

Russians See Decreasing Likelihood of Protests – Poll

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A woman holds a sign reading "You can't shut up everyone!" as journalists and supporters protest against Russia's use of the "foreign agent" law against independent media in central Moscow. **Natalia Kolesnikova / AFP**

Russians are less likely to view economic protests as a possibility than they did at the start of the year despite being more willing to take part in such protests themselves, according to an independent poll [published](#) Monday.

The decrease in protest expectations comes amid what Kremlin critics describe as a tightening clampdown on the opposition, independent media and protest activity ahead of this month's parliamentary vote. The Sept. 19 elections are a key test for the ruling, pro-Kremlin United Russia party, which seeks to maintain its majority despite historic unpopularity.

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While 43% of Russian respondents said they expected protests with economic demands in

January, only 26% of respondents said the same in August, the independent Levada Center pollster said.

At the same time, respondents' own willingness to take to the streets for economic demands rose from 17% in January to 24% in August.

An Aug. 26 poll by the Levada Center [said](#) that 2 in 5 Russians can't afford necessities as rising inflation has driven up prices for groceries and basic goods.

The share of Russians who see political protests as a possibility has also fallen from 45% in January to 27% in August.

At the same time, the willingness to participate in such protests has also grown from 15% in January to 19% in August.

Low-income Russians, as well as those who believe the country is headed in the wrong direction and those who disapprove of the president's activities, were most likely to express willingness to protest with economic and political demands, Levada said.

Mass protests erupted across dozens of Russian cities in January and February, fueled both by calls for jailed Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny's release as well as discontent over falling living standards. The unauthorized rallies were met with a harsh crackdown, with thousands of protesters detained nationwide.

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