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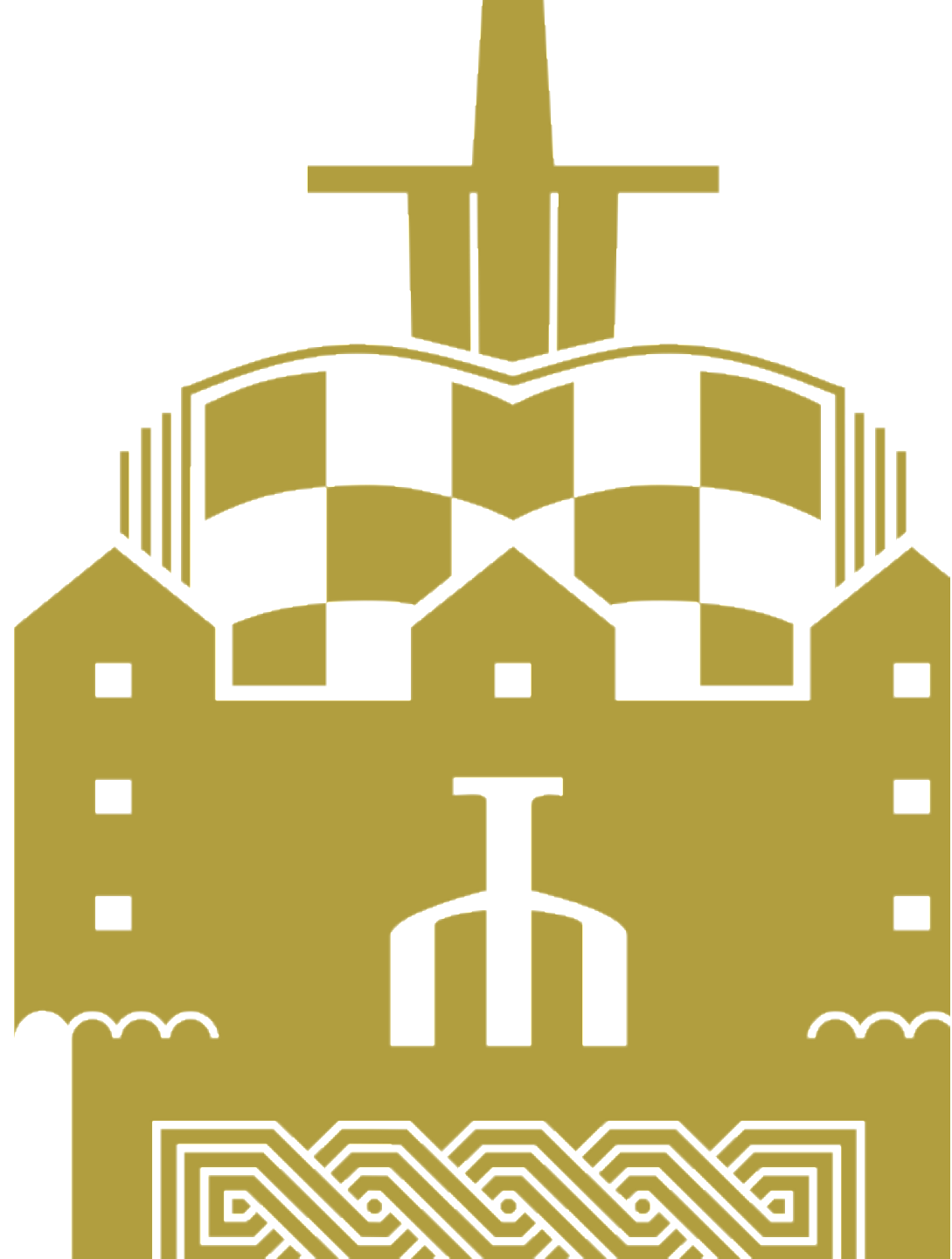
New Frontiers of Electoral Influence: Russia's Involvement in Moldova's 2024 Referendum and Presidential Elections

