

Protest Leaders Increasingly Renowned, Poll Says

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Almost 50 percent of respondents in the VTsIOM survey had heard of anti-corruption campaigner Alexei Navalny, a 20 percent rise over February's results.

Russia's opposition leaders are increasingly renowned, but people are also growing dissatisfied with their actions, a poll released Monday said.

The survey, conducted by the state-run VTsIOM pollster, found that protest organizers such as Alexei Navalny and Gennady Gudkov rose to particular prominence over the past half-year, Interfax reported.

While anti-corruption campaigner Navalny was known to 29 percent of respondents in February, 48 percent said they had heard of him in September.

Sixty percent recognized ousted State Duma Deputy Gudkov in September, as opposed to 21 percent seven months earlier.

Other opposition figures who raised their profile over the same period included Left Front leader Sergei Udaltsov (21 to 39 percent), Khimki forest defender Yevgenia Chirikova (12 to 20 percent) and Just Russia Deputy Ilya Ponomarev (14 to 23 percent).

The poll findings represent a small victory for the organizers of the country's nine-month-old protest movement, which has struggled to draw crowds outside Moscow and St. Petersburg.

State-run media regularly exclude opposition figures from their news coverage or portray them in a negative light.

But while respondents demonstrated greater awareness of the opposition, an increasing number expressed antipathy to its leaders.

Navalny's disapproval rating rose from 31 to 43 percent, while Gudkov's increased from 29 to 43 percent.

Negative reactions to Chirikova, who is running as an opposition candidate for the Khimki mayor's post, were voiced by 40 percent of those surveyed in September.

The VTsIOM survey, which did not give a margin of error, was carried out between Sept. 15 and 16 in 46 Russian regions. Roughly 1,600 people took part.

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