

Fewer Russians Think Political Opposition Exists in Russia – Poll

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The share of Russians that think there is political opposition in Russia has decreased from 66 to 54 percent over the past year, the Interfax news agency reported Monday, citing a new survey by the independent Levada Center pollster.

The findings come six months before parliamentary elections in Russia and reveal that more respondents now think there is no need for political opposition. Presently, 52 percent of people surveyed think Russia should have opposition, down from 58 percent in February last year.

The most popular reasons given included: “we shouldn't dissipate the strength of the society in these difficult times on disputes,” “Russia's current problems can be solved by only one firm hand” and “the opposition prevents [Russian President Vladimir] Putin from solving our problems effectively,” Interfax reported.

According to the poll, leader of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDPR) Vladimir Zhirinovskiy has become the most well-known opposition politician among Russians — he was familiar to 69 percent of respondents.

Gennady Zyuganov, leader of the Russian Communist Party (KPRF) — known to 73 percent of respondents — was the second most famous opposition politician.

He is followed by former chief of Yukos oil giant Mikhail Khodorkovsky. Known to 45 of respondents, he has become the most famous member of non-systemic opposition, according to the poll, Interfax reported.

The survey was conducted on Feb. 19-24 among 1,600 respondents in 48 Russian regions, Interfax reported. A margin of error was not given.

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