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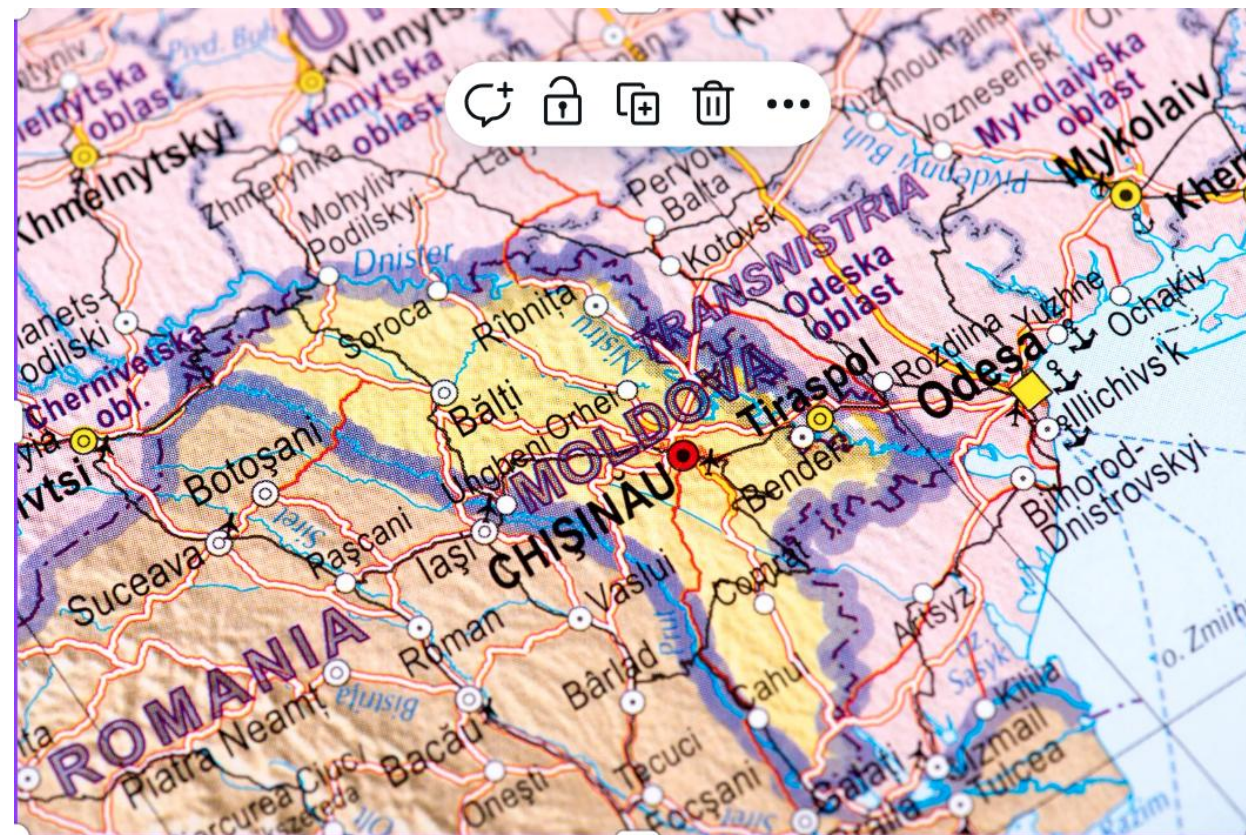


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Introduction & Context

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- ▶ 🕒 **1. Historical Perspective**
- ▶ 🌐 **2. Geostrategic Importance**
- ▶ 🧩 **3. Social & Political Vulnerabilities**
- ▶ ⚔️ **4. Russian Hybrid Warfare**





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Overview of the 2024 Elections *Sapere Aude et Agere*

- ▶ • Referendum and presidential vote: key geopolitical stakes.
- ▶ • Main issue: EU integration vs. pro-Russian orientation.
- ▶ Electoral frauds:
 - ▶ documented by Information and Security Service (SIS)
 - ▶ Journalist investigations





2024 Elections

- ▶ Foreign influence in 2024 through the use of platforms, agents, and tools for hybrid interference.

