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Putin's Approval Grows Amid Ukraine Tensions – Poll

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Russian President Vladimir Putin's approval ratings increased in January as tensions with the West grew over Ukraine, according to an independent survey published Friday.

According to the Levada Center pollster, Putin's job approval grew to 69% last month from 65% in December.

Putin's disapproval dropped to 29% in January from 34% the previous month.

Levada also noted increases in job approval for Russia's Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin and his cabinet, as well as the Russian parliament.

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The past month also saw increases in Russians' trust for Putin, Defense Minister Sergei

Shoigu, Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, Mishustin and other political figures, the pollster said.

The share of those who said Russia is moving in the right direction has grown to 50% over the past month, according to Levada. The share of those who said Russia is moving in the wrong direction declined to 39%

Those ratings ticked up as Western governments warned of a serious risk of Russian military action against Ukraine and threatened wide-ranging sanctions.

Russia, which has stationed some 100,000 troops close to the border with Ukraine, in annexed Crimea and neighboring Belarus, denies plans to invade Ukraine.

In turn, Russia demands the United States and NATO to pull back its forces and ban Ukraine from eventually joining the Western military alliance.

Levada carried out the survey among 1,626 respondents across 50 Russian regions between Jan. 27-Feb. 2.

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