

EDITORIAL

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Single Voting Day 2025: Another Test Passed, but Public Trust in the Political Elite Causes Great Concern



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Abstract. From September 12 to 14, 2025, Russia held its annual Single Voting Day, featuring elections at regional and municipal levels. This electoral campaign was widely seen as a “dress rehearsal” for the 2026 State Duma elections, and many experts concluded that this “test was passed successfully”. However, for several years now, some analysts have pointed out that local elections are increasingly becoming a formality, losing their potential as a tool for diagnosing the relationship between society and the authorities. This article presents the key findings of a long-term monitoring project of regional election campaigns, conducted since 2018 as part of the Editorial column, which includes a comparative analysis of sociological data on public attitudes towards the country’s main political parties. As a stage in this monitoring, an in-depth analysis of the 2025 Single Voting Day results is provided: using official data from the Russian Central Election Commission, voter turnout and support for United Russia across regions and regional capitals are analyzed; a review of expert opinions on the concluded campaign is

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presented; and its specific features in 2025 are examined, including in the context of the geopolitical and civilizational challenges Russia has faced throughout the 21st century and especially since the start of the special military operation. Furthermore, the article continues its monitoring of key managerial decisions made by the President, the State Duma, and the Government. Particular attention is paid to analyzing expert opinions, criminal statistics, and actual instances of detentions of representatives of the ruling “elites”, which indicates a persistent and growing problem of their disconnect from the publicly declared, nationally-oriented development agenda of the Russian Federation, as articulated by the head of state. The authors highlight expert views that public trust in the political elite continues to raise significant and substantial questions. Despite the importance of internal political stability amid a tense international situation and ongoing hostilities within the framework of the SMO, the political system is not yet effective enough in fulfilling its role to meet the public demand for forming a Vision of Russia’s Future and a new Social Contract that aligns with the President’s stated goals of strengthening traditional values and the core principles of a genuine social state.

Key words: Single Voting Day, regional elections, monitoring, government effectiveness, public opinion, Social Contract.

On September 14, 2025, Russia concluded another Single Voting Day – widely regarded as the “year’s largest electoral campaign”¹ and a “genuinely significant political event”².

The nationwide electoral process encompassed over five thousand campaigns, engaging nearly 55 million voters. Direct elections for top executive officials were held in 20 regions, while residents of 11 additional federal subjects voted for candidates to regional legislative bodies. Elections for deputies

to representative bodies in regional administrative centers took place in 25 federal subjects.

The tradition of Single Voting Day in Russia now spans nearly two decades. The inaugural regional and municipal elections under this framework were held in 2006 on March 12 and October 8. During those elections, United Russia fielded party lists in all 17 federal subjects holding regional parliamentary elections, securing first place in every contest³.

¹ Muratova A. Single Voting Day-2025: How will the government and the public agenda change? Available at: <https://www.gazeta.ru/social/2025/09/16/21708806.shtml?ysclid=mgw4h8rqgj281911114>

² Vasilyeva N. Pamfilova launched the Single Voting Day. Available at: <https://www.pnp.ru/politics/pamfilova-dala-start-edinomu-dnyu-golosovaniya.html?ysclid=mgw4g5iejo163025078>

³ United Russia’s results in the 2006 elections. Available at: <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/731844?ysclid=mgw4sm5p6o744883033>

On July 21, 2005, Russian President Vladimir Putin signed the law “On Amendments to Legislative Acts of the Russian Federation Concerning Elections and Referendums and Other Legislative Acts of the Russian Federation”. This document established two equal Single Voting Days for regional and local elections: the second Sunday of March and the second Sunday of October in the final year of the corresponding government body’s term. If regional elections coincided with a federal election year (presidential or State Duma), they were held on the same day⁴.

On October 2, 2012, the head of state signed amendments to the laws on political parties and on the basic guarantees of the electoral rights of Russian citizens. According to these amendments, the Single Voting Day became the second Sunday of September in the year when the terms of local and municipal government bodies expire, while during State Duma election years, it would coincide with the voting day for those elections.

Since 2018 (marking the beginning of a new political cycle and Vladimir Putin’s fourth presidential term), monitoring Single Voting Day outcomes has become an integral component of government effectiveness research featured in the “From the Editor-in-Chief” section⁵. Annually, the fifth issue of the journal “Economic and Social Changes: Facts, Trends, Forecast” publishes official election results from the Central

Election Commission of the Russian Federation, complemented by expert analysis evaluating both the voting outcomes and their broader significance within Russia’s contemporary political landscape.

The monitoring methodology provides particularly comprehensive insights through extensive empirical data presentation that surpasses standard media coverage and official CEC statements. This includes detailed breakdowns by region and regional capitals, covering voter turnout and support for winning candidates through both relative (%) and absolute (number of people) metrics. The analysis further examines these figures as percentages of both total turnout and the overall electorate, while maintaining comparative continuity with previous electoral results from the same territories.

Fundamentally, we proceed from the understanding that regional and municipal elections serve not only as a **tool for assessing the effectiveness of the national development course implemented by the President of the Russian Federation and the direct performance of the Head of State as the guarantor of the Russian Constitution** – which states that “the supreme direct expression of the power of the people shall be referenda and free elections” (Article 3, Paragraph 3) – but also as a **barometer of public opinion regarding the effectiveness of the “grassroots,” local level of the power vertical, which is closest to people’s everyday concerns**. Consequently, voter motivation in local elections operates differently than in presidential

⁴ The history of the Single Voting Day in Russia. Available at: <https://tass.ru/info/18683417>

⁵ The main monitoring results are published in the following articles:

1. Ilyin V.A., Morev M.V. (2018). Revisiting the issue concerning the future of Russian statehood. *Economic and Social Changes: Facts, Trends, Forecast*, 11(5), 9–29.
2. Ilyin V.A., Morev M.V. (2019). The 2018–2019 regional election: Voters’ trust in the authorities continues to decline. *Economic and Social Changes: Facts, Trends, Forecast*, 12(5), 9–24.
3. Ilyin V.A., Morev M.V. (2020). Announced in 2018, V. Putin’s “decisive breakthrough” is now stuck. *Economic and Social Changes: Facts, Trends, Forecast*, 13(5), 22–54.
4. Ilyin V.A., Morev M.V. (2021). Voters supported the President: On the results of the election to the State Duma of the eighth convocation. *Economic and Social Changes: Facts, Trends, Forecast*, 14(5), 9–33.
5. Ilyin V.A., Morev M.V. (2022). The special military operation reveals new features of civil society. *Economic and Social Changes: Facts, Trends, Forecast*, 15(5), 9–32.
6. Ilyin V.A., Morev M.V. (2023). From “Munich 2007” to “Valdai 2023”: Sixteen years that changed Russia and the world. *Economic and Social Changes: Facts, Trends, Forecast*, 16(5), 9–31.
7. Ilyin V.A., Morev M.V. (2024). Special military operation and the internal mobilization of society and elites. *Economic and Social Changes: Facts, Trends, Forecast*, 17(5), 9–39.

elections: people vote less for a particular national development course in abstract terms, and more for its practical implementation; they evaluate the authorities based on tangible changes in their region, municipality, and personal lives.

That said, it would be incorrect to claim that federal and international agendas have no bearing on local election outcomes. In essence, the Single Voting Day represents an assessment of the effectiveness of those local officials who implement the overarching national development course. The key tenets of this course are formulated at the highest level of power (by the President of Russia), taking into account numerous factors: history, national mentality, culture, vision for the country's future, and the current geopolitical landscape, among others.

For instance, the 2018 local elections were held against the backdrop of the pension reform. This reform, which contrasted with the “breakthrough agenda in preserving the people of Russia and ensuring the well-being of our citizens”⁶), previously

outlined by the President in his Address to the Federal Assembly, sparked significant public debate and, as we noted in a previous article, “brought the question of the government’s legitimacy to the forefront”⁷.

“There are no reasonable demographic arguments for immediately raising the retirement age for men”⁸.

“The thesis that increasing the retirement age will improve pensioners’ welfare seems questionable. The situation for those who would have retired soon will worsen. These generations will be deprived of nearly 200 thousand rubles for each postponed year”⁹.

“No reasons for implementing such a strictly timed reform of the retirement age are currently visible. Our analysis, which appears impartial, shows that the economy may not only gain nothing in this case but could even lose”¹⁰.

“Usually, it is believed that in regional elections, it’s important to discuss local issues. However, the discussion of the federal pension reform has raised a number of questions about the quality of life ‘on the ground’: **what is the state of healthcare accessibility after its ‘optimization,’ conditions and the legal labor market, social benefits, real household incomes in the provinces, where the perhaps modest but guaranteed pension of the older generation serves as an important source of cash and benefits** (it’s no coincidence that banks report an increase in loans taken by pensioners). **In the advertising campaign for the pension law during its first month, these pressing societal questions seemed non-existent.** From this perspective, it’s understandable why discontent in the regions overshadowed the agenda of constructive changes for regional infrastructure, which United Russia traditionally proposed”¹¹.

⁶ Address of the President to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, March 1, 2018 Available at: <http://www.kremlin.ru/acts/bank/42902>

⁷ Ilyin V.A., Morev M.V. (2018). Pension reform and exacerbating issues of the legitimacy of the government. *Economic and Social Changes: Facts, Trends, Forecast*, 11(4), p. 9.

⁸ Shirov A.A., Potapenko V.V. (2018). On a fair pension system. *Ekspert*, 24, June 11-17, p. 53.

⁹ Bashkatova A. “NG” calculated how much pensioners will receive as a result of the reform. Available at: http://www.ng.ru/economics/2018-06-20/4_7248_minus.html

¹⁰ Obukhova E., Pakhunov K., Ivanter A. (2018). It’s a reform, baby! *Ekspert*, 26(1080), June 25.

¹¹ Skorobogaty P. (2018). The landmark is 2021. *Ekspert*, 41, October 8-14, p. 53.

Consequently, in the 2018 elections: in the gubernatorial elections held across 22 federal subjects, candidates from United Russia received 4.3 million fewer votes compared to the previous elections in 2013. In the elections for regional legislative bodies (held in 16 federal subjects), the party received 1.2 million fewer votes (*Tab. 1*).

A second round of voting was required to determine the winner in four regions (Khabarovsk Territory, Primorye Territory, Republic of Khakassia, Vladimir Region). As experts noted at the time, it was precisely the “public debate surrounding the federal pension reform that raised fundamental questions about the quality of life at the local level”¹².

In 2019, no second round was required in any of the gubernatorial elections; in all federal subjects, victory went either to representatives of United Russia (in 10 regions) or to self-nominated candidates actively supported by the party (in 6 federal subjects).

However, the underlying negative trends persisted. In the gubernatorial elections held across 16 federal subjects, United Russia candidates received 2.9 million fewer votes than in 2018. Similarly, in the elections for regional legislative bodies held in 13 regions, the party received 1.7 million fewer votes compared to the previous year (*Tab. 2*).

Table 1. Results of the Single Voting Day, 2018

Party, turnout	Elections of the region's head*					
	million people			%		
	Fact		Dynamics 2018 to 2013	Fact		Dynamics 2018 to 2013
	2013	2018		2013	2018	
United Russia	11.82	7.54	-4.28	74.88	62.99	-16.53
CPRF	1.55	1.75	+0.20	16.29	19.58	+5.11
LDPR	0.77	1.82	+1.05	6.77	14.82	+9.28
Just Russia	0.49	0.88	+0.39	4.33	7.45	+2.89
Other parties	0.56	0.79	+0.23	7.96	5.70	+0.53
Self-nomination	0.00	0.42	+0.42	0	61.88	+61.88
Turnout	17.35	15.73	-1.62	44.79	42.95	-1.84
Party, turnout	Legislative elections**					
	million people			%		
	Fact		Dynamics 2018 to 2013	Fact		Dynamics 2018 to 2013
	2013	2018		2013	2018	
United Russia	4.96	3.74	-1.22	51.62	41.54	-10.07
CPRF	0.93	1.54	+0.62	13.78	23.14	+9.36
LDPR	0.58	0.96	+0.39	8.40	15.04	+6.64
Just Russia	0.44	0.60	+0.16	6.67	8.66	+1.99
Other parties	0.88	0.48	-0.40	16.27	7.79	-8.47
Turnout	7.90	7.62	-0.28	39.25	38.73	-0.85

* Total for 22 RF constituent entities: Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), Republic of Khakassia, Altai Territory, Krasnoyarsk Territory, Primorye Territory, Khabarovsk Territory, Amur Region, Vladimir Region, Voronezh Region, Ivanovo Region, Kemerovo Region, Magadan Region, Moscow Region, Nizhny Novgorod Region, Novosibirsk Region, Omsk Region, Oryol Region, Pskov Region, Samara Region, Tyumen Region, city of Moscow, and Chukotka Autonomous Area.

** Total for 16 RF constituent entities: Republic of Bashkortostan, Republic of Buryatia, Republic of Kalmykia, Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), Republic of Khakassia, Trans-Baikal Territory, Arkhangelsk Region, Vladimir Region, Ivanovo Region, Irkutsk Region, Kemerovo Region, Rostov Region, Smolensk Region, Ulyanovsk Region, Yaroslavl Region, and Nenets Autonomous Area.

Source: own calculations based on official data from the Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation. More detailed results are presented in the article: Ilyin V.A., Morev M.V. (2018). Revisiting the issue concerning the future of Russian statehood. *Economic and Social Changes: Facts, Trends, Forecast*, 11(5), 9–29.

¹² Skorobogaty P. (2018). The landmark is 2021. *Ekspert*, 41, October 8–14, p. 53.

Table 2. Results of the Single Voting Day, 2019

Party, turnout	Elections of the region's head*					
	million people			%		
	Fact		Dynamics 2019 to 2014	Fact		Dynamics 2019 to 2014
	2014	2019		2014	2019	
United Russia	7.78	4.88	-2.90	74.53	71.50	-3.04
CPRF	0.77	0.89	+0.12	11.47	14.79	+3.33
LDPR	0.36	0.50	+0.13	5.02	8.21	+3.19
Just Russia	0.12	0.38	+0.27	5.45	5.27	-0.18
Other parties	0.43	0.47	+0.04	5.31	3.91	-1.41
Self-nomination	0.06	2.30	+2.24	9.78	72.33	+62.55
Turnout	9.82	9.71	-0.11	43.97	44.58	+0.60
Party, turnout	Legislative elections**					
	million people			%		
	Fact		Dynamics 2019 to 2014	Fact		Dynamics 2019 to 2014
	2014	2019		2014	2019	
United Russia	5.01	3.31	-1.69	66.57	51.91	-14.65
CPRF	0.83	1.26	+0.43	10.29	17.06	+6.76
LDPR	0.46	0.81	+0.35	6.77	14.48	+8.17
Just Russia	0.41	0.50	+0.09	5.12	6.80	+1.57
Other parties	0.84	1.16	+0.32	9.13	9.34	+0.20
Turnout	7.82	7.28	-0.54	52.01	47.45	-4.56
<p>* Total for 16 RF constituent entities (excluding the heads of subjects of the Russian Federation appointed by a vote in Parliament): Republic of Altai, Republic of Bashkortostan, Republic of Kalmykia, Trans-Baikal Territory, Stavropol Territory, Astrakhan Region, Volgograd Region, Vologda Region, Kurgan Region, Kursk Region, Lipetsk Region, Murmansk Region, Orenburg Region, Sakhalin Region, Chelyabinsk Region, Saint Petersburg.</p> <p>** Total for 13 RF constituent entities: Altai Republic, Kabardino-Balkarian Republic, Karachay-Cherkess Republic, Republic of Crimea, Republic of Mari El, Republic of Tatarstan, Republic of Tyva, Khabarovsk Territory, Bryansk Region, Volgograd Region, Tula Region, Moscow, Sevastopol.</p> <p>Source: own calculations based on the official data of the Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation. More detailed calculation results are presented in the article: Ilyin V.A., Morev M.V. (2019). The 2018–2019 regional election: Voters' trust in the authorities continues to decline. Economic and Social Changes: Facts, Trends, Forecast, 12(5), 9–24.</p>						

The elections held during the Single Voting Day from September 11 to 13, 2020, marked the first electoral campaign following the adoption of amendments to the Russian Constitution. The 2020 monitoring focused on territories hosting large, systemically important industrial enterprises¹³.

According to calculations based on official CEC data, **support for the authorities in these territories decreased by 77 thousand people at the regional level (from 1.63 to 1.55 million) and by 27 thousand people in major cities (from 0.12 to 0.09 million). Concurrently, voter turnout (as a percentage of the**

¹³ In total, on September 13, 2020, elections of senior officials were held in 18 subjects of the Russian Federation (Komi Republic, Republic of Tatarstan, Chuvash Republic, Kamchatka, Krasnodar, Perm territories, Arkhangelsk, Bryansk, Irkutsk, Kaluga, Kostroma, Leningrad, Penza, Rostov, Smolensk, Tambov regions, Sevastopol, and Jewish Autonomous Region).

