

Russians More Confident in Stability in North Caucasus, Poll Shows

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Data from the news agency Caucasian Knot shows that in recent months, the number of those killed by insurgency-linked violence in the North Caucasus has climbed.

The number of Russians who believe the situation in the restive North Caucasus region is stable and under control has more than doubled in the past year, a poll released Thursday has shown.

The survey, conducted by independent pollster Levada Center, showed 44 percent of respondents described the overall situation in the North Caucasus — where Russian security forces have been fighting a militant insurgency for years — as "safe and calm." Last May, only 18 percent held such a view, the pollster said.

The number of those who believed the situation in the area is "critical" has fallen from 11 percent last May to 3 percent currently, and those who described the region's situation as "tense" fell from 61 percent to 40 percent.

The increased confidence in stability in the region may come as a surprise to some, as the terrorist threat from the region dominated headlines around the world ahead of the Winter Olympic Games in Sochi in February.

The region has been a major cause of concern in recent years, and two suicide bombers who struck Volgograd over the New Year's holidays were identified by the National Anti-Terrorism Committee as natives of Dagestan in the North Caucasus. Prior to that, a number of other suicide bombers who carried out attacks in Russia were found to have hailed from areas across the North Caucasus, where the now-deceased militant leader Doku Umarov had sought to establish a radical Islamic Caucasus Emirate.

The more relaxed attitude to the region may stem from ongoing events in Ukraine, where hundreds have been killed in recent months as fighting continues between pro-Russian separatists and Ukrainian forces.

The spike in confidence also comes just weeks after President Vladimir Putin ordered the establishment of a North Caucasus Ministry to oversee the development of the region.

Data from the news agency Caucasian Knot shows that in recent months, the number of those killed by insurgency-linked violence in the North Caucasus has climbed. The number of fatalities recorded by the news agency in February was 21, while in March it increased to 33. In April, that figure stood at 52.

In the broader scheme of things, however, the number of annual fatalities has gone down, with the number of those killed in 2013 at 529 compared to 700 in 2012, according to the Caucasian Knot.

The Levada Center poll, conducted between May 23-26, surveyed 1,600 respondents in 45 different regions and had a margin of error of 3.4 percentage points.

See also:

[At Least 33 Dead After Volgograd Bomb Attacks](#)

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