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Vladimir Putin Seen by Russians as Highest Moral Authority

By The Moscow Times

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Russians see President Vladimir Putin as a shining beacon of morality, according to a poll published Wednesday.

President Vladimir Putin is seen as Russia's highest moral authority, a poll published Wednesday revealed.

The state-run Public Opinion Foundation asked individuals from 43 different regions across Russia whether celebrities can be considered moral authorities. One-third said no.

Of the two-thirds of respondents who said yes, 36 percent see Putin as a shining beacon of morality.

Trailing behind Putin was a diverse group of Russian cultural figures, such as famed novelist Alexander Solzhenitsyn, folk singer Lyudmila Zykina and pianist Denis Matsuyev. These artistic and literary heroes were seen as moral authorities by 9 percent of those who believe

celebrities can set the moral compass.

Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov and Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu lagged far behind the commander-in-chief, being considered moral authorities by 6 and 5 percent of the question's respondents, respectively. Another 4 percent of those who believe that public figures can be seen as moral authorities said Vladimir Zhirinovsky, the firebrand leader of the Liberal Democratic Party who recently called for a re-establishment of the Russian monarchy, was among them.

Revered journalist Vladimir Posner, Soviet hockey legend Vladislav Tretyak, Chechen leader Ramzan Kadyrov and the Russian Orthodox Church's Patriarch Kirill were each considered moral authorities by only 1 percent of respondents.

The poll, conducted in July on 1,500 Russian adults, had a margin of error that did not exceed 3.6 percent.

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