Elections of deputies of legislative (representative) government bodies of the subjects of the Russian Federation were held in 11 regions (Komi Republic, Belgorod, Voronezh, Kaluga, Kostroma, Kurgan, Magadan, Novosibirsk, Ryazan, Chelyabinsk regions, Yamal-Nenets Autonomous Area).

Elections of deputies of representative bodies of municipalities of administrative centers were held in 22 regional capitals (Syktyvkar, Kazan, Izhevsk, Cheboksary, Krasnodar, Astrakhan, Vladimir, Voronezh, Ivanovo, Kaluga, Kostroma, Lipetsk, Magadan, Nizhny Novgorod, Novosibirsk, Orenburg, Orel, Rostov-on-Don, Smolensk, Tambov, Tomsk, and Ulyanovsk).

The sample of the monitoring stage in 2020 (which analyzed the results of voting on constitutional amendments) included 14 regions and 17 cities (their regional capitals and some large cities), on the territory of which large, systemically important companies for the Russian economy are located (such as Norilsk Nickel, NLMK, Kovatek, Severstal, Lukoil, Metalloinvest, MMK, Evraz, PhosAgro, Akron, Rusal, Severalmaz, Polymetal).

Of these territories, 6 regions and 3 cities participated in the Single Voting Day on September 13, 2020.

total electorate) decreased by 5 percentage points in the regions (from 30 to 25%) and by 3 percentage points in the cities (from 15 to 12%; *Tab. 3*).

Table 3. Number of votes for United Russia representatives in regional and municipal elections of 2015 and 2020 in selected federal subjects of Russia

Indicator	Single Voting Day		Dynamics, 2020 to 2015
	15 Sept. 2015	13 Sept. 2020	
Average for 7 regions*			
Turnout, million people	3.38	2.75	-0.63
Turnout, %	44.4	36.7	-7.7
Support for United Russia, million people	1.63	1.55	-0.08
% of turnout	48.2	56.5	+8.3
% of voters	21.4	20.7	-0.7
Average for 3 cities**			
Turnout, million people	0.24	0.20	-0.04
Turnout, %	30.4	25.6	-4.8
Support for United Russia, million people	0.12	0.09	-0.03
% of turnout	49.0	46.1	-2.9
% of voters	14.9	11.8	-3.1
* Belgorod Region, Lipetsk Region, Arkhangelsk Region, Yamal-Nenets Autonomous Area, Chelyabinsk Region, Irkutsk Region, Magadan Region			
** Lipetsk, Magnitogorsk, Magadan.			
Source: own calculations using the data of the Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation.			

As experts noted while analyzing the 2020 Single Voting Day results, “Russian society as a whole, and particularly in certain regions of our country, demonstrates growing political passivity”. The voting outcomes indicate “a process of, if not confrontation, then alienation — a distancing of our society from the current system of domestic political power”.

Summarizing the September 2020 Single Voting Day, Valery F. Fedorov, Director General of the Russian Public Opinion Research Center (VCIOM),

“Compared to the ‘constitutional’ vote of June 25 – July 1, voter turnout decreased significantly, despite the introduction of the ‘three-day voting’ period, allowing for early voting on Friday and Saturday, September 11–12, in addition to the ‘main’ Sunday vote on September 13. This can be partly explained by the ‘local’ nature of the elections, which traditionally generate much less interest among our citizens. However, the difference is so pronounced that the following conclusion suggests itself: **Russian society as a whole, and especially in certain regions of our country, is displaying growing political passivity, though this is less applicable to the ‘national’ republics within the Federation. This picture indicates not only a fundamental difference in the systems of governance between ‘ordinary’ regions and republics within the Russian Federation but also a process of, if not confrontation, then alienation, a distancing of our society from the current system of domestic political power**”¹⁴.

emphasized that “the scenario for the upcoming federal campaign [the 2021 State Duma elections] is turning out to be exceptionally pessimistic for the authorities and their party”¹⁵.

It should be noted that this prediction proved largely accurate. On the one hand, in 2021, voter turnout for the State Duma elections increased by 4 percentage points nationwide compared to 2016 (from 48% to 52%), representing an additional 3.8 million people. Furthermore, while turnout growth in 2016 was observed in only four Russian regions,

¹⁴ Vinnikov V. Quiet backwater: on the results of a single political day. Available at: https://zavtra.ru/blogs/tihaya_zavod_?yclid=mh94xw5qou614573335

¹⁵ D. Garmonenko. United Russia will face seven risks in the State Duma elections. Available at: https://www.ng.ru/politics/2020-10-06/1_7982_elections.html (based on the materials of V.V. Fedorov’s speech “The results of the UVD-2020 — Prospects for the State Duma elections 2021” at the meeting of the VCIOM Scientific Council “Russian Regional Elections 2020: Trends and Prospects” on September 23, 2020).

by 2021 it had expanded to 60 regions¹⁶. **However, over the past 14 years (from 2007 to 2021), the number of Russians participating in elections has decreased by 12 million people (turnout dropped from 64% to 52%; Tab. 4).**

Support for the ruling party decreased nationwide from 54% to 50% between 2016 and 2021 (a loss of 0.5 million people), with United Russia's position weakening compared to previous State Duma elections in 70 federal subjects. **Overall, from 2007 to 2021, the share of votes cast for the ruling party fell from 64 to 50%, meaning a loss of nearly 17 million voters.** It is difficult to disagree with expert assessments noting that "if the ruling party gains 50% of votes with a 50% turnout, this means that only a quarter of citizens actually support the authorities"¹⁷.

Thus, a brief analysis of the monitoring results of local (regional and municipal) elections from 2018 to 2020, as well as the 2021 State Duma elections, demonstrated that despite maintaining dominant superiority on the political stage (specifically, a constitutional majority in the State Duma), United Russia's support dynamics showed consistently negative trends. **This is primarily evidenced by the ruling party's loss of 17 million votes in parliamentary elections between 2007 and 2021.**

Based on the empirical data from conducted research and expert assessments of all analyzed electoral campaigns from 2018 to 2021, a logical conclusion was that "the past elections to the 8th State Duma, on the one hand, demonstrated the growing dissatisfaction of Russians with how the current ruling party and the President are handling key issues concerning the population. On the other hand, society granted the head of state another 'credit of trust,' hoping that through gradual reforms and personal initiatives he would be able to bring the system of state governance to order..."¹⁸

The special military operation and the sharp escalation of national security threats that Russia faced after February 2022 gave these "gradual reforms and personal initiatives" by the head of state a qualitatively different, higher level of urgency.

Primarily, the SMO significantly influenced voter motivation. All electoral campaigns after February 2022 took place "amid **unprecedented societal consolidation, unification around the president and the flag**"¹⁹, which inevitably affected voting outcomes. Furthermore, after the start of the SMO, many experts began arguing that under the force majeure circumstances, where the country is effectively waging a full-scale war with the Collective West and must reorganize according to the principle

Table 4. Changes in voting results in the elections to the State Duma of the 5th and 8th convocations (2007–2021)

Indicator		Year				Dynamics (+/-)		
		2007	2011	2016	2021	2021 to 2016	2021 to 2011	2021 to 2007
Turnout	Million people	69.61	65.77	52.70	56.48	+3.78	-9.28	-13.12
	%	63.78	60.21	47.88	51.72	+3.84	-8.49	-12.06
Support for United Russia	Million people	44.71	32.37	28.53	28.06	-0.46	-4.31	-16.65
	%	64.30	49.31	54.20	49.82	-4.38	+0.51	-14.48

Source: own calculations using the data of the Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation.

¹⁶ Detailed calculation results are presented in the article: Ilyin V.A., Morev M.V. (2021). Voters supported the President: On the results of the election to the State Duma of the eighth convocation. *Economic and Social Changes: Facts, Trends, Forecast*, 14(5), p. 32.

¹⁷ Glazyev S.Yu. The future belongs to open voting. Available at: <https://glazev.ru/articles/136-chelovek-i-obshchestvo/95065-sergey-glaz-ev-budushhee-za-otkrytym-golosovaniem>

¹⁸ Ilyin V.A., Morev M.V. (2021). Voters supported the President: On the results of the election to the State Duma of the eighth convocation. *Economic and Social Changes: Facts, Trends, Forecast*, 14(5), p. 32.

¹⁹ Analysts at the Expert Institute for Social Research called the 2023 elections consolidating Russian society. Available at: <https://lenta.ru/news/2023/09/12/analitiks>

M. Delyagin (Deputy of the State Duma of the Russian Federation): “Under the conditions of the special military operation, the regime should not be ‘Live as usual, pay no mind,’ but rather ‘Everything for the front, everything for victory.’ And in this context, holding such elections looks somewhat strange”²⁰.

I. Grashchenkov (Political Analyst): “The idea of abolishing elections for regional heads is not new. Rumors about their cancellation circulated throughout the spring of this [2022] year. Back then, the argument was that under the conditions of the SMO, it would be wise to demonstrate domestic political unity and, at the same time, save budgetary funds”²¹.

S. Mironov: “Why spend all this time and money on [gubernatorial elections] when it’s already clear that an absolute majority supports the conduct of the special military operation and, in particular, the decisions of the President of Russia?”²²

A. Gallyamov (Political Analyst): “People don’t like to give up their right to choose their own leaders. It turns out that with one hand the authorities reassure the population – saying, everything is fine with us – while with the other they introduce a force majeure situation. This will reinforce the feeling that something is going wrong in the country”²³.

“everything for the front, everything for Victory”, regional elections are essentially unnecessary.

Analyzing the results of the Single Voting Day held on September 11, 2022, K. Kostin, Chairman of the Board of the Civil Society Development Foundation, noted: “All incumbent governors won in the first round with good results, and United Russia achieved one of the best results in its history (if not the best) – 80 percent of all mandates. This indicates support for the president and the forces implementing his policy at various levels”²⁴.

“Incumbent governors who reconfirmed their mandates achieved higher results than last time. And this is the outcome of the consensus surrounding the president”²⁵.

However, it should be noted that compared to previous analogous elections (i.e., over the period from 2017 to 2022), the number of people who came to the polls decreased in many regions and regional capitals. According to some experts, this suggested that “the authorities have problems or lack full confidence”²⁶.

²⁰ Yentsov Yu. Instead of the call “Everything for the front!”, fellow citizens hear “Everything is fine, beautiful Marquise” (interview with M. Delyagin, September 10, 2024. Available at: <https://kprf-saratov.ru/2024/09/mihail-delyagin-vmesto-prizyva-vsyo-dlya-fronta-sograzhdane-slyshat-vsyo-horoshu-prekrasnaya-markiza>

²¹ To elect or appoint. Why Russia may cancel gubernatorial elections in 2023. Available at: <https://www.amic.ru/news/politika/izbirat-ili-naznachat-pochemu-v-rossii-v-2023-godu-mogut-otmenit-vybory-gubernatorov-510924?ysclid=m22xj5t wjh750436221>

²² The discussion about the possible abandonment of direct elections in 2022 has generated intrigue. Available at: <https://mskgazeta.ru/politika/diskussiia-o-vozmozhnom-otkaze-ot-priamih-vyborov-v-2022-godu-porodila-intrigu-10172.html?ysclid=m22xrnw0h9238697419>

²³ Ibidem.

²⁴ Experts on the election results: The political system has successfully passed the UVD. Available at: <https://rg.ru/2022/09/12/eksperty-ob-itogah-vyborov-politicheskaia-sistema-uspeshno-sdala-edg.html?ysclid=mh03nr5dur449008820>

²⁵ Experts on the election results: The political system has successfully passed the UVD. Available at: <https://rg.ru/2022/09/12/eksperty-ob-itogah-vyborov-politicheskaia-sistema-uspeshno-sdala-edg.html> (opinion of E. Sokolova, head of the Department of Strategic Research and Forecasting at the Expert Institute for Social Research).

²⁶ D. Garmonenko. The government continues to win with any number of voters. Available at: https://www.ng.ru/politics/2022-09-11/1_8536_elections.html

Specifically, in the elections for regional heads from 2017 to 2022, average voter turnout across the regions decreased by 4 p.p. (from 40 to 36%, or from 6.2 to 5.5 million people; *Tab. 5*). Support for the ruling party decreased by 2 p.p. (from 29 to 27% of the total electorate), meaning United Russia lost 270 thousand votes.

Table 5. Results of the 2022 Single Voting Day for elections of regional heads in regions and regional capitals

Indicator	Single Voting Day		Dynamics, 2022 to 2017
	10 Sept. 2017	11 Sept. 2022	
Average for 14 regions*			
Turnout, million people	6.20	5.46	-0.74
Turnout, %	40.23	35.95	-4.3
Support for United Russia, million people	4.40	4.13	-0.27
% of turnout	71.07	75.65	+4.6
% of voters	28.60	27.20	-1.4
Average for 14 regional capitals**			
Turnout, million people	1.75	1.58	-0.17
Turnout, %	30.53	27.51	-3.0
Support for United Russia, million people	1.15	1.09	-0.06
% of turnout	65.80	68.70	+2.9
% of voters	20.09	18.90	-1.2
* Republic of Buryatia, Republic of Karelia, Republic of Mari El, Udmurt Republic, Vladimir Region, Kaliningrad Region, Kirov Region, Novgorod Region, Ryazan Region, Saratov Region, Sverdlovsk Region, Tambov Region Tomsk Region, Yaroslavl Region.			
** Ulan-Ude, Petrozavodsk, Yoshkar-Ola, Izhevsk, Vladimir, Kaliningrad, Kirov, Veliky Novgorod, Ryazan, Saratov, Yekaterinburg, Tambov, Tomsk, Yaroslavl.			
Source: own calculations using the data of the Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation.			

In regional capitals, turnout decreased by 3 p.p. (from 30 to 27%, or from 1.8 to 1.6 million people),

while support for the ruling party fell by 1.2 p.p. (from 20 to 19%, representing a loss of 60 thousand votes)²⁷.

The next Single Voting Day in Russia took place on September 10, 2023. Electoral campaigns and local referendums at various levels were held “in 85 out of 89 federal subjects”²⁸.

A key feature of the September 2023 elections was, firstly, that they were the “last before the 2024 presidential campaign”²⁹. Secondly, they were conducted not only amidst ongoing military operations, as well as terrorist attacks and sabotage on Russian territory, but also following the armed mutiny attempt led by Wagner PMC head Yevgeny Prigozhin on June 24, 2023.

Against this backdrop, as noted by CEC Chairperson E. Pamfilova, “turnout reached a record high in ten years... All incumbent governors, as well as acting heads, retained their posts”³⁰.

However, an in-depth analysis of the CEC data revealed that a substantial increase in turnout compared to previous elections occurred in only a minor number of territories.

For example, in the elections for top regional officials, the proportion of voters participating increased significantly (by 10 p.p. or more) in only 4 out of 21 federal subjects (on average by 16 p.p., from 44 to 60%, or by 3.2 million people). Meanwhile, turnout decreased in 9 regions (by 4 p.p., from 47 to 43%, or by 360 thousand people; *Tab. 6*).

In the elections for regional legislative bodies, a noticeable increase in turnout in 2023 compared to 2018 was observed in only two regions – Kemerovo and Smolensk regions (by 12 p.p., from 45 to 57%, or by 0.3 million people). A decrease in turnout was recorded in 10 federal subjects (by 4 p.p., from 39 to 35%, or by 0.4 million people; *Tab. 7*).

²⁷ For more detailed research results, including elections to the legislative bodies of the subjects of the Russian Federation, see the article: Ilyin V.A., Morev M.V. (2022). The special military operation reveals new features of civil society. *Economic and Social Changes: Facts, Trends, Forecast*, 15(5), 9–32.

