

Russian National Guard Reaches 340,000 Men

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Russia's new National Guard now has 340,000 personnel in 84 units across Russia, the head of the force has claimed.

National Guard leader Viktor Zolotov told reporters on Friday that the eight-month deployment had taken place "without lowering the combat readiness of military units engaged in combat missions."

Included in the structure of the National Guard are the Interior Troops, as well as various organs and units of the Interior Ministry, including MVD special forces. Interior Ministry troops currently account for half of the National Guard's overall strength, Zolotov said.

National Guard troops will be armed with a variety of small arms including pistols, rifles, machine guns, and sniper rifles. They will also have access to weapons for use against underwater saboteurs and non-lethal weaponry. They will also have access to various armored personnel carriers similar to those used by the regular army, such as the BTR-80.

The National Guard will also control its own airplanes and helicopters, including fixed-wing

transport aircraft such as the IL-76, An-26 and AN-12. Helicopters will include the Mi-8 and the heavy transport Mi-26.

The National Guard was founded by Russian President Vladimir Putin in April 2016. The force is set to take over the functions of Russia's riot police and rapid response units with the reported aim of better combatting terrorism and organized crime,

Putin's Personal Army: Read more on how Russia's [analysts view on the birth of Putin's National Guard](#).

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