

AFTER THE MOSCOW PROTESTS: RUSSIA'S POLITICAL AND SOCIETAL LANDSCAPE ON THE EVE OF THE 2020s

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Arkadiankatu 23 H (courtyard), Helsinki

The protests surrounding the regional elections in Moscow in the summer brought new features to Russia's domestic political dynamics. Despite the authorities' increasingly harsh measures against non-governmental political activities, mobilization of citizens against these measures appeared to be the largest since the 2011-12 protests. The regime's repressive methods did not calm the situation as expected. Instead, these methods turned against themselves when hundreds of thousands of citizens as well as various occupational groups demonstrated an extraordinary solidarity for the arbitrarily arrested and condemned citizens.

The year 2019 in Russia has shown that protests have placed, at least in the short term, a constraint on the regime's restrictive policies towards civil society, whether the issue is about arbitrary arrests, waste management or the public usage of urban space. Trends in public opinion have pointed in a similar direction, and it is legitimate to say that the so-called "Crimean consensus" is over. Are these changes more permanent and will the dissatisfaction seen in various parts of Russia expand in terms of the growing civic opposition to the regime? Will the Kremlin be able to fix its troubled authoritarian party system and restore the credibility of its politics of stability? Or, will the regime be forced to resort to increasingly repressive policies in sustaining its political legitimacy?

Speakers: **Denis Volkov**, Deputy Director, Levada-Center

Abbas Gallyamov, Political Consultant

Comments: **Veera Laine**, Visiting Research Fellow, FIIA

Chair: **Jussi Lassila**, Senior Research Fellow, FIIA

Speakers' biographies 

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Denis Volkov is the Deputy director at the Levada-Center. He joined the Levada-Center, an independent polling organisation based in Moscow, as an analyst and head of department in 2007. Since then he participated in more than a hundred quantitative and qualitative research projects as a researcher, analyst or organiser. He has authored publications with particular focus on civil society, protest activities, elections and political attitudes of the general public and of young people, business and elites opinion in Russia. He is a columnist at Vedomosti and RBC newspapers and at Carnegie.ru of Carnegie Moscow Center.



Abbas Gallyamov, a former speechwriter for Russian President Vladimir Putin, is a political consultant who has worked in many elections. As a political expert, he regularly comments on issues related to Russian domestic politics in Moscow's leading daily newspapers.



Veera Laine is a Visiting Research Fellow in the EU's Eastern Neighbourhood and Russia research programme at the Finnish Institute of International Affairs. She is currently working on her political history doctoral dissertation on nationalism(s) in contemporary Russia at the University of Helsinki.



Jussi Lassila works as a Senior Research Fellow in the EU's Eastern Neighbourhood and Russia research programme at the Finnish Institute of International Affairs. His recent publications include *After the election of no alternatives: The Kremlin's domestic political challenges from 2018 onwards* (FIIA Working paper 101) and a co-edited and co-authored volume *War and Memory in Russia, Ukraine and Belarus* (Palgrave Macmillan 2017). He has published widely on issues related to Russian domestic politics, in particular identity politics, nationalism, populism and political communication. Lassila has published, for instance, the monograph *The Quest for an Ideal Youth in Putin's Russia II: The Search for Distinctive Conformism in the Political Communication of Nashi, 2005-2009* (2012; 2nd revised ed. 2014) and contributed to numerous journals and collected volumes.