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Miss Russia Thanks Putin for Lack of Weinstein-Style Harassment in Russia

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Polina Popova at a press conference of the representatives of Russia at the Miss World and Miss Universe competitions. **Mikhail Pochuyev / TASS**

Russian women have President Vladimir Putin to thank for the lack of sexual harassment incidents that are coming to light in the United States, two Miss Russia finalists say.

Miss Russia 2017 pageant winner Polina Popova and first runner-up Ksenia Alexandrova are expected to represent the country at this year's Miss World and Miss Universe contests next month.

They addressed the issue of sexual harassment on Thursday in the wake of a high-profile scandal involving Hollywood film producer Harvey Weinstein. Multiple actresses, models, and employees have accused him of rape, sexual harassment, and trading sex for movie roles.

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"I believe that these situations cannot happen in Russia, and for that we have to thank Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin and his policy. It's very rare that you hear about such cases in our country and I'm very happy about that." Alexandrova said, the independent Dozhd television news channel reported.

Popova noted that she has never been the target of untoward advances from men.

"I think everything depends on the woman. I don't know how Angelina Jolie acted in that instance — he is her employer after all," Popova said, referring to the star who came forward alongside a dozen other Hollywood actresses.

Despite Popova and Alexandrova's assertions, the subject of violence against women is attracting more attention in Russia.

A popular talk show devoted at least half a dozen broadcasts earlier this year to a teenage rape victim whose case divided the Russian public into those who blamed and those who defended her.

In January, Russian lawmakers voted nearly unanimously to decriminalize domestic violence and downgrade it to an administrative offense.

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