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Russians Trust Putin Less Than Army – Poll

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The army is Russia's most trusted institution. **Alexander Avilov / Moskva News Agency**

Russians trust President Vladimir Putin less than they do their armed forces, according to a new independent survey seen by the Vedomosti newspaper.

The army emerged as Russia's most trusted institution last year as a result of what sociologists called the Kremlin's "saber-rattling." This year's institutional trust rating published by the independent Levada Center pollster placed Putin at 60% and the army at 63%.

"Trust in the president has dropped significantly in 2018 and hasn't recovered, automatically placing the army first since the 'enemy image' hasn't disappeared and the need to protect against external threats remains," sociologist Karina Pipiya was quoted as saying.

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Trust in the Russian army has almost doubled in the last decade.

The military's high ratings come against the backdrop of Russia's annexation of the Crimean Peninsula, followed by armed conflict between Ukraine and pro-Russian rebels, and intervention in the Syrian civil war in 2014 and 2015.

The Levada Center conducted the survey among 1,600 respondents in 50 Russian regions between Sept. 26 and Oct. 2.

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