

In the 'Urals Switzerland,' a Village Boycotts Vote for Pro-Kremlin Governor Over Neglected Road

By [Moscow Times Reporter](#)

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Screenshot / Podslushano Tyulyuk / VK

A small village in a national park in Russia's Chelyabinsk region is boycotting the upcoming regional elections where the pro-Kremlin incumbent governor seeks to secure his mandate because they have been cut off from the outside world by authorities' negligence.

The village of Tyulyuk, some 1,700 kilometers from Moscow, is located in a region nicknamed the "Urals Switzerland" because of the beauty of Zigalga National Park. Yet all that connects it to the nearest town is a 28-kilometer path through the forest ridden with potholes and pits that often floods due to the river overflowing its banks.

"The road has been neglected for 20 years. It is impossible to use it," one of the villagers [says](#) in a video appeal addressed to Acting Governor Alexei Teksler, a member of the pro-Kremlin

United Russia party.

Tyulyuk's predominantly elderly residents claim that their requests to regional authorities, including Teksler, to repair the road have gone unheard.

"We have written to both the president and you [the current governor], but we have only received a non-response," another villager says in the video.

"Therefore, since you ignore us, do not hear our cry of the soul, we have decided — we will not go to the elections as a village."

Embed:

Despite repeated promises by local authorities and Teksler himself, the road has still not been fixed. Instead, the Chelyabinsk region is [financing](#) the reconstruction of the Russian-occupied town of Yasinovataya and the Volnovakha district in Ukraine's Donetsk region.

The roads' poor conditions prevent the police, ambulances, public transportation and even public utilities from coming to Tyulyuk. If a car breaks down on the road, it is nearly impossible to signal for help because there are no cellphone towers in the area.

Tyulyuk residents with serious health conditions are forced to travel to a hospital in the nearest town themselves. Although a new medical center was [built](#) in the village for 17 million rubles (\$170,000) two years ago, local authorities have so far been unable to find doctors willing to move there to live and work.

The Chelyabinsk region is one of 21 Russian regions that will hold gubernatorial elections on Sept. 8.

Criticism of the Russian government and the military has been effectively outlawed since the February 2022 invasion of Ukraine. Virtually all independent media outlets have been shut down or forced to relocate abroad since the start of the war.

Independent observers have criticized the organization of the elections, citing restrictive laws and the early start of voting in some regions, which they argue makes it nearly impossible to ensure the legality of the process. Additionally, authorities are expanding the use of electronic voting, which independent experts describe as entirely non-transparent and susceptible to manipulation.

In the Chelyabinsk region, the leading candidate is Acting Governor Teksler from the pro-Kremlin United Russia party.

Following the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, Teksler [said](#) that Russia was "fighting fascism that is rearing its head." Teksler was sanctioned by Britain, the United States, Canada and other Western countries in spring 2022.

The election commission refused to register the candidate from Yabloko, the only anti-war party.

Teksler's three rivals have no realistic chance of winning, a source close to the Central Election Commission (CEC) said.

“All three of Teksler’s rivals are only nominal contenders. They can be called sparring partners. But the United Russia candidate must win,” the source added, speaking on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak to the press.

The Chelyabinsk region governor’s office did not respond to a request for comment.

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