

# Most Russians Would Back Kremlin In Case of War With Ukraine, Poll Says

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Almost a quarter of Russians think war with Ukraine is likely and three out of four Russians would support their government if such a war were to break out, a recent poll showed.

Thirty-six percent of Russians said they would "definitely" back Moscow in case of a war against Ukraine, and another 38 percent said they would "most likely" support it, a survey by the Levada Center pollster said, RBK reported on Sunday.

Only 2 percent of respondents said they would definitely oppose Moscow's actions in case of a war with Ukraine, and another 11 percent said they would probably oppose it. Thirteen percent of respondents were still undecided on the issue.

Russians also appeared to view as fairly high the probability of a war between the two Slavic, predominantly Eastern Orthodox Christian, former Soviet republics.

A total of 23 percent of respondents said war was "quite probable," though 53 percent considered it unlikely, and 13 percent said it could be "absolutely ruled out." The remaining 11 percent were undecided.

Levada Center deputy chief Alexei Grazhdankin described the results as disheartening.

Grazhdankin blamed Russian media coverage on the situation in Ukraine for a drop in the number of Russians who have a positive view of Ukraine, from 63 percent in early March to 52 percent now.

More than three out of four Russians, or 77 percent, blamed the Ukrainian administration to some extent for the deterioration of that country's relations with Russia, while only 3 percent held Moscow responsible for the cooling of relations.

Nearly three in four respondents, or 73 percent, considers as illegitimate or mostly illegitimate the Ukrainian government that came to power after months of political protests that toppled a Moscow-backed administration.

Only 14 percent said that Ukraine's government was at least to some extent legitimate, and another 15 percent was undecided.

More than half of respondents, 58 percent, attributed Western sanctions against Russia over the annexation of Crimea to the West's "hostility toward Russia" and the supposed wish to take advantage of the situation to "pressure" Russia. Another 20 percent attributed the sanctions to the West's lack of understanding about the "real situation" in Ukraine.

A total of 13 percent of respondents said that the sanctions were caused by Russia's annexation of part of a foreign country and by Moscow's violation of international law.

The poll was conducted on March 21-24 among 1,603 people in 45 Russian regions and gave a margin of error of 3.4 percent.

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