

Russians Say They Fear Hunger, Unemployment and Nuclear War

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Russia's deteriorating relations with the West and the economic turmoil that followed sanctions imposed on Moscow for its meddling in Ukraine have had a significant impact on Russians' view on the likelihood of nuclear war or going hungry, the poll published Thursday by state-run VTsIOM pollster showed.

The number of respondents who said they feared a nuclear war has doubled to 17 percent from only 8 percent two years ago, while the number of those who fear going hungry has nearly tripled to 11 percent from 4 percent over the same period.

Former Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev warned earlier this week that Russia and the U.S. could be edging toward a "hot war" instead of a "Cold War."

"If our country gets involved [in the fighting], it could spark a fire so strong the whole world won't be able to put it out." Gorbachev said.

In a question that allowed for up to five answers, the most popular fears named by respondents were concerns about the future of their children, with 31 percent, poverty with 26 percent, and losing one's job with 23 percent, according to the report.

The numbers were broadly similar to those recorded in a similar poll two years ago, the report said.

Russians seem to be more confident about the political situation at home — only 2 percent said they feared a return to "Stalinism or mass repression."

The VTsIOM poll was conducted on Jan. 10-11 among 1,600 people in 132 cities and towns, and gave a margin of error of up to 3.5 percentage points.

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