

Putin Says He's 'Not a Tsar' After 20 Years in Power

By [AFP](#)

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"I don't reign, I work every day," Putin said in an interview to TASS. [kremlin.ru](#)

Russian President Vladimir Putin dismissed comparisons between himself and an imperial tsar on Thursday, arguing that he "works every day" and listens to what people want.

"I don't reign, I work every day," Putin said in an interview to the state-run TASS news agency.

The interview aired on Thursday as part of a series rolled out by TASS this month to mark 20 years since the 67-year-old Putin took the helm of Russian politics. It is not clear when the segments were recorded, but the series began airing before this month's declaration by Putin that he wants an opportunity to run for president again as part of his constitutional reforms.

The reforms, proposed in January, include the granting of more power to parliament and the strengthening of the role of the State Council.

An amendment approved last week by the Duma would allow Putin to run for two more six-year terms in the Kremlin, both in 2024 and again in 2030. The reforms will be subject to a public vote.

When asked what he foresees past 2024, Putin deferred to the perspective of "people's sentiments...what they want."

"The primary source of power is the people," he said. "It's very important for me to feel and understand what people want. A tsar is one who just sits there, looks down from above and says: 'They will do as I order,' while he just tries on a cap and looks at himself in the mirror," Putin said.

"On the contrary, I work every day."

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