

Russians Expect Kremlin to Stabilize Economy - Poll

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The majority of Russian citizens expect that the government will stabilize economic and political conditions in the country, a poll carried out by the independent Levada Center pollster revealed.

The results of the survey, published on Monday, showed that 53 percent of respondents believe that government policy should be focused on the stabilization of economic and political conditions. Fifty-one percent of Russians also consider social benefits to be important, as well as the timely payment of salaries and pensions.

At the same time, only 9 percent of Russians expect a right to freedom of expression, religion or peaceful assembly from the authorities.

The poll also compares the current findings with the answers given by Russians in December 1999, a month before Vladimir Putin began ruling the country. At that time, Russian citizens were mostly concerned about security issues.

Among the main expectations of the authorities indicated by respondents in 1999 were

the strengthening of order in the country and the fight against crime.

The poll, with a margin of error that did not exceed 3.4 percent, was conducted on Dec. 18-21 among 1,600 respondents in 48 Russia's regions.

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