- ▶ **Russian interference was identified across multiple vectors:**
 - a) **Amplification of radical separatist-autonomist tendencies;**
 - b) **Propaganda and disinformation;**
 - c) **Exploitation of the ecclesiastical factor;**
 - d) **Interference by the Russian Federation in Moldova's electoral process;**
 - e) **Subversive operations conducted by Russian intelligence services;**
 - f) **Exploitation of organized crime elements;**
 - g) **Energy-related blackmail.**

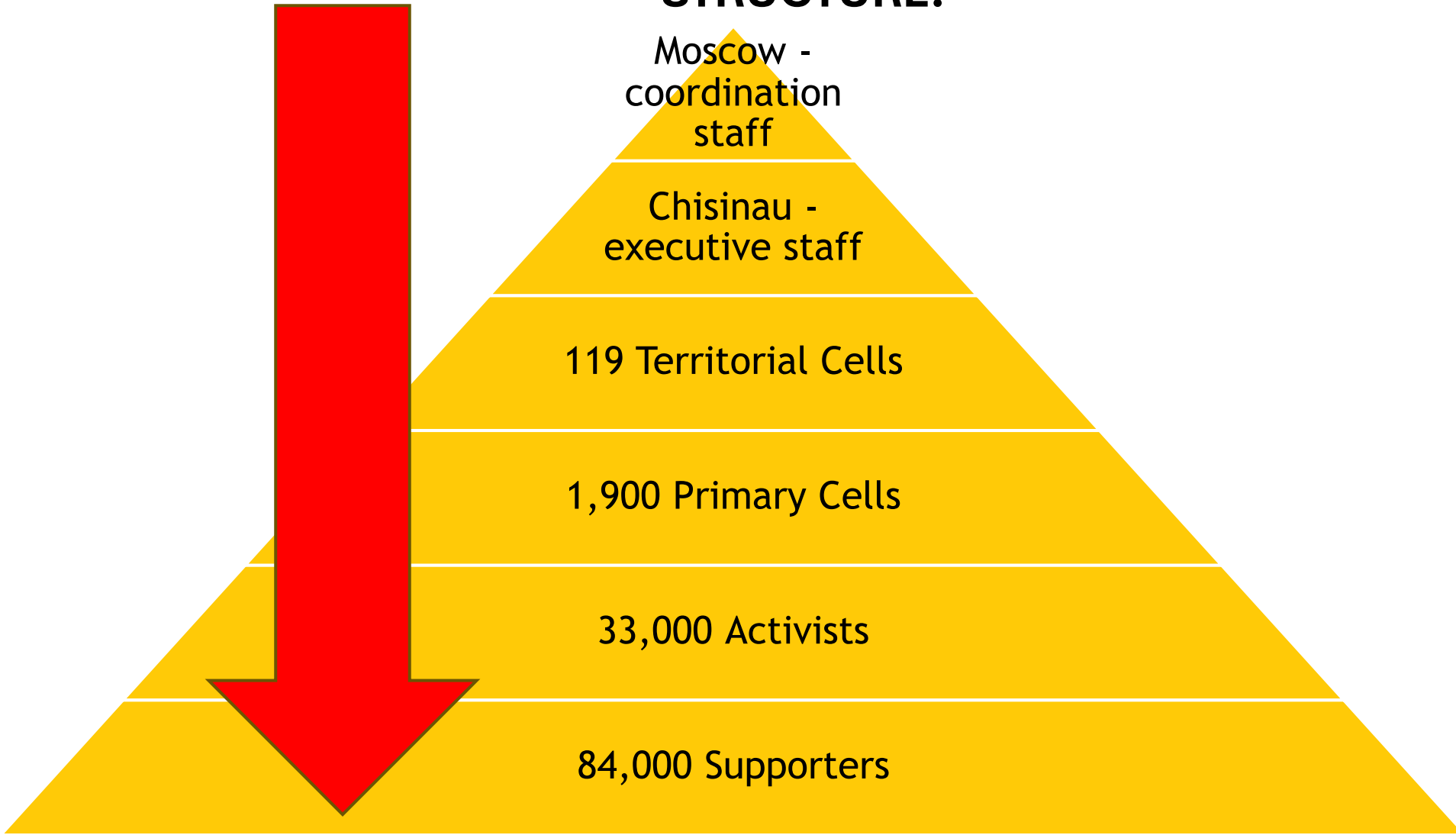


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2024 Elections

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► FOREIGN INTERFERENCE COORDINATION STRUCTURE:



