The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Xenophobia Is Still On the Rise in Russia – Poll

September 18, 2019



Andrei Lyubimov / Moskva News Agency

Anti-migrant attitudes have risen for a second consecutive year in Russia, according to a new independent survey's results that experts link to the country's economic woes.

The Levada Center's findings come as research has shown a decade-high surge in migration to Russia in the early months of 2019. At the same time, real incomes continue to stagnate in the country after five years of Western sanctions and falling oil prices.

Related article: Russia's Migrant Numbers Surge to Highest Levels in a Decade, Study Says

Seventy-two percent of respondents said Russia should limit migration, Levada said Wednesday, up from both 2018 and 2017.

"Poverty worries the population more than two to three years ago, so [anti-migrant] attitudes are aggravated through the search for scapegoats," Levada sociologist Karina Pipiya

was quoted as saying by the Vedomosti business daily.

The same percentage of respondents (72%) said they would like to limit labor migration in particular, and 64% said they felt that jobs typically held by migrants could be done by their relatives or other people they know.

"When people start to 'think politically,' threats appear in their heads and they become more xenophobic," Alexander Verkhovsky, the head of the SOVA Center which tracks nationalism and xenophobia in Russia, told Vedomosti.

The survey said that half of respondents supported the "Russia for Russians" slogan, up from 19% last year and 10% in 2017.

Related article: Siberian Region Bans Migrant Workers Amid Tensions Over Rape Case

Rising negativity was most pronounced toward the Roma, Chinese and Vietnamese ethnic groups, according to Levada's results, followed by those who come from ex-Soviet Central Asian states and the North Caucasus.

On Wednesday, the head of the Primorye region in Siberia signed a decree banning foreign workers from public transport jobs. Earlier this year, the Siberian city of Yakutsk was rocked by anti-migrant protests sparked by allegations that Central Asian migrants raped a local woman.

Levada conducted its survey among 1,608 respondents over the age of 18 across Russia on Aug. 22-29.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2019/09/18/xenophobia-is-still-on-the-rise-in-russia-poll-a67326