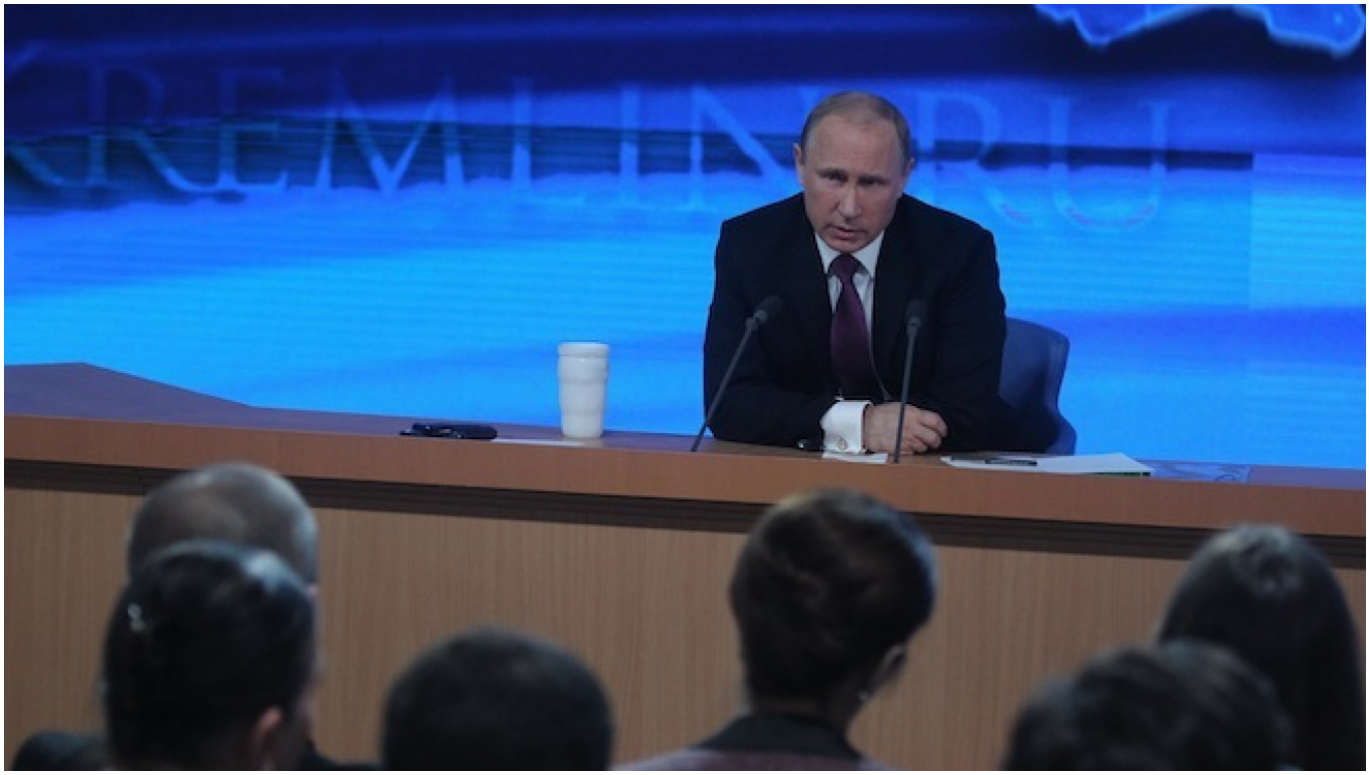
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INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Half of Russians Believe Putin is Poorly Informed of Situation in the Country, Poll Shows

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President Vladimir Putin

Over half of Russians think President Vladimir Putin does not receive a complete picture of what is going on in Russia or is being deliberately misled by his entourage, according to a poll released Wednesday by an independent Russian polling center.

Fifty-six percent of respondents in the poll conducted by the Levada Center said that Putin doesn't have a complete picture of the national situation, including fourteen percent who believe his closest advisors and allies are outright concealing the truth from the Russian president.

Only 31 percent of respondents said that they believed Putin was completely aware of what is taking place across the country and truthfully informed by his advisors.

When asked if they believe Putin is guilty of various accusations of misuse of power levied by

his opponents, 22 percent of respondents were certain he is innocent — twice as many as in April 2012.

Thirty-one percent of respondents said that Putin's culpability in alleged violations is less important than his role in improving the standard of living.

Only 38 percent of respondents in the survey said they could freely express their thoughts and opinions about government policies. Ten percent said they couldn't express themselves because they were scared of reprisals or felt uncomfortable.

The poll surveyed 1,600 adults across Russia between July 17 and 20.

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