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Russia's Happiness Index Drops to Post-Crimea Low

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Russia ranked as the fifth-most unhappy place among the 46 countries surveyed. **Andrei Nikerichev / Moskva News Agency**

Russians' level of happiness has fallen to its lowest point in six years, according to a Gallup International poll cited by the ROMIR research agency Friday.

Jordan was the world's unhappiest place late last year, followed by Lebanon and Syria, according to Gallup. Hong Kong and Iraq shared the fourth-lowest spot in the "happiness index," followed by Russia.

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Russia's "happiness index" in late 2019 stood at 24 percentage points — explained as the difference between the 42% of Russian respondents who identified as happy and 18% as unhappy. That equals the same happiness index recorded in late 2013.

Russia's happiness index began dropping in 2015 following a 2014 spike attributed to the annexation of Crimea. This decline accelerated in 2018-2019, economist Sergei Guriyev told the Vedomosti business daily.

"A drop in the index can most often be explained by two factors: no observable life improvement ... as well as a sense of injustice toward yourself," said Andrei Milekhin, ROMIR's president and vice president of Gallup International.

Colombia was named the world's happiest country, followed by Indonesia and Ecuador. Russia's post-Soviet cohorts Kazakhstan, Armenia and Azerbaijan also placed in the top 10.

The global happiness index stood at 48 percentage points, unchanged since the last time Gallup International conducted the poll in 2017.

Gallup International surveyed 45,000 people in 46 countries, including 1,500 respondents in Russia, between November and December.

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