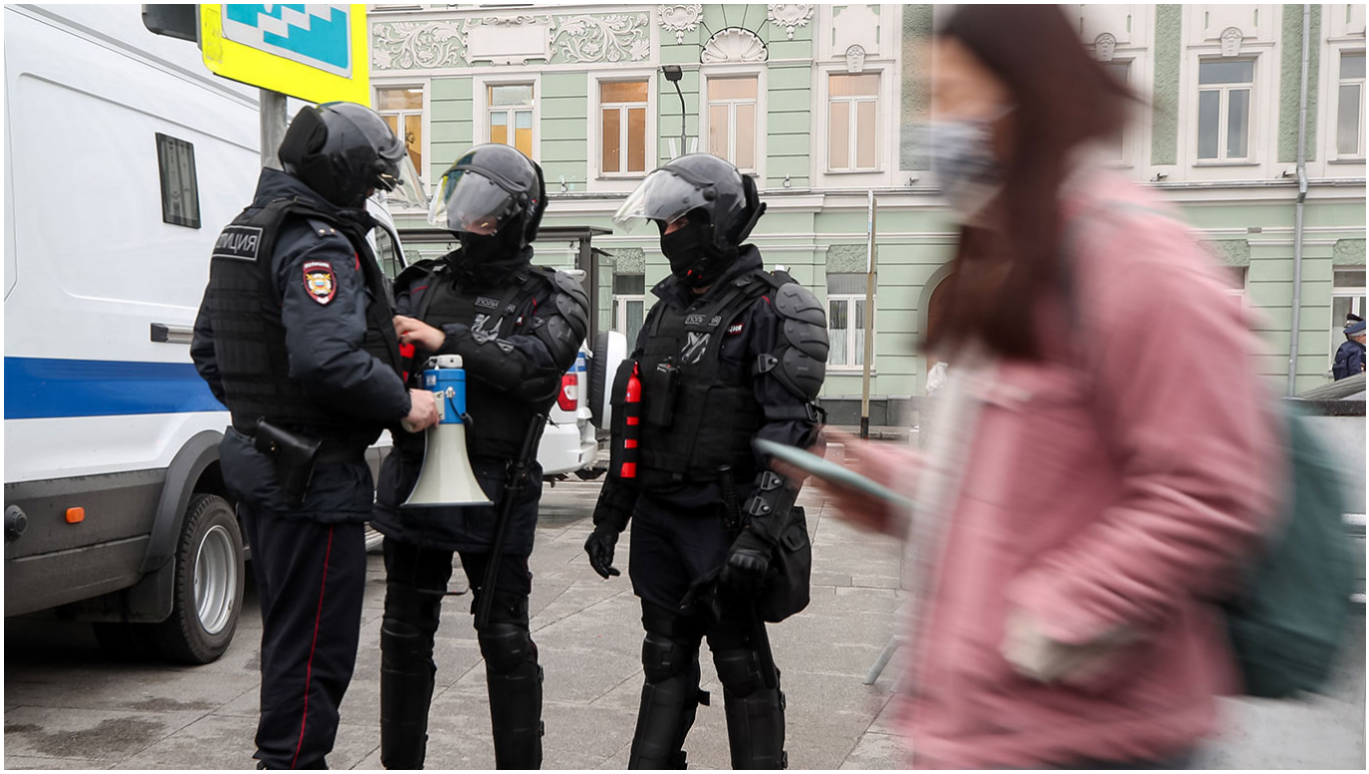
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INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

6 in 10 Russians Say Law Does Not Protect Them – Poll

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Some 58% of Russians said they do not feel protected by the country's laws. **Valery Sharifulin / TASS**

Almost six in 10 Russians say they do not feel protected by the law, a new survey published Wednesday by the independent Levada Center has shown.

Some 58% of Russians said they do not feel the law protects them — up from 54% who said the same in 2018. Just 36% said they felt the law was on their side, the pollsters found.

"The share of those who do not feel protected by the law has been growing over the last 5 years, and is approaching levels recorded in 2010," the polling organization said.

The main reasons cited were that laws are "freely interpreted by those in power," laws are "not written for everybody" and that it is "impossible to count on an honest trial."

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Russia has long been criticized by a coalition of rights groups, international organizations and

investors for its weak rule-of-law protections. Several high-profile cases, ranging from an embezzlement trial against U.S. investor Michael Calvey to fabricated drug charges against independent journalist Ivan Golunov and the jailing of Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny have triggered outcry in recent years.

The proportion of those who said Russia's elites interpret the laws how they wish hit an all-time high of 49% in the Levada poll, up from 37% in 2015.

At 36%, the share of Russians who feel the law does protect them is still higher than the low of just 25% recorded in 2006.

Older respondents were more likely to say the law was on their side, Levada found.

Levada conducted its survey among 1,634 respondents in 137 Russian towns and cities Sept. 23-29.

Results from the same poll published Tuesday showed half of Russians say they don't hold democratic values.

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