²⁸ The history of the Single Voting Day in Russia. Available at: <https://tass.ru/info/18683417>

²⁹ The 2023 regional campaign will be large-scale but predictable. Available at: <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/5758775>

³⁰ Pamfilova called the record turnout at 46%. Available at: <https://www.rbc.ru/politics/13/09/2023/6501c3fe9a7947ea85beaf37>

Table 6. Dynamics of voter turnout in elections for top regional officials on September 10, 2023, compared to September 9, 2018, by federal subject

Federal subject	2018		2023		Dynamics (+/-)	
	thousand people	% of voters	thousand people	% of voters	thousand people	% of voters
Increase in turnout by 10 percentage points or more						
Moscow Region	2144.96	38.59	3682.45	60.53	+1537.49	+22
Nizhny Novgorod Region	1046.59	40.51	1401.66	56.01	+355.08	+16
Kemerovo Region – Kuzbass	1337.42	66.47	1549.24	81.01	+211.82	+15
City of Moscow	2259.08	30.94	3325.12	43.18	+1066.04	+12
TOTAL	6788.05	44.13	9958.47	60.18	+3170.43	+16
Increase in turnout by 1–9 percentage points / no changes						
Krasnoyarsk Region	593.49	28.94	730.88	35.55	+137.39	+7
Amur Region	194.75	31.25	233.42	38.74	+38.66	+7
Voronezh Region	831.09	44.83	928.81	51.08	+97.71	+6
Samara Region	1143.20	48	1296.99	53.79	+153.79	+6
Smolensk Region*	225.61	29.67	250.38	33.71	+24.77	+4
Novosibirsk Region	628.95	29.52	695.49	31.86	+66.55	+2
Tyumen Region	1241.45	49.09	1359.02	50.76	+117.57	+2
Ivanovo Region	265.77	32.9	261.61	33.92	-4.16	+1
Pskov Region	195.41	36.91	194.08	37.8	-1.33	+1
TOTAL	5319.71	36.79	5950.67	40.80	+630.96	+4
Decrease in turnout						
Primorye Territory**	680.10	46.35	655.23	45.58	-24.87	-1
Republic of Sakha (Yakutia)	321.54	50.69	314.93	48.41	-6.61	-2
Republic of Khakassia	160.09	41.88	155.82	39.54	-4.27	-2
Oryol Region	364.85	57.77	337.27	55.98	-27.58	-2
Magadan Region	38.74	39.58	33.95	35.09	-4.78	-4
Altai Territory	683.34	37.28	547.93	31.04	-135.41	-6
Chukotka Autonomous Area	17.99	60.19	15.97	53.48	-2.02	-7
Omsk Region	666.63	43.6	510.51	34.51	-156.11	-9
TOTAL	2933.26	47.17	2571.61	42.95	-361.65	-4
* The previous elections were held on September 13, 2020.						
** The previous elections were held on December 16, 2018.						
Source: own calculations using the data of the Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation.						

Table 7. Dynamics of voter turnout in elections for regional legislative bodies on September 10, 2023, compared to September 9, 2018, by federal subject

Federal subject	2018 г.		2023 г.		Dynamics (+/-)	
	thousand people	% of voters	thousand people	% of voters	thousand people	% of voters
Increase in turnout by 10 percentage points or more						
Kemerovo Region – Kuzbass	1335.56	66.39	1549.10	81.01	+213.54	+15
Smolensk Region	182.06	23.67	250.32	33.70	+68.26	+10
TOTAL	1517.62	45.03	1799.42	57.36	+281.80	+13
Increase in turnout by 1–9 percentage points / no changes						
Trans-Baikal Territory	176.01	22.04	205.18	26.62	+29.17	+5
Republic of Bashkortostan	1498.02	49.08	1545.91	51.72	+47.89	+3
Nenets Autonomous Area	12.17	35.96	12.87	37.69	+0.70	+2
Ivanovo Region	265.80	32.91	261.56	33.92	-4.24	+1
TOTAL	1951.99	35.00	2025.52	37.49	+73.53	+2
Decrease in turnout						
Arkhangelsk Region	276.88	29.34	250.52	28.08	-26.35	-1
Republic of Khakassia	159.97	41.85	155.85	39.57	-4.12	-2
Republic of Sakha (Yakutia)	321.45	50.69	314.58	48.36	-6.87	-2
Irkutsk Region	491.58	26.33	443.84	24.22	-47.74	-2
Yaroslavl Region	296.69	29.27	271.96	27.41	-24.73	-2
Republic of Buryatia	270.19	39.55	254.76	36.3	-15.44	-3
Rostov Region	1447.33	45.43	1357.36	42.83	-89.97	-3
Ulyanovsk Region	404.48	40.31	330.84	34.68	-73.64	-6
Vladimir Region	372.65	32.92	268.45	24.77	-104.20	-8
Republic of Kalmykia	111.80	54.03	84.29	42.04	-27.51	-12
TOTAL	4153.02	38.97	3732.47	34.83	-420.56	-4
Source: own calculations using the data of the Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation.						

Table 8. Comparison of election results on September 10, 2023, in the new regions and other federal subjects of Russia

Indicator	For new RF subjects	For other RF subjects	Dynamics (+/-) for new subjects of the Russian Federation in comparison with other regions
Legislative elections			
Turnout, % of voters	71.14	38.31	+33
Share of votes cast for United Russia, % of turnout	77.52	56.52	+21
Elections to representative bodies of municipalities of regional centers of RF subjects			
Turnout, % of voters	63.54	33.14	+30
Share of votes cast for United Russia, % of turnout	77.46	50.68	+27
Source: own calculations using the data of the Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation (http://www.vybory.izbirkom.ru).			

A similar situation was characteristic of regional capitals:

✓ in the elections for top regional officials, turnout increased substantially in only five municipal formations (from 36 to 48%, or by 1.4 million people), while it decreased in 9 regional capitals (by 5 p.p., from 35 to 30%, or by 1 million people).

✓ in the elections for legislative bodies, a noticeable turnout increase was observed in only three cities – Ufa, Kemerovo, and Smolensk (by 12 p.p., from 33 to 45%, or by 0.1 million people), while it decreased in 10 cities (by 5 p.p., from 33 to 28%, or by 0.2 million people)³¹.

Furthermore, the 2023 regional elections marked the first participation of new Russian regions – the DPR, LPR, Kherson, and Zaporozhye regions – which demonstrated higher levels of turnout and support for United Russia compared to the average across other federal subjects and municipal formations of Russia (*Tab. 8*).

Thus, analyzing the results of the 2023 Single Voting Day, experts noted that it was a “far more complex phenomenon”³², than simply a “rally-

’round-the-flag” effect: “In a country that, within a single year, underwent mobilization, experienced high-profile failures at the front, saw a military mutiny collapse, and witnessed sharply rising prices for essential goods and food in the rear. There were many positive developments too, but it is precisely the listed phenomena that most often weigh on the voter and provoke a reassessment of the command-political echelon”.

“The results of the Single Voting Day on September 10, 2023, signal that against the backdrop of the general consolidation of the majority of the population (quite naturally prompted by the urgency of the external and internal threats Russia faced after the start of the SMO), a demand continues to accumulate in society for the authorities to align the behavior and concrete actions of the elites with the state’s publicly declared rhetoric”³⁴.

³¹ Detailed results of the study are presented in the article: Ilyin V.A., Morev M.V. (2023). From “Munich 2007” to “Valdai 2023”: Sixteen years that changed Russia and the world. *Economic and Social Changes: Facts, Trends, Forecast*, 16(5), 9–31.

³² Ibidem.

³³ Ilyin V.A., Morev M.V. (2023). From “Munich 2007” to “Valdai 2023”: Sixteen years that changed Russia and the world. *Economic and Social Changes: Facts, Trends, Forecast*, 16(5), 9–31.

³⁴ Skorobogaty P. Elections-2023: the effect of cohesion. Available at: <http://vybor-naroda.org/stovyborah/248163-vybory-2023-jeffekt-splochenija.html>

On September 8, 2024, the Single Voting Day took place against a backdrop not only of the increasing likelihood of missile strikes deep into Russian territory using NATO-produced long-range weapons but also, and more importantly, following the incursion of the Ukrainian Armed Forces into the Kursk Region (August 6, 2024).

Naturally, the persistence of the general context of a worsening external political situation globally and around Russia influenced the continuation of trends observed in the results of the 2024 Single Voting Day.

E. Pamfilova “rated the results of the 2024 Single Voting Day as maximally positive”³⁵: as before, in all subjects where elections for regional

heads were held, victory went either to acting heads appointed by the President or to incumbent governors. Furthermore, on average across the 21 regions holding direct elections for regional heads, turnout increased by 3.72% (from 46.8 to 50.5% of the total electorate), and support for representatives of the ruling party or acting heads appointed by the President increased by 3.64% (from 73.36 to 77.0%; *Tab. 9*).

An increase in turnout was recorded in the majority of federal subjects where voting took place (in 15 out of 21 subjects), although it should be noted that support for the ruling party in 2024 increased compared to the previous 2019 elections in only half of the regions (in 11 out of 21)³⁶.

Table 9. Results of the 2024 Single Voting Day for elections of regional heads in regions and regional capitals

Indicator	Single Voting Day		Dynamics, 2024 to 2019
	8 Sept. 2019	8 Sept. 2024	
Average for 21 federal subjects*			
Turnout, million people	13.90	14.63	+0.73
Turnout, %	46.82	50.54	+3.72
Support for United Russia, million people	10.59	11.20	+0.61
% of turnout	73.36	77.00	+3.64
% of voters	34.87	38.98	+4.11
Average for 20 regional capitals**			
Turnout, million people	3.56	3.52	-0.04
Turnout, %	41.97	42.01	+0.04
Support for United Russia, million people	2.59	2.67	+0.08
% of turnout	69.59	73.96	+4.37
% of voters	29.62	31.41	+1.79
* Republic of Altai, Republic of Bashkortostan, Republic of Kalmykia, Trans-Baikal Territory, Stavropol Territory, Khabarovsk Territory, Astrakhan Region, Volgograd Region, Vologda Region, Kaliningrad Region, Kemerovo Region - Kuzbass, Kurgan Region, Kursk Region, Lipetsk Region, Murmansk Region, Orenburg Region, Samara Region, Sakhalin Region, Tula Region, Chelyabinsk Region, Saint Petersburg.			
** Gorno-Altaysk, Ufa, Elista, Chita, Stavropol, Khabarovsk, Astrakhan, Volgograd, Vologda, Kaliningrad, Kemerovo, Kurgan, Kursk, Lipetsk, Murmansk, Orenburg, Samara, Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk, Tula, Chelyabinsk.			
Source: own calculations using the data of the Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation.			

³⁵ Rodin I. Pamfilova rejected anti-popular criticism of the elections. Available at: https://www.ng.ru/politics/2024-09-11/3_9091_campaign.html?ysclid=m1q4r67ynj13324465

³⁶ Detailed results of the study are presented in the article: Ilyin V.A., Morev M.V. (2024). Special military operation and the internal mobilization of society and elites. *Economic and Social Changes: Facts, Trends, Forecast*, 17(5), 9–39.

1. **“Against the backdrop of progress in electoral technology, the political system is degrading into archaism... [opposition parties] have finally turned into objects of the political process.** Its subjects are the regional authorities, linked into a single network through political deputy governors, which is centralized in the relevant departments of the presidential administration”³⁷.

2. **“In such a construct, one cannot expect elections to be a process of collective search for solutions to the most pressing problems of regions/cities/districts/the country.** Because a demand of metaphysical/existential importance is pushed to the forefront – the preservation of Russian statehood itself. And people’s current problems seem minor, insignificant, selfish, philistine...”³⁸

3. **“Elections are increasingly perceived as a political ritual that one is expected to participate in... This might be sufficient here and now. But it is hardly sufficient to effectively govern a large country in the long term, to sense the mood of the people”**³⁹.

4. **“The ‘freezing’ of political and public activity will continue. It can be assumed that under such conditions, the ruling party will continue its course of turning elections into a farce and maintaining legitimacy purely formally. As experts are already saying, the real political content of the elections does not relate to the will of the masses...”**⁴⁰

5. **“The 2024 Single Voting Day, in its formal characteristics, turned out to be a copy of last year’s elections, with the main competition compressed to the five parliamentary parties”**⁴¹.

Analyzing the results of the 2024 Single Voting Day, many experts concluded that a significant portion of the population increasingly perceives elections as a “political ritual”, whose “real political content does not relate to the will of the masses”. They argue that Russia’s political system is “regressing into archaism” due to the “constriction of political competition”, where opposition parties are “turning into objects of the political process”,

thus leading to a “freezing of political and social activity”.

In other words, experts pointed out that **alongside the “rally-’round-the-flag” process, a “routinization” and a de facto “atrophy” of the election institution itself is occurring.** The continuation of this trend was noted by them during the next local-level electoral campaign held on September 14, 2025.

³⁷ On the options of the emerging one-party system. Available at: https://www.ng.ru/editorial/2024-09-11/2_9091_red.html?ysclid=m1ov943beg112335220

³⁸ Remchukov K. Does our society want changes? Available at: https://www.ng.ru/politics/2024-09-09/2_9088_1427.html?ysclid=m1ouwv0945994401035

³⁹ About elections as a communication channel. Available at: https://www.ng.ru/editorial/2024-09-10/2_9090_red.html?ysclid=m1ov3swigc738886871

⁴⁰ D. Garmonenko, Party lists for the State Duma-2026 will be preserved to the politically necessary extent. Available at: https://www.ng.ru/politics/2024-09-17/1_9095_elections.html?ysclid=m1ow0bnrnr730662997 (opinion of the head of the Analytical Department of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation S. Obukhov).

⁴¹ Kynev A. LDPR, New People and Social Revolutionaries claim the same electorate. Available at: <http://club-rf.ru/detail/7425?ysclid=m1uf0lhmgc649045765>

“In the elections for the leadership of 20 Russian regions, 19 nominees from United Russia and one self-nominated candidate – the incumbent head of the Chuvash Republic, Oleg Nikolayev – emerged victorious. None of the winners received less than 60% of the votes. Eight newly elected regional leaders, including the new governor of the Kursk Region, Alexander Khinshtein, secured over 80% of the votes...”

All this indicates that while the elections for regional heads featured formal competition, there was no real contest or any element of suspense. In the sterilized domestic political landscape, this is both expected and normal...

The overwhelming victories of pro-government candidates ostensibly suggest that the regions are entirely stable, with no cause for public discontent, let alone protest sentiments. Alternatively, it may indicate that the authorities are effectively monitoring the situation on the ground, promptly removing discredited leaders and replacing them with more effective ones (as seen in the Kursk Region). In other words, everything is orchestrated to ensure that elections remain little more than a ritualistic practice of endorsing the pre-approved candidate.

This is an opaque environment... This is politics in the shadows, which elections fail to illuminate in any way”⁴².

The 2025 electoral campaign had several distinctive features worth noting separately.

⁴²**First, the 2025 Single Voting Day served as a “dress rehearsal for the political system ahead of the 2026 State Duma elections”⁴³.** This meant that for political parties, these were “model” elections... Their performance in this upcoming Single Voting Day would determine the balance of power ahead of the State Duma elections”⁴⁴. For society, it meant a test of “demonstrating the stability”⁴⁵ of both the electoral process and the political system as a whole.

Second, the past elections showed that “the process of forming a new elite is already underway”⁴⁶. As noted by CEC Chairperson E. Pamfilova, “the most significant distinction this year is the wave of participants in the special military operation running in the elections”⁴⁷.

E. Pamfilova: “...the most significant distinction is that this year we have seen a wave of participants in the special military operation running in elections, and with very strong results...”

A total of 1,663 candidates were SMO participants, of whom 1,035 were elected... United Russia – 882 individuals, the Communist Party (CPRF) – 23, the Liberal Democratic Party (LDPR) – 20, A Just Russia — For Truth – 20, New People – six, Party of Pensioners – three. The Republican public movement ‘Tatarstan – New Century’ – two, Party of Growth – one, Civic Platform – one, and 77 self-nominated candidates.

This trend [emerged] also considering that You [the President], and this is very important, essentially set this direction, stating that a new wave in politics is needed”⁴⁸.

⁴² On the election of regional heads and the costs of verticalization. Available at: https://www.ng.ru/editorial/2025-09-16/2_9339_red.html

⁴³ Minchenko consulting. XIX Rating of political stability of the heads of regions “Gossovets 2.0”, March 2025. Available at: https://minchenko.ru/netcat_files/userfiles/Gossovets_2025_9_marta_NEW.pdf

⁴⁴ Daria Kislitsyna, Head of the EISI Department for Work with the Regions. Available at: <https://vz.ru/news/2025/6/5/1336826.html?ysclid=mggi90nhwg519939165>

⁴⁵ UVD-2025: Context, course of campaigns, alignment of forces, agendas and forecasts: An analytical note. Available at: <https://cipkr.ru/2025/09/04/edg-2025-kontekst-hod-kampanij-rasstanovka-sil-povestki-i-prognozy/>

⁴⁶ Isaichenko O. The elections opened up political opportunities for its participants. Available at: <https://vz.ru/politics/2025/9/15/1359732.html>

⁴⁷ The meeting of the President of the Russian Federation V. Putin with the Chair of the Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation E. Pamfilova, September 26, 2025. Available at: <http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/78076>

⁴⁸ Ibidem.

According to State Duma Deputy O. Matveychev's estimates, "over 1.6 thousand individuals connected to the special military operation participated in elections at various levels this year... We must not forget those who provided various forms of assistance to the front. These people were also represented in the elections, having earned the trust of citizens... the spirit of the SMO will be felt in the upcoming 2026 State Duma elections as well"⁴⁹.

