

Duma Vote 'Failed to Restore Trust,' Says Russia's Elections Chief

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Ella Pamfilova, head of Russian Central Election Commission, speaks in commission headquarters in Moscow, Russia on Sept. 15, 2016. **Ivan Sekretarev / AP**

Russia's parliamentary elections failed to fully restore the trust of the Russian people, the head of the Central Electoral Committee (CEC) has announced.

CEC chief Ella Pamfilova maintained that last Sunday's vote was "open and transparent" but did not go far enough to gain the confidence of the Russian people, the Interfax news agency reported.

"We were able to increase the level of trust that people have in these elections, but that level still isn't what it should be," she told members of Russia's state Duma on Thursday night. "But I am sure that we have provided an open and transparent vote."

Pamfilova said that she deemed the elections to be legitimate, despite some violations.

Votes from nine separate polling stations have been annulled following reports of electoral

violations. They include polling stations in the Russian regions of Rostov-on-Don and Belgorod, where clips of alleged ballot stuffing went viral.

A total of 32 criminal cases had been opened, Interfax reported.

The CEC chief pledged that all complaints would be followed up, and that the Russian people “were right to judge us [the CEC] harshly.”

Pamfilova, who previously served in government as Russia’s Human Rights ombudswoman, declared in April that she would resign in the [event of unfair elections](#). She has not discussed leaving her post following the parliamentary vote.

Independent election monitors have praised [Pamfilova’s influence](#) on Russia’s electoral system, but still claim that the State Duma vote was “far from free and fair.”

Sunday’s vote saw a landslide victory for the ruling United Russia party, who built on their existing presence in the State Duma to gain a super-majority.

Russian President Vladimir Putin has attributed the victory to Russia’s [desire for stability](#) in a turbulent economic climate.

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