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Russians' Enthusiasm For Political Protests Hits Record Low, Poll Shows

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A man holds a sign during a protest against the conflict in eastern Ukraine in the center of Moscow Aug. 28, 2014. The sign reads: "No war." **Maxim Zmeyev**

Russians' willingness to take part in political protests has shrunk to a record low, with only 7 percent prepared to take their political demands to the streets, according to a recent poll.

The independent Levada Center pollster said Monday most Russians did not imagine their fellow citizens would take part in protests either— only 12 percent of those questioned said they expected some kind of politically-motivated public protest would be staged in their region.

The number is at its lowest since mid-2000 and marks a dramatic decline from late 1998, when half of respondents said political protests could occur, according to the report.

In the latest poll, 83 percent of respondents thought it unlikely a political protest would be staged in their region, and an even higher number — 87 percent — said they would probably refrain from participating in one themselves, the poll indicated.

The poll was conducted on Aug. 22-25 among 1,600 people in 134 cities and towns around Russia, and gave a margin of error of no more than 3.4 percentage points.

The lack of enthusiasm for public action to further political demands is likely the result of a belief such protests have little effect and a fear of persecution.

The anti-Kremlin protests on Moscow's Bolotnaya Square in 2012 led to a widely publicized ongoing case which, to date, has seen six protesters convicted on charges of having participated in "mass riots" and dozens more indicted.

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