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# 6 Highlights From Putin's State of the Nation Address

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Putin discussed Russia's demographic crisis, the poverty level and his vision for the Russian government after he leaves office. **Kremlin.ru**

President Vladimir Putin turned an eye toward Russia's domestic affairs in his annual state-of-the-nation speech Wednesday, outlining proposals for fixing the country's political, economic and social problems.

Addressing both houses of parliament, the Federal Assembly, at the Manezh Central Exhibition Hall, Putin discussed Russia's demographic crisis, the poverty level and Russia's defense.

In addition to setting out key policy areas, Putin announced a referendum on constitutional amendments. Putin, who is serving his fourth overall presidential term, also reiterated lukewarm support toward limiting the number of terms any future president can serve.

Here's a look at the top takeaways from his speech:

**On constitutional changes**

“We need a referendum on the entire package of amendments to the Constitution.”

“We need to entrust the State Duma [lower house of parliament] with not just approving but [choosing] the prime minister’s candidacy.”

“Russia should remain a strong presidential republic.”

“I don’t consider [the two consecutive term limit] a matter of principle, but I agree with it.”

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**On defense**

“For the first time, we’re not chasing anyone.”

"We are not threatening anyone or striving to impose our will [on other countries]. At the same time, I can assure everyone: Our steps to strengthen national security have been taken in a timely and sufficient manner."

“We’re not catching up with anyone. On the contrary, other states will have to create weapons that Russia already has.”

**On Russian law and international treaties**

"I really do think that the time has come to introduce certain changes to the country's main law that will directly guarantee the Russian constitution is the priority in our legal space," Putin said.

"This means that the demands of international legislation and treaties, and also the decisions of international bodies can only apply to Russia's territory when they do not entail restricting human and citizens' rights and freedoms, and do not contradict our constitution."

**On the economy**

“Based on a stable macroeconomic foundation, we need to create the conditions for real incomes to increase significantly.”

“In order to solve this problem, we need structural changes in the national economy and an increase in its efficiency. Russia should achieve a higher GDP growth rate than the rest of the world in 2021.”

“Starting this year, annual investment growth should be at least 5% and its share in the country's GDP should be increased from the current 21% to 25% in 2024.”

**On poverty**

“The state will provide regular payments to [low-income] citizens, assistance in job training and advanced training and assistance in finding a job or starting a small business.”

“The regions have already begun to introduce this ‘social contract’ mechanism, but its effectiveness is still extremely low and the impact on poverty reduction and on increasing family incomes is weak.”

“There is an acute problem which is a direct threat to our demographic future: The low incomes of a significant number of families.”

## On demographics

“Our historical responsibility is not only to get out of the demographic trap, but also ensure sustainable natural population growth by the middle of the coming decade.”

“In 2024, the birth rate should be 1.7” children per woman.

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