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3% of Russians Agree With Kremlin That There Are 'No Oligarchs in Russia'

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Roman Abramovich **Sergei Savostyanov / TASS**

The Kremlin's claim that there are no oligarchs in Russia has resonated with only 3 percent of the population, according to a state-run poll that also named Roman Abramovich the most famous Russian oligarch.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov took offense at the term "oligarchs" last week ahead of a new wave of U.S. sanctions against Russian tycoons that sent the ruble and Russian markets into a two-day tailspin this week.

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An overwhelming 94 percent of Russians surveyed by the state-controlled VTsIOM pollster said that they believe that their country does have oligarchs. Just under 45 percent said

oligarchs “bring more harm” than good to Russia while 9 percent said they “bring more benefits.”

“Roman Abramovich leads in the people’s rating for the popularity of Russian oligarchs (15 percent named him),” VTsIOM said of the billionaire Chelsea Football Club owner in a press release accompanying the report.

Abramovich was followed by sanctions-hit steel tycoon Oleg Deripaska at 8 percent and 2012 presidential contender Mikhail Prokhorov at 7 percent.

The survey was conducted by phone among 2,000 Russians between April 7 and April 8.

Valery Fyodorov, the head of VTsIOM, said the poll’s results showed that the negative perception of Russian oligarchs has “blurred.”

“Oligarchs today are perceived as a given, as an integral element of the domestic business landscape,” Fyodorov said.

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