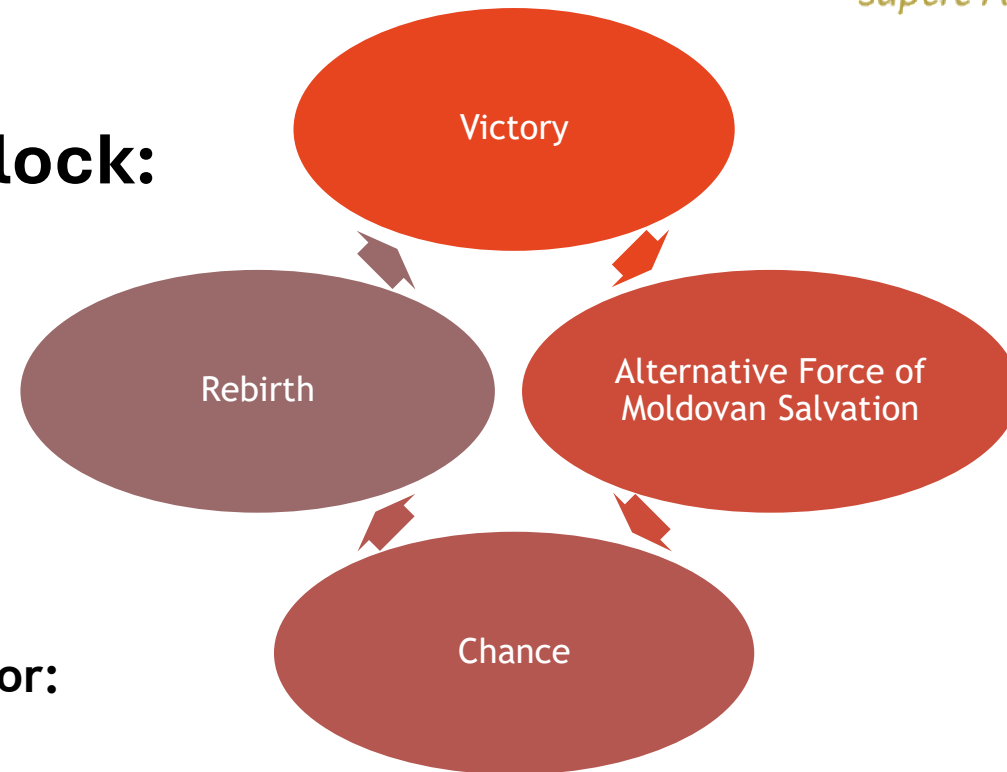


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► “Victory” Block:



- **3 Call Centers based in Moscow responsible for:**
 - communication with primary organizations,
 - managing relations with the formation’s activists,
 - maintaining and strengthening relations with supporters.
- **Telegram chatbot - @KYCMD_bot through which:**
 - activists were **registered**,
 - electoral and **propaganda** measures were coordinated,
 - **control**, including registration in the app, granting the mobile phone access to location data, submission of identity document copies, and user identification via photo/video/biometric verification.



2024 Elections

- ▶ **A full spectrum of hybrid tools (financial, media, human, logistical, technical, counterintelligence, and combat capabilities) applied into these steps:**
 1. **Creation of EVRAZIA in April 2024 in Moscow**
 2. **SOFT: Financing, logistics, media support: Youth & religious leaders**
 3. **HARD: preparing the driving force for the destabilization scenario**
 4. **Creation of “Moldovan” organizations on the territory of the Russian Federation**

2024 Elections

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► ILLICIT FINANCING:

► EXTERNAL:

- **Organized transport of cash** from the Russian Federation to Moldova by so-called couriers and associated persons (via air routes).
- **Money transfers from Russia** conducted through bank accounts at PSB/**PROMSVYAZBANK** (subject to international sanctions) – using the Russian payment system **MIR**, with sums transferred via payment platforms from Uzbekistan; **P2P transfers** through banks and payment platforms in Central Asia, and money transfer systems such as **Zolotaya Korona**.
- Regions affiliated with ŞOR (Gagauzia, Taraclia, and Orhei) - signed **trilateral contracts with EVRAZIA and PSB** for receiving financial resources - camouflage illegal financing and electoral corruption.
- **“youth grants” and “employment contracts”** were made for Moldovan citizens.
- To utilize the funds received on **Russian MIR cards**, certain individuals acted as **“intermediaries of transfers from Russia”** (hereinafter “service providers”). Cases were documented where a service provider **transferred funds to the Moldovan bank card of an activist or supporter**, via **P2P transactions**, from the service provider’s personal card or from cards issued to third parties (so-called “drops”), including using platforms such as **BINANCE and BYBIT** (the latter allowing transfers from Russian cards to Moldovan cards).
- Following the **suspension by commercial banks of P2P operations from bank cards issued in Central Asia**, transfers to **accounts opened with electronic money issuing companies** have intensified.
- **Russian special services**, through individuals close to the ŞOR group, use the **TRUSTEE app (Trustee Plus UAB “Trustee Global”, Lithuania)** as a financing mechanism.

► INTERNAL:

- **“donors” for the election campaign**



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Other forms of Interference

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- ▶ Elections monitoring
- ▶ Cyber issues
- ▶ False bombing alerts



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The Role of Disinformation

- ▶ • Narratives: 'EU = loss of sovereignty', 'NATO = war', 'Russia = protector'.
- ▶ • Channels: Telegram, TikTok, local portals.
- ▶ • Impact: polarization, confusion, and voter manipulation.



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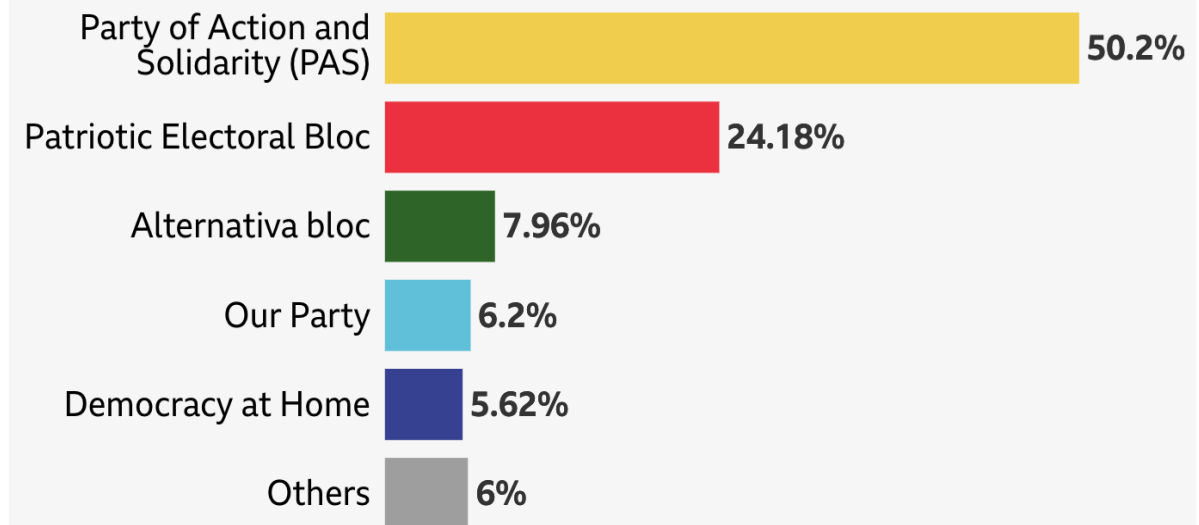
Implications for 2025 Elections

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- massive Russian interference
- illicit funding: One party in Dodon's bloc was barred from running two days before the vote
- network promising to pay participants if they posted pro-Russian propaganda and fake news
- Digital Army of Kremlin (ZdG) - investigation
- Moldovans voting "in record numbers",
- police reported evidence of an unprecedented effort by Russia to spread disinformation and buy votes
- Dozens of men were arrested, accused of travelling to Serbia for firearms training and co-ordinating unrest

Moldova parliamentary election

Preliminary results



Central electoral commission • Turnout 52.21% - 1.6m votes





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