Third, the "voting demonstrated Russia's ability to maintain the independence and resilience of its electoral system under external pressure"⁵⁰. As political analyst N. Lyakhovetsky emphasized, "**electoral sovereignty is one of the foundations of Russia's independence**. This refers to the protection of the electoral system from any forms of external interference, including information attacks and the spread of fakes and disinformation designed to undermine citizens' trust in elections... Particular effort was required from election commissions in border regions under constant shelling – such as the Bryansk, Kursk, and Rostov regions, and Krasnodar Territory"⁵¹.

Regarding the direct changes in the party-political configuration, shortly before the elections, many experts predicted that the LDPR would, for the first time, overtake the CPRF and assume the status of the "main opposition party" in the country.

E. Pamfilova: "For the first time, we launched our own digital platform, as promised – an analogue of the State Automated System 'Elections'... it operated at 100 percent capacity without any backup, without failures, without any issues... This is entirely our own software, domestically produced".

K. Kostin: "The concluded campaign essentially marked the beginning of AI application in the electoral process. On one hand, this will make it more creative and interesting in the future, but on the other hand, it will also make it more complex and become a source of new challenges and threats to the transparency and legitimacy of electoral procedures"⁵².

N. Lyakhovetsky: "During the voting days, the CEC portal was subjected to 290 thousand hacking attacks, with over 300 additional attacks targeting the remote electronic voting system".

O. Garmonenko: "The LDPR is openly referred to as the second state party..."⁵³

K. Kalachev: "The situation is objectively developing in the LDPR's favor. The party is known and remembered in the regions, its ratings are growing, and it enjoys a regime of complete favorability. Apparently, the LDPR can count on support from the authorities, and in some places – even administrative support... The authorities clearly intend to assist it as United Russia's junior partner; apparently, the party is being elevated to second place this very year in preparation for the major federal campaign. It would have been suspicious if the LDPR was consistently third in 2025, and then suddenly became second in the State Duma elections"⁵⁴.

⁴⁹ Isaichenko O. The elections opened up political opportunities for its participants. Available at: <https://vz.ru/politics/2025/9/15/1359732.html>

⁵⁰ Ibidem.

⁵¹ Isaichenko O. The elections opened up political opportunities for its participants. Available at: <https://vz.ru/politics/2025/9/15/1359732.html>

⁵² Kostin K. Law and choice. Available at: <https://iz.ru/1954805/konstantin-kostin/pravo-i-vybor>

⁵³ D. Garmonenko, the LDPR is already being called the second state party. Available at: https://www.ng.ru/politics/2025-06-10/1_3_9271_ldpr.html?ysclid=mgj1hboh61970067801

⁵⁴ Ibidem (opinion of the head of the Political Expert Group K. Kalachev).

However, this prediction ultimately did not materialize. As experts noted after the voting, “the fate of second place remains undetermined... While communists more confidently secured second places in gubernatorial elections, the Liberal Democratic Party performed better in parliamentary campaigns”⁵⁵.

K. Kostin: “We all said the Single Voting Day would determine the leader of this competition, but it hasn’t. There is a leader – United Russia, while the situation in the middle of the ‘tournament table’ is becoming more crowded”⁵⁶.

Thus, the 2025 Single Voting Day had its distinctive features, **but the fundamentals remained unchanged:**

1. *“Voter demands are shaped by the general political agenda and the information streams broadcast across the entire country”⁵⁷.*

2. *“Societal consolidation, the maximum ‘rallying around the flag’ – this is the contemporary political reality that determines the outcomes of all elections”⁵⁸.*

3. *“Most importantly, citizens have, in effect, as if in a referendum, approved of Vladimir Putin’s policies, placing their trust in all his endorsed candidates for regional leadership positions and representatives of the United Russia party, which serves as the political instrument for the country’s development course implemented by the president. The 2025 Single Voting Day once again confirmed and strengthened the trend of Russian society consolidating around the head of state”⁵⁹.*

The specific results of the concluded electoral campaign (for elections of regional heads and deputies to legislative bodies) compared to previous elections held in 2020 and 2015 are presented in *Inserts 1–5*.

Here, we note the most general trends from the results of the regional head elections compared to previous analogous elections held in the same territories in 2020–2022⁶⁰:

✓ firstly, aggregate voter turnout across all federal subjects and their regional capitals increased (by 1.6 million people in the regions and by 0.2 million people in the cities; *Tab. 10, Inserts 1, 3*);

✓ secondly, in aggregate across the regions, 1.5 million more people voted for the United Russia party compared to 2020, and 0.4 million more in the regional capitals. However, it can be said that the level of support for the ruling party remained virtually unchanged compared to past elections: on average across the federal subjects, it constituted 74% of the votes cast by participating voters; in the cities, it was 69% (*Tab. 10, Inserts 2, 4*);

✓ thirdly, it is important to note that the 69–75% of votes received by United Russia in the elections represents the will only of those who participated. As a percentage of the total number of registered voters residing in these territories (according to official CEC data), the level of support for the ruling party is significantly (almost halved) lower – averaging 40% in the regions and 29% in the regional capitals (*Tab. 10, Inserts 2, 4*).

⁵⁵ Ibidem.

⁵⁶ Leiba G. Number off in ones and fourths! How will the results of the 2025 regional campaign affect the results of the State Duma elections. Available at: <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/8041559?ysclid=mgi0fzo0oql69180845>

⁵⁷ Political scientists named the main expectations of voters: What parties should prepare for (opinion of political strategist S. Markelov). Available at: <https://fedpress.ru/article/3405416>

⁵⁸ Zamakhina T. “Uniting around the flag”: political scientists have studied the pre-election scenario for 2025. Available at: <https://rg.ru/2025/08/26/obedinenie-vokrug-flaga-politologi-izuchili-predvybornyj-rasklad-2025.html?ysclid=mgi1h9krpb340481599>

⁵⁹ Kostin K. Law and choice. Available at: <https://iz.ru/1954805/konstantin-kostin/pravo-i-vybor>

⁶⁰ The 2020 SVD was held in 15 of the 20 analyzed subjects of the Russian Federation. The previous regional elections were held in 2020, but there are exceptions: in the Novgorod, Sverdlovsk and Tambov regions, the previous elections of the heads of regions were held in 2022; in the Kursk and Orenburg regions – in 2024.

Table 10. Results of the 2025 Single Voting Day for elections of regional heads in regions and regional capitals

Indicator	2015	2020	2025	Dynamics (+/-), 2025 to...	
				2015	2020
Average for 20 federal subjects*					
Turnout, million people	13.11	13.80	15.41	+2.30	+1.61
Turnout, %	42.72	46.91	52.43	+9.71	+5.52
Support for United Russia, million people	10.14	10.52	12.01	+1.87	+1.49
% of turnout	72.32	74.89	74.37	+2.05	-0.52
% of voters	31.85	35.74	39.87	+8.02	+4.13
Average for 20 regional capitals**					
Turnout, million people	2.97	2.85	3.07	+0.10	+0.23
Turnout, %	33.58	36.68	40.02	+6.44	+3.34
Support for United Russia, million people	2.13	1.93	2.28	+0.16	+0.35
% of turnout	64.95	69.08	69.07	+4.12	-0.01
% of voters	22.83	25.68	28.87	+6.03	+3.19
* Republic of Tatarstan, Jewish Autonomous Region, Krasnodar Territory, Sevastopol, Leningrad Region, Rostov Region, Chuvash Republic – Chuvashia, Bryansk Region, Kursk Region, Tambov Region, Orenburg Region, Perm Territory, Kamchatka Territory, Kaluga Region, Sverdlovsk Region, Kostroma Region, Komi Republic, Novgorod Region, Arkhangelsk Region, Irkutsk Region.					
** Birobidzhan, Sevastopol, Kazan, Rostov-on-Don, Bryansk, Kursk, Krasnodar, Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky, Tambov, Orenburg, Veliky Novgorod, Perm, Irkutsk, Arkhangelsk, Cheboksary, Kaluga, Syktyvkar, Yekaterinburg, Kostroma.					
Source: own calculations using the data of the Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation.					

We also note that compared to previous elections, turnout in the elections for top regional officials, as well as the share of votes for United Russia candidates, increased in 16 out of 20 regions (*Inserts 1, 2*).

The situation looks slightly less pronounced (though still convincing for the ruling party) in the regional capitals: here, turnout in the elections for regional heads increased in 11 out of 20 administrative centers (*Insert 3*), and support for United Russia representatives increased in 13 out of 20 cities (*Insert 4*).

Regarding the elections of deputies to regional legislative bodies, both voter turnout and support for the ruling party representatives increased in all 11 regions compared to the previous elections. Turnout rose *from 4 to 5 million people (on average from 36.5 to 44%)*, and support for the ruling party increased *from 2 to 3 million people (on average from 47.7 to 60.5%; Insert 5)*.

Thus, summarizing the course and results of the 2025 Single Voting Day, experts once again concluded that *“the system of political representation has demonstrated its maturity and functionality, having developed the capacity to respond to threats and the ability to operate in crisis situations, evolving towards greater thoroughness and ‘maturity,’ responding to the demands of citizens and the country’s development trajectory. The test has been passed with dignity”*⁶¹.

“In essence, we witnessed an informal ‘referendum of trust’ on the president’s policies – all acting regional heads supported by him and incumbent candidates won in the first round with respectable results”⁶².

“The excellent result of United Russia, **which serves as the instrument for implementing the president’s policy**, is the main outcome”⁶³.

⁶¹ Kostin K. Law and choice. Available at: <https://iz.ru/1954805/konstantin-kostin/pravo-i-vybor>

⁶² Experts named the main results of SVD-2025 (K. Kostin’s assessment). Available at: <https://vz.ru/news/2025/9/16/1360120.html?ysclid=mggfnxs8t6352419574>

⁶³ Ilyina V. Marker of normality: Experts discussed the results of the 2025 elections. Available at: <https://rg.ru/2025/09/16/marker-normalnosti-eksperty-obsudili-itogi-vyborov-2025.html?ysclid=mh21x3xntc738372756> (K. Kostin’s opinion).

Insert 1

Elections of top regional officials (turnout and total number of voters)*

Federal subject	Total number of voters, thousand people			Dynamics (+/-), 2025 to...			Turnout, people			Dynamics (+/-), 2025 to...			Turnout, %			Dynamics (+/-), 2025 to...		
	2015	2020	2025	thousand people	%	2020	2015	2020	2025	thousand people	%	2020	2015	2020	2025	2015	2020	2025
Republic of Tatarstan	2906.6	2945.3	2940.2	+33.6	+1.2	-5.1	-0.2	2456.8	2320.4	2230.2	-226.6	-9.2	-90.1	-3.9	84.5	78.8	75.9	-8.7
Chuvash Republic	944.1	921.4	908.7	-35.4	-3.7	-12.7	-1.4	553.3	511.4	531.6	-21.7	-3.9	+20.1	+3.9	58.6	55.5	58.5	-0.1
Orenburg Region	1557.4	1501.1	1506.8	-50.6	-3.2	+5.7	+0.4	616.1	789.4	744.0	+127.9	+20.8	-45.4	-5.8	39.6	52.6	49.4	+9.8
Perm Region	1971.9	1998.5	1972.7	+0.8	0.0	-25.8	-1.3	838.7	714.7	967.2	+128.5	+15.3	+252.5	+35.3	42.5	35.8	49.0	+6.5
Volga FD	1845.0	1841.6	1832.1	-12.9	-0.7	-9.5	-0.5	1116.2	1084.0	1118.3	+2.0	+0.2	+34.3	+3.2	56.3	55.7	58.2	+1.9
Jewish Autonomous Region	131.5	126.6	117.0	-14.5	-11.0	-9.6	-7.6	41.9	92.5	86.9	+45.0	+107.3	-5.6	-6.1	31.9	73.0	74.2	+42.4
Kamchatka Territory	239.2	227.1	231.7	-7.4	-3.1	+4.6	+2.0	76.2	84.4	107.8	+31.6	+41.4	+23.4	+27.8	31.9	37.2	46.5	+14.6
Far Eastern FD	185.3	176.9	174.4	-11.0	-5.9	-2.5	-1.4	59.1	88.4	97.3	+38.3	+64.8	+8.9	+10.1	31.9	55.1	60.4	+28.5
Krasnodar Territory	3933.2	4219.2	4469.6	+536.5	+13.6	+250.4	+5.9	1810.9	2895.6	3069.3	+1258.5	+69.5	+173.7	+6.0	46.0	68.6	68.7	+22.6
Sevastopol	318.6	327.9	357.8	+39.2	+12.3	+29.9	+9.1	109.0	158.3	239.6	+130.6	+119.9	+81.3	+51.3	34.2	48.3	67.0	+32.8
Rostov Region	3274.5	3196.9	3120.8	-153.7	-4.7	-76.2	-2.4	1590.0	1374.2	1902.2	+312.2	+19.6	+527.9	+38.4	48.6	43.0	61.0	+12.4
Southern FD	2508.7	2581.4	2649.4	+140.7	+5.6	+68.0	+2.6	1169.9	1476.1	1737.0	+567.1	+48.5	+261.0	+17.7	42.9	53.3	65.5	+22.6
Leningrad Region.	1296.5	1361.1	1431.5	+135.0	+10.4	+70.4	+5.2	577.1	701.2	899.5	+322.3	+55.8	+198.3	+28.3	44.5	51.5	62.8	+18.3
Komi Republic	691.3	658.3	617.9	-73.4	-10.6	-40.4	-6.1	281.1	198.5	233.3	-47.9	-17.0	+34.7	+17.5	40.7	30.2	37.8	-9.5
Novgorod Region.	505.4	477.2	467.5	-37.9	-7.5	-9.6	-2.0	143.3	156.6	176.3	+33.0	+23.0	+19.8	+12.6	28.4	32.8	37.7	+9.4
Arkhangelsk Region	979.7	924.2	886.1	-93.6	-9.5	-38.0	-4.1	205.7	301.8	321.8	+116.1	+56.4	+20.0	+6.6	21.0	32.7	36.3	+15.3
NWFD	868.2	855.2	850.8	-17.5	-2.0	-4.4	-0.5	301.8	339.5	407.7	+105.9	+35.1	+68.2	+20.1	33.6	36.8	43.7	+10.0
Bryansk Region	1023.1	985.0	934.8	-88.3	-8.6	-50.1	-5.1	587.6	496.1	543.9	-43.7	-7.4	+47.8	+9.6	57.4	50.4	58.2	+0.8
Kursk Region	922.5	874.2	865.5	-57.0	-6.2	-8.7	-1.0	383.4	538.1	488.2	+84.8	+22.1	-69.9	-13.0	41.6	61.6	54.1	+12.5
Tambov Region	835.1	809.7	780.9	-54.2	-6.5	-28.9	-3.6	539.5	468.7	421.7	-117.8	-21.8	-47.0	-10.0	64.6	57.9	54.0	-10.6
Kaluga Region	803.8	801.0	779.9	-23.9	-3.0	-21.1	-2.6	289.9	283.5	349.4	+59.5	+20.5	+65.9	+23.2	36.1	35.4	44.8	+9.4
Kostroma Region	545.4	523.4	496.6	-48.8	-8.9	-26.8	-5.1	195.2	167.4	197.6	+2.5	+1.3	+30.3	+18.1	35.8	32.0	39.8	+4.0
Central FD	826.0	798.6	771.5	-54.5	-6.6	-27.1	-3.4	399.1	390.8	396.2	-3.0	-0.7	+5.4	+1.4	47.1	47.4	50.2	+3.1
Sverdlovsk Region	3401.7	3303.3	3295.3	-106.4	-3.1	-8.0	-0.2	1269.6	940.5	1315.2	+45.6	+3.6	+374.6	+39.8	37.3	28.5	39.9	+2.6
Ural FD	3401.7	3303.3	3295.3	-106.4	-3.1	-8.0	-0.2	1269.6	940.5	1315.2	+45.6	+3.6	+374.6	+39.8	37.3	28.5	39.9	+2.6
Irkutsk Region	1869.5	1864.9	1826.2	-43.2	-2.3	-38.7	-2.1	545.6	608.6	604.1	+58.5	+10.7	-4.5	-0.7	29.2	32.6	33.1	+3.9
Siberian FD	1869.5	1864.9	1826.2	-43.2	-2.3	-38.7	-2.1	545.6	608.6	604.1	+58.5	+10.7	-4.5	-0.7	29.2	32.6	33.1	+3.9
TOTAL FOR REGIONS**	1407.5	1402.3	1400.4	-5.2	-0.4	-1.9	-0.1	655.5	690.1	770.5	+114.9	+17.5	+80.4	+11.6	42.7	46.9	52.4	+9.7

Source: database of the Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation. Ranked: within each federal district by the decrease in turnout in 2025 (in %).

