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Russians' Approval of Putin, State Duma on the Rise – Poll

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Russian President Vladimir Putin. **kremlin.ru**

President Vladimir Putin's approval ratings are once again on the rise, according to an independent Levada Center poll published Thursday.

The Russian president enjoys the approval of 67% of Russian respondents despite weeks of record Covid-19 infections and deaths that the authorities have largely pinned on slow vaccination uptake. Putin ordered a nationwide partial lockdown from Oct. 30-Nov. 7 in a bid to slow the virus' spread after placing most Covid-19 response decisions in the hands of regional leaders for much of the pandemic.

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His October approval ratings are up from 64% in September and 61% in August, Levada said.

Despite the increase, Putin's approval has yet to return to the high levels seen following

Russia's 2014 annexation of Crimea from Ukraine, as unpopular pension reforms and lagging living standards have fueled public discontent.

Russia's lower-house State Duma has also seen a slight boost in its approval ratings as well as the ruling, pro-Kremlin United Russia party, which increased its rating slightly to 29% from 26% in July.

The results follow last month's State Duma elections that saw United Russia claim a decisive win amid widespread reports of electoral fraud and the blocking of most opposition candidates from the ballot.

According to the poll, 48% of Russians believe that the country is headed in the right direction and 43% think the country is on the wrong path.

Last week, Levada published a separate poll finding that nearly half of Russians say they don't hold democratic values.

Levada conducted the survey among 1,636 respondents in 137 Russian towns and cities between Oct. 27-30.

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