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Russian Governors' Approvals Drop as Kremlin Distances From Virus Response – Poll

July 02, 2021

Kremlin.ru

Russians' approval of every government institution except for President Vladimir Putin has dropped in the past month, an independent poll published Friday revealed as the Kremlin distanced itself from regional authorities' unpopular coronavirus measures amid a deadly third wave.

Putin's approval rating only saw a 1% dip from 67% in May to 66% in June, according to the Levada Center polling agency. His disapproval rating stayed at 32%.

Related article: Russia Rejects New Lockdown Despite Record Virus Deaths

Governors and mayors, one-quarter of whom have mandated vaccinations for certain workers and introduced restrictions for unvaccinated residents, suffered declines from 63% to 57% in

approval. The share of respondents who said they disapprove of their regional leader went up from 34% in May to 38% in June.

In his annual Direct Line call-in with Russians on Wednesday, Putin said he didn't support compulsory vaccination.

And on Friday, the Kremlin ruled out the idea of a new nationwide lockdown.

The share of respondents who told Levada that Russia is on the right track has also declined from 51% in May to 49% last month. Those who say that Russia is on the wrong track have gone up from 40% to 43% over the same period.

Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin's approval ratings dropped from 59% to 54%, though his disapproval also dropped from 36% to 32%, the pollster said.

Mishustin's cabinet, which includes his deputy Tatiana Golikova who oversees the national Covid-19 response effort, also suffered a reversal from 51% approve and 47% disapprove in May to 47% approve and 50% disapprove in June.

The State Duma, the lower house of Russian parliament, remained Russians' least-trusted institution and had its approval ratings decline further from 43% to 39% and disapproval increase from 54% to 57%.

Levada conducted its survey among 1,630 respondents across 137 Russian towns and cities between June 24-30.

Russia has confirmed a record number of Covid-19 deaths for four consecutive days starting June 29.

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