

## Despite World Cup Excitement, Russians Angry Over Retirement Reform

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**Dmitry Feoktistov / TASS** 

Watching the World Cup may be an enjoyable pastime, but an overwhelming majority of Russians are still angry about their government's long-term plan to raise the retirement age, according to recent polls.

Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev announced the reform, which would push the retirement age past the <u>life expectancy</u> of some Russians, on June 14, the opening day of the football tournament. The Kremlin was accused of using the World Cup as a cover to avoid dissent as it pushes through unpopular measures.

The World Cup did beat out the announcement of retirement reform as the most memorable event in June for Russians <u>surveyed</u> by the independent Levada Analytical Center.

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Fifty-six percent of people said the World Cup was the most unforgettable event of June, while only 31 percent named the government's proposal to reform the pension system. <u>Nearly half</u> of the Russian population over the age of four watched their country's opening match with Egypt.

But around 90 percent of Russians oppose the government's plan to raise the retirement age, <u>according to</u> a second Levada survey.

Popular discontent over the retirement proposal spilled into the streets in the past weeks, as both pro-Kremlin and opposition forces staged demonstrations all over Russia.

Both Levada and the state-run VTsIOM pollster have registered a significant drop in the population's trust toward Medvedev and, for the <u>first time</u> in several years, President Vladimir Putin.

"The resulting data was not surprising," Levada concluded.

Reuters contributed reporting to this article.

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