

Authorities Hampering Civil Society, Report Says

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Authorities are hampering the development of civil society, and elites will demand that President Vladimir Putin hand over power after his third presidential term, according to a report commissioned by a group of experts headed by former Finance Minister Alexei Kudrin.

The report, titled "Authorities — Elites — Society: Contours of a New Social Contract," was compiled by the Center for Political Technologies think tank and Levada Center pollster and released Thursday to coincide with the one-year anniversary of Kudrin's Committee of Civic Initiatives.

Its main finding was that between 2011 and 2012, "the 'Putin consensus,' whereby the majority voted for authorities or the perennial opposition without displaying any political activism in between elections, ceased to exist," Kommersant [reported](#).

Instead, there appeared "demand for a change in course," as reflected by the anti-Kremlin

protest movement, but the ruling elite backed a turn toward conservatism over increased democracy.

Political and economic experts said at the report's presentation that civil society remains underdeveloped and that the level of interpersonal trust in Russia is "too low."

"Russian elites aren't able to solve problems on a national level," since they are built into the country's power vertical and are called on to display loyalty at all costs, the experts said.

But Kudrin's committee said elites could have a greater role to play as Putin's support base shrinks and managerial ineffectiveness in the government grows. In particular, elites could insist that Putin comprehensively hand over power at the 2018 presidential elections.

"The option of the tandem will be impossible," the committee said.

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