

60% Distrust Police, Poll Finds

November 10, 2010

The  **Moscow Times**

Sixty percent of Russians distrust the police, an independent poll showed, dealing a new blow to a corrupt and scandal-hit force that the Kremlin has vowed to reform.

Of the 1,600 Russian adults polled on Oct. 22-25 in 127 towns across the country, 60 percent said police "only acted out of their own interests," the Levada Center said. In the same poll in August, 48 percent said they distrusted the police.

A survey by the GfK market research group earlier this year showed that 86 percent of Germans and Italians trusted their police, while 59 percent of French, 55 percent of Bulgarians and 54 percent of Romanians did.

In the Russian poll, 60 percent of respondents said they believed that bribe taking, extortion and racketeering had become the norm among police, with only 22 percent describing such crimes as "isolated incidents."

The poll had a margin of error of 3.4 percentage points.

Russia is perceived as the most corrupt country in the G20, according to Transparency

International.

The anti-corruption watchdog this year rated Russia, which has a \$1.2 trillion economy, 154th out of 178 nations in its Corruption Perceptions Index, along with Cambodia, Kenya and Laos.

Late last year, President Dmitry Medvedev pledged to reform the police and cut staff by 20 percent.

Critics say there has been little substantial change so far, and Medvedev admitted in July that his administration had made almost no progress in fighting corruption.

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