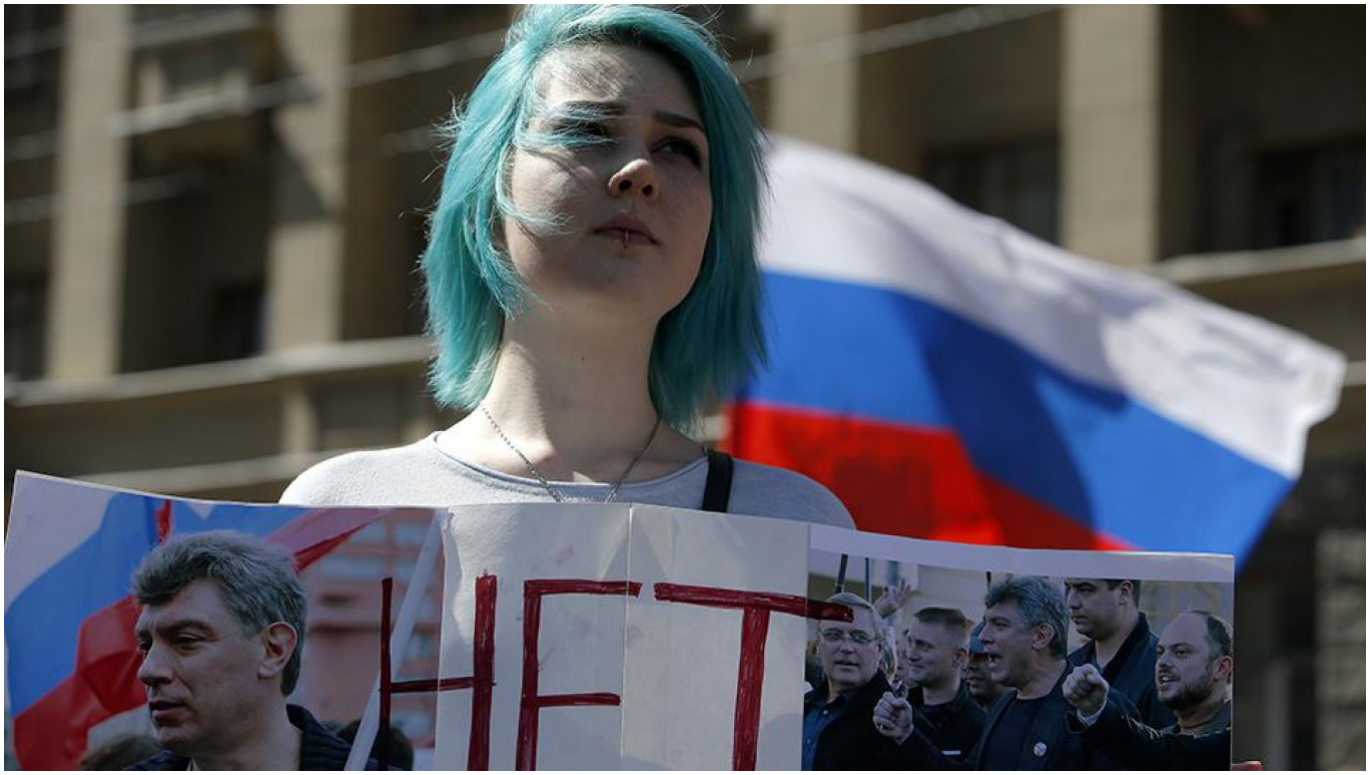
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Nearly Half of Russians Believe Nemtsov's Killer Will Never be Found — Poll

March 16, 2018



Sergei Karpukhin / Reuters

Almost half of Russians polled by the independent Levada Center believe the mastermind behind opposition politician Boris Nemtsov's assassination three years ago will never be found.

Five men have been sentenced since the assassination of the former deputy prime minister near the Kremlin in February 2015, but his supporters claim the masterminds behind the murder remain at large. A Moscow City Hall-approved memorial plaque is expected to be unveiled in honor of Nemtsov later on Friday.

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Of the 83 percent of Russian respondents who told Levada that they had heard of Nemtsov's murder, 42 percent said they think the masterminds "would never be found."

Nearly one-third of the respondents in the survey published Friday said they "don't understand why the politician was killed." Twenty-one percent called Nemtsov a "victim of criminal in-fighting" and 24 percent said he was gunned down for his political views.

Levada Center director Lev Gudkov said few Russians know why Nemtsov was killed because media outlets "destroyed his reputation in the public's eyes" in the 1990s.

"Nemtsov was not liked, then they stopped letting him appear on television. He became a convenient target for further demonization," he told the RBC business portal.

Meanwhile, Nemtsov's family has joined opposition politicians Ilya Yashin and Alexei Navalny in boycotting the memorial's opening ceremony, the Kommersant business daily reported.

The opposition figures said that the event was being used as a campaign stunt by liberal presidential candidate Ksenia Sobchak, who publicly expressed gratitude to Moscow's authorities for authorizing the installation of the plaque.

The Levada poll was conducted between March 7 and March 11 among 1,600 adults across 52 Russian regions.

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