

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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