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Russians Gripped By Distrust Toward Politicians – Study

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Sergei Fadeichev / TASS

Russians don't trust the politicians in power and trust the political opposition even less, according to focus-group research by analysts who correctly predicted mass anti-government rallies in 2012.

The study's authors had detailed plummeting support for the ruling elite and growing public discontent in March 2011, less than a year before a wave of anti-Kremlin protests broke out. Last year, they predicted that existing financial, social and environmental issues could contribute to widespread unrest.

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Eighty-six percent of focus-group respondents said they don't see politicians who talk about "the real state of things," according to the Center for Strategic Research think tank. More Russians said they felt irritation, fear and shame toward the authorities than they did last

year, the research said.

Fewer Russians trust members of the opposition, even if their opinions match those of the population, said the study published by the RBC news website Thursday.

“The current situation is perceived as unacceptable, there is a conscious and responsible understanding of the need for change along with the willingness to act,” the focus-group study said.

The think tank surveyed 129 respondents with a high school or university degree divided into focus groups in nine Russian regions this spring. In Moscow, the focus groups included students, pensioners and middle-aged respondents.

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