* Methodological commentary on Inserts 1–2. The results of the Single Voting Day in 2025 were analyzed with the results of two previous elections of a similar level. In most regions of the Russian Federation, they were held in 2015 and 2020, but there are exceptions:

1) The Single Voting Day in 2015 was held in 12 of the 20 territories analyzed. In the remaining 8 regions of the Russian Federation – in other years:

- ✓ in the Komi Republic – in 2016;
- ✓ in the Perm Territory, Novgorod and Sverdlovsk regions, as well as in Sevastopol – in 2017;
- ✓ in the Kurgsk Region and Orenburg Region – in 2019;
- ✓ in the Kambov Region – in 2020.

2) The Single Voting Day in 2020 was held in 15 of the 20 analyzed subjects of the Russian Federation. In the remaining 5 territories:

- ✓ in the Novgorod, Sverdlovsk and Tambov regions – in 2022;
- ✓ in the Kurgsk and Orenburg regions – in 2024.

** In absolute terms (thousand people) – sum, in relative terms (%) – average.

Insert 2

Elections of top regional officials (support for elected regional heads)*

Federal subject	Total number of voters, thousand people			Dynamics (+/-), 2025 to...				Turnout, people			Dynamics (+/-), 2025 to...				Turnout, %			Dynamics (+/-), 2025 to...	
	2015	2020	2025	2015		2020		2015	2020	2025	2015		2020		2015	2020	2025	2015	2020
				thousand people	%	thousand people	%				thousand people	%	thousand people	%					
Republic of Tatarstan	2306.8	1930.4	1963.6	-343.2	-14.9	+33.2	+1.7	94.40	83.27	88.09	-6.31	-6.7	+4.82	+5.8	79.37	65.54	66.78	-12.59	+1.24
Orenburg region.	406.2	616.6	622.0	+215.8	+53.1	+5.4	+0.9	65.94	78.14	83.85	+17.91	+27.2	+5.71	+7.3	26.08	41.07	41.28	+15.2	+0.21
Perm Region	687.9	540.3	685.6	-2.3	-0.3	+145.3	+26.9	82.06	75.69	70.94	-11.12	-13.6	-4.75	-6.3	34.89	27.04	34.75	-0.14	+7.71
Chuvash Republic	362.3	386.4	356.0	-6.3	-1.7	-30.4	-7.9	65.54	75.61	67.06	+1.52	+2.3	-8.55	-11.3	38.38	41.94	39.17	+0.79	-2.77
Volga FD	940.8	868.425	3627.2	-34.0	+9.0	+38.4	+4.4	77.0	78.2	77.5	+0.5	+2.3	-0.7	-1.1	44.7	43.9	45.5	+0.8	+1.6
Jewish Autonomous Region	31.6	76.3	72.1	+40.5	+128.2	-4.2	-5.5	75.42	82.50	83.02	+7.6	+10.1	+0.52	+0.6	24.02	60.23	61.62	+37.6	+1.39
Kamchatka Territory	57.5	67.9	67.8	+10.3	+17.9	-0.1	-0.1	75.48	80.51	62.97	-12.51	-16.6	-4.75	-5.9	24.05	29.90	29.27	+5.22	-0.63
Far Eastern FD	44.6	72.1	70.0	+25.4	+73.0	-2.2	-3.0	75.5	81.5	73.0	-2.5	-3.2	-2.1	-2.6	24.0	45.1	45.4	+21.4	+0.4
Krasnodar Territory	1512.2	2401.3	2551.6	+1039.4	+68.7	+150.3	+6.3	83.64	82.97	83.17	-0.47	-0.6	+0.2	+0.2	38.45	56.91	57.09	+18.64	+0.18
Sevastopol	77.4	135.1	195.0	+117.6	+151.9	+59.9	+44.3	71.05	85.72	81.73	+10.68	+15.0	-3.99	-4.7	24.30	41.21	54.50	+30.2	+13.29
Rostov Region	1241.3	899.2	1544.5	+303.2	+24.4	+645.3	+71.8	78.21	65.53	81.25	+3.04	+3.9	+15.72	+24.0	37.91	28.13	49.49	+11.58	+21.36
Southern FD	943.6	1145.2	1430.4	+486.7	+51.6	+285.2	+40.8	77.6	78.1	82.1	+4.4	+6.1	+4.0	+6.5	33.6	42.1	53.7	+20.1	+11.6
Leningrad Region.	471.1	585.8	756.9	+285.8	+60.7	+171.1	+29.2	82.10	83.61	84.21	+2.11	+2.6	+0.6	+0.7	36.34	43.04	52.87	+16.53	+9.83
Komi Republic	174.6	145.1	163.1	-11.5	-6.6	+18	+12.4	62.17	73.18	70.04	+7.87	+12.7	-3.14	-4.3	25.25	22.04	26.39	+1.14	+4.35
Novgorod Region.	109.5	210.1	216.4	+106.9	+97.6	+6.3	+3.0	53.25	69.63	67.32	+14.07	+26.4	-2.31	-3.3	11.18	22.73	24.42	+13.24	+1.69
Arkhangelsk Region	97.4	120.5	109.6	+12.2	+12.5	-10.9	-9.0	67.99	77.03	62.19	-5.8	-8.5	-14.84	-19.3	19.27	25.26	23.44	+4.17	-1.82
NWFD	213.2	265.4	311.5	+98.4	+46.1	+46.1	+8.9	66.4	75.9	70.9	+4.6	+8.3	-4.9	-6.5	23.0	28.3	31.8	+8.8	+3.5
Kursk Region	310.6	351.0	406.3	+95.7	+30.8	+55.3	+15.8	81.07	65.28	86.92	+5.85	+7.2	+21.64	+33.1	33.67	40.16	46.95	+13.28	+6.79
Bryansk Region	469.4	355.5	428.3	-41.1	-8.8	+72.8	+20.5	79.96	71.69	78.78	-1.18	-1.5	+7.09	+9.9	45.88	36.09	45.81	-0.07	+9.72
Tambov Region	427.3	398.1	311.0	+116.3	-27.2	-87.1	-21.9	79.30	84.95	73.84	-5.46	-6.9	-11.11	-13.1	51.17	49.16	39.83	-11.34	-9.33
Kaluga Region	206.7	201.6	252.2	+45.5	+22.0	+50.6	+25.1	71.43	71.19	72.24	+0.81	+1.1	+1.05	+1.5	25.72	25.17	32.33	+6.61	+7.16
Kostroma Region	128.0	108.1	133.5	+5.5	+4.3	+25.4	+23.5	65.62	64.65	67.63	+2.01	+3.1	+2.98	+4.6	23.47	20.66	26.89	+3.42	+6.23
Central FD	308.4	282.9	306.3	-2.1	-0.7	+23.4	+12.6	75.5	71.6	75.9	+0.4	+0.6	+4.3	+7.2	36.0	34.2	38.4	+2.4	+4.1
Sverdlovsk Region	788.9	618.6	805.9	+16.9	+2.1	+187.3	+30.3	62.16	65.78	61.3	-0.86	-1.4	-4.48	-6.8	23.19	18.73	24.45	+1.26	+5.72
Ural FD	788.9	618.6	805.9	+16.9	+2.1	+187.3	+30.3	62.16	65.78	61.3	-0.86	-1.4	-4.48	-6.8	23.19	18.73	24.45	+1.26	+5.72
Irkutsk Region	270.5	369.8	367.1	+96.5	+35.7	-2.7	-0.7	49.60	60.79	60.79	+11.19	+22.6	0	0	14.47	19.83	20.10	+5.63	+0.27
Siberian FD	270.5	369.8	367.1	+96.5	+35.7	-2.7	-0.7	49.60	60.79	60.79	+11.19	+22.6	0	0	14.47	19.83	20.10	+5.63	+0.27
TOTAL FOR REGIONS**	10137.2	10517.7	12008.5	+1871.1	+32.5	+1490.8	+13.3	72.3	74.9	74.4	+41.0	+3.9	+2.4	+0.6	31.9	35.7	39.9	+8.0	+4.1

Source: database of the Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation. Ranked: within each federal district, in descending order of support for the head of the federal subject in 2025 (in % of turnout).

* Methodical commentary. The candidates from United Russia won all the elections. In addition to the heads of the Komi Republic, the Chuvash Republic, the Kamchatka and Perm territories, as well as the Irkutsk Region in 2020, as well as the heads of the Chuvash Republic in 2025 (self-nomination).

** In absolute terms (thousand people) — sum, in relative terms (%) — average.

Insert 3

Elections of top regional officials in regional capitals (turnout and total number of voters)*

Federal subjects in the context of federal districts	Total number of voters, thousand people			Turnout, thousand people			Dynamics (+/-), 2025 to...			Turnout, %			Dynamics (+/-), 2025 to...	
	2015	2020	2025	2015	2020	2025	2015	2020	2025	2015	2020	2025	2015	2020
Birobidzhan	58.2	57.4	56.6	-1.6	-0.8		+23.9	+3.5		27.40	63.26	70.30	+42.90	+7.04
Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky	135.1	133.5	132.2	-2.9	-1.3		+20.4	+14.4		26.40	31.25	42.40	+16.00	+11.15
Far Eastern FD	193.3	190.9	188.8	-4.5	-2.1		+44.3	+17.9		26.9	47.3	56.4	+29.5	+9.1
Sevastopol	318.6	327.9	357.8	+39.2	+29.9		+130.6	+81.3		34.21	48.28	66.96	+32.75	+18.68
Rostov-on-Don	791.4	802.9	746.1	-45.3	-56.8		+28.7	+144.4		45.86	30.80	52.49	+6.63	+21.69
Krasnodar	674.1	659.5	506.5	-167.6	-153.0		+15.2	+39.9		31.22	28.16	44.54	+13.32	+16.38
Southern FD	1784.1	1790.3	1610.4	-173.7	-179.9		+174.5	+265.6		37.1	35.7	54.7	+17.6	+18.9
Kazan	913.9	930.4	949.2	+35.3	+18.8		-125.4	-46.7		71.93	62.20	56.05	-15.88	-6.15
Orenburg	424.5	437.9	448.5	+24	+10.6		+23.3	-14.7		33.32	40.98	36.72	+3.40	-4.26
Perm	669.4	682.4	703.9	+34.5	+21.5		-40.1	+22.1		38.09	28.25	30.53	-7.56	+2.28
Cheboksary	368.9	373.2	293.6	-75.3	-79.6		-90.8	-80.3		46.67	43.33	27.73	-18.94	-15.60
Volga FD	2376.7	2423.9	2395.2	+18.5	-28.7		-233	-110.6		47.5	43.7	37.8	-9.7	-5.9
Bryansk	358.3	350.3	344.5	-13.8	-5.8		-10.4	+20.2		50.30	42.72	49.30	-1.00	+6.58
Kursk	351.2	302.3	343.2	-8.0	+40.9		+54.0	+12.2		32.53	51.61	49.01	+16.48	-2.60
Tambov	245.3	243.0	270.7	+25.4	+27.7		+29.8	+34.3		33.72	32.19	41.56	+7.84	+9.37
Kaluga	289.3	296.1	267.7	-21.7	-28.4		-5.4	-3.1		27.27	25.88	27.48	+0.21	+1.60
Kostroma	218.7	98.7	192.7	-26.0	+94.0		+36.7	+20.6		5.43	28.33	25.23	+19.80	-3.10
Central FD	1462.8	1290.4	1418.8	-44.1	128.4		+104.7	+84.2		29.9	36.1	38.5	+8.7	+2.4
Veliky Novgorod	178.4	169.1	163.6	-14.8	-5.5		+6.5	+5.8		24.60	26.36	30.78	+6.18	+4.42
Arkhangelsk	280.3	260.6	229.8	-50.5	-30.8		+11.2	-15.8		18.75	30.55	27.76	+9.01	-2.79
Syktvykar	150.0	148.3	131.4	-18.6	-16.9		-25.9	-6.0		40.39	27.43	26.38	-14.01	-1.05
Northwestern FD	608.7	578	524.8	-83.9	-53.2		-8.2	-16.0		27.9	28.1	28.3	+0.4	+0.2
Irkutsk	456.7	462.6	464.8	+8.1	+2.2		+22.3	-11.4		24.90	31.87	29.26	+4.36	-2.61
Siberian FD	456.7	462.6	464.8	+8.1	+2.2		+22.3	-11.4		24.90	31.87	29.26	+4.36	-2.61
Yekaterinburg	1086.6	1125.3	1039.9	-46.7	-85.4		-1.9	+5.6		25.00	23.47	25.94	+0.94	+2.47
Ural FD	1086.6	1125.3	1039.9	-46.7	-85.4		-1.9	+5.6		25.00	23.47	25.94	+0.94	+2.47
TOTAL FOR REGIONS**	7968.9	7861.4	7642.7	-326.3	-218.7		+102.7	226.3		33.6	36.7	40.0	6.4	3.3

Source: database of the Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation.

* Ranked: within each federal district in descending order of support for the head of the subject of the Russian Federation in 2025 (in % of turnout).

** By absolute values (thousand people) — sum, by relative indicators (%) — average.

Insert 4

Elections of top regional officials in regional capitals (support for elected regional heads)*

Federal subjects in the context of federal districts	Total number of votes, thousand people				% of turnout				% of voters			
	2020		2025		2015		2020		2015		2020	
	Dynamics (+/-), 2025 to ...		Dynamics (+/-), 2025 to ...		Dynamics (+/-), 2025 to ...		Dynamics (+/-), 2025 to ...		Dynamics (+/-), 2025 to ...		Dynamics (+/-), 2025 to ...	
	2015	2020	2015	2020	2015	2020	2015	2020	2015	2020	2015	2020
Kursk	90.8	101.4	142.0	+40.6	79.51	64.99	84.90	+5.39	25.86	33.54	41.37	+7.83
Bryansk	146.9	106.0	133.0	-13.9	81.53	70.81	78.25	-3.28	41.00	30.25	38.61	+8.36
Tambov	32.9	61.6	73.3	+40.4	39.81	78.81	65.45	+25.64	13.42	25.36	27.09	+1.73
Kaluga	49.2	49.8	45.9	-3.3	62.37	65.02	62.32	-0.05	17.01	16.83	17.13	+0.30
Kostroma	8.0	16.9	29.1	+21.2	67.19	60.34	60.00	-7.19	3.65	17.10	15.10	+11.45
Central FD	327.8	335.7	423.3	+87.6	66.1	68.0	70.2	+2.2	20.2	24.6	27.9	+3.2
Kazan	605.0	417.6	448.7	-156.3	92.04	72.16	84.39	-7.65	66.20	44.88	47.27	-18.93
Orenburg	90.5	129.1	133.7	+43.2	63.99	71.93	80.21	+16.22	21.32	29.48	29.81	+0.33
Perm	201.2	138.2	152.9	-48.3	78.93	71.66	71.21	-7.72	30.06	20.25	21.72	+1.47
Cheboksary	95.2	104.0	38.5	-56.7	55.29	64.34	47.32	-7.97	25.81	27.88	13.11	-12.70
Volga FD	991.9	788.9	773.8	-218.1	72.6	70.0	70.8	-1.8	35.8	30.6	28.0	-7.9
Rostov-on-Don	272.1	139.9	328.8	+56.7	74.97	56.58	83.46	+8.49	34.39	17.43	44.07	+9.68
Sevastopol	77.4	135.1	195.0	+117.6	71.03	85.35	81.73	+10.70	24.30	41.21	54.50	+13.29
Krasnodar	169.7	118.1	168.9	-0.8	80.66	63.61	74.61	-6.05	25.18	17.91	33.35	+8.17
Southern FD	519.2	393.1	692.7	+299.6	75.6	68.5	79.9	+4.4	28.0	25.5	44.0	+18.5
Birobidzhan	11.5	27.8	31.1	+19.6	72.13	76.52	78.05	+5.92	19.76	48.41	54.87	+6.46
Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky	26.7	34.0	34.8	+0.8	74.98	81.39	62.22	-12.76	19.80	25.44	26.35	+0.91
Far Eastern FD	38.2	61.8	65.9	+27.7	73.6	79.0	70.1	-3.4	19.8	36.9	40.6	+3.7
Arkhangelsk	21.7	59.1	46.4	+24.7	41.35	74.22	70.95	+29.60	7.75	22.67	20.20	+12.45
Sykttykar	35.7	26.9	21.1	-14.6	58.91	66.18	61.01	-5.17	23.79	18.15	16.08	-7.71
Veliky Novgorod	26.9	34.3	26.7	-0.2	61.25	77.09	53.07	-8.18	15.07	20.32	16.33	+1.26
Northwestern FD	84.3	120.3	94.2	+9.9	53.8	72.5	61.7	+7.8	15.5	20.4	17.5	+2.0
Irkutsk	34.3	80.7	77.8	+43.5	30.18	54.74	57.04	+26.86	7.52	17.45	16.74	+9.22
Siberian FD	34.3	80.7	77.8	+43.5	30.18	54.74	57.04	+26.86	7.52	17.45	16.74	+9.22
Yekaterinburg	130.1	150.1	154.0	+23.9	47.90	56.84	56.11	+8.21	11.97	13.34	14.81	+2.84
Ural FD	130.1	150.1	154.0	+23.9	47.90	56.84	56.11	+8.21	11.97	13.34	14.81	+2.84
TOTAL FOR REGIONS**	2125.8	1930.6	2281.7	+351.1	60.0	67.1	66.6	+6.6	19.8	24.1	27.1	+7.2

Source: database of the Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation.

