

# Tajik Opposition Candidate Bows Out Of Race

**DUSHANBE -- An opposition candidate for the Tajik presidency, Oinihol Bobonazarova, says she will not take part in the November 6 election.**

Bobonazarova told RFE/RL on October 11 that her campaign had narrowly missed collecting the required number of signatures to register for the poll.

"I knew from the beginning that it was not going to be an easy campaign, but I didn't realize there would be so many barriers and problems in the way," Bobonazarova said.

The Central Election Commission had announced on October 10 that it was extending the registration deadline by one day -- until October 11 -- ostensibly to give Bobonazarova more time to hand over the required 210,000 signatures of her supporters.

She said her campaign had been "under pressure" from many sides, starting with state-run television and extending to regional governors, neighborhood committee heads, and even teachers, who did not want to see her run.

She also accused state media of unfairly focusing on incumbent President Emomali Rahmon's campaign. "It felt like Rahmon wasn't my only rival in this race," she said. "My rival was the entire government with all its agencies, including its law enforcement structures."

Bobonazarova earlier accused police of interfering in her campaign by arresting her supporters while they collected supporters' signatures.

However, she said she was happy to see that her supporters were not willing to give up on their dreams for the country's future, despite the abrupt end to her campaign. She apologized and said she had "tried until the last moment."

She said none of the five officially registered candidates poses a real threat to Rahmon in the vote. She said she would have been the only "serious contender" to Rahmon and that her challenge had "frightened" the authorities.

## 'No Impact'

The Central Election Commission said Bobonazarova's decision will not have any impact on the election, which officials said would be "democratic, transparent, and free."

Opposition leaders have also accused the authorities of excluding more than a million Tajik migrant workers -- a major opposition power base -- from the signature-gathering campaign.

Tajikistan's election commission had ruled that the migrants have the right to vote in the election, but that they were not allowed to take part in the signature-gathering process.

Bobonazarova's candidacy had been supported by the United Reformist Forces of Tajikistan, an alliance that brings together the country's largest opposition party, the Islamic Renaissance Party, and the Social Democratic Party, as well as several nongovernmental organizations and influential political figures.

Six presidential candidates have officially registered for the election. In addition to Rahmon, who has been in power since 1992, they are Tolibbek Bukhoriev from the Agrarian Party; Olim Boboev from the Economic Reforms Party; Ismoil Talbakov from the Communist Party; Abduhalim Ghafforov from the Socialist Party; and Saidja'far Ismonov from the Democratic Party.

<http://www.rferl.org/content/tajik-opposition-president/25133663.html>