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Majority of Russians Hold Putin Responsible for Rising Costs of Living, Poll Says

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Alexander Avilov / Moskva News Agency

A majority of Russians have said they hold President Vladimir Putin responsible for the problems the country is facing and rising costs of living, according to a new poll released by the independent Levada Center pollster.

Putin's approval rating has dropped to five-year lows on the back of an unpopular law he signed in October that raised the population's pension eligibility age.

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Fifty-five percent of respondents in Levada's poll published Thursday said they hold Putin responsible for the nation's problems, including higher costs of living, marking a four-year

high and a 6 percent increase since over the past year.

More than a third of respondents (37 percent) said they held the government and its ministers as being responsible for the problems in the country, while 21 percent attributed blame to Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev.

Another 13 percent of respondents said local authorities were to blame for the woes in the country.

“The president has concentrated power in his own hands and people feel this,” Denis Volkov, a sociologist at the Levada Center told the RBC news website in comments on the results of the latest poll.

“That is good when everything is going well in the country but when life gets worse this works against the president,” he said.

The share of Russians who blame their head of state for social, economic and other issues has progressively increased since August 2016, according to Levada.

Levada conducted the poll among 1,600 participants in 52 Russian regions between Oct. 18 and Oct. 24.

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