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Nearly Half of Russians Distrust Police — Poll

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Forty-six percent of Russians distrust the police, according to a new study by the state-run VTsIOM pollster.

Analysts told the Vedomosti newspaper that the results suggested that Russia's police reform, initiated during the presidency of Dmitry Medvedev, had failed.

“The last few years have seen practically no change, and change is badly needed,” VTsIOM director Valery Fedorov said. 'In the U.S., Britain and Germany, levels of public trust in the police are radically different. In Russia, only the president and the army can match [these levels].”

Twenty-three percent of respondents said they 'definitely distrusted' police officers, compared with 11 percent in 2013. A further 23 percent were 'rather distrustful'. On the other hand, 14 percent thought that the police 'could definitely be trusted,' up from only 7 percent in 2013.

United Russia deputy Alexander Khinshtein told Vedomosti that the situation was likely to deteriorate.

“Accessing police assistance is becoming more difficult. The Interior Ministry's projected deficit for 2016 is 40 billion rubles ($620 million), and that's if we only consider essential services. The numbers of detention and traffic officers are dwindling.”

Mikhail Pashkin, head of the Moscow-based inter-regional police union, told the TASS news agency that insufficient funds were the root of the problem.

The poll surveyed 1600 respondents between Oct. 31 and Nov. 1. The margin of error did not exceed 3.5 percent.

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