* Ranked: within each federal district in descending order of support for the head of the subject of the Russian Federation in 2025 (in % of turnout).

** By absolute values (thousand people) — sum, by relative indicators (%) — average.

Insert 5

ELECTIONS OF DEPUTIES TO REGIONAL LEGISLATIVE BODIES

Turnout and total number of voters*

Federal subjects in the context of federal districts	Total number of voters, thousand people				Turnout, thousand people				Turnout, %							
	2015		2020		2025		Dynamics (+/-), 2025 to ...		2015		2020		2025		Dynamics (+/-), 2025 to ...	
	2015	2020	2025	Dynamics (+/-), 2025 to ...	2015	2020	2025	Dynamics (+/-), 2025 to ...	2015	2020	2025	Dynamics (+/-), 2025 to ...	2015	2020	2025	Dynamics (+/-), 2025 to ...
Belgorod Region	1201.2	1229.2	1196.1	-5.1	-33.1	648.0	669.7	707.5	+59.5	+37.8	53.95	54.48	59.15	+5.20	+4.67	
Voronezh Region	1875.8	1845.2	1798.2	-77.6	-47.0	945.7	814.5	985.9	+40.2	+171.4	50.42	44.14	54.83	+4.41	+10.69	
Ryazan Region	942.8	903.1	869.0	-73.8	-34.1	352.8	293.4	394.8	+42.0	+101.4	37.42	32.49	45.43	+8.01	+12.94	
Kaluga Region	803.8	800.9	779.0	-24.8	-21.9	289.7	283.2	348.5	+58.8	+65.3	36.05	35.36	44.74	+8.69	+9.38	
Kostroma Region	546.5	523.4	496.4	-50.1	-27.0	195.3	167.3	197.4	+2.1	+30.1	35.74	31.97	39.77	+4.03	+7.80	
Central FD	5370.1	5301.8	5138.7	-231.4	-163.1	2431.5	2228.1	2634.1	+202.6	+406.0	42.7	39.7	48.8	+6.1	+9.1	
Yamal-Nenets Autonomous Area	341.4	365.2	353.6	+12.2	-11.6	236.8	172.0	174.5	-62.3	+2.5	69.37	47.11	49.35	-20.02	+2.24	
Chelyabinsk Region	2693.2	2600.4	2571.5	-121.7	-28.9	1114.4	880.7	1028.0	-86.4	+147.3	41.38	33.87	39.98	-1.40	+6.11	
Kurgan Region	730.6	686.7	639.1	-91.5	-47.6	221.9	213.3	245.2	+23.3	+31.9	30.38	31.05	38.37	+7.99	+7.32	
Ural FD	3765.2	3652.3	3564.2	-201.0	-88.1	1573.1	1266.0	1447.7	-125.4	+181.7	47.0	37.3	42.6	-4.5	+5.2	
Magadan Region	108.1	97.8	96.4	-11.7	-1.4	36.4	32.4	40.2	+3.8	+7.8	33.62	33.17	41.71	+8.09	+8.54	
Far Eastern FD	108.1	97.8	96.4	-11.7	-1.4	36.4	32.4	40.2	+3.8	+7.8	33.62	33.17	41.71	+8.09	+8.54	
Komi Republic	691.3	658.0	617.9	-73.4	-40.1	352.1	198.3	232.7	-119.4	+34.4	50.93	30.14	37.66	-13.27	+7.52	
Northwestern FD	691.3	658.0	617.9	-73.4	-40.1	352.1	198.3	232.7	-119.4	+34.4	50.93	30.14	37.66	-13.27	+7.52	
Novosibirsk Region	2138.0	2157.8	2189.9	+51.9	+32.1	656.7	609.6	723.8	+67.1	+114.2	30.71	28.25	33.05	+2.34	+4.80	
Siberian FD	2138.0	2157.8	2189.9	+51.9	+32.1	656.7	609.6	723.8	+67.1	+114.2	30.71	28.25	33.05	+2.34	+4.80	
TOTAL FOR REGIONS**	12072.7	11867.7	11607.1	-465.6	-260.6	5049.8	4334.4	5078.5	+28.7	+744.1	42.7	36.5	44.0	+1.3	+7.5	

Support for the United Russia Party*

Federal subject*	Total number of votes, thousand				% of turnout				% of voters						
	2015	2020	2025	Dynamics (+/-), 2025 to ...		2015	2020	2025	Dynamics (+/-), 2025 to...		2015	2020	Dynamics (+/-), 2025 to...		
				2015	2020				2015	2020			2015	2020	
	698.0	499.1	728.1	+30.1	+229.0	73.84	61.52	73.88	+0.04	+12.36	37.21	27.05	40.49	+3.28	+13.44
Voronezh Region															
Belgorod Region	404.0	428.1	515.4	+111.4	+87.3	62.36	63.95	72.98	+10.62	+9.03	33.63	34.83	43.09	+9.46	+8.26
Ryazan Region	220.9	139.8	287.1	+66.2	+147.3	62.73	47.65	72.85	+10.12	+25.20	23.43	15.47	33.04	+9.61	+17.57
Kaluga Region	164.8	120.1	203.8	+39.0	+83.7	56.99	42.43	58.56	+1.57	+16.13	20.51	14.99	26.16	+5.65	+11.17
Kostroma Region	99.5	53.4	99.1	-0.4	+45.7	50.96	31.92	50.26	-0.70	+18.34	18.20	10.20	19.96	+1.76	+9.76
Central FD	1587.2	1240.5	1833.5	+246.3	+593.0	61.40	49.50	65.70	+4.3	+16.2	26.6	20.5	32.5	+6.0	+12.0
Magadan Region	20.9	18.9	26.4	+5.5	+7.5	57.71	58.32	65.89	+8.18	+7.57	19.37	19.32	27.44	+8.07	+8.12
Far Eastern FD	20.9	18.9	26.4	+5.5	+7.5	57.71	58.32	65.89	+8.18	+7.57	19.37	19.32	27.44	+8.07	+8.12
Yamal-Nenets Autonomous Area	166.0	111.1	114.2	-51.8	+3.1	70.11	64.64	65.60	-4.51	+0.96	48.62	30.43	32.31	-16.31	+1.88
Kurgan Region	125.9	95.0	134.5	+8.6	+39.5	56.74	44.57	54.91	-1.83	+10.34	17.23	13.84	21.04	+3.81	+7.20
Chelyabinsk Region	624.9	374.3	558.9	-66	+184.6	56.16	42.58	54.48	-1.68	+11.90	23.20	14.39	21.74	-1.46	+7.35
Ural FD	916.8	580.4	807.6	-109.2	+227.2	61.0	50.6	58.30	-2.7	+7.7	29.7	19.6	25.0	-4.7	+5.5
Novosibirsk Region	291.7	231.7	375.4	+83.7	+143.7	44.56	38.13	51.91	+7.35	+13.78	13.65	10.74	17.14	+3.49	+6.40
Siberian FD	291.7	231.7	375.4	+83.7	+143.7	44.56	38.13	51.91	+7.35	+13.78	13.65	10.74	17.14	+3.49	+6.40
Komi Republic	204.0	56.6	103.3	-100.7	+46.7	58.05	28.61	44.50	-13.55	+15.89	29.51	8.60	16.71	-12.80	+8.11
Northwestern FD	204.0	56.6	103.3	-100.7	+46.7	58.05	28.61	44.50	-13.55	+15.89	29.51	8.60	16.71	-12.80	+8.11
TOTAL FOR REGIONS**	3020.6	2128.1	3146.2	+125.6	+1018.1	59.1	47.7	60.5	+1.4	+12.9	25.9	18.2	27.2	+1.3	+9.0

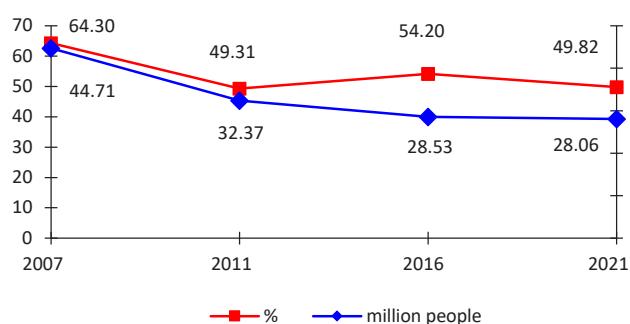
Source: database of the Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation.

*Ranked: within each federal district in descending order of turnout (in%) and support for the head of the subject of the Russian Federation (in% of turnout) in 2025.

** In absolute terms (thousand people) — sum, in relative terms (%) — average.

Of course, it is essential to acknowledge that the very fact of another calmly conducted electoral campaign is of key importance given the external political conditions the country has faced since the start of the SMO. **However, as the analysis of all monitoring data on regional and municipal elections from 2018 to 2025 shows, behind the façade of relatively smooth local electoral campaigns (expressed primarily in the non-alternative support for the ruling party by voters) lie latent and rather concerning trends.**

These trends, in particular, have already led to a tangible decline in support for United Russia at the federal level, where it lost nearly 17 million voters over 14 years (from 45 to 28 million; *Figure*) in State Duma elections. This essentially signifies a decrease in society's level of trust in the authorities.



Dynamics of Support for the United Russia Party in State Duma Elections, 2007–2021

Source: Calculated by the authors based on CEC of the Russian Federation data.

Both empirical data and expert assessments from elections at both local and federal levels indicate that simultaneously with the repeated credit of trust granted annually by Russian voters to the President, the ruling party, and the entire national development course implemented by the head of state, society demonstrates a growing demand for a qualitative increase in the effectiveness of state governance.

This is confirmed not only by official election results (for instance, when United Russia's convincing victory occurs against a backdrop of declining turnout; or when an overall increase in national turnout is achieved due to a small number of regions, while turnout decreases in most federal subjects; or when the ruling party wins across all territories but loses votes in many of them compared to previous elections...) but also by the results of long-term sociological surveys of the population.

The results of mass public opinion polls (both nationwide and regional) show that they objectively reflect the structure of citizens' party-political preferences, as demonstrated by the distribution of votes in elections: United Russia consistently holds first place in this structure, second and third are shared by the CPRF and the LDPR, with A Just Russia – For Truth and New People parties lagging significantly behind (*Insert 6*). At the same time, over the past 25 years (from 2000 to 2025), the share of people who believe that United Russia shares their interests has increased substantially:

- ✓ nationwide – by 20 p.p. (from 14 to 34%)⁶⁴;
- ✓ in the Vologda Region – by 24 p.p. (from 18 to 42%; *Insert 6*)⁶⁵.

However, the results of sociological research also indicate that the level of support for the ruling party is only 30–40% (which corresponds more closely to the election results as a percentage of the total electorate, rather than just those who actually participated). This is an indicator that allows United Russia to feel comfortable in electoral competition, **but it is not an indicator that would suggest the ruling party expresses the viewpoint of the majority of the country's citizens.**

⁶⁴ Data from the Federal Center for Theoretical and Applied Sociology (FCTAS RAS). Source: Levashov V.K., Velikaya N.M., Shushpanova I.S. et al. (2025). How are you, Russia? Express information. 55th stage of the All-Russian sociological monitoring, May 2025: Bulletin. Moscow: FCTAS RAS. 106 p.

⁶⁵ Public opinion monitoring data from Vologda Research Center of the Russian Academy of Sciences (VoIRC RAS).

Furthermore, a significant portion of Russians does not see any political party in parliament that reflects their interests. On average over the past months of V. Putin's fifth presidential term (from 2024 to the present):

- ✓ according to nationwide surveys by FCTAS RAS, their share is 53%;
- ✓ according to surveys conducted by VolRC RAS in the Vologda Region, it is 36%.

That is, in essence, there are three substantial groups (according to VolRC RAS data for 2024–2025; *Insert 6*):

- ✓ 42% supporting United Russia,
- ✓ 23% supporting other parties,
- ✓ and 36% of people who do not see any political forces in parliament expressing their interests at all.

“We live in a society of three thirds. Where one is always for the authorities, another is politicized and protest-oriented, and the final third wavers... although the politicized and protest-oriented third has shrunk in size, it always remains a qualitative group...”⁶⁶.

Thus, the data presented in *Insert 6* indicate that from the standpoint of the electoral structure of the political system, United Russia's “lead” over other parties is colossal. **However, from the perspective of the tasks facing United Russia as the ruling party, the party of the majority, there are as yet no signs that it is consolidating Russian society.**

Moreover, there are specific facts pointing not merely to a growing public need for improved government effectiveness, **but to an objective historical necessity for it. Indeed, since February 2022, relatively calm elections and the non-alternative public support for the authorities have largely been determined by the fact that electoral campaigns occur under force majeure conditions, under the influence of “black swan” events:**

- ✓ in 2022, the SMO itself (the start of hostilities) and the retreat of Russian troops from the Kharkov Region served as such a “black swan”⁶⁷;
- ✓ in 2023 – the armed mutiny by the Wagner PMC;
- ✓ in 2024 – the incursion of the Ukrainian Armed Forces into the territory of the Kursk Region, as well as the exposure of massive corruption facts in the Russian Ministry of Defense⁶⁸;
- ✓ in 2025 – the exposure of a corruption scheme related to the activities of the Kursk Region “Development Corporation” (including the arrest of former Governor A. Smirnov on April 15, 2025), which became a cause for the incursion of the Ukrainian Armed Forces into the territory of the Russian Federation...

Each of these factors created a direct threat to national security, increasing voter anxiety and strengthening distrust towards the government bodies that allowed these “black swans” to emerge. As experts note, *“society's trust in the political elite, which is supposed to be a moral compass, the entity responsible for protecting sovereignty and consolidating society, raises serious questions...”*

⁶⁶ Garmonenko D. The social structure of society is being depoliticized for elections. Available at: https://www.ng.ru/politics/2025-10-13/3_9358_parties.html (opinion of the head of the Analytical Department of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation S. Obukhov).

⁶⁷ Recall that Presidential Decree 647 “On the announcement of partial mobilization in the Russian Federation”, dated September 21, 2022, as well as the retreat of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation from Kherson on November 9, 2022, are events that can also be classified as “black swans”, but they occurred after the Single Voting Day on September 11, 2022.

⁶⁸ The anti-corruption campaign in the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation intensified after the arrest of deputy minister T. Ivanov on April 24, 2024 and the resignation of defense minister S. Shoigu on May 12, 2024. According to open data, in total for 2024 there are 110 executives, managers, mayors, ministers, deputies, heads of state enterprises and officers who became involved in criminal cases because of bribes” (source: Smolentsev K. A year of purges. In 2024, 110 officials, military and security personnel were arrested. Available at: <https://66.ru/news/politic/278122>).

Insert 6

Level of support for political parties/movements by respondents
(data from FCTAS RAS for the Russian Federation, % of respondents)

Party	1999	Vladimir Putin's first presidential term (2000–2003)	Vladimir Putin's second presidential term (2004–2007)	Dmitry Medvedev's presidential term (2008–2011)	Vladimir Putin's third presidential term (2012–2017)	Vladimir Putin's fourth presidential term (2018–2023)	Vladimir Putin's fifth presidential term (2024 – present)	Vladimir Putin's fourth presidential term (2018–2023) to Vladimir Putin's first presidential term (2000–2003)	Vladimir Putin's fifth presidential term (2024 – present) to Vladimir Putin's first presidential term (2000–2003)
United Russia	5.0	13.9	18.4	34.9	24.1	16.7	33.5	+3	+20
CPRF	20.0	13.6	7.4	9.6	9.3	8.3	6.0	-5	-8
LDPR	3.0	4.3	6.9	7.5	7.3	7.8	3.5	+4	-1
Just Russia – For the Truth			6.0	4.9	2.6	2.8	2.0	+3	+2
New People						1.3	1.5	+1	+2
CPRF, LDPR, Just Russia, New People, other	23.0	17.9	20.3	22.0	19.3	20.1	13.0	+2	-5
None		34.1	35.8	28.5	36.2	42.3	44.5	+8	+10
Difficult to answer	31.0	16.5	16.1	9.8	9.8	10.0	8.0	-7	-9
None, difficult to answer	31.0	50.6	51.9	38.3	46.0	52.3	52.5	+2	+2

Source: Levashov V.K., Velikaya N.M., Shushpanova I.S. et al. (2025). How are you, Russia? Express information. 55th stage of the All-Russian sociological monitoring, May 2025: Bulletin. Moscow: FCTAS RAS. 106 p.

