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# 1 in 5 Russians Advocate 'Eliminating' LGBT Community – Poll

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Stigmatization is falling. **Steven Saphore / EPA / TASS**

Almost one in five Russians believe that LGBT people should be "eliminated," according to the results of a new independent Levada Center poll.

The figures showed 18% of respondents giving the response, marking a slight softening in attitudes toward members of the LGBT community since 2015, when 21% advocated their "elimination." Similarly, 32% said this year that gays and lesbians should be "isolated from society," down from 37% five years ago.

"The stigmatization of socially vulnerable people has decreased over the past 30 years, and norms that require helping and not isolating from them have expanded," Levada sociologist Karina Pipiya told the Kommersant newspaper Sunday.

Positive attitudes have also improved over the past five years, with 9% of the respondents favoring helping the LGBT community, up from 6%, and 32% saying they should be "left alone," up from 24%.

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Levada's results showed similar improved attitudes toward sex workers, HIV-positive people and the homeless.

"Besides state support measures, the development of the non-profit sector and the emergence of organizations working to improve the image of vulnerable groups in the eyes of society play an important role," Pipiya was quoted as telling Kommersant.

Among other groups presented in Levada's "Social Distancing" poll, terrorists elicited the least amount of tolerance, with 80% of the respondents advocating for their "elimination" in 2020. They were followed by pedophiles at 75%, murderers at 61% and extremists at 44%.

"The rigid approach toward the need to destroy those who can do harm and even those who don't contribute to society doesn't mean that people are ready to take up arms," Kommersant quoted political analyst Alexei Makarkin as saying.

"There's now a new generation that has fewer [Soviet-era] frustrations. Roughly speaking, these are people who did not stand in queues," Makarkin was quoted as saying.

Levada conducted the survey among 1,614 respondents in 50 Russian regions between Feb. 20 and Feb. 26.

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