The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

3 in 4 Ukrainians Say Russia Is 'Hostile State' – Survey

December 10, 2021



Ukrainians say Poland is the most friendly country towards them. **Bert Kaufmann / flickr (CC BY-NC 2.0)**

Some 72% of Ukrainians say Russia is a "hostile state," according to new polling conducted amid a tense standoff between the two countries.

Russia has been accused of preparing to invade Ukraine and is amassing tens of thousands of troops close to the Ukrainian border, according to satellite images and Western intelligence reports. Moscow says it is not planning to attack and is responding to Ukrainian military posturing.

Just 12% of Ukrainians said they see Russia as an ally, according to the survey by Ukrainian polling organization Rating Group published Friday.

Despite this week's call between Russian President Vladimir Putin and his U.S. counterpart Joe Biden, fears remain high and the rhetoric about a possible confrontation has ramped up. In stark comments issued Thursday, Putin said the ongoing conflict between pro-Russia separatists and forces loyal to Kiev in eastern Ukraine "looks a lot like genocide."

Related article: Putin Says Conflict in Eastern Ukraine 'Looks Like Genocide'

Rating Group conducted its survey between Dec. 6-8 — as Putin held his high-profile video call with Biden — and had 2,500 respondents from Ukraine, excluding Russia-annexed Crimea as well as the breakaway Donetsk and Luhansk republics, which have been under separatist control since 2014.

In April, when Russia was similarly accused of mounting a significant troop buildup near the Ukrainian border, 76% of Ukrainians said Russia was "hostile."

Some 14,000 people have died in the seven-year conflict between Ukraine and pro-Russian forces. Despite a ceasefire agreement, violations are rife and dozens of fighters from both sides are killed every year.

A majority of Ukrainians want that agreement — named the Minsk accords — to be revised, the survey found.

The survey also showed Ukrainians have grown significantly more negative toward Belarus over the past eight months as strongman leader Alexander Lukashenko has aligned himself more closely with Moscow amid international isolation.

Almost half — 48% — of the respondents said Belarus was a "hostile state," up from 22% in the previous survey.

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