

44% of Russians Call Ruling Party 'Crooks and Thieves' - Poll

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Almost half of all Russians, 44 percent, agree with opposition leader Alexei Navalny that the ruling United Russia party is made up of "crooks and thieves," a recent opinion poll showed Monday, a significant increase from two years ago.

Navalny, an anti-corruption activist who finished second in Moscow's recent mayoral election, coined the derogatory moniker in a radio interview in February 2011. Later that year, United Russia won parliamentary elections marred by allegations of fraud that evoked a wave of protests.

An April 2011 survey by the same pollster, the respected independent Levada Center, showed that about 30 percent of Russians considered the "crooks and thieves" moniker to be an accurate description of the party's membership.

In April 2013, some 51 percent of respondents agreed with the slogan, another Levada poll

showed, a rise from 38 percent in September 2012. In June this year, almost half of Russians (47 percent) said United Russia was the Kremlin's "puppet party."

The Levada poll whose results were released Monday was conducted on August 23 to 26 among 1,601 people across 45 Russian regions. Its statistical margin of error did not exceed 3.4 percent, the pollster said in a statement.

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