

Half of Russians Want the Death Penalty Back – Poll

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Yevgeny Leonov / TASS

The number of Russians who support the death penalty's return has climbed to almost 50%, according to the independent Levada Center pollster's survey [released](#) Thursday.

While the death penalty remains enshrined in Russian law, the Kremlin placed a moratorium on its use in 1996 as a condition of Council of Europe membership. Debates on restoring the death penalty have [resurfaced](#) following last month's [murder](#) of a schoolgirl in southern Russia.

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Forty-nine percent of Russian respondents would like to see the return of the death penalty, according to Levada's results, an increase from [44% in 2017](#).

In 2002, when the pollster first asked the question, 68% of Russian respondents had said they

would like to re-establish capital punishment.

“When I discuss this in focus groups, people kept saying that we can be wrongly convicted and that’s why it’s dangerous to return [capital] punishment,” Levada sociologist Denis Volkov told the RBC news website of capital punishment’s decline in popularity since the early 2000s.

Among the death penalty’s supporters in 2019, 33% said they would like to see Russia implement capital punishment the way it had been used in the 1990s. The other 16% favored expanding the death penalty.

According to Levada, 21% of respondents said the moratorium should remain in place, while 19% said the death penalty should be abolished.

Russians aged over 55 were the most avid supporters of capital punishment at 55%. Support declined proportionately among younger age groups.

Levada conducted the survey among 1,616 respondents across 50 Russian regions on Oct. 24–30.

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