Which party expresses your interests?
(data from VoIRC RAS for the Vologda Region, % of respondents)

Party	1999	Vladimir Putin's first presidential term (2000–2003)	Vladimir Putin's second presidential term (2004–2007)	Dmitry Medvedev's presidential term (2008–2011)	Vladimir Putin's third presidential term (2012–2017)	Vladimir Putin's fourth presidential term (2018–2023)	Vladimir Putin's fifth presidential term (2024 – present)	Vladimir Putin's fourth presidential term (2018–2023) to Vladimir Putin's first presidential term (2000–2003)	Vladimir Putin's fifth presidential term (2024 – present) to Vladimir Putin's first presidential term (2000–2003)
United Russia	10.1	17.8	23.5	35.2	33.4	34.9	41.9	+17	+24
CPRF	12.7	10.7	7.9	8.4	9.1	9.3	9.2	-1	-2
LDPR	4.6	6.8	8.1	7.3	8.4	8.6	7.7	+2	+1
Just Russia – For the Truth			4.9	4.4	4.6	4.2	3.5		
New People						1.9	2.2		
Other	0.8	0.6	0.3	0.2	0.4	0.4	0.2	0	0
CPRF, LDPR, Just Russia, New People, other	18.1	18.0	18.7	20.2	22.4	23.4	22.7	+5	+5
None	27.1	31.2	27.4	28.3	31.8	31.2	25.7	0	-6
Difficult to answer	33.4	20.0	18.1	12.8	11.7	10.8	10.0	-9	-10
None, difficult to answer	60.5	51.2	45.5	41.1	43.5	42.0	35.6	-9	-16

Source: VoIRC RAS public opinion monitoring data.

“One of the effects of the special military operation (unexpected for the West, but completely logical for Russia) was the consolidation of society. Over 70% of Russians provide volunteer assistance to the front, and trust in the President of Russia remains stably high. **However, society’s trust in the political elite, which is supposed to be a moral compass, the entity responsible for protecting sovereignty and consolidating society, raises serious questions...**

... In Russia, the elite is primarily considered to consist of individuals with high incomes, status-filled relatives, and great power. And when the degree of elitism is determined by income level – as Yuri Solomin rightly noted – this ‘gives rise to stratification, and with it, the **savagery of souls**’. It is precisely this savagery of souls that we often observe among our ‘elitists’. **Corruption, embezzlement of budget funds, irresponsibility, the priority of selfish interests, susceptibility to external influence, contempt for the interests of the people (‘these losers’), and a firm intention to continue the ‘feast during the plague’ – stories dedicated to these themes, using examples from the political, military, and cultural elite, we see in almost every news broadcast**”⁶⁹.

Even as the state continues its active policy of organizing domestic life under the conditions of the SMO (*Insert 7*), **the system of state governance itself remains populated by individuals whose daily conduct is entirely opposite to the public national development agenda proclaimed by the head of state.**

This is confirmed by specific facts presented in *Inserts 8–9*:

Insert 8 reflects the **qualitative aspect** of such episodes of “savagery of souls” among individual representatives of the ruling elites. It presents expert assessments indicating that such individuals are found among representatives of all key parliamentary parties.

Insert 9 continues our monitoring of arrests and detentions of government officials. It largely reflects the **quantitative side (the high frequency)** of such episodes in our country, specifically those officially “exposed” as a result of actions by law enforcement agencies.

According to official data from the Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs for the period from 2018 to 2025 (data for January – August):

- ✓ the total number of corruption-related crimes in Russia increased **from 22.7 to 32.3 thousand (or from 1.4% to 15.1% of the total crime rate)**;
- ✓ the number of crimes related to bribery increased from **9.3 to 20.1 thousand (or from 4.6% to 18.7%)**⁷⁰.

Thus, the results of monitoring electoral campaigns from 2018–2025, along with sociological measurements, expert assessments, and factual data characterizing the state of Russia’s system of state governance, indicate that the election results after February 2022 – where Russian society annually grants a “credit of trust” to the authorities and personally to the President of the Russian Federation – are largely based on people’s need for stability amidst the undoubtedly force majeure circumstances that have accompanied life in the country in recent years.

⁶⁹ Batchikov S. The time of the best. Available at: <https://izborsk-club.ru/27211?ysclid=mgrm2zx2oc618569270>

⁷⁰ Source: monthly reports of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation “The state of crime in Russia”. Available at: <https://xn--b1aew.xn--p1ai/reports/1/>

**Monitoring of regulatory legal acts (laws, decrees) Signed by the President
of the Russian Federation from August 19 to October 24, 2025⁷¹**

**MEASURES TO SUPPORT SMO PARTICIPANTS AND THEIR FAMILY MEMBERS, TO DEVELOP THE MILITARY-INDUSTRIAL
COMPLEX, MEASURES RELATED TO MOBILIZATION, ORGANIZATION OF MARTIAL LAW, INCREASE IN THE ANTI-TERRORIST
PROTECTION OF FACILITIES**

September 18 – A list of Presidential instructions following the July 23 meeting with Cabinet members. The Government of the Russian Federation is instructed to submit proposals for a new procedure for providing social support measures to SMO participants in electronic form. This concerns assistance to combat veterans and their family members in the federal subjects. The plan is to provide social support measures electronically using the unified portal of public services and regional portals of state and municipal services, including on a no-application basis or in a proactive mode.

September 29 – Federal Law 364 “On Amending Articles 81 and 351 of the Labor Code of the Russian Federation.” An employment contract will not be terminated after the completion of military service – it is now automatically extended for the period necessary for recovery and rehabilitation, even if treatment extends beyond three months. If an SMO participant falls ill after the completion of service but has not yet returned to work, the sick leave will be paid from the funds of the Social Fund of Russia. Protection against unlawful dismissal is guaranteed (the new rules will help avoid situations where employees needing rehabilitation lose their jobs). Thus, the previously established three-month period for returning to work is now supplemented by the possibility of extending the contract for the entire period of temporary disability. Similar changes apply to state civil servants participating in the SMO.

**MEASURES TO PROTECT INFORMATION SECURITY, REGULATE THE ACTIVITIES OF FOREIGN AGENTS,
AND UPBRING AND EDUCATE THE YOUNGER GENERATIONS**

September 29 – Federal Law 368 “On Amending the Federal Law ‘On Education in the Russian Federation’.” It is established that additional professional education for individuals who are not teaching staff, and for teaching staff, for the purpose of enabling them to teach subjects, courses, disciplines (modules) aimed at gaining knowledge about the foundations of the spiritual and moral culture of the peoples of Russia, moral principles, historical and cultural traditions of world religion(s), or alternative subjects, courses, disciplines (modules), can also be provided by spiritual educational institutions and private educational institutions whose founders are centralized religious organizations.

October 6 – Decree 719 “On the Establishment of the Council for Culture and the Institution of the Presidential Prize in the Field of Culture for Works and Projects for Children and Youth.” The previously existing Presidential Council for Culture and Art is abolished. The head of state remains the Chairperson of the Council, as before, the Deputy Chairperson is the head of the Mosfilm movie concern, K. Shakhnazarov, and the Secretary is the Assistant to the President of the Russian Federation, V. Medinsky. It is also established that three presidential prizes will be awarded annually, with the prize amount being 5 million rubles.

October 15 – Federal Law 378 “On Amending Article 330 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation.” Establishes criminal liability for evading the fulfillment of duties stipulated by the legislation of the Russian Federation on foreign agents, committed by a person who has been held administratively liable for violating the procedure for the activities of a foreign agent or who has a previous conviction for evading such duties.

⁷¹ The insert is a continuation of the monitoring of the most important regulatory legal acts signed by the President of the Russian Federation, which we have been conducting since June 2022 (the first issue of the monitoring is presented in the article: Ilyin V.A., Morev M.V. (2022). A difficult road after the Rubicon. Economic and Social Changes: Facts, Trends, Forecast, 15(3), 9–41).

According to the new version of Article 330.1 of the Criminal Code, liability will arise for evading the submission of documents for inclusion in the register of foreign agents or violating the procedure for their activities, if this act is committed by: someone who was previously subjected to administrative punishment for an offense under Article 19.34 of the Code of Administrative Offenses (“Violation of the procedure for the activities of a foreign agent”); someone with a previous conviction for a crime under Article 330.1 of the Criminal Code. The criminal penalties themselves remain unchanged. The changes only concern how quickly criminal liability is triggered.

The following measures are provided for evading the duties of a foreign agent: a fine of up to 300 thousand rubles or the amount of the salary/other income of the convicted person for a period of up to two years; compulsory labor for up to 480 hours; corrective labor for up to two years; imprisonment for up to two years.

October 15 – Decree 738 “On the Concept of the State Migration Policy of the Russian Federation for 2026–2030.” The Concept proclaims the main goal of migration policy to be ensuring a balance of state, public, and private interests. The main activities of state authorities in the field of migration policy in the coming years will be aimed at:

- ✓ increasing the responsibility of employers hiring foreign citizens;
- ✓ reducing the burden on healthcare and the social sphere due to the presence in the Russian Federation of non-working and non-studying family members of foreigners;
- ✓ resolving the issue of taxation of foreign citizens; preventing the territorial isolation of foreigners who have come to the Russian Federation for permanent residence.
- ✓ It is also stated that the result of the migration policy should be the following:
- ✓ a marked decrease in the number of illegal migrants and crimes committed by them;
- ✓ the authorities will restrict the stay in the country of foreign citizens not engaged in work or study and their family members;
- ✓ creating conditions for the return to Russia of residents of the new regions who were forced to go abroad due to the SMO;
- ✓ the authorities will support the relocation to Russia of foreigners who share traditional Russian spiritual and moral values;
- ✓ taking measures against the formation of ethnic enclaves.

Specific examples of “egregious”⁷² behavior by individual representatives of the ruling elites

1. July 24, 2025: M. Yegorov, a State Councillor of the Russian Federation, 1st class, was detained. On 04.10.2021, by decree of the President of the Russian Federation, he was appointed acting governor of the Tambov Region. He was a graduate of the fourth cohort of the “Governors’ School.” On 10.12.2021, he was elected secretary of the Tambov regional branch of the United Russia party. On 19.09.2022, he won the gubernatorial election, receiving 84.95% of the vote. He had been awarded honorary certificates from the President and the Government of the Russian Federation, among other accolades.

A criminal case has been initiated against Yegorov under Part 6 of Article 290 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation (receiving a bribe on an especially large scale). As experts noted, “**since December [2024], Yegorov is already the third detained former governor in the Central Federal District.** At the end of 2024, the former head of the Ryazan Region, Nikolay Lyubimov, was arrested, accused of receiving bribes totaling over 250 million rubles. And in April, the former governor of Kursk, Alexey Smirnov, was placed in a pre-trial detention center — in connection with a criminal case concerning 1 billion rubles in fraud during the construction of fortifications in the border area”⁷³.

2. October 11: S. Les, the head of Krymsky District in the Krasnodar Territory, was detained. He is suspected of misappropriating over a hundred land plots, with an estimated value of up to 2 billion rubles. **Les’s detention is linked to the largest natural disaster in the history of the Krasnodar Territory — the 2012 flood, which resulted in 170 deaths and left tens of thousands homeless.** The investigation established that if local authorities had promptly informed residents about the flood, there could have been fewer casualties. Les was already the deputy head at that time. However, while the mayor of Krymsk and the district head were sent to prison, he managed to remain in power... **A few years later, Les began laying claim to lands belonging to the victims**⁷⁴.

Argumenty i Fakty newspaper: “Thirteen years have passed since the terrible emergency, its echoes are still heard — for instance, in 2023, the bridge over the Adagum River collapsed again after recent repairs; it was promised for completion in 2025, but at the time of publication, it had not yet been commissioned. **Interestingly, the construction cost of the bridge is just over 600 million rubles, while the value of the land plots the district head is accused of embezzling exceeds two billion.** Simple arithmetic — three such bridges could have been built with that money”⁷⁵.

Prior to his detention, S. Les was the secretary of the Krymsk local branch of the United Russia party.

3. July 29, 2025: I. Apostolevsky, leader of the CPRF faction in the Legislative Assembly of the Leningrad Region, was detained. The politician is charged with propaganda of the symbols of an extremist organization. According to RIA Novosti, an administrative case was initiated against him due to “publications posted in 2017 and not removed from social media in support of [Alexey] Navalny*.” On July 30, he was sentenced to 7 days of administrative arrest⁷⁶.

⁷² Besogon TV. The episode aired October 17, 2025. Fear the wrath of the patient. Available at: <https://besogontv.ru/videos/boysya-gneva-terpelivkh/>

⁷³ Ivanov A. The ex-governor of one of the Russian regions, the former chief housing inspector of the Russian Federation is detained. Available at: https://zavtra.ru/events/zaderzhan_eks-gubernator_odnogo_iz_rossijskih_regionov_bivshij_glavgoszhilinspektor_rf?ysclid=mgmk4hor5m745590504

⁷⁴ He felt like a prince: How the official Les pulled off a scam with land for 2 billion. Available at: <https://ren.tv/longread/1374368-pochuvstvoval-sebia-kniazkom-kak-chinovnik-les-provernul-afery-s-zemlei-na-2-mlrd?ysclid=mgmjbduob475947652>

⁷⁵ Ivanov A. In Kuban, the head of the district tried to escape from the security forces with golden crutches and 105 million rubles. Available at: <https://www.livekuban.ru/news/zhizn/glava-krymskogo-rayona-kubani-les-za-reshetkoy-cto-zhdet-ego-doma-semya-i-lichnaya-zhizn-chinovnika-vora?ysclid=mgmjb8207a192122244>

* The activities of Navalny’s headquarters were recognized as extremist and banned on the territory of the Russian Federation.

⁷⁶ Kondratiev A. “It is clear what the police were looking for”: searches took place in the Lipetsk Regional Committee of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation. Available at: <https://www.gazeta.ru/politics/2025/08/01/21462734.shtml?ysclid=mgqbey5xr0655886184>

4. In September 2024, the General Prosecutor's Office identified violations of anti-corruption legislation in the actions of State Duma Deputy Yuri Napso. It was established that Yuri Napso had been a deputy since December 8, 2007. He held various positions, including deputy and first deputy chairman of the Committee on Civil, Criminal, and Arbitration Legislation, as well as first deputy chairman of the committee on state building and legislation. All these positions required him to fully and accurately declare his property and refrain from entrepreneurial activity. **However, an inspection revealed that while holding state positions, Yuri Napso was also the owner and manager of commercial organizations. He participated in their activities and received income from them... He illegally acquired expensive real estate objects, information about which he did not declare or report to regulatory bodies...**

April 4, 2025, the State Duma adopted a resolution on the early termination of his powers, as the parliamentarian was permanently residing in Dubai, where, according to press reports, he owns elite real estate. **The Commission on Regulations and Support of State Duma Activities found that starting from April 2023, Yuri Napso was periodically on sick leave, and on the days between – was absent from work. In total, he was not present in the State Duma for about two years, more than 200 days of which were without valid reason...**

321 deputies voted to strip Napso of his mandate; however, the LDPR faction did not vote on the resolution, abstaining in its entirety, which cannot be interpreted otherwise than as a coordinated position coming from the faction's leadership... The LDPR leadership certainly knew about Napso's illegal activities but did nothing about it⁷⁷.

5. On September 23, the Prosecutor's Office reported that one of Russia's highest-ranking judges, Viktor Momotov, received remuneration from the "Pokrovskie" OCG (Organized Criminal Group). Since 2010, while serving as a judge, Momotov failed to comply with the restrictions stipulated by anti-corruption legislation. He held the positions of Secretary of the Plenum of the Supreme Court (since 2013), member of the Presidium of the Supreme Court (since 2019), and Head of the Council of Judges of Russia (re-elected in 2022), which, according to the oversight body, provided him with unlimited influence on judicial practice and the personnel policy of lower courts.

To develop and expand his own hotel business, Momotov collaborated with the organizers of the "Pokrovskie" OCG, A. Chebanov and A. Korovaiko. The Head of the Council of Judges also helped the owner of the Marton hotel chain, A. Marchenko, legalize 11 real estate properties through court decisions. Forty-four land plots and 51 real estate properties were registered in the name of Marchenko and individuals under his control, which were used to provide hotel services, house bath complexes, and hookah lounges. Based on these assets, Momotov and Marchenko created the Marton business hotel network, consisting of 40 complexes in the Krasnodar Territory, Rostov Region, Volgograd, Voronezh, Kaliningrad, Nizhny Novgorod, Vologda, and Moscow. Their total value exceeds 9 billion rubles.

According to the General Prosecutor's Office, Momotov used his status as a judge to legalize real estate, protect affiliated businesses in courts, and circumvent control by government authorities. Furthermore, according to the General Prosecutor's Office, a separate source of income for Momotov and Marchenko was tax evasion – the arrears exceed 500 million rubles⁷⁸.

