov. 6

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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DUSHANBE — Tajikistan's parliament on Friday called a presidential election for Nov. 6 which is expected to extend President Emomali Rakhmon's more than two-decade rule over the Central Asia country until 2020.

Rakhmon, a 60-year-old former state farm director, has presided over the Muslim nation of 8 million people since shortly after the Soviet Union collapsed and his Moscow-backed forces won a 1992-97 civil war against the Islamist opposition.

His opponents have failed to unite and apathy is widespread, making it likely he will run for a new term and win the election, especially as he enjoys blanket coverage in a compliant state media, even though poverty levels are high.

The West has criticized his record on democracy and said elections in Tajikistan failed to meet democratic standards. Rakhmon has also overseen constitutional amendments that increased

the length and number of terms he could be president.

He won a presidential election in 2006 with 79.3 percent of the vote, but if he wins a new seven-year term, it will be his last under the constitution.

Tajikistan, which lies on a heroin trafficking route out of neighboring Afghanistan, remains the poorest of the former Soviet republics. Many Tajiks work in Russia, sending home cash remittances that help keep the rickety economy afloat.

In July of last year, Rakhmon sent troops and armor to restore order in the restive Gorno-Badakhshan region in eastern Tajikistan after supporters of a former warlord murdered a security services general, undermining the president's authority.

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