

1 in 10 Russians Have Been Tortured by Authorities – Poll

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AP / TASS

One in 10 Russians say they have been tortured by law enforcement officials, a survey by the independent Levada Center pollster said.

Russian law enforcement has been rocked with several torture scandals, with victims including LGBT people in Chechnya, Jehovah's Witnesses and prisoners. In 2018, United Nations human rights investigators called on Russia to halt frequent torture of detainees and prosecute perpetrators.

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The results offer “frightening evidence that law enforcement officers use violence against detainees and use it often,” the Levada Center said of its survey, which was commissioned by the Committee Against Torture human rights group and [published](#) on Wednesday.

Three-quarters of respondents who claimed they had been tortured said law enforcement officers used violence to humiliate and intimidate them. Half said the authorities tortured them to extract confessions, and one-third said the violence was inflicted as punishment.

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While 60 percent of respondents said they oppose torture in all cases, 30 percent said the practice is acceptable in rare cases. At the same time, 40 percent said refraining from torture would make it more difficult for law enforcement to find criminals.

“These results are unpleasantly surprising,” the committee’s lawyer Dmitry Kozakov [told](#) the Kommersant business daily.

The Kremlin [said](#) the survey needs "careful analysis" before drawing conclusions, asking the estimated 30 reporters on a conference call to come forward if they had ever been tortured, according to a Meduza news website transcript.

Levada conducted its survey, published on the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, among 3,400 respondents in 53 Russian regions in January and February.

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