

Russians Fear Arbitrary Authorities More Than Death, Poll Says

October 30, 2019



Igor Ivanko / Moskva News Agency

Russians fear arbitrary exercises of power more than death, according to an independent Levada Center [poll](#) that the Kremlin dismissed as superficial.

Fear of arbitrary authorities and lawlessness placed third in the pollster's hierarchy of fears for the second year in a row in 2019. The return of mass repressions and a tighter political regime shared the sixth spot among Russians' biggest fears, while fear of death ranked 10th.

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Observers [link](#) those fears to Russians' persistently [falling incomes](#), President Vladimir Putin's unpopular move to [raise](#) the retirement age and the occasionally violent mass arrests during this summer's protests in Moscow. Analyst Mark Galeotti [wrote](#) in a column last month that the arrests' "aim [was] to create a climate of fear and uncertainty."

The Kremlin said it had taken the Levada survey's findings into account but questioned its methodology and the way it formulated its questions.

"There are high-profile cases that leave an emotional toll [but] this needs a more profound analysis," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov was [quoted](#) as saying to reporters Tuesday.

A recent study of social media and news reports [placed](#) police violence among Russians' biggest fears.

Levada conducted its survey among 1,601 respondents in 50 Russian regions from Sept. 26 to Oct. 2.

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