⁷⁷ Ivanov A. A long-term deputy of the State Duma is suspected of raping a young assistant. Available at: https://zavtra.ru/events/mnogoletnego_deputata_gosudarstvennoj_dumi_podozrevayut_v_iznasilovanii_yunoi_pomoshnitci?ysclid=mgrmbw658c102524228

⁷⁸ Panteleev D., Zykina T., Sarsania N. "Organized criminal group and assets worth 9 billion rubles": what is known about the lawsuit against the head of the Council of Judges. Available at: <https://www.rbc.ru/business/23/09/2025/68d26a509a79476cc45d7597>

Facts of detentions and arrests of representatives of the ruling elites (August 19 – October 24, 2025)⁷⁹

October 19 – The first deputy head of Nefteyugansk in the Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Area was charged with abuse of power.

October 19 – As part of an investigation into a case against administration officials accused of siphoning several million rubles from the budget, the deputy head of the city of Zheleznogorsk, R. Vychuzhanin, was detained.

October 18 – The deputy chairman of the committee for urban economy and construction of the Kaliningrad administration was detained. He is suspected of fraud.

October 11 – The head of the administration of Luzhsky Municipal District in the Leningrad Region was detained. According to the investigation, in August 2024 he received a bribe of 1 million rubles through an intermediary.

October 11 – The head of Krymsky District of the Krasnodar Territory, S. Les, was detained. He is suspected of embezzling state land plots.

October 5 – In the Stavropol Territory, the former Minister of Health of Dagestan, T. Belyaeva, was detained. She is accused of large-scale fraud, with damages estimated at at least one million rubles. Belyaeva served as the Minister of Health of Dagestan from February 2022 to August 2024.

September 30 – The acting head of the legal support, assessment, and personnel department of the territorial administration of Rosimushchestvo in the Rostov Region was arrested in a case involving a 13 million ruble bribe.

September 30 – The head of the Main Directorate of the Russian Ministry of Emergency Situations for Kabardino-Balkaria, M. Nadezhin, was detained on suspicion of receiving a 2 million ruble bribe.

September 30 – Former vice-mayor of Nizhny Novgorod, I. Shtokman, was charged with receiving a bribe on an especially large scale (55 million rubles).

September 30 – A. Vlasov, who on September 29 announced he was going to the front and leaving his post as acting deputy governor of the Krasnodar Territory, was detained on suspicion of large-scale embezzlement of humanitarian aid for the SMO.

September 29 – Former vice-governor of the Sverdlovsk Region, O. Chemezov, was detained. He was charged under Part 4 of Article 159 of the Russian Criminal Code (fraud committed by an organized group or on an especially large scale, or resulting in the deprivation of a citizen's right to residential premises).

September 29 – The head of the Rosgvardiya department for North Ossetia, V. Golota, was detained. Investigative actions are being conducted in a criminal case concerning bribe-taking.

September 22 – Former State Duma deputy and ex-deputy head of the Crimean government, R. Balbek, previously declared a federal fugitive, was detained. Criminal cases are being pursued against him for unlawful access to computer information and slander. The suspect has been remanded in custody.

September 17 – In Tatarstan, the deputy head of Zelenodolsky District was detained on suspicion of large-scale bribery involving ownership rights to four land plots.

August 27 – The mayor of Vladimir, D. Naumov, was detained. He is suspected of large-scale fraud. On the same day, the Vladimir regional branch of United Russia suspended his party membership.

August 25 – The acting deputy governor of the Kursk Region, V. Bazarov, was detained. He was charged with embezzlement. Bazarov's detention is linked to his work as deputy governor of the Belgorod Region and concerns the construction of defensive structures.

August 25 – Officials of the Belgorod Region government and the Region Capital Construction Directorate were detained on charges of embezzling funds allocated for defensive structures on the border with Ukraine. According to the investigation, the embezzlement was committed by the former head of the Region Capital Construction Directorate, A. Soshnikov, his deputies A. Reshetko and L. Streltskaya, and the deputy minister of construction of the region, V. Gubarev. "They stole more than 251 million rubles by inflating the cost and understating the technical characteristics of defensive structures – tetrahedrons installed on the border with Ukraine," reports the Ministry of Internal Affairs. All have been remanded in custody.

August 20 – Former deputy governor of the Chelyabinsk Region, A. Ufimtsev, was detained. According to the investigation, from 2009 to 2010, Ufimtsev, together with three accomplices, fraudulently acquired the right to use a forest plot in the protected zone of a natural monument in the Chelyabinsk Region on Lake Uvildy.

⁷⁹ Source: RT in Russian. The latest news about arrests. Available at: <https://russian.rt.com/tag/zaderzhanie?ysclid=mdzkzlnnsn147444962>

However, as V. Matviyenko, Chairwoman of the Federation Council of the Russian Federation, rightly notes, **“all current conflicts, including the Ukrainian one, have a chance of resolution only if their root causes are eliminated”**⁸⁰. This thesis is often voiced concerning international conflicts, but, as the results of this study show, it is fully applicable to the country’s internal life as well.

It is necessary to understand that under the conditions of the SMO, all events, phenomena, and processes occurring within the country should be viewed not only as part of internal daily life but also in the context of their potential external,

geopolitical consequences. In this sense, the consolidating function of the ruling party as the “instrument for implementing the president’s policy”⁸¹ plays a crucial role in fulfilling one of the key tasks facing the country – the formation of a new Social Contract as a “basic, yet at the same time special state of relations between the state and the people, expressed in the philosophy of a common destiny”⁸².

And although this task is not explicitly formulated by the head of state, numerous expert assessments testify to the growing need of Russian society for a new Social Contract.

1. “The conduct of the SMO, along with active and contradictory processes of socio-cultural turbulence within Russia and in Near Abroad states, **requires adjustments to the existing social contract**”⁸³.

2. “As a result of the global transformation of the geopolitical system in 2022, the problem of a **radical revision of the social contract emerged...** The initiated shifts signify a fundamental change in the country’s governance regime – from a dependent (colonial) one to an independent (sovereign) one... **The need for forming a qualitatively different social contract between the supreme authority of Russia, represented by its president (and simultaneously the leader of the nation!), and the population has already ripened**”⁸⁴.

3. “...currently, solutions to specific state and societal problems in a significant number of cases lead to distorted processes and phenomena, which do not always embody the equal unity of the people and the political power, leading to various forms of tension reflecting the **deformation of the existing Social Contract**”⁸⁵.

4. “For many years, a discussion about the necessity of creating and introducing a common ideological platform into society has been intensifying in the country. This platform should serve as a guiding thread for state development...”

At the current civilizational rupture experienced by the world, **we need such a guiding thread more than ever... A more or less clear outline, let alone one approved at the state level and purposefully, yet creatively (through discussions and probable corrections), proposed to broad elite circles and introduced into public consciousness, does not yet exist...**

⁸⁰ Matviyenko: Current conflicts can be resolved only by eliminating the root causes. Available at: <https://tass.ru/politika/24664489?ysclid=mh0emrycw3763429181>

⁸¹ Ilyina V. Marker of normality: experts discussed the results of the 2025 elections. Available at: <https://rg.ru/2025/09/16/marker-normalnosti-eksperty-obsudili-itogi-vyborov-2025.html?ysclid=mh21x3xntc738372756> (K. Kostin’s opinion).

⁸² Toshchenko Zh.T. (2025). Social contract in modern Russia: Has a balance of interests been achieved? Sotsis, 2, p. 6.

⁸³ Nemirovskiy V.G. (2025). Social contract in modern Russia: Reality or illusion? Reflections of a sociologist on the monograph by Zh.T. Toshchenko “The fate of the social contract in Russia: The evolution of ideas and the lessons of implementation”. Standard of Living of the Population of the Regions of Russia, 21(2), p. 303.

⁸⁴ Balatsky E.V., Ekimova N.A. (2022). Social contract in Russia: Before and after 2022. Journal of Institutional Studies, 14(3), 74–90.

⁸⁵ Toshchenko Zh.T. (2025). Social contract in modern Russia: Has a balance of interests been achieved? Sotsis, 2, p. 12.

The state's leadership stratum is still dominated by economist-technocrats, 'political technologists'. They are useful for current management, they do much that is necessary, but they are incapable of leading the country and the people towards new horizons, of ensuring a deep, ideological unity between the people and the authorities in the difficult, fateful struggle which the country and the world have entered... The above is not a call for a change of the supreme authority, especially during an acute foreign policy crisis, which will last for many more years. But the renewal of the governing elites is a mandatory condition for success"⁸⁶.

Nevertheless, as the research results show, the unconditional victory of the ruling party (70–75%) in regional and municipal elections is, in fact, secured by only about half (45–50%) of all eligible voters. The remaining portion of the population (judging by sociological survey data) either supports other parties or is fundamentally skeptical of the country's political system. **This solves the tactical task of ensuring the stability of the political system in the present but becomes ineffective in the context of the country's responses to future challenges.**

"Among analysts, who usually work precisely for the authorities, an apprehensive mood has recently begun to prevail... the essence is that **in the year of the upcoming State Duma elections, neither the people, nor the elites, nor, apparently, the political technologists themselves understand the future. And they cannot know or even attempt to predict what might happen in it"**⁸⁷.

Hence the conclusion – apparently, the electoral process requires adjustment, as it does not entirely accurately reflect the real situation in the country and the relationship between society and the authorities.

"In recent years, it has not been uncommon for governors to end up in the defendant's dock. And it seems rather unseemly when someone who showed a super-high result of over 80% ends up under investigation or on trial. Let's say, similar to what happened with the former governor of Kursk Region, Alexey Smirnov, although last year he did receive 65.3%. But ultimately, this situation still looks politically unacceptable"⁸⁸.

It should be noted that elections, like mass sociological surveys of society, are merely an indicator, a "litmus test," allowing for periodic "snapshots" of the relationship between the state and society. **The real "root causes" that lead to only 50, 40, or even 20% of voters participating in elections are much deeper and require not just "adjustments," but far more decisive actions to change the entire system of state governance and life in the country as a whole:**

✓ **overcoming the persistently high level of inequality and the most acute social contradictions;**

⁸⁶ Karaganov S. Russia's Living Idea-Dream, the Code of the Russian in the 21st Century: Report within the framework of the project "Russia's Idea-Dream and the Code of the Russian in the 21st Century" under the auspices of the Council on Foreign and Defense Policy and the Faculty of World Economics and World Politics of the National Research University Higher School of Economics. July 2025. P. 17.

⁸⁷ Rodin I. The factions examined the situation in the country from different angles. Available at: https://www.ng.ru/politics/2025-10-07/3_9354_fractions.html

⁸⁸ D. Garmonenko. In the conditions of the SMR, voter turnout has gained political significance. Available at: https://www.ng.ru/politics/2025-09-07/1_9332_elections.html?ysclid=mh4ko1wv2o202671700

“The Forbes list of the world’s richest people continues to be replenished with Russian billionaires. In 2025, the number of Russians in the ranking of the wealthiest people increased by 21 individuals, reaching 146 people. Moreover, during the period of the SMO, each of them increased their annual income by 1.5–2 times”⁸⁹.

“...when our soldiers and commanders are dying on the fronts of the SMO, the issue of corruption takes on a special hue. If in peacetime the boundless theft by pampered clans simply slowed the country down, now it’s a completely different story. The law of justice and the law of retribution demand that such crimes be paid for with blood”⁹².

✓ **eliminating instances of the real, “egregious” (as Nikita Mikhalkov noted in his TV show “Besogon”⁹⁰), behavior of elites as a systemic phenomenon; as part of ordinary, everyday life;**

✓ **resolving contradictions and disagreements (within the expert community and among broad segments of the population) in interpreting the national development course and understanding the Image of Russia’s Future, which is impossible without a clear, unequivocal assessment of past and present events;**

✓ **not merely “adjusting,” but creating a mechanism of state governance, or a system that would “filter out” people incapable of effectively performing their official duties while in “state service”: either those unprepared due to their professional qualities, or those fundamentally not sharing the general vector of national development that Russia has been following for almost a quarter of a century now.**

As A. Shkolnikov writes, “There are many musicians, but virtuosos are few; yet they all must feel and hear the music. If an official does not understand these principles of work, it means they are in the wrong profession”⁹¹.

Thus, decisive actions (primarily from the head of state) are required to address all those problems that have remained unresolved throughout virtually the entire post-Soviet period, have had (and continue to have) a cumulative nature, which has, among other things, led to the reduced effectiveness of elections as a diagnostic tool.

And what happens when diagnostic tools fail is quite well-known. The painful experience of the Ukrainian Armed Forces’ incursion into the Kursk Region due to the seemingly banal embezzlement by officials through yet another “Development Corporation” serves as a highly instructive lesson in this regard, from which necessary conclusions must be drawn... – by the President, the State Duma, the Government, and entities within the state governance system at all levels of authority: federal, regional, and municipal.

This thesis, in our view, is largely confirmed by the expert assessment presented in the report by the Center for the Study of Russian Political Culture (CSPCR), prepared for the 34th anniversary of the GKChP putsch on August 19, 2025:

⁸⁹ Ilyin V.A., Morev M.V. (2025). What a 30-year absence of state ideology leads to: “Great nations are not built without great, guiding ideas, and having lost them, they collapse with a thunderous crash”. *Economic and Social Changes: Facts, Trends, Forecast*, 18(4), 9–45.

⁹⁰ Besogon TV. The episode aired October 17, 2025. Fear the wrath of the patient. Available at: <https://besogontv.ru/videos/boysya-gneva-terpeliviykh/>

⁹¹ Shkolnikov A. The nature of bureaucratic alarmism. Available at: https://zavtra.ru/blogs/priroda_chinovnich_ego_alarmizma

⁹² Goncharov A. The Kekhman case. Available at: https://zavtra.ru/blogs/delo_kehmana?ysclid=mgrpluzvv4841221682

“We must be aware that the risks of a repetition of the August 1991 tragedy exist today. The modern risks are significant – history could repeat itself: after 30 years, the threat has not disappeared. The Western concept of the ‘decolonization of Russia’ explicitly aims to dismember the last large fragment of historical Russia – the Russian Federation. As during perestroika, part of the elites sees salvation in a deal with the West, hoping to return to the happy times for them of exchanging resources for the ‘glass beads’ of Western overconsumption, as under ‘Grandfather Yeltsin’. But the price of such a deal today is ‘decolonization,’ meaning total dismemberment.

And the existing risks of another elite betrayal could very well materialize with the convergence of three ‘factors’.

The first – a ‘crisis of trust’ in the authorities. But for now, this is offset by the president’s ‘super-high rating,’ however, stability cannot hang on a single ‘nail’ indefinitely.

The second – the ‘comprador psychology of the ‘elites’,’ some of whom hope to return to the times of the happy exchange of the ‘glass beads’ of Western ‘overconsumption’ for the export of domestic resources, as it was under ‘Grandfather Yeltsin’. But hopes to ‘make peace’ with the global ‘hegemon,’ which has decided to purge the ‘overfed Russian oligarchy,’ can now only be realized through the conditions of Russia’s ‘decolonization,’ that is, its total dismemberment.

And the third – the ‘absence of a sovereign ideology,’ an alternative civilizational ‘project.’ And this is the risk that the rebellious province of global capitalism, in the form of Russia, will be neutralized, lacking its own civilizational identity and ‘project’.

Today, these three threats are blocked by the tough stance of the security forces and the consolidation of society around the goals of the SMO, including ‘Putin’s statements’ – about the impossibility of ‘returning Russia to the pre-2022 situation,’ and that ‘capitalism has exhausted itself’. **However, ‘pragmatic security officials and technocrats’ have betrayed historical Russia more than once – both in February 1917 and in August 1991. Yes, history knows no subjunctive mood. But it demands to be studied and for the necessary lessons to be learned”⁹³.**

In conclusion, we note that on October 2, 2025, speaking at the plenary session of the Valdai International Discussion Club, Russian President V. Putin gave a comprehensive assessment of the situation in the country and the historical moment Russia is experiencing today: **“None of us, of course, are granted the ability to foresee the future in its entirety. However, this does not absolve us from the obligation to be prepared for anything that might**

happen. In practice, as both time and recent events show, one must be ready for absolutely anything. In such periods of history, everyone’s responsibility is especially great – for their own fate, for the fate of the country, and for the fate of the entire world. And the stakes are extraordinarily high”⁹⁴.

In our view, this is not only an assessment but also a call to action that must be heard and internalized by the ruling elites at all levels of power.

⁹³ Obukhov S.P. Perestroika, the Emergency Committee and the third destruction of historical Russia: Is it possible to repeat the betrayal of the elites? Available at: <https://kprf-saratov.ru/2025/08/s-p-obuhov-perestrojka-gkchp-i-trete-razrushenie-istoricheskoy-rossii-vozmozno-li-povtorenie-predatelstva-elit/>

⁹⁴ Speech by the President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin at the plenary session of the Valdai International Discussion Club on October 2, 2025. Available at: <http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/78134>

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