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Dispute Over Electoral Reforms Continues in Ukraine

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Ukraine's electoral dispute continues following Friday's Supreme Court order for a new presidential runoff vote with the opposing sides now sparring over electoral reforms. President Leonid Kuchma has called for a new roundtable meeting on Monday involving international mediators.

International mediators from the European Union, Poland and Lithuania are expected in Ukraine Monday for a roundtable session aimed at resolving changes to electoral laws that parliament failed to pass on Saturday.

President Kuchma called for the new talks after he accused the opposition of renegeing on last week's agreement to approve certain reforms.

The reform would transfer many presidential powers to parliament, and have been under discussion since earlier this year.

But opposition leader Viktor Yushchenko says the government wants to make too many changes because they fear he will win the presidency in the new runoff vote ordered by the supreme court on Friday.

Parliament adjourned for a 10-day break without passing electoral reforms intended to ensure the election on December 26 will be free and fair.

Thousands of Mr. Yushchenko's supporters say they will remain in their tent city in the center of Ukraine's capital city of Kiev until the situation is clarified.

Mr. Yushchenko has called on the international community to help insure the new vote will be fair, saying the it will determine Ukraine's fate "for decades and centuries ahead."

The European Union, Canada and other countries are making plans to send foreign observers to monitor the new election.

Many will come with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), which strongly criticized the last vote.

But a very different reaction has come from Russia, which openly backs Prime Minister Yanukovich and accuses the West of "interfering" in Ukraine's internal affairs.

Russia has singled out the OSCE for what it calls "clear bias" in its election monitoring and focus on human rights issues.

In another development, Mr. Yushchenko says that his family is now in hiding due to the ongoing political crisis in Ukraine.

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Ukraine's Prime Minister says he will take part in a new runoff presidential election after the supreme court ruled the results of a previous poll were invalid. Parliament is holding a special Saturday session to discuss what comes next, as electoral officials begin planning for the new vote later this month. Ukrainian Prime Minister Viktor Yanukovich says he has "no choice" but to run in the new election despite feeling that the court's decision violates Ukraine&...



By **Bill Gasperini**
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Ukraine's Supreme Court Orders New Presidential Vote

Ukraine's Supreme Court has ordered a new presidential runoff election, ruling in favor of the opposition's claim that the election was marred by widespread voter manipulation and fraud. The ruling means Ukraine's voters will again have a choice to vote for either Prime Minister Viktor Yanukovich or opposition candidate Viktor Yushchenko. After five days of intense public examination, Ukraine's Supreme Court deliberated for some six hours, before...

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Uncertainty Hangs over Ukraine as Election Dispute Enters Third Week

Ukraine's election crisis is now in its third week and shows no sign of ending, as the two sides in the political battle again lock horns in a new standoff. Although President Leonid Kuchma says he is "ready to compromise," tens of thousands of opposition protesters remain in downtown Kiev, to keep up the pressure. Opposition leader Viktor Yushchenko urged the huge crowd to maintain its blockade of government buildings, amid uncertainty about what comes next in the...

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Ukraine Opposition Leader Warns Against Outsider Interference in New Election

Ukrainian opposition leader Viktor Yushchenko has warned foreign nations against taking sides in the country's new presidential runoff election. Mr. Yushchenko said outsiders should only work to ensure the vote is fair. His comments followed pledges from the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe to support Ukraine's new court-ordered presidential run-off election. Thousands of Mr. Yushchenko's supporters have continued their...

