

Majority of Russians Hold Putin Responsible for National Woes, Poll Says

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Kirill Zykov / Moskva News Agency

A majority of Russians have said they hold President Vladimir Putin fully responsible for the problems the country is facing under his rule, according to a new poll published by the independent Levada Center pollster.

Putin's popularity has been hurt by legislation he [signed](#) last month to raise the pension eligibility age, which has [brought](#) down his approval rating to five-year lows.

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Sixty-one percent of respondents said they hold Putin “fully” accountable for the nation's problems, according to survey results [published](#) by Levada on Thursday.

Another 22 percent said they hold Putin “somewhat” responsible.

“This is truly an all-time record number,” political analyst Boris Makarenko [told](#) the Vedomosti business daily in comments on the results. “With the fall of the ruble in late 2014, the situation worsened and approval indicators for socio-economic policy have been dropping since.”

“Pension reform became a trigger that changed the situation,” he was quoted as saying.

The share of Russians who blame their head of state for social, economic and other issues has gone up annually since January 2015, according to Levada.

If elections were held this Sunday, only 40 percent of respondents said they would hand Putin a fifth presidential term.

Levada conducted the poll among 1,600 participants in 52 Russian regions between Oct. 18 and Oct. 24.

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