

Report: Pro-Putin rallies were ordered

by UPI

MOSCOW -- Rallies for Russian President Vladimir Putin to run for a third term were ordered by regional authorities, the British newspaper The Guardian reported. Documents seen by the newspaper in Moscow showed state railway workers and students in numerous regions were ordered to attend boisterous rallies for Putin, who will step down next March because of constitutional term limits. The report said it wasn't immediately clear whether the compulsory orders originated in the Kremlin, or from politically minded local bureaucrats, but the act contravenes election law, and prosecutors have begun an investigation. The documents were uncovered by the Union of Right Forces, a liberal opposition party. Putin has repeatedly said he will abide by the constitution and step down, although he has indicated he doesn't want to abandon high-level Russian politics. There is some speculation he would run for prime minister in March, allowing him to try again for the presidency in 2012, the report said.

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