

## US behind refusal of OSCE's election monitoring body to observe elections in Russia

By [Global Research](#)

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The U.S. State Department has denied being behind a refusal by the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe's election monitoring body to attend Russia's December 2 parliamentary elections.

Russian President Vladimir Putin said on Monday that the organization's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) refusal to send observers was made on the recommendation of the U.S. State Department, and that Russia would "take this into account in our intergovernmental relations with that country."

An official spokesperson for the U.S. State Department said Putin's remarks did not correspond to the truth.

The representative also said that during an earlier meeting with ODIHR director Christian Strohal, which took place before the election watchdog made the decision to pull out of the December 2 vote, State Department officials had made no recommendations.

In fact, the spokesman said, the U.S. State Department had promised to recognize any decision made by the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe's monitoring body on the issue of the Russian polls.

An ODIHR spokesperson stated that the decision not to go to the polls was independent, and said that the organization did not act on any orders from any state.

Monitoring by the 56-member Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, a Vienna-based organization that includes the United States and Canada, is considered by Western nations a key requisite for declaring elections free and fair. However, Russia has accused the organization of bias towards pro-Western forces.

President Vladimir Putin said the refusal by the ODIHR to dispatch its observers, which the organization has said is due to "unprecedented restrictions" and Russia's failure to issue visas to monitors, was aimed at discrediting the December poll.

The State Department spokesperson called on Russian authorities to meet its commitments and permit ODIHR representatives to monitor the vote without restrictions.

The mission of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe's Parliamentary Assembly has, meanwhile, begun work in Russia, spokesman Klas Bergman said on Monday, following a decision by the organization to send its European parliamentary members in

place of a full monitoring team to Russia.

The State Duma, Russia's lower house, is currently dominated by the pro-Kremlin United Russia. Putin announced in October that he would head the party's candidate list, a move which has all but guaranteed the party a resounding victory at December's polls.

In further developments ahead of the polls, several opposition leaders were briefly detained in Moscow and St. Petersburg at the weekend during anti-Putin rallies. Riot police were summoned to break up the demonstrations, which they said violated procedural rules for public gatherings.

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