

Russians Grow Increasingly Blase Toward Recognition of Georgian Breakaway Regions

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August 21, 2014

The  **Moscow Times**

Russians have grown increasingly indifferent toward their country's recognition of Georgia's breakaway republics of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, a poll published Thursday revealed.

The poll, conducted by the independent Levada Center, showed a considerable decline in Russians' positive assessment of their country's recognition of the Georgian breakaway republics following its five-day war with Georgia in August 2008.

In September 2008, 40 percent of the population viewed Moscow's recognition of the Georgian regions' independence as beneficial to Russia, while 28 percent of the population saw the move as neither helpful nor detrimental.

Six years later, with tensions between the countries having begun to subside, 54 percent of the Russian population was found to be indifferent to Russia's recognition of Abkhazia

and South Ossetia, marking a 26 percent increase since 2008. Meanwhile, the percentage of Russians convinced that the recognition of the regions' independence had been beneficial dropped 17 percent.

Russia, Venezuela, Nicaragua and Nauru are the only members of the United Nations who currently recognize the independence of South Ossetia and Abkhazia.

The results of the poll, which was conducted in late July using a representative sample of 1,600 adults across 46 Russian regions, also showed that 22 percent of the population now believe that Georgia's breakaway republics are federal subjects of Russia. The poll had a margin of error not exceeding 3.4 percent.

Tensions between Russia and Georgia escalated in April 2008 after the Kremlin established direct diplomatic ties with Georgia's breakaway regions and ordered military exercises near the Georgian border.

War erupted following Georgian forces' attempt to seize Tskhinvali, the capital of South Ossetia, which in turn led Russian troops to cross the border and engage in an armed conflict with Georgia.

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