

Russians Distrustful of Judicial System, Poll Says

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Most Russians remain distrustful of the country's judicial system, with two-thirds of them confident that an ordinary Russian would not be afforded a fair trial if he had to turn to courts to solve his grievances, a Levada Center poll showed Wednesday.

According to Levada, only 27 percent of respondents believe otherwise, a result that has remained largely the same over the last five years.

The survey also showed that Russians are skeptical of juries; only 23 percent believe that this form of trial is more fair than a bench trial.

Over the last decade, both President Vladimir Putin and former President Dmitry Medvedev have called for a thorough legal reform and cited the absence of the rule of law as one of the main obstacles keeping Russia from carrying out a genuine modernization of its economy.

But the survey's results suggest that their efforts have been largely futile. Russia is still the source of more applications to the European Court of Human Rights than any other country.

Last Thursday, the ECHR ruled that one of Russia's most famous inmates, former oil tycoon Mikhail Khodorkovsky, was not given a free and fair trial.

High-profile cases such as Khodorkovsky's and a recent case against prominent opposition leader Alexei Navalny, who has been sentenced to five years in prison, were among the main factors undermining people's trust in the Russian judiciary, legal experts said.

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