

Russians Sour on Navalny After ‘Extremist’ Ruling – Poll

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A Russian court added Navalny's political and activist **TASS**

Russians view jailed Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny in an increasingly bad light and largely approve or remain indifferent toward the authorities' decision to brand his political movement as “extremist,” according to an independent survey [published](#) Friday.

The Levada Center polling agency said 14% of its respondents approve of Navalny's activities, dropping from 20% last year and 19% earlier in 2021.

Another 62% said they do not approve of Navalny's activities, a figure that has grown 12 percentage points since September 2020. One-quarter of Levada's respondents were either indifferent or could not answer.

Related article: [What Now for Navalny's Groups After Russia's ‘Extremist’ Ban?](#)

The anti-corruption campaigner was sentenced to 2.5 years in prison in February on old fraud

charges he calls politically motivated after surviving a nerve agent poisoning he blames on the Kremlin. His arrest upon returning to Russia from poisoning recovery in Germany helped spark nationwide protests where thousands were detained.

Asked about last month's court decision blacklisting Navalny's political and activist networks — both peaceful opposition movements — as “extremist,” 32% said they approve and 27% don't approve of the ruling. Another 41% were either indifferent or unable to answer, Levada said.

The court ruling and a newly passed law banning “extremists” from running for parliament has effectively shut out Russia's most effective grassroots opposition force from this September's high-stakes elections.

When Levada split the respondents into sub-groups, the results showed a higher share of anti-Navalny attitudes among older Russians and those who approve of President Vladimir Putin.

Respondents in the 40-54 group and those aged 55 and older were more likely to approve of the “extremist” designations on Navalny's groups (32% and 45% each) than disapprove (24% and 23%).

Conversely, respondents in the 18-24 and 25-39 age groups were more likely to disapprove of the designations (33% and 32% each) than approve (20% and 19%).

Among Putin supporters, approval for the “extremist” designations was split at 40% approval to 20% disapproval. Those respondents who told Levada they don't approve of Putin's activities held a diametrically opposite view at 16% to 42%, respectively.

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

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