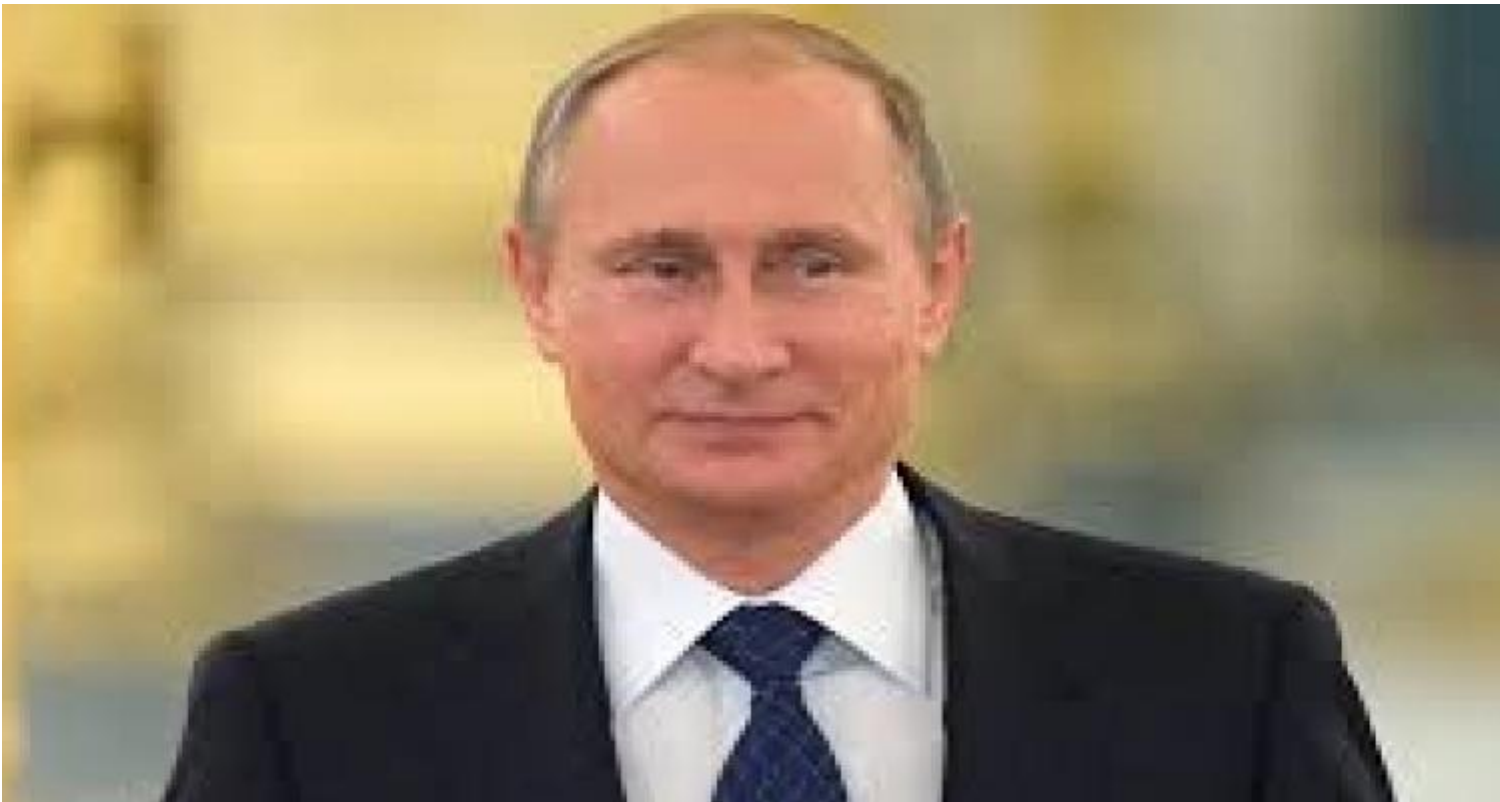


# *Praise for Putin's election victory pours into Russia from leaders around the world*

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Havana, March 19 (RHC)-- As soon as Russian President Vladimir Putin was declared the winner in Sunday's presidential election, messages of praise and congratulations began to pour in from leaders around the world.

Chinese President Xi Jinping congratulated Putin on his election win. He said Monday: "Currently, the China-Russia comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership is at the best level in history, which sets an example for building a new type of international relations."

Xi further said: "China is willing to work with Russia to keep promoting China-Russia relations to a higher level, provide driving force for respective national development in both countries, and promote regional and global peace and tranquility."

Iranian President Hassan Rouhani congratulated Putin on what he called his "decisive victory" and said in a message on the presidential website: "I am sure that during your new term, relations between our two countries will develop further."

Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman sent a cable of congratulations to President Putin, wishing him "constant good health and happiness and his people steady progress and prosperity," Saudi Arabia's state press agency said.

Meanwhile, a statement from Venezuela's Communications and Information Ministry said Monday that President Maduro "congratulates Russian President Vladimir Putin on his re-election for the period 2018-2024, and the glorious Russian people for their demonstration of civility, high political awareness and deep commitment to democracy in the important and historic electoral day."

Bolivian President Evo Morales also resorted to Twitter to, as he put it, "salute the resounding victory of the brother president of Russia." Morales added that Russia "respects the dignity of peoples and guarantees the geopolitical balance and world peace in the face of the onslaught of imperialism."

Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi wished Putin every success and expressed hope in "further developing and promoting cooperation on behalf of the two friendly nations," various news agencies reported.

Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic was one of the first heads of State to congratulate Putin on election results.

"Please accept my heartfelt congratulations on your re-election as Russian president and best wishes to further steer your country along the clearly defined path of progress for the benefit of all its citizens. I am confident that with your outstanding talent for leadership with a clear understanding and inflexible will, responsibility and commitment to your cause, you will continue to achieve success in solving all issues important for Russia and in implementing plans for its further comprehensive development," the statement said.

Other world leaders who congratulated Vladimir Putin on his electoral victory include also the president of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev and Kazakhstan's Nursultan Nazarbayev.

Putin became president for the first time in 2000. He was re-elected in 2004 and became president for the third time in 2012 after serving as prime minister for four years. He will lead Russia through 2024.

The president is expected to be sworn in on May 7th.

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