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# Russia Plans $63M Military-Patriotic Youth Education Center – RBC

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**Moskva News Agency**

Russia plans to educate youngsters in military-patriotic themes in a new $63 million facility at its sprawling military-themed park outside Moscow, the RBC news website reported Monday.

The militarization of young Russians has been a controversial topic in the past several years, with President Vladimir Putin's establishment of the Youth Army in late 2015 drawing comparisons to the Hitler Youth. With around half a million members aged 8-18, the Youth Army hopes to reach 1 million members by 2020.

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High schoolers will once a year gather for a weeklong "military-patriotic education" camp at the Russian Defense Ministry's $350 million Patriot Park west of Moscow, RBC cited two ministry officials as saying.

“We’re discussing if [attendance at the youth education center] will be part of a compulsory or voluntary program,” one of the sources was quoted as saying.

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The Moscow city and Moscow region administrations will each contribute 2 billion rubles ($31.5 million) to the project, according to one of the sources.

The “Avangard” teaching center’s construction is expected to begin in September.

The latest move comes months after state television launched a new channel targeting Russia’s youth with 24/7 programming dedicated entirely to World War II. In March, security officials announced that delinquent youngsters would be sent to military-patriotic reeducation camps.

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