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Russians Split in Attitudes to Ruling United Russia Party, Poll Says

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Dmitry Yermakov / Moskva News Agency

Russian attitudes to the ruling United Russia party are nearly split, with 47 percent viewing it in a positive light and 44 percent in a negative one, according to a new poll published by the independent Levada Center pollster.

The ruling party has seen its approval ratings fall over the past year to levels not seen since anti-Kremlin protests in 2011, as disgruntled Russians continue to express dissatisfaction over its role in passing a law that pushed back the retirement age earlier this year. In September, United Russia suffered a rare setback in regional elections when four candidates running for governor were forced into run-off votes after failing to win majorities.

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“The deterioration of the overall situation in the country is carrying over [into attitudes] to its leadership and to the party, because it is viewed as a reflection of power,” Lev Gudkov, the head of the Levada Center, was cited by the Vedomosti business daily as saying in comments about the latest poll published on Tuesday.

The sociologist predicted that the party’s ratings were unlikely to improve if the country’s socioeconomic situation did not change for the better.

Among respondents who approved of the leadership of President Vladimir Putin, 65% also had a positive assessment of United Russia, while 83% of those who disapprove of Putin's work also had a negative view of the ruling party, according to the survey.

Levada conducted the poll among 1,600 participants in 52 Russian regions.

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